
Africa in the News: Is News Coverage by Chinese Media Any Different?

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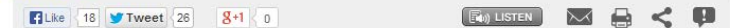
Sino-African mediated engagements

Sino-African media relations



China is relying on its own media to try to secure its trade relations with the resource-rich continent.

Listening Post Last Modified: 19 Dec 2012 17:52



Chinese media in Africa: What you need to know



GEOFFREY YORK

Why China is making a big play to control Africa's media

GEOFFREY YORK

NAIROBI — The Globe and Mail

Published Wednesday, Sep. 11 2013, 10:14 PM EDT

Last updated Thursday, Sep. 12 2013, 10:37 AM EDT



Types of engagement

Type of Involvement	Company Name	Industry	Date	Description
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(Madrid-Morales & Wasserman 2017)

Africa in (Anglo-American) media

- Previous research on representations of Africa in the media suggests that coverage of the continent has tended to be ...
 1. **Scarce** when compared to other world regions;
 2. Narrow in the **topics covered** and the frames used;
 3. Predominantly **negative** or “Afro-pessimistic”;
 4. Dominated by **North American and European perspectives**.
- Limited comparative and longitudinal studies have led to the creation of a “**myth**” on how the media cover Africa (Scott, 2015).

Africa and global Chinese media

- Our knowledge about the way global Chinese media cover Africa is sparse, inconclusive and sometimes contradictory.
 1. News about Africa is said to be **event-driven** and, thematically, focused on “**hard news**” (i.e. security, war, politics...).
 2. Chinese global media say they are doing “**positive news**” about Africa; although previous **research suggests otherwise**.
 3. The degree to which Chinese global media’s coverage differs from other global media (i.e. BBC or AP) is **disputed**.

Research Questions

RQ₁ - How **much coverage** does Africa get in global Chinese media compared to Anglo-American media?

RQ₂ - How much **geographic diversity** is there in Chinese and Anglo-American media's coverage of Africa?

RQ₃ - What **topics** do Chinese and Anglo-American media cover when reporting on Africa and other regions?

RQ₄ - Does **news valence** in stories about Africa differ between Chinese and Anglo-American media?

RQ₅ - Does China provide a content **contra-flow** when reporting contemporary Africa?

Research Methods

- Computational Text Analysis of **N = 1,162,373** news items published and/or broadcast between January 2012 and December 2015
- Data comes from four news outlets: **Xinhua** (n = 380,104), **CGTN/CCTV+** (n = 102,657), **The Guardian** (n = 177,967) and **Reuters** (n = 501,645).
- Three types of analysis were used:
 - keyword analysis, semi-supervised dictionary-based machine learning [newsmap] (**RQ₁** & **RQ₂**)
 - supervised topic classification [Naïve Bayes] (**RQ₃**)
 - sentiment analysis with KWIC (**RQ₄**)

RQ₁. How much coverage does Africa get in global Chinese media compared to Anglo-American media?

Figure 1. Country mentions by news outlet aggregated at continent level (2012-2015)



Figure 2. *Country mentions by news outlet aggregated at continent level (2012-2015)*



Table 1. Country Mentions by News Outlet (2012-2015)

		News Organization				
		Xinhua	CCTV/CGTN	Reuters	<i>The Guardian</i>	Total
1.	United States	6.07%	6.95%	13.03%	15.13%	11.26%
2.	China	11.87	36.83	6.41	2.73	8.74
3.	Great Britain	2.54	2.13	4.55	16.61	6.42
4.	Syria	5.16	2.67	5.20	2.59	4.50
5.	Russia	3.43	2.57	5.50	2.72	4.20
6.	France	2.15	1.26	3.30	4.11	3.05
7.	Iran	2.59	0.97	4.10	1.32	2.94
8.	Germany	1.91	1.14	3.22	3.17	2.74
9.	Israel	3.15	0.84	2.69	1.57	2.48
10.	India	1.96	1.24	3.25	1.73	2.47
...						
18.	Egypt	1.69	1.44	1.58	0.78	1.43

RQ₂. How much geographic diversity is there in Chinese and Anglo-American media's coverage of Africa?

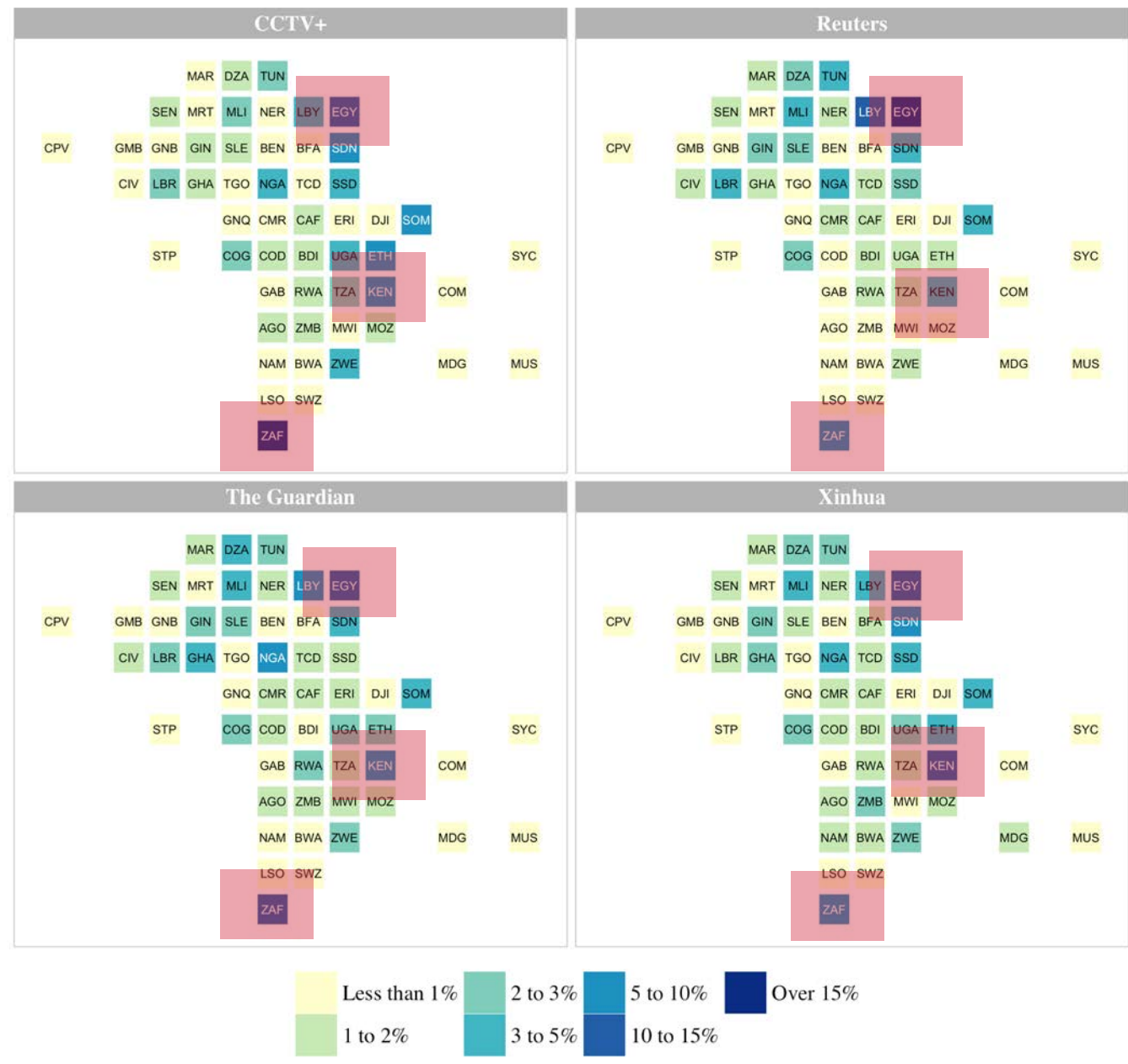


Figure 3. Mentions of African Countries by News Outlet (2012-2015)



Figure 4. Mentions of Libya by News Outlet (2012-2015)

RQ₃. What topics do Chinese and Anglo-American media cover when reporting on Africa and other regions?

Figure 5. News Items by Topic and Continent for each News Outlet (2012-2015)

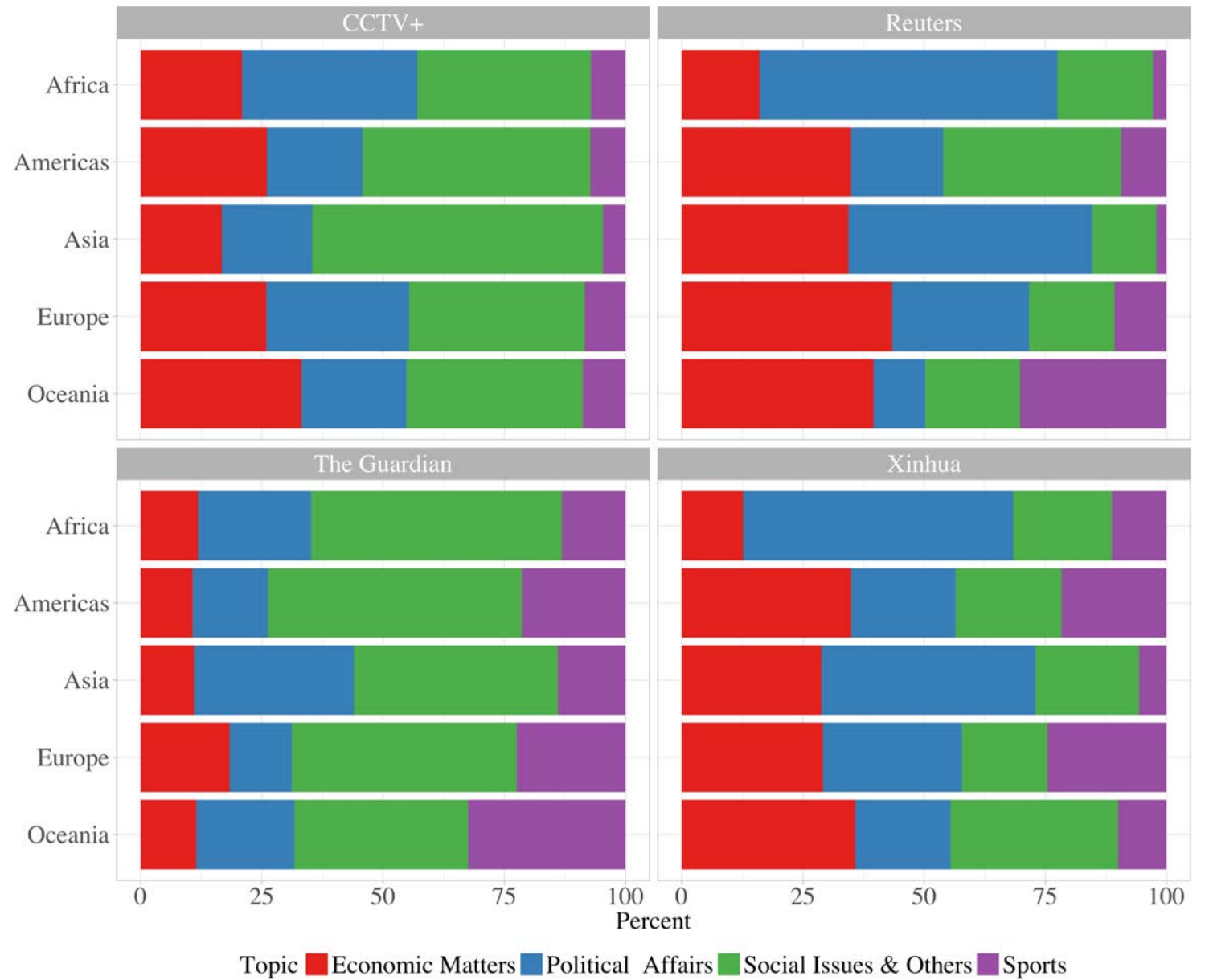
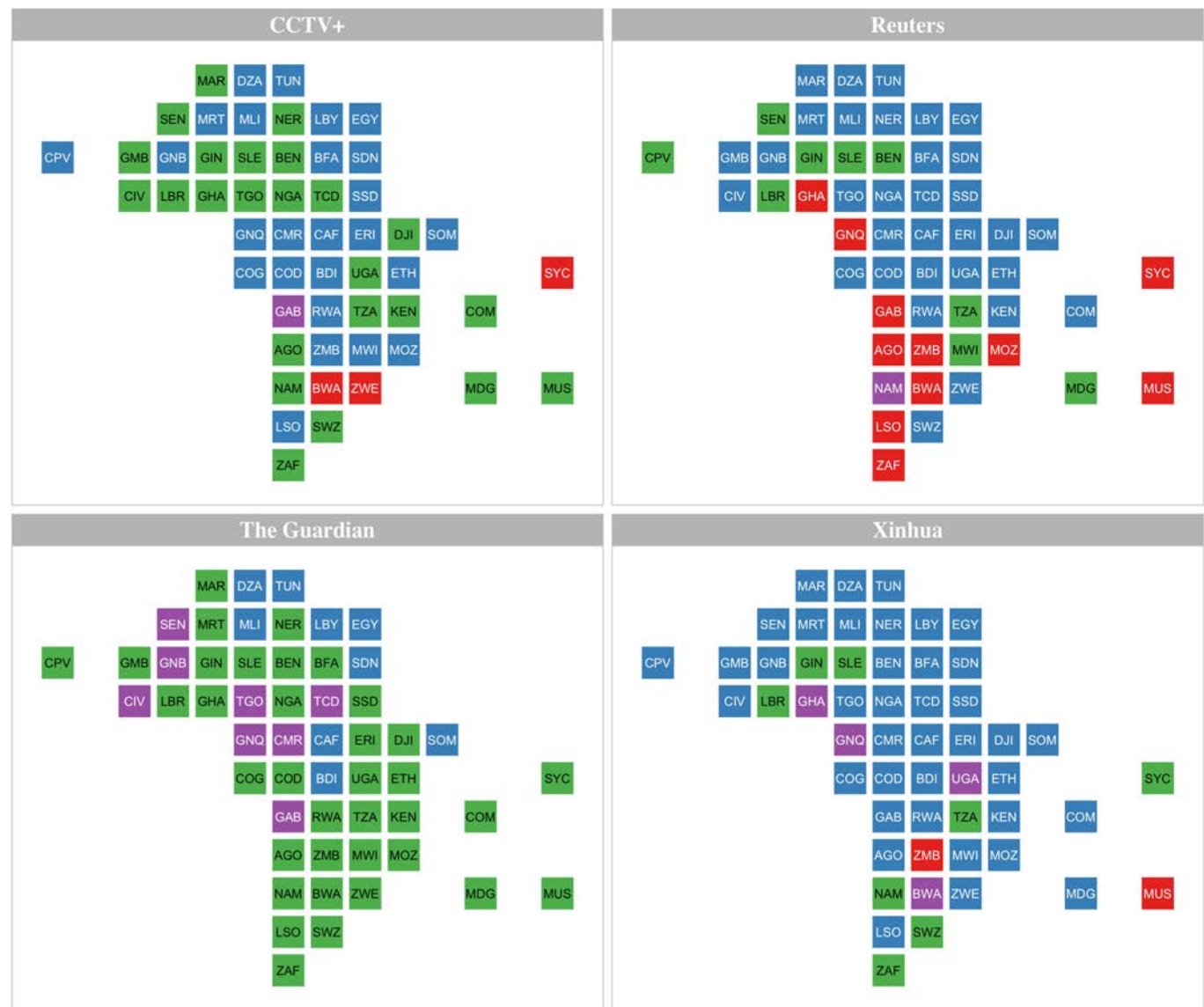


Figure 6. Most Frequent Topic per African Country by News Outlet (2012-2015)



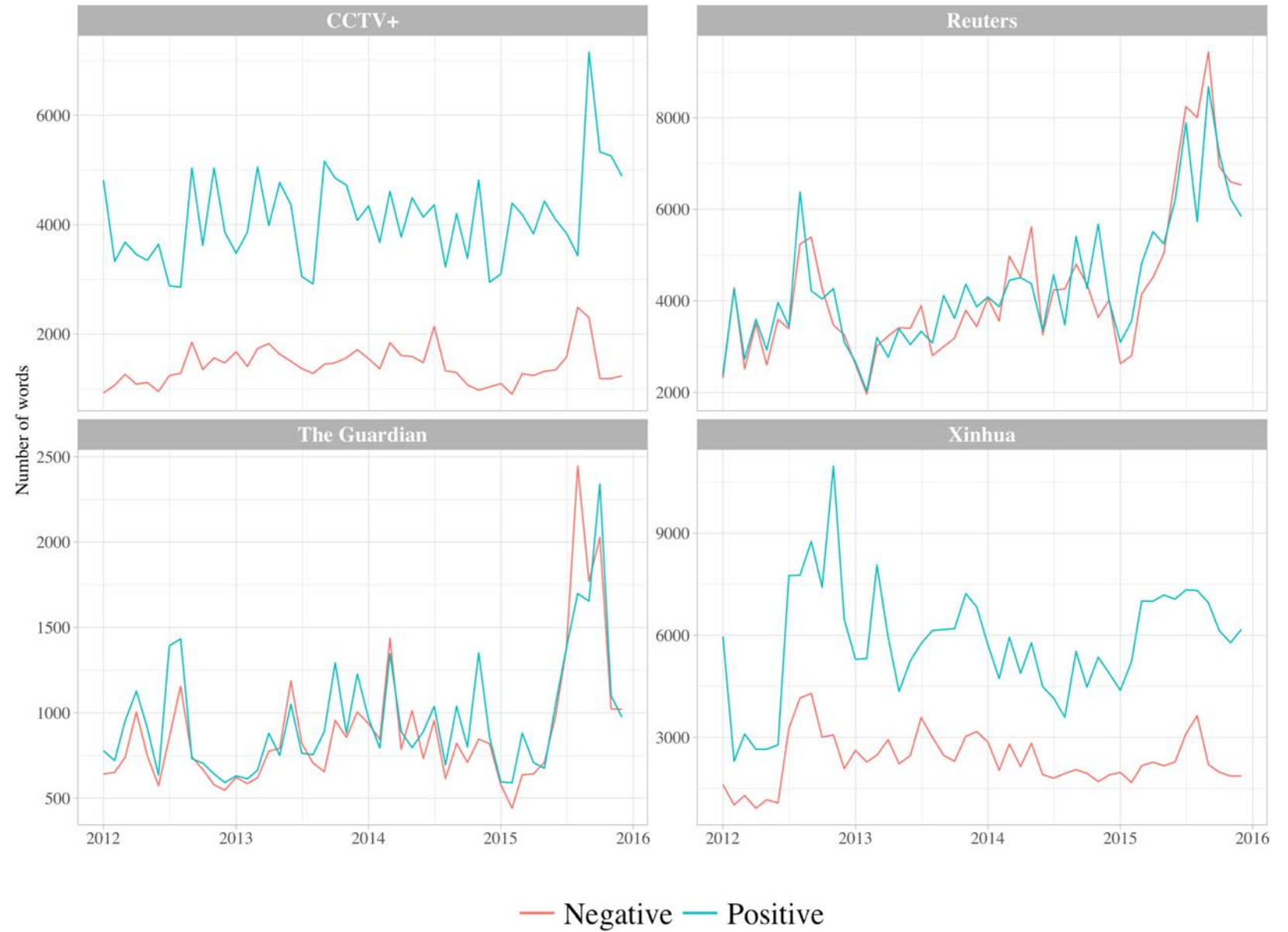
■ Economic matters
 ■ Political Affairs
 ■ Social Issues & Others
 ■ Sports

RQ₄. Does news valence in stories about Africa differ between Chinese and Anglo-American media?

Figure 7. Sentiment Analysis of News Items Related to Africa (2012-2015)



Figure 8. Sentiment Analysis of News Items Related to China (2012-2015)



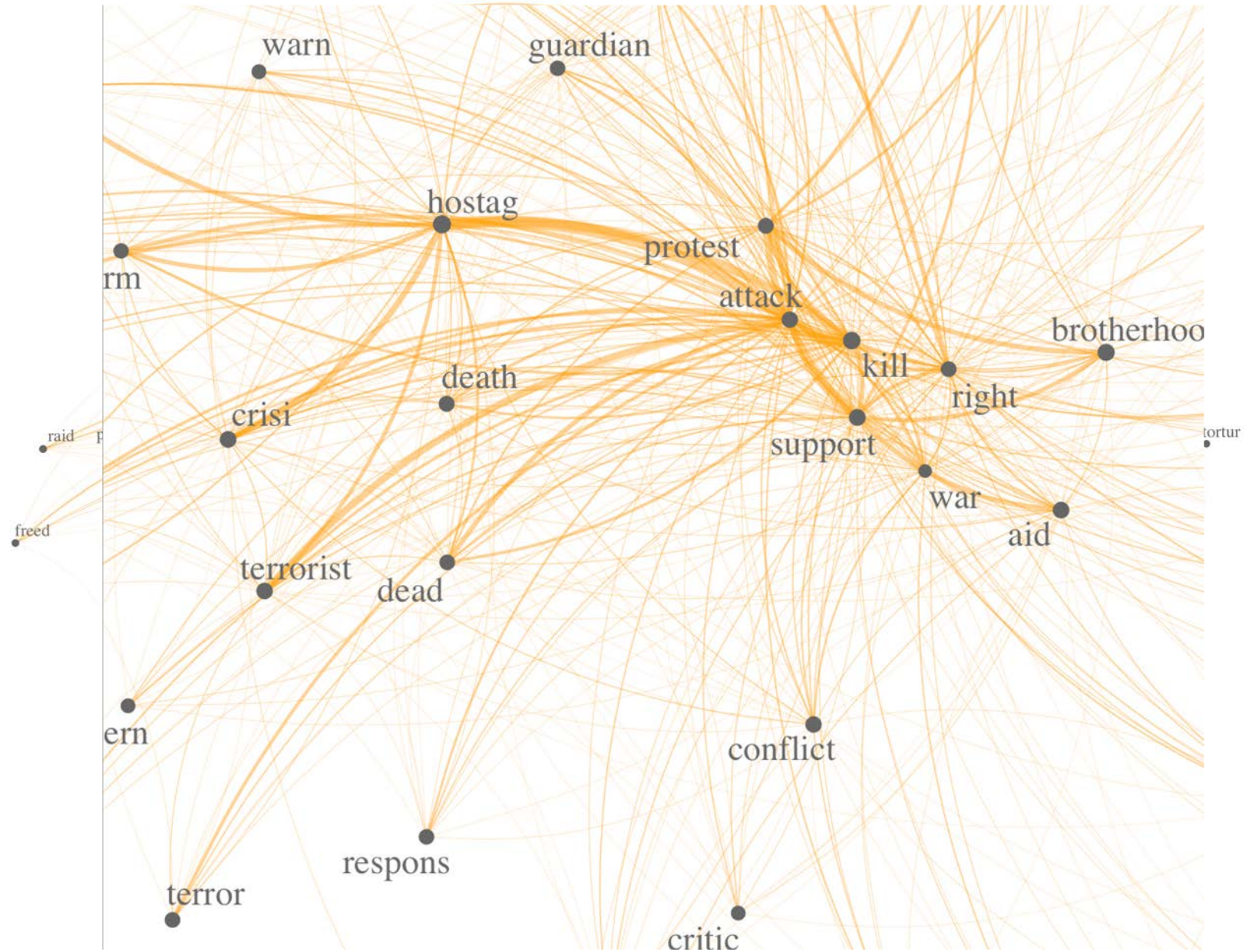
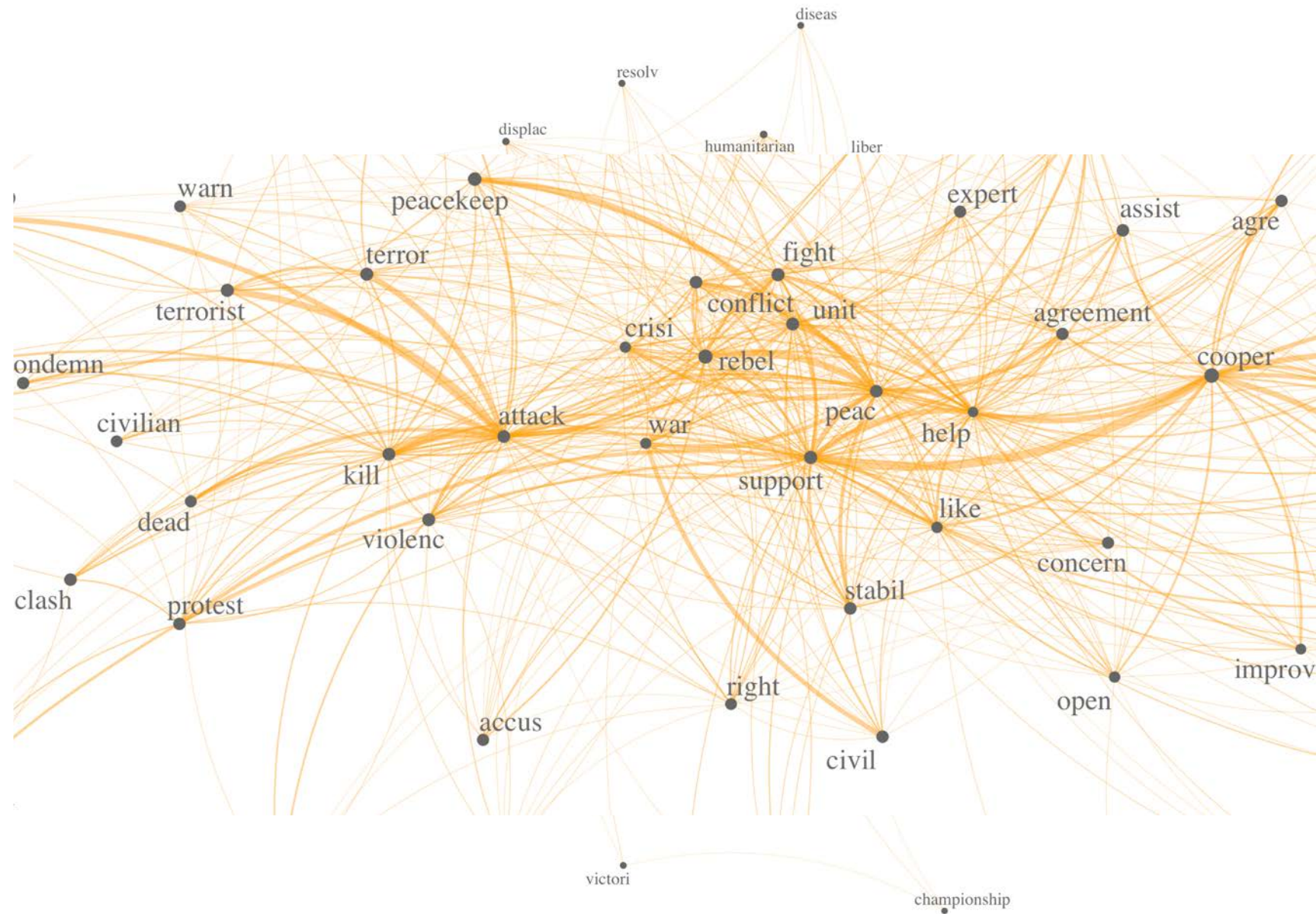


Figure 9. *Semantic Network of Sentiment Words Associated with Africa on The Guardian*

Figure 10. *Semantic Network of Sentiment Words Associated with Africa on CGTN*



RQ₅. Does China provide a content contra-flow when reporting contemporary Africa?

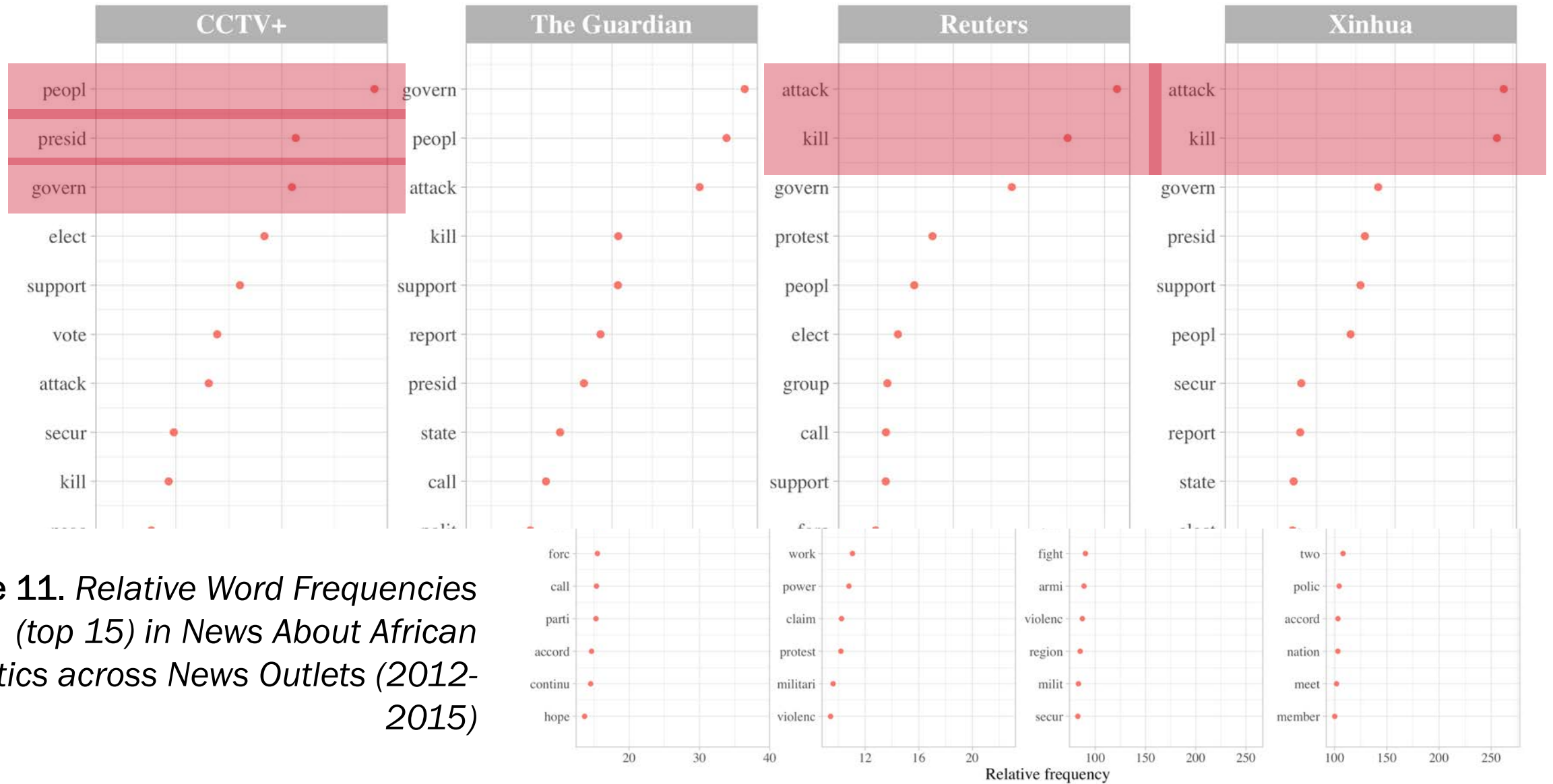


Figure 11. *Relative Word Frequencies (top 15) in News About African Politics across News Outlets (2012-2015)*

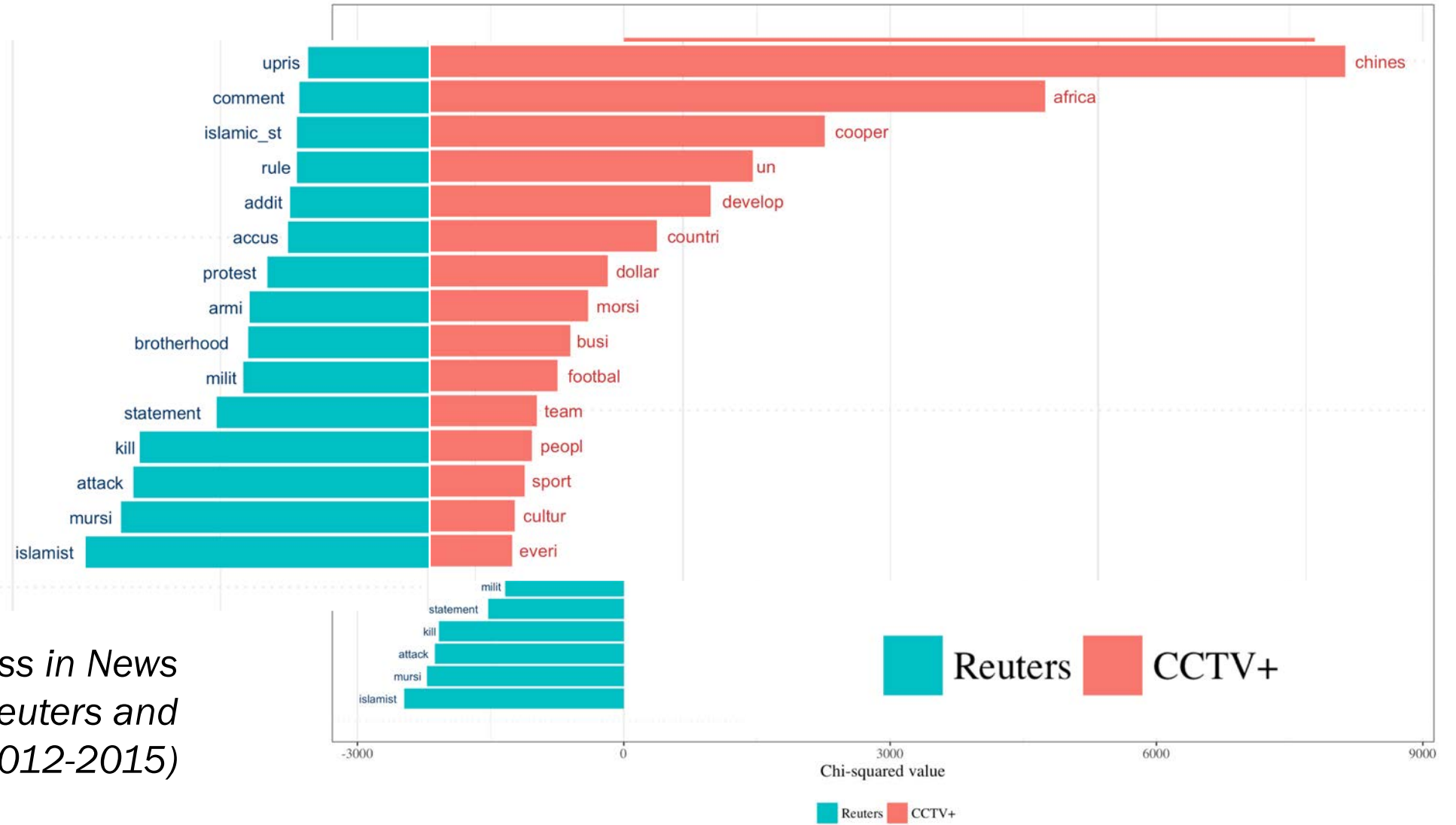


Figure 12. *Keyness in News About Africa on Reuters and CCTV+ (2012-2015)*

Final Ideas (I)

- CCTV/CGTN's coverage of Africa differs from that of other global media, including Xinhua, in at least three ways ...
 1. It is more **thematically diverse**, although certain topics are absent (i.e. religion), but present elsewhere.
 2. The self-declared goal of telling a “positive story” of Africa, translates in the **prevalence of positive sentiment words** over negative.
 3. Content is less focused on political conflict. When conflict is discussed, it is framed as **cooperation** and **problem-solving**.

Final Ideas (II)

- Current depictions about Chinese media's potentially transformative impact on media representations of Africa should be examined carefully for three reasons
 1. Coverage is very concentrated on a **few geographic areas** (East, North and Southern Africa).
 2. In countries where political violence has been recurrent during the period of analysis **news is monothematic**.
 3. The news agenda is **event-driven**. News about violence is given more salience than news related to culture, the economy or social issues.

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