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The “Rise of the Rest” in global media and the competition over news narratives in Africa

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Shortly after the military seized control of power in Niger in July 2023, the ruling junta ordered broadcasts of Radio France International (RFI) and FRANCE 24, which are subsidiaries of the French government-owned France Médias Monde, be blocked.¹ The move followed a similar suspension of the same two news organisations in Mali in 2022 for what the military junta described as “a premeditated strategy aimed at destabilising the political transition, demoralising the Malian people and discrediting the Malian army”.² A year earlier, amidst armed conflict in the Tigray Region, the Ethiopian Media Authority issued a “final warning” to four news organisations from the United States (Associated Press and CNN) and the United Kingdom (BBC and Reuters) for “news that sow seeds of animosity among people and compromised the sovereignty of the country”. The warning received little media attention globally, but was reported by CGTN (China Global Television Network),³ a state-run multilingual broadcaster headquartered in Beijing, which has been growing its presence in Africa since the mid 2010s. Chinese state-owned media organisations are not the only to have tried to increase their footprint on the continent. Others, including Sputnik, RT, and Ruptly (all of which are under the control of the Russian government), Al Jazeera (a subsidiary of a state-owned public media conglomerate in Qatar) and TRT (also funded by the Turkish government), have also been making inroads across Africa.⁴

One of the consequences of the simultaneous occurrence of these two phenomena on the continent—the growing pressure and scrutiny over the content of once-dominant Western news media organisations on the one hand and the proliferation of new (and old) media actors on the other—is that African audiences are increasingly exposed to a wider range of views, perspectives and narratives on current affairs, which in turn may contribute to shaping their views of foreign countries, their governments and their people.⁵ These new media actors are predominantly supported by governments in countries that once belonged to the periphery and semi-periphery of the world-system, and are now at (or close to) the core. Their growing geopolitical weight, which has been sometimes described as the “Rise of the Rest”,⁶ is reflected in their willingness to be more active in global media discussions. Some of these “new” actors, such as Russia or China, have had a long-standing relationship with the African continent, and their media played a significant role during liberation struggles in the 20th century, providing a platform for the dissemination of political views that were largely absent in colonial media.⁷ Now, after several decades of a quasi-monopoly by US and European media globally, in what many called an extended period of media imperialism,⁸ the “Rest” are actively engaged in the African media ecosystem, bringing attention to issues not often covered by

¹ FRANCE 24. 2023, 3 August. RFI and FRANCE 24 condemn the suspension of their broadcasts in Niger. <https://www.france24.com/en/france/20230803-rfi-and-france-24-condemn-the-suspension-of-their-broadcast-s-in-niger>

² Reuters. 2022, 17 March. Mali to suspend French broadcasters France 24 and RFI. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/frances-rfi-radio-france-24-television-be-suspended-mali-2022-03-17/>

³ CGTN. 2021, 20 November. Warning letters to BBC, CNN, Reuters, AP: Ethiopian Media Authority. <https://newsaf.cgtn.com/news/2021-11-20/Warning-letters-to-BBC-CNN-Reuters-AP-Ethiopian-Media-Authority-15kmVn9Ttwk/index.html>

⁴ Michałowska-Kubś, A. & Kubś, J. 2023. Kremlin spent 1.9 billion USD on propaganda last year, the budget exceeded by a quarter. Debunk.org. <https://www.debunk.org/kremlin-spent-1-9-billion-usd-on-propaganda-last-year-the-budget-exceeded-by-a-quarter>

TRT. 2023. TRT Afrika: Türkiye's public broadcaster launches Africa edition <https://www.trtworld.com/africa/trt-afrika-t%C3%BCrkiye-s-public-broadcaster-launches-africa-edition-66641>;

KAS. 2021. *It's about Their Story: How China, Turkey and Russia Try to Influence Media in Africa*. Johannesburg: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.

<https://www.kas.de/en/web/medien-afrika/einzeltitel/detail/-/content/it-is-about-their-story>

⁵ Madrid-Morales, D., & Wasserman, H. 2022.. How Effective Are Chinese Media in Shaping Audiences' Attitudes Towards China? A Survey Analysis in Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa. *Online Media and Global Communication* 1 (4): pp. 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1515/omgc-2022-0047>.

⁶ Zakaria, F. 2011. *The Post-American World and the Rise of the Rest*. New York: Penguin

⁷ Friedman, Jeremy Scott. *Shadow Cold War: The Sino-Soviet Competition for the Third World*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015.

⁸ Boyd-Barrett, Oliver. *Media Imperialism*. London: SAGE Publications, 2015.

US/European media, and offering a set of worldviews that seem to resonate with existing anti-imperialist and anti-Western sentiment on the continent.

In this chapter we interrogate the extent to which the ongoing changes in the media environment in a range of African countries can be connected to perceived changes in public attitudes towards the “West”, which are discussed in other chapters in this Report. We draw on recent survey data we collected in Angola, Ethiopia, South Africa and Zambia⁹ to demonstrate the diversity of audience engagement with and opinions towards foreign media. In addition, we elaborate on the ongoing scramble between global powers to influence the way African audiences perceive their policies, political actions, and engagement with the African continent. Our analysis of hundreds of news websites over a period of 12 months further highlights the importance of de-homogenising the continent, given the existence of significant differences in how news media in different parts of the continent narrate “Western” countries.

The slow “de-Westernization” of Africa’s news media landscape

The African media landscape has always been shaped by geopolitical forces. Foreign influence through the media started during colonialism, when news media were both a foreign policy tool and a means to “win the hearts and minds” of Africans.¹⁰ In the aftermath of colonialism, former colonial powers retained an influence over the African media sphere which was otherwise widely controlled by postcolonial governments. Much foreign influence on public opinion at the time was exerted through radio. The Cold War, which lasted from the late 1940s to the early 1990s, was characterised by ideological and geopolitical competition between the United States and the Soviet Union (USSR), and Africa became a battleground for influence. At the time, radio channels such as the BBC, Voice of America (VOA) and RFI served as prominent vehicles of “Western” influence, competing with their adversaries from the Communist Bloc, like the USSR’s Radio Moscow, China’s Radio Peking and Czechoslovakia’s Prague Radio, all of which supported the struggle for liberalisation in white-minority controlled countries (Rhodesia, Namibia and South Africa).¹¹

When African media started a process of liberalisation in the 1990s, many Western media houses continued to exert influence through partnerships with local media, providing media development and training programmes.¹² In a liberalised media market, the constant flow of content (news and entertainment) from Europe and North America to the continent led many to talk about a new stage of media and cultural imperialism, a thesis that held that foreign media, particularly US media, undermined the cultural autonomy of African states¹³ and that the global media system was organised along an unequal, centre-periphery structure.¹⁴ At the beginning of the 21st century, conceptualisations of media imperialism became outdated as global programming formats became localised in Africa¹⁵ and rival media outlets from elsewhere in the world started to compete for dominance over the globalised African media space. This competition was accelerated by the development of new satellite and digital technologies. African satellite broadcasters such as the South African company Multichoice’s satellite channel DStv and Nigeria’s Hitv competed against each other and with international channels from outside the continent such as French-owned Canal+.¹⁶

The process that started with the liberalisation and digitalization of the media space has led to a process of slow but sure “de-Westernization” in African media. Recent years have seen the arrival of new players (Turkey, Qatar, Iran) and the return of old ones (Russia, China), whose primary aim is to shape public opinion and local media narratives. Today, the contestation between different geopolitical interests for

⁹ We collected data between November and December 2022 through online surveys. We collected 998 responses in Angola, 1,203 in Ethiopia, 1,203 in South Africa and 1,209 in Zambia. In all countries our sample has quasi parity of male and female respondents. The majority of respondents are under 45, and live in Urban areas.

¹⁰ Fiedler, A. & M-S. Frère. 2016. Radio France Internationale and Deutsche Welle in Francophone Africa: International Broadcasters in a Time of Change, *Communication, Culture and Critique*, Volume 9, Issue 1, 1 March 2016, Pages 68–85, <https://doi.org/10.1111/cccr.12131>

¹¹ Mosia, L., C. Riddle & J. Zaffiro. 1994. From Revolutionary to Regime Radio: Three Decades of Nationalist Broadcasting in Southern Africa. *Africa Media Review* 8(1):1-24

¹² Fiedler, A. & M-S. Frère *ibid*.

¹³ Fiedler, A. & M-S. Frère *ibid*

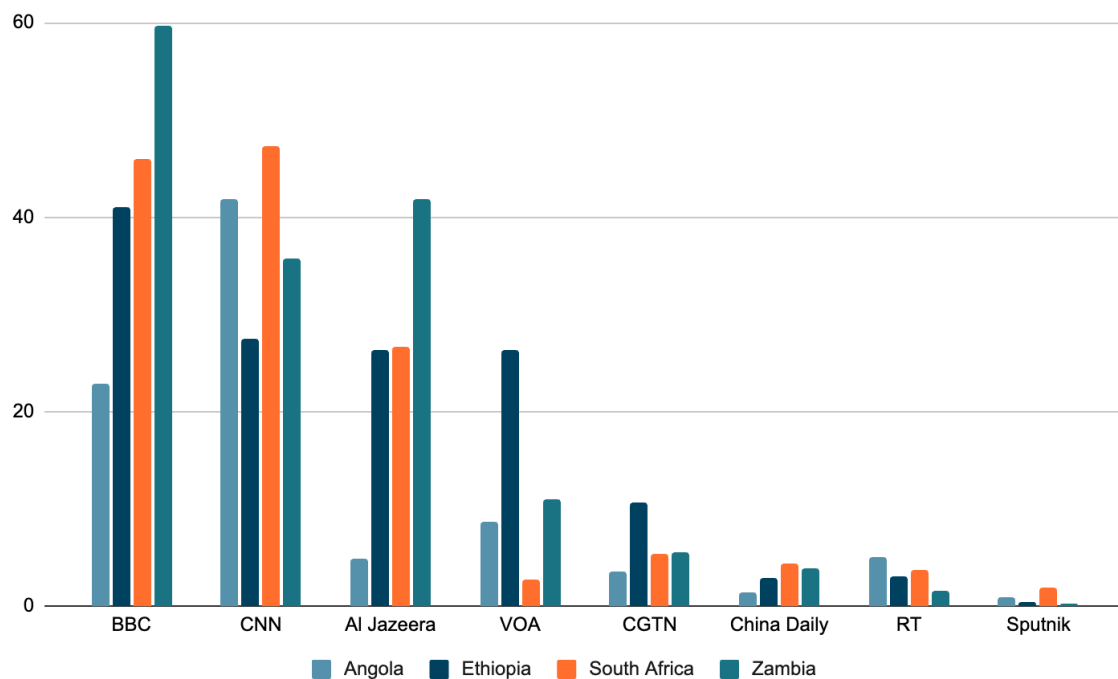
¹⁴ Ndlela, M.N. 2012. Global Television Formats in Africa: Localizing *Idol*. In T.Oren and S. Shahaf (eds.). *Global Television Formats*. London: Routledge, pp. 242-259.

¹⁵ Ndlela, *ibid*.

¹⁶ Ndlela, *ibid*.

influence is also no longer limited to the broadcasting arena only, but also extends into the digital space, in particular on social media.¹⁷ With mobile phone use on the rise and news media organisations increasingly distributing their content cross-platforms, the possibilities for African media consumers to access content representing a plurality of points of view is growing. That said, the penetration and reach of many of these new actors is still much lower than for well-established news organisations, particularly those based in former colonial powers. This can be seen in **Figure 1**, which presents data from a survey of four African countries in late 2022 focused on understanding media consumption habits. In three of the countries we surveyed, Ethiopia, South Africa and Zambia, over 40% of respondents said they had used BBC to get news in the previous week. Figures were above 20% in all countries for CNN. Angola revealed itself as a consistent outlier in the survey, most likely due to the fact that most of the international media outlets we asked people about don't have a Portuguese version.¹⁸

Figure 1. Have you got news from any of these sources in the last 7 days?



Compared to “Western” media, and leaving Al Jazeera aside, broadcasters like China’s CGTN and Russia’s RT enjoy a very small following. Except for Ethiopia, where around 10% of respondents said they had got news from the Chinese-owned TV station in the previous week, figures for other countries were around 5%. We see even lower readership/viewership values for the other emerging news outlets like Sputnik, a Russian news agency with a very large presence on social media, or *China Daily*, a Chinese English-language newspaper that is widely distributed for free in large African cities, such as Addis Ababa, Lusaka and Johannesburg. The differences across countries that we see in **Figure 1**, are the first indication of the very different nature of media consumption patterns across the continent, which might in turn indicate that, in their efforts to reshape news narratives across the continent, different foreign actors might have different outcomes due to a variety of factors.

In the same survey where news consumption data were collected, we asked people about their views of the media in China, Russia and the US. We present a summary of the responses in **Figure 2**. As in the audience data, differences between countries are quite striking here too. For example, in Angola 86% of respondents said they strongly or somewhat agree with the statement “The media in the US are free and objective”. In Ethiopia, that figure is just 33%. These values reflect, in part, the growing anti-US sentiment in Ethiopia, which appeared to peak during the most recent military conflict in Tigray. Not only were Ethiopians

¹⁷ Douzet, F., Limonier, K., Mihoubi, S., & René, E. 2021. Mapping the spread of Russian and Chinese contents on the French-speaking African web. *Journal of Cyber Policy*, 6(1), 50–67. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23738871.2021.1943477>

¹⁸ The exception being CNN Portugal, which is available through satellite TV in Angola.

more critical of US media, but also of the US government (only 54% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “The US is competently governed”, compared to 87% in Angola, 73% in South Africa and 74% in Zambia). When taken together, data in **Figure 2** point at what could be one of the weakest points in efforts by Beijing and Moscow to shape public opinion on the continent: audiences appear to see the media in these countries as neither free nor objective. We find more evidence of the gap in perceptions across countries in **Figure 3**, where we present responses to the question “What country is the main source of foreign propaganda in your country?”. The US scores extremely high in Ethiopia, where 85% of respondents list it as their top choice. The US is also the top choice in Zambia (35%) and South Africa (37%), underscoring, perhaps, the persistence of views of US transnational media as agents of media and cultural imperialism.

Figure 2. “How much do you agree with this statement: “The media in China/Russia/US are free and objective?””

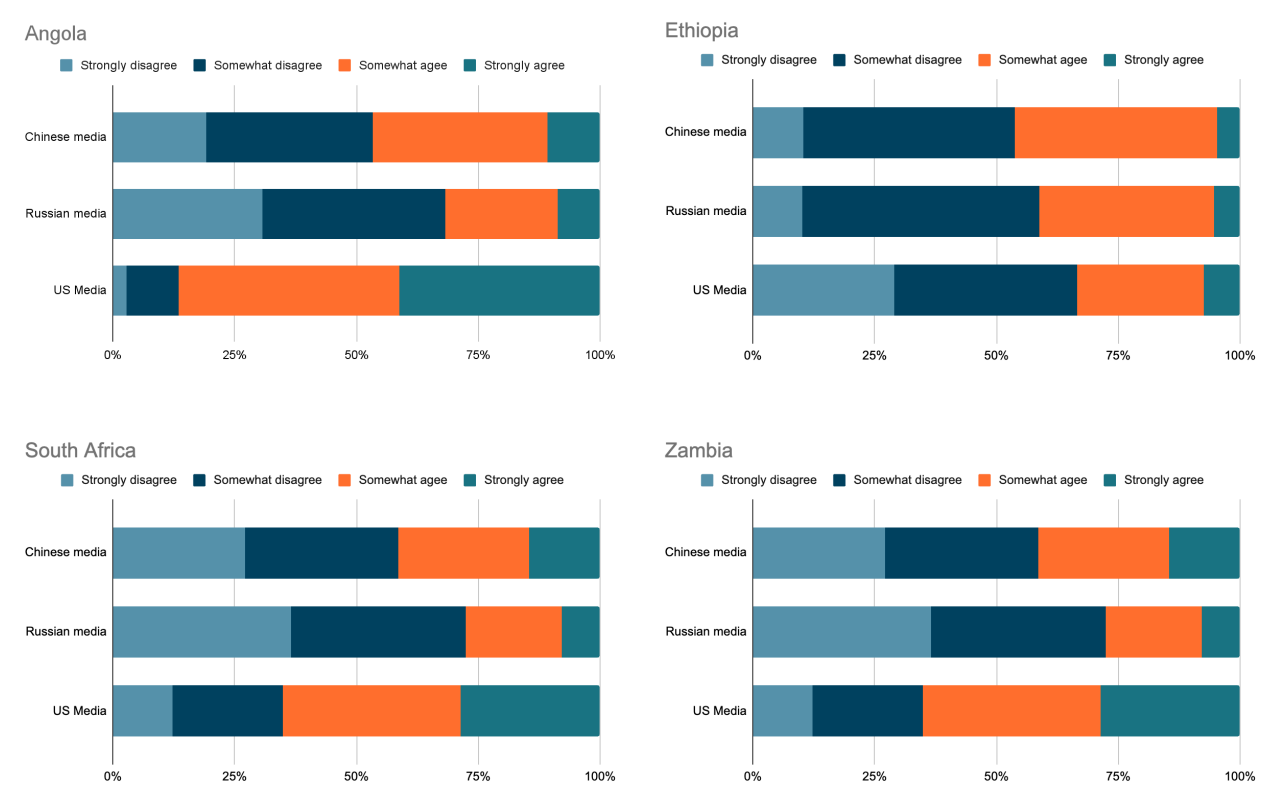
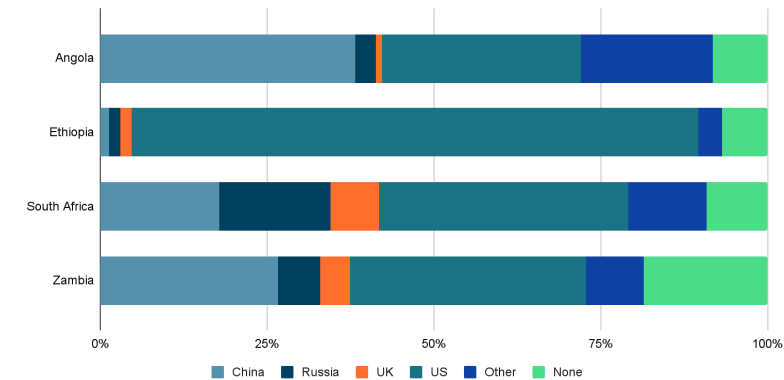


Figure 3. “What country is the main source of foreign propaganda in your country?”



The scramble to shape African public opinion

One of the reasons why governments invest in the internationalisation of their news media might be that academic research has shown that people rely extensively on the media to make sense of what is happening

outside of their country.¹⁹ For a long time (and some might say still today), it was predominantly Western news agencies such as Reuters or Agence France-Presse (AFP) that were able to shape public opinion through the news media. In Africa, these agencies were not only sources of information but also instruments of influence and propaganda, thereby shaping international perceptions of events on the continent and contributing to the broader geopolitical dynamics.²⁰ Their reports were (are) used by newspapers, radio and television stations worldwide. Some African countries launched their own agencies in the postcolonial period, but these were often not trusted because they were considered to be propaganda outlets.²¹ In an attempt to counter the influence of Western news agencies which had been accused of presenting a biased and unfair image of Africa, a continent-wide news agency, the Pan-African News Agency (PANA) was established in 1983.²² Today other foreign agencies have grown their presence on the continent, including Xinhua (China), Ruptly (Russia) and Anadolu (Turkey). These agencies are subsidised by the government and provide content for free or at a reduced cost to African newsrooms, as opposed to commercially oriented Western agencies like AFP.²³ Xinhua, alongside other Chinese media with a strong footprint on the continent, are important vehicles through which the Chinese government has tried to influence the news agenda in Africa.

China, in fact, offers a good example of the multitude of efforts by countries outside the West to get their viewpoints present on African media. Over the last decade, the Chinese government has facilitated and financed activities including a) the distribution of Chinese media content through, for example, signing agreements with national broadcasters to distribute Chinese content locally; b) building telecommunications infrastructure, including the provision of digital TV access to rural communities; c) exchange and training programmes for media professionals, who get an opportunity to visit and report China firsthand; and, d) public opinion management, including the direct engagement with audiences via social media.²⁴ It is especially this latter aspect, the “management” of African public opinion that has seen the most significant shift in recent times as Beijing responded to several crises, including its handling of the outbreak of COVID-19,²⁵ a wave of pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong and accusations of genocide in Xinjiang.²⁶ When projecting its voice on these issues globally, China has adopted a range of anti-US narratives. Some of these might resonate well in Africa and in other parts of the Global South, where years of colonial abuse and military interventions have left strong anti-Western attitudes amongst parts of the population.

Two other episodes, the latest outbreak in the long-running Russian occupation of Ukraine and France’s failures in the Sahel region, further illustrate the potential appeal among African audiences of narratives that focus on highlighting what some see as the shortcomings of “Western” liberal democracies. These narratives, largely absent in reports by media outlets like BBC, CNN or Reuters, do get significant attention on Chinese and Russian outlets, for example. In regards to the war in Ukraine, Beijing has contributed to spreading Russian propaganda, stifled criticism of Russia’s invasion and spread anti-US disinformation, such as the existence of US-run bioweapon labs in Ukraine.²⁷ Using its large media presence across most of Africa, China has promoted narratives that portray the “West” as holding equal (if not more)

¹⁹ Wanta, W., Golan, G., & Lee, C. (2004). Agenda Setting and International News: Media Influence on Public Perceptions of Foreign Nations. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 81(2), 364–377.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/107769900408100209>

²⁰ Paterson, C. (2011). *The international television news agencies: The world from London*. Peter Lang.

²¹ Kivikuru, U. 1998. From State Socialism to Deregulation. In: Boyd-Barrett, O. & T. Rantanen (eds.). *The Globalization of News*. London: Routledge, pp. 137-153

²² Wauthier, C. 1987. PANA: The Voice of Africa. *Africa Report*. 32(2):65

²³ Xin, X. (2009). Xinhua News Agency in Africa. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 1(3), 363–377.

<https://doi.org/10.1386/jams.1.3.363/1>

²⁴ Madrid-Morales, D. (2021). Sino-African Media Cooperation? An Overview of a Longstanding Asymmetric Relationship. In *It’s about their story: How China, Turkey and Russia try to influence media in Africa* (pp. 9–70). Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

²⁵ Jacob, J.T. (2020). ‘To Tell China’s Story Well’. China’s International Messaging during the COVID-19 pandemic. *China Report* 56(3): 374-392.

²⁶ Olander, E. 2021 China launches full-scale media blitz in Africa to counter mounting US-European Pressure on Xinjiang. *The China-Africa Project*.

<https://chinaafricaproject.com/analysis/china-launches-full-scale-media-blitz-in-africa-to-counter-mounting-u-s-european-pressure-on-xinjiang/>

²⁷ Curet, M. 2022. China repeats false claim that US has biolabs in Ukraine. *Politifact*. 9 March. <https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2022/mar/10/instagram-posts/china-repeats-false-claim-us-has-biolabs-ukraine/>

responsibility in the Russian invasion of Ukraine.²⁸ The rivalry between China and the US (and the US-EU partnership) may therefore also play out in public attitudes towards these two countries among African citizens. There's evidence, for example, that China has been focusing its messaging towards African publics on social media on these issues.²⁹ Russia itself can also still count on historic loyalties in Africa. In Moscow's attempts to bolster its support in Africa, the Kremlin often draws on its role in the liberation struggle, a practice that is sometimes referred to as "memory diplomacy".³⁰

While the war in Ukraine has focused a lot of the attention on Russia's information manipulation efforts globally, in Africa, it is in the Sahel where competition over narratives, particularly between France and Russia, has been most intense in recent years. France has long insisted that its military presence in the region is to counter extremist groups. However, the lack of tangible progress combined with a spat of coups have led to increased tensions between France and its former colonies.³¹ Russia, on its part, has been accused of playing a covert role in exacerbating this sentiment through disinformation campaigns. At the centre of these campaigns is the paramilitary group Wagner, founded by Yevgeny Prigozhin, once an ally of the Kremlin.³² While anti-French sentiment cannot solely be blamed on Wagner's actions, the role of information manipulation in the Sahel underscores Russia's broader strategy to gain a foothold on the continent by drawing on historical ties. Lingering resentment against former colonial powers can be exploited through wider anti-Western rhetoric, while historic loyalties towards Russia can be reactivated by framing its actions as "anti-imperialist". These narratives are then amplified through local influencers³³ and supportive media outlets in what has been referred to as "information laundering",³⁴ and through political parties who trade on anti-imperialist rhetoric, such as the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) in South Africa.³⁵

News narratives of the "West" and the "Rest"

Up to this point, this chapter has described the ongoing changes in the African media landscape, and it has highlighted how these changes might be connected to the growing competition by foreign actors to try to shape African public opinion. Unfortunately, in much of the debates around foreign disinformation, information manipulation and interference, African agency is left out of the equation. That is, not enough attention is paid to the active role that African media consumers and professionals play when "decoding" media content. For example, the fact that a growing number of countries are actively seeking to influence editorial news agendas through a range of strategies, does not preclude African media and journalists from exercising their agency in selecting the points of view they prefer to highlight based on their professional judgement and, potentially, their own views. In this final section, we try to disentangle agency from the

²⁸ Pike, L. 2022. How China uses global media to spread its views – and misinformation. *Grid*. 18 May. <https://www.grid.news/story/global/2022/05/18/how-china-uses-global-media-to-spread-its-views-and-misinformation/>

²⁹ Repnikova, M., & Chen, K. A. 2023. Asymmetrical discursive competition: China–United States digital diplomacy in Africa. *International Communication Gazette*, 85(1), 15–31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17480485221139460>

³⁰ McGlynn, J. 2021. Moscow is using memory diplomacy to export its narrative to the world. *Foreign Policy*. 25 June. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/06/25/russia-puting-ww2-soviet-ussr-memory-diplomacy-history-narrative/>

³¹ Mules, I. 2019. Why is anti-French sentiment on the rise in West Africa? *Deutsche Welle* 12 December. <https://www.dw.com/en/anti-french-sentiment-on-the-rise-in-west-africa-as-security-situation-deteriorates/a-51648107>

³² Irish, J., E. Pineau & B. Felix. 2023. France targets Russian and Wagner disinformation in Africa. *Reuters*. 21 June. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa-france-targets-russian-wagner-disinformation-2023-06-21/>

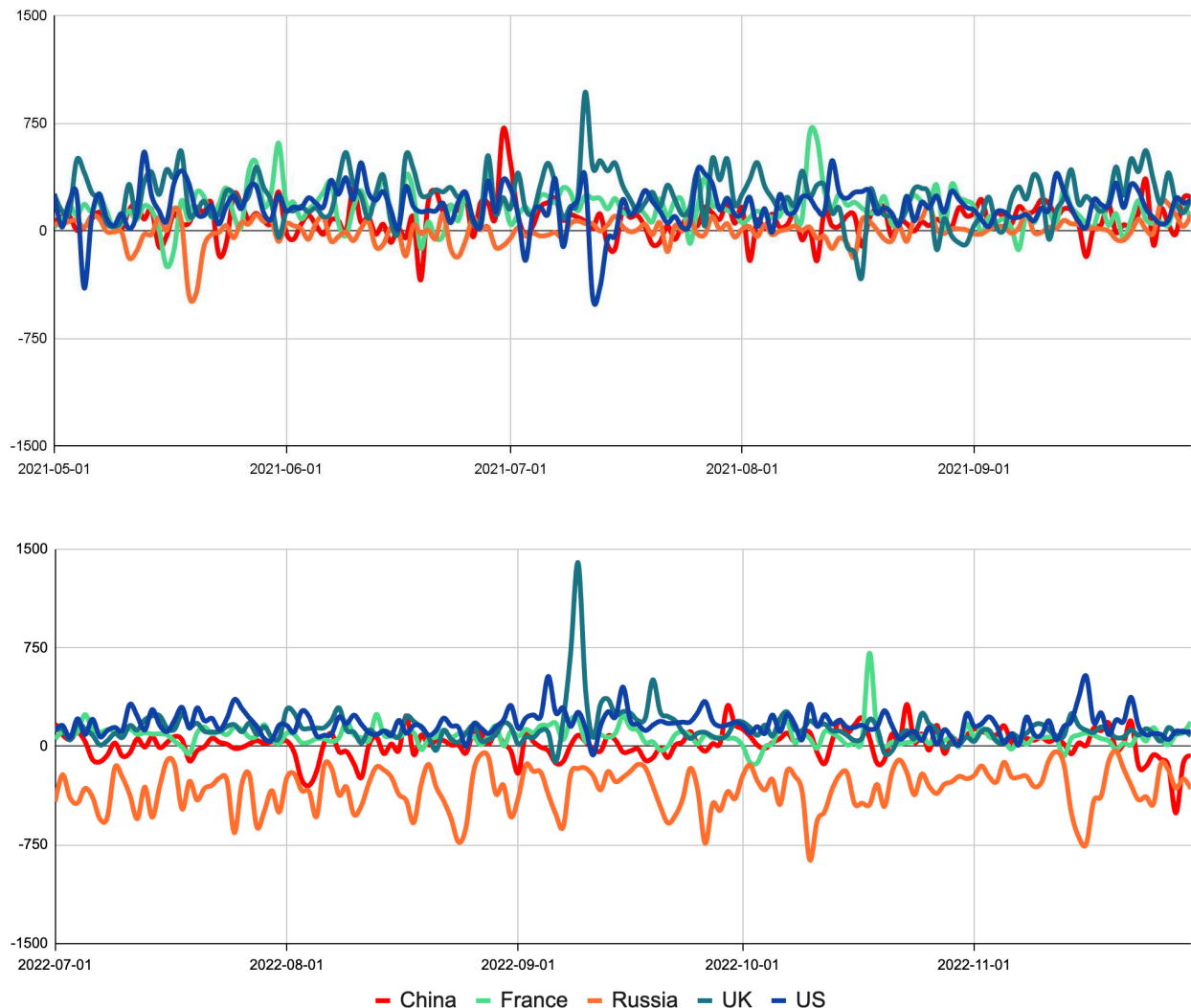
³³ Coakley, Amanda. & Vetch, Frankie. 2022. "Russia is using African influencers to spread its lies on Twitter." *.coda*. 16 December. Accessed on 8 September 2023. <https://www.codastory.com/disinformation/wagner-africa-disinformation-ukraine/>

³⁴ Wasserman, H. 2023. Media capture and information laundering – China and Russia's propaganda assault on Africa. *Daily Maverick* 27 March. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2023-03-27-info-laundering-china-and-russias-propaganda-assault-on-africa/>

³⁵ Wanjala, E. 2023. I would arm Russia since it's fighting imperialism – Malema. *The Star*. 24 May. <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2023-05-24-i-would-arm-russia-since-its-fighting-imperialism-malema/>

structural changes we have described above as we use a range of computer-assisted techniques³⁶ to analyse a large dataset of more than 500,000 news articles published in roughly 1,200 news websites from 40 countries covering two five-months periods between May 2021 and November 2022.³⁷

Figure 4. Sentiment analysis towards the “West” and the “Rest” in African English-language media (May to September 2021 and July to November 2022)



In **Figures 4** and **5**, we plot the net sentiment (computed as number of positive words - number of negative words) over time. Overall, the sentiment towards Russia on the news media appears to have deteriorated between mid-2021 and mid-2022. The change in overall sentiment is undoubtedly connected to the Kremlin’s decision to invade East Ukraine in February 2022, the coverage of which dominates mentions of Russia in African media from that point onwards. During the five months in 2022 that we examined, Russia is consistently mentioned alongside words such as “conflict”, “invasion” and “killing”. In 2021, while some of these words with negative connotations persist—after all, Russia’s campaign in East Ukraine has been

³⁶ We ran a sentiment analysis around instances of the names of the countries. That is, we looked for words like “China”, “Chinese”, “France” and “French” and, within a window of 15 words, we counted how many positive and negative words there were. For more details of the approach and the list of positive/negative words we used, see Young, L., & Soroka, S. (2012). Affective News: The Automated Coding of Sentiment in Political Texts. *Political Communication*, 29(2), 205–231. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2012.671234>.

³⁷ For further information about the dataset, the countries that are included in it, and for a sample of the data, see: Madrid-Morales, D., Lindner, P., & Periyasamy, M. (2021). *Corpus of African Digital News from 600 Websites Formatted for Text Mining / Computational Text Analysis* [dataset]. Texas Data Repository. <https://doi.org/10.18738/T8/UKJZ3E>

ongoing since 2014—there are a good number of positive words associated with Russia, such as “cooperation”, “peace” and “(strong) power”. The predominance of conflict-related language seems to suggest that there’s limited information about Russia other than news stories about the war in Ukraine, thus severely limiting the range of images of the country that audiences can construct. Moreover, because the vast majority of the reporting on the war in Ukraine that is published comes from Western news agencies, there is limited space for Russian narratives to become prevalent, other than the odd favourable commentary or editorial.

Figure 5. Sentiment analysis towards the “West” and the “Rest” in African French-language media (May to September 2021 and July to November 2022)



We also identify a downward trend in sentiment towards France, particularly in French-language media. There are, however, some differences worth pointing out when compared to news about Russia. First, in the case of Russia, the prevalence of negative sentiment words applies to both French-language and English-language media. When it comes to France, the trend is predominantly only in French-language media. This is seen most clearly during the one week in August 2022 when sentiment towards France in our analysis reached its lowest point (see **Figure 5**). In French-speaking media, France was discussed in news about the worsening security situation in the Sahel, Paris’ diplomatic spat with the Malian military junta and the football games in Ligue 1 for the week. In English-language media, sports coverage monopolises news related to France. This translates in the predominance of words such as “winning”, “champions” and “victory” in English-language media, as opposed to “crise” (crisis), “rupture” and “guerre” (war) and “violations” in French-speaking media.

To conclude: there is little doubt that the media landscape in Africa has in the last decade become a space where geopolitical struggles are reflected. Old notions of core and periphery in global media have become outdated as the media from the 'Rest' have been posing a strong challenge to the entrenched interests of the old colonial, Western powers in the continent's media. Older notions of media imperialism have had to be revised to reflect a new scramble for African audiences' attention by a range of new actors, active across a full range of media that includes legacy platforms such as television and radio, but also, increasingly, digital media. And while the contestation still takes place in the traditional news arena, journalistic discourses compete for attention alongside influence operations and disinformation. In all this, it is important to consider the African media space as a changing, fluid one, with the entry of new actors altering the dynamic and interacting with older ones. At the same time as recognising this growing diversity of global players, the agency of African media producers and audiences have to be taken seriously. The mere presence of global players does not necessarily equate with impact and influence, as our analysis has shown. The overall picture that emerges from the analysis of news content is one that highlights the heterogeneity of the African media landscape, the difficulties faced by the "Rest" to challenge the dominance of news narratives by the "West", and the need for nuance in understanding the slow moving structural changes we describe in the earlier part of this chapter.