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Post-Coloniality and Path Dependency: Challenges at Stake in Media and Communication Research in Francophone Africa

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Introduction: Of Which Africa and Which Africans?

The constitution of a body of knowledge about the African continent (referred to as "African studies") has long been debated in the academic field (Mbembe, 2000). Can one speak about Africa? Isn't this generalization too abstract? Can research on the continent propose frames and concepts that apply to all the fifty-four African countries? Does Gambia have the same characteristics as Ethiopia? Should the same objects and the same concerns be observed all over the continent? Is comparison possible and relevant between countries so distant geographically and different culturally as South Africa and Senegal?

Despite these valid concerns, many publications have addressed the African continent as a single entity, putting forward elements of a shared identity above differences. Some address the theme of Africa in general (Agbobli,

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2002; Amselle, 2010; Dumont, 1963; Gassama, 2010; Mongo-Mboussa, 2005). Some underline Africa-specific features regarding epistemology and philosophy (Hountondji, 1976; Eboussi Boulaga, 1977; Wiredu, 1980; Mudimbe, 1988; Mbembe, 2000; Kodjo-Grandvaux, 2013). Others show continental continuities in disciplines such as geography or health science. History is also a major topic of research, as demonstrated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) nine-volume series on the general history of Africa, as well as works by Cornevin (1966), Niane (1960) and Ki-Zerbo (1972). Research on Africa has also focused on the field of political science (Bayart, 2010; Gazibo, 2010; Médard, 1991; Zorgbibe, 2009) and the economy and development (Monga & Tchatchouang, 1996; Kassé, 1992; Moyo, 2009; Agbobli, 2015; Koulibaly, 1992).

Likewise, a number of publications have been produced on communication and media research in Africa, intending to approach the continent as a whole (Rogers, 1969; Hachten, 1971; Mytton, 1983; Boafo, 1985; Ugboajah, 1985; Okigbo, 1987). These studies have focused on several aspects of communication in Africa, such as its relationship to culture, communication and development, traditional media and contemporary media. Nevertheless, if we take a closer look at the content of these works, it appears that they generally focus on case studies from English-speaking Africa; and also that contributors from French-speaking countries are scarce. As Frère has argued (2012, p. 5), there is a "separation, and lack of communication and exchange, between French- and English-speaking researchers." Referring to the different media systems in French- and English-speaking Africa, mostly inherited from colonial times, she assumes that "the differences between the models have also impacted on the cumulative constitution of knowledge, the methods used to collect and treat data, and the seminal authors and concepts on either side of this border. Given that few possibilities exist for crossing this frontier, mutual ignorance ensues of the research conducted within both these fields."

This chapter intends to dig deeper to understand this divide, and therefore uses a post-colonial approach to scrutinize the field of media and communication research in francophone Africa. Post-colonial studies are generally neglected in communication studies, but also in French African studies in general, as a fierce debate between Achille Mbembe and Jean-François Bayart in 2010 indicated. While the persistence of colonial domination is the central claim of the new field of study that goes by the name "Afrocentric coloniality," most French-speaking researchers of Africa have kept away from this debate.

Nevertheless, most would agree that, despite the independence of several francophone African countries from French or Belgian rule, the academic community has gained less autonomy than its counterpart in former British colonies. Regarding the field of media and communication studies, a first

reason lies in the fact that the emerging field initially focused on gaining scientific legitimacy rather than on putting aside the concepts and models developed by the former colonizers. Moreover, scientific legitimacy could be gained through adopting these dominant models and applying them to African contexts and research objects. As Ansah (1994) showed more than twenty years ago, communication research in Africa is developing and has gained some scientific legitimacy. However, he argues that African researchers tend to base their models, theories and paradigms on Western models without adapting them to the African context. Chabal and Daloz have nevertheless demonstrated that African countries could invent their own methodologies (1999).

In this chapter, we demonstrate the challenges inherent in the process of truly overcoming the colonial legacy in media and communication research in francophone Africa. To do so, we first consider how "afrocentricity" and the "post-colonial" issue have emerged in the francophone African studies debate. Then we analyse the institutionalization of the field in French-speaking Africa and how the creation of journalism schools and training centers, the typical "reference list" of francophone research, as well as the circulation of research results, have contributed to perpetuation of the French model. Lastly, we discuss how the post-colonial approach and "path dependency" logic can help to guide the future of research in francophone Africa.[1]

Africa in the Francophone Academic Scope

When it comes to Africa, in a French-speaking environment the term "Africanist" immediately designates a specialist in African studies. The first "Africanists" (economists, historians, anthropologists, etc.) were unique in that they were Western researchers with an obvious interest in Africa. The scientific rigor of certain Africanists (e.g. Balandier, Coquery-Vidrovitch and Griaule) was not equally valued by all Africanists; some were considered to be charlatans who did not respect research standards (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1997). The views of these Africanists didn't always encompass the heterogeneity and complexity of Africa, even though these researchers shared an understanding that Western research had a universal reach.

When French-speaking African researchers began to look toward their own continent, during the 1950s, they followed the steps of the Senegalese Cheikh Anta Diop, whose main aim was to emphasize the endogenous characteristics of Africa, as well as the continent's contribution to universal history. Their detractors accused them of Afrocentrism: "Afrocentrism claims a history, but

it is built on a fundamental memory base, as if its authors were endowed with mystical inspiration allowing them to conspire with the most distant ancestors across all the ruptures of history, all the reconstructions and all the unknowns, across the misunderstandings or tricks that make up the fabric of history" (Fauvelle-Aymar, Chrétien, & Perrot, 2001, p. 20). Long debates put the Africanists and the Afrocentrists into opposition during the 1960s and the 1970s.

The Afrocentric approach came in the aftermath of the fight for independence, when the first indigenous researchers demonstrated a desire to focus on Africa and to contribute to the body of knowledge created about the continent. Almost all those who were then labeled Afrocentrists were African researchers whose work focused on Africa, and not militants wishing to pursue a political agenda. However, in the rhetoric of Africanists, the research of Afrocentrists such as Théophile Obenga and Pathé Diagne had a direct connection to the work of Cheikh Anta Diop. The so-called Afrocentrists replied that "The researchers of the continent of Africa almost never use the terms 'Afrocentricity,' 'Afrocentrism,' 'Africana,' etc. However, the Africanists, delighted at their discovery, include all the Negroes of the Earth in their 'Afrocentrisms,' as a result of all their 'Eurocentrisms'" (Obenga, 2001, p. 11). Obenga underlined a simple fact: European researchers would refer to German researchers in Germany as historians, sociologists or political scientists and not as "Germanists," while English researchers doing research about different aspects of their own country aren't called "Englishists" but "English researchers." Thus, Afrocentrists developed a critical rhetoric in response to the Africanists, but frequently denied being "Afrocentrists," even less "Afrocentricists."

Afrocentricity,[2] a concept elaborated by Asante, came out of the context of the American Civil Rights movement, during which African-Americans followed the example of Martin Luther King Jr. and fought for their rights to be recognized. For Asante, Afrocentricity is defined as "a mode of thought and action … placing African people in the center … [and] enshrine[ing] the idea that Blackness itself is a trope of ethics" (2003, p. 2). Mazama presents Afrocentricity as one of the responses developed by Africans to improve their state of dependence, in spite of having a nominal independence (Mazama, 2003). Mazama suggests understanding Afrocentricity as a paradigm in the Kuhnian sense of the term: "The fundamental Afrocentric principle that determines the entire perception of reality is the centrality of the African experience for Africans" (Mazama, 2003, p. 220).

These three terms (Africanism, Afrocentrism and Afrocentricity) reveal how much the field of African studies is also the site for a power struggle inherent to the activity of knowledge production in and about former colonized or enslaved communities. Discourse is fundamentally political and entrenched in power relations, as Foucault noted (1977). In this sense, the research on Africa goes beyond the realm of research itself and takes a special meaning in the current questioning of the relationship between force and ideologies. Yet, as Ricoeur emphasizes, "Ideology is always a controversial concept. It is never assumed by an individual; it's always the ideology of someone else. Even at a low level, ideology declares that another is in the wrong. No one ever recognizes that they are gripped by an ideology" (1997, p. 19). Moreover, "[i]deology is essentially related to the process of maintaining asymmetrical power dynamics, or in other words, the process of maintaining domination. This usage of the term expresses what could be called a critical concept of ideology" (Thompson, 1987, p. 9). The various conceptions of ideology have a common ground: the affirmation of the will of a ruling class or group to maintain its power over the others. These issues are prevalent in numerous groups and are equally relevant when conducting research in post-colonial Africa.

The debate about how ideologies can be detected in the current production of scientific knowledge about Africa has been revived in the last decade since the Cameroonian scholar Achille Mbembe (2010) accused the French "Africanists" of having been unable to integrate, in the French research environment, the "post-colonial studies" approach which has spread in the USA and the UK. The debate grew especially among historians and political scientists (Bancel, Bernault, Blanchard, & Boubeker, 2010; Bayart, 2010), but did not seem to reach the field of media and communication studies. As mentioned before, scholars in that field were too much concerned about establishing their own discipline. Indeed, it was only in the late 1970s that information and communication sciences (ICS) gradually took shape as an autonomous field of knowledge in France. Scholars studying African media and communication practices were therefore trapped in between "Africanists" (mostly historians, political scientists and anthropologists), for whom media and communication practices were not central, and media and communication studies scholars mainly concerned about the establishment of their research about Western media and communication dynamics as an independent discipline. As a result, French-speaking research on the media in Africa was scare and lacked visibility and recognition on the academic stage (Frère, 2012).

Thirty years later, the situation has not changed much, even though there is a growing number of researchers working on communication- and media-related subjects (Atenga, 2017) Three types of scholars were (and still are) involved in the production of knowledge in that field: members of the African

diaspora (Noble Akam, Henri Assogba, Christian Agbobli, Etienne Damome, Osée Kamga, Oumar Kane, Alain Kiyindou, Jean-Michel Ledjou, Ndiaga Loum, Charles Moumouni); researchers who are not of African origin but have developed a strong connection with Africa and produced seminal research studies (André-Jean-Tudesq, Guy Bessette, Renaud de la Brosse, Marie-Soleil Frère, Annie Lenoble-Bart); and numerous African scholars based in Africa and working in African research or education institutions (including Serge Théophile Balima, Charles Boyomo, Yaya Diaby, Jean-Chrétien Ekambo, Missé Missé, Francis Barbey, Aghi Bahi, Mustapha Samb, Thomas Atenga). At a time when ideas and publications circulate quickly and when social media platforms increase intercultural and international dialogue, it seems difficult to make distinctions between the research conducted by African researchers based in Africa and that of their colleagues living outside the continent. Moreover, some academics such as Jean-Jacques Bogui or Francis Nyamnjoh teach and implement research both in African and Northern institutions. However, this geographic differentiation can be useful, as the institutional belonging of each scholar still has consequences regarding sources of funding for research, connections with international networks and ability to travel worldwide. Hence, even though some of the elements developed here also apply to "diasporic" or non-African researchers based outside the continent, the present chapter mostly focuses on the "endogenous" francophone African researchers in communication studies.

The authors mentioned in this chapter are established communication studies researchers in Africa, selected on the basis of their experience in media and communication research, as well as their impact on the field, measured through the high number of citations of their work as well as their involvement in the international research networks in communication studies, particularly among French-speaking countries. Their trajectories and production reveal some common trends that we will describe in the next section, focusing on their educational background, their research objects, the circulation of their academic production and the networks they belong to.

Media and Communication Education in French-Speaking Africa

Socialization with the research career in communication and media studies starts with higher education. All the above-cited scholars currently involved in producing high-quality research about media and communication in French-speaking Africa were trained outside the continent, either in France, Belgium or Québec. For decades, communication scholars have studied at the Institut Français de Presse (IFP) in Paris, at the universities of Bordeaux, Grenoble and Strasbourg, at the Belgian universities of Brussels or Louvain-la-Neuve or at the University of Quebec in Montreal. No surprise then that, as noted by Boafo and Wete (2002, p. 1), the training methods for African communication professionals come from Western Europe and North America: "The source of inspiration for the professors, the programs of study and the textbooks is Western."

The first communication schools of francophone sub-Saharan Africa were established in Cameroon, Senegal and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC, then called Zaïre). In Cameroon, the École Supérieure Internationale de Journalisme de Yaoundé (ESIJY), established in 1970, aimed to train journalists from a dozen African states, through a collaboration with the French École Supérieure de Journalisme (ESJ) in Lille. In 1982, the ESIJY switched from being a regional to a national school, and its name was changed to the École Supérieure des Sciences et Techniques de l'Information (ESSTI). Later it became the École Supérieure des Sciences et Techniques de l'Information et de la Communication (ESSTIC).

In Senegal, the Centre d'Etudes des Sciences et Techniques de l'Information (CESTI) was created by the government in 1965 with the support of UNESCO and French and Canadian cooperation. It aimed to train journalists, but also focused on theoretical aspects of communication studies. "From 1973, when the first class graduated, to December 2012, when the 40th class graduated, the CESTI trained 1091 professional journalists, including 511 Senegalese. Today the CESTI maintains its pan-African scope, educating students from Senegal, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Mali, Guinea, Mauritania, Togo and Congo-Brazzaville."[3]

In Zaïre/DRC, the (Institut des Sciences et Techniques de l'Information (ISTI, which became IFASIC in 1997) was established in 1973, with the specific aim to avoid the "rupture" brought about by the training in European schools. As its former director explained, "the training given in European or American schools to future journalists from developing countries takes place in a socio-political context different from the one in which these agents will one day have to work. And yet it is essential that they be trained in close collaboration with the global cultural, political and economic environment which they will one day have to report on" (Malembe, 1985, p. 67).

Behind the rhetoric of an "indigenous" training adapted to local peculiarities, these schools were mostly devoted to train journalists for the state-owned media, ready to disseminate the government's propaganda.[4] The

research produced in such a context also aimed at supporting the public policies and the political priorities in the management of the media sector.

At the beginning of the 1990s, as the media field was liberalized, new journalism education curricula were established in public universities (in Ouagadougou, Brazzaville, N'Djamena, etc.), but also in a growing number of private institutions. Most schools opened to communication in a broader sense, including public relations, business communication, publishing and advertising. In Benin, at least seventeen schools or private universities were recognized by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in 2015 as offering training in communication studies. In Togo, in 2015, fifty-five schools, institutes and private universities received the accreditation of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, including a dozen schools that trained students in communication, audiovisual studies and journalism. The Institut des sciences de l'information, de la communication et des arts (ISICA), founded in 2004 at the Université de Lomé, is the only public establishment of higher education in the country offering a university diploma in communication studies.

Progressively, institutional communication, marketing and public relations have become the most popular curricula, with fewer and fewer students turning to journalism, as employability and job quality appear to be less reliable in that market. These departments and institutions consider the programs to have an instrumental, market-driven vision (Odhiambo, Boafo, et al. 2002, p. 7). Therefore, research is not at the core of communication education in francophone Africa. This is for three reasons. First, trainers do not have resources to implement research, as most universities and higher education institutions provide limited funds for research. Secondly, many of these professors have a very heavy load of classes, teaching in several institutions to guarantee a (low) salary, which does not leave much time for research. Thirdly, most of these scholars get opportunities to implement research only in the frame of consultancies, when foreign donors or international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) commission them on special assignments, generally with very strict agendas. This is a general concern for social sciences scholars in francophone Africa: Jean Copans (2010) has demonstrated how the attraction of well-paid commissioned consultancies, but also responsibilities in higher administration positions (often leading to support of the political regime) have hindered the production of high-quality independent research.

As a consequence, not enough endogenous and independent research is produced that could help to feed the curricula with data and analysis drawn from the local context. Boafo and Wete suggested that the aim of communication training in Africa "should be to train communication professionals who are competent in various fields of communication; they would be immersed in the culture of their society and well informed of the political, economic and social realities of their country, of the region, and of the world. They should also understand and have an expertise in the usage of new communication and information technologies" (2002, p. 3). A quick look at the existing curricula in French-speaking Africa confirms that this goal is far from reached (Berger & Matras, 2007).

Communication Research in Francophone Africa

Even if communication education institutions in French-speaking Africa have always focused on practical training, research has nevertheless emerged in the field.

In 1973, the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) was created in Dakar with the goal of developing scientific capacities and tools to facilitate the emergence of an African scientific community. Research programs, publications and training workshops on research started to be organized. Research in Africa was encouraged through the publishing of a dozen scientific journals with the objective of circulating the research results, including in the communication field. The *Africa Media Review* was created, serving as a space for researchers to debate communication theory, practice and policy. This review has published more than forty issues. During the first eight years, the articles were in English; after that francophones began to publish articles in it in French.

Despite this initiative, research has grown separately in both francophone and anglophone Africa. Today, anglophone research in Africa is much better structured than francophone research and has higher visibility.

Research Topics and Donor Funding Priorities

Historically, whether anglophone or francophone, communication research in Africa has focused on what has been called "communication for development," which is often anchored in a normative approach owing to its practical goals (Bogui, Rico, Kane, & Agbobli, 2016). Clearly, this tradition of research, inspired by American development communication scholars such as Lerner, Schramm and Ithiel de Sola Pool, concentrates on communication and media strategies aimed at promoting social and economic development (Agbobli, 2011).

After the liberalization of the media and political sectors, new themes have emerged. In a recent article, Kane (2014) identifies a number of research trends in West Africa: "communication and development" remains popular, but other topics are covered: "media and democracy," "communication and democracy," "communication and community media," "communication and health," "ICTs [information and communication technologies]", "communication and gender." Even though Kane targets West Africa in his analysis, he barely presents any West African francophone countries, apart from Senegal.

Koné (1992) identified new challenges for communication professionals in the context of the 1990s democratization process in Africa. Among these challenges were the needs to strengthen pluralism and to have professional journalists who would guarantee the circulation of information. "This is the only way to avoid certain information problems known as information overload, information chaos, disinformation, propaganda, etc." (Koné, 1992, p. 9).

This focus on media and journalism, and their political role in a democratic society was at the core of the work of Serge Théophile Balima (2000, 2004, 2006a, 2006b) in Burkina Faso, Adjovi (2003) in Benin, Samb (2008) in Senegal and Boyomo (1999) in Cameroon. Because of current events in Africa (and sometimes also the priorities of international donors commissioning research), scholars have also granted attention to, for example, media and conflict, media and political parties, and media and elections. Others have focused on specific types of media such as radio (Senghor, 2015; Sonko, 2014), television (Silla, 1994) and print (Atenga, 2017). Relations between media and politics also lead to studies in political communication (N'Guessan, 2015; Atenga & Madiba, 2013).

Research in francophone Africa has also dealt with community and alternative media (Sy and Koné, 1995). For instance, the work of Ahadé (2000) has focused on the rural press, rural educational radio, television clubs and education television created by internal actors (governments, private businesses) and foreign partners. The sub-theme of media education was also explored in the work of Barbey (2011).

Apart from media, information and journalism, a second research tradition is structured around communication and social change.[5] For instance, Koné (1993) conducted research on communication and family planning. Two other communication researchers at the Université d'Abidjan (Kouamé and Sia, 1993) showed the efficiency of traditional means of communication to transmit health education messages, emphasizing the role of religious chiefs and healers as opinion leaders. Reminiscent of the former "communication for development" paradigm, this approach was not without critics. The Cameroonian scholar Missé Missé (2006, p. 14) made a plea to question "the evolution of the communication practice dominated by the nominalism and pragmatism that structure the phenomenon of 'development' as a field of thought and that intervene in the production and reproduction system of contemporary Africa." Missé Missé sees communication for development as having a productivist logic that has laid the groundwork for "communication for social change." For Missé Missé (2006, p. 24), "[c]ontemporary strategies of social communication foster the development of new dynamics of communication to explain social change." Through developing a critical perspective of a long-dominant tradition in Africa, Missé Missé advocates for francophone African researchers to reconsider the ideas they circulate.

In the same vein, Missé Missé has also explored international communication, emphasizing how its contemporary developments have an impact on the national sovereignty of states. Criticizing the hegemonic nature of international communication as well as the propaganda that it allows, Missé Missé (2000, para. 46) maintains that "international communication appears to be an opposing force, a weapon for destabilizing the sovereign powers in charge."

The concept of "development" has nevertheless been central in studies about the Internet, social media and mobile telephones in francophone Africa. Several authors have accentuated the role of ICTs in the development of African countries, including such pioneers as Ntambwe Tshimbulu (2001), followed by Alzouma (2008), Bahi (2004a, 2004b), Dakouré (2014), Sagna (2006), Bonjawo (2002) and Bogui (2010). The role of these new technologies (and of the social networks such as Facebook) has also been considered within political evolutions, examples being the 2010 elections in Senegal and the 2014 Burkinabe uprising.

Organizational communication is much less studied in francophone Africa (Goa, 2013; Mubangi Bet'Ukani, 2004; Toa, 2013), probably it does not raise much interest among foreign donors.

Finally, research into "traditional communication," with a more anthropological approach, remains important, with studies of informal communication emphasizing non-verbal and ancestral language (Akotia, 2016; Anate, 2002). As Balima suggests, "cultures are largely affected and controlled by communication proximity or by patterns of communication associated with the needs of a particular group in a specific geographic area" (Balima, 2006a, 2006b, p. 52). Oral communication is also examined in the work of N'Guessan (2015), who conducted studies on informal public spheres in Côte d'Ivoire. Traditional communication is also at the core of the work of Jean-Chrétien Ekambo (2006), whose research focuses on the epistemology and anthropology of communication.

One should note that most of this scientific literature is based on the specific experience of one single country. Comparative work is scarce, and when it exists it focuses on French-speaking countries. For instance, More Faye (2008) has analysed the press in Senegal, Benin and Togo; Thomas Atenga compared two francophone countries (Cameroon and Gabon). Comparison is even less frequent with English-speaking countries, mostly because of language but also financial constraints. This lack of comparative works also prevents the constitution of a body of knowledge at the continental level.

Research Dissemination: No Highways for Francophone Knowledge

Institutionalization of a research field goes alongside elaborate mechanisms that allow the data collected, analysis and ideas produced to circulate in the scholars' community. This is one of the main concerns regarding research into media and communication in French-speaking Africa. As noted by Frère 2012, English-speaking researchers have at least five specialized journals dedicated to the media and communication, with a continental scope, while the francophones have none.

University departments, research centers and research laboratories have been established, many of them aimed at creating a scientific journal; but most of these are published very irregularly, if ever. Examples include the *Cahier congolais de communication* of the IFASIC, in Kinshasa ; *EDUCOM*, published by the ISICA at the Université de Lomé (Togo). The Centre d'enseignement et de recherche en communication (CERCOM) and the Department of Communication Sciences of the Université Félix Houphouet-Boigny (UFRICA) in Côte d'Ivoire also edit the journal *Communication en question*, and Dakar's CESTI the *Revue africaine de communication*.

These journals strive to circulate and promote peer-reviewed communication research in francophone Africa, either in print or in digital forms. They also aim at integrating francophone African researchers into a publishing system in which they are hardly recognized. As publishing in scientific journals is necessary to climb the academic ladder, these journals allow the candidates to fulfill the conditions that allow them to be promoted to assistant professor, professor or ordinary professor in the CAMES system.[6] Indeed, the promotion of academics from public universities in nineteen francophone countries of Africa is still centralized and managed by this unique body, which is based in Ouagadougou.

The issue of knowledge dissemination is central in explaining the lack of mutual recognition and cross-fertilization between French- and English-speaking

researchers on the African continent. Anglophone academics usually have little or no knowledge of French, while francophones only publish in French. The dialogue is therefore complicated at a continental level.[7] Recently, the growing domination of English in all fields of science has pushed more and more French-speaking scholars to publish in English. The consequences are twofold: on the one hand, major works about francophone countries are now only available in English, being therefore out of reach of French-speaking researchers who do not understand English. On the other hand, the quality of the research published in English by French-speaking scholars is not always guaranteed. As a senior scholar used to peer-reviewed processes testifies: "Papers are oversimplified and badly written, by authors who do not speak English well, but absolutely want to publish in that language. Sometimes, they pay huge amounts of money for very bad translations, of which they cannot control the quality."

Besides journals, francophone Africa also lacks scientific book publishers. As appears in the reference list of this chapter, most scholars continue to work with publishers based in Paris, Brussels or Montréal. As a result, these books, tailored for the European market, are financially unaffordable for African researchers, and have a very limited circulation in the very few bookstores in French-speaking Africa.

Poor Networking

Most French-speaking African scholars belong to few international academic associations, and when they do these are exclusively francophone and generally based in France. Many have just kept connections with African studies or communication studies associations from the country in which they studied at PhD level. The network of the French-speaking schools of journalism (Réseau Théophraste), in which African schools are well represented, gathers journalism schools that are more concerned about practical training than research. The absence of any structured and well functioning network of French-speaking academics working on media and communication issues in Africa has also prevented fruitful dialogue at continental level.

A striking example of this took place in 2010, when the first World Journalism Education Congress was organized in Africa, in Grahamstown (South Africa). The organizers were eager to welcome researchers and journalism educators from the entire continent. They managed to raise funds to fly twelve French-speaking African academics to Rhodes University, and to secure funding for the simultaneous translation into French (as well as Spanish and

Chinese) of the opening and closing sessions. Nevertheless, most time was devoted to thematic panels held in parallel, where the only language used was English; the French-speaking group ended up forming a single francophone workshop. While other colleagues from all around the world, including English-speaking African scholars, were discussing new methods and new research trends, the francophones were pushed into the background (in which they did not learn much, as they have known each other for quite a while).

Endogamic Citation and References

Because of this gap and the lack of exchange beyond linguistic borders, French-speaking African scholars refer a lot (and sometimes exclusively) to references in French and to the canons of French research. For instance, the research cited in this chapter refers mostly to French, Belgian or Canadian scholars: Francis Balle, Roland Barthes, Daniel Bougnoux, Hervé Bourges, Annie Cheneau-Loquay, Patrice Flichy, Joseph Fourier, Thierry Libaert, Jean Lohisse, Armand Mattelart, Bernard Miège, Serge Proulx, Dominique Wolton. Similar work in anglophone Africa would probably refer to Everett Rogers, Daniel Lerner, Denis McQuail and Wilbur Schramm. The most cited work about the media in French-speaking Africa is that of the French professor André-Jean Tudesq, a name virtually unknown in the anglophone environment.

In general, francophone African researchers vacillate between adapting French theories to their local context and criticizing those theories. Rare are the researchers who make reference to other African researchers. This is a consequence of their education and socialization in research within the environment of French academics. But one cannot help referring here to Bourdieu (1984), who pointed out that the university realm is a place where power issues are at stake over the importance of naming: as it is important in the francophone academy to cite the most influential French intellectuals, citing authors who come from the former colonies does not add value to the work.

This might change with the new generation, as some young scholars are beginning to claim that there is a need for "decolonizing" francophone African media studies (Atenga, 2017).

Post-Coloniality and Path Dependency

In her seminal work on post-colonial studies, Spivak (1988, p. 78) asks: "Can the subaltern speak?" The power dynamics inherent in post-coloniality leads to questioning the ideologies at work when analysing media and communica-tion research in the context of francophone African countries, and one can ask whether francophone African scholars can speak. The previous description of the way in which knowledge is elaborated, built, circulated and valued in francophone Africa shows why the question deserves to be raised, and how post-coloniality is at the heart of the answer.

The term "post-colonial" does not include sequentiality (after colonial) or polarity (anti-colonial) (Bhabha, 2007). Post-colonial studies aim to encompass all phases of the colonial process up to the present, arguing that independence has not stopped colonial domination in all areas governed by post-colonial states (Bhabha, 2007; Mbembe, 2000; Mignolo, 2002; Spivak, 1988). It appears from this chapter that French-speaking communication scholars, obviously in an uneasy position, are still far from joining the debate around post-coloniality (Atenga, 2017). And when they do, it is more at the discourse level than at the practical level of the production of knowledge.

Nevertheless, one might wonder if this is the right way to look at things. As Mudimbe (1988, p. 16) points out, "it seems impossible to make any statement about colonialism without being a dogmatist." This sentence can be decoded as "whatever the point of view of a researcher about coloniality, he will be caught in an oppositional ideology." Mbembe (2000) believes that post-coloniality in Africa should be analysed in the context of the continent's relationship with the West. In a situation where the social reality of sub-Saharan Africa "is a mix of practices that are socially produced, practically codified, and symbolically objectified," Mbembe describes several practices in post-colonial Africa that are modernized versions of those with their origins in colonization. Mignolo (2002) does an epistemological analysis of the coloniality of power by establishing the geopolitics of knowledge. He considers that coloniality is omnipresent in modern times and recognizes that the time of having a world system with "a spatial relationship to power" has passed. From this point on, post-coloniality goes beyond a simple intellectual decolonization. As for Mudimbe (1988), a consciousness for developing original strategies in social sciences can grow in francophone Africa. Presenting the *prise de parole* of those African intellectuals concerning epistemological vigilance, Mudimbe (1988, p. 199) is concerned about an African gnosis; that is, "a kind of secret knowledge." This gnosis has been developed by researchers such as Ki-Zerbo or Obenga. Even if we share Mudimbe's analysis about the *prise de parole* of francophone African researchers, we wonder about their actual capacity to make their voice loudly heard.

If, in francophone Africa, communication research has maintained very close ties to the West, particularly to France, it is not because of a lack of endogenous production, but mainly because of financial, practical and linguistic reasons.

The schools of journalism and communication departments were established with the support of France. The educational model copied the one of the former colony where the professors were trained (and are still trained). There was no possibility of instituting a PhD in communication studies in francophone Africa before the beginning of the 2000s: expatriation was therefore compulsory. Evaluation of degrees and professors' careers still depends on the CAMES, created in 1972, which handles higher education for nineteen francophone African countries and standardizes the university ranks (assistant, assistant instructor, lecturer and full professor) for those countries.[8]

More than a lack of post-colonial critic and assessment of their own work, we suggest that the research produced by the French-speaking researchers of Africa reflects the path dependency mechanism. Path dependency is an approach that suggests organizations (or, in our case, sectors of knowledge) are influenced by the past, by a specific history that has an impact on the decisions made in later stages, even when the system has apparently changed. It explains the continued use of a product or practice based on historical preference. In this chapter, we have identified the legacy that explains why research about the media in francophone Africa is still mostly produced in Northern francophone countries and regions, and mainly in the former colonial empires (France and Belgium—Capitant, 2008; Quebec) and in the French language (thus circulating in francophone networks specifically). If a growing body of knowledge is produced in English about francophone Africa, this research has very little impact on the francophone media research trends. Therefore, path dependency gives us a clue about the concepts, methodological approaches and theoretical frameworks that are mostly used in francophone research about African media, but also about the themes and objects on which researchers decide to focus.

We believe that the path of French-speaking African communication scholars has come to a crossroads and that it should head towards "afrocontemporaneity." According to Sarr (2016, p. 40), "afrocontemporaneity is this present time, this psychologic continuum of the life experience of African people, incorporating the past and pregnant of its future which is still to be thought." The past will not be erased, but the future can be different if there is space, freedom and energy for creativity.

Conclusion

The institutionalization of media and communication science is undeniable in francophone Africa. Yet the challenges are numerous. One of these might hinge on francophone African researchers' ability to build their own legitimacy apart from Western models, paradigms and networks. Nevertheless, if the global context of research is still influenced by a form of imperialism, ideas and concepts circulate now more widely and quickly than ever. Francophone African researchers cannot leave their path, but they can work on heading in new directions by reducing the dependency. Suitable local conditions for teaching and research could be provided so that francophone African researchers, still trained in the best French and North American universities, go back home after they get their diploma to offer to their students an education that mixes global perspectives and local contexts. The door is open for more and more PhD students trained locally, within a research process reaching the same level of excellence as elsewhere.

But a fundamental issue in allowing French-speaking communication scholars to speak is language: academic literature in English should not be neglected, nor the dissemination in English of outstanding locally produced research. This should be considered as a positive value for francophone academics that is worth investing in if they want to share their work with the rest of the world.

Moreover, the structural coloniality of the academic realm, which generates the same antique hierarchy between places of knowledge and economic, political and symbolic powers, might not last much longer in an environment where African students go to study in China, India or Brazil. A new generation might be on the way...

Notes

1. Francophone Africa will be considered in this chapter as including twenty-one sub-Saharan countries formerly colonized by France or Belgium and where French is the (or one of the) official language(s): Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Gabon, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Republic of Congo, Senegal, Seychelles and Togo.
2. Even if several researchers combine the positions of Afrocentrists with those of the adherents of Afrocentricity, several differences (such as the origin of the discourse and the fight rhetoric associated with Afrocentricity) prevent the merging of this "-ism" and "-icity."
3. http://cesti-ucad.com/ecole-journalisme-cesti-dakar; consulted March 8, 2017.
4. A regional school specialized in training "rural journalists" aimed at working in radio stations located in the countryside was also created in Burkina Faso (the called Upper Volta) in1978 with the support of German foreign aid (GTZ) : the Centre Interafricain d'Etudes en radio Rurale de Ouagadougou.

5. This includes the policies or strategies established around the models of "information–education–communication" (IEC) and "behavioral change communication" (BCC).
6. CAMES stands for Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'enseignement supérieur (in French) or African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education.
7. In order to try to build bridges between the communities, a project was launched in 2012 involving the French journal *Afrique contemporaine* and the South African journal *Ecquid Novi:African Journalism Studies*. Each one published a special issue devoted to research in the other part of the continent. French works were translated into English, and vice versa. For several francophone researchers, it was their first paper ever published in English.
8. France used this categorization method until 1984, but the former colonies have continued using the old French method of academic recognition since France has dropped it.

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