



16 October 2013

## Press Release

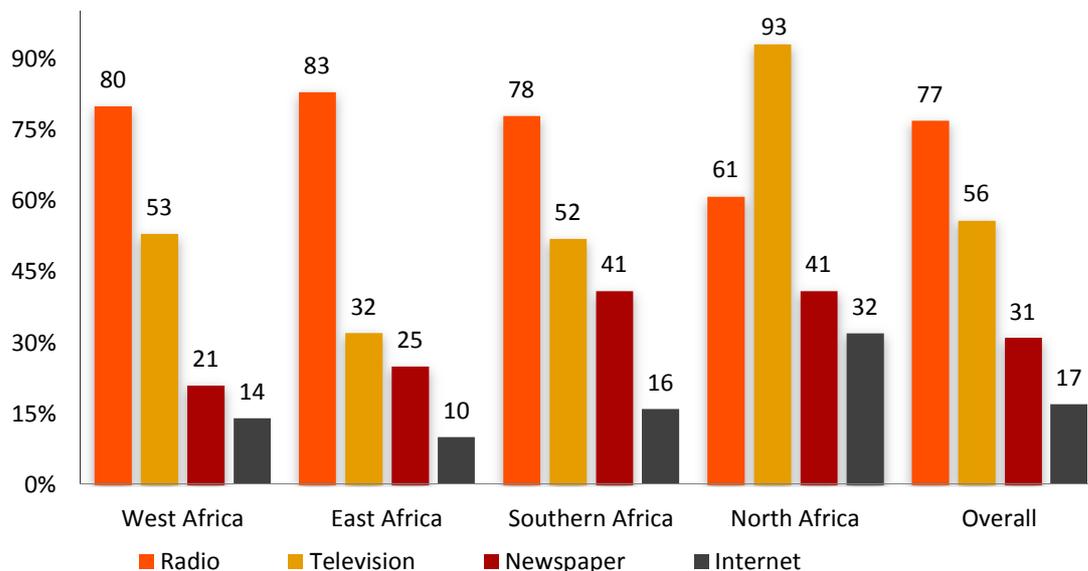
For further information or to arrange an interview with Afrobarometer's investigators, please contact Sam Balongo, 254 733 424 906 ; 254 710 690 000.

### Radio Remains Top Choice for News Even as Traditional Media Loses Ground

Radio remains the dominant news source for most Africans; more than 60% of the people in every state except Egypt consume radio news, according to Afrobarometer's survey of 34 countries. Both television and internet are growing as sources of news, chipping at radio's dominance, but 77% of people on the continent listen to radio news at least a few times every month, the survey shows.

Afrobarometer's report, "The Partnership of Freedom of Speech and Good Governance in Africa," was released today at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Nairobi. Written by Winnie Mitullah and Paul Kamau from IDS, the report tracks media use across 34 countries in 2011-2013 (Afrobarometer Round 5), and over time in 16 countries (2002-2012).

**Figure 1: Access to news from selected sources, by region, 34 countries, 2011-2013**

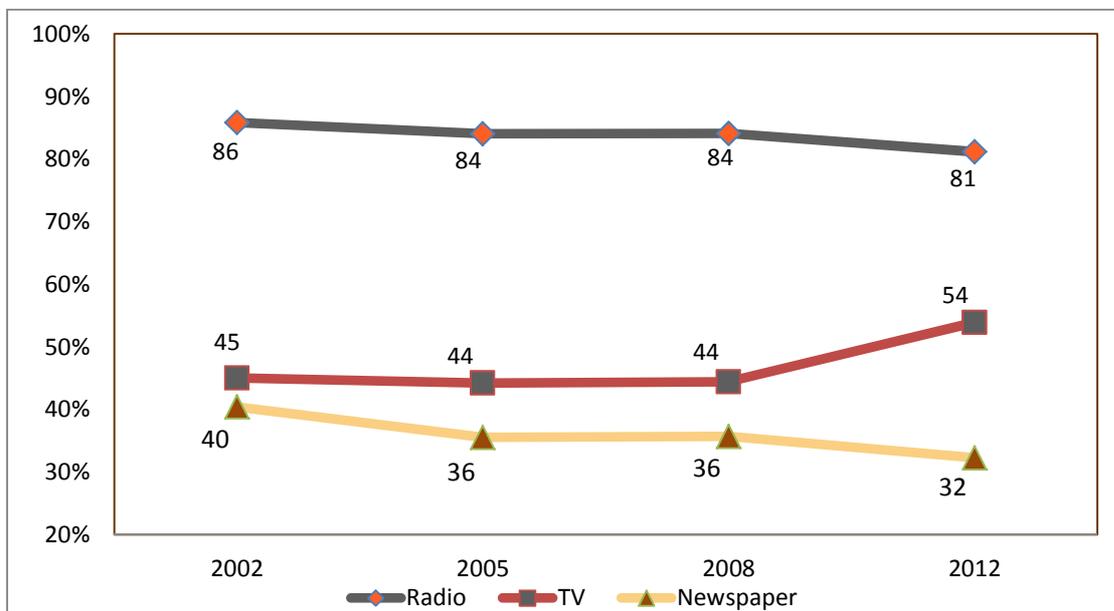


Participants were asked: 'How often do you get news from each of the following sources?' (% responding 'a few times a month', 'a few times a week' or 'every day')



Radio may, however, be losing ground even in sub-Saharan Africa. Across the 16 countries where data is available since around 2002 (Round 2), the use of radio as a source of news is down 5 percentage points, from 86% in 2002 to 81% circa 2012 (Figure 9). Newspaper readership has dropped more substantially, down 8 points, or 20%, since 2002. By contrast, television has gained ground, increasing 9 percentage points over the same period, while the internet has come onto the scene as a source of news, registering 15% across these 16 countries in Afrobarometer Round 5 (2012).<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 9: Access to news via selected sources, 16 countries, 2002-2012**



These trends in media consumption could have political implications, as both of the news sources that are increasing in importance – television and internet – are associated with heightened criticism of leaders and of government performance.<sup>2</sup> The effects are quite small, but consistent. Individuals who access television and internet news more frequently also tend to rate their leaders somewhat worse in terms of their trustworthiness and the extent to which they engage in corruption, and to give slightly lower ratings for government performance across most sectors. The effects are slightly stronger (more negative) for internet access compared

<sup>1</sup> Afrobarometer surveys did not ask about the internet as a source of news in previous rounds.

<sup>2</sup> The effects of getting news from newspapers are very similar to those for television and internet. The effects of radio listening, in contrast, are more mixed, but tend to be more positive for government leaders and government performance, rather than negative.



with television. This could suggest that exposure to a more diverse array of news sources, including those from beyond respondents' own borders, leads citizens to develop higher expectations of their governments, and to become more critical citizens.

## Key Findings

- Radio has the highest penetration among countries: 77% report listening to radio news at least a few times a month or more (Figure 8). Radio access is more than 60% in all countries across the continent, with the reported exception of Egypt (31%).
- More than half (56%) now get news from television on a regular basis, but the range in access is very wide. Nearly everyone in Algeria (99%), Egypt (96%), Tunisia (94%), Morocco (93%), and Mauritius (98%) gets news from television; less than one quarter do in Liberia (21%), Sierra Leone (20%), Malawi (18%) and Burundi (11%).
- Just one in three (31%) has regular access to newspapers, which suggests a limited culture of reading in much of Africa. Mauritius is a notable exception, where 88% read newspapers regularly, followed by South Africa (63%), Botswana (61%) and Sudan (55%). In contrast, less than 10% regularly access newspapers in Benin (9%), Niger (6%) and Burundi (5%).
- The internet is at least an occasional source of news for an average of 17% of survey respondents. Morocco shows the highest levels of internet use at 38%, followed by Mauritius, Sudan and Tunisia (all 34%), and Cape Verde (33%). But only 5% ever access news via the internet in Burundi, Malawi and Niger, and usage in several other countries falls below 10%.

## Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer (AB) conducts public opinion surveys that measure citizens' attitudes toward democracy, governance, the economy, leadership, identity, and other related issues. The AB is an independent, non-partisan, African-based network of researchers. The organization aims to give the public a *voice* in policy making by providing high-quality public opinion data to policymakers, civil society organizations, academics, media, donors and investors, and ordinary Africans.

Afrobarometer surveys are based on nationally representative samples. These 34-country results therefore represent the views of approximately three-quarters (76%) of the continent's population. Results from a 35<sup>th</sup> country, Ethiopia, will be available shortly. The total number of respondents in the 34 countries was 51,605.

Afrobarometer's economic management findings were released in Johannesburg, at the first of seven Afrobarometer release events in seven cities. Survey results on internet usage will be released in Nairobi Oct. 16; data on government services and natural resource management will



be presented in Accra on Oct. 30; corruption results will be released in Dakar on Nov. 13; taxation data will be released in Lagos on Nov. 27; and gender findings will be released in Addis Ababa on Dec. 4. Our signature democracy figures will be presented in Bamako on Dec. 12.

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