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AFRICAN REGIONAL MEDIA SYSTEM IN POST-BIPOLAR ERA: INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSION

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the development of African regional media system in the post- Cold War period, including the contemporary situation, from a political perspective. It is characterized primarily by the fact that Africa ceased to be an arena of confrontation between communism and capitalism, but instead it became a place for international competition for the influence on the continent between the "old" and "new" global players, mainly, between the USA, Europe and China. This struggle is manifested by considerable attention paid to the creation and support by main actors of various channels of influence on African audiences by mass media (both traditional — foreign broadcasting by radio and television, and Internet plat-forms — websites, online broadcasting, social media). Secondly, there is an attempt by the African media environment to create Pan-African media, being guided by commercial needs and operated under the conditions of liberalized information space, are quite successful, unlike the failed projects that took place during the Cold War, being politically motivated and operating in rather undemocratic environment. We also argue that there are distinct sub-regional media systems that coincide with the borders of the former colonial empires. Their existence is both colonial legacy (common language, cultural ties, etc.), and a result of contemporary media influence of the former metropolitan countries.

Keywords: international communication, international broadcasting, mass communications, Africa

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1. INTRODUCTION

The extreme disparity between the countries of the African region dramatically slowed down the processes of integration and cooperation. Unlike the European, Latin American or Arab world, Africa has neither a cultural nor political nor economic integration core that makes any attempts to implement different kinds of cooperative projects ineffective. It is confirmed by rather long terms of implementation of initiatives on the establishment of separate regional intergovernmental organizations. In addition, part of the African region, namely, the Arab countries, is much more interested in the projects of cooperation within the Arab institutions (Tereshchuk, 2018).

The current situation gives grounds to talk about the actual absence of an integrated African media system. The origins of this lie primarily in the peculiarities of the functioning of the media on the African continent, which were relevant in the colonial and post-colonial periods, and partly remain so to this day. There is a cluster of causes of political, socio-economic and cultural nature. Political reasons are primarily due to the peculiarities of the political environment that existed in many countries of the region. As Kupe (1995, p. 392) summed up, "In some countries like Kenya the colonial media continued to exist after independence, still owned by foreign private interests but now also reflecting the interests of the African elite, who were entering the commercial sector and accumulating wealth using their political power. In some countries, like Tanzania and Zambia, the press was nationalized and became the mouthpiece of the government and the single ruling party. No private press was allowed. The news values of the inherited colonial media remained elite-centred and its coverage and distribution urban-biased." Kupe also highlighted the key socio-economic characteristics of the functioning of African media. Firstly, the fact that most African people live in rural areas, the level of media penetration in which is extremely low; secondly, it is a high level of illiteracy and poverty that limit the range of media consumers; third, the general economic situation when media suffer from insufficient funding for full-scale activities, and there is no infrastructure for the dissemination of the press (lack of roads), radio and television (electricity, equipment); fourth, African media are more focused on entertainment rather than informing or educating the population how to raise living standards, which occurs primarily for political reasons (see 2008, p. 391–392). The cultural dimension of the role of the media in African communities is connected to the fact that, as Kivikuru (1995, p. 375) observed, "the role of the mass media is not as deeply rooted in societal life in Africa as it is, say, in Europe". The reason why it is likely is that the very concept of mass media was brought to the African region during the colonial period.

Significant changes in the media landscape of the region occurred in the 1990s and are related both to the processes of democratization and the emergence of new ICTs. Capitant and Frère (2011) summarizing the changes in media space in Sub-Saharan Africa, noted that the situation over the past twenty years was characterized by the liberalization of the media landscape, initially spontaneous, and then more controlled; by breakthrough of digital tools. During this period, "the continent has gone from a situation of scarcity, where each country had only a few media outlets which were connected to the government or single ruling party, plus a single national broadcaster (radio and television), to an impressive profusion of newspapers and stations that compete for the domestic market and, in the case of East Africa, reach beyond their borders"; "Media content has evolved from the cult of personality and state propaganda to a multiplicity of critical, diverse, and politically engaged discourses

that reflect popular concerns or defend the interests of particular groups", and "are focused on reporting the facts and sometimes even attempt investigative journalism". Furthermore, "availability of international radio stations on FM frequencies in African cities", "access to foreign television stations via satellite and cable", and "thousands of foreign media outlets and other sources through the Internet" have further multiplied the opportunities for exposure to diverse and pluralistic sources of information. Considerable changes in African media sphere were also noted by UNESCO. Thus, in the regional overview "World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development: Regional overview of Africa" (2014, p. 7), it was stated that in 1990s in most countries of the continent private newspapers started to flourish, and growing deregulation of the broadcasting sector began to allow for the blossoming of private and community radio and television stations. However, this situation, obviously, has created a nutritious soil not only for the development of local or Pan-African media, but also to enhance the influence of foreign broadcasters, who through influence on African communities realize the foreign policy interests of their states.

2. METHODOLOGY

Despite the rather active use of the term "media system" in various academic and journalistic sources, there are still few attempts to clearly define it. In the most general form, the media system means "set of media institutions and practices understood as interacting with and shaping one another" (Hallin, 2016). Hardy determined that "a media system comprises all mass media organised or operating within a given social and political system (usually a state)" (Hardy, 2008, p.5). More broadly, this concept is interpreted as "entirety of organizational rules, norms and regulations within mass communications means, a collection of institutions used to continuously inform society about current events and to interpret them, as well as any and all public, legal and organizational circumstances connected" (Sonczyk, 2009). This approach was the basis of our study, with a focus on media institutions as key component and related socio-cultural "circumstances" has been determining the development of the world and separate regions in the bipolar and post-bipolar periods.

The purpose of this article is to identify the features of the development of African regional media system in last three decades. To achieve the goal the following tasks were defined: to identify the pan-African broadcasters whose activities can prove the existence of interest and substantive progress in constructing of regional media system; to analyse the level of attention to African region from by given states — major international broadcasters and to discern particular focuses of it, if any; and to test the hypothesis that the colonial division of the African continent is a socio-cultural factor that still defines the contours of the sub-regions and, accordingly, the contours of separate sub-regional media systems, the existence of which is fuelled by the former metropolitan countries.

These tasks shaped the agenda of the article, and defined methodology of this paper, which is generally based on case studies. Comparison and generalization allowed to make a conclusion about activities of main international broadcasters in African region. Also, the elements of historical analysis, event analysis, document analysis were applied.

Focus of attentions is mostly on Sub-Saharan Africa because Egypt and Maghreb states definitely gravitate towards Arab regional media system which also includes states of Middle East and Gulf region, and therefore is not included in this research scope.

3. INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSION OF AFRICAN MEDIA SYSTEM UNDER CONTEMPORARY CONDITIONS

3.1 DEVELOPMENT OF PAN-AFRICAN MEDIA PLAYERS

In such a diverse environment as the African continent, the idea of a pan-African news agency seemed to be natural and appropriate. The first attempt to create a pan-African news agency arose as an intergovernmental initiative within the Organization of African Unity. Indeed, during the inaugural assembly (1963, Addis Ababa), when the OAU was launched, there was a call for the creation of an African news agency (Cavanagh, 1989, p. 354). However, this idea was implemented only on July 20, 1979, when the conference of information ministers of OAU states in Addis Ababa adopted convention which established the Pan-African News Agency (PANA) with headquarters in Dakar (Senegal). The agency started its operation on May 25, 1983. It was assumed that PANA will produce news in three major languages of Africa — English, French, and Portuguese (The New York Times, 1983). However, most African countries continued to depend on Western, transnational news agencies, even when it comes to news about Africa itself. African media institutions, including URTNA[2] and PANA, suffered from severe shortages in finance, equipment, and personnel. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, the World Bank, the German government, and the United States Agency for International Development have provided significant assistance (Zaffiro, 2005, p. 284). Another problem was that the main source of information provided by PANA was material from the domestic news agencies of OAU member states. Since most of these are state-controlled, the "news" they were offering was never likely to attract many western users (Mungham, 1996). Numerous problems and inefficiencies in the operation of the Pan-African news agency inevitably raised the demand for revision of the basics of its activities. PANA Recovery Plan under the aegis of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was adopted by OUA Heads of State and Government on July 1, 1992. As a result, in October 1997, PANA was transformed into a private news agency PanaPress, which is functioning till now.

In 2000, the media company AllAfrica Global Media emerged, with one of its key direction of activities being the aggregation, production and dissemination of news about Africa (as stated on the AllAfrica site, "AllAfrica is a voice of, by and about Africa"). AllAfrica collects news from more than 140 media across the continent and distributes them to the African and global audiences. The company positions itself as the only independent, pan-African news source (see: AllAfrica, n.d.). Agency's working languages are English and French. It is presented on such social Internet platforms as Facebook, Twitter and Google+.

The urgency of ensuring the "voice" of Africa in the global media space is confirmed by the creation in 2015 of another private media institution — the African News Agency (ANA). Being created in place of the abolished South Africa News Agency SAPA; however, it was intended to reach beyond the country borders and engage in the activities across African continent. ANA positions itself as Africa's leading news platform, as a reliable source for African news (see: African News Agency, n.d.). The working language ANA is English. Agency is presented on such social Internet platforms as Facebook and Twitter.

2　　Union of National Radio and Television Organizations of Africa, in 2006 renamed to African Union of Broadcasting (AUB)

In August 2018 another pan-African news agency — African Daily Voice (ADV) with headquarters in Equatorial Guinea and a central editorial office in Morocco — began its work. With regional offices in countries such as Algeria, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa (see: African Daily Voice, n.d.), ADV covers all parts of the continent — both from geographic and political-cultural perspectives. Materials are prepared in English, French and Arabic, and again, this allows to reach almost all audiences of the continent. The agency is actively using Internet platforms to distribute its messages, including the website and social media — Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Google+.

One of the vectors of efforts to create the pan-African media space involves launching cross-border television channels. In May 2008, a private bilingual (French and English language) television channel Voxafrica, with the headquarters in London, began broadcasting. Due to the active use of various channels of content distribution (satellite, cable networks, mobile networks, Internet), the channel can reach the multi-million audience, including the African diaspora (see: AllAfrica, 2018). In 2016, the Euronews television network launched pan-African multilingual (currently in English and French) TV channel. Broadcasting is carried out both through the air, and on the Internet.

Thus, the new arrangement prevailing in the African media landscape in recent decades have set suitable conditions for developing not only national media but also for launching of pan-African media institutions.

3.2 AFRICA AS AN OBJECT OF INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING

Besides the development of local media, the African continent has always been at the centre of attention of foreign broadcasting from overseas states. For some of them, it has been a long-standing practise since colonial periods, for others — it is important region to influence public opinion in the context of realizing their own respective foreign policy interests.

3.2.1 UNITED KINGDOM

One of the biggest foreign broadcasters in Africa is BBC. Founded in 1922, the British Broadcasting Company (since 1927 — the British Broadcasting Corporation, BBC) began foreign broadcasting in English in 1932 under the name BBC Empire Service. Its aim was "knitting together dispersed British subjects in colonies and imperial dominions across the world through radio broadcasting. Specifically, the broadcasts were seen as a way of bringing together settlers, soldiers and colonial administrators in a common culture of 'home'" (Toynbee & Vis, 2010, p. 547). In subsequent years, BBC broadcasting covered almost all the territories of the British Empire.

The BBC first foreign-language broadcasts were produced in Arabic in 1938 in order to counter anti-British uprisings in Arabic regions of the British Empire (partly fuelled by German-backed propaganda programs). Towards the collapse of Empire, the service was renamed into BBC World Service in 1965 (Zöllner, 2011, p. 30).

Special attention to Africa both in Cold War and post-Cold War periods is evidenced by the fact that the BBC World Service carries out broadcasting to the region in many languages: Swahili, Hausa and Somali (since 1957), French (since 1960), Rwandan (since 1994). In 2016, the BBC World Service proclaimed the largest "expansion" since the 1940s, and within

the framework of this plan, broadcasting services were launched in the Amharic, Pidgin, Oromo and Tigrinya languages (2017), Igbo and Yoruba (2018). As can be seen in the list of languages, the BBC World Service separates as target audiences primarily the populations of the countries that were part of the British colonial empire, namely Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda, etc. In addition to broadcasting, BBC performs broadcasting on the Internet platforms and supports individual language pages on Facebook. In addition, from 1939 to 2011, broadcasting was conducted in Portuguese, and from 1939 to 1957 in Afrikaans (BBC 2007; BBC 2016).

3.2.2 FRANCE

Another major overseas broadcaster in Africa is France. French broadcasting abroad was born in 1929 as the idea of creating a radio service for broadcasting to the territory of the French colonies. This conception was embodied in the form of the Le Poste colonial radio service launched on May 6, 1931. Its target audience was French expatriate colonizers and a few natives who had been trained to speak French and engage in low-status labour (Tchouaffe, 2008, p. 4089-4090). In general, the potential audience was about 100 million inhabitants of the French colonial empire. The broadcasting was conducted in addition to French, as well as Spanish and English. What is more, broadcast in Arabic expanded to Middle East and North Africa. At the end of the 1950s, in a context of increasing tensions in the French colonies of North Africa, France intensified its broadcasting in the Maghreb region, in particular, in an attempt to counter the transmissions from Egypt supporting nationalist movements and the independence of Algeria. However, after the declaration of independence, the volume of broadcasting to the region decreased (see: Peuleux, n.d.-a).

In 1975 new France's foreign radiobroadcasting service was launched — Radio France Internationale (RFI). At that time, the following priority directions of foreign broadcasting were defined: in 1975, broadcasting began to the African region (so-called Southern Canal, Chaîne sud), mainly to French Africa, which France regarded as a zone of its privileged influence in the Third World; in 1976 — to the French-speaking audience of the United States and Central America (Western Channel, Chaîne Ouest); in 1977 broadcasting started to the CEE countries (Eastern Channel, Chaîne Est) (see: Peuleux, n.d.-a). As we can see, Africa was the priority number one. In 1997, RFI buys the RMC Moyen-Orient radio service, created in 1972. This gave French foreign broadcasting service a powerful broadcasting tool in Arabic for the Middle East and the Maghreb region — by then, the audience of the radio service was 16 million. Since 2006, the radio service is called Monte Carlo Doualiya (MCD) (see: Peuleux, n.d.-b). Today, according to RFI official website, radiobroadcasting is carried out in fifteen languages: French, English, Cambodian, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Spanish, Hausa, Mandingo, Portuguese, Brazilian Portuguese, Swahili, Persian, Romanian, Russian and Vietnamese. Besides the air, RFI broadcasts via the Internet, satellites and cable networks.

The first French foreign broadcast channel, TV5, was launched in 1984, and in 2006 it was renamed into TV5 Monde. The channel is broadcasting in French, distributing cultural programs, films and news to 200 countries around the world, thus serving as a tool for the policy of Francophonie. The mission of the channel is to promote French-language creative work as well as the French language, but also to deliver multilateral and international information everywhere in the world (TV5MONDE, n.d.). In 1992 special TV channel TV5

Afrique was launched. It is available in 48 countries and worldwide via Internet. In 2009 (probably, in order to increase its audience, TV5MONDE Afrique started subtitling its programming in English (see: TV5MONDE, 2017).

3.2.3 USA

The peculiarity of the United States of America's policy of broadcasting lies in the fact that it was not defined by the imperatives associated with the functioning of the colonial empire. Consequently, unlike, for example, the United Kingdom or France, the US broadcast from the very beginning was subordinated to the foreign policy objectives, and, therefore, we can talk about it as an element of public diplomacy and propaganda (during the Cold War). Such an instrument became government-funded international radio broadcaster Voice of America (VOA), which started its operations under this name in 1942.

The first VOA radio service, created specifically for the African continent, became a radio station in Afrikaans (operated from 1942 to 1949). In the same year, the broadcasting service was launched in Arabic (and continued to exist, intermittently, until 2002).

During the Cold War, Africa was at the focus of attention for Western broadcasters, since the continent after decolonization became the scene of the struggle between the USSR and the West for influence on the new independent states. This is confirmed by the active creation of special language services of Voice of America for African region. Thus, in 1960, a broadcast service was created in French (now it covers 22 francophone countries in sub-Saharan Africa); in 1962 — service in Swahili (covering Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo); in 1963 — service in English (oriented to all African countries); in 1976 — the Portuguese language service (targeting the Portuguese-speaking countries of Africa, as well as East Timor and Brazil); in 1979 — service in Hausa (for Nigeria, Niger, Ghana, Chad and Cameroon); in 1982 — service in Amharic (targeting Ethiopia and neighbouring countries) (see: VOA, n.d.).

The important role of the African vector in US foreign broadcasting is also confirmed by the fact that all these services continue to function, even though, after the end of the Cold War, many broadcasting services in other regions of the world got shut down. In addition, new ones were launched: in 1996 — services in the languages of Oromo, Kirundi and Kinyarwanda (East Africa) and Tigrigna (Ethiopia and Eritrea), in 2003 — in Shona and Ndebele for Zimbabwe and neighbouring countries, in 2007 — service in Somali; in 2013 — in Bambara for Mali (VOA, 2017).

A good illustration of the United States' attention to the use of broadcasting on order to support foreign policy interests was the launch in 2010, on the eve of the referendum on South Sudan's independence, of the region-wide radio program *Sudan in Focus*. According to the statement of senior officer in VOA's Office of Business Development, "Southern Sudan right now is a critical interest of the United States and in fact the eyes of the world are on southern Sudan as they move forward with a referendum. And we want to make sure because it is a right for all free people that they receive the information they need about what's going on in their country" (VOA, 2010).

3.2.4 CHINA

China is a relatively "young" participant in global media communication practicing foreign broadcasting. Even though the first such services were available during the Cold War, the active expansion of the PRC into the world media space began in the post-bipolar period.

African direction takes a prominent position in China's policy of foreign broadcasting, due to the growing interest of the country in this region in recent years. As Movchan put it, "China has broad political and economic interests in the African continent and implements a consistent policy in this direction", "Today, China is turning into a powerful participant in the international competition for influence on the continent" (Мовчан, 2015, p. 12).

China's international radio broadcaster China Radio International (CRI) was established in 1941, and its first English service started in 1947. Now, "using 61 languages, China Radio International (CRI) has the most language services among all global media organizations" (China Plus, 2017). Besides worldwide radio broadcasting in main international languages, CRI has two services designed for the Africa region, namely in Hausa and Swahili.

In 2012 CCTV Africa, a special English-language TV news channel of China Central Television (CCTV), was launched in Kenya. After establishing, in 2016, China Global Television Network (CGTN), which united all China's international TV-channels, CCTV Africa was renamed into CGTN Africa. According to the statement on official channel website, "The CCTV Africa News Production center is considered a vital step in expanding CCTV's global news coverage capabilities. It is also regarded as a crucial measure toward the completion of CCTV's global news gathering network to enhance the competitiveness of CCTV".

Also, the following TV-channels of China Global Television Network are available in Africa: the English-language channel CGTN (former CCTV-9, operating since 2000), the French-language channel CGTN-Français is available in Sub-Saharan Africa (operating since 2007), and the Arab-language CGTN Arabic in North Africa (operating since 2009).

3.3 SUB-REGIONAL MEDIA SYSTEMS

In Africa several sub-regional media systems can be distinguished, namely francophone, anglophone, and lusophone. Their existence is based mainly on colonial legacy.

The largest of these is the Francophone system, created by the French-speaking countries of the Western and Central Africa, the Maghreb, the island states in Indian Ocean, and Djibouti (the territory of the French and Belgian colonial empires in Africa). This region is the main object of the implementation of Frech international audio-visual policy, which was the response to the domination of English-speaking media at the dawn of global satellite television. "Audio-visual broadcasts in French form one of the cornerstones of France's cultural policy and indeed the general policy in promoting France's interests and language" (Mytton, Teer-Tomaselli & Tudesq, 2005, p. 102).

The specificity of the African anglophone sub-regional media system lies primarily in the fact that the English language, as a language of international communication after the Second World War, nowadays is not an instrument for the implementation of a specific cultural policy, as it is in the case of French language. Accordingly, the English language did not become an integrative factor for African English-speaking countries, and English-speaking international broadcasting services for the African region, incl. British ones, as a rule, do not distinguish between these countries in terms of their constituting separate audiences. As a result, we can talk about anglophone sub-system only with some qualification. Nevertheless, we can

talk about the presence of British media in the information space of these countries, which lasts since colonial times, and the emergence of local cross-border English-speaking media. As for the former, the most striking example is the British public broadcaster BBC. It started broadcasting in the African region in 1938. In the summer of 2012, the daily news bulletin *Focus of Africa* in English was launched on BBC World News TV Channel for some English-speaking African countries (BBC, 2012). Among the local initiatives of English-speaking cross-border media there are mass media of South Africa. In particular, it is a satellite TV service DStv, launched in 1995 by a South African company Multichoice.

The Lusophone media system on the African continent can also be separated, consisting of the countries of former Portuguese colonial empire: Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe. The media landscape in these countries is also largely shaped by the media of the former metropolitan countries, as well as Brazil. First, what is worth mentioning is RTPi, the international TV service of Portugal state-owned broadcasting company, which broadcasts in different regions of the world where there are Portuguese-speaking communities. In January 1998, RTP África, a separate RTPi's TV channel for broadcasting to Portuguese-speaking countries of Africa, was launched. Other examples of overseas media presence in Lusophone Africa are the Lusovisao network for the exchange of television content between Portugal and African-Portuguese-speaking countries; TV company MGM Latin America provides some of its service from Brazilian sources and the Brazilian giant, TV Globo International, is also available from satellite (see: Mytton et al., 2005, p. 114).

As in the case of France, the influence through the means of broadcasting on the Portuguese-speaking countries is part of Portugal's systemic policy, which includes, among other things, the creation in 1996 of the intergovernmental forum — Community of Portuguese Language Speaking Countries, whose general objectives, in particular, proclaimed cooperation in all matters, including communications as well as the implementation of the projects that promote and disseminate the Portuguese language (see: UNESCO Office in Brazil, n.d.). There are also non-state initiatives, for example, Portuguese TV channel SIC Internacional, which has been operating since 1997 being oriented at Portuguese-speaking audience around the world.

The above, in our opinion, justifies the talk of a specific media dimension of African post-colonialism. The above-described sub-regional media systems reveal the contours of the former colonial empires, and their functioning and distinct isolation are fuelled not least by the efforts of the former metropolitan countries and their international media, which are part of the system of foreign broadcasting.

This situation gives grounds for the perception by African population and local media of foreign broadcasting and the general state of affairs within information space of the African region as a continuation of imperialist policy. This idea can be illustrated by the pronouncement of Toussaint Alain, the CEO of, established in August 2018 pan-African news agency, African Daily Voice. He said that "Information networks remain dominated in our countries by Western media. Their stories of African events do not always reflect the true identity of our people, our cultures, and our languages", "They impose their own vision of the world, anxious above all to preserve their interests.". He also stressed that "the independence of information, and the plurality of sources are of the same importance today as the struggle against imperialism and neo-colonialism. They play a vital role in the process of political, social, economic and cultural liberation of our continent" (African Daily Voice, 2018).

4. CONCLUSIONS

Summarizing the peculiarities of institutional dimension of African Regional Media System development in Post-Bipolar Era, we can confidently state that:

1) At present, the Arabic media system is still in its infancy, if it is possible to speak about its outlines in the first place. The development of private initiatives in the African media landscape, which were triggered by the processes of liberalization and the development of ICT, as a priori more flexible and adequate to meet real needs will help to identify the actual trends in the development of African media and their integration into the global media landscape, to identify the needs and prospects of transnational cooperation, and, more broadly, to answer the questions of whether pan-African media system will have real outlines, functionality and value for the countries of the region, or there will be several regional and transregional systems.

2) In the post-bipolar period, like during the Cold War, Africa remains an arena of competition for the influence between the major superpowers, now mainly between the United Kingdom, France, the United States and China. For the first two, main task is to preserve, through "soft power" and the media as an instrument of its realization, their respective influence mainly on the territories belonging once to their respective colonial empires. And the latter two, which do not have "colonial background", are trying to realize through their foreign media the influence on African audiences in order to support their own foreign policy interests — both ad hoc and long-term. For China, the inclusion of the African continent in its sphere of foreign broadcasting means turning into a global player in the international information space, and thus is an additional "brick" in PRC's superpower status.

3) One of the aftermaths of the colonial period in Africa is the formation of separate sub-regional media systems, namely, francophone, anglophone and lusophone, which in general reproduce the contours of former colonial empires. The active influence of former metropolitan countries on these regions through foreign broadcasting as well as the growing activity of private trans-border broadcasters allows us to assume that; firstly, integrity of each of these three sub-regional media systems will remain stronger than the integrity of pan-African system, even if the latter will play a significant role in the region, and, secondly, that in future global media systems based on a particular language (French, Spain, Portuguese, etc.) as integrative socio-cultural factor will emerge.

4) Since the African region as a whole has no integration factors of political, economic, socio-cultural, etc. nature, we consider that the formation of the pan-African media system (like the European, Latin American, Arabic are) is prospectless. The functioning of existing (and possible future) media entities (mainly news agencies) claiming the status of pan-African, regardless of whether they originate within or without Africa, are rather merely institutional — they boil down to the aggregators and content producers – mainly of news "from African perspective", and are not the drivers which look towards (and is capable of) forming the very "media system". In addition, the powerful influence of foreign broadcasters in the region cements the status quo, in which Africa is predominantly an object than an actor of international information relations.

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