Toward an Indigenized Philosophy of Communication: An Analysis of African Communication Educational Resources and Needs

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Abstract

This paper critically reviews the current status of African communication educational resources and needs in the context of the development of the post colonial state and its institutions. In calling for an indigenized[1] philosophy of communication, the paper argues that the current patterns of communication education are too foreign-oriented and have very little or no indigenous component. As a result, media practitioners are institutionally incapable of interpreting dynamically complex socio-economic and development problems facing Africa today.

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Vers l'Indigénisation de la Philosophie de la Communication: Une Analyse des Ressources et Besoins de l'Enseignement de la Communication en Afrique

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Résumé

Cet article fait une analyse critique de l'état actuel des ressources et des besoins de l'enseignement de la communication dans le contexte du developpement de l'Etat post-colonial et de ses institutitions. En lançant un appel pour une indigénisation de la philosophie de communication, l'article fait remarq:ier que les formules actuelles de l'enseignement de la communication sont trop orientées vers l'étranger avec très peu ou pas du tout d'élements locaux.

Le résultat de ceci est que les praticiens des médias sont institutionnellement incapables d'interpréter de façon dynamique les problèmes complexes de développement socio-économiques auxquels l'Afrique se trouv e confrontée.

Introduction

Communication education in Africa is an outgrowth of the social system that traces its roots to the colonial era. To understand its origins and philosophy comprehensively, this paper will analyze it not only in the context of communication philosophy, research and practices but also within the framework of the post-colonial state and its institutions. Approaches to the analysis of communication education in Africa vary from quantitative and descriptive to world systems theory studies. However, institutions for communication education are, like the media systems, an integral part of the socio-political structures in Africa (Ansah, 1986). Therefore any comprehensive discussion and analysis of the historical development of communication education has to be within the context of the evolution of the colonial and post-colonial state and its institutions.

Approaches to Communication Education Study in Africa

Bourgault (1989) has taxonomized four approaches to the study of communication education in Africa. The first, defined as descriptive studies [and in which she cites Quarmyne and Bebey (1967); Katzen (1975); Ainsle (1967)] among others, focuses on institutions and facilities available for communication education. The second addresses the merits and demerits of local versus overseas training. In this category Bourgault identifies the literature and scholarship of Hachten (1968); Head (1974); and Cruise-O'Brien (1985). The third approach deals with what she calls "ideological issues in communication education, i.e., the problems caused by the importation of western values to Africa" and the resultant clash of cultures. Here she cites Barton (1969); Scotton (1974); and Elliot and Golding (1979). In the fourth category Bourgault identifies the world systems theory in which western-oriented communication education "is viewed in the context of the expansion of global cultural and economic imperialism" as reflected in the writings of, for example, Gollen (1967); Stokke (1971); and Golding (1979). Bourgault argues that most of the above approaches fail to address and adequately discuss basic and crucial issues inherent in the transfer of technology.

In other words, they fail to explain the implicit assumption underlying the belief that training is necessary. They also fail to explain why training can be so difficult. In so doing, they avoid addressing the knotty problems experienced by rural peoples from oral societies, persons whose lives have brought them into a head-on collision with technology (Bourgault, 1989, p. 199).

Bourgault proposes what she calls "a bottom up" approach that looks at ordinary individuals whose working lives demand that they operate within the parameters of media organizations in Africa. In this approach she relies on the "ora-media" tradition, based on the research studies of Ong (1982) into "the psycho-dynamic qualities of the mind typical of the oral mind set," namely its independence, creativity and expressiveness and its profound effects on practices of media personnel. She cites two practices that she observed in radio and television production in Nigeria:

> There is a general lack of time orientation in most areas of broadcast production: programs rarely begin on schedule; programs lengths often exceed allotted time; schedules themselves are often replete with errors; and production crews rarely arrive on time.

> There is a general resistance to the use of scripts. There is a tendency to allow programs to run free-form, much like oral narrative.

> It is important that trainers and media managers in Africa understand the oral cultural origins of "untimely" behaviour exhibited by studio personnel. This will prevent the former from attributing such tendencies to lack of staff discipline or to defiance to authority (Bougault, 1989, p. 202).

Bougault's micro approach reflects the ongoing "theorists" versus "empiricists" debate, which will be elaborated later in this paper. Her method supports to some extent an important social theory developed by Giddens (1976), namely, the capability of the human agent in influencing structures in which he operates.

However, a fundamental weakness in Bougault's method is the absence of synthesis of various approaches to the study of communication education in Africa. Her own approach is only an addition to what already exists, and it merely shifts attention from structure to agency, which does not help us much to understand the dynamic relationship between structure and agency. There are many factors that influence communication education in Africa. An examination of what she calls "work related behaviours and attitudes of mostly low-level media personnel, camera operators, sound technicians, radio producers, television directors, news reporters, graphics and set designers (Bougault, 1989, p. 202)," will not by itself give a comprehensive and enlightened understanding of communication education in the continent. Such behaviours as coming late to work and not keeping to schedules are cross- and extra-cultural; that is, they are not necessarily or solely a result of single culture-specific factors. There are a host of socio-economic, political, technical and educational factors that can individually or collectively affect or be

affected by such behaviour. It may well be that the oral-culture plays an insignificant role, relative to other factors like equipment breakdown due to age and resulting from poor investment; poor rewards and little or no incentives; the effects of work routines attributed to technology; and poor training. Such oral-culture is more prevalent in rural communities than in the urban environment where such modern technologies of communication are to be found.

This paper will use, as its analytical tool, a synthesis of approaches to the study of communication education in Africa. The rationale for this approach is elaborated in the thesis on the relationship between agency and structure.

The Post-colonial State

In the post-colonial social system, education itself was a process in which the indigenous elites became socialized into professions. In the process they took on the trappings and paraphernalia of, among others, the journalism profession — its occupational ideology and routines. In what Halloran (1987) called the "tyranny of professionalization," this took on the elements of a self-fulfilling prophecy, i.e., news is news because it is news. The result was their inability to judge the occupation from values external to professionalization. Thus the ideological orientation of communication education was closely aligned to the mandate of the post-colonial state in Africa — namely to promote the interests of the fragile social system inherited at independence. In analyzing the historical origins of African communication education three key factors provide the context or framework within which the discipline, if it can be called that, developed, i.e., the post-colonial state, western social science theorizing and communication education models.

In the literature and scholarship on the role of the post-colonial state in Africa, several arguments have been made about the degree and level, if any, of the autonomy of the state to effectively distribute goods, services and benefits to the majority of its population, the bulk of whom are rural peasants (Bryceson, 1982; Miliband, 1969; von Freyhold 1977). The fragility of the post-colonial state system, coupled with its severe internal problems and contradictions, left African countries in a state of perpetual dependency and under-development (Magubane, 1976; Poulantzas, 1979; Markovitz, 1977; Mazrui, 1978). In such a situation of poverty and underdevelopment the state and its institutions have become the sovereign source of social and economic development. The elite class that inherited the state institutions also acceded to the privileges of state employment and sustenance, leading

to the domination of the state by the administrative elite (Magubane, 1976; Bennell, 1982).

Within the context of the state and a social system that inherited non-indigenous values and influences, and continues to be nurtured by them, communication education policy and practice reflect in a historical way a pattern consistent with other parts of the social system. This involves the use of the communication media as a key structure in the socialization process, others being schools, religious organizations and government institutions (Barton, 1969; Ainsle, 1967; Wilcox, 1975).

However, it has been argued that Africa has no mass media but simply media, since the media circulation is concentrated among the urban residents who constitute about 20 percent of the continent's population (Hachten, 1971). This problem is exacerbated by the fact that journalism training is largely conducted in English, French and other non-indigenous languages. These languages are also used in the mainstream newspapers, journals and magazines to the almost total exclusion of indigenous languages, which most of the largely rural population ordinarily use. To this extent the elitist nature of communication education is evident.

Communication Education Models

Models for communication education in Africa were part and parcel of the socio-economic and cultural package that was bequeathed to the continent by the colonial and other powers. The contradictory conceptual approaches to communication research and education traditions that were developed in Europe and North America (Rowland, 1985) not only deprived Africa of the opportunity to develop models inspired by her cultural tradition but created some paradoxes. The Western cultural values embedded in communication theories and superimposed on non-western geo-cultural environments have often led to the conversion of the local trainees, making them amenable to control by western social and cultural influences — a process Mowlana (1986) has called "westofixation" because of the "schizophrenic paralysis of creative power" when these newly westernized converts are made to behave in ways different from their natural routines. One example of such paralysis of creative power is the tendency among many African academics and intellectuals to use western rather than indigenous experiences as sources of knowledge. A survey of 20 randomly selected papers read at a communications conference in Nigeria in 1987 showed that 87.14 percent of citations were from foreign sources (Badejo, 1988). These citations of foreign sources reflect the tyranny of

professionalization in which local values and knowledge are superseded by those of the West. Creativity is lost because by and large such intellectual recitation is essentially a regurgitation of what has been said or written about elsewhere.

The nature and scope of western-oriented methods of training create a journalist who is not very sensitive to local culture and who spends most of his or her time chasing government officials, police, fire, ambulance or attending endless receptions or festive occasions hosted by government, business or diplomatic institutions. The focus in this respect is to write about the lives and times of the urban elite. In the process, major issues affecting the rural majority are sidelined or treated superficially. One reason is simply that the journalist has not received the type of training that is oriented towards dealing with the non-western concepts of life, time and space or the indigenous communication and information environment.

To add to this confusion, the western models are not monolithic. The European model, typified by the writings of Murdock and Golding (1977); Golding and Murdock (1980); and van Dijk (1985) is derived from what Ugboajah (1987, p. 3) called "proletarian sociologists" and their focus on a critical analysis of society as a conceptual framework for communication and media research. The North American tradition, on the other hand, has tended to be viewed as "administrative" with its focus on quantitative research as Rogers and Kincaid (1983) have observed:

> The empirical (administrative) school of communication research is commonly characterized by quantitative empiricism . . . In the past it has generally emphasized the direct effects of communication, while paying less attention to the broader context in which communication is embedded. In contrast, the essence of the critical school is its philosophical emphasis and its focus on the broader social structural context of communication . . . and a central concern with the issue of who controls a communication system. Critical scholars believe that a theory of communication is impossible without a theory of society, so their scope of analysis is much wider than that of empirical scholars (Rogers and Kincaid 1983, p.125)

Orthodox Consensus

However, such contradictions in communication theory now reflect the state of disarray social theorizing has found itself in since the intellectual repudiation about 20 years ago of what Giddens (1976, 1982) called the "orthodox consensus." As a body of intellectual thought or mainstream of ideas which guided social theorizing, the orthodox consensus had not conceptually distinguished between natural and social sciences. It had erroneously believed that a unity existed between

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nature and society and that the role of the researcher had been to secure this unity as a basis for social analysis.

The disillusionment with the orthodox consensus reflected the failure of social theories to live up to their expectations. A major criticism of the orthodox consensus was its failure to recognize a fundamental difference between social and natural science, namely, that nature is not a human product but society is. In this respect, social practices or human behaviours are not given as nature is but brought about by lay actors endowed with conscious language and a body of collective lay knowledge (Giddens, 1982).

The problem with the structuralist and functionalist (some of the key elements of the orthodox consensus) approaches to social analysis was that they were unable to account for *human praxis*, the knowledgeability of human agents and their dynamic involvement through what Giddens calls practical consciousness in the creation of their structures, although not under conditions they completely control.[2]

For the Third World such western social theories were unable to give an analytical explanation of the tremendous capabilities and resilience people in situations of poverty, underdevelopment and elitist domination have displayed. Goulet (1979) and Streeten (1984) have documented cases in which Third World people have, through their own initiatives and, with little or no outside help, undertaken some of the most impressive development projects based on self-reliance. This gave rise during the debate on the New World Information and Communication Order to the call for a new conceptual approach to understanding the nature of relationships between communication and development and an indigenized theory of communication and journalism practices as alternatives to the western theories (Inayatullah, 1967; Smith, 1980; Hedebero, 1982; Becker *et. al.*, (1986).

This call for an alternative theory of communication or an indigenized philosophy of communication comes in the aftermath of the fragmentation in the West of the orthodox consensus, leaving behind a variety of competing schools with a diversity of ideas. This in turn has brought about a sharp debate on the merits and demerits of plural diversity in social theories. Those welcoming such diversity, like Feyerabend (1981), see it as a multi-theorist counter to the dogmatism that characterized the orthodox consensus and argue that the study of human beings is a study of varied human agents. However, at the other end of the scale in the theoretical debate are the empiricists who have down-played the importance of theory, highlighting in their criticism the state of anarchy in the post modernist era of social theories.

This multi-theorist approach to social analysis is the empirical basis for Krippendorff's (1984) notion of a *multi-verse* rather than a *universe*, meaning that in this world are many worlds each existing in the reality constructed by its cultural traditions. In developing communication models the researcher must take into account and respect these cultural traditions. But this fragmentation of the orthodox consensus has created for the African scholar and researcher an opportunity for a theoretical retaxonomization of communication education based on the African experience and philosophical thought.

Because it is largely unwritten, African philosophy has been subjected to varied and often conflicting interpretations. Gyekye (1980) has argued that African philosophical thought has embedded in it logic, patterns of thought, the acceptance of plurality of ideas and critical thinking and an exercise of careful judgment and observation of something's value and truth. It is therefore not incompatible with the European tradition of critical thought. In developing an indigenized philosophy of communication this does not mean throwing out the baby with the bath water but evolving a synthesis of values and relating them to indigenous experiences. For while this is a culturally diverse world, there are core values and philosophies that transcend cultural boundaries, — for example, the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Onyewuenyi (1986) has observed that the key elements of the European philosophical thought processes originated from Africa. However, for some strange reason, the notion of cultural pluralism as well as new alternative theories of communication and development that were developed during the last two decades are not organically embedded in the communication education patterns in Africa. This attests to the neo-colonial nature of journalism education and the characterization of journalists as institutionally incapable of interpreting complex socio-economic issues affecting the majority of their countries' populations. It must be stressed, however, that this pattern of journalism education and practice is influenced by the power factors in a given social system. The institutionalized mediocrity in the media, a worldwide phenomenon, has to do with not only the nature of journalism education but to a very large degree issues of power, control and influence in media management and production (Smythe, 1980; Cruise-O'Brien, 1984; Schiller, 1976).

These factors of power and influence are evident in content analyses of the African media — which reveal the absence of development-oriented stories like agricultural production, literacy programmes, and self-reliant development among the rural masses. Instead, the media are typically replete with foreign, political, entertainment and business stories and very little in-depth analysis of major socio-

economic issues affecting the majority of the continent's population. Aborampah and Anokwa (1984) found that situationally relevant agricultural information occupied very little space in the African press, a situation that reflected a general pattern of coverage of development-oriented news and ownership of the media as also shown in studies by Brown and Kearl (1967) and Ugboajah (1985). Other studies by Ogan and Fair (1984) showed that the amount of development news in the African press actually declined. Mazombwe (1980) concluded that the African media lacked information on serious issues. The media were replete with trivia in the form of imported cultural programming which was of very little developmental relevance to the rural people.

Growth and Development of Communication Education in Africa

During the early years of African political independence, communication education was not developed into a discipline. This was consistent with the British tradition which stressed on-the-job training for journalists with its accent on the five "W's and one H" of news reporting, photojournalism and editing (Chimutengwende, 1988). During the colonial era where such on the job-training occurred, it was also part of a socialization and acculturation process. Thus it offered no opportunities for in-depth critical and social analysis. At the same time the culture of the colonizing power provided the ideological and professional underpinning for communication education and practice.

In this context, a well-trained journalist was one who had become literate in the colonial culture in terms of language, philosophy and social outlook. Such a journalist had become a classic example of a socialization process that Freire (1970) called "transmission mentality" or "banking education". This was consistent with the legacy of colonial education. Coleman (1972) says there was a high correlation between educational achievement and upward mobility into the more prestigious and remunerative roles available to the indigenous inhabitants. In the process, argues Coleman, education became a crucial legitimating factor of elite status because a substantial number of the upward mobile elements in the emerging indigenous elite in colonial societies came from the lower strata of traditional societies.

In the geo-political and cultural context, the division of Africa in 1884 into subject territories of the European colonizing powers led to the creation of rigid vertical lines of command with little lateral interaction. Thus the French colonies became an extension of the French colonial culture and social system. The communication education curriculum in Francophone Africa was modelled after schools

of journalism in Paris, Lille and Strasbourg (Domatob, 1989). Students from journalism schools in Senegal and Cameroon did their third year in France, Britain, or North America, especially Quebec in Canada. The same applied to colonial empires of the British, the Belgians and the Portuguese. It is not surprising that communication and transport structures in colonial Africa linked the colonies directly with their colonial overlords with little or no lateral links or networks. To travel or telephone from Nigeria to neighbouring Cameroon one had to go through Europe. The distance and expense of such a roundabout trip effectively discouraged such lateral travel or contacts.[3] In this respect communication education and journalism practice produced practitioners who had a tunnel vision about the world around them — not only in neighbouring countries but also in rural areas. They were essentially urban elites with strong organic ties to their colonial metropoles where they often went for internship or further training.

Where it existed, communication education, as part of the colonial social system, relied for its teaching materials, trainers and curricula on the respective colonizing powers whose policies were to ensure the dominance of their culture in their colonial enclaves in Africa. Hence mass media institutions were in essence a transplant from the west (Golding, 1979). Golding (quoted in Nwosu, 1987) observed that syllabuses were transplanted wholesale into institutions like Jackson College of Journalism (now Department of Mass Communication) at the University of Nsukka. Michigan State University, under contract with substantial American aid, supplied the structure, staff and much of the university curricula including a journalism programme. In some cases the journalists were western-trained. Mogekwu (quoted in Domatob, 1989) observed that the bulk of journalism educators in Nigeria had a western training. In the universities of Nigeria, Nsukka and Lagos, the staff were almost 100 percent American trained, resulting in "a continuous transfer of the western journalistic psychology from one generation to another. In the end the system produces either an alien journalist for the Nigerian audience or a non-Nigerian audience" (Mogekwu quoted in Domatob 1989, p. 46).

The preponderance of American cultural products in the fields of book publishing spilled over into mass communication training. Thus the cultural influence of the former colonial powers in Europe somewhat lost ground to "the increasing American cultural and intellectual influence in the continent to the disadvantage of the former colonial powers" (Mohammed, 1988, p. 75). In a sense, the United States created a post-war world culture in book publishing, consumer goods and entertainment. The emergence of this culture coincided with the decolonization of Africa.

Communication Educational Resources and Needs

Journalism education in sub-Saharan Africa dates back to February 1959 when the first journalism institution in the region, the Ghana Institute of Journalism was established (Nordenstreng and Boafo, 1988). The decolonization of most of the continent during the two decades of the 1960s and 1970s also witnessed the growth and development of journalism training schools. International organizations, notably the International Press Institute and UNESCO, contributed to the growth and development of training programmes in post-colonial Africa. IPI's Africa Program which was launched in 1966 had trained 200 journalists by 1968.[4] The BBC Staff Training Department in London launched on-the-job training programmes for many African media people. In addition, the Thompson Foundation, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association established training programmes for media personnel (UNESCO, 1977).

Chimutengwende (1988) identifies early problems in communication education as dependence on foreign funds and expertise. Also, there were no serious attempts to train local instructors and the courses tended to be narrow in scope, aimed at giving basic communication skills and neglected social sciences. These problems still persist. The existing training institutions are not only inadequate but they also continue to be plagued by understaffing and poor and decrepit equipment. By 1986, there were 35 journalism and communication schools in Anglophone African countries. Twenty-two of these schools were pre-university and 13 based at universities (Nordenstreng and Boafo, 1988). Nigeria had the largest number of students, 2,931 out of a total enrolment for Anglophone Africa of 3,596. According to the Directory of Communication Training Institutions in Africa, compiled by the ACCE (1988), there were 15 communication training institutions in French-speaking Africa.

Chimutengwende (1988) has observed that there was, at the beginning of independence, a lot of bureaucratic and political resistance to communication education:

> The old British idea that journalists were born, not created, was strong. Many of the old African journalists who were trained on the-the-job during the colonial period also supported the idea that formal training for journalists was neither necessary nor good. African academics, true to their British upbringing and educational values, could not easily accept the idea of formal journalism training especially in the universities. They gave the conservative, elitist, and anti-development argument to the effect that a university was a centre for satisfying the academic and intellectual rather than the vocational needs of society (p. 36).

Such a view on communication education reflects the colonial institutions inherited at independence. The apparent inability by the leadership to develop a dynamic communication education policy is one of many problems afflicting communication education in Africa. Another problem is the chronic shortage of teaching materials and books. Africa lags behind most other continents in book publishing (UNESCO, 1989). The political dimension of this problem has historically been the poor allocation of resources and investments by the policy makers. There has been little or no incentives to stimulate book-publishing in the continent. Textbooks constitute a cornerstone of the training and learning process in journalism education. The dearth of publishing in Africa has had a severe impact on the availability of locally written material for journalism education. The results of a survey by the International Association for Mass Communication Research (IAMCR) showed not only a significant inadequacy in locally produced textbooks but an infrastructure for journalism education that lacked a number of important components like library holdings, radio and television studios, photojournalism laboratories and teaching staff (Nordenstreng and Boafo, 1988). The IAMCR study, which was funded by UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communications, also showed that almost all of the 35 journalism education institutions in Anglophone Africa were understaffed, leading to the use of part-time lecturers in an effort to reduce the teaching load.

While most of the journalism education schools had their own libraries, these were small, with holdings averaging 100 materials which included books, journals and magazines. Budgetary and other constraints meant that only a few schools were able to purchase new books and periodicals each year. For some schools there was virtually no budget provisions to purchase new material to increase the library holdings. This means that the library holdings consisted of old or aging books with little or no updated or new inputs. The vast majority of these aging textbooks have no indigenous inputs, having been published in the West. Consequently the contents of the textbooks are not only inadequate in relation to the indigenous geo-cultural situations but also continue to recycle old knowledge and ideas which may have been challenged or superseded in the West by new knowledge.

The IAMCR survey further showed that most of the 311 textbooks used in journalism education institutions in Africa came from or were published in the United States, which accounted for 215 or 69 percent. Western Europe accounted for 73 books or 24 percent. Overall 93 percent of all textbooks used in the Anglophone African journalism education schools came from or were published in the West; Africa accounted for only six percent (Nordenstreng and Boafo, 1988).

Most of the textbooks were published before 1980 — ninety percent to be exact. Fifty eight or 20 percent were published before 1970 and fifty percent or 153 were published between 1970 and 1979. Only 91 textbooks or 30 percent are relatively new, having been published after 1980. A chronic problem was that of inadequate textbook supplies to meet demand. The IAMCR study found that in many cases only a single teacher's copy was available and this could not be photocopied for students because photocopiers were either unavailable or out of service (Nordenstreng and Boafo, 1988, p. 11).

Ugboajah (1987, p. 9) has argued that the "problem for Africa is not only that of conceptualization but also that of the process and administration of social research. Social research in Africa has suffered from erratic conclusions, wild generalizations and foreign dominance." Obeng-Quaidoo (1987) sees the lack of an African view on communication as a result of the absence of

> a processual definition of African culture . . . and also a multiplicity of African researchers and Africanist commentators who take solace in several sources. We have those with American communication bias who consider testing of hypotheses as the supreme effort in arriving at the truth. We have those who hate the very idea of *chi square* and consider the European critical approach as *sine qua non* of any truth seeking. And we also have scholars trained in the Soviet Union or the (former) Eastern bloc who look through the ideological prism in finding the truth (p. 53).

In stressing the integration of local culture in the development of an alternative theory of communication for Africa, it must be noted that the "processual definition of culture" points to a culture that is dynamic, not static. In this respect, traditional values, indigenous cultural innovations in response to contemporary pressures, and assimilated metropolitan values constitute the new mix that characterizes the contemporary cultures of the Third World (Amunugama, 1986).

What is needed in African communication education is a model that integrates communication processes and African culture or what Wilson (1989) calls a diachronic-synchronic view of communication. This view

> sees communication as a cultural transaction and transmission taking place over time. The technology for transmission of messages undergoes changes and is shaped and sharpened through ages. Old processes are synchronized with modern technologies as new ones replace some of the functions of the old ones. The process of snychronization with the old sees the past acting as a guide to the future. With this, there is no cultural or age gap created by jumping from one form to the other without being part of the socialization process (Wilson, 1989, p. 28).

In developing an alternative model, consideration should be given to four key assumptions proposed at a meeting of researchers held in Nairobi in August 1981. These were:

1. the overwhelming majority of Africans live in a rural setting;
2. the need to examine the role and effect of communication within the context of development objectives and activities;
3. the need to focus on different communication modalities and styles, values underlying different communication structures, constraints inherent or imposed on communication; and
4. the need to achieve the goal of self-reliance in the development of communication research (Quoted in Ugboajah, 1987, p. 11).

Conclusion

Communication education, research and practice in Africa have been greatly influenced by the western-oriented notions of communication and social theory. This has created a problem of relevance of such discipline in the geo-cultural and political environment that has different tradition, philosophy, values and history. Exacerbating this problem has been Africa's colonial experience which created fragile socio-political and economic institutions, superimposed on the traditional pre-colonial institutions, and the attendant problems of dependency and neo-colonialism. A major development in social theorizing in the West was the fragmentation about 20 years ago of the orthodox consensus. This provided Africa with an opportunity to develop an indigenized social theory. But this revolution of ideas has never been significantly incorporated in the communication education policy and practice. Hence, there is neither dynamic creativity nor innovation in communication education and journalism practice in Africa.

The task facing both policy makers and communication practitioners and researchers in Africa is to evolve an indigenized theory of communication education and research. While to date no coherent set of proposals for an indigenized philosophy or theory of communication has emerged, there is a growing scholarship and literature on African philosophical thought. This can provide a useful framework for evolving such an indigenized theory. Equipped with this kind of theoretical framework, African policy makers and media practitioners can begin to design training programmes or to practice journalism in a way that addresses dynamically the communication, information and educational needs of most Africans.

Notes

1. "Indigenized," rather than "Africanized", here is used in the sense of making a particular practice situationally relevant to a given geo-cultural location. In this world of cultural intercourse the notion "indigenized" more appropriately refers to contemporary cultural practices than "Africanized." It also reflects a large degree of local and democratized participation in the adoption and adaption of cultural mixes brought about by the increasing interaction among culturally diverse societies. But this does not mean such cultural mix is symmetrical. Factors of power and influence will always skew such interaction in favour of whoever controls the means of production and cultural products.

2. Gidden's theory of structuration is a useful tool for developing a situationally relevant communication education policy in Africa, because the analysis takes into account the hermeneutic-dialectic tradition or understanding through dialogue. Here the people and the policy-makers get to develop a policy based on each others' expressed needs.

3. It must be pointed out that such travel disincentives and subsequent minimal or lack of contacts affected mostly urban populations. Rural dwellers in contiguous zones visited their friends and relatives across the colonial borders at will, an indication of the inability of the colonial, and even the post-colonial state, to effectively control the entire territory.

4. See *IPI Report*, November 1966, p. 10.

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