



Dar es Salaam, Tanzania  
8 September 2021

## News release

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### **Majority of Tanzanians want unrestricted access to social media but are wary of fake news and intolerance**

A majority of Tanzanians support unrestricted access to social media, but most are also wary of its potential dangers, the latest Afrobarometer survey shows.

Among Tanzanians who have heard of social media, large majorities believe that such platforms help make people more informed and effective citizens. However, most also say that social media make people more likely to believe false news and more intolerant of people with different opinions.

Overall, Tanzanians are almost evenly divided on whether the impact of social media on society is positive or negative.

#### **Key findings**

- One in five Tanzanians say they get news from social media every day (13%) or “a few times a week” (7%). In total, 27% of citizens say they use social media for news at least on occasion, a 9-percentage-point increase compared to 2017 (Figure 1).
- A majority (58%) of Tanzanians say they have heard of social media (Figure 2).
  - Awareness of social media is higher among men and urbanites than among women and rural residents, and increases strongly with respondents’ education level, ranging from 20% of those with no formal education to 96% of those with post-secondary qualifications. Youth (69%) are almost twice as likely to be familiar with social media as older citizens (37%).
- Among those who have heard of social media:
  - Most believe that it makes people more aware of current happenings (89%) and helps people impact political processes (72%) (Figure 3).
  - But large majorities also say that it makes people more likely to believe false news (76%) and more intolerant of others with different political opinions (71%).
  - Overall, Tanzanians are almost evenly split in their views on the effect of social media on society: 39% see its impact as positive, while 37% say it is negative (Figure 4).
- More than half (54%) of Tanzanians say that access to social media and the Internet should be unrestricted, while one-third (33%) want access to be regulated by the government (Figure 5).
  - Educated citizens, youth, men, and urban residents are less likely to support the regulation of social media.

#### **Afrobarometer surveys**

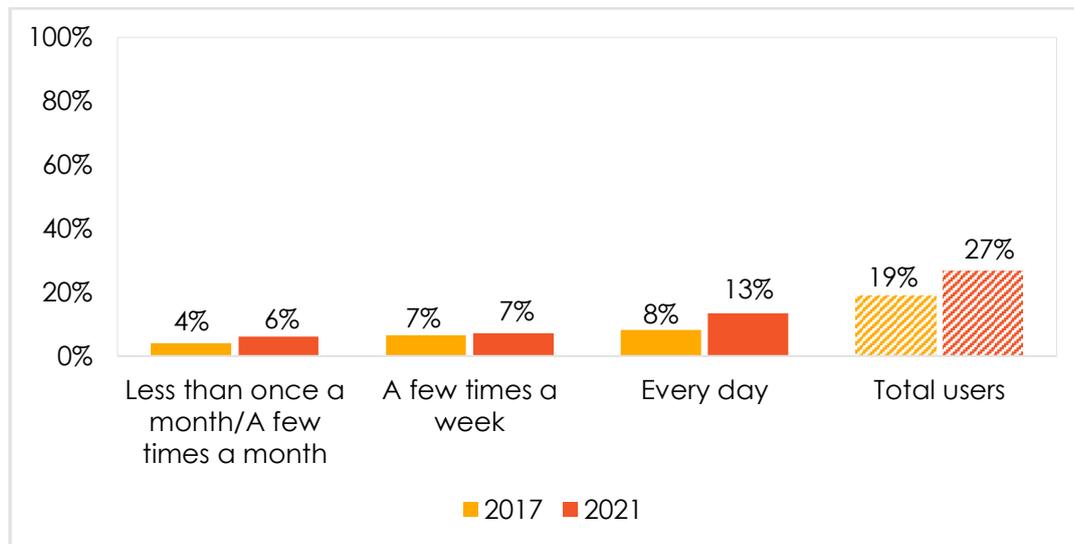
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, nonpartisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Eight rounds of surveys have been completed in up to 39 countries since 1999. Round 8

surveys (2019/2021) cover 34 countries. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Tanzania, led by REPOA, interviewed a nationally representative, random, stratified probability sample of 2,398 adults in March-April 2021. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Tanzania in 2001, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014, and 2017.

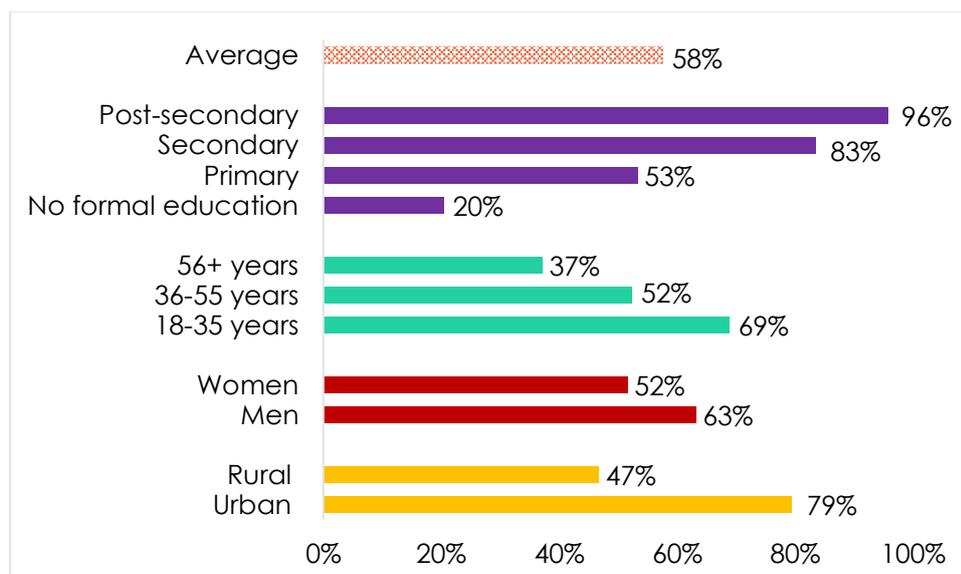
## Charts

**Figure 1: Social media as news source | Tanzania | 2021**



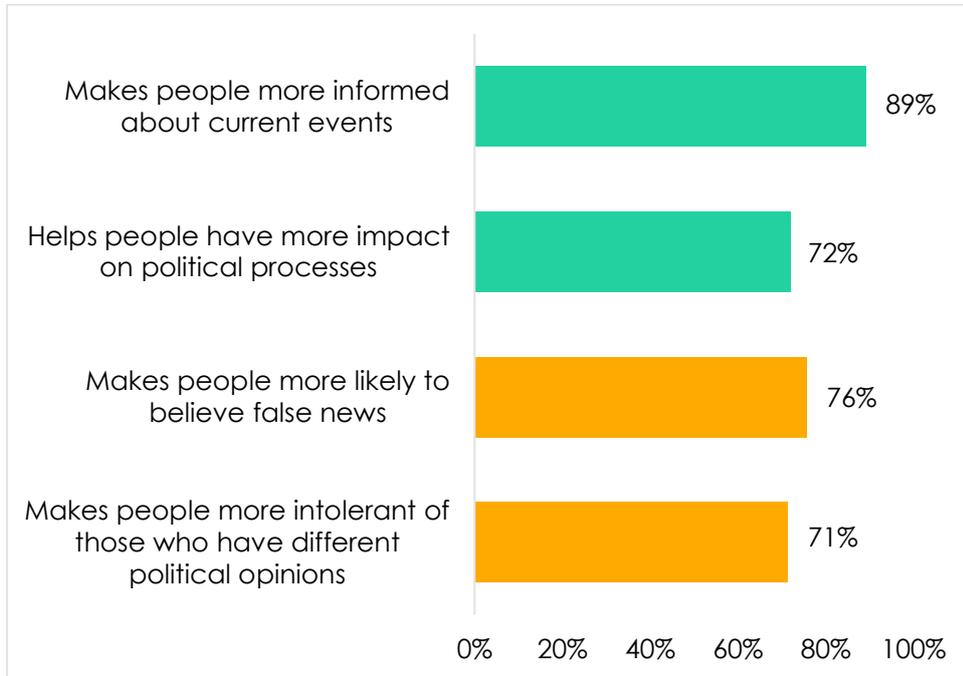
**Respondents were asked:** How often do you get news from social media such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, or others?

**Figure 2: Heard of social media | by socio-demographic group | 2021**



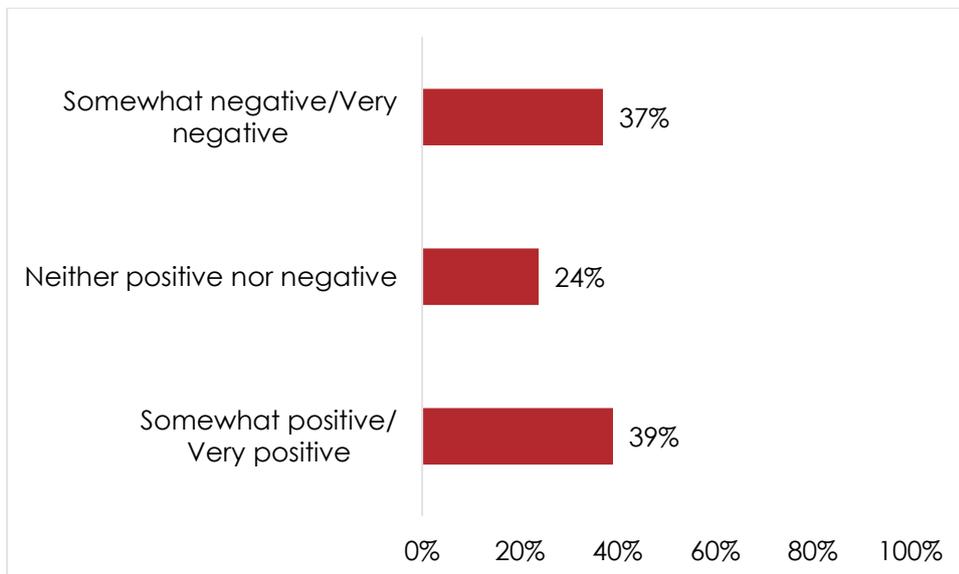
**Respondents were asked:** Have you heard about social media, for example, Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp?

**Figure 3: Impact of social media on society** | by socio-demographic group  
 | Tanzania | 2021



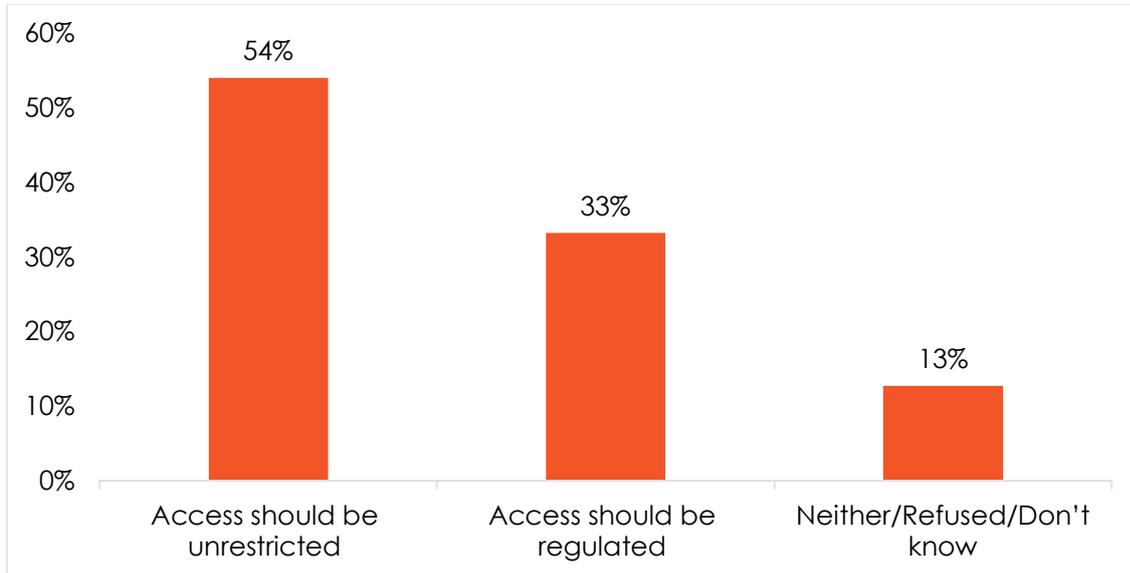
**Respondents who have heard about social media were asked:** Regardless of whether you personally use social media yourself, please tell me whether you agree or disagree that social media [has the following effects]. (% who “agree” or “strongly agree”)

**Figure 4: Social media: Positive or negative impact on society?** | Tanzania | 2021



**Respondents who have heard about social media were asked:** Overall, do you think that the effects of social media on society are mostly positive, mostly negative, or haven't you heard enough to say?

**Figure 5: Should access to Internet and social media be regulated? | Tanzania**  
 | 2021



**Respondents who have heard about social media were asked:** Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Statement 1: Unrestricted access to the Internet and social media helps people to be more informed and active citizens and should be protected.

Statement 2: Information shared on the Internet and social media is dividing Tanzanians, so access should be regulated by government.

(% who "agree" or "agree very strongly" with each statement)

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