THE INTERNATIONALIZATION PROCESS OF FIRMS FROM FRANCOPHONE AFRICA “L’EFFET METROPOLITAIN”

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ABSTRACT

Emerging market firms (EMFs) have become a significant contemporary global economic force in terms of their international presence and influence. However, given the extreme poverty and lack of development in their home countries, many francophone firms in Africa seeking to internationalize lack resources as well as legitimacy in international markets. Compared to higher income emerging markets, francophone firms in Africa face significantly greater challenges in their internationalization efforts. For such firms, initial internationalization may occur through the former colonial center as a result of "*l'effet métropolitain"* (or the metropolitan effect). They may take advantage of their French relationship to overcome the disadvantages of being located in underdeveloped countries and markets. Once established in France, they are able to internationalize more broadly. The aim of this research was to investigate "*l'effet métropolitain"* and learn about the factors influencing the internationalization process of francophone firms in Africa. To meet these aims, data on internationalization processes of firms from francophone Africa were collected through case study analysis and semi-structured interviews with senior management of seven, francophone firms from Africa. The case study findings largely provide confirmation of a proposed model of "l'effet métropolitain" wherein certain firm resources and motivations moderate the internationalization of francophone firms in Africa to France first and then beyond.

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife Leila and to

my precious and amazing boys Mohamed and Meouloud.

You have contributed to my adopting new sleeping habits in the last

two years, but I am truly grateful for having you in my life.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Table Page

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure Page

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATION	Definition
EMF	Emerging Market Firm
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GVC	Global Value Chain
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMS	International Market Selection
OLI	Ownership Location and Internalization

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> You can sense the omnipresence of history, of colonization, of these structures that are always in place, which always play an important role, and on which you need to rely on your continued development in your various markets, including in France. — *Study respondent*

Africa has been touted as the next big context for the theory and practice of international business. The GDP growth rate on the continent has accelerated from about 2.5 percent at the end of twentieth century to around 5 percent by the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century (Chironga, Leke, van Wamelen & Lund, 2011). This suggests firms in the continent are likely to have enormous opportunities in the coming years and decades. As shown by Table 1 and Figure 1 (see Appendix A and B), francophone Africa constitutes the largest group of countries on the continent. As such, research on the internationalization of francophone firms provides an opportunity to develop unique knowledge on the processes that underscore the growth of internationalizing firms from developing nations.

Compared to firms from developed nations, emerging markets firms (EMFs) have been stereotypically viewed as technologically backward with less than sophisticated products and lacking market knowledge as well as legitimacy (Kumaraswamy, Mudambi, Saranga & Tripathy, 2012; Ramamurti, 2012). These concerns apply with special force to firms from Africa. Their business environments have been viewed negatively as having political and institutional turbulence, inferior levels of economic development such as macro-economic instability, an inefficient legal framework, poor infrastructure, scarcities of skilled labor and weak capital markets (Hoskisson, Eden, Lau, & Wright, 2000; Peng, Wang, & Jiang, 2008; Wright, Filatotchev, Hoskisson, & Peng, 2005).

From the literature on EMFs, it has been argued, however, that such firms possess unique resources that provide them with several competitive advantages (Ramamurti, 2012). First, they have a distinct home advantage wherein they are best placed to understand and service their local customers' needs. This goes beyond their low wage structures, as they have also have to employ creativity and generate innovation to develop low cost value propositions to ensure that their customers can afford their products. Second, EMFs strategize on how to overcome weak infrastructure and logistics. EMFs often manage a challenging home-country governance environment, which they turn to their advantage when they pursue internationalization in similarly challenging emerging markets (Cuevro-Cazurra & Genc, 2008). Third, being relatively "recent arrivals," they begin as users of new technologies and innovations (Ramamurti, 2012), often sourced off-the-shelf from "best in the world" suppliers (Awate, Larsen & Mudambi, 2012). With that advantage and capability, EMFs are often able to compete effectively with other advanced economy companies that may be tied to antiquated equipment and practices.

In the research literature on EMFs, the main focus has been on the more advanced emerging markets like the BRIC countries of Brazil, Russia, India and China (Awate et al., 2012; Buckley, Clegg, Cross, Liu, Voss & Zheng, 2007; Fleury & Fleury, 2011; Kalotay & Sulstarova, 2010; Kumaraswamy et al., 2012; Peng et al., 2008; Ramamurti, 2012) and other higher income emerging markets like Turkey and Mexico. In contrast, there is little research that investigates the internationalization of firms from francophone

Africa. Given the extreme poverty and backwardness of their home countries, many firms from francophone Africa face significant disadvantages. Further, they usually lack many of the advantages that the literature typically associates with EMFs. This means that the hurdles they face in the process of internationalization are far higher than those faced by firms from the lower to middle-income emerging market countries like China and India.

As such, countries in francophone Africa are generally considered "frontier economies," as distinct from emerging market economies. Frontier economies are defined as fast-growing low-income markets and countries (Zhu, 2014). Indeed, there has been a fast growth in the internationalization of firms from francophone Africa, wherein many are establishing a presence in France. According to *L'Economiste* (Tohry, 2016) and a recent report by *Business France* (2015), more than 700 companies from francophone African countries like Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria are established in France, where they employ more than 6,400 people. Moreover, there have been regular press reports in recent times about *le business dans le sens inverse*, or business in the opposite direction where many firms from francophone Africa are establishing a presence and have strong ties in France (e.g., Leaders, 2016; Le Bec, 2012; Mokhliss, 2014; Tohry, 2016). These include a range of firms from different industries and francophone countries such as Outsourcia and Intelcia from Morocco (call center and digital management), Misfat from Tunisia (automotive filters), Cevital from Algeria (food production), Phoneo from Morocco (Communications) and BGFI Bank from Gabon (Finance). We study several of these in depth in this dissertation.

Importantly, many firms from former French colonies adopt a particular internationalization strategy that consists of choosing France as the first site during the internationalization process, and then following an expansion strategy, which may be termed "*l'effet métropolitain"* or the metropolitan effect. The word "*metropole"* can be traced back to the Greek era wherein a metropolis or mother city had deep influence over surrounding cities because of its economic, geographical and social importance. In the eighteenth century, due to its historical context of colonization, France was considered the "*métropole*" of all French colonies (Lavallee & Lochard, 2015).

"L'effet métropolitain" occurs when colonial commonalities such as shared language, history, culture, legal systems, and values drive internationalization processes between colonial powers and their former colonies. It is a development of the "commonwealth effect" that Lundan and Jones (2001) defined as the propensity for commonwealth nations to trade and invest with each other due to the shared use of the English language, similar institutional structures, legal systems and business practices. Indeed, in this empirical study, Lundan and Jones (2001) showed the significant prevalence of 'intra-Commonwealth flow' of international business between countries when compared to other non-commonwealth nations. Whereas colonization by the UK was quite different to that of France, comparisons between the colonies of these two former world powers appears to hold weight when it comes to the internationalization location choices of their former colonies. In both cases, we can evidence "*l'effet métropolitain*."

The Objective of the Dissertation

The objective of this research was to address a gap in the research literature by investigating the internationalization process of firms in francophone Africa. This dissertation reviews the central frameworks to explain the processes of firms' internationalization and especially "*l'effet métropolitain*". The main perspectives reviewed include the incremental internationalization perspective (e.g., Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; 2009), the eclectic paradigm (e.g., Dunning, 2000; Dunning & Lundan, 2008), and institutional theory (e.g., Peng, Wang, & Jiang, 2008; Yeung, 2000). From this review, it can be concluded that no model or theory from the relevant literature taken alone can adequately explain the internationalization process of firms from the colonial periphery in general and from francophone Africa in particular.

As a result, a conceptual model to explain the relation between the colonial periphery and the colonial center was put forward in this dissertation by adapting the current internationalization literature. The framework provides a range of propositions about how firm-specific resources and motivations taken together can explain the location choices of internationalizing firms from the colonial periphery. To illustrate this model, it was proposed that the internationalization location choices of firms from francophone Africa will be significantly more directed towards France than other countries due to less distance between France and its former colonies (proposition 1). It was further proposed that such firms will be motivated by gaining French legitimacy and will employ relationship resources, such as the African diaspora in France, to achieve this end (proposition 2). Finally, it was expected that firms in francophone Africa that have internationalized into France will be more likely to extend their internationalization efforts into other francophone African countries off the back of the legitimacy established by their business ties to France (proposition 3). This dissertation investigates these propositions and expectations via interviews with seven leaders of different firms in francophone Africa.

The firms sampled for the purposes of this dissertation ranged from those in finance, manufacturing, recruitment, outsourcing and e-commerce. Moreover, the firms also represented different countries from francophone Africa including Tunisia, Niger, Morocco, Senegal, and Gabon and vary in size in terms of turnover and number of employees from small to very large businesses. In each case, the firm has sought internationalization in France with some taking their business elsewhere in Europe and francophone Africa since. The internationalization case of the Tunisian auto parts manufacturer Misfat was typical of most cases and reflected the process of *"l'effet métropolitain."* In 2009, Misfat made its first major internationalization venture in France through the purchase of French manufacturer after having spent many years distribution experience in France. Exploiting French business services further contributed to the French legitimacy of Misfat, which was then positioned to expand further and commence industrial or distribution activities in four other countries: Morocco, Spain, Poland, and Russia.

As shown in the other cases, each firm engaged in "*l'effet métropolitain"* to a large degree. Illustrating proposition 1, each respondent indicated that France was critical to their firm's internationalization for reasons of its psychic proximity in terms of shared language, culture, history and institutional similarities (e.g., legal, educational, financial institutions. The findings also illustrated proposition 2 as firms in francophone Africa were motivated by gaining French-legitimacy and regarded its firm's home-based experiences and ethnic and diaspora relationships as significant resources as central to the internationalization process. Finally, there was significant illustration for proposition 3 wherein most firms had used their French legitimacy to expand their internationalization to other francophone countries in Africa and other European countries.

Choice of the Topic

There are several reasons to investigate the processes that drive "*l'effet métropolitain*" apart from the fact that there has been little investigation of this phenomenon. Knowledge derived from this research will be significant for its practical contribution to helping managers and owners rationalize and focus their internationalization efforts. Moreover, knowledge about the processes that drive "*l'effet métropolitain*" can provide internationalizing firms from francophone Africa with a potentially fertile pathway towards internationalization of their businesses. Conducting research in frontier economies as in the case of francophone Africa also provides an opportunity to verify existing internationalization theories, as well as extend and develop new theoretical frameworks.

Research Problem

Emerging market firms have had a significant influence on the world economy in recent years and there has been significant research to develop theoretical and practical knowledge on the processes that drive EMFs toward internationalization. At the same time, there is little knowledge about internationalizing firms from frontier economies and regions such as Africa despite their potential importance to the world economy. In these contexts, internationalizing firms from francophone Africa face a range of internal and external barriers to internationalization. Nonetheless, a number of internationalizing firms from Africa have successfully internationalized their operations through different avenues. One such avenue appears to have been firms in francophone Africa opening operations in France as the first step in the process of "*l'effet métropolitain*". A significant problem in the literature is a lack of knowledge that explains the internationalization processes of internationalizing firms from frontier economies and those firms from francophone Africa that engage in "*l'effet métropolitain*". The research in this dissertation aimed to address this gap in research knowledge.

Research Questions

Based on a review of the literature and the proposed conceptual model of this Dissertation, the following research questions will be investigated:

- How do firms from the colonial periphery internationalize their activities?
- How and where do they begin?
- To what extent are firms in the colonial periphery likely to invest in the former colonial center in their first internationalization experience?
- What are their motivations to invest in former colonial nations?
- What are the factors (motivations and resources) influencing and facilitating the internationalization process of firms in the colonial periphery?

To address these research questions, a research design and methodology was implemented in this research wherein a qualitative approach was developed to expand knowledge on the internationalization processes of firms in the colonial periphery. The specific focus was on the internationalization of firms from francophone Africa. It was expected that the research would identify the main resources and motivations that internationalizing firms from the colonial periphery utilize to expand their international operations and presence.

Dissertation Outline

This research first reviews and evaluates traditional and contemporary perspectives on the process of EMF internationalization to determine their utility for explaining the internationalization of firms from the colonial periphery. Based on this review, a specific framework and conceptual model is then put forward to describe and explain the internationalization of firms from the colonial periphery. The research then provides a description of the methods to test this conceptual framework. Overall, the method section of this research provides a justification for conducting a qualitative case study analysis of the internationalization process of firms from the colonial periphery with a focus on francophone Africa and "*l'effet métropolitain*".

CHAPTER 2

THEORY FOUNDATION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

To determine their utility for explaining the internationalization of firms from the colonial periphery, the first section of this review evaluates current knowledge on the distinct internationalization processes of emerging and frontier economies. Which is followed by an evaluation of traditional and contemporary perspectives on the process of internationalizing firms. Although certain aspects of internationalization theories explain "*l'effet métropolitain*," it would appear that the internationalization of firms from the colonial periphery entails relatively distinct processes. Overall, it may be contended that the Uppsala model wherein firms are proposed to first start exporting to a market close to their local market, then gradually expand to markets further away before expanding their international presence may not fully account for the processes behind the internationalization of firms from the colonial periphery. Due to their home-country institutional issues, organizational weaknesses and strengths, and border effects, firms from the colonial periphery may instead employ processes such as diaspora interconnectivity, catch-up activities, or enter at the low end of the global value chain to internationalize their business operations. As such, a specific framework and conceptual model is put forward in this dissertation to describe and explain the internationalization from the colonial periphery.

Emerging Economies Versus Frontier Economies

The once widespread view amongst scholars and practitioners that the international economy may be distinguished between rich and poor countries lost its validity (Hoskisson et al., 2000) as many “poor” countries (e.g., South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore) rapidly grew their economies to a developed status. The most prominent recent success has been China, which has led the way by acquiring some of the features of developed economies. As identified by financial institutions such as the IMF, Standard and Poor’s and Morgan Stanley, these features reflect the capacity for developing economies to financially interrelate to developed markets via their equity and debt markets. These institutions maintain similar lists of twenty or so emerging market economies. In contrast, such interrelationships are not shown by poor countries which can be labelled “frontier economies” (Fujita and Mori, 1998). The origin of this label is based on earlier economic models wherein the frontier economies lacked strong interrelationships with developed countries due to their isolation and physical distance.

The interrelationship between firms from emerging countries and those from developed market economies is highly correlated with the level of internationalization of firms from these countries. Firms that fit this profile have generally sought growth opportunities beyond their borders through the strategies of ‘escape’, ‘search’ and ‘fit’. In terms of escape, the need arises in most African countries to counter the effects of a weak home-country institutional environment, infrastructure and labor markets (Cuervo-Cazurra & Genc, 2008). The search strategy is about firms’ pursuit of critical technologies, resources, skills and abilities that cannot be found in their home context (Awate et al., 2012). Finally, firms adopt a fit strategy to capitalize on their capacity to conduct low-cost and knowledge activities within global value chains with the expectation that success in this regard will allow them to move up the chain and become internationally competitive (Kothari, Kotabe & Murphy, 2013; Mudambi, 2008).

The potential for EMFs to connect to the global market chain does not solely rely on their capacity to provide low-cost labor. EMFs also have the potential to creatively employ low-cost value propositions and innovations to connect to the global market, which is often driven by multinational firms from developed and advanced markets and countries (Mudambi, 2008). EMFs often achieve this objective by (initially) performing low value-added, standardized activities to maximize their competitive cost advantage. In addition, EMFs can make use of their experience with a weak institutional context in their home-country to navigate through similarly challenging institutional environments in other emerging markets (Cuevro-Cazrra and Genc, 2008). Moreover, as new arrivals in developed industries, EMFs often have the competitive advantage of being able to adopt new technologies and innovations (Ramamurti, 2012), more quickly than firms from advanced economies that may be tied to antiquated equipment and practices (Awate et al., 2012). EMFs are also faced with the challenge of overcoming formal and informal distance factors between their home country and countries where they direct their internationalization efforts (e.g., Berry et al., 2010; Peng et al., 2008; Phillips, Tracey, and Karra, 2009). These "border effects" between EMFs and a new location include physical, institutional, political, economic, language, and cultural boundaries (Beugelsdijk & Mudambi, 2013) amongst other distance factors.

In contrast to the growing interconnectivity between EMFs and advanced market economies, there is generally a lack of such connection among poor colonial periphery economies with this being especially the case with countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Whereas internationalizing firms generally lack the technological capacities of advanced markets, they have a high level of interconnectedness with them via global value chains. In contrast, frontier economies do not possess commensurate innovative capacity and processes. Still, businesses from the frontier African economies would be expected to share similar internationalization drivers as EMFs in terms of escape, search and fit. African firms likely have a stronger motivation to internationalize than businesses located in emerging market economies and engage in catch-up processes. Nevertheless, many firms face the challenges of not knowing much about potential markets, not being seen as a legitimate international player in the market, and not having the capacity to provide quality services and products that are competitive in the international market (Kumaraswamy et al., 2012; Ramamurti, 2012).

These and other internationalization challenges faced by African firms have meant that African economies lack integration into the global economy as evidenced by the relatively low level of intra-African international trade (Gibbon & Ponte, 2005). Whereas South Africa is one sub-Saharan country that has developed from a poor to emerging economy status, much of francophone Africa is yet to make this transition. EMFs from the BRIC countries, as well as Turkey and South Africa are instructive in terms of the common set of success factors they have employed to engage with developed and emerging economies and successfully internationalize their businesses operations.

Traditional Theories of Firm Internationalization

Traditional theories of internationalization have provided significant perspectives and knowledge about the factors that lead a firm to develop their operations in international markets. Whereas the Uppsala model (e.g., Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; 2009) highlights the importance of psychic distance on the internationalization process, the eclectic paradigm (e.g., Dunning, 1988) emphasizes that the internationalization motivations drive the process of firms' internationalization. As such, psychic distance and firm motivations can be seen to partially explain the internationalization from the colonial periphery. Yet, as shown in the review, internationalization from the colonial periphery is a relatively distinct process that is not fully explained by traditional theories of internationalization.

The Uppsala Internationalization Model and the Psychic Distance

The Uppsala internationalization model, otherwise known as the Stages Approach was developed initially by the Swedish school of Johanson and Vahlne (1977) and updated more recently to reflect rapid changes in the internationalization business field in the last 30 years (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009). From this viewpoint, the internationalization has been defined as "the process of increasing involvement in international operations" (Ruzzier, Hisrich, & Antoncic, 2006, p. 478) such that the process of internationalization entails a linear and sequential process composed of stages known as the "chain of establishment" (Coviello & McAuley, 1999). In other words, internationalization develops in progressive stages: firms first start exporting to a market close to their local market, taking advantage of similarities in culture, language, and business practices; they then gradually expand to markets further away before expanding their international presence. The model proposes that two principles drive the focus of internationalization: learning processes and "psychic" distance.

The first principle of learning relates to what happens when internationalization occurs: learning is a gradual and sequential process (Laghzaoui, 2006). Analyzing Swedish firms expanding to other Scandinavian locations, Johanson and Vahlne (1977) put forth four stages of a sequential process of learning: 1) activities of irregular and opportunistic exports; 2) export via an independent agent; 3) establishment of selling subsidiaries; and 4) production in the foreign country. Other authors argue that while learning does indeed occur in stages, it presents as incremental rather than gradual, with various stages reflecting changes in the attitudinal and behavioral commitment of managers and the firm's resultant international orientation (Bilkey & Tesar, 1977; Coviello & McAuley, 1999; Reid, 1983).

The second principle of the Uppsala model relates to psychic distance, i.e., it refers to the whole of cultural and linguistic differences having an influence on the information flow and the decision-making in international transactions (e.g., Berry, Guillen, & Zhou, 2010; Peng et al., 2008). Distance indicators have been identified in the literature to include language, religion, level of industrial development and political, economic and financial distances between an EMF and its proposed location (Brewer, 2007; Dow & Ferencikova, 2010; Evans & Mavondo, 2002; Smith, Dowling & Rose, 2011). Berry et al., (2010) also identify knowledge, administrative and cultural distance as challenges for EMFs, with the latter being differences in attitudes towards authority, trust, and the importance of work and family. Importantly, distance does not merely refer to cross-national borders (Beugelsdijk & Mudambi, 2013); firms decide to internationalize in a specific national location according to set of particular agglomerations. Moreover, distance effects have been recently shown to separately incorporate considerations that reduce distance in terms of commonalities and those that augment distance via differences (e.g., Williams & Gregoire, 2015) and to be differentially related to a firm's industry (e.g., Puthusserry, Child & Rodrigues, 2014).

Wu (2014) tested the impact of these distance factors on the merger and acquisition activities of EMFs in OECD countries during the period 2001-11. The findings showed that the smaller the political, economic and cultural distance, the more likely EMFs made decisions to invest abroad. In contrast, financial, demographic and geographical distance had little impact on investment decisions. Moreover, greater institutional distance (cultural and knowledge) negatively impacted on the performance of the acquired firm. Whereas a similar study by Pradhan (2010) found geographical distance also had little impact on the acquisitions made by Indian pharmaceutical firms, Hakanson and Ambos (2010) found geographic distance significantly accounted for a range of cultural, political and economic psychic distance factors between 25 nations.

The propositions of the Uppsala model have received some support as the relationship between psychic distance and early order of internationalization entry has been relatively consistent over time and across sectors (Singh, 2011), even though the relative importance of specific distance factors have been argued in the literature. Nonetheless, Hakanson and Ambos (2010) state that psychic distance is an important consideration in International Market Selection (IMS), a serious criterion weighed by all internationalizing firms when undergoing the internationalization process. The proponents of this approach advocate that, as the international experience increases, the psychic distance between internationalizing firms and international markets decreases, leading to more and more involvement in new markets. Moreover, the stages of internationalization as per the Uppsala model appear to generally follow a path of pre-engagement where firms are mainly interested in the national market, but are seriously planning to export, an initial phase where firms begin, in an irregular way, to export, while having potential to extend their activities abroad, and the advanced phase where firms export regularly with extended experience abroad, and firms consider other forms of international engagement.

While internationalizing firms from francophone Africa have not been formally studied to a great extent, upon initial review their internationalization activities can be seen to be consistent with the Uppsala model, at least to some degree. For example, firms from Morocco have a wide range of internationalization options in terms of psychic distance. Morocco is close to the West and, in some ways, bridges the gap between East and West. As described by King Hassan II, Morocco is a tree with roots in Africa; trunk and branches in Europe (Chtatou, 2016). Morocco also has close proximity and ties to neighboring Arab countries; positioning Moroccan firms as likely candidates for successful internationalization.

Yet, in its generality, the Uppsala model does not adequately account for the internationalization of firms from the colonial periphery. Psychic distance perhaps explains the first step in the internationalizing firms from colonial periphery, but the stages of internationalization of firms from colonial periphery like firms from francophone Africa are quite distinct to those put forward under the Uppsala model. Moreover, the Uppsala model does not fully take into account the specific internationalization motives of internationalizing firms in the colonial periphery, such as the desire to gain legitimacy as the first stage of internationalization. The next section examines a different and prominent internationalization perspective in the literature that takes firm motivations into account.

The Eclectic Paradigm

The eclectic or OLI paradigm (Dunning, 1988; 1993; 2000) is a well-regarded framework for conceptualizing the types of motives that may drive firms' internationalization. The OLI paradigm poses three main predictors of internationalization processes. The first predictor is the competitive advantages that are being engaged by an organization. The ownership (O) specific advantages, especially compared to other corporations in the country of investment interest, are more likely to make investment attractive. The second predictor (L) is the locational attractions of a potential investment site for adding value to the activities of the firm. The third main predictor of the eclectic paradigm is internalization (I) and conceptualized as a framework for the various ways organizations may exploit their competencies given the locational attractions.

Of particular relevance to this research, the OLI perspective (e.g., Dunning, 2000; Dunning & Lundan, 2008) categorizes the different internationalization motivations of firms based on their resources, competencies and locational attractiveness. Internationalization motives are proposed to be reflected in four main types: market-seeking, efficiency-seeking, resource-seeking, and asset-seeking motivations (Jain, Kundu, & Newburry, 2015). Market seeking occurs when an internationalizing firm is looking to secure greater foreign direct investment (FDI) through identifying a market that is conducive for its products and services, or because it has fully exploited the market potential of its home base. A second type is resource seeking, where the main aim of the internationalizing firm is to capture and make use of abundant resources that are not available at home or are available elsewhere at lower prices, such as minerals or labor. The third type of internationalizing motivation includes those firms that are seeking efficiency and may include the need for more efficient division of labor or organizational processes. A final type of activity is where an internationalizing firm may be seeking strategic assets to augment or protect current O advantages of a firm and/or to reduce those of competitors. From this view, emerging market firms would be attracted by locations where they find advanced technology, knowledge, distribution skills and management capacities.

A range of studies have investigated the impact of these motives on the internationalization strategies of EMFs (e.g., Kothari, Kotabe & Murphy, 2013; Kumaraswamy et al., 2012; Schmitt & Van Biesebroeck, 2013), but few have tested the impact of motives on location choices. In one study, Jain et al., (2015) studied how a firm's internationalization motives impacted the location decisions of emerging market firms. Data were collected from Indian software businesses on their internationalization decisions made between 2000 and 2009. Jain et al., found that Indian firms located in developed countries with a market-seeking strategy and in emerging markets when they had an efficiency-seeking strategy. Yet, if software firms held resources such as a high certification rating, they were more likely to locate in a developed country if they were in an efficiency-seeking mode. Thus, location decisions of these EMFs at least were based on a mix of their resources and their internationalization motivations.

Whereas the eclectic paradigm provides an important distinction between some motives of internationalization, these do not appear to fully capture the motives underlying "*l'effet métropolitain*." The market-seeking, efficiency-seeking, resource-seeking, and asset-seeking OLI motives do not directly reflect "*l'effet métropolitain*" motive of seeking French legitimacy in the case of firms in francophone Africa specifically. Indeed, French legitimacy seeking appears to reflect a mix of strategic asset- and resource-seeking motives. Moreover, theory on organizational legitimacy holds that organizations seek to gain approval and status from groups in a society to enhance their strategic assets (Ashford & Gibbs, 1990). In this light, firms in colonial periphery are likely to be motivated by gaining colonial legitimacy to augment their assets and resources towards internationalization. As such, legitimacy-seeking motives would appear to extend the range of internationalization motives put forward by the OLI perspective.

Firms from frontier economies may not possess any of the advantages posited by the OLI paradigm. In other words, they rarely have ownership advantages that can be leveraged abroad; neither do they possess local or internalization advantages over other firms in the colonial center. The OLI paradigm explains how firms internationalize by leveraging their advantages; in contrast, firms from frontier mainly internationalize to acquire advantages (Cuervo-Cazurra and Genc, 2008; Awate et al., 2012).

Both the Uppsala model and the OLI paradigm provide partial explanations for the internationalization process of firms from frontier economies. The psychic distance construct from the Uppsala model is a useful lens through which to view this process. However, its conflation of cultural and geographic distances break down when applied to the colonial context of frontier economies. The resource-seeking driver from the OLI paradigm is important for frontier economy firms, but the view that internationalization occurs through leveraging firm advantages does not apply. Thus both of these theories are useful building blocks, but neither provides a complete explanation for the process of internationalization by firms from the frontier economies with colonial pasts.

Emerging Market Firms Internationalization Theories

From the previous subsections, it can be inferred that EMF internationalization strategies relate to psychic distance and the firm motivations. Yet, the focus on firm-specific factors has been criticized for offering a relatively narrow view of EMF internationalization (e.g., Levenchenko, 2004). Firms operate in larger political, social, economic, and legal environments that can shape their outward FDI or internationalization. Institutional theory focuses on the idea that larger contextual factors or the broader institutional environment may facilitate or impede internationalization of EMFs.

Institutional Theory

Institutional theory maintains that a firm's strategies, like its efforts towards internationalization, are partly framed by the institutional framework of its home country (Peng et al., 2008; Yeung, 2000). Institutions can be defined as the political, social, legal and economic systems of a country that affect a wide range of behaviors including business activities (North, 1990; Scott, 2001). Levenchenko (2004) claimed that institutions typically refer to a "wide range of structures that affect economic outcomes: contract enforcement, property rights, investor protection, the political system, and the like." (p. 3). As such, internationalization strategies of an EMF are constrained or facilitated by the distinct institutional framework of its operating environment or home country (Scott, 2001). Whereas it is important to focus on industry conditions and firm resources, the institutional theory implies that the strategic direction of EMFs is the outcome of an interaction between institutional and organizational factors (Peng, 2002).

The perspective of the institutional view is that the strategic directions of a firm can be facilitated or obstructed by a range of institutional forces as well as those factors that inhibit or promote improvement in resources and capabilities held by a firm (Dunning & Lundan, 2008). If the regulation, policies and laws of a home government are consistent, open and clear, and open-minded, institutional theory infers that firms would be encouraged towards internationalization. In contrast, some countries exhibit relatively weak institutional frameworks that are generally associated with prohibitive transaction costs for establishing and maintaining outward or even inward FDI and thereby discourage internationalization (Meyer, 2001). It is further argued by Buckley et al., (2007) that a discretionary and regularly changing institutional policy framework also weakens the drive for outward FDI via internationalization.

In their study, Wang, Boateng, and Hong (2012) sought to address the fact that few studies have focused on the effect of home-country rather than host-country institutional factors on internationalization. Internationalization activities of Chinese firms (N = 667) were investigated to test the hypothesis that industry factors and institutional factors would have a greater effect on internationalization than firm resources. Whereas internationalization was measured in the study as the level of foreign sales, resources was operationalized as a firms' level of R&D, marketing and capital intensity and institutional involvement factors were coded as a firms' level of state ownership, government support and whether or not it was party to an industry policy that encouraged internationalization. In support of expectations, the type of institutional environment a firm is subject to explained more of its internationalization investments than its resources.

Institutional theory implies that weak institutions are an impediment to internationalization efforts. Indeed, internationalizing firms from developing nations are generally viewed as having weak institutions (Klein, Wocke, & Hughes, 2014) making outward and inward FDI all the more challenging. One would expect a relatively strong motivation and push factor behind the internationalization of firms from the colonial periphery (especially amongst firms from francophone Africa) is to escape a weak institutional environment.

Lessons for Frontier Economies from Emerging Market Connectivity

It is instructive for firms from frontier economies with colonial pasts, such as those in francophone Africa, to understand the processes by which those from emerging markets link and subsequently internationalize into the global economy. An important approach in the research literature, has been to understand the process of internationalization by EMFs with respect to the concept of global value chains (GVCs), wherein the different stages of production of a product are located across different countries (Giuliani, Pietrobelli, & Rabellotti, 2005). EMFs often enter a global value chain by conducting low knowledge and highly systematized activities that accompany high-knowledge specialized activities that may be conducted by partner firms in developed economies. Usually the low-cost overheads of EMFs are a key to them entering the GVC at this starting point, however, further movement and success in the value chain is linked to their capacity to provide and upgrade local skills and capabilities (Lewin, Massini and Peeters, 2009).

Although many and varied locations provide the opportunity to employ low costs and local skills that can be upgraded, a key to their utilization appears to be the importance of individual relationships and connections. An important connection that provides a bridge between a range of emerging and developed economies has been the role of migrant and diaspora entrepreneurs; individuals who reside in a developed county and actively pursue business connections between their home and adopted countries (Elo & Riddle, 2016). In the case of Taiwan, Ireland, and Israel, the overseas diaspora was utilized for internationalization growth opportunities via the deliberate policies of state agencies (e.g., Saxenian & Hsu, 2001; Breznitz, 2007). In other contexts, such as the Bangalore and Bollywood networks in India, linkages with the overseas diaspora were more opportunistic and relatively unforeseen (Lorenzen & Mudambi, 2013).

Whether the mode of connectivity is a state-sanctioned policy or intervention, a strategic move by an EMF, or a chance occurrence, the evidence suggests that certain individuals with strong diaspora networks play an important role in advancing the process of internationalization. Indeed, Saxenian (2007) has labelled such individuals global "Argonauts" who often develop their networks in emerging economies before connecting with their home country's diaspora in an advanced market economy. Moreover, these individuals become what has been termed global boundary spanners (Schotter & Abdelzaher, 2013) who make connections between their home and adopted country and perhaps more countries. As shown by recent case studies in the halal (Schotter & Abdelzaher, 2013) and digital imaging industries (Kim, Lee, Monaghan & Mudambi, 2016), individual representatives of diasporas have provided a link between emerging and advanced economies to pursue internationalization objectives.

Recent internationalization evidence suggests that innovation and entrepreneurial activity are associated with small-world networks that have a global element of interconnectivity (e.g., Cantwell & Mudambi, 2011; Watts & Strogatz, 1998). Global Argonauts appear to occupy a significant position within these diaspora networks as they have the capacity to bridge structural holes (Kuznetsov, 2006) and connect people and resources between advanced and emerging economies. The success of bridging structural holes then allows the opportunity for greater internationalization activities of EMFs geographically and institutionally close to the original home country of global Argonauts.

EMFs may also engage in catch-up strategies by seeking competencies to draw nearer to competitors from more advanced economies (Gao, 2011). In one example, Balcet, Wang, and Richet (2012) investigated the internationalization catch-up process in a single case study of one of China's largest automotive manufacturers, Geely. The company developed various ways to catch up in the market place including technology imitation via reverse engineering, product architecture innovations and asset-seeking acquisitions abroad. These overseas acquisitions delivered core technologies and brand and intellectual property rights which allowed Geely move from the middle to upper car category. Currently, Geely is a significant exporter of motor vehicles and has moved to combine their asset-seeking focus with a market-seeking strategy. Similarly, frontier economies like those from francophone Africa may engage in catch-up strategies to develop their internationalization potential.

Overall, I contend that the Uppsala model wherein firms are proposed to first start exporting to a market close to their local market, then gradually expand to markets further away before expanding their international presence does not fully account for the processes behind the internationalization from the colonial periphery firms. Due to their home-country institutional issues, organizational weaknesses and strengths, and border effects, colonial periphery firms may instead employ processes such as diaspora interconnectivity, catch-up activities, or enter at the low end of the global value chain to internationalize their business operations.

Conceptual Model: The Internationalization Process of Colonial Periphery Firms

Altogether, theory and research provide different factors that would explain the internationalization of firms from the colonial periphery and "*l'effet métropolitain*." For one thing, the Uppsala model predicts psychic distance to be an important internationalization factor and research confirms the location strategies of EMFs are associated with a range of institutional distance indicators (e.g., Berry et al., 2010; Peng et al., 2008; Phillips et al., 2009). These indicators include physical, economic, language and cultural distances between an EMF and its proposed location. Moreover, Williams and Gregoire (2015) add further weight to this theory by supporting the argument that while physical distance has traditionally played a paramount role in internationalization, newer research suggests that other commonalities may be more predictive of EMF internationalization. In this light, "*l'effet métropolitain*" certainly make senses, wherein commonalities that affect internationalization likely involve colonial history including language, culture, legal systems, and values. Indeed, a study of former UK colonies (Lundan & Jones, 2001) showed the prevalence of 'intra-Commonwealth flow' of international business between countries.

Internationalization theory and research based on the eclectic model view of internationalization highlights that a firm's internationalization motives are significant factors in its effort to expand business across international boundaries. Indeed, Jain et al. (2013) recently proposed that internationalizing motives are central to understanding the location choices of EMF. Put simply, location choices will be based on what a firm has (its resources) and what it needs (motivations). Yet, as put forward by Jain et al. (2013) there is little research investigating the impact of firm resources and motivations on the location choices of EMFs. More generally, Crescenzi, Pietrobelli and Rabellotti (2015) claim the dynamics and processes behind location choices of EMFs have often been overlooked in the research literature. This is particularly the case with the internationalization of firms from the frontier economies of the colonial periphery and "*l'effet métropolitain*."

Apart from the lack of research on the location choices of EMFs, internationalization theoretical frameworks do not appear to quite adequately explain the internationalization of firms from the colonial periphery. Whereas psychic proximity to France would explain the metropolitan effect with firms in francophone Africa like Morocco, the motivations and resources as well as the stages of internationalization are quite distinct amongst internationalizing firms engaged in outward FDI with a former colonial power. Thus, a conceptual model adapted from Jain et al. (2013) is put forward here to describe what are theorized to be the distinct processes behind the internationalization of firms from the colonial periphery and "*l'effet métropolitain*". Figure 2 (see appendix B) describes this model in detail with respect to colonial periphery firms internationalizing to the colonial center, wherein it is assumed that a mix of certain resources and motivations interact to drive the internationalization of firms from the colonial periphery.

The proposed model includes three stages where firms are proposed to engage different sets of resource and motivations. In Stage 1, firms choose the colonial center in their first internationalization experience. Firms use the resources stemming from home or local experiences, resources stemming from relationships (business relationship, diaspora relationship and institutional relationship) and the psychic distance proximity with France. Moreover, firms from francophone Africa may use the African diaspora in France to facilitate their internationalization. At this stage, a firm's internationalization motivations would be directed towards French market seeking and French legitimacy seeking; reflecting the OLI asset- and resource-seeking motives. At Stage 2 of the model, firms establish a presence in France, take advantage of the relatively more sophisticated local business environment (e.g., the availability of advanced business services), and begin to generate investible surpluses. Finally, Stage 3 entails a firm making use of the resources of French legitimacy and French business services in addition to their home experience and relationship resources to "go global" and start looking for further internationalization expansion which may be to other neighboring francophone countries.

Research Propositions

From the model of the internationalization of firms from the colonial periphery, a range of propositions can be put forward that reflect the stages of the *"l'effet métropolitain*" of entry into France and internationalization after French legitimacy:

Proposition 1: Firms from francophone Africa are likely to invest in France in their first internationalization experience.

Proposition 2: Firms in francophone Africa are likely to invest in France relying on resources stemming from ethnic and diaspora relationships and resources stemming from home experiences.

Proposition 3: Firms in francophone Africa are likely to invest in France with a French legitimacy-seeking motive to augment their assets and resources.

Proposition 4: Firms in francophone Africa with French legitimacy are likely to invest in other francophone countries and all around the world.

The aim of this study was to investigate the propositions about the internationalization of firms from the colonial periphery and "*l'effet métropolitain*" in the context of internationalization of firms from francophone Africa to France. Data were collected to analyze the internationalization processes, strategies and rationale of internationalizing firms from francophone Africa as a function of their internationalization location choice. In general, it was expected that the internationalization location choices of firms from francophone Africa would be significantly directed toward France rather than other countries due to lower psychic distance factors between France and its former colonies. It was further expected that internationalizing firms from francophone Africa that have internationalized into France will be likely to extend their internationalization efforts into other francophone African countries on the basis of their colonial legitimacy.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This chapter provides a detailed overview and justification of the research methods employed to investigate the research questions of this dissertation. The research approach and strategies are first described followed by an outline of the case study methods to investigate the research questions relating to the internationalization of firms from the colonial periphery and "*l'effet métropolitain*." The final section outlines measures and decisions that ensure the quality of the proposed research study.

Choice of the Research Strategy

The methodology adopted for investigating the research questions of this dissertation was to employ a qualitative analysis of firms from francophone Africa based on its suitability for testing the propositions about the internationalization of firms from the colonial periphery model put forward in this research (a full justification for the qualitative approach can be found in the Appendix D). For example, the internationalization choices of the case study organizations of Misfat, Intelcia and BGFI bank that were collected by secondary data analysis appear to reflect the proposed stages of the *"l'effet métropolitain*". As such, the research strategy to investigate the internationalization processes of firms from francophone Africa entailed semi-structured interviews with senior management and the collection of secondary or archival data, such as Company Reports, to supplement data generated from interviews.

Secondary data analysis provides the advantage that it is usually more likely to be an objective representation of reality and provides savings in terms of cost and time

(Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005). Nevertheless, secondary data may lack specificity and not relate directly to a particular research question; although there may be vast amounts of secondary data, its relevance to a research question may be questionable. A researcher has little control over the quality of secondary data and the data may not be timely; secondary data may be limited by the fact that it has been collected at a time that does not reflect contemporary patterns, business objectives and outcomes. Moreover, secondary data may be incomplete such that gaps in its collection can undermine efforts to identify continuous trends. Thus, secondary data collected through the course of this research was cross-validated by the data collected via semi-structured interviews.

Overall, the use of semi-structured interviews and secondary data in this study provides the capacity for data triangulation. Data triangulation is the process of "corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data, or methods of data collection in descriptions and themes in qualitative research" (Creswell, 2008, p. 266). Triangulation of collected data in this study entailed comparing and corroborating data generated by semi-structured interviews and secondary data. Data triangulation from each method enhances the validity and reliability of the data generated from each case study to address the research questions.

Selection of Companies Studied

Cases for the study were recruited through a purposive or non-probabilistic sampling technique. According to Patton (2002), purposive sampling allows the researcher to select participants that are uniquely positioned to best understand the issues that are central to the problem or phenomena to be studied. The cases were also selected for convenience; convenience sampling is justified when there is a lack of resources such as time and money (Merriam, 2009). Ordinarily, data is collected from multiple cases until saturation, when the addition of further cases does not add to data already collected from previous cases. However, due to time limits, the dissertation collected a few cases based on a combination of purposeful and convenience sampling methods.

In this study, internationalizing firms from francophone Africa were selected as case-study organizations on the basis that they show evidence of internationalizing to France and displaying "*l'effet métropolitain*." For example, the internationalization choices of case study organizations Misfat, Intelcia and BGFI bank that were collected by secondary data analysis appear to reflect the proposed stages of "*l'effet métropolitain*." In the case of Intelcia, the company was initially established in Morocco, then opened operations in France, before expanding within Africa to Cameroon.

Apart from collecting secondary data from internationalizing firms' websites, media or company reports, senior managers were selected to participate in a semi-structured interview due to their specific knowledge about the internationalization processes of their respective internationalizing firms. Potential participants were contacted via business networks to recruit those that meet the selection criteria of being a senior manager of an internationalizing firm from francophone Africa. Data to address the research questions were collected through semi-structured interviews of participants who volunteered for the study.

Interview and Question Design

The questions selected for the semi-structured interviews have been operationalized to reflect the main concepts under investigation in this study. As such, the interviews were guided by a set of questions to test the propositions of "*l'effet métropolitain*" conceptual framework with the full interview instrument shown in the Appendix C. For example, interviewees were asked "Please describe the main motives and rationale behind your firm's choice to expand and locate its international operations into France" to determine firm motives. Respondents were also asked to describe the firm resources through the question, "Are your firm resources mostly relationship-based (e.g., business, ethnic, diaspora, or institutional associations) or home-experience based (e.g., abilities to produce low cost products for large home markets and negotiate difficult regulatory environments) and why?"

Senior leaders who agreed to undertake the study were engaged in a tape-recorded semi-structured interview with focus questions employed to generate their views on the effects of specific resources and motivations on the firm's choice to select France as the first internationalization location. The design of the semi-structured interview schedule allowed the interviewer to navigate the specific research questions while simultaneously providing participants an opportunity to talk freely and be descriptive about their firms' motives and characteristics that have led to its internationalization choices. As such, the interview schedule did generally act as a guide to questions, so there was some variance to each interview depending on the participant responses. Nevertheless, each participant was asked a standard set of questions even if there is some deviation in their responses.

Company Interviews

Prior to commencing the interview, participants were taken through the informed consent process. Through this process, participants were given a description of the research, and provided with an opportunity to willingly consent to be interviewed for the proposed study. The location of the interviews was determined by each participant, but the majority of interview were conducted either by telephone or Skype. The duration of the interviews was approximately 30 minutes in average. The length of interviews depended on participant's willingness to engage in the subject material. To enhance the internal consistency of the research and data, participants have been asked the same set of questions to capture data related to the research focus and propositions of this research.

Quality of Research

It is important to establish the quality of research in terms of its validity and reliability (Merriman, 2009). For the current study, a number of safeguards were taken to insure the internal validity of the findings. First, the interview questions were pilot tested to insure they accurately reflect the central concepts of the investigation, such as firm motivations and resources. Second, each interviewee was asked the same set of questions. Third, multiple sources of evidence such as secondary data were used to triangulate with interview data. Fourth, steps were taken to insure the data from interviews was evaluated objectively and not subject to researcher bias. Interview data was analyzed through a number of stages described by Willig (2008) to include accurate transcribing of interviews, reading and rereading the text of each interview to break the transcript down into thought units, summarizing and interpreting the ideas and thoughts from each interviewee, and integrating the summaries from each interview to produce an overall perspective on the processes, motives and resources that appear to drive *"l'effet métropolitain"* for firms in francophone Africa.

To enhance the external validity of this study, the research context and the assumptions that were central to the research were described thoroughly, such that the generalizability of the findings to other contexts is clear (Merriam, 2009). The researcher also insured respondents were interviewed objectively and their responses are confidential so that they can give honest and open answers to questions. Despite the small sample size for this study, internationalizing firms from different industry sectors and francophone countries were sampled to enhance the external validity of the findings. In this way, it was possible to make generalizations from the findings of this study to the wider population of firms in francophone Africa engaged in "*l'effet métropolitain*".

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of a qualitative investigation of seven francophone African firms that have developed internationalization profiles and operations. The data generated from semi-structured interviews with a prominent leader from each firm provides rich information and detail about their organization's internationalization experience. The background of each firm is first described with a focus on the nature of its industry and operational history. The next sections analyze comments by respondents about the firm internationalization motives and resources. The final sections analyze data on the institutional barriers and facilitators of firm internationalization and what advantages their internationalization to France brings.

Background of Firms

In total, senior leaders from seven firms from francophone Africa participated in semi-structured interviews to convey their perspectives on the internationalization processes of their respective organizations. The background for each firm is summarized in Table 2 (Appendix A), with further details for each firm listed below showing that the sample of firms operate in a variety of industries and are headquartered in several different francophone African countries.

BGFIBANK (Firm 1) is a privately owned financial-services organization headquartered in Gabon and commenced operations in 1971 with one institution. The bank made its first internationalization moves with subsidiaries in the Congo and Equatorial Guinea. Currently, the group has subsidiaries in eight (8) countries including

Gabon, Benin (2010), Republic of the Congo (2000), Democratic Republic of the Congo (2010), Equatorial Guinea (2001), Madagascar (2010), France (2007) and Cote d'Ivoire. As of December 2010, the assets of BGFIBANK were in excess of Euro 3.7 billion. In January 2010, BGFIGroup was ranked the largest bank group in Central Africa by assets, and employs approximately 1,800 people.

Facilitator (Firm 2) is an African recruitment firm located in Senegal (Dakar) that sources talent for Africa (Talent2Africa). The firm commenced in 2015 and currently has 10 employees. The firm searches for employees for the benefit of companies seeking recruitment, and relies on digital tools (internet and social media) to find prospective employees for a range of client companies. Their mission is to source potential employees for companies located in francophone Africa because most of their customers are French companies sourcing employees for their African operations.

Intelcia (Firm 3) is a Moroccan firm that commenced operations in 2000 and has gradually established itself as a major player in the outsourcing and call center businesses. Development in Morocco and internationally accelerated with the acquisition of Eurocall (Morocco) in 2010, The Marketingroup (France) in 2011, Clienteos (Cameroon) in 2015, Atento Maroc (The French and Moroccan markets), and a first establishment in Senegal in 2016. By the end of 2016, there were 7,000 employees working from four countries: Morocco, France, Cameroon, and Senegal, with 19 production sites.

Favizone (Firm 4) is a Tunisian startup created in 2014 that offers an innovative personalization solution for e-commerce sites. Due to its expertise in big data and machine learning, Favizone enables e-merchants of all sizes and sectors to increase their sales by improving the online experience of their customers, anticipating their product needs. The firm was developed in Tunisia and then created the French subsidiary for the commercial part of the business. France is its largest market as it provides better direct debit facilities and stronger internet privacy options.

Tech-Innov (Firm 5) is a company located in Niger that commenced operations in 2013 and markets remote irrigation systems. The firm was created to manage, operate and commercialize the "Tele-Irrigation" system and its derivatives: Automatic Watering, Rural Drinking Water Kiosk, Méto-Mobile, Discreet Scrutineer and Agri-Infos Multimedia Center. The firm employs seven permanent staff and twelve subcontractors. The firm is also in France to create a commercial axis in its Mediterranean parts as well as in the Maghreb.

Valomnia (Firm 6) was founded in Tunisia in 2012, a subsidiary of a Proxym Group created in 2006. The firm specializes in enterprise solutions, e-government and e-government projects, mobile and web applications, medical ERP, e-banking solutions, e-commerce and social networks. The Group has various entities (Proxym France, Proxym-IT, Proxym Middle East, Chifco and Calys-IT) based in France, the United Kingdom, the Middle East and Tunisia.

Misfat Filtration (Firm 7) commenced business activities in Tunisia (in the city of Jedeida) in 1979 specializing in automotive-parts distribution. After many years in the auto-part distribution business, during which the company assimilated and learned the needs of auto-part distributors, Misfat added a manufacturing arm for motor vehicle filters (oil, fuel/diesel, air and cabin air filters for light vehicles, commercial and heavy duty applications in the automotive industry). After thirty years of business, Misfat became the leader of the Tunisian market and commenced a process of internationalization consistent with its growth objectives and position in the market.

In 2009, Misfat made its first internationalization venture in France (Crépy-en-Valois, Picardy) making use of the common shared history, language and culture between Tunisia and its former colonialist. This internationalization stage in France was made possible by using the firm's business relationships, home experience and by acquiring a well-known French company, Solaufil France (and its Mecafilter and Laurette brands) and its Spanish affiliate, Solaufil Iberica in less than one year. Exploiting Solaufil's business image, know-how, and French business services (including Banks like BNP Paribas, Credit Lyonnais, and Société Générale and accountants like Cecaudit International and Demon) contributed to the French legitimacy of Misfat, which was then positioned to expand further and commence industrial or distribution activities in four other countries: Morocco, Spain, Poland and Russia. The Tunisian factory currently employs more than 850 employees and produces 16 million filters per year, mostly dedicated for export. Today and after only seven years of its initial internationalization in France, Misfat has become a successful African multinational firm recognized for high quality products and their supply to well-known customers all over the world.

According to the CEO of Misfat, the company ended the year 2016 with a consolidated turnover of approximately 62 million euros, with only 10 to 11% of this turnover in Tunisia. Its largest sales are in France with about 34 million euros followed by Tunisia, Germany, Spain, Morocco, Italy, Poland and Algeria. The factory locations of Misfat are mainly in Tunisia, France and Morocco with other subsidiaries in Spain, Poland and Russia only for distribution. Misfat is a shareholder of these subsidiaries, and has partnerships in Poland and Russia, with management on its part. This rapid expansion occurred in the last ten years.

Overall, the firms sampled for this study range from those in finance, manufacturing, recruitment, outsourcing and e-commerce. Moreover, the firms also represent different countries from francophone Africa including Tunisia, Niger, Morocco, Senegal, and Gabon and vary in size in terms of turnover and number of employees from small to very large businesses. In each case, the firm has sought internationalization in France with some taking their business elsewhere in Europe and francophone Africa since. The internationalization motives and firm resources as well as the institutional barriers and facilitators of internationalization and their rationale for choosing France as an internationalization option are detailed in the following sections.

Testimonies of Senior Leaders of Firms from Francophone Africa

As mentioned above, the literature offers little insight into the behavior of firms from francophone Africa and how they integrate into the global economy. To properly understand the process of "*l'effet métropolitain*", I interviewed business leaders from francophone Africa to discover their perspectives on the main concepts and drivers of "*l'effet métropolitain.*"

Internationalization Motives

The internationalization motives were described by participants in response to the question “Would you describe the firm’s motives for location choices as being primarily resource-seeking, asset-seeking or market-seeking, or French legitimacy-seeking and why?” The findings are summarized in Table 3(see appendix A) and show a mix of firm internationalization motives and themes. There were two consistent themes that emerged from the findings on internationalization motives. Most firms chose to internationalize to meet market needs and sought a natural market in France due to its proximity and the presence of business connections between their home environments and France. Reflecting the market-seeking motive, some respondents also mentioned that their home environments were too small for market growth. A further theme was a legitimacy-seeking motive wherein some firms sought to gain credibility via their presence in France and as a springboard to the broader markets of Europe and francophone Africa. There was also some mention of resource- and asset-seeking motives for internationalization; specifically, technical, financial and R & D opportunities.

Firm Resources

The type of firm resources that were related to internationalization was described by respondents answering the question “What would you describe as the firm’s main type of resources?” with illustrative responses shown in Table 4(see appendix A). In most cases, respondents indicated their experience, reputation and technical expertise were significant firm resources; what one may categorize as intangible resources. In fewer cases, respondents mentioned relationship resources such as home-based and diaspora relationships. Only two respondents mentioned more tangible assets as a firm resource that facilitated internationalization (patents and prestigious awards). A further respondent mentioned home-country labor costs as a significant resource.

Institutional Factors and Internationalization

Respondents were also asked to speak to the issue of institutional barriers and facilitators to internationalization by addressing the question "Tell me if and how home-based and French-based institutional issues (e.g., legal, political, social, economic issues) have facilitated or hindered internationalization processes in your firm.". The responses in Table 5 (see appendix A) show that in most cases firms faced some home-based impediments to internationalization such as generally rigid legal and financial structures. Indeed, the three Tunisian firms found regulations on foreign exchange exerted by the central bank were a barrier to internationalization. At the same time, most firms found very few French-based institutional barriers to internationalization; only Firm 5 experienced some difficulties setting up a bank account. In contrast, there were some positive home-based and French institutional factors that facilitated internationalization for some firms. These included favorable home-based tax incentives and French-based institutions that encouraged investment by firms in francophone Africa. Overall, respondents stated that France was a comparatively favorable institutional environment for their internationalization agendas.

The Advantage of Legitimacy

Respondents were also asked to comment on the factors that influenced firms to choose France for internationalization. The responses in Table 6(see appendix A) show that the consistent reason for internationalization to France were the similarities between francophone Africa and France in terms of culture, history, language, legal, socio-economic and education systems. As commented by respondents, these similarities provided significant advantages to conducting business in France. Further comments by some respondents indicated that France provided the advantage of a certain level legitimacy and credibility that has, in the words of respondent 3, become “the gateway or the main entrance to all of francophone Africa”. Thus, it was clear that firms displayed a legitimacy-seeking motive wherein some firms sought to gain credibility via their presence in France and as a springboard to the broader markets of Europe and francophone Africa.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The aim of this dissertation was to investigate a series of propositions regarding the processes that underlie "*l'effet métropolitain*" in the context of internationalization of firms from the former colonial periphery to the colonial center. Data was collected to analyze the internationalization processes, strategies and rationale of internationalizing firms in francophone Africa as a function of their internationalization location choice. In general, it was expected that the internationalization location choices of firms in francophone Africa will be significantly more directed towards France than other developed countries due to lower psychic distance factors between France and its former colonies. It was further expected that internationalizing firms from francophone Africa that have internationalized into France will be likely to extend their internationalization efforts into other African countries on the basis of their French business legitimacy. Based on a review of the literature a series of propositions were investigated regarding the motivations, resources and institutional factors that are associated with "*l'effet métropolitain*." Data to test these propositions were collected via semi-structured interviews with leaders of seven successful firms in francophone Africa, which provided details about their internationalization processes and illustrated the metropolitan effect.

Proposition 1 stated firms in francophone Africa are more likely to invest in France in their first internationalization experience. Whereas France was not the first internationalization locations for all firms, it certainly figured predominantly in each firm's internationalization strategies. For example, Misfat Filtration started with product representation and ultimately purchased a manufacturing site in France as its first internationalization move. In contrast, BGFIBANK opened operations in France seven years after first internationalizing to two nearby francophone African countries. Nevertheless, each respondent indicated that France was critical to their firm's internationalization for its psychic proximity in terms of shared language, culture, history and institutional similarities (e.g., legal, educational, financial institutions).

The findings also spoke to Proposition 2 that firms in francophone Africa are likely to invest in France relying on resources stemming from ethnic and diaspora relationships and resources stemming from home experiences. Indeed, the findings illustrated that each respondent regarded its firm's home-based experiences as a significant resource in terms of experience and knowledge and relationships formed in their country of origin. There was also some support for the proposition that ethnic and diaspora relationships are important to internationalization processes. As stated by the respondent from Tech-Innov, "a large part of the diaspora wanted our company to be established in France." Some respondents had spent a significant time in France (for example, two as students) and had brought to bear French relationships, knowledge and experience on the internationalization processes of their respective firms. These particular leaders reflected what has been termed global boundary spanners (Schotter & Abdelzaher, 2013) who make connections between their home and adopted country and perhaps more countries. Consistent with previous studies (e.g., Kim et al., 2016; Schotter & Abdelzaher, 2013), the findings of this research showed certain leaders of firms in francophone Africa provide a link between emerging and advanced economies to pursue internationalization objectives.

The third proposition put forward in this research was that firms in francophone Africa are likely to invest in France with a French legitimacy-seeking motive to augment their assets and resources. To large extent, the findings illustrated this proposition. All the respondents indicated that a large advantage to their French internationalization was that it delivered a high level of credibility. As stated by the respondent for BGFI Bank , “it was important to have the status of an international bank, in this case an African bank, but which is recognized and operates in La France.” At the same time, most respondents stated that a French market-seeking motive was an important driver of their firm’s internationalization process. For many, France was seen as a natural market due to psychic proximity and the many cultural and institutional similarities shared between francophone Africa and France. As such, the findings illustrate the eclectic or OLI paradigm (Dunning, 2000) which posits the different motives behind internationalization as being market-seeking, efficiency-seeking, resource-seeking, or asset-seeking. Nevertheless, the results from this research also extend the OLI paradigm by showing that internationalization can entail a significant legitimacy-seeking motive.

The final proposition (Proposition 4) of this research investigation was that firms in francophone Africa with French legitimacy are likely to invest in other francophone countries and all around the world. There was very good support for this proposition. As evidenced by the findings, most firms had employed their French legitimacy to expand their internationalization to other francophone countries in Africa and other countries in

Europe. Two respondents stated, “once we are there, it can be a relay to go elsewhere” and “France is the gateway to all of francophone Africa.” Such findings are consistent with the final general step of “*l’effet métropolitain*” model put forward in this research.

Overall, the findings provide good confirmation of the model to describe internationalization of firms from the colonial periphery and “*l’effet métropolitain*” where firms are proposed to engage different sets of resource and motivations to those that are ordinarily associated with internationalization processes. Consistent with Stage 1, most firms included France in their first internationalization experience. To achieve this objective, firms were shown to use the resources stemming from home or local experiences, resources stemming from relationships (business relationship, diaspora relationship and institutional relationship) and the psychic distance proximity with France. Moreover, some firms from francophone Africa also used the African diaspora in France to facilitate their internationalization. As confirmed by the findings, most firm’s internationalization motivations were directed towards French legitimacy-seeking at this stage of the metropolitan effect. At Stage 2 of the model, firms are proposed to establish a presence in France, use French business service and take advantage of the business environment in France. Indeed, most firms included in this study had taken advantage of French financial services as well as other services to foster a link between their firm and France. Finally, the findings were consistent with Stage 3 of “*l’effet métropolitain*” wherein firms made use of the resources of French legitimacy and French business services in addition to their home experience and relationship resources to start looking for further internationalization to other neighboring francophone countries.

CHAPTER 6

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The dissertation provides a theoretical contribution by explaining that "*l'effet métropolitain*" describes the internationalization strategy of firms in former colonial outposts. For example, the Uppsala internationalization model (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009) proposes four stages of a sequential learning to account for internationalization: 1) activities of irregular and opportunist exports; 2) export via an independent agent; 3) establishment of subsidiaries of sale; and 4) production in the foreign country. Moreover, the Uppsala model predicts that psychic distance would drive the initial location choices of internationalizing firms. Whereas psychic distance was certainly found to be a significant element to the internationalization process of firms in francophone Africa, the findings suggest a distinctive focal move towards the colonial center in addition to those proposed by the Uppsala Model of internationalization. Once established in France, firms then used their French legitimacy as a springboard to expand their internationalization activities to other parts of Europe and francophone Africa.

The new theory also challenges the eclectic or OLI paradigm of internationalization (e.g., Dunning, 2000) The OLI model provides an important distinction between different motives behind internationalization as being market-seeking, efficiency-seeking, resource-seeking, or asset-seeking. Of these motives, the findings revealed that most firms from francophone Africa had a market-seeking motive as a central driver of their internationalization to France. Nevertheless, this range of motives does not adequately account for "*l'effet métropolitain*" motive of attaining

French legitimacy, which most firms indicated was a strong driver of their internationalization to France. Given their success with this strategy, the implication is that many internationalizing firms from francophone Africa may deploy their colonial connections to establish their credibility in the market and further their internationalization objectives.

The findings also suggest that the types of resources held by an EMF that would lead to internationalization are not well specified by the eclectic paradigm. Instead, the Resources-Based View (e.g., Barney 1991; Grant, 2010) of internationalization suggests that an EMF's resources in terms of assets and capabilities would frame its internationalization choices. Moreover, Jain, Lahiri and Huasknecht (2013) proposed certain combinations of home experience-based resources, relationship-based resources, and country-created assets-based resources with internationalization motives that would drive the direction of EMF internationalization. As revealed in the findings, firms relied on each of these resources in terms of home-based knowledge and experience, home-based and diaspora relationships, and country level institutional relationships and resources.

Whereas it is important to focus on firm resources and motivations for internationalization, institutional theory implies that the strategic direction of EMFs is the outcome of an interaction between institutional and organizational factors (Peng, 2002). The perspective of the institutional view is that strategic directions of a firm can be facilitated or obstructed by a range of institutional forces as well as those factors that inhibit or promote improvement in resources and capabilities held by a firm (Dunning &

Lundan, 2008). As shown in the current findings, firms found a mix of institutional impediments to their internationalization efforts; chiefly, financial and regulatory regulations. Nevertheless, there were some institutional factors that promoted internationalization, such as government support and tax incentives in both the home country and the colonial center. Institutional similarities between countries in francophone Africa and France such as shared legal and educational backgrounds appeared to facilitate the internationalization to France.

Altogether, the model and evidence put forward in this research to explain the internationalization process of colonial periphery firms suggests a different set of internationalization stages than those expounded by the Uppsala model. This colonial, or "metropolitan," effect is an interesting twist on the Uppsala model entailing distinct steps in the process of internationalization for former colonial nations. The findings also provide some support to the model that the French legitimacy-seeking motive is a distinct factor in the internationalization of firms from francophone Africa, and additional to internationalization motives described by OLI or eclectic theory. Finally, the model implies that the internationalization motives and resources of firms from francophone Africa combine in certain ways to drive the "*l'effet métropolitain*" and that institutional factors are an important consideration for successful internationalization.

In a practical sense, the model provides implications for managers of internationalizing firms from the colonial periphery. As pointed out by Jain et al. (2013), managers who adopt traditional internationalization models may make sub-optimal choices in terms of location choices for international expansion and end up squandering organizational resources. "*L'effet métropolitain*" model presented here provides managers of internationalizing firms from francophone Africa with a clear set of steps towards internationalization and a framework to effectively deploy organizational resources stemming from home or local experiences and from business and diaspora relationships to that end.

The model also has meaningful implications for government agencies and policy makers in the colonial center and periphery. National governments generally acknowledge the importance of outward FDI and its impact on national economies and international trade and relations. Based on the metropolitan effect model and the findings of this study, policy makers may develop incentives, relieve institutional burdens or foster international relations to encourage EMFs to expand their operations internationally. Firms in the colonial periphery would be especially well-positioned to foster relations with former colonial compatriates to facilitate "*l'effet métropolitain*."

Generalizability

The theoretical and practical implications of the conceptual model of "*l'effet métropolitain*," and the findings of this study apply to a wide variety of business environments that account for a significant portion of the global economy. In addition to the countries of francophone Africa that were colonies of France, two other large economic blocs are the English-speaking former colonies of the U.K. (Jones and Lundan, 2001) and the Spanish-speaking former colonies of Spain (Cuervo-Cazurra & Genc, 2008). Firms from the former colonies in both of these blocs are likely to exhibit several aspects of "*l'effet métropolitain.*"

Further, while the effects may weaken where the ties between the former colonies and the colonial center are looser (or even adverse), they are still likely to persist. Thus, we suggest that the Indonesian diaspora in the Netherlands and the Vietnamese diaspora in France may be factors influencing the disproportionate likelihood that Indonesian and Vietnamese firms' initial internationalization proceeds to their former colonial center.

Further, "*l'effet métropolitain*" is likely to appear in diverse forms. In the illustrative cases of firms from frontier economies in francophone Africa presented in this thesis, we have documented a hierarchical effect, whereby the colonial center (France) stands at a higher level in terms of technology, resources and legitimacy. However, this need not always be true. Recent evidence shows that in the case of Angola and its former colonial center, Portugal, the relationship between the two is one of much greater parity or even reversed (Ames, 2015).

Nonetheless, the limitations of the current study must be acknowledged. The findings reflect a very small sample of firms in francophone Africa despite them being from different countries and industries. A further limitation of the conceptual model is that it does not clearly specify which firm resources may be more likely to facilitate the metropolitan effect. Although the resources stemming from home or local experiences and resources stemming from relationships were found to be central to "*l'effet métropolitain*," these may be quite varied and distinct and a function of the structure of the colonial network. For example, the English network with many developed countries may offer different opportunities than networks with one or a few developed countries (e.g., French network). As such, future research could clarify the type of resources most associated with "*l'effet métropolitain*" to calibrate the model further.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Although "*l'effet métropolitain*" appears to be a well-established trend in the internationalization of firms from colonial periphery, there has been little research to investigate its processes and outcomes. The model and findings of this research make an important contribution to addressing this gap in the research literature. The findings from successful internationalizing firms showed that internationalizing firms from francophone Africa make a significant investment in France as a central part and often first step of their internationalization strategy due to psychic proximity and cultural and institutional similarities with France. They do so with market-seeking and French legitimacy-seeking motivations and with the aid of a set of home-based experience and knowledge resources and home-based and diaspora relationship resources. Confirming the propositions of the model of "*l'effet métropolitain*" put forward in this research, firms then utilize their French-based legitimacy to extend their internationalization objectives beyond France and most typically to other countries in francophone Africa.

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APPENDIX A:

TABLES

Table 1

Francophone Countries in Africa Listed by Population Size

Nr	Country	Population (2010)[1][2]
1	Democratic Republic of the Congo	67,827,000
2	Algeria	37,900,000
3	Morocco	33,848,242
4	Madagascar	21,146,551
5	Cameroon	19,958,692
6	Ivory Coast	21,571,060
7	Burkina Faso	16,287,000
8	Niger	15,891,000
9	Senegal	12,861,259
10	Mali	14,517,029
11	Tunisia	10,982,754
12	Rwanda	10,277,282
13	Chad	10,329,208
14	Guinea	10,324,437
15	Burundi	8,519,005
16	Benin	9,212,000
17	Togo	6,780,000
18	Central African Republic	4,410,873
19	Republic of the Congo	4,043,318
20	Mauritania	3,537,368
21	Gabon	1,501,000
22	Comoros	734,917
23	Equatorial Guinea	700,401
24	Djibouti	888,716
25	Seychelles	86,525
Total	Francophone Africa	344,135,470

[1] World Atlas, 2012.

[2] World Development Indicators, 2012. World Bank, Washington DC.

Table 2

Table 2

Firm Country and Industry

Firm Name	Country	Industry
BGFIBANK	Gabon	Banking/Finance
Facilitator	Senegal	Recruitment
Intelcia	Morocco	Outsourcing/Call centers
Favizone	Tunisia	E-commerce
Tech-Innov	Niger	Irrigation systems
Valomina	Tunisia	E-banking
Misfat	Tunisia	Automotive parts

Table 3

The Internationalization Motives of Firms in Francophone Africa

Firm	Illustrative Responses and Quotes
1	• The bank's choice of internationalization is mainly due to the fact that the market in Gabon has been very limited • As far as France is concerned, it was noted that the majority of clients with whom we work in these French-speaking areas have headquarters in France. So, it's really the market needs, the technical needs. • The implantation in France facilitated the expansion in Africa.
2	• We are looking for proximity to the potential clients, European multinationals, multinationals that are taking advantage of France as hub to enter Africa. • A lot of business facilities that we do not necessarily find easily and systematically in Senegal
3	• The market issue is one of the reasons. The second reason is the credibility and legitimacy.
4	• We chose France because we were looking for a market, because the Tunisian market could not absorb the services.
5	• Our first objective was to be able, through our establishment in France, to conquer the rest of the markets similar to the African markets. • The need of technical and financial partners wanted us to come to France not only to accelerate the growth of our company and to further develop the innovative solutions.
6	• There is the search for a greater market, visibility at European level, and the objective of opening up to other international investors. • There are many advantages, especially in terms of R & D, and the most important for us, the opportunity to raising funds.
7	• The founders thought that the Tunisian market being too small. • France, it is viewed also as a market, not necessarily as a production site. So, it is a market that is "natural" for the Maghreb since there are many affinities.

Table 4

The Resources of Internationalized Firms in Francophone Africa

Firm	Illustrative Responses and Quotes
1	• In Africa, we are a group that have a strong experience and expertise. • What interests us more, when we recruit in Paris, is of course the technical skills, the expertise, the relational capacities, the network that these people can bring us.
2	• Our main resources are a mix of knowledge and experience of the Francophone market and relationships that we have with the African diaspora in France.
3	• Mainly our experience and expertise here in Morocco, our ability to offer high quality services with controlled costs to our clients.
4	• Our know-how, our expertise, our strength is that of the 8 members of our team there are 7 engineers. Our strength is technical, we master the innovative techniques.
5	• Our first strength is our will. • Our system is patented so it is our primary strength and has won a number of prestigious awards; this has allowed it to have a very high reputation. • In our case a large part of the diaspora wanted our company to be established in France.
6	• We rely on our network for marketing and sales. • The second aspect is the profitability and the extraordinary value for money obtained by working with Tunisian engineers and settling in Tunisia.
7	• At the beginning, it was more relational in Tunisia • There is also our experience developed in Tunisia. • Because with the reputation we have acquired, quality of origin, original supplier, regularity, and respect of the rules of the market.

Table 5

The Institutional Factors That Impact on Internationalizing Firms in Francophone Africa

Firm	Illustrative Responses and Quotes
1	• In Gabon, it is much more the legal and institutional conditions of the host country that influence. When you leave with a satisfactory record of your environments, these are favorable elements. • I would say that it is easier for an institution like our Bank with its francophone or Gabonese origin and experience to settle in France.
2	• I think that there was no barrier at that level because we are not dependent on the institutional structures.
3	• Two banks lent us money in Morocco, then we had to get the authorization to get it out, to the exchange office. • In general, I think that an African entrepreneur will have no difficulty in France. But there are markets on which we should not go, highly regulated, hence more complicated.
4	• In fact, the framework in Tunisia is a bit rigid but it is not blocking. • We were able to create the subsidiary very quickly, in 2 weeks. On the other hand, there are rules on the capital that one is allowed to invest, on the pro rata of the turnover.
5	• Concerning the institutional question, we had the help of Business France, our interlocutor for the installation in France, which greatly facilitated our implantation. On the Niger side things are easier, there have been no difficulties, we have gained a great understanding in Niger.
6	• First of all, to invest in France, as a Tunisian company, we had problems to get the money out. There have been many steps to be taken at the central bank level. • In France, the main difficulty we have encountered is the creation of a bank account. Without a direct relationship with the bankers, it is very complicated. • The government is very keen on the culture of the internationalization of Tunisian companies and is aware of the stakes involved. Thus, through FAMEX (External Market Access Fund), it grants financial aid to groups seeking internationalization.
7	• There was a very favorable tax system for those who make export. There are subsidies and upgrading plans that allow for technological leaps, which help finance equipment. • On the other hand, we had other concerns with the Tunisian administration as a little too much regulation, a little too rigid, on the currency exchange It is a serious problem for Tunisian firms seeking to internationalize. If we had to go through the central bank authorizations, we could have missed the opportunity because it takes too long.

Table 6

The Advantages of French Legitimacy

Firm	Illustrative Responses and Quotes
1	• The main similarities come from the common history, which lasted for some time, and that continues through this language that we all speak. Behind, because of this history, in Gabon you have a very strong implantation of French groups. • The influence of the French legal model in French-speaking countries of Africa is clear and considerable, particularly in business law. There is also the influence of the socio-economic model and the French management model in Gabon and in Africa in general. There is the French educational system which dominates and continues to train the thousand Gabonese cadres from time of the independence until today.
2	• I think the choice of France by ambitious francophone firms like mine might be a very good lever strategically speaking because I consider France to be the only way out or at least less risky for firms that want to go overseas, and at the same time the gateway or the main entrance to all francophone Africa.
3	• We went to France because I was already addressing the French market. The second reason is the credibility and legitimacy. • The similarities are cultural, in how to deal with business. To go to France, for me, was natural, and it was necessary, because if I wanted to be aware of what is done in this sector in France, it was necessary to be there
4	• It is more cultural and linguistic: mastery of the language. Because the biggest challenge of a start-up is the first sale, the first marketing. So, linguistic and cultural proximity helps a lot. Today, personally, if I have to manage an English client, I will be able but I will not have the same ease as with a French customer.
5	• There are many similarities. These two countries produce a lot of agriculture, and their GDP is due in large part to agricultural production. Then, Niger was a colony of France, and both countries are working on innovation, which means that a technology that develops in Niger can develop in France, and vice versa. • The common language effectively facilitates communication. It is our common denominator that allows us to collaborate with French researchers and farmers, which allows us to advance our agriculture. In addition, the Francophone institution, the OIF, has worked hard to develop our system, tele-irrigation.

Table 6, continued

The Advantages of French Legitimacy

Firm	Illustrative Responses and Quotes
6	• Certainly, there is a French legitimacy, but as I said, we chose France because we know very well how it works in France, the administration, and so on. • Actually, we are very close in term of culture and so on, and as I spent 11 years in France. I know very well how it works. I have a good network, I know a lot of people, and I know the ecosystem
7	• Already Tunisia was a French colony. So, our legal system, school, the organization of the administration come from the French model. Even how to talk, how to get known, how to approach a customer, sales techniques, how to do business. • Our made in France today is competitive and obviously strengthens our brand. "It is necessary to keep the legitimacy of the French brand"

APPENDIX B:

FIGURES

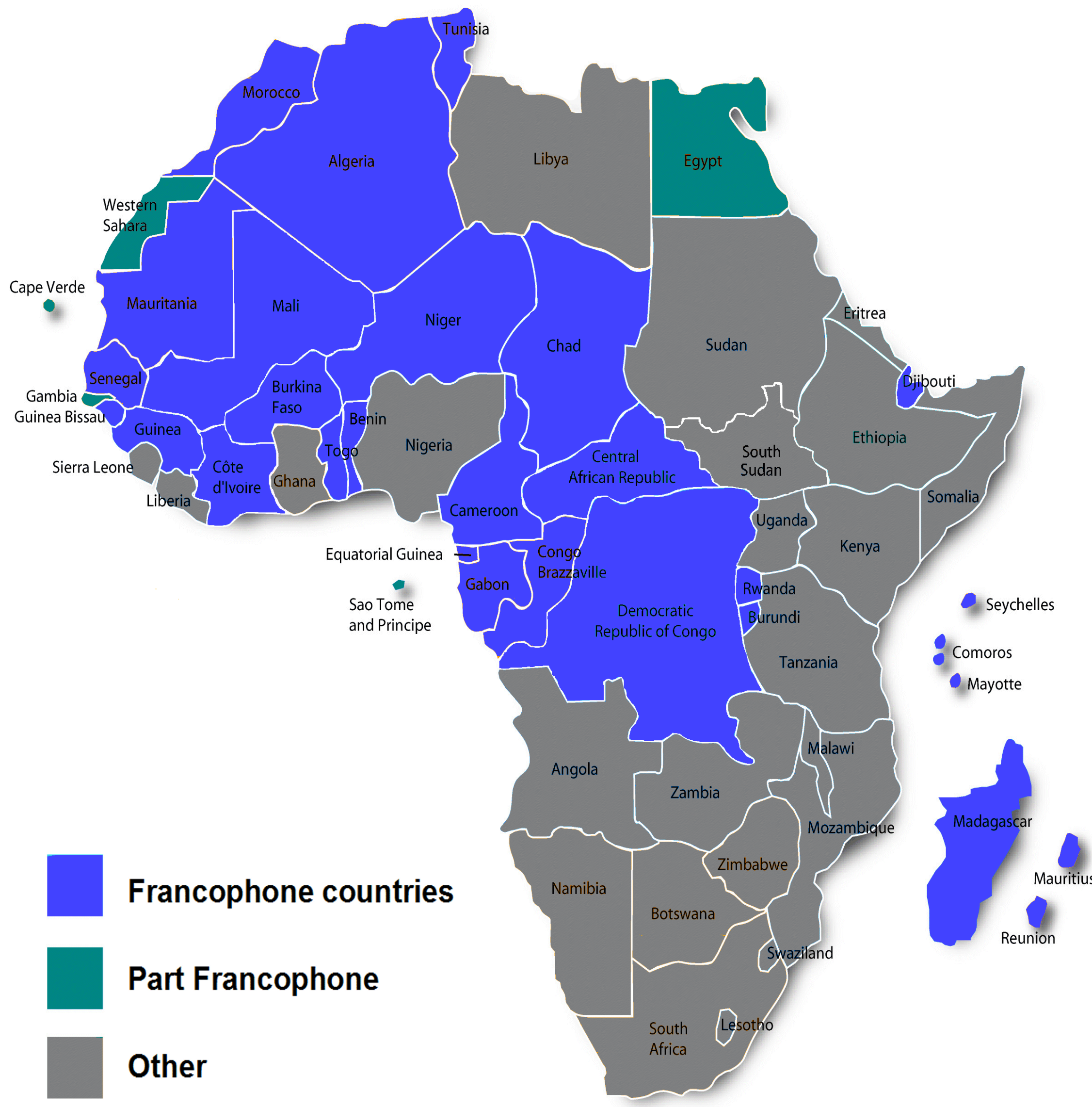

Figure 1.

The geographical distribution of francophone countries in Africa. (Map showing francophone countries)

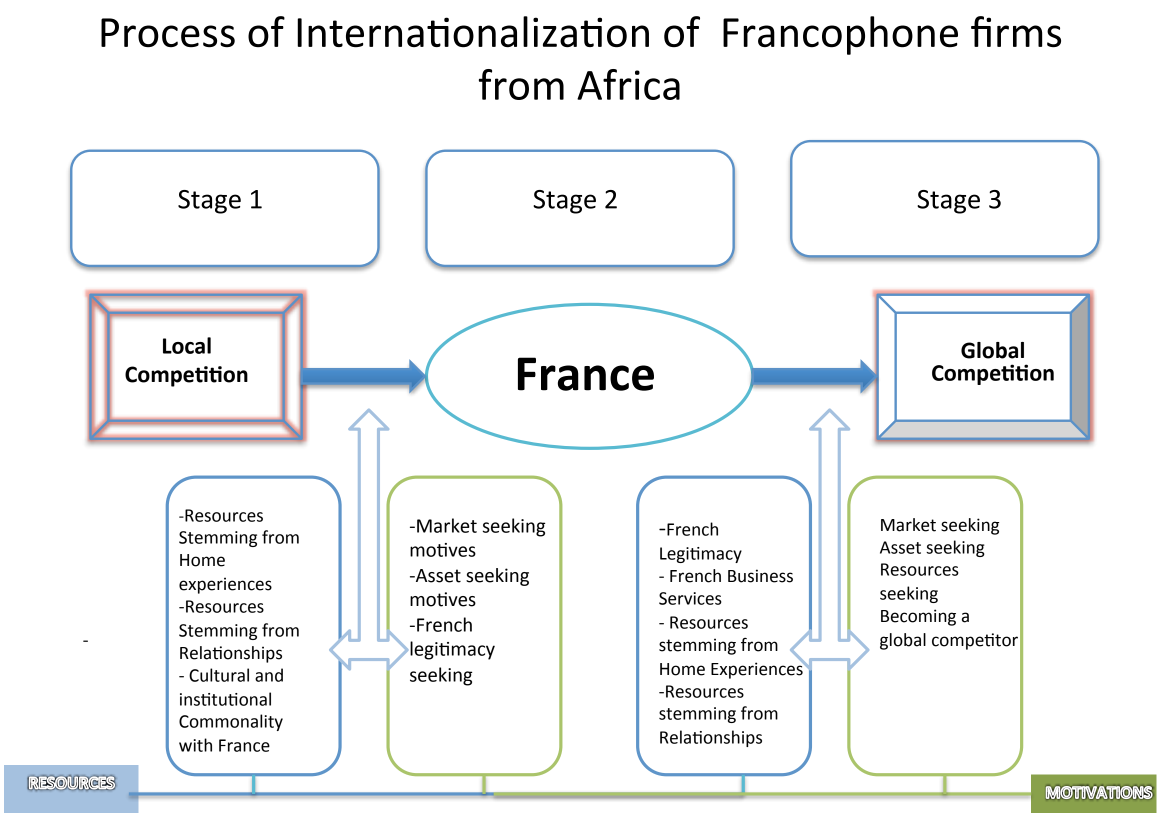

Figure 2.

The processes of internationalization of firms from francophone Africa.

APPENDIX C:

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

- Please tell me about the ownership structure of the firm and the size of the firm.
- Can you tell me some of the history or background about your firm's internationalization experience and decisions (decision to target France, establish French business services, internationalization choices after France)?
- Please describe the main motives and rationale behind your firm's choice to expand and locate its international operations into France. What are the advantages?
- What similarities between your country and France facilitate French internationalization?
- Would you describe the firm's motives for location choices as being primarily resource-seeking, asset-seeking or market-seeking, or French legitimacy seeking and why?
- What would you describe as the firm's main type of resources?
- Are your firm resources mostly relationship-based (e.g., business, ethnic, diaspora, or institutional associations) or home-experience based (e.g., abilities to produce low cost products for large home markets and negotiate difficult regulatory environments) and why?
- How have these resources affected the firm's internationalization location choices?
- Tell me if and how home-based and French-based institutional issues (e.g., legal, political, social, economic issues) have facilitated or hindered internationalization processes in your firm.

APPENDIX D:

RESEARCH APPROACH

Generally, the contemporary approach to scientific investigation of a phenomenon draws upon distinct research paradigms entailing quite different methodologies. A research paradigm is an accepted body of language, shared precepts, theory and methods shared amongst a research community to describe, explain, and predict behavior (Kuhn, 1962). As described by Newman and Benz (1998), the main research paradigms include the positivist and interpretivist research paradigms which entail quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, respectively.

The positivist paradigm is underscored by a philosophy of science that assumes observations of the material world are the most reliable basis for generating knowledge (Campbell, 1957), but accepts that unobserved hypothetical or theoretical constructs can play a useful role in scientific theories. Positivism adopts the scientific method where knowledge is sought through development of empirical questions, systematic observation via agreed-upon methodologies, gathering data and submitting it to quantitative analysis, and then integrating the information to form an interpretation of the findings with regard to research questions and hypotheses (Bryman, 2012). The scientific method generally entails a test of the effect of a predictor variable on an outcome variable via controlled experiments or through the use of surveys to establish and isolate cause-effect relationships, while at the same time controlling for extraneous variables. From this process, a researcher will usually produce a research report or paper and subject it to the peer review and evaluation process from the relevant scientific community before the findings are more widely circulated.

In contrast to the positivist approach to educational research, the interpretivist paradigm focuses on understanding what an experience, event, and/or state is from the perspective of the participant. As such, the interpretivist approach assumes a certain level of relativity in research; people's individual perspectives on the same topic may differ but, nonetheless, each provides a point of valuable and potentially rich data (Newman & Benz, 1998). Moreover, the interpretivist perspective acknowledges that background factors to a research question, such as social context and culture, are important aspects of empirical inquiry. Interpretivist research methods include several approaches to gathering data including semi-structured interviews, case studies, observational research, focus groups, and ethnographies. Ordinarily, the data generated from these methods is subject to reflective and content analysis, and coded to develop themes and general impressions of the findings that speak to the specific research focus (Howitt, 2010).

Overall, the positivist and interpretivist paradigms provide distinct quality standards that have their advantages and disadvantages. Whereas research from the positivist paradigm provides significant objective control and rigour to establish cause-effect relationships, it lacks takes little account of the context of observations in that research findings often don't reflect real world situations. In contrast, qualitative approaches reflecting the interpretivist research paradigm overcome the limits of quantitative methodologies in several ways (Howitt, 2010; Newman & Benz, 1998). Qualitative methods provide the opportunity to study real world phenomena with regard to the social and cultural context in which they exist. As a result, data generated from qualitative methods have a broader and richer focus on the research questions under investigation. Moreover, qualitative methods provide the opportunity for a researcher to engage directly with a respondent and to alter the inquiry as new and pertinent information is revealed. Given these advantages and their relevance to the research questions, the study was guided by the qualitative approach to understand the processes that drive "*l'effet métropolitain.*"