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African information environments and Russian disinformation tools and narratives

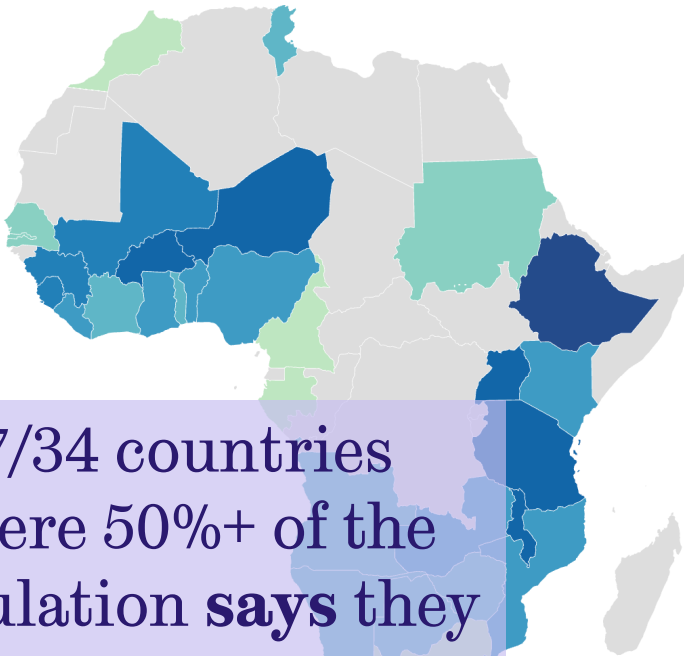
Dani Madrid-Morales | The University of Sheffield | @DMadrid_M

September 29, 2022, Wilton Park, Russia/Ukraine: Winning the global information war



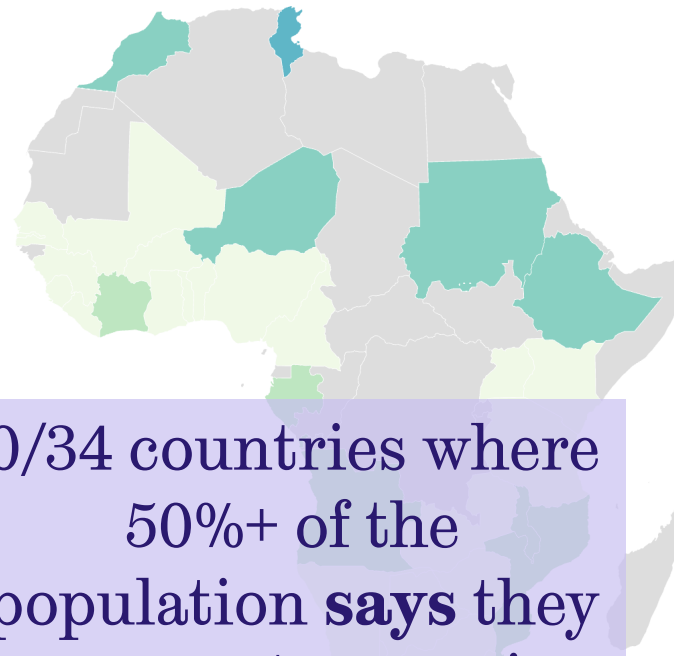
Media consumption

Never get news from social media



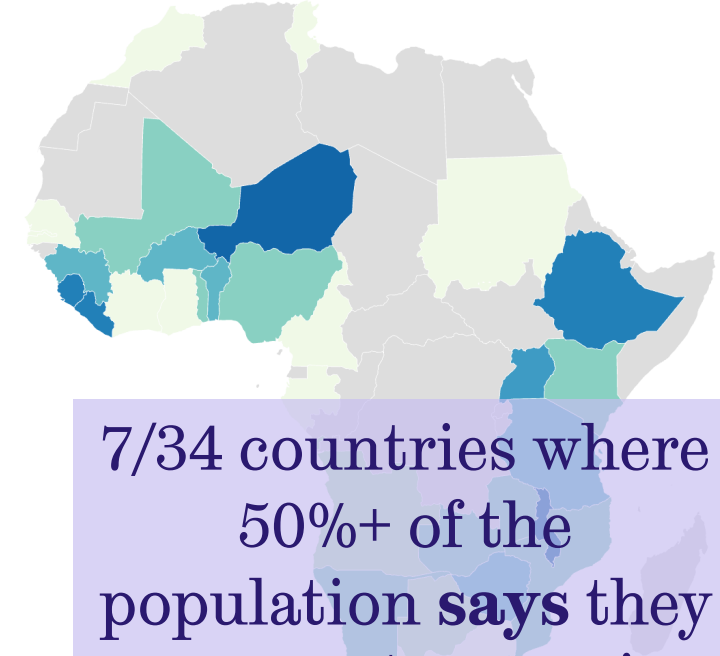
17/34 countries
where 50%+ of the
population **says** they
never get news on
social media

Never get news from radio



0/34 countries where
50%+ of the
population **says** they
never get news via
radio

Never get news from TV



7/34 countries where
50%+ of the
population **says** they
never get news via
radio



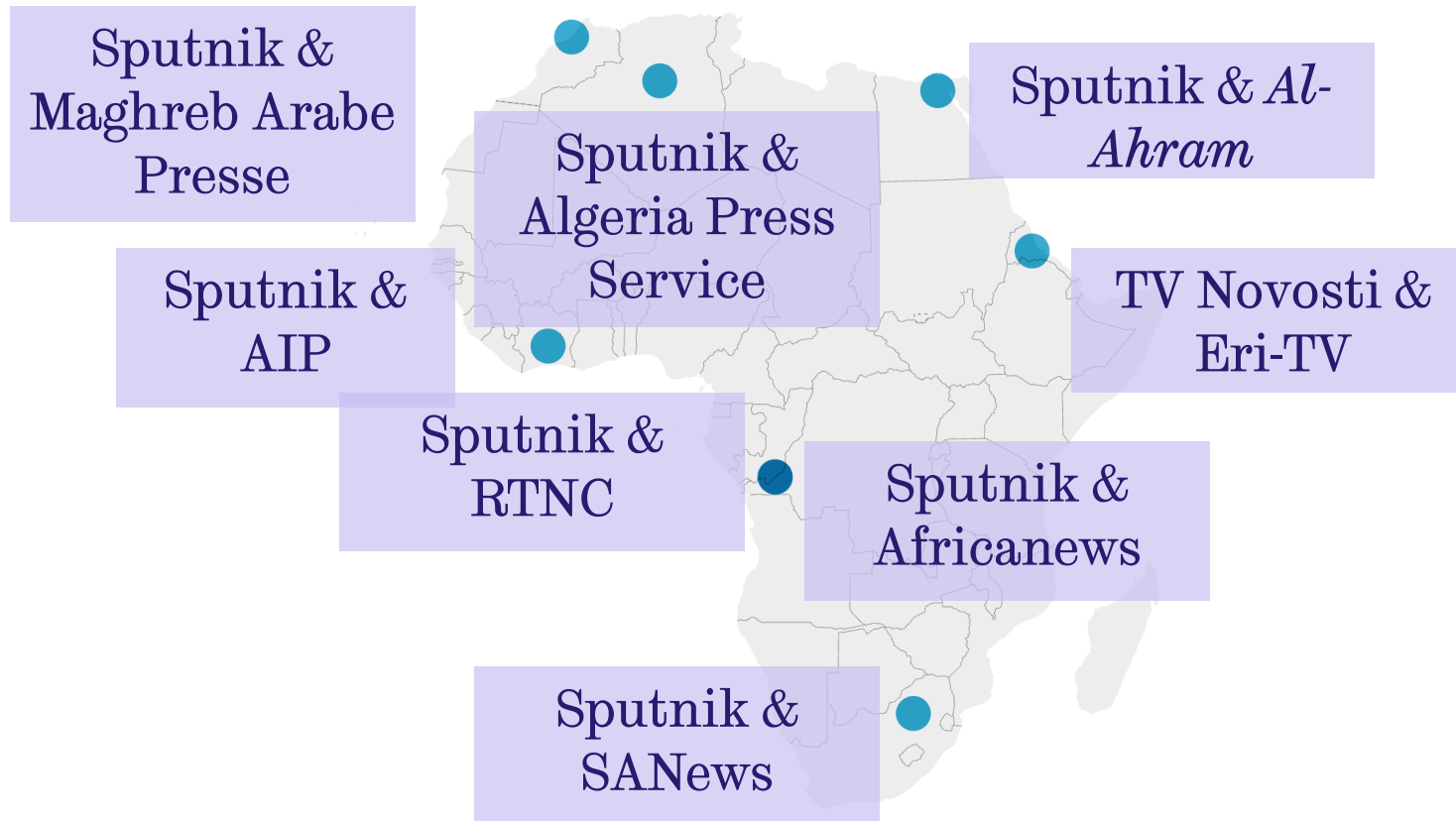
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Importance of offline spaces

... and how Russia (currently) has limited to zero capabilities to exploit these spaces

Existing “partnerships”

Russian Media Content Exchange/Provision Agreements



Media Partnerships at Sochi 2019

Эксперты: отношения России и Африки в сфере медиа нужно строить без посредников



Директор информационного центра
Организации Объединенных Наций в
Москве Владимир Кузнецов
© Валерий Шарифулин/ТАСС

Генеральный директор ТАСС Сергей Михайлов сообщил, что агентство намерено активно развивать сотрудничество с коллегами в Африке, предоставлять жителям континента возможность ознакомиться с другой, отличной от большинства западных СМИ, трактовкой событий в мире и на Африканском континенте

СОЧИ, 23 октября. /ТАСС/. Отношения России и Африки в сфере информационных обменов, медиа и СМИ нуждаются в активизации и выстраивании без посредников. Такое мнение высказали участники Форума информационных агентств "Россия - Африка", проходящего в рамках саммита Россия - Африка в Сочи.

“We should stop seeing the things through the eyes of others — through the eyes of **Reuters or Associated Press**” Director, Maghreb Arabe Presse.

“We should build a [Russian-African] partnership, which will allow us to **change the narratives on the whole continent**” Director general, Ghanaian News Agency.



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‘Borrowing boats’ (借船出海)

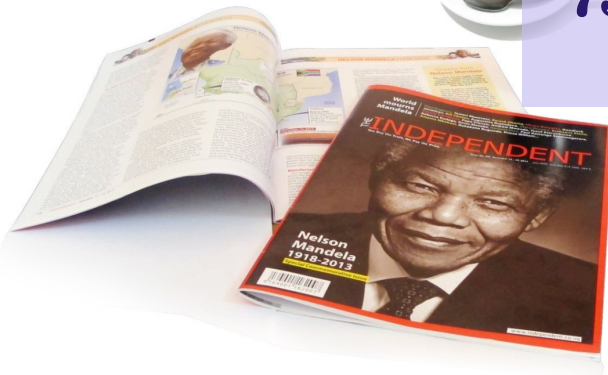
... and how **sometimes** Chinese (“legacy”) media can become conduits for Russian disinformation



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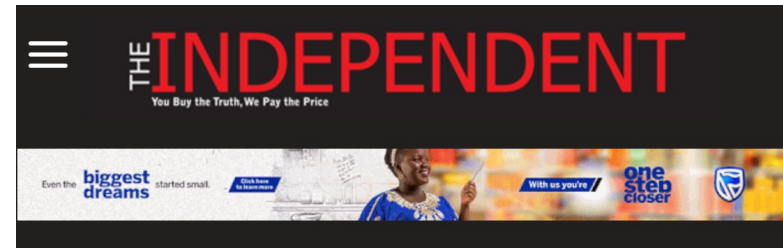


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164 reports on Ukraine
124 provided by Xinhua
75% of Ukraine stories



Vaccine-preventable diseases outbreaks on the rise in Africa: W

Home / WORLD / Russia begins second phase of special military operation in Ukraine: Lavrov

Russia begins second phase of special military operation in Ukraine: Lavrov

The Independent April 19, 2022 WORLD Leave a comment

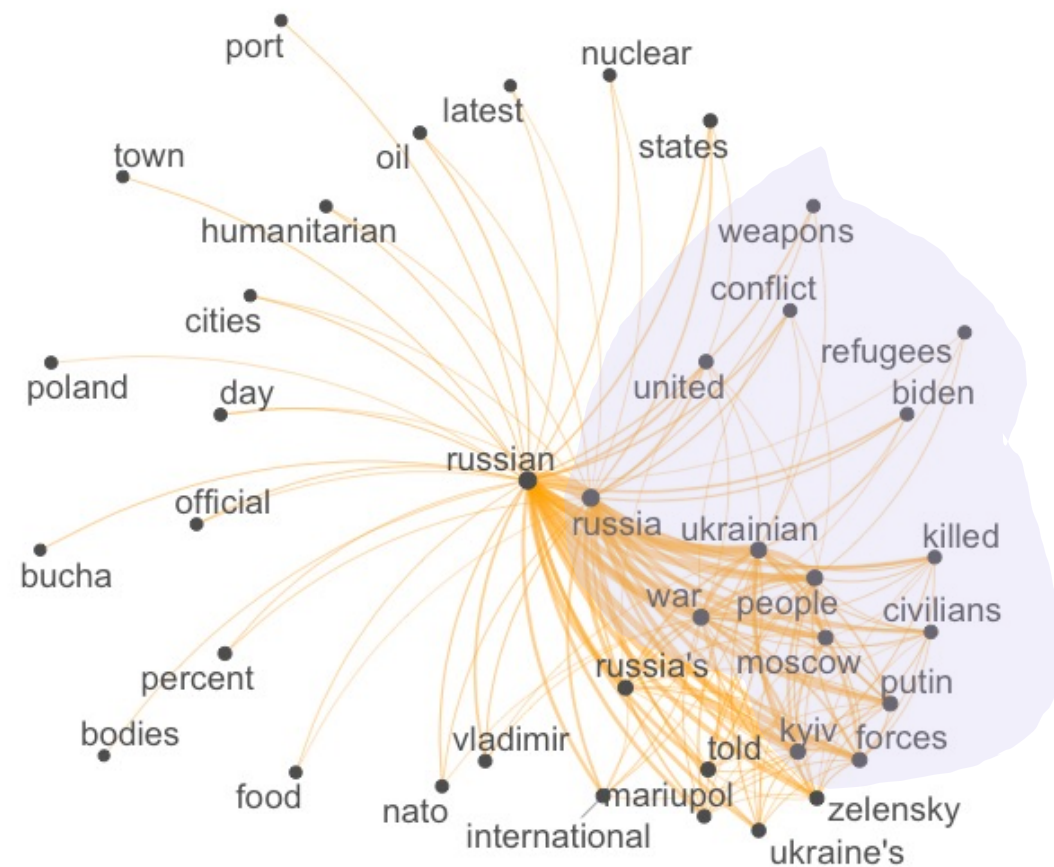


Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. File Photo

Moscow, Russia | Xinhua | The second phase of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine has begun, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Tuesday.

The operation in eastern Ukraine is aimed at "completely liberating" the populations of Donetsk and Lugansk, Lavrov said during an interview with India Today.

"This operation will continue, the next phase of this operation has now begun. There will now be an important moment during this special operation," he added.

Co-occurrence network – *Capital FM* (KE)



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9

Russian narratives

interfax



Home > Newsroom > Top Stories > Kyiv tried to urgently conceal traces of military biological program funded by U.S. Defense Dept - Russian Defense Ministry

6 Mar 2022 18:59

Kyiv tried to urgently conceal traces of military biological program funded by U.S. Defense Dept - Russian Defense Ministry



MOSCOW. March 6 (Interfax) - Facts of the urgent concealment by the regime in Kyiv of the traces of a military biological program funded by the United States Department of Defense and implemented in Ukraine were exposed during the special military operation, Russian Defense Ministry spokesperson Igor Konashenkov said at a briefing on Sunday.

"We have obtained documents from employees of Ukrainian bio laboratories that the especially dangerous pathogens of plague, anthrax, Tularemia, cholera and other deadly diseases were urgently destroyed on February 24," Konashenkov said.

"Russian expert of the Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Protection Troops are now analyzing the documents," he said.



Kiev a détruit des échantillons mortels provenant de laboratoires de guerre biologique financés par les Etats-Unis (MAE russe)



French.xinhuanet.com | Publié le 2022-03-09 à 13:52

MOSCOU, 8 mars (Xinhua) -- Les autorités de Kiev ont détruit des agents pathogènes dangereux de maladies mortelles stockés dans des laboratoires en Ukraine financés par les Etats-Unis, a confirmé mardi le ministère russe des Affaires étrangères.

Le ministère a reçu des documents d'employés de laboratoires biologiques ukrainiens confirmant la destruction en urgence d'agents pathogènes dangereux tels que la peste, l'anthrax, la tularémie, le choléra et d'autres maladies mortelles le 24 février, selon une déclaration de la porte-parole du ministère, Maria Zakharova.

Elle a ajouté que ces laboratoires étaient financés par le Pentagone et faisaient partie d'un programme d'armes biologiques.

Selon le ministère, ces agents pathogènes ont été immédiatement détruits pour dissimuler les preuves indiquant que les Etats-Unis et l'Ukraine ont violé l'article I de la Convention sur l'interdiction des armes biologiques.

Mardi également, le ministère chinois des Affaires étrangères a appelé les Etats-Unis à publier les détails de leurs laboratoires biologiques en Ukraine et a exhorté les parties concernées à assurer leur sécurité. Fin



xinhuanews

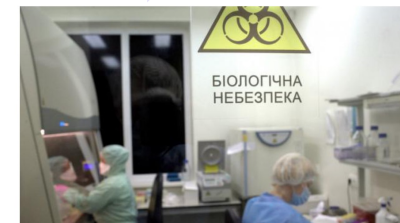
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xinhua



« Kiev a détruit des échantillons mortels provenant de laboratoires de guerre biologique financés par les Etats-Unis » (Min Aff russe)

9 mars 2022 | administrateur | Environnement | 0



« Les autorités de Kiev ont détruit des agents pathogènes dangereux de maladies mortelles stockés dans des laboratoires en Ukraine financés par les Etats-Unis », a affirmé mardi 8 mars 2022 le ministère russe des Affaires étrangères.

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29/09/2022

African information environments and Russian disinformation tools and narratives

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10

GLOBALink | Cost of living hits high in Africa as U.S. dollar's aggressive interest rate boosts global inflation

Source: Xinhua | 2022-09-14 16:40:46 | Editor: huaxia



Xinhua co-produces
content for several
national broadcasters



The U.S. dollar's aggressive interest rate increases global food and energy costs, which in turn hikes the cost of living in African countries.

US **bio**labs in Ukraine for military purpose: Russian official



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ID: 8292555

Dateline: Sept 22, 2022/File

Location: Russia;

Duration: 1'04

Source: China Central Television (CCTV), China Global Television Network (CGTN)

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Published: 2022-09-23 23:41

Last Modified: 2022-09-24 03:24

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Information infrastructure

... and how China has a competitive advantage because of the plurality of actors involved



Multiple engagements

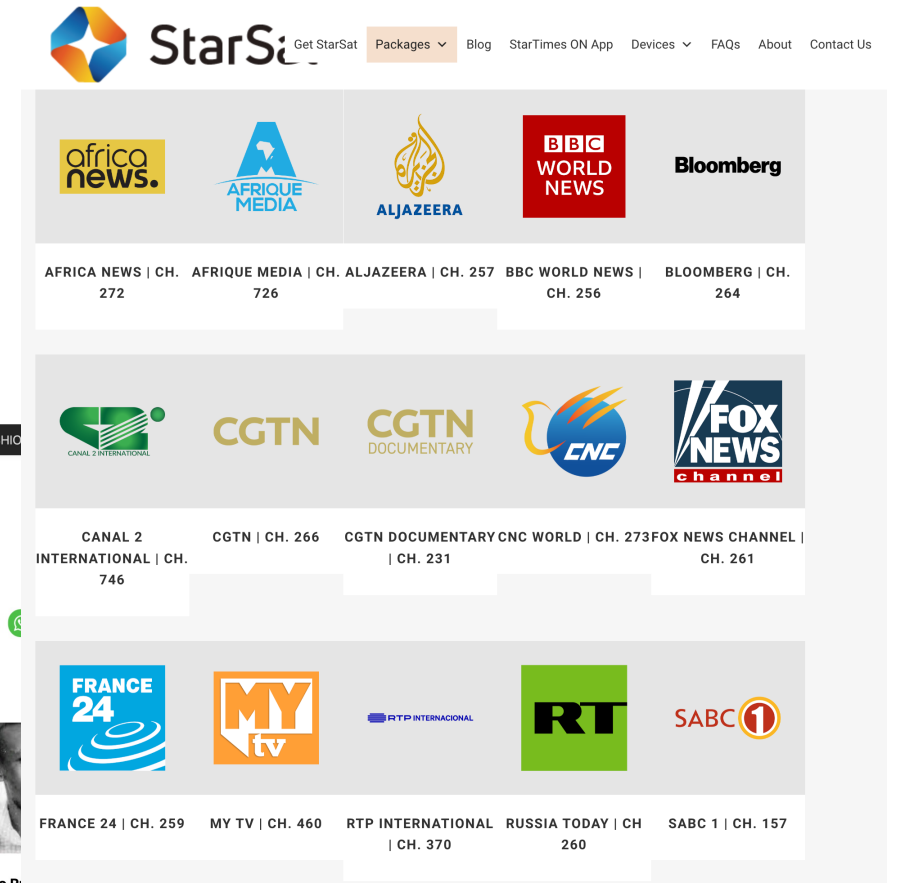
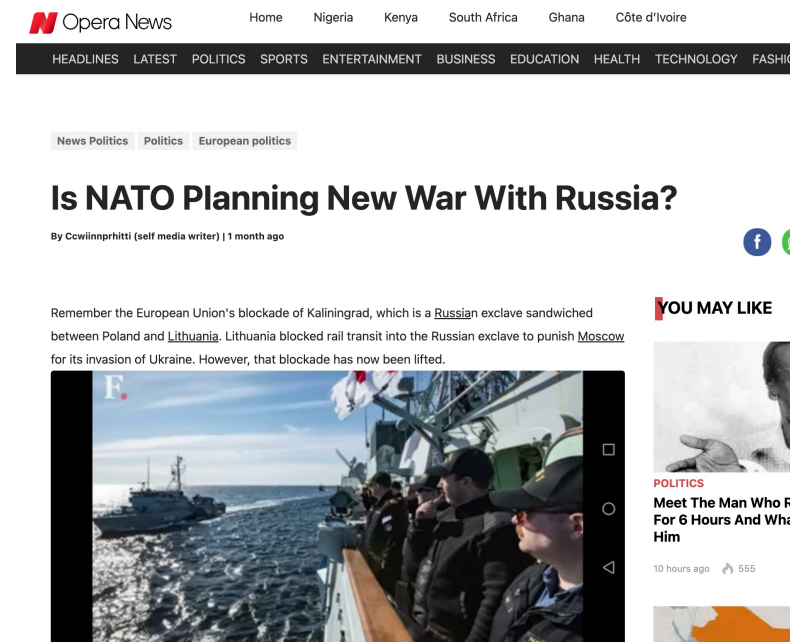
Type of Involvement	Example
Infrastructure Development	StarTimes is awarded the tender to implement the “Access to TV to 10,000 villages” project
Training	Journalists from African countries participate in workshops organised by China’s MOFA.
Content Production	StarTimes commissions Swahili and Yoruba original content for its own channels
Content Distribution	Xinhua content offered to African publishers & CGTN is aired on national broadcasters
Direct Investment	A Chinese investment holding acquires 20% of a South African media company
Public Opinion Management	Chinese Ambassadors turn to Twitter to repeat Russian narratives on the war

(Madrid-Morales & Wasserman, 2019)



Role of “Private” sector

- StarTimes
- Opera.News



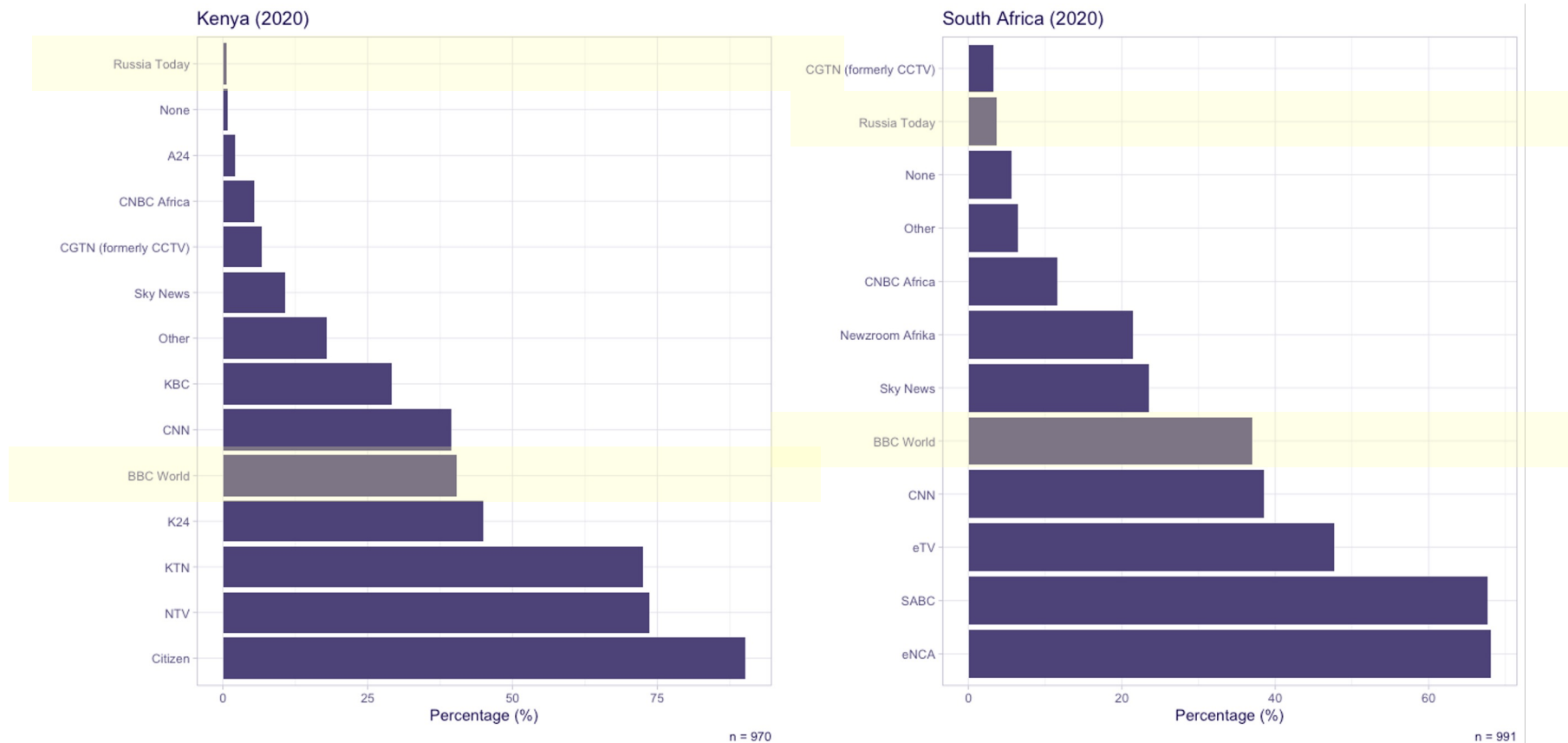


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What about audiences?

... and why it is both difficult and important
to understand “African audiences”

Limited direct reach



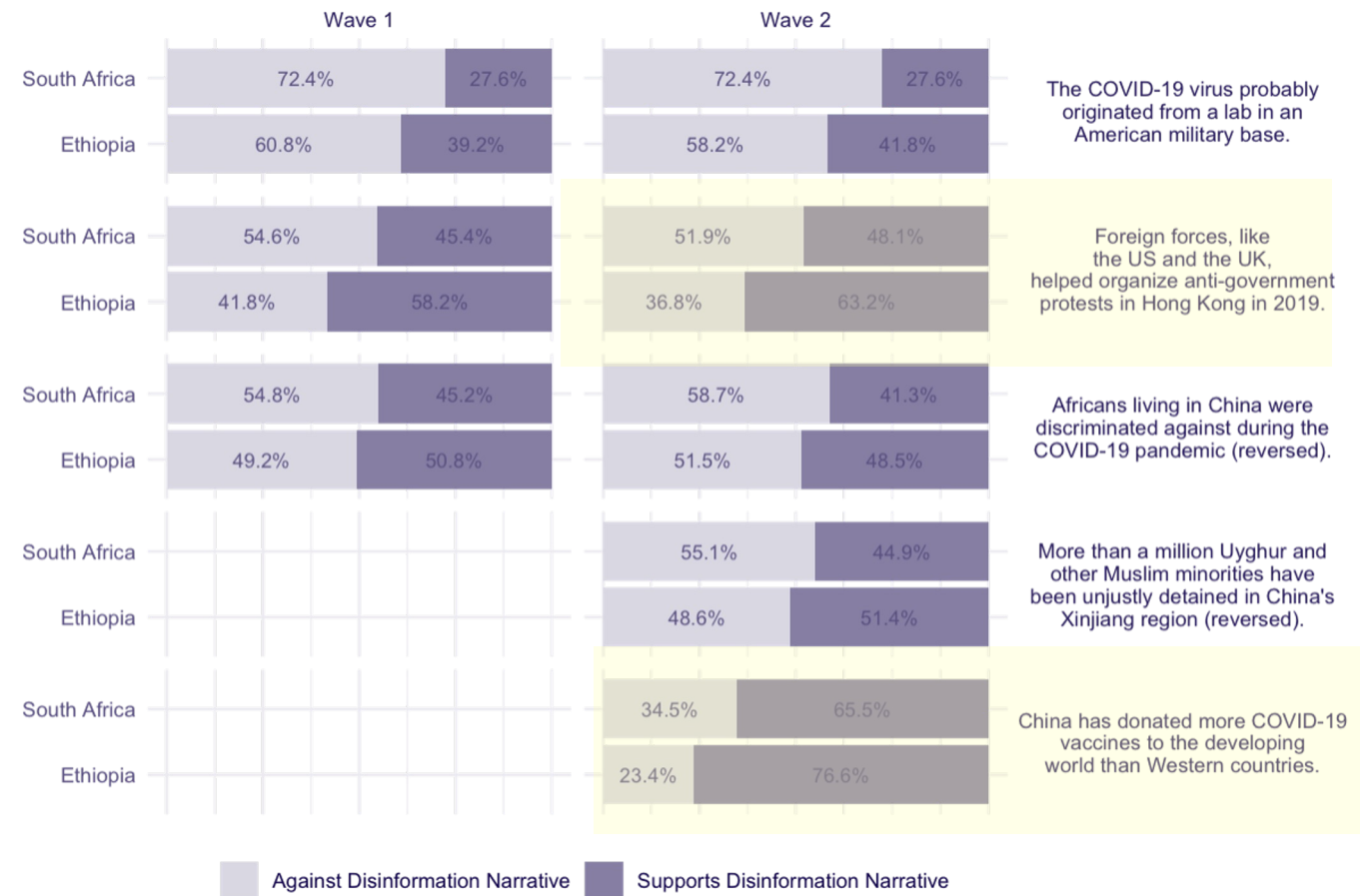


Competitive advantage

	Al Jazeera		BBC		CGTN		CNN		RT	
	2017	2021	2017	2021	2017	2021	2017	2021	2017	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

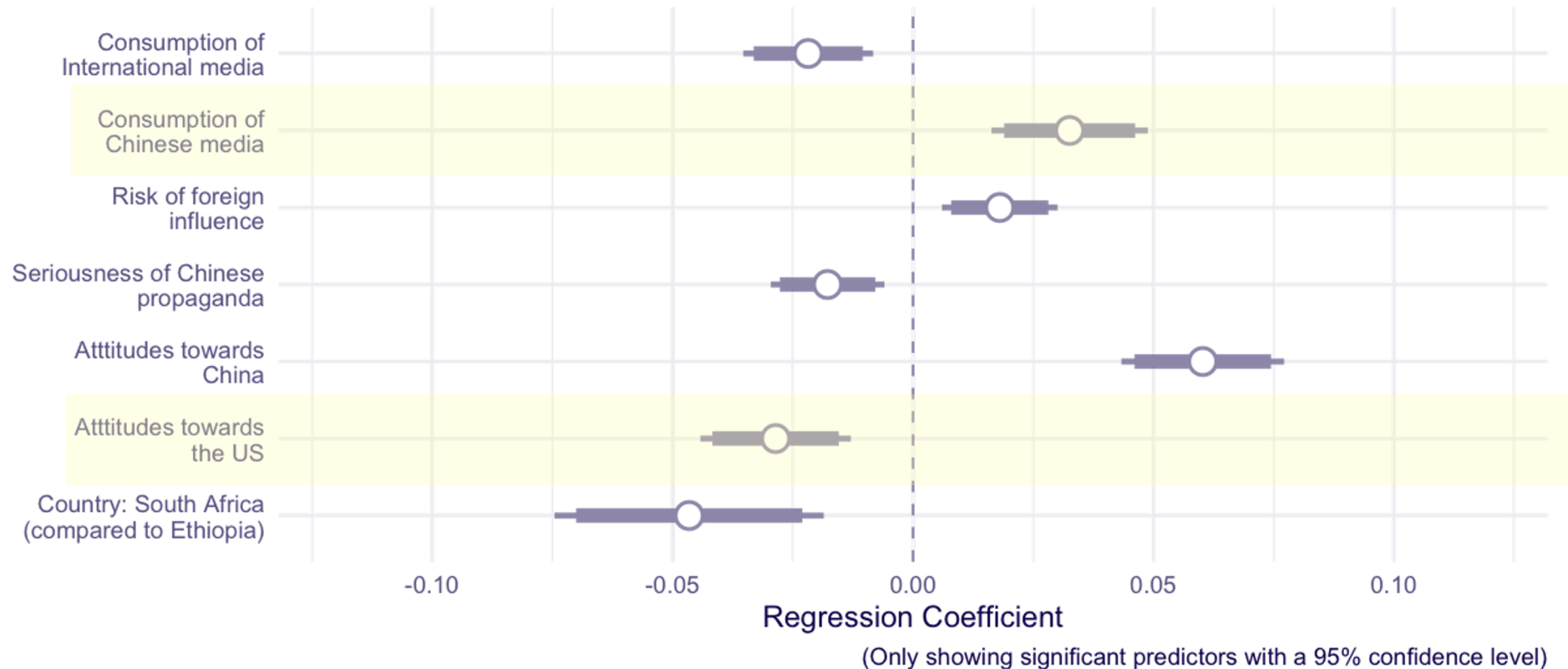
Note: A score of 1 indicates best ranked, and a score of 5 indicates lowest rank

Support for Chinese Narratives



Explaining support for Chinese narratives

Positive coefficients indicate higher support for Chinese disinformation narratives





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Information vacuums & the long game

... and why there's a need for a long-term strategy in the information space