

Assessing the influence of Chinese global media in Africa: An Audience Analysis

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Key points

1. Chinese media have increased their presence in many Africa enormously since the 2000s.
 1. However, we must not equate **presence (breadth)** with **influence (or depth)**.
2. Chinese media have **limited impact** on the general population in Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa.
 1. This can be explained by the limited audience that (English-language) Chinese media have in Africa.
3. Chinese media have **a (relatively) limited (but uneven) impact** on the news agendas of African media.

Chinese media in Africa

Type of Involvement	Company Name	Date	Example
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(Madrid-Morales & Wasserman, 2019)

Chinese media, African Audiences

- In most areas of Sino-African relations, it is possible to distinguish two levels of engagements (Park and Alden, 2013):
 - Upstairs – exchanges that affect elites, such as diplomatic and trade missions, government relations...
 - Downstairs – people to people exchanges, including those that are institutionalized (Confucius Institutes), as well as those that are not.
- Very **little is known about the “downstairs”** dimension of Sino-African mediated engagements:
 - There are some small scale studies that suggest limited impact (e.g. Gorfinkel et al, 2016; Guyo & Yu, 2019).
 - Bailard (2016) offers evidence of some impact.

Data

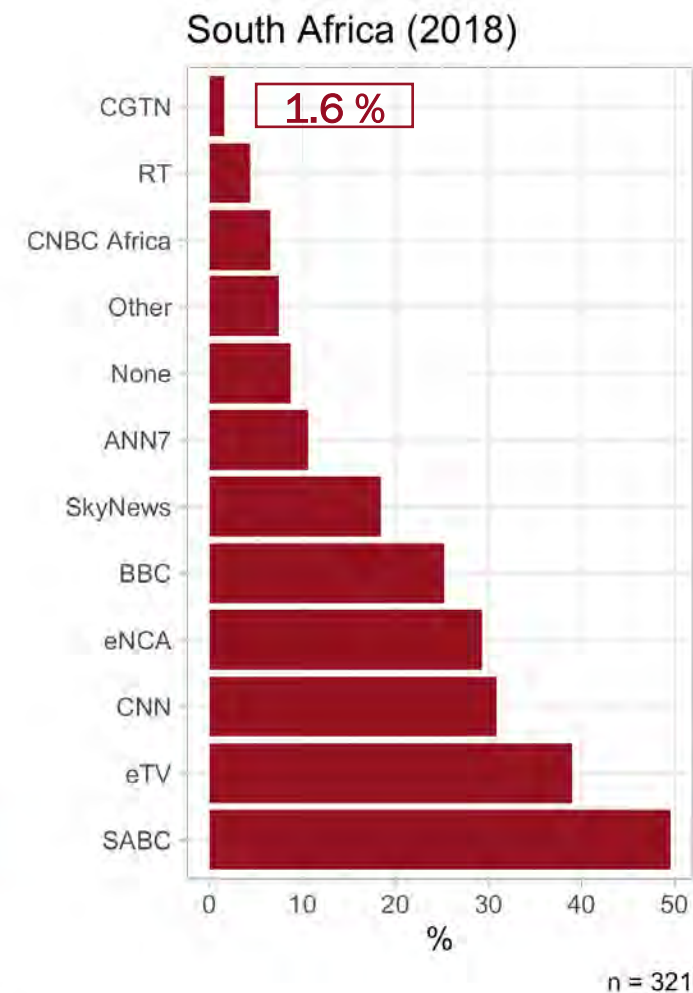
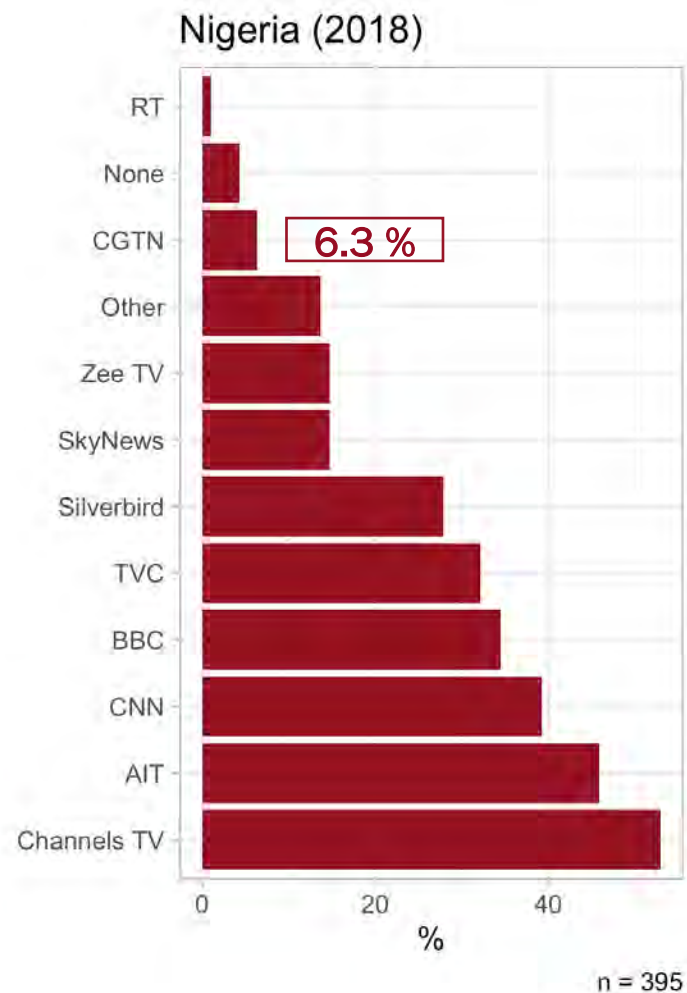
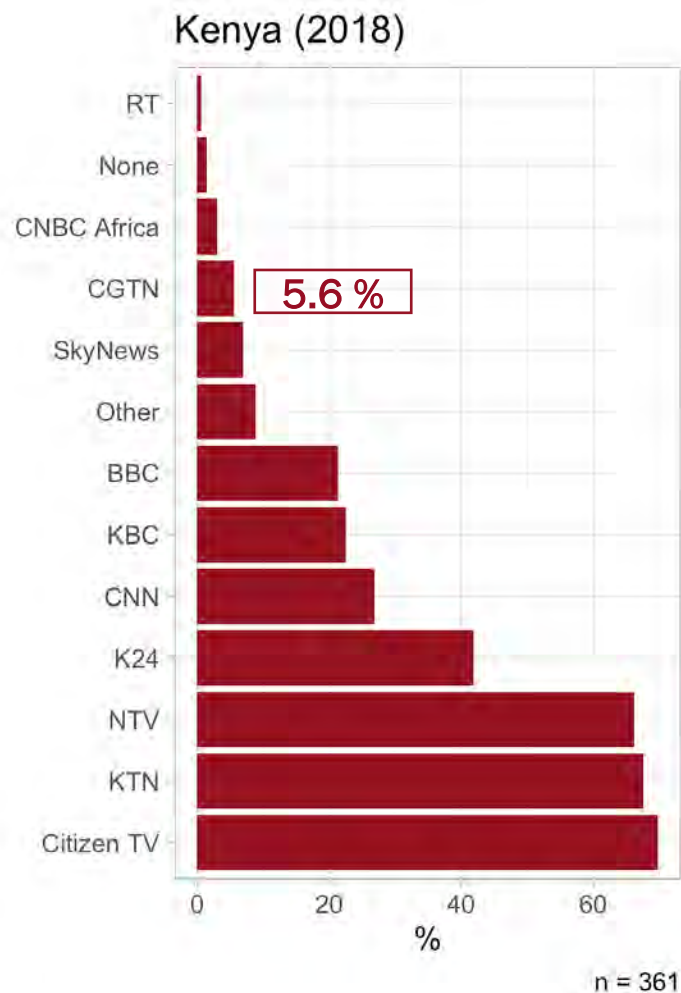
- Three waves of online surveys in Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa:
 - Wave 1 – January 2018
 - Wave 2 – March/April 2020
 - Wave 3 – October 2021
- Around 6,000 surveys conducted:
 - Wave 1 – N = 1,077 (KE, NG & ZA)
 - Wave 2 – N = 2,986 (KE, NG & ZA)
 - Wave 3 – N = 1,813 (KE & ZA)



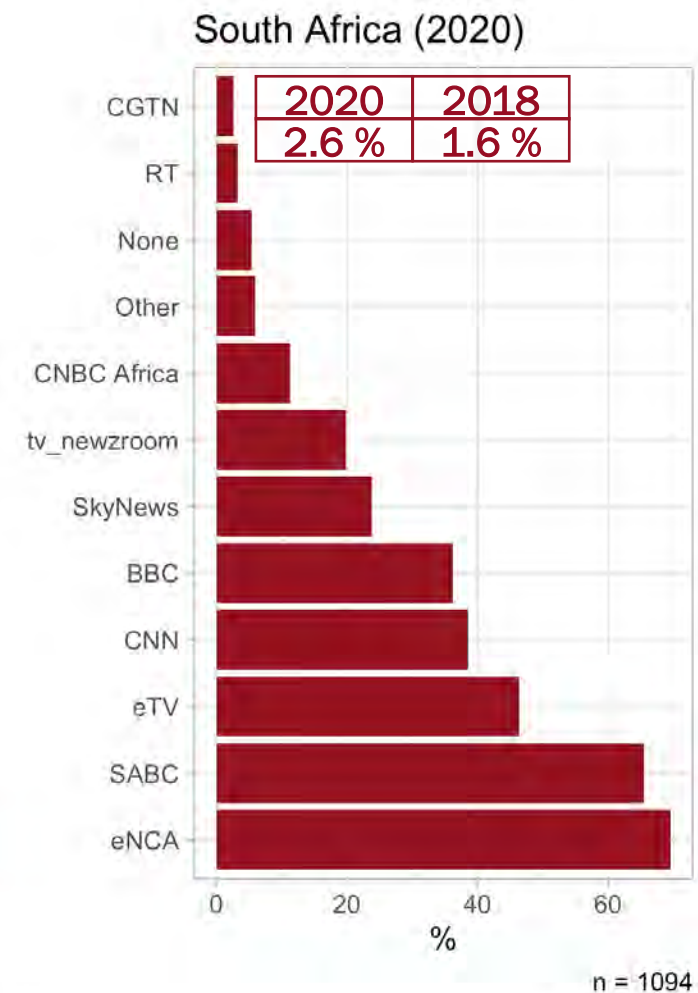
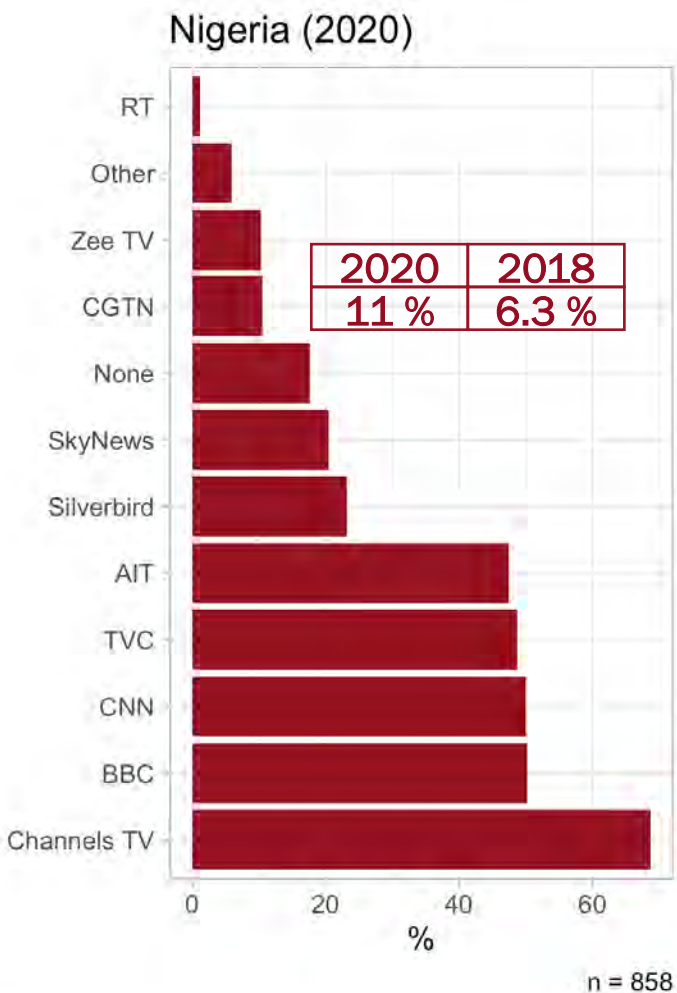
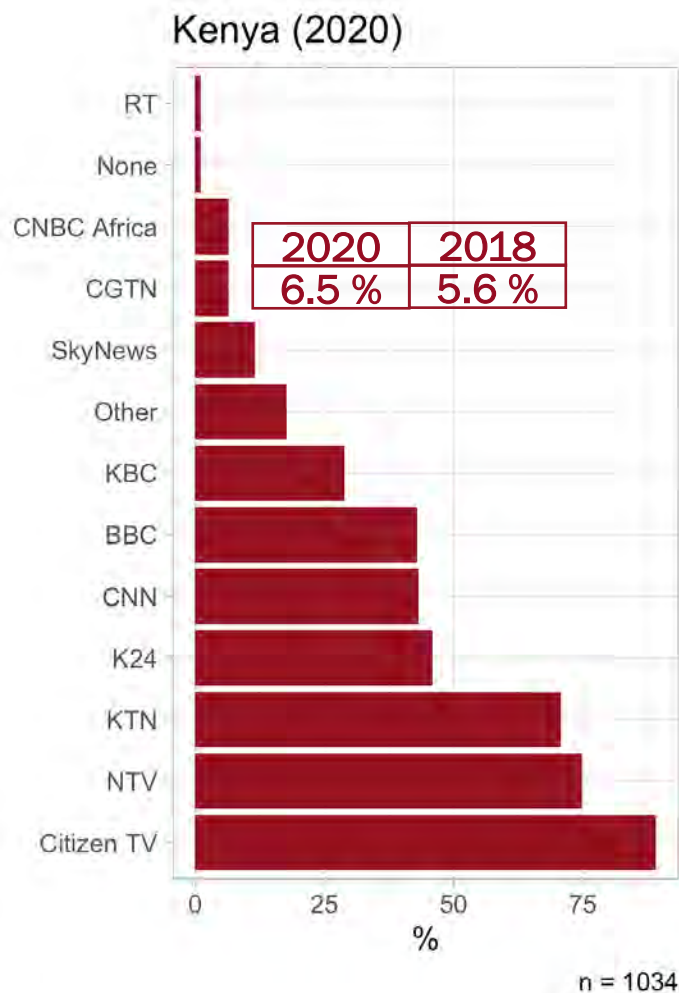
Media Consumption

Have you gotten news from any of these sources in the past 7 days?

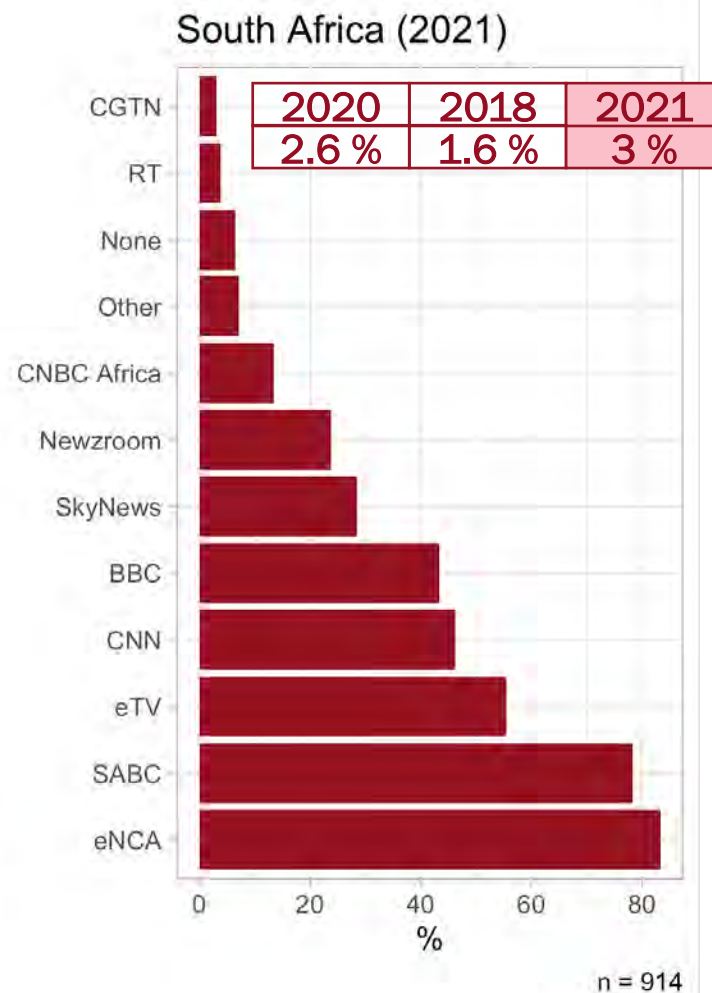
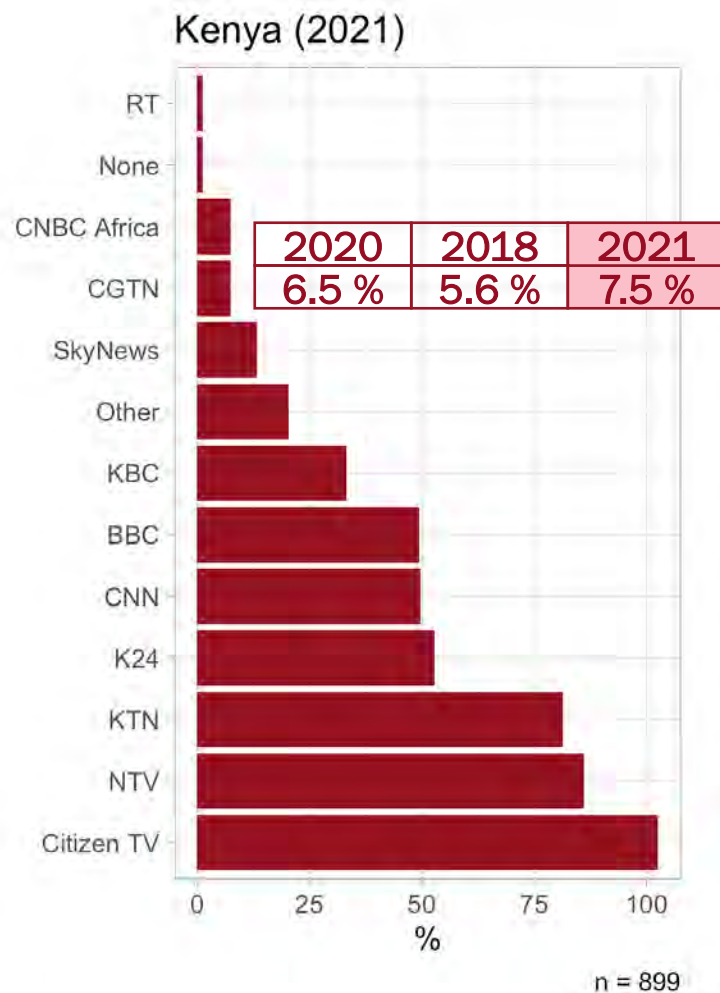
TV viewership 2018



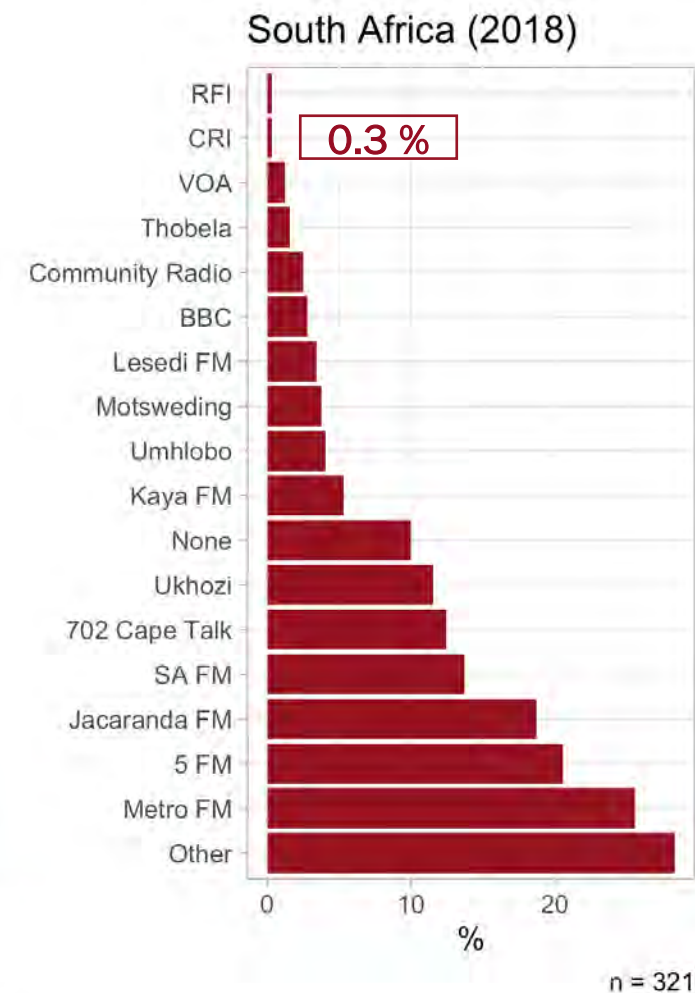
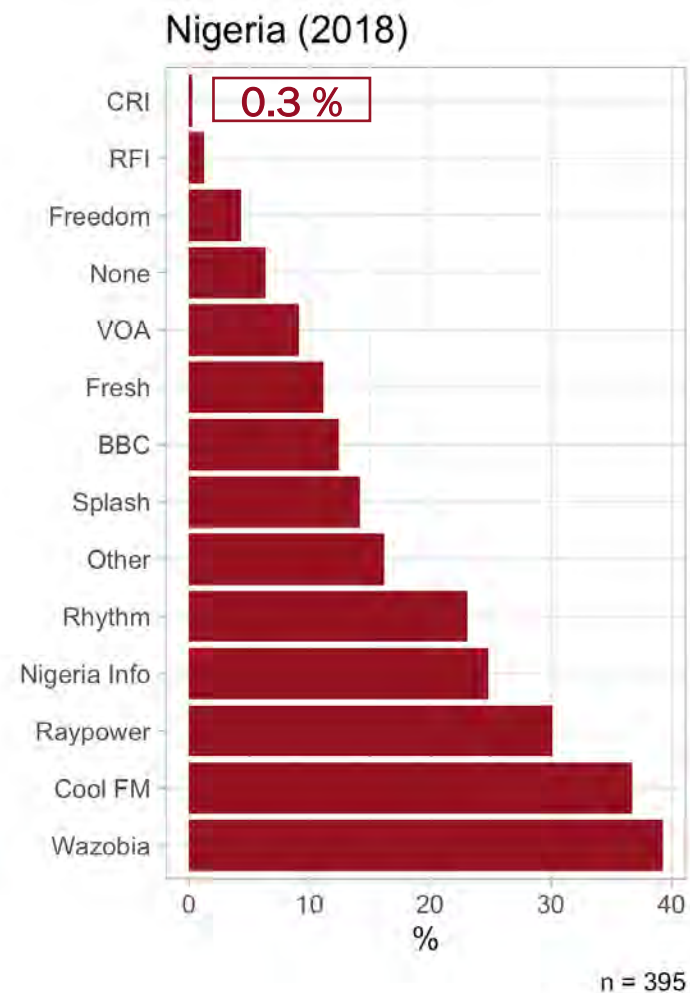
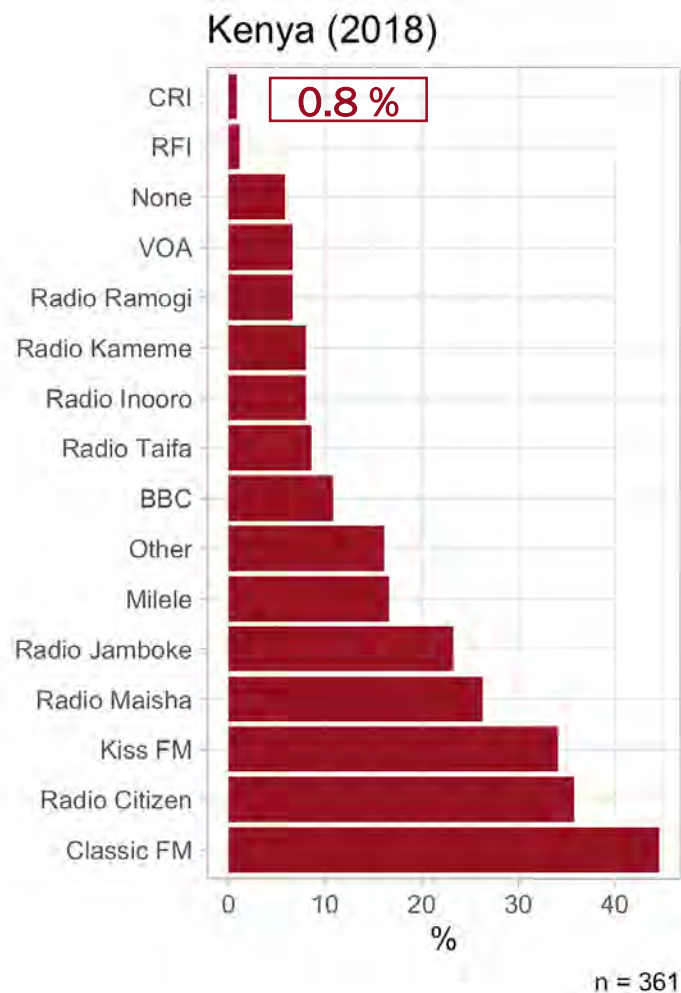
TV viewership 2020



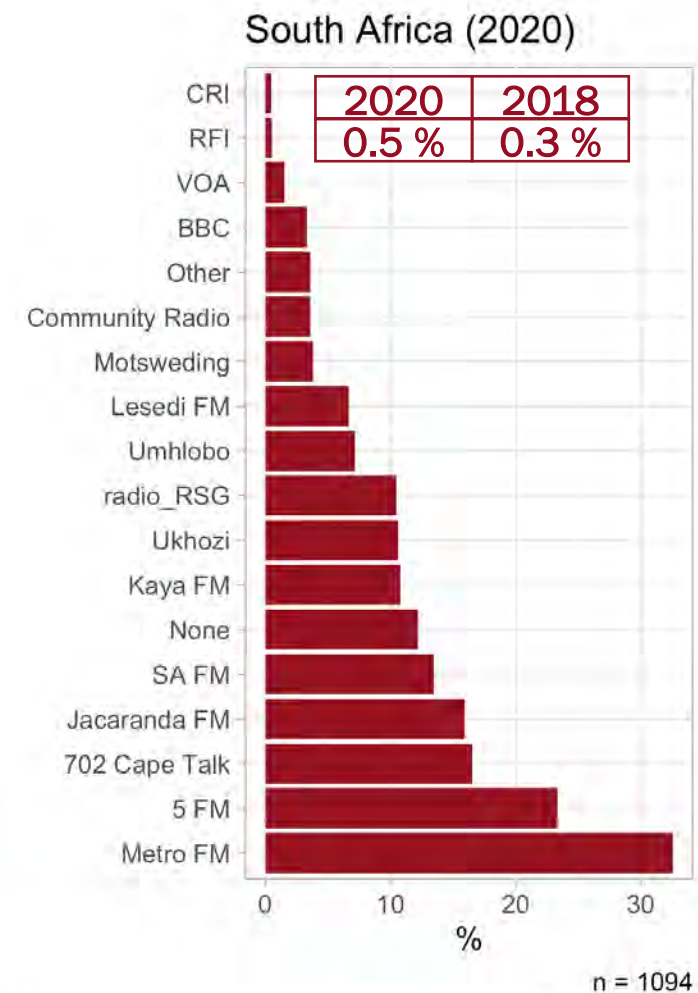
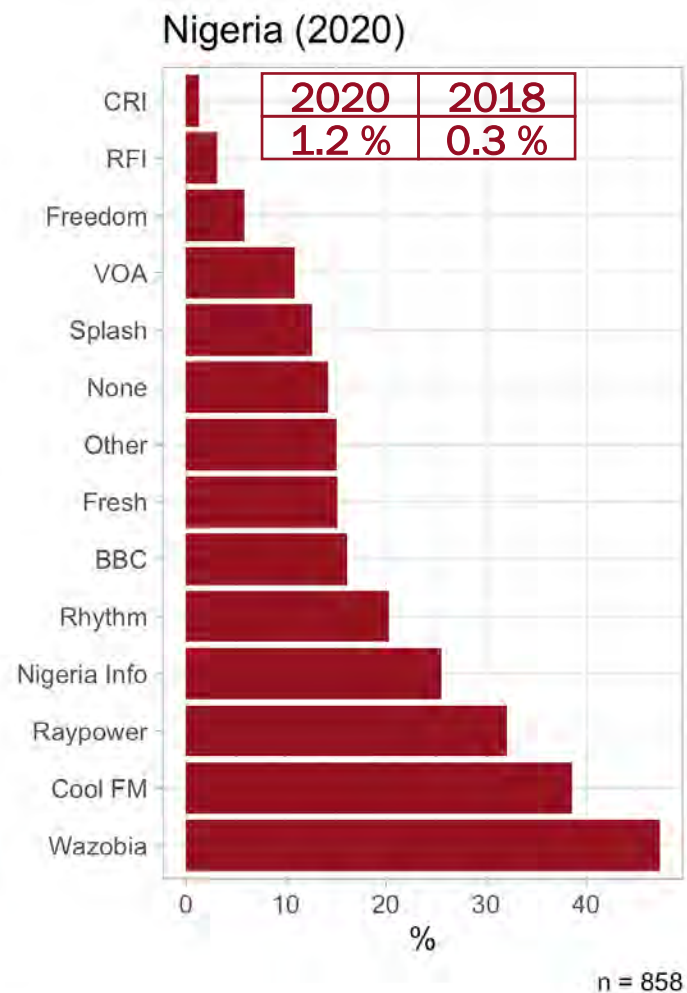
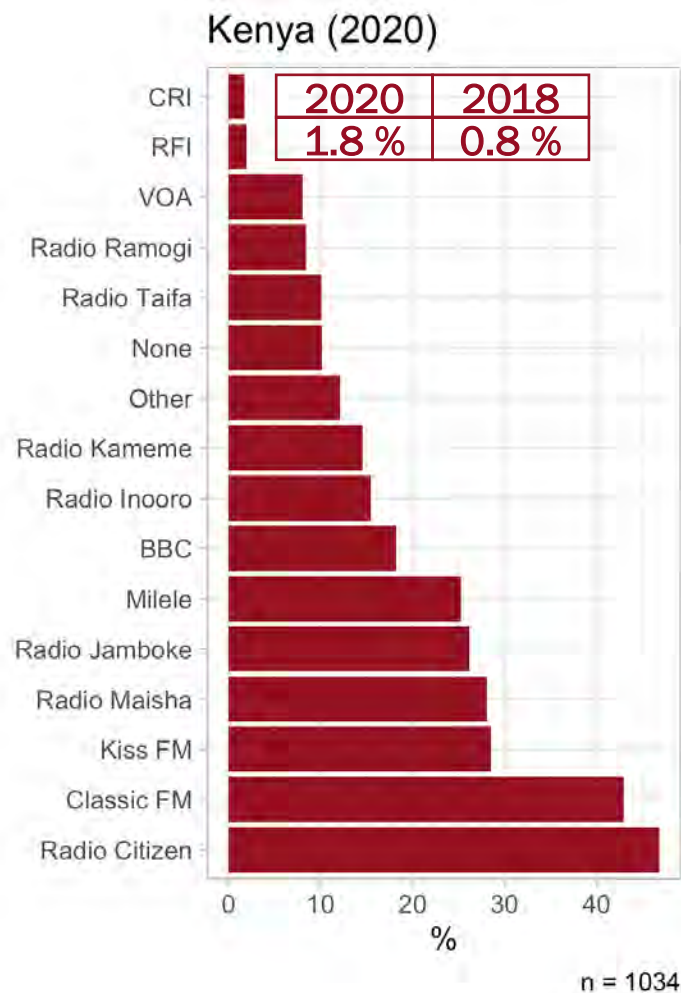
TV viewership 2021



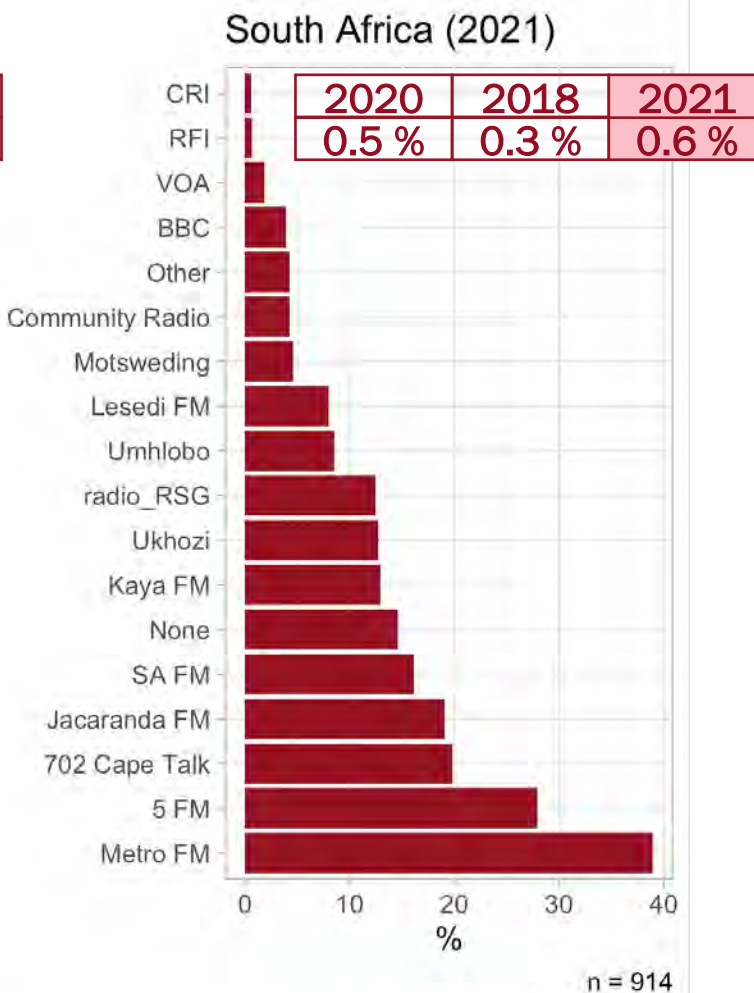
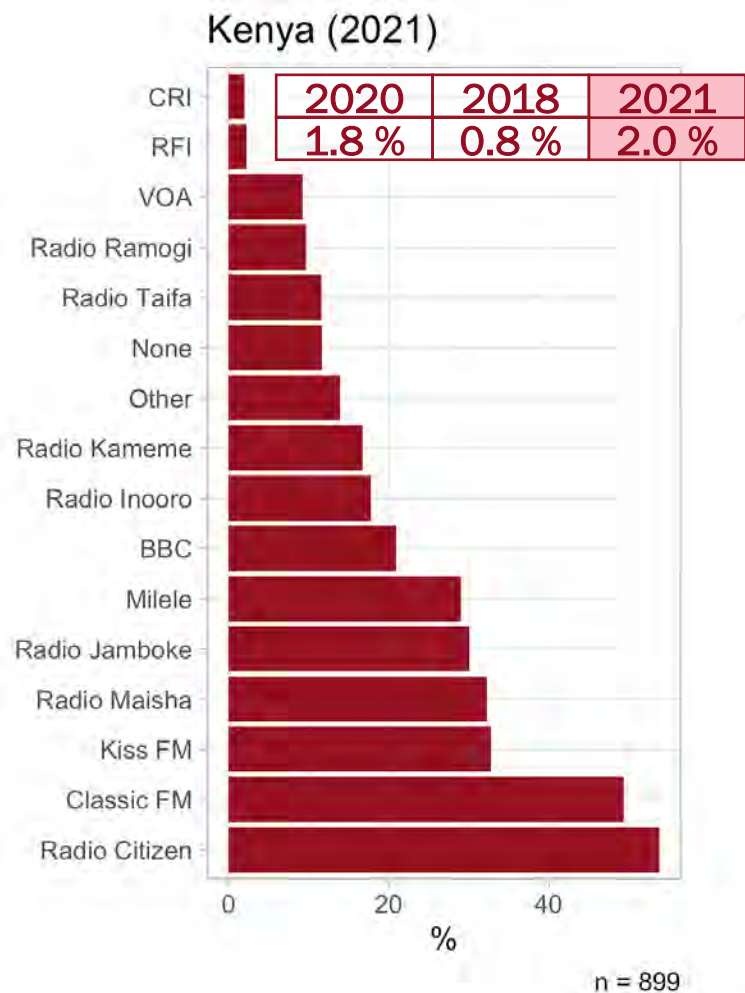
Radio listenership 2018



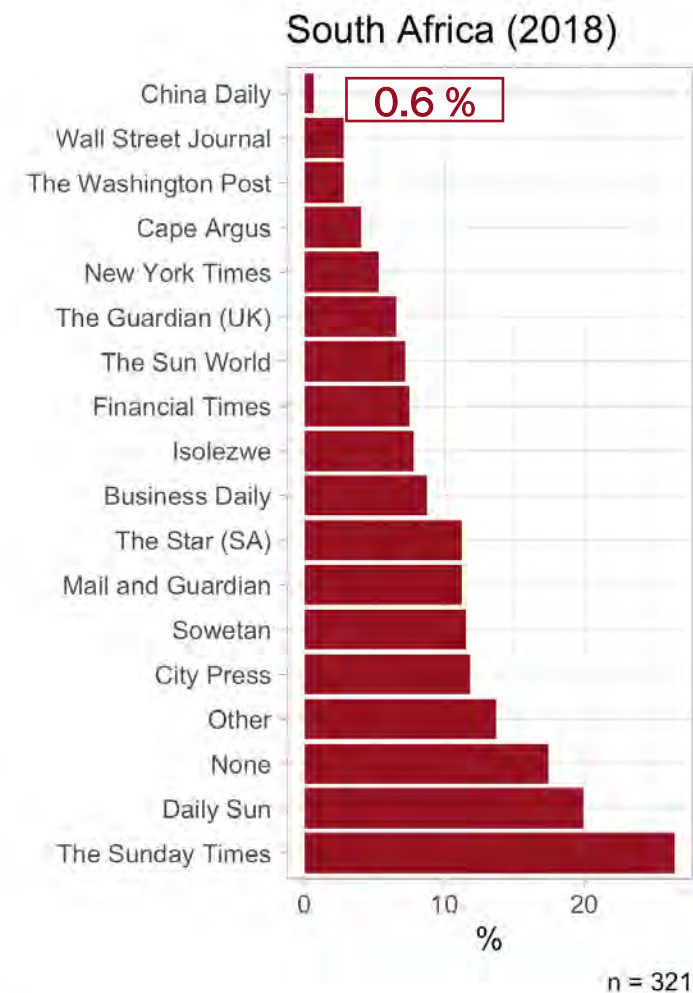
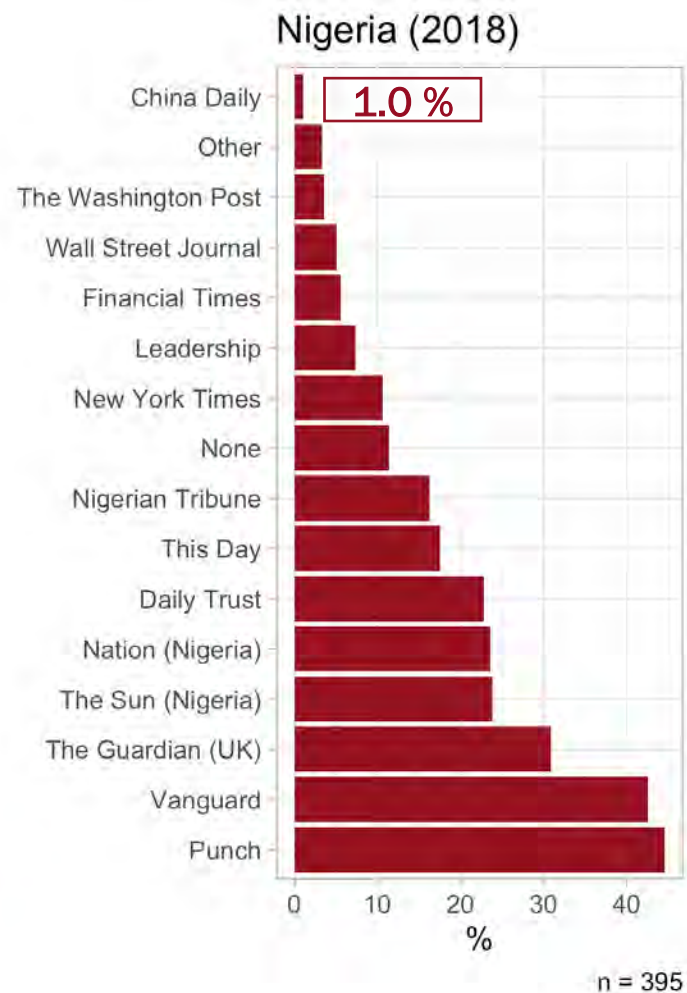
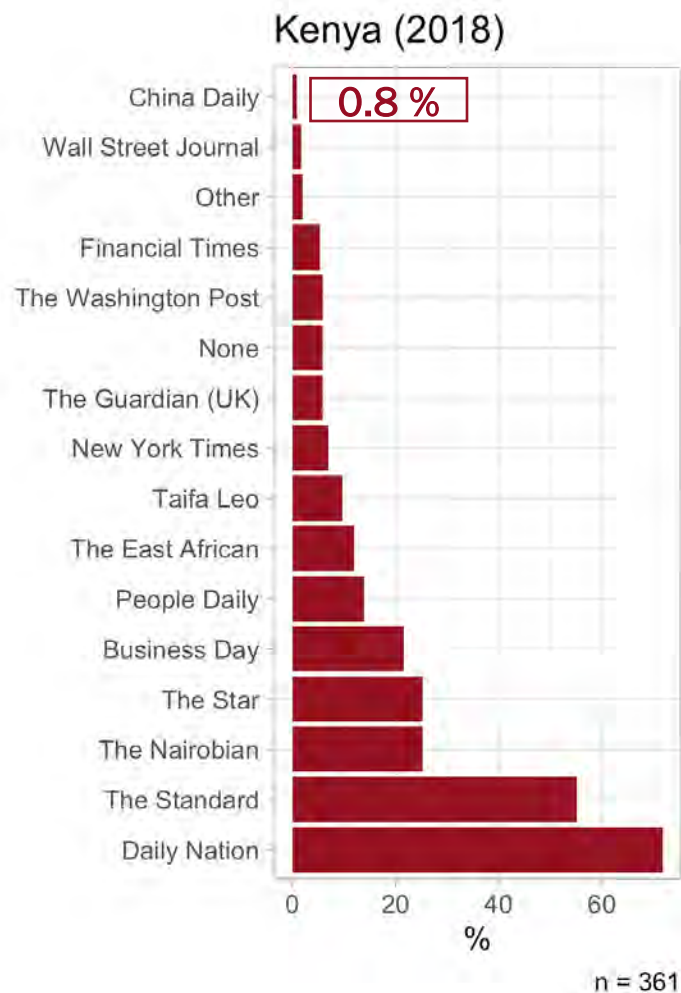
Radio listenership 2020



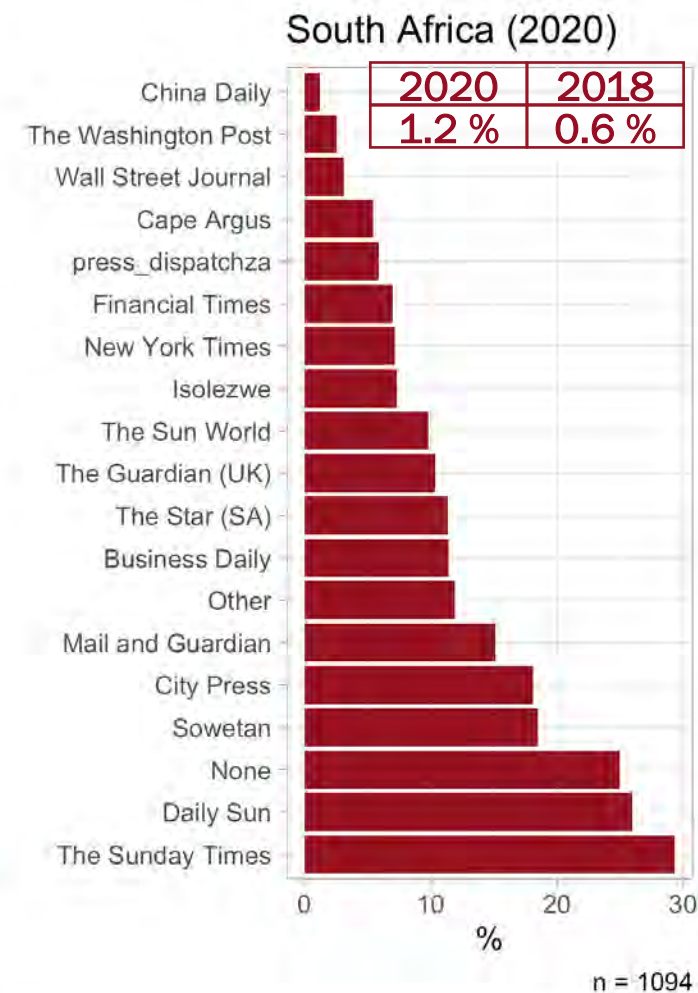
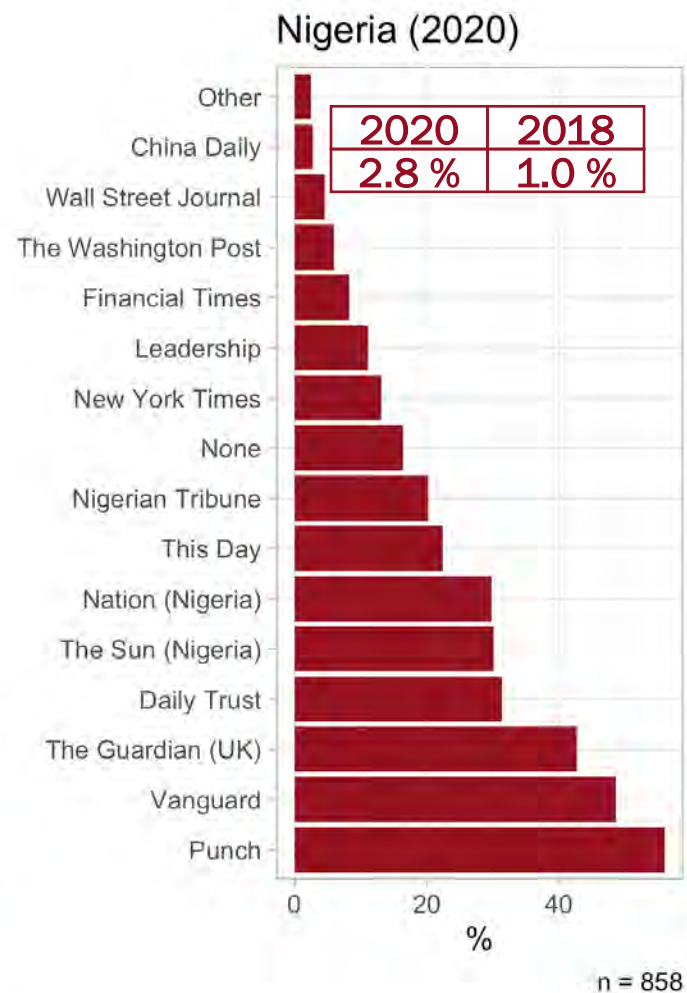
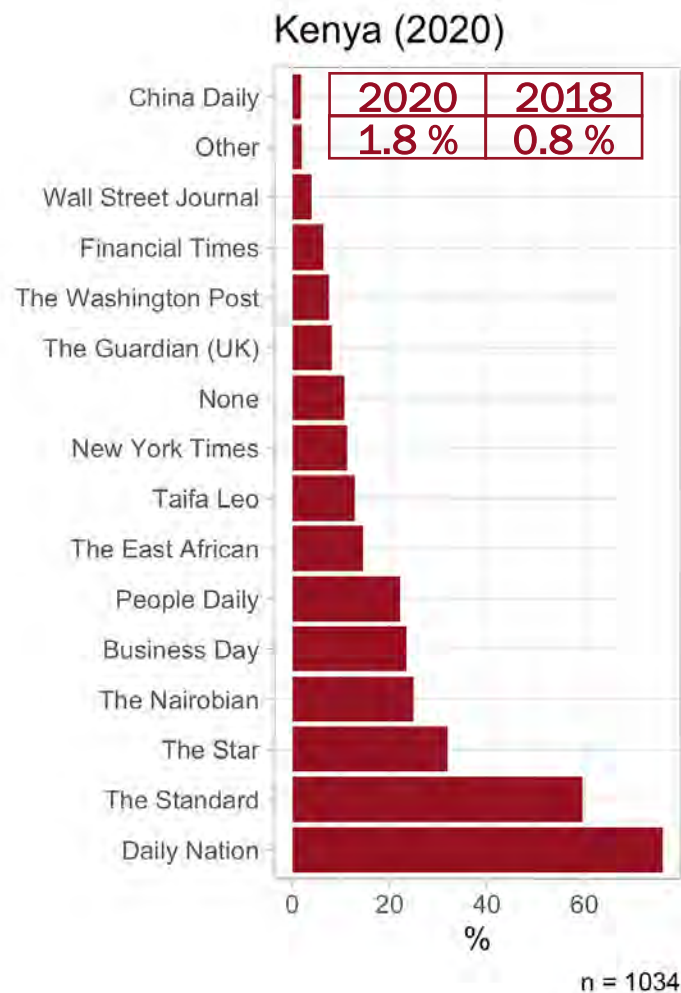
Radio listenership 2021



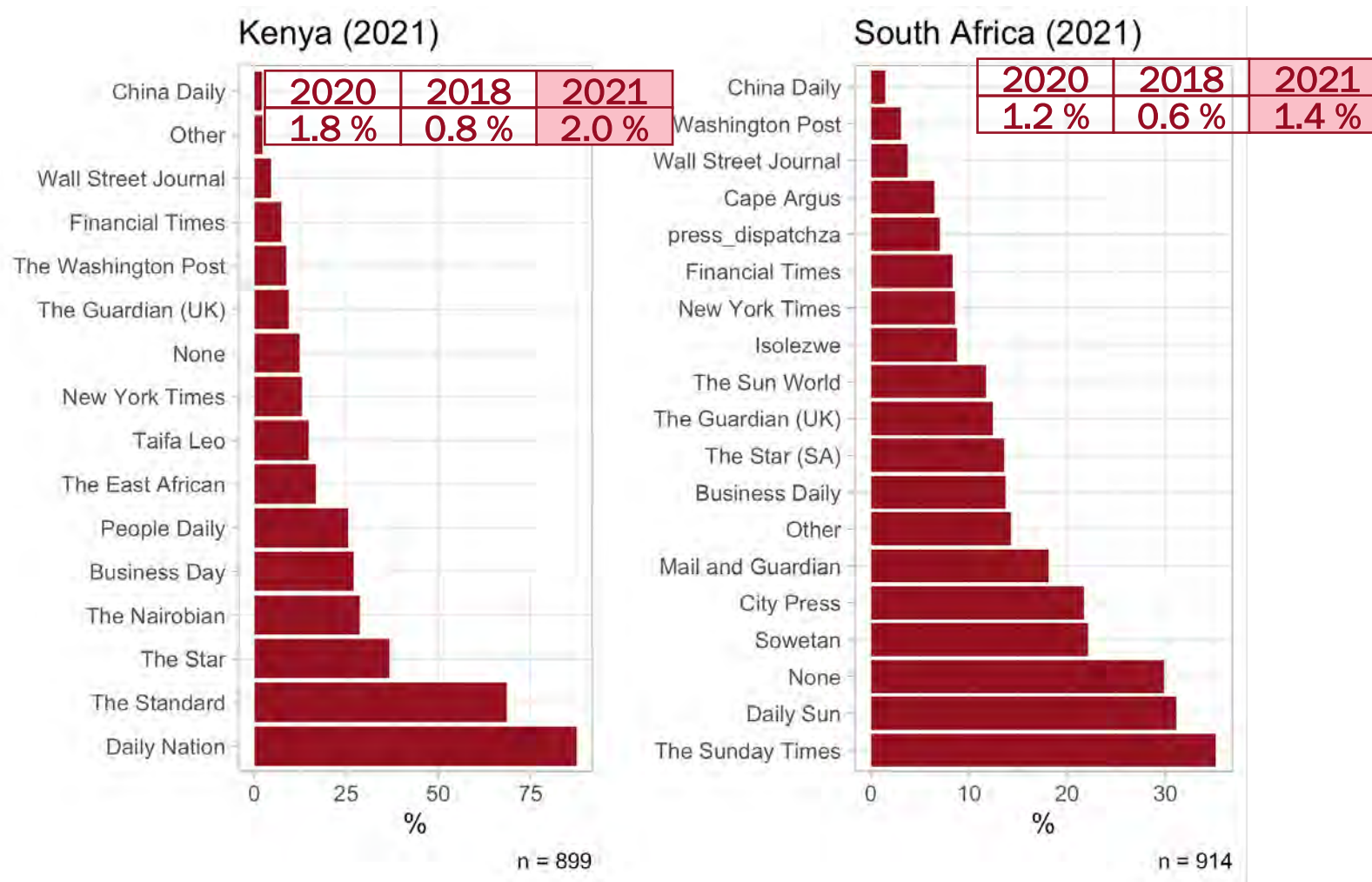
Newspaper readership 2018



Newspaper readership 2020



Newspaper readership 2021







Views on Chinese media

Views on CGTN (5 to 1 scale)

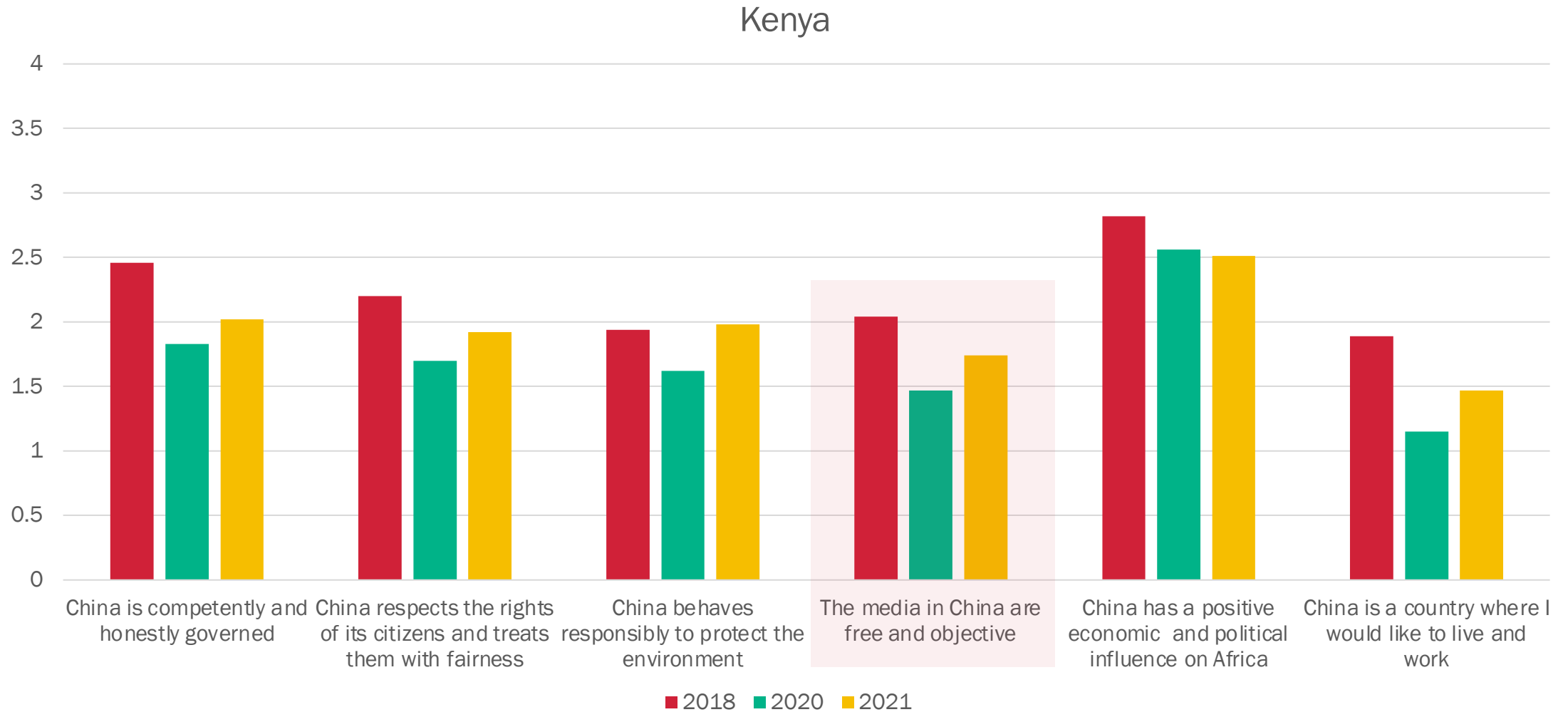
	Kenya		Nigeria		South Africa	
	2018	2021	2018	2021	2018	2021
Can be trusted	3.55	3.77	3.52		3.42	3.68
Reports Africa well	3.24	3.56	3.38		3.21	3.54
Tells the truth	3.41	3.76	3.48		3.25	3.61
I know it well	3.55	3.82	3.56		3.36	3.71

Overall views on global broadcasters (5 to 1 scale)

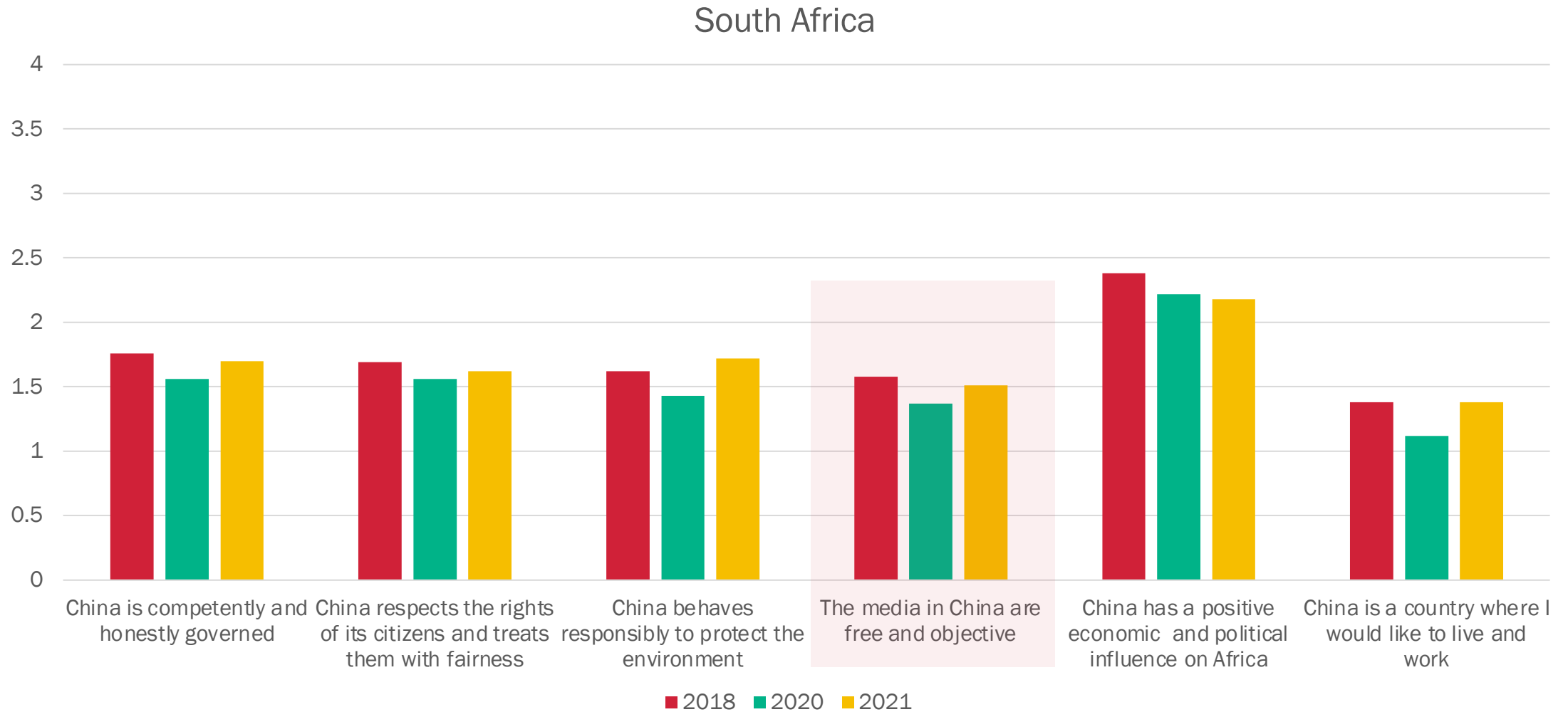
										
	2018	2021	2018	2021	2018	2021	2018	2021	2018	2021
Kenya	2.82	2.59	2.10	2.00	3.44	3.72	2.21	2.19	4.44	4.35
Nigeria	2.84		2.25		3.48		2.12		4.30	
South Africa	3.19	3.01	2.35	2.03	3.31	3.62	2.40	2.13	3.77	4.04

Attitudes towards China

Attitudes towards China (0 to 4 scale)



Attitudes towards China (0 to 4 scale)

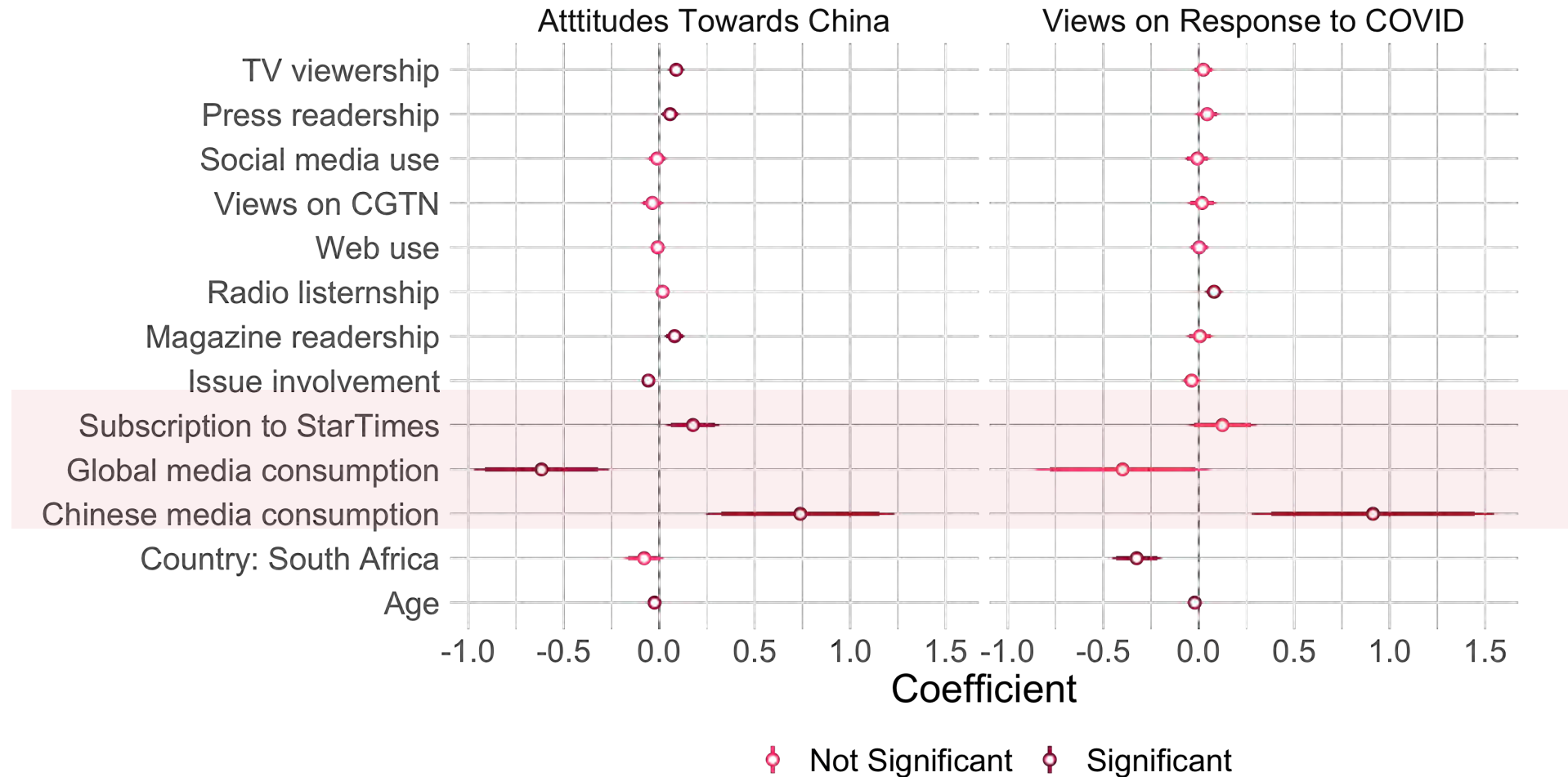


Government responses to COVID-19 (0 to 4 scale)

	KENYA		SOUTH AFRICA	
	2020	2021	2020	2021
Chinese government response	2.39	2.54	2.13	2.08
US government response	1.91	2.87	1.52	2.09
WHO response	2.87	3.15	2.65	2.60
Own country's government response	2.71	2.24	2.76	1.96

Consumption & Attitudes

Factors Shaping Attitudes towards China

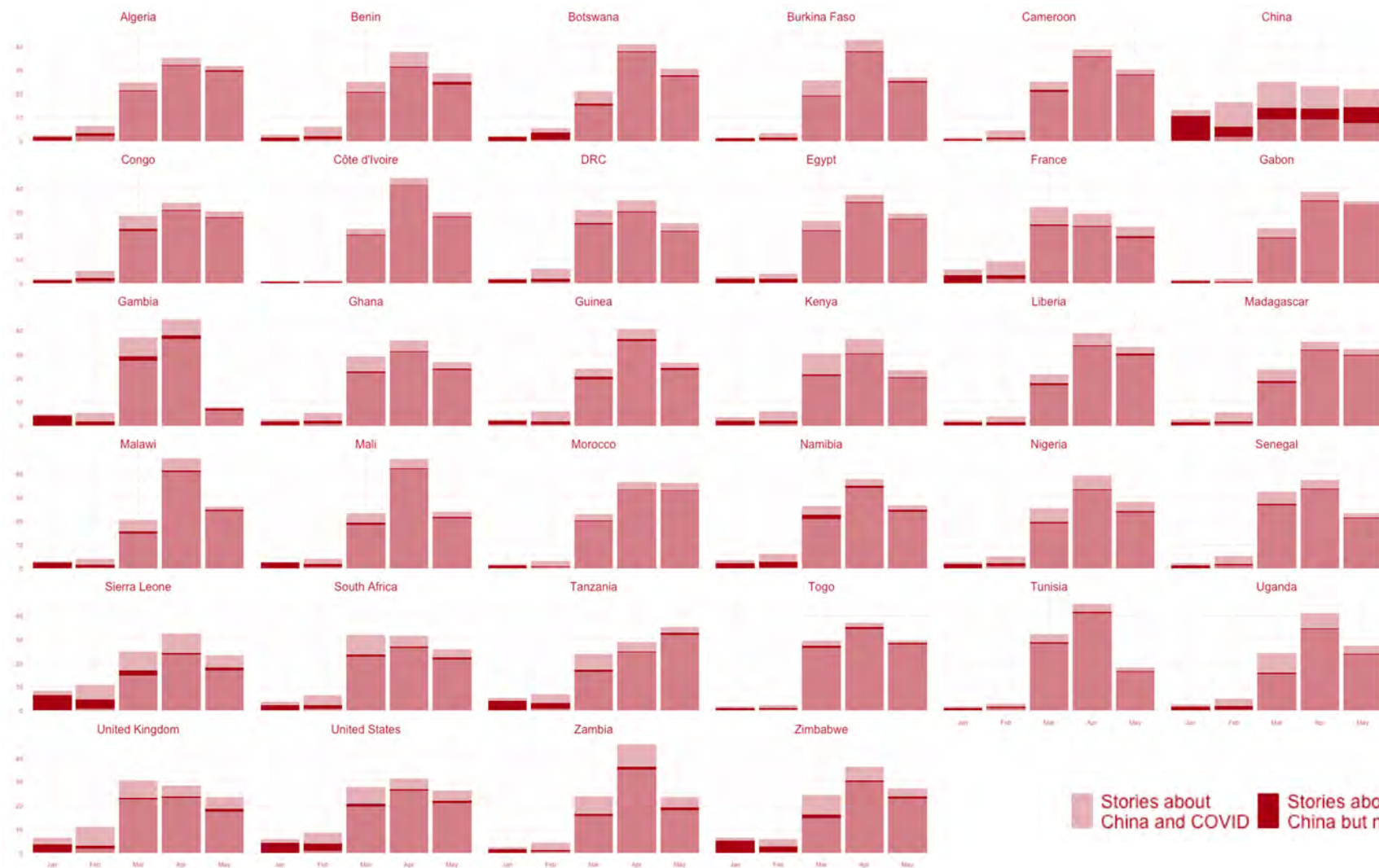


Data

- Compiled 500k news stories about COVID-19 (Jan to Jun 2020)
 - 16 French-speaking African countries
 - 16 English-speaking African countries
 - UK, France, US, China media
- Data was analyzed using two forms of machine learning to:
 - Identify how much content from China is printed in African media
 - Observe overlaps in news coverage



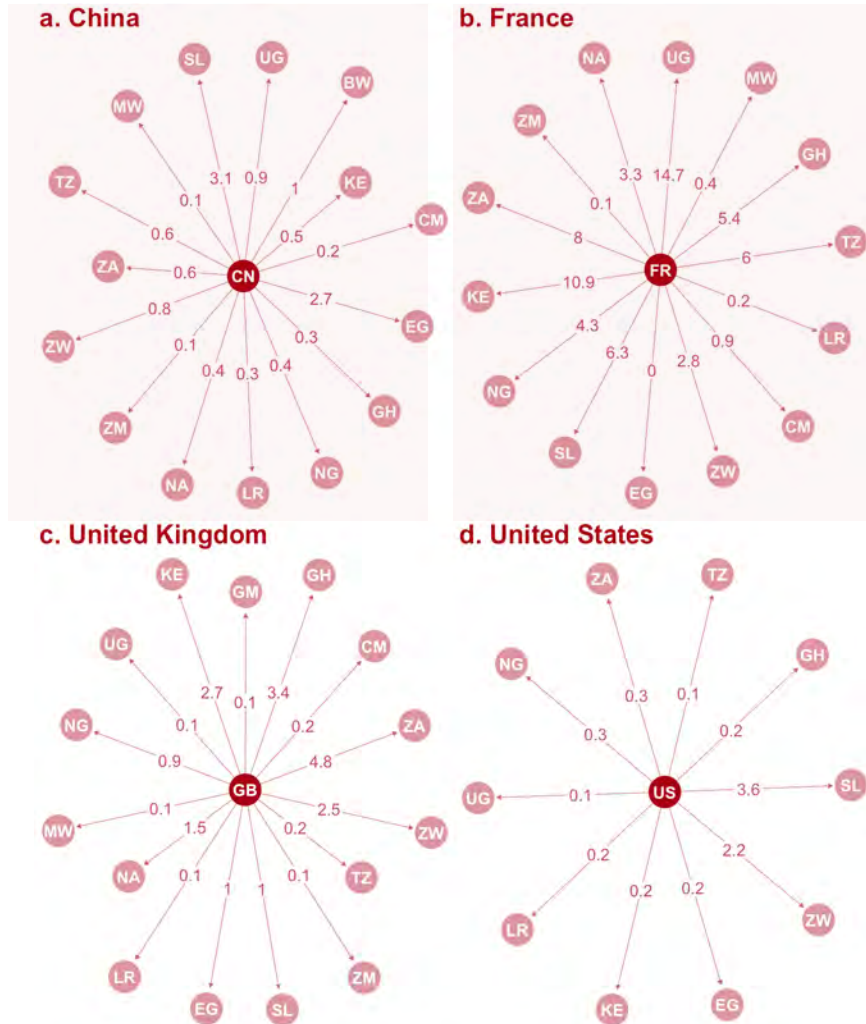
Amount Coverage about China & COVID



Limited news about China pre-COVID-19; peaked in April

Global media discuss China more
XH 225 stories/day
Reuters: 135/day
Average: 1.2/day

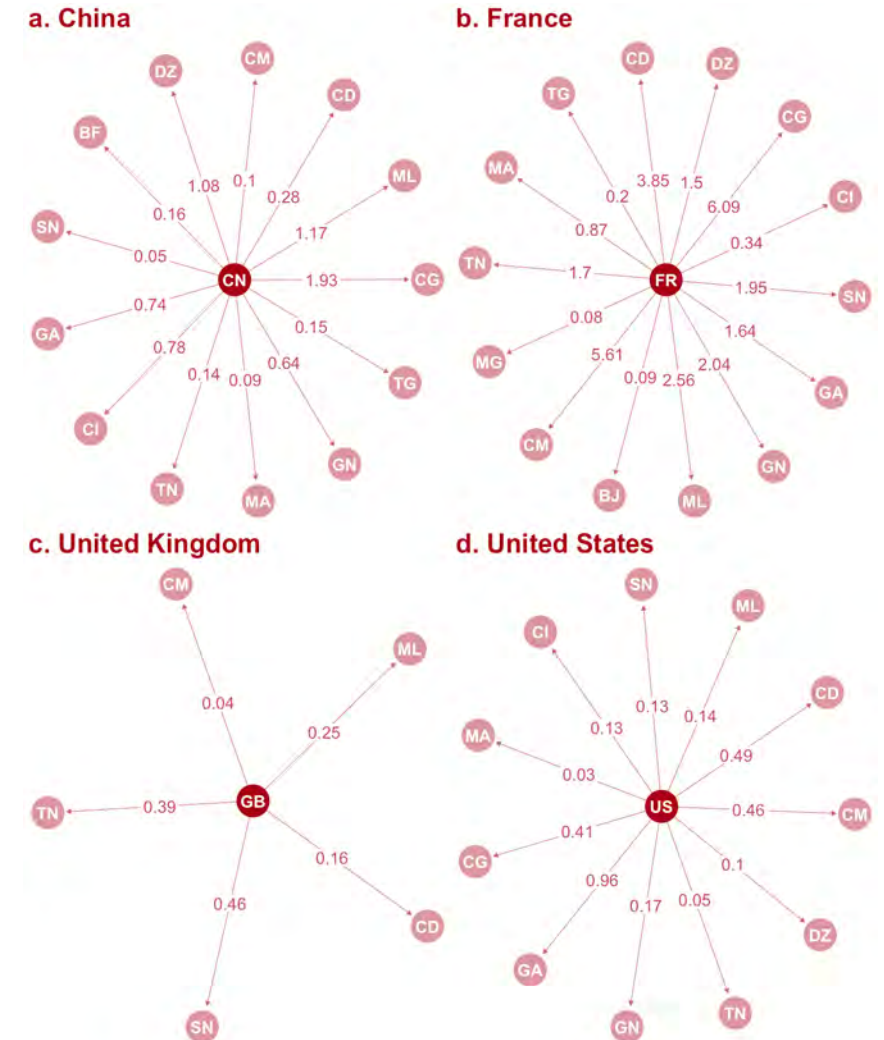
Chinese media content in African media



Around 4% of stories were from foreign sources (AFP, 1st).

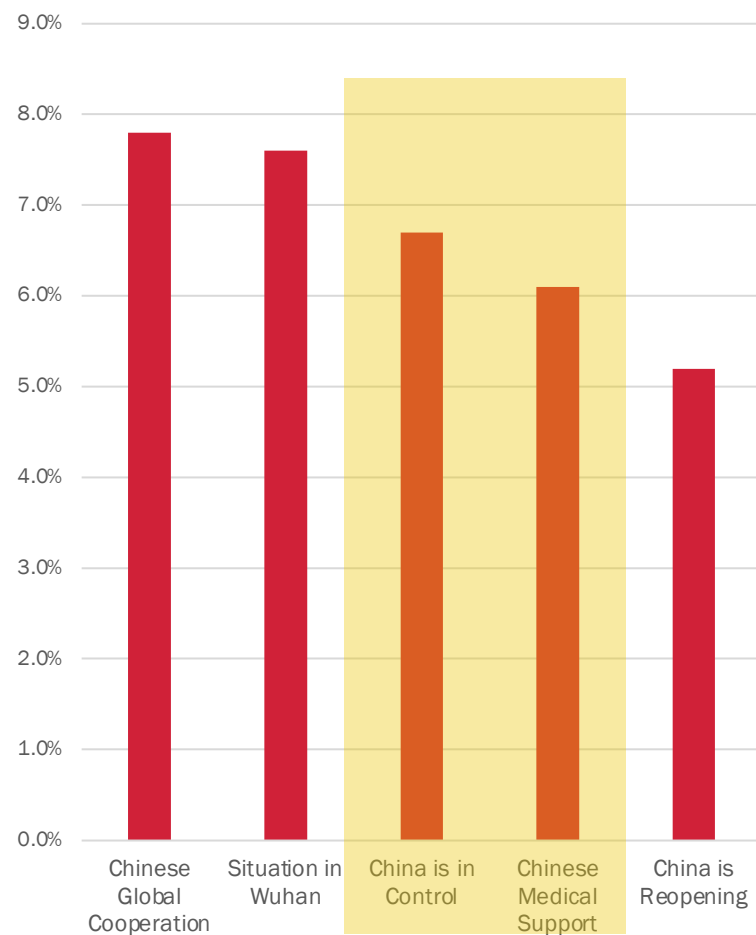
News on China and COVID came from FR (65%), UK (25%) & CN (7%) sources.

More reliance on text reuse on English (<=) that French (=>)

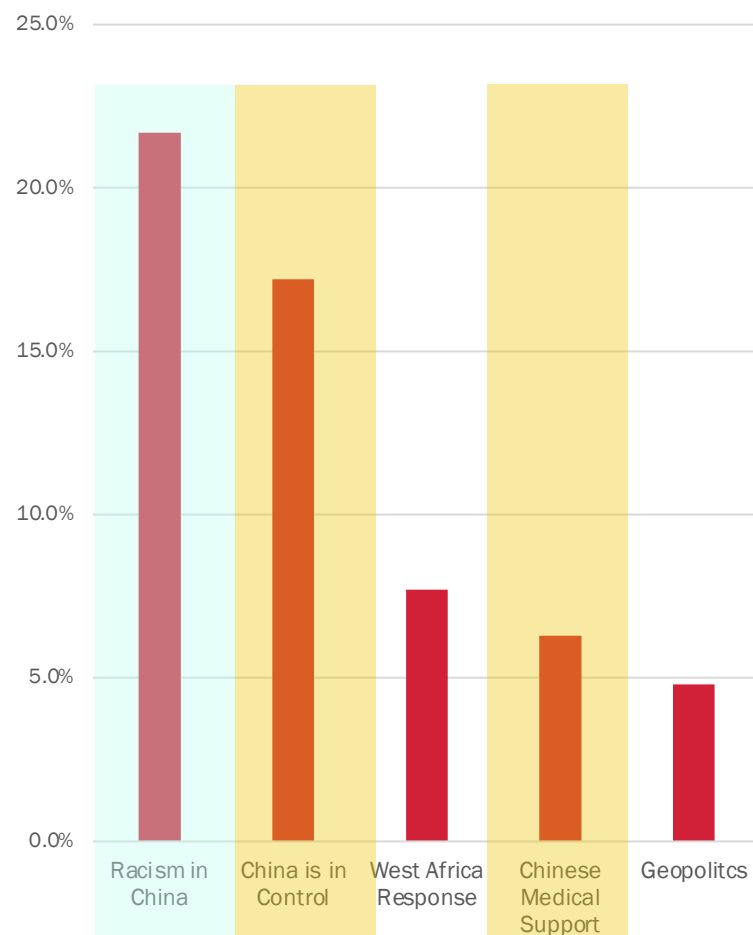


Narrative overlaps – Two cases

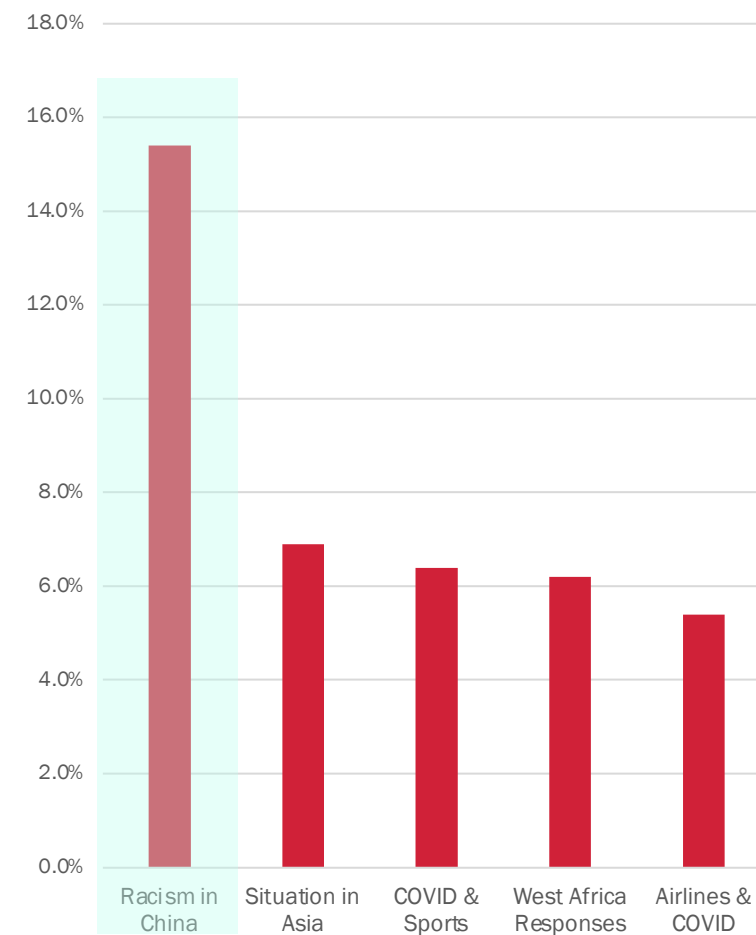
Chinese media



Gambian media



Kenyan Media



Final Ideas (I)

1. It is important to consider the **longitudinal dimension** of China's influence on foreign public opinion.
2. COVID-19 showed the potentially **negative impact of a single event** – but it also points to the resilience of China attitudes.
3. We still know **too little** about China's media across many parts of Africa (**non-English speaking countries**, for example).
4. Africa-China media engagements are **extremely asymmetric** (there are no true exchanges), which could eventually come to hurt China.

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