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An Analysis of the Tanzanian Public Response to Tanzanian Leadership During the COVID-19  
Pandemic

by  
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A thesis submitted to the faculty of The University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College

Oxford  
May 2022

Approved by

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## ABSTRACT

### An Analysis of the Tanzanian Public Response to Tanzanian Leadership During the COVID-19 Pandemic

(Under the direction of Professor Mohammed Bashir Salau)

This thesis discusses the similarities and differences in Tanzanian COVID-19 policies implemented by the late President John Pombe Magufuli and his successor, President Samia Suluhu Hassan. It also analyzes the responses of Tanzanian citizens to these different policies as expressed in the media. The conclusions that were made in this thesis are based on qualitative analysis of articles published in Tanzanian-based newspapers during specific time periods surrounding significant policy changes during each presidency. The situation of COVID-19 policies in Tanzania is unique due to the differences in the COVID-19 policies implemented in comparison to those implemented by other countries and also due to the change in leadership in the midst of the pandemic following Magufuli's tragic death while he was in office. The results of this analysis show that Magufuli and Samia utilized considerably different responses to the pandemic, which Magufuli using a more conservative approach in which citizens choose their individual responses to COVID-19 and Samia using a more involved and scientific approach where citizens are encouraged to follow the recommendations made by the Tanzanian COVID-19 taskforce. Also, this analysis showed that neither president was particularly favored over another in the media, but both presidents received more supportive opinions expressed in the media when they acted in accordance with global health recommendations than when they changed their policies.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SARS-CoV-2: Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2

TANU: Tanganyika African National Union

CCM: Chama Cha Mapinduzi

WHO: World Health Organization

EVD: Ebola virus disease

DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo

MOHCDGEC: Ministry of Health, Social Development, Gender, Elderly and Children

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

DSE: Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange

TSI: Tanzania Share Index

MAT: Medical Association of Tanzania

CHADEMA: Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo

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## INTRODUCTION

With both the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent passing of the Tanzanian president, John Pombe Magufuli, causing tension and hardships, the United Republic of Tanzania has experienced a year of increased political turbulence. Although the entire world experienced many changes since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and various governments took a wide range of approaches to accommodate those changes, the response of the Tanzanian government differed tremendously from that of most other countries.

This thesis focuses on the response of the Tanzanian government to COVID-19 from March of 2020 to May of 2021. This time period is significant because it extends from the first responses of the Magufuli administration regarding the COVID-19 pandemic to the announcement of changing COVID-19 policies during the Samia administration. This thesis also discusses the different approaches taken by the Magufuli and Samia administrations in response to COVID-19 and the resulting opinions of Tanzanian citizens as they were expressed in the media in regards to these approaches.

COVID-19 is the disease caused by the infection of the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), which is a highly contagious virus.<sup>1</sup> COVID-19 was first identified in December of 2019 in China, but the disease spread quickly and reached pandemic status by March of 2020.<sup>2</sup> This disease, which spreads through direct contact and respiratory droplets, affects people of all ages, genders, and backgrounds, but older adults and people with other comorbidities are at a greater risk of experiencing more severe cases of COVID-19 or long-term effects due to the infection.<sup>3</sup> Although the COVID-19 pandemic is a unique situation due to the magnitude of its impact on politics and the media, it is not the only

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<sup>1</sup> Yu Shi et al., "An overview of COVID-19," *Journal of Zhejiang University-Science B*, 21, No. 5 (2020).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



disease that has led to government action in Tanzania, and the Tanzanian government's actions in response to past diseases will be discussed further in a later chapter.

The late Tanzanian President Magufuli took a different approach to COVID-19 guidelines, protocols, and restrictions implementing policies, such as a National Day of Prayer to protect the citizens as opposed to the quarantines that were encouraged by most countries.<sup>4</sup> Magufuli also made the decision to remove most of the COVID-19 restrictions for Tanzanians earlier than other countries, explaining his decisions to lead in a different way than most other countries due to Tanzanian economic needs and the large percentage of Tanzanian citizens that rely on daily wages to meet their basic needs.<sup>5</sup>

The unexpected death of President Magufuli was announced in March of 2021 and attributed to health issues.<sup>6</sup> As Tanzania experienced its first death of a current president, the vice-president, Samia Suluhu Hassan, became the president of Tanzania. Throughout the writing in this thesis, President Samia Suluhu Hassan will be referred to as Samia, which is the name that is most commonly used for the president in the media.

After taking her place as the Tanzanian president, Samia changed the country's approach to COVID-19 prevention by creating plans to organize a COVID-19 advisory panel composed of scientists and health professionals to advise the government on COVID-19 policies, vaccination updates, and other aspects of the pandemic.<sup>7</sup>

Due to the contemporary and ever-changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the death of the late Magufuli, however, there is little academic literature recorded about the

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<sup>4</sup> Musa Saleh, "Impact of COVID-19 on Tanzania Political Economy," *International Journal of Advanced Studies in Social Science & Innovation* 4, no. 1 (2020): 28-29.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Judd Devermont and Marielle Harris, "Will the Death of President Magufuli Bring Real Change to Tanzania," *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (March 2021), <http://119.78.100.173/C666/handle/2XK7JISWO/319990>.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Adepoju, "Africa is waging a war on COVID anti-vaxxers," *Nature Medicine* 27, (July 2021): 1122-1125, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41591-021-01426-2>.

COVID-19 pandemic and the Tanzanian government's policies, or lack thereof, to combat the pandemic. Tremendous amounts of newspaper articles and other news sources, however, have been written about these policies. In addition to this, the opinions and attitudes of the general public and how those opinions have changed in response to the progression of the COVID-19 pandemic and to the government's response to that progression have been recorded in newspaper articles.

By analyzing the COVID-19 policies utilized by both presidents and the discussion of COVID-19 policies and the language used in these articles in response to the actions of both the late Magufuli and Samia in COVID-19 protections, I plan to answer the following research questions: how do the strategies used to address the COVID-19 pandemic differ during the Magufuli and Samia administrations and how have the public opinions of Tanzanian citizens regarding their leadership been impacted by the Tanzanian leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic? Through the research involved in this thesis, I hope to provide a greater historical understanding of the Tanzanian government's actions relating to the pandemic and the Tanzanian general population's response to the actions of its government during a time of such turmoil.

Due to the controversy and the magnitude of the impact of the Tanzanian leadership's decisions regarding COVID-19, massive amounts of articles and information have been released conveying opinions and information about COVID-19. Because such a large volume of opinions have been recorded through various news articles and sources, I have used articles from *Mwananchi*, Tanzania's largest news source, to develop a timeline of the COVID-19 progression in the United Republic of Tanzania and the Tanzanian government's responses at various points in time. After completing a timeline of the various governmental actions, time periods around

various points of action throughout the ongoing pandemic were chosen to investigate the responses of different media sources, such as *Mwananchi*, *BBC*, and *The Daily News*.

In order to select news and media sources that offer a wide variety of opinions from Tanzanian citizens, three of the largest news sources in Tanzania were used to gather information. Three different news sources were used to provide a wider variety of opinions from people of various backgrounds, political parties, and regions throughout the country. In addition to this, *Mwananchi*, *BBC*, and *The Daily News* all have updated and accessible online databases for their articles, making the analysis of all of the articles that were published by these companies during the time periods of interest possible.

The time periods chosen for analysis coincide with significant or controversial actions taken regarding COVID-19 by the Tanzanian government, specifically actions taken that indicate the different views held by Magufuli and Samia regarding the pandemic. Time periods of interest include the week when Tanzanian COVID-19 restrictions began, the week that COVID-19 restrictions in Tanzania were lifted, the week prior to the passing of the late Magufuli, the week after Samia's announcement of changing COVID-19 policy, and the week after the release of the report detailing the new COVID-19 policy recommendations. Analyzing the articles written during specific time periods allows for a manageable amount of information to be reviewed and analyzed. I have chosen three different Tanzanian media sources to include opinions published from people with various backgrounds throughout the country.

Following the determination of the news sources to use and the time periods of interest, source selection took place by identifying every article that was published by the various news sources during the time periods of interest with information pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic. The articles were identified by reading both the titles and the articles in their entirety

for information and opinions regarding Covid-19 policy. The articles that were identified as pertaining information regarding the pandemic were then analyzed qualitatively for opinions or attitudes held by Tanzanian citizens toward their government expressed throughout the articles.

One limitation to this analysis, however, is that all three news organizations that were analyzed provide the most coverage in urban areas of Tanzania. Therefore, the results of the analyses in this thesis are potentially more representative of the opinions of urban Tanzanian citizens than those living in rural areas with less frequent media coverage from large news sources, such as *Mwananchi*, *BBC*, and *Daily News*.

Another potential limitation to this analysis is the lack of opinions from sources that were not published in English or translated from Kiswahili to English. Although Tanzanian citizens often publish articles in the English language and learn English in school, Kiswahili is both the official and most commonly spoken language in the United Republic of Tanzania.<sup>8</sup> The results of the analyses in this thesis, therefore, are potentially more representative of Tanzanian news reporters who write in English than Tanzanian news reporters who write only in Kiswahili.

It is also important to consider that many of the sources analyzed for this thesis were written in light of the amendments made to the Electronic and Postal Communications Act, which means that the opinions expressed in these articles could potentially be influenced due to fear of governmental reprimand. The new amendments released in July 2020 list “content with information with regards to the outbreak of a deadly or contagious diseases in the country or elsewhere without the approval of the respective authorities” as prohibited content that “may cause public havoc and disorder”.<sup>9</sup> The results of the analyses in this thesis, therefore, are

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<sup>8</sup> Rubagumya, Casmir M. "Language promotion for educational purposes: The example of Tanzania." *International review of education* 37, no. 1 (1991): 67-85.

<sup>9</sup> The Gazette of the United Republic of Tanzania. “Subsidiary Legislation No. 29,” Vol. 101, July 17, 2020, 18, [https://www.tcra.go.tz/uploads/documents/sw-1619088125-The%20Electronic%20and%20Postal%20Communications%20\(Online%20Content\)%20Regulations.%202020.pdf](https://www.tcra.go.tz/uploads/documents/sw-1619088125-The%20Electronic%20and%20Postal%20Communications%20(Online%20Content)%20Regulations.%202020.pdf).

potentially more representative of the opinions that are acceptable based on the limitations of public expression in Tanzanian media sources.

The information gathered during research is organized into three chapters. The first chapter of this thesis provides a review of pertinent historical information regarding Tanzanian politics and policies. This information includes an overview of important political events regarding the elections and presidencies of both John Magufuli and Samia Saluhu Hassan. The information discussed in the first chapter provides necessary contextualization for the opinions expressed in the news articles that are covered in the second chapter.

The second chapter of this thesis features a comparative analysis of the different presidential administrations' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. This chapter provides examples of the Tanzanian governments' past responses to national health issues and shows the similarities and differences in the COVID-19 policies of Magufuli and Samia. The second chapter concludes with the culmination of the research into the determined answer to the previously mentioned research question regarding the differences in the responses of Magufuli and Samia to COVID-19.

The third chapter of the thesis discusses the comparative analysis of the responses from Tanzanian citizens in the media to the decisions regarding COVID-19 in the two most recent presidential eras. The third chapter concludes with the culmination of the research into the determined answer to the previously mentioned research question regarding the responses of the Tanzanian citizens to the different presidential administrations' COVID-19 policies.

The fourth and final chapter of this thesis concludes the research by providing the answers found to the discussed research questions. This chapter also discusses potential limitations and further applications to the research.

## CHAPTER ONE: HISTORICAL REVIEW

### 1.1 Introduction

Although the different societies that compose what is now known as Tanzania have a long and rich history both before and after the colonization of the area by Europeans in the 1880s, this paper focuses solely on the history of Tanzania following its independence. Although past presidents of Tanzania did not have to respond to COVID-19 as Magafuli and Samia have, it is important to discuss the political and economic climate of Tanzania leading up to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic to provide a better understanding of both the stances that are usually taken by Tanzanian government officials and the expectations held by Tanzanian citizens in regards to their political leaders.

The Tanzanian government, during the presidencies of both Magafuli and Samia, consists of a president, prime minister, National Assembly and Cabinet.<sup>10</sup> The president, or rais in the Kiswahili language, is elected by majority vote and acts as both the chief of state and head of government for a five year term.<sup>11</sup> In addition to this, the president appoints the members of the Cabinet from the National Assembly.<sup>12</sup> The president also appoints a prime minister, who oversees both the Cabinet and National Assembly.<sup>13</sup> The National Assembly of Tanzania, also known as the Parliament, consists of 393 members who are elected or appointed in various ways, and the National Assembly establishes the laws of the country.<sup>14</sup> The general framework of the Tanzanian government has remained consistent since the first election in the country, which took place in 1962.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> United States Central Intelligence Agency, "Tanzania", in *The World Factbook 2020* (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 2022), <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/tanzania/#government>.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

After gaining its independence from Great Britain in December of 1961, Tanganyika, the country now known as Tanzania after its union with Zanzibar in 1964, was led by Julius Nyerere as the Prime Minister.<sup>16</sup> The first election was held in the country in 1962 with Julius Nyerere attaining the presidency in a multi-party election, which would be the last multi-party election to take place in the country until 1994.<sup>17</sup>

From 1961 to 1994, the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), which became known as the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party after 1977, ruled without any allowed opposition under the 1965 Interim Union Constitution.<sup>18</sup> After amendments were made to the Tanzanian Constitution and the passing of the Political Parties Act of 1992, Tanzania held its first multi-party presidential election since 1961 in October of 1995 with a member of the CCM party, Benjamin Mkapa, winning the presidency.<sup>19</sup> Since multi-party elections have returned to the country, the CCM party has remained in control of the presidency.<sup>20</sup>

Tanzania has experienced a much wider variety of economic structures than political structures from its independence to the present. Immediately following independence, Tanzania's economy continued to function as it had during colonialism, with agricultural exports as the main focus of the economy.<sup>21</sup> During this period of operating with a market economy, the majority of Tanzanians experienced significant poverty.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Fengler, Wolfgang. "Tanzania." In *Elections in Africa: A Data Handbook*, by Nohlen, Dieter, Bernard Thibaut, and Michael Krennerich, eds., edited by Dieter Nohlen, Bernard Thibaut, and Michael Krennerich (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2003), 883. <https://doi.org/10.1093/0198296452.003.0049>.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.; The Political Parties Act, The United Republic of Tanzania. (2019).

<sup>20</sup> Fengler, "Tanzania," 883.

<sup>21</sup> Tschannerl, Gerhard. "PERIPHERY CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT-A CASE STUDY OF THE TANZANIAN ECONOMY." *Utafiti Journal* 1, no. 1 (2018).

<sup>22</sup> Mandalu, Martin, D. R. Thakhathi, and Hofisi Costa. "Investigation on Tanzania's Economic History since Independence: The Search for a Development Model." *World Journal of Social Sciences* 4, no. 1 (2018): 61.

The magnitude of the poverty experienced during the market economy strategy led to the shift of the economy to the “Ujamaa” economic strategy in 1967.<sup>23</sup> This strategy, introduced by Nyerere, was a socialist policy wherein the nationalization of industries and institutions and the villagization (the grouping of people in rural areas into collective villages) occurred in order to address the issue of poverty in Tanzania.<sup>24</sup> The Ujamaa economic policy benefited social indicators of poverty in Tanzania, with increases both in primary school enrollment and life expectancy.<sup>25</sup> This economic policy, however, negatively impacted the economic indicators of poverty in Tanzania, and the country shifted to a capitalist economy after the transition of power from Nyerere to his successor, Mwinyi, in 1985.<sup>26</sup> By privatizing and reforming the Tanzanian economy, some progress in various measurements of economic indicators of poverty has been achieved, but the significant problem of poverty in Tanzania persists.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.



## 1.2 The presidency of Magufuli

In the most highly contested presidential election since the introduction of the multi-party system in Tanzania, Dr. John Pombe Magufuli of the CCM party was elected to the Tanzanian presidency in 2015 with 58% of the vote, defeating the unified opposition parties' candidate, Edward Lowassa.<sup>28</sup> Lowassa was reported to have received 40% of the votes, although he initially claimed to have won the presidency with 62% of the votes.<sup>29</sup> Although Lowassa and the leaders of the opposition parties expressed their distrust in the results of the election, Dr. Magufuli was ultimately inaugurated on November 5th, 2015.<sup>30</sup>

In his first term in office, Magufuli was praised by Tanzanian citizens and government officials for the ways that he increased development in the country by the creation of highway systems, improvements to public transportation, and changes to the energy sector.<sup>31</sup> In addition to this, Magufuli addressed issues with corruption and resource management through policy responses such as The Economic and Organized Crimes Control Act, which formed a court to handle matters of corruption and the mishandling of economic resources.<sup>32</sup>

On the other hand, Magufuli was criticized for his strict views on the press, media, and political parties other than the CCM.<sup>33</sup> During Magufuli's first term, the CCM-dominated Parliament passed amendments to laws such as the Statistics Act and the Political Parties Act that gave more power to the government over the ability of citizens to publish research and

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<sup>28</sup> United States Central Intelligence Agency, "Tanzania."

<sup>29</sup> Ruth Nesoba, "Tanzania poll: John Magufuli of CCM defeats Edward Lowassa," *BBC*, October 29, 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-34669468>.

<sup>30</sup> United States Central Intelligence Agency, "Tanzania."

<sup>31</sup> James, Stephen, and Faustine Kashumba. "An Analysis of Servant Leadership in Africa Using a Single Case of the Late President Dr. John Pombe Joseph Magufuli in Tanzania." *EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 7, no. 6 (June 2021): 69–80. <https://doi.org/10.36713>.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Oxford Analytica. "Centralising power in Tanzania may signal weakness." *Emerald Expert Briefings* oxan-db (2016).

establish parties in opposition to the CCM.<sup>34</sup> Under the Statistics Act and the amendments made to it, for example, citizens face criminal punishment for the publication of any statistics that counter statistics published by the government or any “false statistics”, making any dissent potentially dangerous for Tanzanian citizens.<sup>35</sup> In addition to these things, Magufuli has also received criticism throughout his presidency for his decreased participation in global diplomacy in comparison to past Tanzanian presidents.<sup>36</sup>

As preparations for the 2020 presidential and legislative elections began, international leaders and opposition party members began to express concerns over possible corruption and collusion by both Magufuli and the CCM party as a whole.<sup>37</sup> On October 28, 2021, however, Magufuli was reelected with 84% of the vote, the largest percent of votes seen in a presidential election since the introduction of the multi-party system in Tanzania.<sup>38</sup> Although the large margin by which Magufuli won was seen as proof for the opposition parties to the corruption of the CCM party and the Tanzanian government, no one could deny the power of the CCM party.<sup>39</sup>

After ruling during the COVID-19 pandemic for a year, it was announced by then Vice President, Samia Suluhu Hassan, on March 17, 2021 that John Magufuli was dead.<sup>40</sup> In her address, Hassan stated that the late president died of heart disease.<sup>41</sup> In the weeks prior to his death, however, Magufuli made no public appearances, which led some Tanzanians to believe

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<sup>34</sup> Komba, Neema. "Silence speaks volumes: Tanzanian artists and musicians are facing government censorship in a country where 64 new restrictions have just been introduced." *Index on Censorship* 48, no. 1 (2019): 83-85, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306422019841328>.

<sup>35</sup> The Political Parties Act, The United Republic of Tanzania. (2019).

<sup>36</sup> Cabestan, Jean-Pierre, and Jean-Raphaël Chaponnière. "Tanzania-China all-weather friendship from socialism to globalization: a case of relative decline." (2016).

<sup>37</sup> Cheeseman, Nic, Hilary Matfess, and Alitalali Amani. "Tanzania: The Roots of Repression." *Journal of Democracy* 32, no. 2 (2021): 77-89. <https://doi:10.1353/jod.2021.0020>.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Devermont and Harris, "Will the Death of President Magufuli Bring Real Change to Tanzania."

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

that he had contracted COVID-19.<sup>42</sup> As rumors and skepticism spread throughout the country, the Tanzanian government denied all claims that the president was in poor health and arrested some citizens for claims made in the media that the president was receiving treatment for COVID-19 in either Kenya or India.<sup>43</sup> After the shocking announcement, many members of the opposition parties saw the death of Magufuli as confirmation that the government had been hiding the sickness of Magufuli.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> “John Magufuli: Tanzania’s president dies aged 61 after Covid rumours,” *BBC*, March 18, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-56437852>.

<sup>43</sup> “John Magufuli: Tanzania arrests over missing president rumours,” *BBC*, March 15, 2021, [https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-56405313?ns\\_mchannel=social&ns\\_source=twitter&ns\\_campaign=bbc\\_live&ns\\_linkname=56405313%26Arrests%20in%20Tanzania%20over%20missing%20president%20rumours%262021-03-15T16%3A45%3A37.769Z&ns\\_fee=0&pinned\\_post\\_locator=urn:bbc:cps:curie:asset:d098316c-9baa-40c5-aeef-d2b2d9b74909&pinned\\_post\\_asset\\_id=56405313&pinned\\_post\\_type=share](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-56405313?ns_mchannel=social&ns_source=twitter&ns_campaign=bbc_live&ns_linkname=56405313%26Arrests%20in%20Tanzania%20over%20missing%20president%20rumours%262021-03-15T16%3A45%3A37.769Z&ns_fee=0&pinned_post_locator=urn:bbc:cps:curie:asset:d098316c-9baa-40c5-aeef-d2b2d9b74909&pinned_post_asset_id=56405313&pinned_post_type=share).

<sup>44</sup> “Magufuli ‘drove Tanzania toward disaster’,” *BBC*, March 18, 2021, [https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cjnwl8q4qdr/tanzania?ns\\_mchannel=social&ns\\_source=twitter&ns\\_campaign=bbc\\_live&ns\\_linkname=6052eb4e4d910a02f0b40356%26Magufuli%20%27drove%20Tanzania%20towards%20disaster%27%262021-03-18T06%3A43%3A53.199Z&ns\\_fee=0&pinned\\_post\\_locator=urn:asset:73fbd67f-e3ab-4910-b236-d96a53458693&pinned\\_post\\_asset\\_id=6052eb4e4d910a02f0b40356&pinned\\_post\\_type=share](https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cjnwl8q4qdr/tanzania?ns_mchannel=social&ns_source=twitter&ns_campaign=bbc_live&ns_linkname=6052eb4e4d910a02f0b40356%26Magufuli%20%27drove%20Tanzania%20towards%20disaster%27%262021-03-18T06%3A43%3A53.199Z&ns_fee=0&pinned_post_locator=urn:asset:73fbd67f-e3ab-4910-b236-d96a53458693&pinned_post_asset_id=6052eb4e4d910a02f0b40356&pinned_post_type=share).

### 1.3 The presidency of Samia

While skepticism surrounding Magufuli's cause of death continued, Samia Suluhu Hassan, a member of the CCM, was sworn into the Tanzanian presidency in the wake of Magufuli's death, after serving as the vice-president of Tanzania.<sup>45</sup> In accordance with the Tanzanian Constitution, she will serve as president until the end of Magufuli's elected term in 2025.<sup>46</sup> Samia is the first woman to assume the Tanzanian presidency, and the first person in Tanzania to take office after the death of her predecessor.<sup>47</sup>

As Samia began her presidency in March of 2020, Tanzanian citizens and other political leaders anticipated her decisions and policies, unsure if she would continue with the political path taken by her predecessor.<sup>48</sup> Some Tanzanians and members of opposition parties worried that the transition of power would bring about little change due to Samia's association with the CCM, while others were cautiously holding on to the hope that Samia would reform the policies created during Magufuli's presidency.<sup>49</sup> Other Tanzanians felt that Samia lacked the control and experience to lead the country adequately in the wake of the era of the Magufuli, also known as the "Bulldozer", presidency.<sup>50</sup>

In spite of these conflicting views regarding her abilities, Samia has received praise from both Tanzanian citizens and other institutions globally for significant changes in the Tanzanian response to COVID-19, the country's stance toward foreign business investments and East African relations, and the culture of oppression of the media and opposition political parties.<sup>51</sup> In

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Cheeseman, et al., "Tanzania: The Roots of Repression."

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Devermont and Harris, "Will the Death of President Magufuli Bring Real Change to Tanzania?"

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Cheeseman, et al., "Tanzania: The Roots of Repression."

<sup>51</sup> Harris, Marielle. "One Year of Tanzanian President Hassan: What's Changed?" *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (March 18, 2022), <https://www.csis.org/analysis/one-year-tanzanian-president-hassan-whats-changed>.

her first year as president, Samia shifted toward a more scientific and research based approach toward COVID-19 that more closely aligns with the approach outlined by the WHO, and her strategy on COVID-19 prevention will be discussed more thoroughly in the following chapter.<sup>52</sup> In addition to this, Samia has met with various East African leaders to discuss relations and repair some of the relationships that were damaged by Magufuli's handling of the pandemic.<sup>53</sup> Samia has also removed the bans on certain news outlets and had a more open attitude in her speeches toward opposition parties.<sup>54</sup>

Despite her successes, Samia has also received criticism for her lack of tangible policy changes to reinforce the ideas that she communicates in her speeches.<sup>55</sup> Policies from previous administrations which restrict freedom of speech, the activity of opposition parties, and foreign investments continue to hinder the growth that Samia envisions for the country, yet Samia has not made public efforts to take action in response to these policies.<sup>56</sup> It is important to note, however, that Samia has served only one year as the president, so the true impact of her presidency cannot yet be fully known.

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<sup>52</sup> Harris, Marielle. "One Year of Tanzanian President Hassan: What's Changed?"

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

## **1.4 Conclusion**

Tanzania has undergone significant changes as a country in both its political ideologies and economic strategies since its independence, going from leaders such as Nyerere to Mkapa and then later to Magufuli and from economic styles of colonialism to socialism and then to capitalism. These various changes and their impacts have influenced the thoughts and opinions of Magufuli and Samia and their decisions on how to lead the country as well as influencing the opinions of Tanzanian citizens regarding how their government should lead.

Both Magufuli and Samia have experienced success and failure in various aspects of their governance and led Tanzanians during unprecedented situations, including the COVID-19 pandemic. As people look back on the legacy of Magufuli, there are varying opinions regarding his unique leadership style and his ability to better the country of Tanzania. Because Samia has served as president for only one year, the complete story of her legacy of leadership has yet to be written. Her actions and decisions over the next three years as she finishes the term originally started by the late Magufuli will undoubtedly shape the way in which Tanzanians view her leadership capabilities.

## **CHAPTER TWO: A comparative analysis of the Magufuli and Samia administrations' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic**

### **2.1 Responses of the Tanzanian government to past national health issues**

When considering the responses of the Tanzanian government to the contemporary COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to reflect on the methods used by the government in the past to respond to other national health issues. This reflection on the Tanzanian government's responses to past encounters with the ebola virus disease (EVD) provides cultural context for examples of the standard practices for disease control in Tanzania. In addition to this, an analysis of how the Tanzanian leadership has responded to recommendations from global health officials, such as the WHO, provides a greater understanding of the past priorities of the Tanzanian leadership when facing national health concerns. Knowledge of the past actions of the government when facing health crises allows further understanding of what practices were likely expected by Tanzanian citizens to be implemented at the start of the pandemic, both of which potentially contribute to the opinions of citizens about their government's reactions.

In 2018, the leaders of Tanzania were faced with the challenge of another deadly disease caused by a virus: Ebola virus disease.<sup>57</sup> After infection with the virus, a person will develop symptoms such as fever, body aches, and fatigue, but these symptoms will worsen to nausea, vomiting, and hemorrhaging.<sup>58</sup> Unlike COVID-19, this disease is transmitted through direct contact with the bodily fluids of an infected person or the body of a dead person who was

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<sup>57</sup> Aruna, A, et al., "Ebola Virus Disease Outbreak - Democratic Republic of the Congo, August 2018-November 2019," *MMWR Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 68, (December 20, 2019): 1162-1165. <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6850a3>.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

infected with the virus, such as blood, urine, or semen.<sup>59</sup> Also unlike COVID-19, EVD was not a novel disease in 2018.<sup>60</sup>

The virus causing EVD was first discovered in 1976 in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and it was responsible for an epidemic affecting West Africa between 2014 and 2016.<sup>61</sup> On August 1, 2018, DRC declared an EVD outbreak, and neighboring Tanzania was placed on high alert due to its proximity to DRC.<sup>62</sup> After being placed on high alert, the Tanzanian Ministry of Health, Social Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (MOHCDGEC) began to take measures suggested by the WHO to prepare the country for potential imports of EVD into the country from DRC.<sup>63</sup> The MOHCDGEC used the information featured on the WHO's checklist for preparedness in order to implement the correct prevention methods and strategies.<sup>64</sup>

The decision of the MOHCDGEC to utilize the information provided by the WHO in response to the country's high risk for EVD shows that historically the Tanzanian government has acknowledged and acted in accordance with the recommendations of the WHO regarding national health issues, in the specific case of EVD. There were, however, some discrepancies in the closeness with which the Tanzanian MOHCDGEC followed the recommendations on the WHO checklist.<sup>65</sup> When the Tanzanian government's risk assessment was evaluated, the assessment showed that the country was lacking in certain aspects of its preparedness.<sup>66</sup> The areas that were found to be lacking in EVD outbreak preparedness were then addressed and

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<sup>59</sup> Aruna, A, et al., "Ebola Virus Disease Outbreak - Democratic Republic of the Congo, August 2018-November 2019."

<sup>60</sup> Kishimba, Rogath Saika, et al., "Is Tanzania prepared to respond and prevent Ebola Outbreak?" *Tanzania Public Health Bulletin* 1, no. 1 (January 2019): 14-17.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.



improved until Tanzania was “operationally prepared” to counter an outbreak of EVD in the country.<sup>67</sup>

In September of 2019, posts made on social media and articles written in various news sources claimed that a Tanzanian woman who had been studying in nearby Uganda had died of symptoms similar to EVD and that several people who had been in contact with her were also experiencing symptoms of EVD.<sup>68</sup> The WHO publicly requested details about the unknown illness, and the Tanzanian government responded four days later saying that there were no cases of EVD in the country.<sup>69</sup> The Tanzanian government, however, did not submit any samples from the patients for secondary testing, which is a suggestion under the International Health Regulations.<sup>70</sup> Without outside confirmation allowed from the Tanzanian government, the United States and Great Britain both released statements alerting citizens potentially traveling to the country about a “probable” EVD infection in Tanzania.<sup>71</sup>

Although the decision of the Tanzanian government to prepare for an EVD outbreak showed their consideration of WHO guidelines, this response of the Tanzanian government and the MOHCDGEC, in particular, to the WHO’s request for information and secondary testing shows the Tanzanian government’s disregard for certain aspects of the requests of the WHO. Because of the actions of the MOHCDGEC in their response to EVD, it is unlikely that Tanzanian citizens were unsettled or surprised by their government’s decision to disregard the WHO’s recommendations in relation to COVID-19.

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<sup>67</sup> Kishimba, Rogath Saika, et al., “Is Tanzania prepared to respond and prevent Ebola Outbreak?”

<sup>68</sup> Branswell, Helen, “U.S. and U.K. alert travelers to Tanzania about possible unreported Ebola cases,” *Stat News*, (September 27, 2019), <https://www.statnews.com/2019/09/27/ebola-tanzania-travelers-alerted-to-possible-unreported-cases/>.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

## 2.2 President Magufuli's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

From the beginning of the pandemic, John Magufuli took a less restrictive approach to COVID-19 prevention than other countries throughout the world, such as the United States, Uganda, and China. The magnitude of the difference between the approach of the Tanzanian government and the previously mentioned governments grew larger as the pandemic continued until the death of Magufuli. Providing a timeline of the decisions made by Magufuli regarding COVID-19 and the reasoning that was given by him with those decisions allows for better cultural and contemporary contextualization of the feedback that he received that will be discussed in the second chapter.

As the list of countries with confirmed COVID-19 cases started to grow in March of 2020, Tanzania claimed its spot on the list of countries with confirmed cases of COVID-19 on March 16, 2020, after a Tanzanian woman tested positive after returning from a trip to Belgium.<sup>72</sup> On March 17, 2020, the Prime Minister of Tanzania, Kassim Majaliwa, made an announcement closing all schools in Tanzania and banning public gatherings, such as sports events, for one month, which was extended to an indefinite closure on April 14, 2020.<sup>73</sup> On March 23, 2020, the Tanzanian government announced that all travelers entering the country from countries affected by COVID-19 would be required to complete a fourteen day quarantine in hotels designated for isolation.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> World Health Organization, Tanzania Country Office, *Progress Report on the Implementation of the COVID 19 Response Plan: July - December 2021* (Tanzania: WHO Country Office, 2021), pg. 13, [https://www.afro.who.int/sites/default/files/2021-07/WCO%20Progress%20Report\\_%20July-December%202020.pdf](https://www.afro.who.int/sites/default/files/2021-07/WCO%20Progress%20Report_%20July-December%202020.pdf)

<sup>73</sup> "Tanzania extends school closure, bans Union, May Day celebrations as Covid-19 cases rise to 53," *Mwananchi*, April 14, 2020, <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/tanzania-extends-school-closure-bans-union-may-day-celebrations-as-covid-19-cases-rise-to-53-2707666>.

<sup>74</sup> Odunga, Maureen. "Drastic Measures As Cases Rise." *The Daily News*, March 23, 2020. NewsBank inc.

Unlike some other East African countries, Magufuli did not close Tanzanian borders completely due to economic implications that would result from decreased trade interactions with neighboring countries and decreased revenue from the country's tourism industry. In spite of the reasons given, Magufuli's controversial approach has caused strain between Tanzania and other East African countries, such as Kenya, who felt that his more relaxed approach put East African citizens at an increased risk to contract COVID-19.<sup>75</sup> Other countries, such as Russia, suspended flights from Tanzania due to COVID-19 concerns.<sup>76</sup>

During the early months of the pandemic, Magufuli made several requests for Tanzanian citizens to take actions that contradicted the guidelines created by the WHO. In spite of the Tanzanian government's ban on public gatherings and the calls by the WHO for all people to practice social distancing, Magufuli urged Tanzanians to attend services at churches and mosques to pray.<sup>77</sup> In an interview, Magufuli said that COVID-19 "cannot live in the body of Christ - it will burn instantly."<sup>78</sup> In addition to this, the President declared on April 16, 2020, that the country should pray for three days so that God might end the COVID-19 pandemic completely in Tanzania.<sup>79</sup>

As the number of confirmed cases in the country continued to rise, Magufuli called into question the legitimacy of the number of confirmed cases in the country on May 3, 2020, citing potential false-positive test results.<sup>80</sup> Magufuli claimed to have marked samples coming from a goat and a sheep with human names and sent them to the laboratory for COVID-19 testing with

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<sup>75</sup> Francis B. Frimpong, Leah H. Mwainyekule, "The Pandemic and the Economy of Africa: Conflicting Strategies between Tanzania and Ghana," *Digital Government: Research and Practice* 4, no. 33 (October 2020): 1-8, <https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3419217>

<sup>76</sup> Alex Nelson Malanga, "Views divided after Russia suspends flights to Tanzania," *Mwananchi*, April 15, 2021, <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/-views-divided-after-russia-suspends-flights-to-tanzania-3363000>.

<sup>77</sup> Esther Nakkazi, "Obstacles to COVID-19 control in East Africa," *The Lancet* 20, no. 6 (June 2020): 660.

<sup>78</sup> "John Magufuli: Tanzania's late president in his own words," *BBC*, March 18, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-56441421>.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Nakkazi, "Obstacles to COVID-19", 660.

both samples receiving positive results.<sup>81</sup> After launching an investigation into the National Health Laboratory, the laboratory responsible for conducting all of the COVID-19 testing in the country, and suspending the director of the laboratory, the Tanzanian government did not submit any further data to the WHO regarding the number of COVID-19 cases or deaths after May 2020 during the presidency of Magufuli.<sup>82</sup> The last COVID-19 data update under Magufuli recorded 509 cases of COVID-19 and 21 COVID-19 related deaths in Tanzania.<sup>83</sup> The World Health Organization's (WHO) Director-General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus expressed frustration in regards to the Tanzanian government's decisions to ignore the suggestions made by the WHO to ensure the safety of Tanzanian citizens.<sup>84</sup> A particular point of frustration for Dr. Ghebreyesus surrounded the Tanzanian government's decision to stop submitting updated reports detailing the number of COVID-19 cases in the country to the WHO after May of 2020.<sup>85</sup>

In an interview on May 22, 2020, Magufuli said that Tanzania was free of COVID-19 infections, and he called for schools that were closed during the beginning of the pandemic to reopen in June.<sup>86</sup> After declaring the country "COVID-free", Magufuli continued to run his country in a way similar to how he did prior to the start of the pandemic.<sup>87</sup> He continued to make appearances with other government officials at various events without wearing masks or practicing social distancing, both of which were recommended by the WHO.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> World Health Organization, *Progress Report*, 13.

<sup>84</sup> World Health Organization, *WHO Director-General's Statement on Tanzania and COVID-19*.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Shekighenda, Lydia, Anne Robi, "Safety Guidelines Issues as Schools, Colleges Set to Reopen," *The Daily News*, May 29, 2020. NewsBank inc.

<sup>87</sup> Buguzi, Syriacus. "Covid-19: Counting the cost of denial in Tanzania." *bmj* 373 (2021).

<http://dx.doi.org.umiss.idm.oclc.org/10.1136/bmj.n1052>.

<sup>88</sup> Oxford Analytica. "Tanzania's denial will intensify COVID-19 questions." *Emerald Expert Briefings*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/OXAN-ES260165>.

As COVID-19 vaccines began to be created and distributed globally in late 2020 and early 2021, Magufuli expressed his distrust of vaccines and discouraged Tanzanian citizens from receiving COVID-19 vaccines while speaking publicly on January 27, 2021.<sup>89</sup> During this speech, Magufuli stated that “vaccinations are dangerous”, citing the lack of vaccinations discovered for diseases such as AIDS and tuberculosis as his skepticism.<sup>90</sup> At this event, he also pointed out that Tanzania had remained free of COVID-19, which he used the lack of mask wearing at the event as proof.<sup>91</sup> In March of 2021, COVAX, a campaign by groups including the WHO and UNICEF to increase access of COVID-19 vaccines globally, released its information regarding requests for COVID-19 vaccines, which did not include Tanzania.<sup>92</sup> Countries not featured on the list were not included because they did not submit requests to COVAX to receive vaccines.<sup>93</sup> As opposed to vaccination, the Tanzanian government, specifically Dr. Dorothy Gwajima who is the Minister of Health, Social Development, Gender, Elderly and Children encouraged Tanzanians to protect themselves using natural remedies recommended for other illnesses in the past, such as using herbal steaming and drinking smoothies to support the immune system.<sup>94</sup>

In the weeks leading to the announcement of Magufuli’s death on March 17, 2021, he did not appear at any public speaking events after February 27, 2021.<sup>95</sup> His disappearance from

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<sup>89</sup> Makoni, “Tanzania Refuses,” 566.

<sup>90</sup> Munyaradzi Makoni, “Tanzania refuses COVID-19 vaccines”, *The Lancet* 397, no. 10274 (February 2021): 566, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(21\)00362-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(21)00362-7).

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> “COVID-19 Vaccine Market Dashboard,” UNICEF, posted on March 4, 2021, <https://us20.campaign-archive.com/?u=40658b1a132cdc263e35b5b97&id=29e4a4c35c>.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Jacob Mosenda. “Why Covid-19 report has put ministers in a tricky situation,” *Mwananchi*, May 19, 2021. NewsBank inc.

<sup>95</sup> Alan Kasujja. “Where is the Tanzanian president?” *BBC*, March 17, 2021. [https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cjnwl8q4qdr/tanzania?ns\\_mchannel=social&ns\\_source=twitter&ns\\_campaign=bbc\\_live&ns\\_linkname=60518fe64d910a02f0b401cd%26Where%20is%20the%20Tanzanian%20president%3F%262021-03-17T06%3A13%3A41.208Z&ns\\_fee=0&pinned\\_post\\_locator=urn:asset:4b2cf30a-3c47-4fd3-a40b-d6d57a8b61a2&pinned\\_post\\_asset\\_id=60518fe64d910a02f0b401cd&pinned\\_post\\_type=share](https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cjnwl8q4qdr/tanzania?ns_mchannel=social&ns_source=twitter&ns_campaign=bbc_live&ns_linkname=60518fe64d910a02f0b401cd%26Where%20is%20the%20Tanzanian%20president%3F%262021-03-17T06%3A13%3A41.208Z&ns_fee=0&pinned_post_locator=urn:asset:4b2cf30a-3c47-4fd3-a40b-d6d57a8b61a2&pinned_post_asset_id=60518fe64d910a02f0b401cd&pinned_post_type=share).

the public eye led many Tanzanian citizens to believe that it was due to a potential COVID-19 infection, an idea which was instigated by the media.<sup>96</sup> Government officials, including Prime Minister Majaliwa, insisted that the President was healthy and working, as late as March 12, 2021.<sup>97</sup> In her announcement of the death of Magufuli, however, the current President Samia said that Magufuli had been admitted to the hospital in Dar es Salaam for care for an ongoing heart condition.<sup>98</sup> As the news of the President's death spread throughout the country, Tanzanian citizens mourned the loss of their first president to ever die while in office.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> "Timeline of key events in President Magufuli's life," *BBC*, March 18, 2021, [https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cjnw18q4qdr/tanzania?ns\\_mchannel=social&ns\\_source=twitter&ns\\_campaign=bbc\\_live&ns\\_linkname=6052e5bbb4f28002d08cbebd%26Timeline%20of%20key%20events%20in%20President%20Magufuli%27s%20life%262021-03-18T06%3A31%3A29.667Z&ns\\_fee=0&pinned\\_post\\_locator=urn:asset:f4178234-2ac4-4be9-8f90-5795548dc49e&pinned\\_post\\_asset\\_id=6052e5bbb4f28002d08cbebd&pinned\\_post\\_type=share](https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cjnw18q4qdr/tanzania?ns_mchannel=social&ns_source=twitter&ns_campaign=bbc_live&ns_linkname=6052e5bbb4f28002d08cbebd%26Timeline%20of%20key%20events%20in%20President%20Magufuli%27s%20life%262021-03-18T06%3A31%3A29.667Z&ns_fee=0&pinned_post_locator=urn:asset:f4178234-2ac4-4be9-8f90-5795548dc49e&pinned_post_asset_id=6052e5bbb4f28002d08cbebd&pinned_post_type=share).

<sup>98</sup> Owere, Paul, "VIDEO: President John Pombe Magufuli has died," *Mwananchi*, March 17, 2021, NewsBank inc.

<sup>99</sup> Ndilwa, Lilian, "Tanzania mourns Magufuli - What does the constitution say?" *Mwananchi*, March 18, 2021, NewsBank inc.

### 2.3 President Samia's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Assuming office in one of the most turbulent times in the history of the United Republic of Tanzania, President Samia Suluhu Hassan has taken a different approach toward the pandemic than the late-President Magufuli. Shortly after taking office, Samia announced plans to create a panel of scientists, doctors, and other Tanzanians who are knowledgeable about the pandemic to advise the decisions that are made in regards to COVID-19 protocols, saying, "it is not wise to remain silent, reject or accept anything to do with Covid-19 without scientific and professional research".<sup>100</sup>

Forty one days following Samia's announcement of the creation of the COVID-19 committee, the committee's chairman, Professor Said Aboud, released the report.<sup>101</sup> The report featured recommendations, such as the encouragement of voluntary vaccinations, the release of COVID-19 data to the public, and education for the public by medical professionals about the transmission of COVID-19.<sup>102</sup> Many of the recommendations featured in the report were in direct contradiction to the policies that the late Magufuli encouraged during his presidency, such as his distrust of vaccinations and his opinion that releasing COVID-19 data to the public would cause fear.<sup>103</sup>

At the request of Tanzania's COVID-19 advising team and several global relief agencies, Tanzania reported its first COVID-19 case update to the WHO since May 4, 2020, in July 2021.<sup>104</sup> The update showed 609 total confirmed cases and no increase in confirmed deaths from

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<sup>100</sup> Edward Qorro. "Government to Set Up Coronavirus Taskforce," *The Daily News*, April 6, 2021. NewsBank inc.

<sup>101</sup> Maureen Odunga. "Experts Advise On Voluntary Covid-19 Vaccination," *The Daily News*, May 18, 2021. NewsBank inc.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Mosenda. "Why Covid-19 report has put ministers in a tricky situation."

<sup>104</sup> Shegufta S Sikder, Amani Idfonce, "Where there was no COVID-19: strengthening health systems response to disease threats in Tabora, Tanzania," *Journal of Global Health Reports* 6, (February 2022): <https://doi.org/10.29392/001c.31594>.

COVID-19 related causes.<sup>105</sup> The information has been updated, although with no clear consistency, over the course of Hassan’s presidency, which can be seen in figure 1 below.<sup>106</sup>

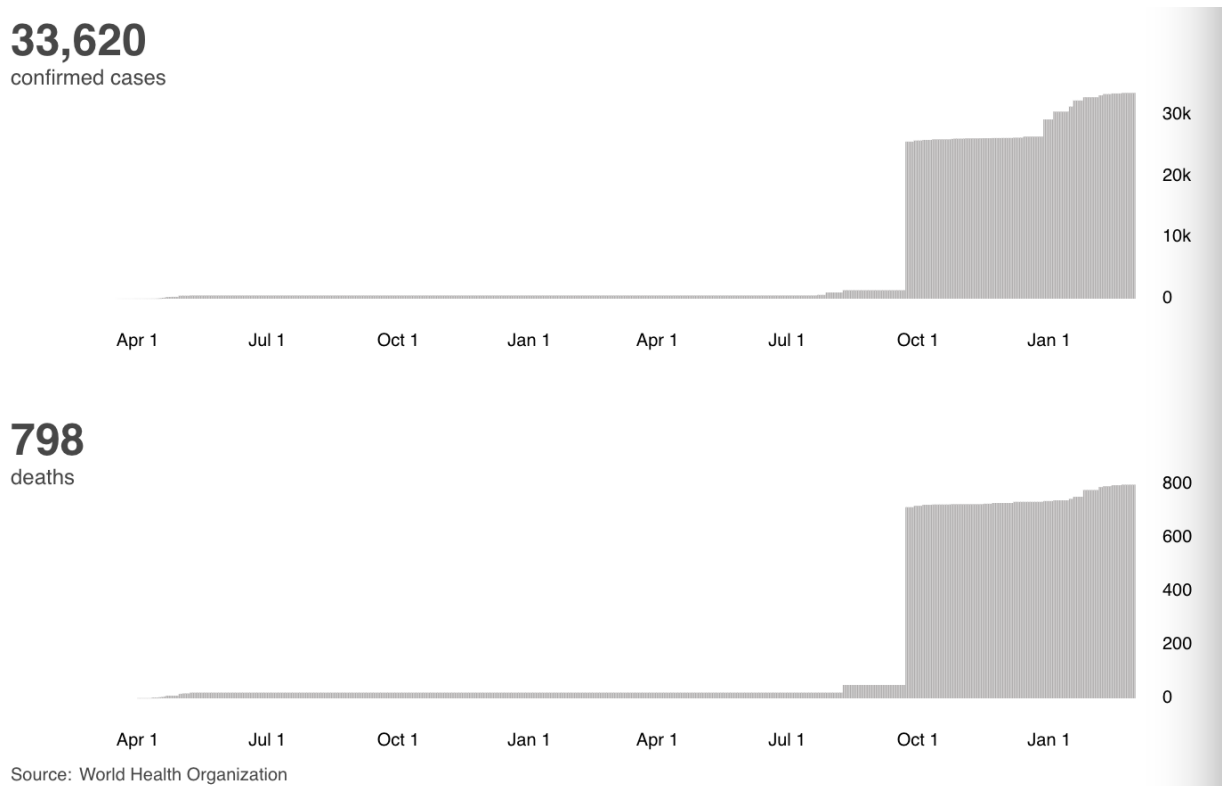


Figure 1. A chart showing the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths reported by the Tanzanian government to the WHO from April 1, 2021, to March 4, 2022.<sup>107</sup>

In addition to making the country’s COVID-19 information public, Samia also followed the recommendation of the taskforce by requesting COVID-19 vaccines from COVAX.<sup>108</sup> After submitting the request, the country received its first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine on July 24,

<sup>105</sup> World Health Organization. “United Republic of Tanzania Situation,” March 4, 2022, <https://covid19.who.int/region/afro/country/tz>.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Nicholas Bariyo, Gabriele Steinhauser. “After a Year of Denying Covid-19, Tanzania Orders Vaccines,” *The Wall Street Journal*, June 17, 2021. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/after-a-year-of-denying-covid-19-tanzania-orders-vaccines-11623938431>.



2021.<sup>109</sup> On July 28, 2021, Samia publicly received her COVID-19 vaccine to promote vaccine safety and efficacy.<sup>110</sup> The president has expressed her desire to have vaccinations for any Tanzanian who would like to receive their vaccine, but vaccines have not been mandated for Tanzanian citizens.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> World Health Organization Africa, “The United Republic of Tanzania receives the first COVAX shipment,” July 24, 2021. <https://www.afro.who.int/news/united-republic-tanzania-receives-first-covax-shipment>.

<sup>110</sup> “Tanzania’s Samia Suluhu Hassan gets Covid jab in policy reverse,” *BBC*, July 28, 2021. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-57996155>.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

## 2.4 Conclusion

The late President Magufuli and Samia have chosen contrasting leadership styles and policies to guide Tanzanian citizens through the COVID-19 pandemic. These decisions have also shown similarities and differences to the way in which the Tanzanian government responded to the high risk of EVD outbreak in 2018 and 2019.

In the early days of the pandemic, President Magufuli initially acted in accordance with the recommendations made by the WHO as the country closed schools and canceled large social gatherings. He also encouraged the Tanzanian citizens to heed the warnings and recommendations of experts, such as the WHO, in order to remain safe and stop the spread of COVID-19. This initial response is similar to the Tanzanian government's initial response to the EVD outbreak in DRC. In both national health issues, the government quickly took action and sought to implement the recommended prevention strategies.

Another similarity between the response of the Tanzanian government to the potential EVD and COVID-19 outbreaks is the discrepancies seen between the WHO recommended strategies and the actual strategies initially implemented by the government. With EVD, the assessment of preparedness found that the measures taken by the Tanzanian government in several areas of preparedness were not adequately completed. This inadequacy in the precautions taken by the government is echoed in Magufuli's decisions to encourage Tanzanians to continue attending services at churches and mosques and to allow the country's borders to remain open.

The similarities between the Tanzanian government's response to EVD and COVID-19 are most clearly seen in the country's decision not to comply with requests made by the WHO in response to secondary testing and reporting. In both situations, the Tanzanian government denied any evidence of disease in the country, but the government also would not allow any further

investigation by outside institutions. This similarity shows that the Tanzanian government officials, and the Magufuli administration specifically, chose to ignore the requests and recommendations of the WHO and instead made decisions regarding the pandemic based on potential economic and political advantages for the country.

Samia, however, has only exhibited similarities in her COVID-19 response to the Tanzanian government's initial response to the EVD outbreak in DRC, in which the government acknowledged and responded to the recommendations of the WHO. Since her presidency, Samia has more closely followed the recommendations made by the WHO and the COVID-19 taskforce that she established than President Magufuli during COVID-19 or the Tanzanian government during the EVD outbreak in DRC.

As seen in the information discussed in the previous sections of this chapter, Magufuli and Samia utilized significantly different strategies to combat the pandemic. Specifically, Magufuli and Samia held discrete beliefs regarding the method for developing COVID-19 prevention strategies, the release of COVID-19 data to the public, and vaccination.

Magufuli no longer sought the guidance of health experts, such as the WHO, to advise his COVID-19 policies after several months of the pandemic. Instead of utilizing this strategy, Samia created a group of Tanzanian experts to advise the country's response to the pandemic. In addition to this, Magufuli discouraged the public release of COVID-19 data due to the fear that it could cause while Samia has released the information following the recommendation of the Tanzanian COVID-19 taskforce. Lastly, Magufuli discouraged the use of vaccines for Tanzanian citizens, citing potential dangers and the lack of Tanzania's involvement in their creation as problems. Samia, on the other hand, has encouraged Tanzanian citizens to receive vaccinations

following the recommendation of the taskforce to the safety and helpfulness of COVID-19 vaccines at protecting people from the virus.

Both administrations, however, have continuously emphasized the need for Tanzanian citizens to rely on Tanzanian sources for information as opposed to outside sources. As mentioned previously, Magufuli expressed distrust in vaccines due to the lack of Tanzanian involvement in their development. Samia mirrored this thought as she created the Tanzanian COVID-19 taskforce in order to provide citizens with accurate, trustworthy information and recommendations from Tanzanian health experts.

As shown throughout this chapter, Tanzanian citizens have experienced two very different leadership styles under Magufuli and Samia. The responses to these styles will be discussed further in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER THREE: A comparative analysis of the responses from Tanzanian citizens to the decisions regarding COVID-19 in two presidential eras**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In addition to analyzing the similarities and differences between the specific policies and decisions made by the Magufuli and Samia administrations, this third chapter analyzes the responses of Tanzanian citizens to these policies and decisions as they have been expressed in the media to answer the research question: how have the public opinions of Tanzanian citizens regarding their leadership been impacted by the Tanzanian leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic?

During each administration, time periods surrounding significant shifts in COVID-19 policy were selected and the articles published during those time periods were qualitatively analyzed for the language and attitude used by Tanzanian citizens and journalists to describe the actions of their government. Section 3.2 focuses on the opinions that were expressed in the media during the Magufuli administration, and Section 3.3 focuses on the opinions that were expressed in the media during the Samia administration. Section 3.3 discusses the results of these analyses and provides the answer to the aforementioned research question.

### 3.2 The citizen responses to the Magufuli administration

As mentioned previously, the articles discussed in this chapter will be related to specific time periods of interest when important, and sometimes controversial, decisions were made by the Tanzanian leadership during the presidency of John Pombe Magufuli, which includes the week when Tanzanian COVID-19 restrictions began, the week that COVID-19 restrictions in Tanzania were lifted, and the week prior to the passing of Magufuli.

As the COVID-19 virus started its initial sweep across the globe, the Tanzanian government began to take precautionary measures to stop the spread of the virus on March 14, 2020, by encouraging citizens to avoid unnecessary travel and bodily contact and screening airline passengers for signs of infection.<sup>112</sup> Prior to the first confirmed case in the country on March 16, 2020, Magufuli and the Ministry of Health started canceling large events, such as sporting events, and preparing for the financial impacts of the pandemic.<sup>113</sup> They did not, however, impose regulations for public transportation or schools, which led some Tanzanians to call on the government for increased safety measures in these areas:

One measure that we would like measures being taken immediately regards public transport in the city: commuter trains and buses. It is time that the authorities required bus and train operators to spray disinfectants to the buses as part of efforts to prevent the diseases from coming in and spreading. It is now standard practice in cities in many countries.<sup>114</sup>

Other than this, the nature of the articles published during this week were generally either supportive toward the Tanzanian government's early stance on the pandemic or strictly factual.

After the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in Tanzania on March 16, 2020, the Tanzanian government closed schools and increased precautions taken in public spaces.<sup>115</sup> In the

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<sup>112</sup> Bernard Lugongo, "COVID-19 - Tanzania on High Alert," *The Daily News*, March 14, 2020, NewsBank inc.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> "Check daladala on Coronavirus Fight," *Mwananchi*, March 16, 2020, NewsBank inc.

<sup>115</sup> "Tanzania bans all public gathering, closes schools, suspends the Premier League over Coronavirus," *Mwananchi*, March 17, 2020, NewsBank inc.

articles written after March 16, 2020, through the end of the week that shutdowns began (March 22, 2020), a majority of the opinions expressed in the articles were in agreement with the measures taken by their governments, crediting the low numbers of COVID-19 cases in Africa to the measures taken by the governments and describing the economic implications of the closures as necessary.<sup>116</sup> Others expressed their agreement and encouraged fellow Tanzanians to follow the guidance of their government health officials.<sup>117</sup>

Some negative feedback, however, was expressed regarding the lack of restrictions for international travel by the Tanzanian government.<sup>118</sup> In addition to this, one article acknowledged the mystery surrounding the information regarding the sixth COVID-19 confirmed case in the country.<sup>119</sup> Although the Tanzanian authorities had released information regarding the nationalities and recent movements of the previous five confirmed cases, no information was released in relation to the sixth case.<sup>120</sup> This is significant because this was the first example in the source material of Tanzanians expressing the opinion that their government was withholding information from the public.

From the beginning of the pandemic's effects on Tanzania in March of 2020 to May of 2020, President Magufuli and the Ministry of Health operated with schools closed, public events

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<sup>116</sup> "After head start on coronavirus, Africa begins clampdown," *Mwananchi*, March 18, 2020, NewsBank inc.; Abduel Elinaza, "DSE Bearish Drift Continue Due to Coronavirus," *The Daily News*, March 19, 2020, NewsBank inc.

<sup>117</sup> "Let's Heed Health Experts' Advice to Contain Coronavirus Infections," *The Daily News*, March 19, 2020, NewsBank inc.;

Sammy Awami, "Top Tanzanian rapper tests positive for Covid-19," *BBC*, March 19, 2020, [https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cjnwl8q4qdr/tanzania?ns\\_mchannel=social&ns\\_source=twitter&ns\\_campaign=bbc\\_live&ns\\_linkname=5e7384e86e362a0656d8780c%26Top%20Tanzanian%20rapper%20tests%20positive%20for%20Covid-19%262020-03-19T14%3A53%3A14.684Z&ns\\_fee=0&pinned\\_post\\_locator=urn:asset:ef2dac12-31c2-42a0-a9d5-5d2ddf1ab9d9&pinned\\_post\\_asset\\_id=5e7384e86e362a0656d8780c&pinned\\_post\\_type=share](https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cjnwl8q4qdr/tanzania?ns_mchannel=social&ns_source=twitter&ns_campaign=bbc_live&ns_linkname=5e7384e86e362a0656d8780c%26Top%20Tanzanian%20rapper%20tests%20positive%20for%20Covid-19%262020-03-19T14%3A53%3A14.684Z&ns_fee=0&pinned_post_locator=urn:asset:ef2dac12-31c2-42a0-a9d5-5d2ddf1ab9d9&pinned_post_asset_id=5e7384e86e362a0656d8780c&pinned_post_type=share)

<sup>118</sup> Rosemary Mirondo, "Calls mount on government to restrict entry restrict travel over Covid-19," *Mwananchi*, March 21, 2020, NewsBank inc.

<sup>119</sup> "Covid-19: The mystery of Tanzania's patient number 6," *Mwananchi*, March 20, 2020, NewsBank inc.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

banned, and measures taken to practice social distancing and reduce the spread of COVID-19.<sup>121</sup> On May 21, 2020, Magufuli announced that the number of COVID-19 cases in the country had dropped significantly, allowing schools and activities to resume on June 1, 2020.<sup>122</sup> Instead of enforcing restrictions for the country as a whole, Magufuli instructed citizens to fight COVID-19 on an individual level, encouraging them to practice social distancing and proper hand hygiene.<sup>123</sup> The second time period of interest selected for analysis (from May 22, 2020 to May 29, 2020) focuses on the articles published following this announcement. Unlike the previous time period where the opinions expressed in the media were generally supportive of Magufuli's decisions, the articles published during the week after Magufuli's decision to reopen public spaces featured both supportive and opposing views.

Some Tanzanians praised Magufuli for his bravery and willingness to avoid a lockdown to ensure the economic safety of Tanzanian citizens.<sup>124</sup> The Medical Association of Tanzania (MAT) confirmed the President's statement regarding decreasing numbers of cases in the country and thanked the president for his successful leadership through the pandemic.<sup>125</sup> In spite of this praise, other Tanzanians worried that the "shift of mindset to a freer world" would result in a second wave of cases throughout the country.<sup>126</sup> Citizens also communicated doubt on the basis of President Magufuli's claims that the number of cases in the country had decreased due to the lack of official Covid-19 statistics that were published after the closure of the National Health

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<sup>121</sup> Louis Kolumbia, "Health Minister Umyy Mwalimu's 65-day ordeal over COVID-19," *Mwananchi*, May 22, 2020. NewsBank inc.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Benjamin Ben. "JPM Clears Sports to Restart June 1st," *The Daily News*, May 22, 2020. NewsBank inc.

<sup>124</sup> Mary Ramadhani, "NGO Praises JPM on Covid-19 Handling," *The Daily News*, May 28, 2020. NewsBank inc.

<sup>125</sup> "MAT Sings JPM Praises Amid Slowing COVID-19 Cases," *The Daily News*, May 28, 2020, NewsBank inc.

<sup>126</sup> Syriacus Buguzi. "Why complacency poses a grave COVID-19 risk," *Mwananchi*, May 28, 2020. NewsBank inc.



Laboratory.<sup>127</sup> Writing for *BBC Tanzania*, Anne Soy expressed the mystery surrounding current COVID-19 numbers and testing:

Whilst there exists no template of what works against the COVID-19 pandemic, the general consensus is that being able to measure the extent of the spread of the virus is a necessary step towards controlling it. Tanzania has been doing the opposite. Since 19 April the East African nation has not published data on new infections. President John Magufuli has questioned the reliability of testing kits, shut the national laboratory and a month on declared victory over the virus. It is not known if testing has resumed.<sup>128</sup>

This doubt was potentially increased by a statement released by the US Embassy in Tanzania warning citizens about an “extremely high” risk of contracting COVID-19 in Tanzania.<sup>129</sup> The Tanzanian government refuted these statements, acknowledging the lack of evidence for the claims made by the US Embassy.<sup>130</sup>

Differing opinions were also published during this time regarding the impacts of COVID-19 on the Tanzanian economy and how those impacts were affected by the actions of the government. As Magufuli made the decision to lift the restrictions placed to control the spread of the virus, some financial officers showed optimism as they expected that the Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange (DSE) and the Tanzania Share Index (TSI) would improve soon thereafter.<sup>131</sup> Other financial officials said that the lack of a partial or complete lockdown imposed by the

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<sup>127</sup> Anne Soy. “Coronavirus: Tanzania walking alone,” *BBC*, May 22, 2020.

[https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cjnwl8q4qdr/tanzania?ns\\_mchannel=social&ns\\_source=twitter&ns\\_campaign=bbc\\_live&ns\\_linkname=5ec805c7d83c0b06724a94b1%26Coronavirus%3A%20Tanzania%20walking%20alone%262020-05-22T17%3A21%3A09.546Z&ns\\_fee=0&pinned\\_post\\_locator=urn:asset:8e090f46-54fe-40c2-9b1d-b295c889ba84&pinned\\_post\\_asset\\_id=5ec805c7d83c0b06724a94b1&pinned\\_post\\_type=share](https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cjnwl8q4qdr/tanzania?ns_mchannel=social&ns_source=twitter&ns_campaign=bbc_live&ns_linkname=5ec805c7d83c0b06724a94b1%26Coronavirus%3A%20Tanzania%20walking%20alone%262020-05-22T17%3A21%3A09.546Z&ns_fee=0&pinned_post_locator=urn:asset:8e090f46-54fe-40c2-9b1d-b295c889ba84&pinned_post_asset_id=5ec805c7d83c0b06724a94b1&pinned_post_type=share).

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> Sammy Awami. “Tanzanian doctors ‘not overwhelmed by pandemic’,” *BBC*, May 28, 2020,

[https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cjnwl8q4qdr/tanzania?ns\\_mchannel=social&ns\\_source=twitter&ns\\_campaign=bbc\\_live&ns\\_linkname=5ecf81e00036390663cfe6a%26Tanzanian%20doctors%20%27not%20overwhelmed%20by%20pandemic%27%262020-05-28T10%3A13%3A16.113Z&ns\\_fee=0&pinned\\_post\\_locator=urn:asset:a31888ba-12f9-496d-81f9-abb609ca2eed&pinned\\_post\\_asset\\_id=5ecf81e00036390663cfe6a&pinned\\_post\\_type=share](https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cjnwl8q4qdr/tanzania?ns_mchannel=social&ns_source=twitter&ns_campaign=bbc_live&ns_linkname=5ecf81e00036390663cfe6a%26Tanzanian%20doctors%20%27not%20overwhelmed%20by%20pandemic%27%262020-05-28T10%3A13%3A16.113Z&ns_fee=0&pinned_post_locator=urn:asset:a31888ba-12f9-496d-81f9-abb609ca2eed&pinned_post_asset_id=5ecf81e00036390663cfe6a&pinned_post_type=share).

<sup>130</sup> “Tanzania says US spread ‘false information’ on Covid-19,” *BBC*, May 27, 2020,

[https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cjnwl8q4qdr/tanzania?ns\\_mchannel=social&ns\\_source=twitter&ns\\_campaign=bbc\\_live&ns\\_linkname=5ece3985cacc40066d09f406%26Tanzania%20says%20US%20spread%20%27false%20information%27%20on%20Covid-19%262020-05-27T10%3A56%3A46.039Z&ns\\_fee=0&pinned\\_post\\_locator=urn:asset:832e7e53-9510-4910-aa57-18399a07afe0&pinned\\_post\\_asset\\_id=5ece3985cacc40066d09f406&pinned\\_post\\_type=share](https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cjnwl8q4qdr/tanzania?ns_mchannel=social&ns_source=twitter&ns_campaign=bbc_live&ns_linkname=5ece3985cacc40066d09f406%26Tanzania%20says%20US%20spread%20%27false%20information%27%20on%20Covid-19%262020-05-27T10%3A56%3A46.039Z&ns_fee=0&pinned_post_locator=urn:asset:832e7e53-9510-4910-aa57-18399a07afe0&pinned_post_asset_id=5ece3985cacc40066d09f406&pinned_post_type=share)

<sup>131</sup> “Stockbrokers’ Upbeat on DSE Rebound in Coming Weeks,” *The Daily News*, May 25, 2020, NewBank inc.

government allowed Tanzanian citizens and businesses to experience only minor economic repercussions compared to those of countries in which the government imposed a lockdown.<sup>132</sup>

The director of NMB Bank in Tanzania reiterated this idea while discussed pandemic relief efforts:

The impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on both individuals and businesses has been relatively small compared to countries that went to partial or complete lockdowns, but nevertheless, actions by other countries may have impacted global supply chains and hence impacting some of our clients. As a bank, we recognize that this is a difficult time for some of our customers and businesses whose financial means are being negatively affected.<sup>133</sup>

Other citizens, specifically members of opposition parties, claimed that Magufuli had an “obsession with mega economic projects over the lives of his people”, which was exhibited by his decision to lift restrictions and allow economic activity to continue as it had before the pandemic, in spite of the potential dangers.<sup>134</sup>

After reopening schools and lifting the restrictions on public gatherings on May 22, 2020, Magufuli and other government officials proceeded with business similarly to how it was conducted prior to the pandemic. As vaccines became available globally, Magufuli expressed distrust in the usefulness of vaccines, so he did not purchase vaccines from COVAX.<sup>135</sup>

Following an appearance on February 27, 2021, Magufuli was not seen for over two weeks.<sup>136</sup>

On March 17, 2021, then vice-president Samia announced the death of Magufuli.<sup>137</sup> The final time period of interest during Magufuli’s presidency focuses on the week of the announcement of Magufuli’s passing (March 14, 2021 - March 20, 2021). Days before and after the announcement

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<sup>132</sup> Rosemary Mirondo, “NMB Bank announces relief measures to ease burden to its customers,” *Mwananchi*, May 22, 2020, NewsBank inc.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> “Zitto’s Covid-19 message ahead of Idd-ul-Fitr,” *Mwananchi*, May 22, 2020, NewsBank inc.

<sup>135</sup> Makoni, “Tanzania Refuses,” 566.

<sup>136</sup> Kasujja, “Where is the Tanzanian president?”

<sup>137</sup> “Buriani Magufuli - President of the United Republic of Tanzania 1959-2021,” *The Daily News*, March 18, 2021, NewsBank inc.

of his death were chosen to allow analysis for the opinions of Tanzanian citizens regarding both the speculation regarding his lack of appearances and the reactions to the news of his death.

Prior to the announcement of the death of the president, the majority of the articles regarding Magufuli are in relation to his lack of appearances. Political leaders in opposition to Magufuli expressed opinions that the president's disappearance was a result of a Covid-19 infection, although various government officials denied these claims.<sup>138</sup> Some of these opposition leaders also claimed that sources confirmed that the president had been hospitalized.<sup>139</sup> Both Tanzanians who believed that Magufuli was suffering from COVID-19 and those who did not believe expressed concern that the president was no longer active in the media or making public appearances, which was not a regular occurrence.<sup>140</sup> Not all of the articles prior to Magufuli's death feature opinions that the President had contracted COVID-19, but all of the articles do mention the public's concern over the president's whereabouts and the reassurance given by government officials that the president is well.<sup>141</sup>

As the death of the president was made public and government officials attributed his death to chronic atrial fibrillation, some articles still expressed the opinion that the president died as a result of a COVID-19 infection while others were mostly factual in nature.<sup>142</sup> For this time period of interest, *Mwananchi* and *The Daily News* published factual articles about the economic and political successes of Tanzania under Magufuli's rule and updates regarding the country's mourning.<sup>143</sup> *BBC*, on the other hand, expressed more negative opinions in reference to Magufuli's COVID-19 policies and the impact of the policies on his legacy, calling his policies

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<sup>138</sup> Kasujja, "Where is the Tanzanian president?"

<sup>139</sup> "John Magufuli: Tanzania arrests over missing president rumours," *BBC*, March 15, 2021.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> Burhani Yakub. "VIDEO: Tanzania Vice President says the country is safe, calls for prayers, unity," *Mwananchi*, March 15, 2021. NewsBank inc.

<sup>142</sup> "Speaker Job Ndugai summons MPs to Dodoma following President's death," *Mwananchi*, March 18, 2021. NewsBank inc.

<sup>143</sup> Rosemary Mirondo. "Fate awaiting Magufuli mega projects," *Mwananchi*, March 20, 2021. NewsBank inc.

during the pandemic “his most damning failure” and “a cautionary tale for the region and the continent”.<sup>144</sup> The negative opinions expressed by BBC Tanzania are most clearly explained in

Dickens Olewe’s article published immediately after the announcement of Magufuli’s death:

The true cost of this negligence and dereliction of duty can be counted in the number of lives lost as a result... Mr. Magufuli’s death has been blamed on “heart problems” but many will still suspect that he succumbed to Covid-19. It is an irony that the pandemic he strenuously denied has outlasted him, turning his once-heralded presidency into a cautionary tale for the region and the continent.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Dickens Olewe. “John Magufuli: The cautionary tale of the president who denied coronavirus,” *BBC*, March 18, 2021.

[https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-56412912?ns\\_mchannel=social&ns\\_source=twitter&ns\\_campaign=bbc\\_live&ns\\_linkname=56412912%26The%20cautionary%20tale%20of%20the%20president%20who%20denied%20Covid%262021-03-18T10%3A59%3A55.870Z&ns\\_fee=0&pinned\\_post\\_locator=urn:bbc:cps:curie:asset:d3b4ad24-8615-43f1-825d-8355d240a0d8&pinned\\_post\\_asset\\_id=56412912&pinned\\_post\\_type=share](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-56412912?ns_mchannel=social&ns_source=twitter&ns_campaign=bbc_live&ns_linkname=56412912%26The%20cautionary%20tale%20of%20the%20president%20who%20denied%20Covid%262021-03-18T10%3A59%3A55.870Z&ns_fee=0&pinned_post_locator=urn:bbc:cps:curie:asset:d3b4ad24-8615-43f1-825d-8355d240a0d8&pinned_post_asset_id=56412912&pinned_post_type=share).

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

### 3.3 The citizen responses to the Samia administration

In a similar way to the previous section of this chapter, the articles discussed in this section will focus on specific time periods of interest surrounding significant government changes and decisions. In this section, the articles analyzed will be in response to the week after President Samia's announcement of changing COVID-19 policy and the week after the country's COVID-19 taskforce, created by Samia, gave their report regarding recommendations to stop the spread of COVID-19 in Tanzania.

Shortly after Samia took office following Magufuli's death, she made it clear that she intended to change the stance of the country on COVID-19 when she announced on April 6, 2021 the creation of an expert committee of Tanzanians to create recommendations for the country's COVID-19 policies.<sup>146</sup> The first time period of interest during Samia's presidency focuses on the week following the announcement that the country was reevaluating its pandemic policies, from April 6, 2021 through April 13, 2021.

Samia's announcement of a significantly different approach to the COVID-19 pandemic than that of her predecessor was met with no negative comments or opinions expressed in any of the three news sources that were analyzed. Samia's move toward a research-driven strategy to address the pandemic was described as "a more mainstream scientific approach", while the approach of Magufuli was described as "delinquency".<sup>147</sup> In the same article, Onyango-Obbo describes Samia's approach as utilizing the "wide open opportunities [the downfalls of Magufuli's COVID-19 policies] to project herself as a more liberal and enlightened leader than Magufuli".<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Edward Qorro. "Government to Set Up Coronavirus Taskforce."

<sup>147</sup> Charles Onyango-Obbo. "African leaders and the picking, eating of the low-hanging fruit," *Mwananchi*, April 8, 2021. NewsBank inc.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

In her announcement, Samia did not directly mention any information regarding vaccinations, a matter that her predecessor strongly opposed, but the topic was mentioned in articles from this time period.<sup>149</sup> One article in particular discussed negative opinions regarding the recommendation of the WHO for the AstraZeneca vaccine, crediting the disapproval to the reported negative side effects.<sup>150</sup> Specifically, the writer says that the AstraZeneca vaccine “forms the bulk of those being given for free to poorer countries under the Covax scheme led by the WHO, the Gavi vaccine alliance, and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations.”<sup>151</sup>

During this time period of interest, *BBC* published only one article in relation to COVID-19 policies.<sup>152</sup> This number is significantly lower than that of other time periods of interest, such as when *BBC* published ten articles regarding COVID-19 policies during the week of Magufuli’s death. Although a reason for this lack of articles was not identified, it is significant to note the differences in the amount of articles to be analyzed.

The expert committee created by President Samia to provide Tanzania with its own research and plan to address the pandemic released its report on May 17, 2021.<sup>153</sup> The second time period of interest during Samia’s presidency centers around the week following the release of this report, from May 17, 2021 to May 24, 2021. After this announcement, Dr. Sembela, a Tanzanian development analyst, said, “many Tanzanians had divided opinions based on their

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<sup>149</sup> Rosemary Mirondo. “Tanzania to re-evaluate its position on Covid-19, says President Samia,” *Mwananchi*, April 6, 2021. NewsBank inc.

<sup>150</sup> “AstraZeneca: Who is using the jab, and who is not,” *Mwananchi*, April 9, 2021. NewsBank inc.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> Caroline Karobia. “Tanzania president hints at new response to Covid,” *BBC*, April 6, 2021. [https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cjnwl8q4qdr/tanzania?ns\\_mchannel=social&ns\\_source=twitter&ns\\_campaign=bbc\\_live&ns\\_linkname=606c351725a85502e21bbd14%26Tanzania%20president%20hints%20at%20new%20response%20to%20Covid%262021-04-06T11%3A13%3A27.243Z&ns\\_fee=0&pinned\\_post\\_locator=urn:asset:9bad29d1-5351-4bb3-b92e-bd2329a64f42&pinned\\_post\\_asset\\_id=606c351725a85502e21bbd14&pinned\\_post\\_type=share](https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cjnwl8q4qdr/tanzania?ns_mchannel=social&ns_source=twitter&ns_campaign=bbc_live&ns_linkname=606c351725a85502e21bbd14%26Tanzania%20president%20hints%20at%20new%20response%20to%20Covid%262021-04-06T11%3A13%3A27.243Z&ns_fee=0&pinned_post_locator=urn:asset:9bad29d1-5351-4bb3-b92e-bd2329a64f42&pinned_post_asset_id=606c351725a85502e21bbd14&pinned_post_type=share).

<sup>153</sup> Bethsheba Wambura. “President Samia receives Covid-19 report from committee,” *Mwananchi*, May 17, 2021. NewsBank inc.

beliefs in some religious leaders and government officials in the country.”<sup>154</sup> The division that he referred to was echoed in both the supportive and hesitant opinions expressed throughout the analyzed articles.

Many of the articles published during this time period of interest convey supportive opinions in relation to the recommended policies. Some Tanzanians seemed pleased with the desires of the government to acknowledge the reality of COVID-19 in Tanzania and take measures to stop the spread of the virus without ruining the country’s economy.<sup>155</sup> An article published by The Daily News featured these supportive views of Samia’s taskforce and their report:

It was noted that she had set up the committee to help fight the virus that is globally a threat not only to human lives, but also socio-economic fabrics of development of any country, Tanzania inclusive... This is an area that requires no politics and name calling, because it rips off several economies, especially the tourism sector that employs thousands of the citizens directly and indirectly apart from being a major source of revenue to the government.<sup>156</sup>

One article in particular discusses Samia’s actions during her first sixty days in office and says that “people of almost all walks of life in the country seem to side with her administration”.<sup>157</sup> As Covid-19 policies are discussed in this article, the article mentions that Mr. Freeman Mbowe, a member of the Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA) opposition party, compliments Samia’s conventional yet inquisitive approach to precautions, specifically regarding vaccinations.<sup>158</sup>

While there were multiple articles discussing Tanzanians holding supportive opinions of the recommendations for precautions, there was also mention of a percent of the population who

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<sup>154</sup> Mosenda. “Why Covid-19 report has put ministers in a tricky situation.”

<sup>155</sup> “Hats Off About On Covid-19 Report, Lockdown Is Severe,” *The Daily News*, May 19, 2021. NewsBank inc.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Deus Ngowi. “60 Days in Power... Samia Marches On,” *The Daily News*, May 17, 2021. NewsBank inc.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

expressed hesitation toward the new recommendations. After living with little to no safety measures and case reporting and a great deal of dismissal regarding vaccinations and the recommendations made by some health organizations during the presidency of Magufuli, many Tanzanians expressed concern with respect to the new and quite different recommendations made by the committee:

The team recommended that Tanzania should adopt COVID-19 vaccinations, noting, however, that every Tanzanian should have the freedom to choose whether or not to be vaccinated. The daunting task ahead for the ministry's top brass will be on how to convince Tanzanians to go for vaccinations, considering the fact that it was not so long ago when they - in an attempt to go with the tune of the late President John Magufuli - publicly rejected vaccinations.<sup>159</sup>

In addition to his statement about divided opinions, Dr. Sembela also said that “there are those [Tanzanian citizens] who still believe in the position of the previous regime.”<sup>160</sup> These opinions show the skepticism held by many of the country's citizens as they were provided with two very different recommendations from their government officials over the course of the pandemic.

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<sup>159</sup> Mosenda. “Why Covid-19 report has put ministers in a tricky situation.”

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.



### **3.4 Conclusion**

As the pandemic began and the late President Magufuli was faced with the decisions about the best way to protect his country both physically and financially, Magufuli seemed to choose the physical protection of Tanzanian citizens over the financial protection, which can be seen in his decision to cancel events, close schools, and increase precautions. In the articles published during the first time period of interest, the Tanzanian citizens whose opinions are recorded in the literature seem to have an overall favorable view of Magufuli at this time. In the first time period of interest, the only negative feedback Magufuli receives is due to his decision not to impose restrictions on international travel, which he explained due to the fact that all of the necessary safety precautions were taken during international travel.

From March 14, 2020 until March 22, 2020, however, Magufuli followed the guidelines given by the WHO more closely than he did in the other two time periods of interest, which is a potential explanation for the lack of negative opinions expressed about him in the media during the first time period of interest.

As Magufuli started to change Tanzania's COVID-19 policies in May of 2020 to a much less restricted environment while the majority of the world was still in lockdown, this is the time period in which Magufuli faces the greatest proportion of opposing opinions to supportive opinions. In the second time period of interest, there is also the most contrast between the two viewpoints. As Magufuli seems to place the financial protection of his citizens over the physical protection of his citizens, some citizens have a more positive opinion of him and his ability to lead them bravely and do what is best for his country, in spite of the policies of the rest of the world. In contrast, other citizens could see his lack of protection for his citizens physically as a potentially life-threatening decision with financial gain as the only justification.

From May 22, 2020 to June 1, 2020, Magufuli followed the guidelines given by the WHO less closely than he did in the other two time periods of interest, which is a potential explanation for the greater amount of negative opinions expressed about him during the second time period of interest.

After Tanzanians had not seen their president, who was normally very involved with the public, in weeks, people began to express concern in the media regarding the whereabouts of Magufuli. As suspicions that the president was battling an infection with COVID-19 arose among Tanzanians, some people expressed negative opinions about the president and his denial of the spread of COVID-19 in his country, but other articles regarding Magufuli's lack of appearances were not critical in nature. During this time, however, the government was arresting people who posted online regarding the president's unconfirmed illness, so the opinions expressed in the first part of the last time period of interest (prior to the announcement of Magufuli's death) could have been influenced by these outside factors.

Once the news of the president's passing was known, most of the articles published were supportive of the late president and his policies, with the exception of some articles published by *BBC Tanzania*.

When Samia embarked on her journey as the Tanzanian president and announced her plan for the reevaluation of the country's COVID-19 policies, she was met with little criticism in the media from Tanzanian citizens. This overwhelmingly positive response could potentially result from concern that COVID-19 was still very active in the country after the circulation of the rumors that Magufuli had died of COVID-19. This response could also be attributed to Samia's description of the country's new pandemic task force as a way for Tanzanians to receive guidance from Tanzanian experts in health as opposed to outside sources with potential

ill-intentions toward the country. No matter the cause of the response, it is clear that Tanzanian citizens were supportive in the media regarding Samia's changing perspective toward COVID-19 policy.

Once the report produced by the Tanzanian COVID-19 task force revealed recommendations that were contradictory to the policies from the Magufuli era, Samia's COVID-19 policies were met with a more divided response from Tanzanian citizens than in the previous time period of interest. This response was largely due to the significant differences between the Magufuli era beliefs about the pandemic and the Samia era beliefs about the pandemic.

After analyzing the opinions expressed in the media by Tanzanian citizens about their presidents' pandemic policies, it can be concluded that neither leader was obviously favored more than the other by the majority of Tanzanian citizens based upon their opinions expressed in the media. Both presidents' have received both praise and criticism for their COVID-19 policies during various time periods.

Both presidents did, however, have the highest ratio of positive opinions negative to negative opinions during time periods when they were explaining their COVID-19 policies based on research and expert opinions, which can be seen by the almost complete support of the public during the first time period of interest in both Magufuli and Samia's presidencies.

The greatest contrast in supportive and opposing opinions expressed in the media for each president is seen during the time periods of interest following the most significant changes in COVID-19 policies that were made by the presidents. For example, Magufuli received the most divided opinions during the second time period of interest during his presidency, when he declared Tanzania "COVID-free" and removed many of the restrictions that were in place. In the

same way, Samia received the most divided opinions during the second time period of interest during her presidency, when she released recommendations for encouraging vaccination and the release of COVID-19 data to the public.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: General Conclusion**

In summary, Tanzanian citizens have experienced notable changes in the leadership types of their presidents and the economic and political framework of their government in general since the establishment of the country following its independence from colonial rule. The framework of the Tanzanian government discussed in Section 1.1 provided the significant details of these changes and how they relate to the current political and economic climates of Tanzania to provide the background knowledge necessary to discuss the presidencies of Magufuli and Samia.

The general strengths and weaknesses of Magufuli and Samia during their respective presidencies outlined in Section 1.2 gave a greater understanding of the decisions of each president in matters of government not pertaining to COVID-19 policy. These sections reveal that improvements to Tanzania's infrastructure and the creation of anti-corruption policies were Magufuli's greatest strengths during his presidency, while the creation of policies limiting freedom of speech and his decreased engagement in diplomacy were recognized as his greatest weaknesses. Regarding Samia, these sections show that increased attention toward foreign relations and business investments and the implementation of a more open culture of speech have been identified so far as Samia's strengths as president. On the other hand, a lack of tangible policy changes during her time in office has been her weakness.

The synopsis of the Tanzanian government's response to EVD outlined in Section 2.1 provided an example of how the country has responded to a past national health issue. This synopsis showed that the government initially followed the recommendations of the WHO to coordinate prevention tactics, but the Tanzanian government did not respond to various requests made by the WHO after a potential case of the disease was rumored in the country.

After providing an example for comparison to the responses of Magufuli and Samia, the particular responses taken by the presidents were described thoroughly in Section 2.2 and 2.3. Based on the information gathered from articles regarding the COVID-19 policies of each president, it can be concluded that Magufuli took an approach toward COVID-19 precautions that is similar to the approach that was taken by the Tanzanian government in response to EVD. Also, it was determined that President Magufuli utilized a more conservative approach to his policy, favoring Tanzanian businesses and allowing the most freedom for citizens to choose their individual responses to COVID-19.

It can also be concluded that Samia has employed a strategy that is very different from the strategy employed in response to the EVD outbreak in 2018. Her diplomatic approach to COVID-19 policy aligned more closely with the research-based recommendations of the WHO and other global COVID-19 institutions than the strategy utilized by Magufuli. The emphasis on using Tanzanian based recommendations regarding COVID-19 as opposed to recommendations made by other institutions was the most significant similarity noted between the responses of Magufuli and Samia.

The final chapter discussed the analyses of news articles that were written in regard to the COVID-19 policies during significant time periods of each presidential era in order to understand the opinions that were expressed by Tanzanian citizens in response to their leadership during the pandemic. Section 3.2 revealed that the majority of opinions expressed during time periods when Magufuli was most closely following the recommendations of global health organizations were supportive in nature. It also revealed that the greatest division in positive and negative opinions regarding Magufuli's COVID-19 policy was following his decision to remove COVID-19 restrictions in the country, which shows that the opinions of Tanzanian citizens

changed in response to changes in the policy implemented by their leadership. Section 3.3 exemplified similar findings, which can be concluded based on the shift from a nearly unanimous support for Samia's COVID-19 stance during the first time period of interest to a much more divided set of opinions for her stance on the pandemic during the second time period of interest following her announcement of changing policy.

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