

Matthias Middell (ed.)

French Globalization Projects





Handbooks of Globalization Projects

Edited by
Matthias Middell, Steffi Marung and Ulf Engel

Volume 1

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Series Introduction

Handbooks of Globalization Projects

The historic epoch often referred to as the “post–Cold War era,” primarily interpreted as a phase of intensive globalization, has ostensibly come to an end. However, upon closer examination, new global dynamics can be observed, not only for the present but also for the past. A simple end to global interdependence must be questioned, even if critical neonationalism has grown from a rumble to a roar in many parts of the world, with both the financial crisis and the pandemic having raised doubts about a future of unlimited processes of deterritorialization, borderless value and commodity chains, and uninhibited movement. The world of the 2020s is different from that of the 1990s, and the theoretical approaches we use to interpret this world and its history need to be revised accordingly.

This book series starts from the premise that globalization is not a natural process that just happens behind the backs of actors who find themselves left with no alternative. This series challenges the singular and unidirectional belief that globalization slowly spreads from a Global North to a Global South, ultimately ushering in a rising prosperity through trickle-down effects. Rather, we place the category of *globalization projects* at the center of a long-term research program, the interim results of which will be presented in the handbooks of this book series.

Globalization projects are carried out to globally connect and order that part of the world that is relevant to the group of actors who plan and pursue these projects. Actions to open and control or expand and restrict go hand in hand, albeit in unique ways explicit to each project. Rarely are these aims and intentions actually projected onto the entire planet. In practice, most globalization projects content themselves with enclosing a part of the earth, even if a universalist language is utilized to frame their claims as world-spanning.

While the globalization of the past was assumed to manifest as a singular process, we assume that globalization projects exist only in the plural—simultaneously in current and historical sequences. The actors of such projects, among others, range from political elites and economic entrepreneurs to cultural actors and religious leaders to associations of civil society activists and intellectuals. These actors make efforts to bring about new world orders, some of which remain utopian or inconsequential but may be taken up in time.

Due to the intersecting aspiration of other actors within a project, the implementation of globalization projects are inevitably conflictual and often presuppose an asymmetry

of power. An example of such can be seen with the colonization of other peoples. The instruments used to enforce these globalization projects range from overt brute force to subtle attainment of cultural hegemony and integration, both efforts facilitating participation in a particular project.

“Globalizing the world” does not mean exclusively those projects that aim at subjugating the entire globe to one’s own ideas of order. Instead, it means above all asserting control over that part of the world that is considered relevant to one’s own project. Due to this circumscribed control, there is inevitably cooperation with other projects in this endeavor, resulting in the forging of alliances or at least the attempt to do so. Consequently, this means that no globalization project can exist without being influenced by efforts to connect to other projects that share similar views of the world they frame. The chances of bringing together and merging globalization projects are the result of this multiplicity and connectivity.

However, the more communication and transport technologies bring the parts of the world claimed by other actors closer together and promote exchange across borders, the more complex and demanding the functioning of a globalization project becomes. Historically, it can be assumed, the need for coordination with other globalization projects has tended to grow, increasing the demands for available knowledge about competing projects and for the ability to think about a multipolar world.

The amount of resources required for such globalization projects are considerable. This means that it is common to submit to a kind of historical path dependency and to continue a project that has already been started and, in turn, to modify it before thinking about completely abandoning a project and replacing it with a fundamental alternative. In this context, resources mean much more than the availability of finances, personnel, and weapons, for example. Rather, resources are the intellectual ability and willingness to “think globally”—that is to say, to make the necessary efforts to integrate a larger number of distant places, regions, connecting lines, and competing interests into a reasonably coherent concept. In doing so, the necessary institutions must be trained and experiences with successes and setbacks must be constructively processed, with the required energies of a community of supporters being mobilized to make a new start even after catastrophic failure. Establishing a globalization project can be achieved if the project enjoys the support of a sufficiently large base, be it by force or by consent to its legitimacy. Without such a legitimizing ideology—for instance, ranging from the theological foundations of missionary activity to the concept of soft power of today’s political entities—a globalization project is not conceivable.

Accordingly, globalization projects are highly complex phenomena and therefore—beyond abstract definitional features—can only be observed with a great deal of empirical effort to investigate their emergence, evolution, and expiration. By their very nature, globalization projects are historically transient phenomena and must be continually adapted to different contexts resulting from interaction with the globalization projects of other actors. They can thus exist over relatively long historical periods, but then

must be adapted to new conditions at very short notice. They can also disappear after a historical caesura as there is no guarantee of existing forever. All in all, they depend on the willingness of specific actors to design such projects, to legitimize the use of resources for these projects, and to act in accordance with the aims of the globalization projects.

There is no overarching plan from which the success or failure of globalization projects can be derived. There are no general rules governing their existence and endeavors, with no possibility of finding an ultimate solution to all the puzzles of the worlds. This leads to certain patterns being added to or removed from the globalization project toolbox either temporarily or even permanently. As a consequence, some patterns spread more easily because they (seem to) promise success, whereas others are restricted, or abandoned, because they (seem to) end in failure.

The Handbooks of Globalization Projects book series empirically tests this category and is connected to a rapidly developing body of research that, on the one hand, observes how individual countries and regions have (repeatedly) redefined their place in global history and, on the other hand, focuses on how actors besides ruling political elites formulate alternative designs of transregional or global interdependence. The first research trend includes the many works that in recent years have examined aspects of a global or transnational history investigating individual states or empires and colonial systems. Other works also include those that advocate defining new subject areas beyond the monolingually defined philologies, drawing inspiration from the insights gained from colonial and imperial historiography. Reflections also flow into this trend from the fields of international studies, the study of new regionalisms, and comparative regionalism. The second research trend consists of analyses of transnational associations, the study of anticolonial resistance, and the emergence of socialist, feminist, and climate activist movements, which counter or at least complement the state-centeredness and anthropocentrism of much of the work in the first trend.

Just as the 2020s are marked by an upheaval in the political concepts of world order, it has also become apparent in the humanities and social sciences that a reinterpretation of global history is now being sought on the basis of the analysis of global flows achieved in recent decades. The book series fits into this effort and for this purpose seeks to bring together researchers from different parts of the world, different disciplines, and different generations to attempt to describe a selection of globalization projects that are understood through this new perspective, thereby going beyond the limits of a programmatic article and a theoretical debate.

The volumes of this series are intended as collective monographs (or handbooks) that bring together the expertise of 20–25 authors in chapters that are bundled by the editors into an investigation and presentation of the historical development of a particular set of globalization projects that is as convincing as possible, yet critical and by no means affirmative. We assume that this will require close coordination between the participants and the sharing of draft chapters as well as their discussion in joint workshops. Starting

in 2024, the series is to be published in two to three volumes per year, if feasible, so that at the end of this decade readers will have a substantial selection of particularly prominent globalization projects at their disposal. This selection should make visible the diversity of possible actors of such projects and the sections of the world particularly engaged by them, as well as the very different rhythms to which the globalization projects were and are subject. In addition to volumes devoted to the hegemonic efforts of individual powers (such as England/United Kingdom, France, the USA, Russia, or China), or the United Nations system and regional projects (from regional organizations via the European Union or the African Union to the Global South), there are also planned volumes that focus on the women's movement and feminism, climate protection movements, trade union movements, cultural industries, the literary world, sport, religions, and churches. The series is open to other topics and may be extended to more than the 20 volumes originally planned.

The series is published on behalf of the Leipzig Research Centre Global Dynamics (<https://recentglobe.uni-leipzig.de/>), which supports the establishment of efficient author teams logistically and editorially by, among other activities, holding regular author workshops in which the approach presented here is only an initial step to be developed further.

Between Ambition and Realization: The History of Franco-Mondialisation, or the Many French Globalization Projects

Introduction: Why a Focus on French Globalization Projects?

Among those globalization projects for which a national framing seems evident, undoubtedly the French one ranks high. Up until the present day, French elites have been driven by the idea that the country has a special mission. Only a few societies of comparable size claim a global presence like that of France. Like Britain, which even combined its ambition of a “Global Britain” with the risky step of leaving the European Union, France evokes and is motivated by its long history as a world power.

With a long history of interaction with other world regions, a historical self-understanding of France has taken hold that conceives of *l'Hexagone* as the center of a historical project (or a *mission civilisatrice*) that has long curbed or even prevented the acceptance of a postcolonial status and the associated practices as well as a sharp self-critique of France as a colonial power. However, for some time, this has been beginning to change. The history laws with which President Jacques Chirac was to impose at the beginning of the twenty-first century—a so-called positive judgement of the colonial period on the country, its schoolteachers, and its academics—became the starting point for an engaged debate discussing how French national history was embedded globally.

As a result, the country has loudly and publicly reflected on, among many other issues, the restitution of looted art sitting in French collections as well as on the joint French-Algerian history, including appeals to the French president to apologize for the war crimes in Algeria. The subsequent historical policy initiatives of the current president, Emmanuel Macron, not only are changing the view of French-Algerian history or the need for restitution of cultural property to sub-Saharan Africa, but they are also part of the recalibration of several French globalization projects.

Analyzing these globalization projects today means writing about French history differently than it might have been written about 30 years ago. And consequently, it also means that a future account of these globalization projects may prove to be different again because the construction of a historical narrative is an inseparable part of any globalization project.

Two decades ago, the British historian and public intellectual Niall Ferguson published two books in quick succession on the rise and fall of the British Empire and on

the American Empire.¹ The message linking the two books was quite typical of the debate on globalization at the time, which began to dominate public interest in the 1990s. Primarily, Ferguson focused on hegemony in the international order, taking a look at the economic and military foundations. The transition from the British to the American Empire seemed to him almost like the natural course of events, even if he felt compelled to give the USA advice to stave off its own decline, which he combined with the presentation of so-called killer apps that had once made Britain or the entire West successful: competition, science, property rights, medicine, consumerism, and work ethics.² Such advice seemed, at the time, opportune because by then the “rest” of the world had obviously understood how to use the tools that guaranteed a powerful position in the world.

It is easy to imagine that confusing globalization with the Anglo-Saxon axis of long-lasting hegemony was not met with overwhelming approval. In France, refusal to accept such a view went so far that for a while many persons—from academics to politicians—refused to use the term *globalization* and, in well-practiced fashion, tried to impose their own term: *la mondialisation*.³ The use of the latter was supported by the fact that Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic Games, could be referred to as the creator of the word.⁴ On the front page of *Le Figaro* from December 13, 1904, Coubertin had linked his internationalization of sport with a determined export of French civilization, whose importance was even growing in a changing world: “The French idea has no rival yet, and men have not finished needing it.”⁵ The neologism served to reestablish a worldwide claim with which to counter burgeoning nationalism in the name of a French civilization that would have proven its cultural superiority. While the adjective *mondial* and the verb *mondialiser* were already in use by various parties to describe the advancing interdependence of economies and societies, Coubertin used the noun *mondialisation* to denote a mission that fell to France despite the marked trend

1 Niall Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005).

2 Niall Ferguson, *Civilization: The West and the Rest* (New York: Penguin Books, 2011). The paperback edition came out shortly afterwards, with the sensational subtitle: *The Six Killer Apps of Western Power* (New York: Penguin Books, 2012).

3 Olivier Dollfus, *La mondialisation* [Globalization] (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 1997); Pierre de Senarclens, *La mondialisation. Théories, enjeux et débats* [Globalization: Theories, Issues, and Debates] (Paris: Armand Colin, 2002).

4 Vincent Capdepuy, “1904, la mondialisation selon Pierre de Coubertin” [1904, Globalization According to Pierre de Coubertin], *Histoire Globale* (April 21, 2014), http://blogs.histoireglobale.com/1904-la-mondialisation-selon-pierre-de-coubertin_3828.

5 Original in Pierre de Coubertin, “Le flambeau à sept branches” [The Seven-Light Torch], *Le Figaro*, December 13, 1904, 1: “L’idée française n’a point encore de rivale et les hommes n’ont pas fini d’avoir besoin d’elle.”

of declining economic and military power. Let us first note that, since its inception, the concept of *mondialisation* upheld an exceptionalism of France, a trend that even the appropriation by francophone Belgian internationalists and internationalists could not stop. Coubertin mentioned Quebec, New Orleans, Hanoi, Pondicherry, Antananarivo, Cairo, and Algiers as seven examples of places that were held together by the bonds of a French civilization, even though some of them were no longer part of the French Empire. However, preserving these places in a French-dominated *mondialisation* required paying attention to their specific regional imprints:

The gazettes or magazines that will appear in Quebec would not be appropriate in Cairo, and the University of Antananarivo cannot resemble those of Lille or Toulouse. In Pondicherry, account must be taken of the students that British India could provide, as in New Orleans one must think of those sent by the Mexican Republic. The methods that will be attracted to Algiers in order to knead and modernize the young phalanxes of Islam are not those that will make it possible to constitute in Hanoi a wisely progressive mandarinat.⁶

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Coubertin felt more the need to adapt an eventual French globalization project to the new realities of imperialism and colonialism in crisis. Notwithstanding, he remained convinced of France's civilizing mission, being derived from its (assumed) superior cultural tradition, despite the country's waning demography, military capacity, and economic weight in a slowly coalescing world.

France, incidentally, was not the only country in which an original terminology (that is to say, at the time, a nationalized language) was sought to express the simultaneity of global interdependence and the growing importance of that interdependence for domestic development, on the one hand, and the various national efforts to control a part of the world considered relevant, on the other hand. In Germany, for instance, a new vocabulary was unfolding at this time around concepts such as *Weltwirtschaft* (world economy) and *Weltpolitik* (world politics).⁷ In striving for linguistic differentiation, attention was already paid to some degree to the fact that *globalization* is rather a generic term that encompasses many dimensions and, above all, obscures the fact that it is not an anonymous process going on behind the backs of actors. Rather, there was an incipient

6 Original in Coubertin, 1: "Les gazettes ou les magazines qui paraîtront à Québec ne conviendraient pas au Caire et l'université de Tananarive ne saurait ressembler à celles de Lille ou de Toulouse. A Pondichéry il faudra tenir compte des étudiants que pourrait fournir l'Inde anglaise, comme à la Nouvelle-Orléans on devra songer à ceux qu'enverrait la République mexicaine. Les méthodes qui attireront à Alger, pour les pétrir et les moderniser, les jeunes phalanges de l'Islam ne sont pas celles qui permettront de constituer à Hanoï un mandarinat sagement progressiste."

7 Jürgen Osterhammel, "Raumerfassung und Universalgeschichte" [The Understanding of Space and Universal History], in *Geschichtswissenschaft jenseits des Nationalstaats. Studien zu Beziehungsgeschichte und Zivilisationsvergleich*, ed. Jürgen Osterhammel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), 151–169.

understanding that this described and observed globalization entailed a multitude of efforts by different actors that, when not existing in parallel (at least for a time), not only conflict but also merge with each other.

Interestingly, the second phase of piquing curiosity in global interactions, which can be dated back to the second half of the 1980s at the latest, was characterized by the prevailing idea that globalization was a uniform process that made the world more homogeneous. This impression was reinforced with the end of real socialism throughout the former Eastern bloc and the breakup of the Soviet Union, as well as with China's "opening up" toward compatible integration into the market-based global economy. The barely concealed triumphalism of the Cold War victors was reflected in two types of theory: one evoked the end of history and saw no more significant challenges to the principle of liberal democracies; the other, in contrast, warned that the convergence of societies made a clash of civilizations even more likely and advised to prepare for it. Both grand narratives, however, were based on the ideas that the world would experience an enormous surge in integration, that interdependence through imports and exports would increase, and that migration would increase as a result. All together, these shifts would lead in the positive case to a more effective distribution of labor and greater convergence of social situations, but in the negative case to a rise in xenophobia and the perseverance and demarcation of distinct cultural identities. Importantly, the extolled idea of the "only remaining superpower" was crowned with the task of keeping this highly dynamic world in balance (if necessary, also at the price of humanitarian interventions) and of ensuring that the "peace dividend" of the ended Cold War could be turned into new investments and higher general prosperity.

Within a relatively short time, this idea proved to be an illusion and—in parallel with the emerging conflicts in the Balkans, Central Asia, the Middle East, as well as in Central Africa—gave rise to a fundamental critique of the ideological construct of globalization. Alter-globalization became the slogan of social movements seeking alternatives.⁸ Among them, the Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions and for Citizen's Action (Association pour la taxation des transactions financières pour l'aide aux citoyens, ATTAC), founded in France in 1998, played a prominent role early on, forging connections with solidarity movements with the so-called Third World. In an editorial for the newspaper *Le Monde Diplomatique* in December 1997, Ignacio Ramonet proposed an organization that would campaign for the "Tobin tax," which, on the one hand, would slow down the upswing of the financial industry and, on the other hand, would mobilize funds for the debt relief of the poorest countries. ATTAC explicitly referred to the historical-political debate in 1992, when protests were held in Latin America against the idea of a "discovery of America" by Christopher Columbus; to the Zapatista uprising in Mexico, which began in 1994; and to the peasant

8 Geoffrey Pleyers, *Alter-Globalization: Becoming Actors in the Global Age* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011).

protest movement La Via Campesina. But even more intriguing, this nongovernmental organization also referred to the major strike against the reform plans for the civil service of Alain Juppé's government in 1995, considered "the first revolt against globalization" in Europe.⁹ Subsequently, it was the protests on the occasion of meetings of the World Trade Organization (WTO), of the Group of Seven/Eight (G7/8) (with the famous battle of Seattle in 1999), and of the World Social Forum (beginning in 2001 in Porto Alegre, Brazil) that more and more shaped the alter-globalization movement and gave it an intellectual profile. In France, the monthly magazine *Alternatives Économiques* as well as the movement Raisons d'Agir, supported by Pierre Bourdieu, accompanied the increasing resistance against financialization and tax havens while demanding an expanded social policy.

Alternatives to the dominant understanding of globalization were imagined and developed in a variety of ways. Accordingly, the World Social Fora also became prominent sites of global encounter and communication.¹⁰ They promoted an understanding that acknowledged the completely different effects that global processes had in varied parts of the world. The fora further stimulated the formation of broad coalitions that were united in their criticism of a neoliberalism diagnosed by many but not in the ways to overcome it.¹¹

However, the search for alternatives to a globalizing world by no means only appealed to the left-wing political spectrum. When the self-confessed left-wing anarchist José Bové and his comrades in arms from the Confédération Paysanne destroyed the unfinished construction of a McDonald's branch at the southern end of Millau with an excavator on August 12, 1999, he was protesting the import duties imposed by the USA on French Roquefort after the European Union banned the import of hormone-treated meat. The sheep farmer saw his business threatened "by liberal global trade" and attacked the fast food chain as a symbol of the global standardization of taste and fashion.

However, this protest also proved to be amenable to a nationalist right, which turned the argument against "liberal world trade" into one against "cultural alienation" and into threats to national identity.¹² The far right of the Front National succeeded in stylizing globalization as the enemy of those who wanted to hold onto the achievements of the welfare state by making use of protectionism, nationalism, and racism. The argument for an alternative globalization was now circulating in (also transnational) communication channels of right-wing populist parties and movements, which in the course of the 2010s

9 Erik Izraëlewicz, "La première révolte contre la mondialisation," *Le Monde*, December 12, 1995, https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1995/12/07/la-premiere-revolte-contre-la-mondialisation_3884319_1819218.html.

10 Sydney Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

11 Kevin McDonald, *Global Movements: Action and Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006).

12 Walden F. Bello, *Deglobalization: Ideas for a New World Economy* (London: Zed Books, 2002).

was increasingly successful in gaining influence over massive social protest movements, as the example of the Yellow Vests shows. The desire for social security and a reduction in inequality persists, but its political articulation has been increasingly aligning with right-wing populist and far-right movements and parties as the contribution by Therese Mager to this volume shows in greater detail.

The rejection of globalization branded as neoliberal, often equated with Americanization, and the search for alternatives beyond the conceptualization of globality and globalization were particularly fierce in France, which may explain the delayed interest in global history.¹³ The boom of global history in international historiography did not go unnoticed in Paris and at one or two other locations of Sciences Po. However, the nostalgic style of Pierre Nora's history of memory and remembrance—in which he and a whole phalanx of co-authors analyze the *lieux de mémoires* (sites of memories), indicating at the same time the loss of the *milieux de mémoire* (environments of memory)—remained influential.¹⁴ The diagnosed collapse of the (national) memory community as a history of loss corresponded with a comparable growing interest in transnational connections and entanglements, which, in a sense, point to the destructive power of advancing cultural hybridization.

It was in the context of French humanities that transnational entanglements (cultural transfers) were intensively investigated in the mid-1980s, whereas the terminology of global history remained rather marginal until the beginning of the 2000s. National memory history by no means dominated the field of historical studies.¹⁵ On the contrary, the first programmatic writings addressing the topic of border-crossing connections and mutual cultural appropriations appeared in parallel, advocating the study of cultural transfers and the fundamentally transnational quality of all national cultures, including

13 On the development of global history in different parts of the world and Europe, see Sven Beckert and Dominic Sachsenmaier, eds., *Global History, Globally: Research and Practice around the World* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019); Matthias Middell, ed., *The Practice of Global History: European Perspectives* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019).

14 Pierre Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire* [Sites of Memory], 7 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1984–1992).

15 For a first approach to the new terminology of global history, see Christophe Charle, ed., *Histoire sociale, histoire globale? Actes du colloque des 27–28 janvier 1989* [Social History, Global History? Proceedings of the Symposium Held January 27–28, 1989] (Paris: Éditeur Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1993). See further on in the discussion: Laurent Testot, ed., *Histoire globale: un nouveau regard sur le monde* [Global History: A New View of the World] (Auxerre: Sciences humaines, 2008); Arnaud Rosset, *Les théories de l'histoire face à la mondialisation* [Theories of History in View of Globalization] (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010); Chloé Maurel, *Manuel d'histoire globale. Comprendre le global turn des sciences humaines* [Handbook of Global History: Understanding the Global Turn in the Humanities] (Paris: A. Colin, 2014).

and very prominently French.¹⁶ However, no connection was made to the globalization discussion.¹⁷

A New Interest in Global History

As in other countries, interest in global history was fed by various sources: area studies¹⁸ faced new questions from imperial and colonial history; different approaches emerged from economic history¹⁹ or environmental history rather than from political and military history; and cultural and migration history in turn advanced different topics. There is not enough space here to describe in detail this diversity of input, which also characterized the emergence of global history in France. In any case, a critical mass emerged over time that allowed conferences, such as the 2014 European Congress on World and Global History, held at the École normale supérieure Paris (ENS) and the Collège de France²⁰; special issues of journals²¹ and new (online) journals and blogs²²; and finally working groups, such as the one founded in 2013 by Blaise Wilfert and Quentin Deluermoz on a “histoire transnationale et globale de la France” (transnational and global history of France), in which the field consolidated. Among the influential publications advancing global history, two in particular stand out.

In his formulation of the crisis of imperial society, Christophe Charle successfully summarized a new perspective that brought together the basic republican consensus with the experience of imperialism and colonialism in such a way that the contradictory character of modern France became more visible than a pure success story of

16 Michel Espagne and Michael Werner, “Deutsch-französischer Kulturtransfer im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert. Zu einem neuen interdisziplinären Forschungsprogramm des CNRS” [German-French Cultural Transfer: On a New Interdisciplinary Research Program at the CNRS], *Francia* 13 (1985): 502–510.

17 Michel Espagne and Michael Werner, “La construction d’une référence culturelle allemande en France: Génèse et Histoire (1750–1914)” [The Construction of a German Cultural Reference in France: Emergence and History (1750–1914)], *Annales ESC* (1988): 969–992.

18 Jacques Pothier, “Nouveaux enjeux des aires culturelles à l’heure de la mondialisation et d’Internet” [New Challenges for Cultural Areas in the Age of Globalization and the Internet], <https://trac.hypotheses.org/files/2013/12/Nouveaux-enjeux-des-aires-culturelles-%C3%A0-l%2E80%99heure-de-la-mondialisation-et-d%2E80%99Internet.pdf>.

19 Philippe Beaujard, Laurent Berger, and Philippe Norel, eds., *Histoire globale, mondialisations et capitalisme* [Global History, Globalization, and Capitalism] (Paris: La Découverte 2009).

20 Michel Espagne, “Plural Globality and Shift in Perspective,” *Practices of Global History: European Perspectives*, ed. Matthias Middell (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), 29–44.

21 Caroline Douki and Philippe Minard, “Histoire globale, histoires connectées. Un changement d’échelle historiographique?” [Global History, Connected Histories: A Shift in Scale in Historiography?], *Revue d’histoire moderne et contemporaine* 54, no. 4 (2007): 7–21.

22 See Histoire Globale, “Le Blog,” accessed February 13, 2024, <http://blogs.histoireglobale.com>.

human rights since 1789.²³ At the same time, he highlighted in his comparative essay that imperial society was not a special feature of France but could be found in many European societies, albeit in each case in specific forms. This paved the way not only for the merging of European and non-European history (for instance by considering “France is not a hexagon”) but also for the opening of French historical culture to the postcolonial experiences of immigrants, who had increasingly shaped the country since the eighteenth century.

The *Histoire mondiale de la France*, coordinated by Patrick Boucheron in 2016, with which the authors positioned themselves in the campaign for the presidential elections of the following year, had a great political impact by opposing a narrow focus on national history and instead presenting many transregional, transnational, and global moments in French history.²⁴

To some extent, this debate renewed a discussion held 100 years earlier: To what extent was the French approach to a universally conceived globalization specific, or was there a particular way for France to enter global modernity that could not be adequately described by the term globalization?

But even at the beginning of the twenty-first century, conceptual clarity initially left much to be desired. The stronger the universalist tone of the debate on globalization became, the more unclear it became whether the use of the term *mondialisation* is ultimately only a defensive effort to describe the same thing with a French term, or whether *mondialisation* describes its own variant of globalization, which should be systematically distinguished from the Anglo-Saxon model.²⁵ While the attitude toward globalization remained critical, the concept of *mondialisation* did not develop into a theory of its own. Globalization was denounced as an attack on firmly rooted identities,²⁶ being seen as destabilizing rather than stabilizing international relations and individual societies.²⁷ Its historical roots lay in an imperialism already denounced by Vladimir

23 Christophe Charle, *La crise des sociétés impériales. Allemagne, France, Grande-Bretagne 1900–1940. Essai d'histoire comparée* [The Crisis of Imperial Societies: France, Germany, and Great Britain, 1900–1940: An Essay in Comparative History] (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2001).

24 Patrick Boucheron, ed., *Histoire mondiale de la France* [Global History of France] (Paris: Seuil, 2016).

25 For instance, in the tradition of French (critical) geopolitics, which was anchored in historically oriented geography and had fewer relations with political or cultural sciences than in other scientific systems: Jacques Lévy, “La mondialisation. Un événement géographique” [Globalization: A Geographical Event], *L'information géographique* 71, no. 2 (2007): 6–31; Christian Grataloup, *Géohistoire de la mondialisation. Le temps long du monde* [Geohistory of Globalization: The Long Time of the World] (Paris: Armand Colin, 2007).

26 Francis Arzalier, *Mondialisation et identité, le paradoxe meurtrier du XXI^e siècle. De la Corse à Kaboul: Volontés identitaires, dérives et instrumentalisation, 1900–2003* [Globalization and Identity, the Murderous Paradox of the Twenty-First Century. From Corsica to Kabul: Identity Aspirations, Aberrations, and Instrumentalization, 1900–2003] (Pantin: Le Temps des cerises, 2004).

27 Zaki Laidi, *Malaise dans la mondialisation. Entretien avec Philippe Petit* [Discomfort in Globalization: Interview with Philippe Petit] (Paris: Textuel 1997); Josepha Laroche, ed., *Mondialisation et gouver-*

Lenin²⁸ and in the history of colonialism,²⁹ while in the present it gave rise to new protest movements³⁰ and added another chapter to the history of inequalities.³¹ It is true that globalization had rather bad press in France at the turn of the twentieth to the twenty-first century. Notwithstanding, the phenomenon occupied French intellectuals as well as French politicians with extraordinary intensity. The search for a terminology of their own was merely the surface of a deeper question: what was the state of France's ambitions in a world of globalization?

With his distinction between the British Empire and the American Empire, Ferguson, too, suggested that there was more than the current variant of global dominance. Although he saw these variants merely asynchronously distributed on a time axis—as hegemony replacing each other—for other authors the question quickly arose whether such variants could not also exist simultaneously or had not existed historically. Was not the history of globalization a history of competition for supremacy, and where there were competitors, there had to be alternative bases for such competition. From a French perspective, the two world wars of the eighteenth century came to mind for this purpose, which—long before the confrontations of the twentieth century were officially proclaimed as world wars—took place between 1756 and 1763³² and 1792 and 1815,³³ respectively, in Europe, Asia, America, North Africa, the Indian Ocean, the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic. These world wars had dramatic consequences for the geopolitical constellations on various continents, some of which can still be felt today.

nance mondiale [Globalization and Global Governance] (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2003); Pierre Noël Giraud, *La mondialisation. Émergences et fragmentations* [Globalization: Emergences and Fragmentations] (Auxerre: Editions des Sciences humaines, 2012).

28 This has motivated the new edition of Lenin's writing on imperialism: see Georges Labica, "De l'impérialisme à la mondialisation" [From Imperialism to Globalization], in *L'impérialisme stade suprême du capitalisme. Essai de vulgarization*, ed. V. I. Lénine (Paris: Le temps de cerises, 2001), 7–33.

29 Jacques Frémeaux, *Les empires coloniaux dans le processus de mondialisation* [Colonial Empires in the Globalization Process] (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2002).

30 Isabelle Sommier, *Le renouveau des mouvements contestataires à l'heure de la mondialisation* [The Revival of Protest Movements in a Globalized World] (Paris: Flammarion, 2003).

31 François Bourguignon, *La mondialisation de l'inégalité* [The Globalization of Inequality] (Paris: Seuil, 2012).

32 Daniel A. Baugh, *The Global Seven Years War, 1754–1763: Britain and France in a Great Power Contest* (New York: Pearson Press, 2010); Sven Externbrink, ed., *Der Siebenjährige Krieg (1756–1763). Ein europäischer Weltkrieg im Zeitalter der Aufklärung* [The Seven Years' War (1756–1763): A European World War in the Age of Enlightenment] (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2008).

33 Roger Chickering and Stig Förster, eds., *War in an Age of Revolution, 1775–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Only very recently has the juxtaposition of Anglo-globalization and Franco-*mondialisation* been explored further.³⁴ In this context, British and French globalization appear as both opposites and complements, being two significant pillars of a collective imperialism that allowed Europeans to dominate large parts of the world for a time. In this domination, the rather informal empire of the French had relied on their language and culture as well as the spread of French capital.³⁵ The growing contribution of French historians—together with those scholars who investigate the experiences of those actors who lived under and responded to French dominance—makes it possible to advance theories about various globalization projects in the first place. The initial aspect that stands out is the long duration with which the globalization projects emanating from France were pursued and repeatedly renewed. They cover major periods of the first European colonial expansion in the early modern times as well as the second wave of colonization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but they extend beyond that into the present.

Where to Start?

Fernand Braudel's magistral synthesis of the history of France began with the Iron Age, alluding to a motif of continuity over a very long time that dominated the historiography of France in the twentieth century.³⁶ Braudel was neither the first nor the last historian insisting on the fact that France has a continuous history of interconnections, of immigration and emigration, and of ethnic mixing. But he did make this perspective prominent in a country that, at times, advanced the superiority and dominance of a strict national perspective on history. His *longue durée* approach led the reader to consider historical periods not yet influenced by nation-building processes. In a figurative sense, one could therefore also speak of a globalization project of Charlemagne or the Merovingians. This perspective has inspired medievalists to take up a global historical approach as well to provide ample evidence for the transregional connectedness of social configurations in this period long before the modern global condition came into being.

There is good reason to start the history of globalization projects in a certain geographical area of the world as early as possible. However, we have to be careful to

34 Rahul Markovits, Pierre Singaravélou, and David Todd, "Une 'Franco-mondialisation' impériale? Domination informelle et expansion coloniale" [An Imperial "Franco-Globalization"? Informal Domination and Colonial Expansion], in *D'ici et d'ailleurs. Histoires globales de la France contemporaine*, ed. Quentin Deluermoz (Paris: La Découverte, 2021), 49–89.

35 Markovits et al., 52.

36 Fernand Braudel, *L'identité de la France* [The Identity of France], vol. 1 (Paris: Arthaud-Flammarion, 1986).

connect them to later political-administrative territories.³⁷ We should also not forget the warning of Marc Bloch against a search for origins that leads the historian astray because all such supposed origins are linked to, out of necessity, a certain construction of the present, serving this understanding of the present or the legitimization of present actions. Accordingly, the origins of French globalization projects could undoubtedly be traced back to the mobility patterns of early inhabitants of Western Europe, about whom we possess only DNA traces and some evidence of their material culture. One could also take as a starting point the universalist claims of interpretation and representation associated with Christianity and the papacy. The early state-building processes of the Merovingians and Carolingians were efforts to consolidate administrative units of political dominance as well as forms of kinship relations not only based on ruling land and people but also associated to various degrees with expansionist intentions. However, if we take into consideration Serge Gruzinski's understanding of globalization, distinguishing between domination in one part of the world and expansion into all (four) parts of the world,³⁸ then it is appropriate to focus on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for the French involvement in this process.

Undoubtedly, this continues a historiographical tradition that was established in the eighteenth century, not least with the extensive work of Abbé Raynal, *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes*.³⁹ Residents of France were latecomers in the colonial race for discoveries and first conquests, and yet in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they developed into very important actors in this expansion at the very moment when the global condition began to emerge. The “rebellious” Atlantic comprises the first stage on which different French globalization projects were performed: from the St. Lawrence River in the north to the Mississippi Valley and the Caribbean in the south, a space, which was by no means homogeneous, stretched out in which settlers, traders, sailors, and adventurers from France were active. Their history is more diverse and contradictory than the older versions of European overseas history would have us believe. Recent imperial history, on the other hand, has favored painting a picture of reciprocal exchange and a profound influence of these encounters in the Americas' North on the French globalization projects.

However, it is necessary to consider at least two different projects and their relationship to one another: on the one hand, the opening up of the New World by sailors, fishermen, merchants, and settlers, which in the French case was rooted in the cities

37 On the emergence of the concept of territory and the slow process of territorialization, see Stuart Elden, *The Birth of Territory* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2013).

38 Serge Gruzinski, *Les quatre parties du monde. Histoire d'une mondialisation* [The Four Parts of the World: History of a Globalization] (Paris: Seuil, 2004).

39 Cecil Courtney and Jenny Mander, eds., *Raynal's "Histoire des deux Indes": Colonialism, Networks and Global Exchange* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2015).

along the Atlantic coast, and, on the other hand, the claim of political and military elites to incorporate overseas territories into the ruling body of the empire. Richard Drayton has assembled convincing arguments for the initiative of the inhabitants of the rapidly flourishing port cities on France's Atlantic front,⁴⁰ while in the interior of the country there were prominent efforts such as the Edict of Villiers-Cotterêts (1539) for the replacement of Latin by French or Joachim Du Bellay's call ten years later to separate himself from foreign influence.⁴¹ The tension between the more globally oriented coastal regions and the more inward-looking center was to define France for a long time to come and has influenced different and at times even directly opposed globalization projects, as the contribution by Alan Forrest to this volume demonstrates.⁴²

At the same time, however, we recognize more clearly than at times when power projections were displayed more predominantly in Versailles or Paris than in Montréal or Pondicherry that the analysis of French globalization projects is by no means solely or even primarily about the impact of Europeans on the Americas, Asia, or Africa—this analysis can just as easily be viewed in the opposite direction.⁴³ What would Rouen, Rennes, Saint-Malo, La Rochelle, Bordeaux, Nantes, or Marseille be without the centuries-long influx of goods, experiences, and people that resulted from the Atlantic trade? And what would they have been without the license to trade slaves? They were not isolated outposts; they were closely linked to a more agrarian as well as protoindustrial hinterland that also benefited from contact with the New World, where to textiles were exported and from where tobacco and sugar were imported. Among the port cities channeling the contact between France and the Atlantic (as well as the Mediterranean) world, the case of Saint-Malo in particular shows that the peak of this exchange was not under the control of the French administration but rather fell in the gray area of a semi-legal trade/smuggling.⁴⁴ And the trading houses of the time were intertwined with those of the Caribbean—growing closer together with each exchange about price fluctuations and their reasons, new technologies and products, and the skills to be learned to manage a New World market.

Finally, Drayton points out that this French frontier of globalization—very similar to the situation in the Caribbean, by the way—did not necessarily show loyalty to the French crown. It was therefore the object not only of fierce regulation and bureaucratic

40 Richard Drayton, "The Globalization of France: Provincial Cities and French Expansion c. 1500–1800," *History of European Ideas* 34, no. 4 (2008): 424–430.

41 Joachim du Bellay, *Deffence et Illustration de la Langue Françoisse* [Defense and Illustration of the French Language] (Paris: Arnoul l'Anglier, 1549).

42 The series *Atlas historique de la Révolution française* gives an impressive visualization of this contrast for the end of the eighteenth century, and this was by no means the end of the opposition, as Alan Forrest shows.

43 Pascal Blanchard and Sandrine Lemaire, eds., *Culture coloniale. La France conquise par son empire, 1871–1931* [Colonial Culture: France Conquered by its Empire, 1871–1931] (Paris: Autrement, 2003).

44 Drayton, "The Globalization of France," 427.

control but also of an economy of privilege based on the temporary granting and withdrawal of special privileges and monopolies, precisely in order to counteract the independence of these profiteers of the Atlantic trade.⁴⁵ Taking this observation a step further, it would be quite inappropriate to assign the two contending elite groups to a single globalization project, as they maintained different aims and had varied concerns not only in the individual port cities but also between wholesalers and seafarers, as well as investors and adventurers.

The same can be said for the settlement efforts in the north of the Americas and the various missions active throughout. They can no more be assigned to a single and homogeneous French globalization project than the Huguenots expelled from France, who found themselves a part of a diaspora spread over almost the entire globe, the contours of which Susanne Lachenicht traces in detail in this volume. Lachenicht quite rightly emphasizes that it would be an inadmissible simplification to speak of one French globalization project in which the efforts of all metropolitan actors converge. Such a notion would project in a completely anachronistic way the steering capacity of the modern state onto the imperial policy of the crown in the seventeenth or eighteenth century.

Even for the present, the idea that the government can coordinate the intentions and actions of all actors is implausible. Moreover, such a perspective would neglect the co-constituting role of actors located outside the metropolis—whether they migrated there from France or they are indigenous peoples affected by the expansion of France.

With her focus on the Huguenot refuge, which spanned several continents, Lachenicht highlights the complication that arose for Franco-*mondialisation* with the confessional conflicts in France. In an expansion in which the mission of various religious orders and settler groups played such a large role—together with the sense of cultural superiority of the French over the indigenous peoples who were to be converted to Catholicism—the Protestant diaspora (including its English and Dutch allies) was often an additional obstacle that was overcome depending on local constellations.

The Universalism of French Enlightenment

The idea of a special role for French civilization gives French globalization projects a universalist claim and considerable coherence, impacting the attachment of many French to these projects. Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, who in this volume traces the development of this idea since the early eighteenth century, makes clear that it was itself a product of the

45 Drayton, 430.

intellectual controversies about France's historical and global positioning.⁴⁶ The debate over civilization, both as a state and a process,⁴⁷ considered the relationship to historical antecedents in Greek and Roman antiquity, to the long economic superiority of Asia, and to the indigenous peoples encountered by Frenchmen in their overseas land grabs. This, in the judgment of Régis Debray, gave the concept of civilization a dynamism that was lacking in the concept of culture, which tended to be fixed to a particular territory.⁴⁸ The invocation of a civilization (française) provided ideological legitimation and acted as a cultural companion to numerous French globalization projects, experiencing a culmination, not without a racist, social Darwinist, and Eurocentric charge, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The concept was deeply inscribed in the practices of many different actors involved in French globalization projects while proving remarkably resistant to the loss of political and economic power in the long term. Such involvement and resistance allowed the concept of civilization to repeatedly amalgamate with new constellations of hegemony—a process still recognizable up to this day.

The numerous efforts made during the second half of the eighteenth century to adapt trade taxation to the realities of the metropolitan-colonial economy reveal less a dominance of politics over economic actors and more the modification of central government policy to the requirements of the slowly emerging global economy. With the Compagnie des Indes Orientales (CIO), however, French mercantile capitalism was pushed back in favor of a more extractive strategy focused on territorial control, which became more widespread in the nineteenth century.⁴⁹ The interest in extractive strategies became a signature of important globalization projects undertaken by French economic elites until postcolonial times in Africa and in the Pacific, as Hubert Bonin shows in his analysis contributed to this volume.

The Seven Years' War opened a caesura for Franco-*mondialisation* in several respects. As a direct consequence of the war or in the subsequent decades, France lost or gradually relinquished control over numerous territories, and the allocation of authority between the crown and the CIO's *comptoirs* (trading posts) across the remaining territories was sporadic rather than systematic. Paradoxically, at the same moment, a kind of imperial consciousness emerged precisely from the late 1750s onwards in France for the first time, integrating the various globalization projects and leading to a significant increase

46 Susan Mokheri, *The Persian Mirror: Reflections of the Safavid Empire in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

47 Rahul Markovits, *Staging Civilization: A Transnational History of French Theater in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2021).

48 Régis Debray, *Civilisation. Comment nous sommes devenus américains* [Civilization: How We Became Americans] (Paris: Gallimard, 2017).

49 Markovits et al., "Une 'Franco-mondialisation' impériale?," 54.

in interest in the economic, political, and cultural fate of the colonies,⁵⁰ together with the growing presence of colonial goods being consumed by more and more French people. This was ensured by the flourishing trade as well as an almost even more rapidly expanding smuggling of the coveted goods from overseas to even the furthest province of France.⁵¹

The regulation of the *Exclusif* in trade with the Antilles and the similarly oriented privilege of the CIO were intended to secure state revenues that rose with the profits; however, such hopes were dashed when the American struggle for independence made it clear what explosive power the discontent among the colonists could lead to. The colonists in Saint-Domingue correspondingly became more self-confident and ensured that both the jurisdiction and the practice of the *Exclusif* were punctured. Nevertheless, major obstacles remained for a truly liberal handling of overseas trade, and there could be no question of a consistent transition to a largely unregulated trade, no matter how much some economists in France might have advocated it.⁵²

The inconsistency between the essentially mercantilist economic policy and liberal relaxation exercises became another feature of Franco-*mondialisation* in the last third of the eighteenth century. In this way, it was possible to defend or even expand one's position vis-à-vis global competitors, as protectionist measures were maintained or as demands for free trade were raised and realized, depending on the strength of the French actors involved. This flexible play with the instruments of foreign economic policy also benefited from the experiments undertaken by Étienne-François de Choiseul with alternatives to large-scale plantation economy, which was based on imported slave labor. In both Guyana and Madagascar, these experiments failed resoundingly. But they did show that Toussaint Louverture's efforts in Saint-Domingue after 1793 to introduce a new economic order based on the labor of small landowners could by no means be explained solely by the military necessities of decolonization.

The arc can be stretched much further. In France itself, too, a fierce dispute was going on about the relationship between large-scale agriculture and peasant smallholdings, which quite definitively determined the intervention of the peasants in the course of

50 Pernille Røge, *Economistes and the Reinvention of Empire: France in the Americas and in Africa, c. 1750–1802* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

51 Michael Kwass, *Louis Mandrin. La mondialisation de la contrebande au siècle des Lumières* [Louis Mandrin: The Globalization of Smuggling in the Age of Enlightenment] (Paris: Vendémiaire, 2016).

52 Jean Tarrade, *Le commerce colonial de la France à la fin de l'Ancien Régime. L'évolution du régime de l'Exclusif de 1763 à 1789* [France's Colonial Trade at the End of the Ancien Régime: The Evolution of the Exclusif Regime from 1763 to 1789], 2 vols. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1972); Paul Cheney, *Revolutionary Commerce: Globalization and the French Monarchy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

the revolution from the summer of 1789 onward.⁵³ Abolition and defeudalization in France were among the decisive caesuras of Franco-*mondialisation*, and they proved to be equally tough and long-lasting processes. Despite the initial enthusiasm for the decree of August 4, 1789, abolishing feudal rights, and for the abolition of slavery by the law of February 4, 1794, it still took more than half a century for these decisions to become irreversible.

The competition between the socioeconomic transformation to the profit of small-holders—accompanied by a strong egalitarian ideology deeply rooted in a widespread mentality—and one that privileges the owners of large portions of land able to mobilize large fortunes for investment (and running overseas plantations) became a characteristic of many French globalization projects that cannot be overlooked.⁵⁴

The wars of 1756–1763 and 1792–1815, being fought on different continents, led to a new type of global power projection for England as well as for France, Spain, and Portugal, becoming the impetus for the emergence of a fiscal-military power apparatus supported by a huge (and lasting) increase in taxes.⁵⁵ The fact that France initially tried to solve this increase through borrowing and public debt led directly to the final crisis of the ancien régime. Additionally, it prompted an interpretation of the Revolution of 1789 as an agreement among the elites to restructure state finances (at the expense of the church and the emigrant nobility, whose property was transformed into *biens nationaux* [national goods]) for a new round in the struggle with Britain for control over the still relatively slow and limited transregional interconnections.⁵⁶

But this history is also the history of intensified interest in the world,⁵⁷ which was surveyed and discussed by the intellectual movement of the Enlightenment with ency-

53 For a detailed account of these waves of peasant activism for a radical land redistribution policy, called *jacqueries*, see Anatoly V. Ado, *Paysans en Révolution. Terre, pouvoir et jacquerie 1789–1794* [Peasants in Revolution: Land, Power, and Jacquerie, 1789–1794] (Paris: Société des Etudes Robespierriennes, 1996).

54 An excellent summary of the respective historiography, see Marc Belissa, *La Révolution française et les colonies* [The French Revolution and the Colonies] (Paris: La fabrique, 2023).

55 Patrick K. O'Brien, *Fiscal and Financial Preconditions for the Rise of British Naval Hegemony 1485–1815* (London: Working Paper LSE Department of Economic History, 2005); Patrick K. O'Brien, *The Contributions of Warfare with Revolutionary and Napoleonic France to the Consolidation and Progress of the British Industrial Revolution* (London: Working Paper LSE, 2011); Benjamin W. D. Redding, *The English and French Navies, 1500–1650: Expansion, Organisation and State-Building* (New York: The Boydell Press, 2022).

56 Bailey Stone, *Reinterpreting the French Revolution: A Global-Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

57 Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink and Manfred Tietz, eds., *Lectures de Raynal. L'Histoire des deux Indes en Europe et en Amérique au XVIIIe siècle; actes du Colloque de Wolfenbüttel* [Readings of Raynal: The History of the Two Indies in Europe and America in the Eighteenth Century. Proceedings of the Wolfenbüttel Colloquium] (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1991); Courtney and Mander, eds., *Raynal's "Histoire des deux Indes"*; Ina Ulrike Paul, ed., *Weltwissen. Das Eigene und das Andere in enzyklopädischen Lexika des langen 18. Jahrhunderts* [World Knowledge: The Self and the Other in Encyclopedic Dictionaries of the Long Eighteenth Century] (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2020).

clopedic thoroughness. It is also the history of contact with the crisis of empires that stretched from Mughal India to British and Spanish America, fitting the French ancien régime into an intercontinental learning process.⁵⁸ And it is the history of dramatic tension between a recasting of globalization projects according to the yardstick of human rights and popular sovereignty, on the one hand, and the attempt to perpetuate the slavery-based plantation economy in the Caribbean, on the other hand.⁵⁹

The latter history includes the decline of French power in parts of the Caribbean (with islands remaining part of the French republic-empire up until the present day) and of North America did not mark the end of French globalization projects—quite on the contrary. Dependency on goods traded from overseas to French households became increasingly important and went far beyond the sphere of luxury items. French *colons* (colonists) in Guadeloupe, Martinique, and elsewhere remained engaged in the slave trade, which became quantitatively more important during large parts of the nineteenth century than ever before.⁶⁰ Napoleon Bonaparte's abolition of slavery meant that until the definitive abolition of slavery in 1848, on the initiative of Victor Schoelcher, a deputy from Martinique, some French globalization projects continued to be based on forced labor and the exploitation of slaves.⁶¹ Having looked more for political support in London during the Revolution,⁶² the *colons* were now again moving closer to the elites in Bourbon Restoration France and were satisfied with the support of their colonial practice that they received in exchange from the crown.

58 Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Par-delà l'incommensurabilité. Pour une histoire connectée des empires aux temps modernes" [Beyond Incommensurability: For a Connected History of Empires in Modern Times], *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, no. 5 (2007): 34–53; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Europe's India: Words, People, Empires, 1500–1800* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017).

59 David Armitage and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, eds., *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, c. 1760–1840* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Alan Forrest and Matthias Middell, eds., *The Routledge Companion to the French Revolution in World History* (London: Routledge, 2015).

60 William S. Cormack, *Patriots, Royalists, and Terrorists in the West Indies: The French Revolution in Martinique and Guadeloupe, 1789–1802* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019); Frédéric Régent, *Les maîtres de la Guadeloupe. Propriétaires d'esclaves 1635–1848* [The Masters of Guadeloupe: Owners of Slaves 1635–1818] (Paris: Tallandier, 2019). On the remarkable progress in the general history of slavery and slave-trade, see Michael Zeuske, *Handbuch Geschichte der Sklaverei. Eine Globalgeschichte von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* [Handbook History of Slavery: A Global History from the Beginnings to the Present] (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019); Damian Pargas and Juliane Schiel, eds., *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Slavery throughout History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023).

61 Marcel Dorigny and Bernard Gainot, eds., *La colonisation nouvelle (fin XVIIIe-début XIXe siècles)* [The New Colonization (from the End of the Eighteenth to the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century)] (Paris: Editions SPM, 2018).

62 Friedemann Pestel, *Kosmopoliten wider Willen. Die 'monarchiens' als Revolutionsemigranten* [Reluctant Cosmopolitans: The "Monarchiens" as Emigrés of the French Revolution] (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015); Matthijs Lok, Friedemann Pestel, and Juliette Reboul, eds., *Cosmopolitan Conservatism: Countering Revolution in Transnational Networks, Ideas and Movements (c. 1700–1930)* (Leiden: Brill, 2021).

A Caesura for French Globalization Projects

The Age of Revolutions, from the late 1770s to the 1820s, was by no means only a turning point in the history of the French metropole, nor was it only accompanied by a change in France's weight in the geopolitical confrontations of the time. Rather, it produced a new spatial format that allowed traditional imperial features to be combined with those of republicanism and the nation-state. In her contribution, Megan Maruschke presents the consequences that this new format had for a self-contradictory and at the same time obviously effective kind of governance at home and abroad. The nation-state-cum-empire format forced a permanent renegotiation of the criteria for citizenship⁶³ and the access that the inhabitants of the colonies could have to the resources of the metropolitan welfare state and the opportunities for participation in the republic.⁶⁴ The concepts of integration and assimilation, much discussed and repeatedly adapted over the course of time, determined the scope for globalization projects, if we only think of the recruitment of soldiers from the colonies for France's military conflicts, as well as the mobilization of labor force for industry and intellectual resources for science and education.

As Alan Forrest rightly points out in his contribution to this volume, the retirement from the central parts of the then emerging USA was by no means the end of France's transatlantic connections. Relations with the United States,⁶⁵ with which France fought side by side in World War I and World War II and with which it entered into a sometimes tense alliance during the Cold War and beyond, proved time and again to be central to France's positioning in the global political arena.

However, for the future of Franco-*mondialisation* especially the loss of Saint-Domingue and the sale of Louisiana were insofar of particular importance, as there was an almost complete geopolitical realignment of the French colonial expansion. Individual outposts in Asia, the Indies, and the Pacific became the basis of a new colonial empire that began to take shape in North Africa following Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt 1798 and the growing interest in the Alger region since the 1760s, dealt with by Ian Collier and Pierre Vermeren in this volume.

63 Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945–1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); as a case study demonstrating the ongoing conflict, see Laurent Dubois, *Soccer Empire: The World Cup and the Future of France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

64 Nicolas Bancel, Pascal Blanchard, and Françoise Vergès, *La république coloniale. Essai sur une utopie* [The Colonial Republic: Essay on a Utopia] (Paris: Albin Michel, 2003).

65 On the beginnings of this long-lasting relationship, see Marcel Dorigny and M. J. Rossignol, eds., *La France et les Amériques au temps de Jefferson et de Miranda* [France and the Americas at the Times of Jefferson and Miranda] (Paris: Société des Etudes robespierristes, 2011).

Over a comparatively long period of time in the first half of the nineteenth century, the conditions for globalization projects in general and for the French in particular changed considerably. A whole cascade of technological innovations, commonly summarized under the term *industrial revolution*, ensured not only the transition to the dominance of fossil energy sources but primarily a profound change in transport and communication. These enabled the much closer integration of regional markets, which had previously only been associated with relatively small quantities of the exchange of goods, which were therefore regarded as luxury goods and were correspondingly expensive.

The transit times between the continents for goods, people, and, above all, information were dramatically reduced by steamship and telegraph, in some cases to just a few hours, which made speculation on economic developments in other parts of the world an attractive business and spurred the stock exchanges and the financial capital that grew with them to look for worthwhile investments worldwide. At the same time, the number of goods that were eligible for external investment grew. Globalization projects were continued, others were taken up, but the fundamental conditions changed radically. Something that we can call the global condition⁶⁶ emerged in a relatively short period of time and in fact forced all societies to engage in a steadily and sometimes abruptly intensifying division of labor and the resulting interaction. These interactions were anything but symmetrical, but they did greatly influence all the societies involved, which took on an increasingly transnational character precisely at the moment when they developed and made explicit their national characteristics.⁶⁷

In his chapter on French banking, Bonin describes how Paris developed into an attractive location for leading European bankers from 1810 onwards, who moved to the Seine from Frankfurt, Milan, and numerous banking centers in Switzerland. They brought with them extensive experience of the various financial practices from Great Britain and mainland Europe, enabling them to manage the risk of the various investments (particularly in the infrastructure projects of the railroads, ports and canals, and mines) and to find their way in an increasingly fast-growing global economy. Rothschild, Perier, and Mirabaud secured the necessary information density for future globalization projects during the extensive travels of the next generation through the establishment of numerous friendly banking companies and the help of employed

66 Michael Geyer and Charles Bright, "For a Unified History of the World in the Twentieth Century," *Radical History Review* 39 (1987): 69–91.

67 An excellent overview of the current state of the art is given in Nicolas Delalande and Stephen S. Sawyer, "La fabrique transnationale de l'État. Nouveaux regards sur une "exception" française" [The Transnational Production of the State: New Aspects of a French "Exception"], in *D'ici et ailleurs. Histoire globales de la France contemporaine*, ed. Quentin Deluermoz (Paris: La Découverte, 2002), 175–206; see also Jean-Numa Ducange, Silyane Larcher, and Stephen W. Sawyer, "La République multiple. Une histoire transnationale et globale" [The Multiple Republic: A Transnational and Global History], in *D'ici et ailleurs. Histoire globales de la France contemporaine*, ed. Quentin Deluermoz (Paris: La Découverte, 2021), 247–284.

specialists, facilitated, above all, by extensive and intensive correspondence. Initially, this network was mainly concentrated in the Rhine region and southern Europe, which became the training ground for the expansion of business from around 1860, while the presence of French banking houses in the Americas and the Baltic region was rather limited. After 1850, companies such as the Société lyonnaise des eaux et de l'éclairage used the experience of the French financial sector to build public infrastructures through subsidiaries and sister companies in Russia, China, and the Ottoman Empire and successfully expanded across the globe. The expansion of colonial infrastructures after 1880 followed on seamlessly from this and deepened the specialization of the French business elite.

After the sale of Louisiana and the partial withdrawal from North America, the French globalization projects were characterized by a fundamental geopolitical reorientation. Instead of focusing on the so-called New World, France's elites now cast their gaze on the Mediterranean region, for which the extensive field research of the scientists mobilized by Napoleon in the direction of Egypt laid the foundation.⁶⁸ This discovery of a new direction of expansion did not cease with the end of the Napoleonic Empire, but was vigorously continued under the Bourbons⁶⁹ and extended from North Africa towards Greece, among other places, finally culminating in the expedition to Algiers in 1830, which became the starting point for many years of colonization, which Vermeren differentiates in his two chapters on Algeria in this volume, presenting the long-lasting consequences for France's positioning strategies even in the second half of the twentieth century.⁷⁰

68 Anne Godlewska, *The Napoleonic Survey of Egypt: A Masterpiece of Cartographic Compilation and Early Nineteenth-Century Fieldwork* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988).

69 Tamar Sarfatti, *The Description of Egypt from Napoleon to Champollion* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022).

70 The Algerian chapter of French globalization projects has attracted particular attention among scholars from very different strands of interest: Hélène Blais, Claire Fredj, Emmanuelle Saada, eds., "L'Algérie au XIXe siècle" [Algeria in the Nineteenth Century], *Revue d'histoire du XIXe siècle*, special issue, no. 41 (2010); Abderrahmane Bouchène, Gilbert Meynier, and Tahar Khalfoune, eds., *Histoire de l'Algérie à la période coloniale, 1830–1962* [History of Algeria during the Colonial Period, 1830–1962] (Paris: La Découverte, 2014); Megan Brown, *The Seventh Member State: Algeria, France, and the European Community* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2022).

French Globalization Projects under the Global Condition

Following the failure to expand into the southern part of Latin America⁷¹ and the attempt by Napoleon III to gain a foothold in Mexico,⁷² the new direction of French colonial expansionism was Africa and Asia rather than the Americas,⁷³ while both North and South America remained zones of cultural exchange.⁷⁴

In this volume, Robert Aldrich provides an overview of the vast space that was opened up in the Indo-Pacific—in a sometimes orchestrated and coordinated and sometimes rather chaotic competition with other colonial powers.⁷⁵ Aldrich makes it particularly clear that this geopolitical reorientation by no means met with general approval as we can see from the publication by the geographer Onésime Reclus from 1904, which postulated: “Lâchons l’Asie, prenons l’Afrique” (Let Us Drop Asia, Let Us Take Africa). However, entrepreneurs, military leaders and scientists ultimately prevailed with their expansionist project, which was aimed at an area that was characterized not only by its sheer size and its great distance from the western edge of the Eurasian landmass, but also by its enormous heterogeneity. It was therefore initially more a matter of linking trade posts and forging alliances with indigenous rulers and other imperialists. This was done not least with the aim of gaining access to the resources of China and Japan and at the same time penetrating the space with the presence of French culture. The concept of grandeur, which had to be maintained and expanded even in what was still unfamiliar territory, was used to build a bridge to earlier globalization projects aimed at other continents and seas. This also made it possible to give a common direction to the interests of very different actors, elites, and ordinary people, welcoming or even forcing their institutionalization.

Yasmine Najm, on the other hand, traces the expansion into Southeast Asia during the nineteenth century on the basis of reporting in the *Courrier de Saigon*, which was founded in 1864 as the official journal of the French colonial government in Cochinchina, in order to repeatedly justify the cause of colonial expansion vis-à-vis the metropole and to promote its continuation with additional arguments. She makes it clear that this globalization project was by no means born out of nothing, but rather followed

71 Edward Shawcross, “When Montevideo Was French: European Civilization and French Imperial Ambitions in the River Plate, 1838–52,” *European History Quarterly* 45, no. 4 (2015): 638–661.

72 David Pruonto, *Das Mexikanische Kaiserreich. Ein französisches Kolonialabenteuer?* [The Mexican Empire: A French Colonial Adventure?] (Bochum: Winkler, 2017).

73 Robert Aldrich, *Greater France: A History of French Overseas Expansion* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996); Alice L. Conklin, Sarah Fishman, and Robert Zaretsky, eds., *France and Its Empire, 1870 to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

74 Charle, *La crise des sociétés impériales*.

75 Bert Becker, *France and Germany in the South China Sea, c. 1840–1930: Maritime Competition and Imperial Power* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021).

on from a 300-year-old missionary tradition in what later became Indochina. The *Courrier de Saigon* proves to be an excellent source for the analysis of French globalization projects in Southeast Asia, as well as an instrument in that it gave a state-authenticated coherence to the multitude of efforts to increase French influence in the region.

The relocation of the globalization project run by *colons* was accompanied by the development of a new apparatus of knowledge about the colonies and their administration,⁷⁶ while republicanization at home and colonization in other parts of the French Empire became increasingly strained.⁷⁷ The concepts of integration and assimilation, which were heatedly debated in the Third Republic, added new and long-acting patterns to the hitherto known methods for control and interdependence, which developed model effects for comparable constellations.

To study the many French interventions in the competition for the most effective project to gain control over a relevant portion of the world does not mean to perpetuate a long-lost political power duopoly of the late eighteenth century. It is evident that the story of France's engagement with other parts of the world did not end at Waterloo, finding continuation in the colonialism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries⁷⁸ as well as France's postcolonial presence in many of the world's current conflict zones, from the Indo-Pacific to the Sahel. But France and Britain were not alone in this attempt to build large colonial empires, and with the number of colonial powers increasing the points of dispute over claimed territories grew at the same pace as the need for coordination between these colonial powers, as the Berlin Conference on Africa shows perhaps in the most striking way.⁷⁹ But what holds true for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can also be for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Those steering colonial expansion, from military people and private adventures to the state to church administrations and from settlers to merchants to cultural elites, only made up a part of those actors pursuing French globalization projects.

76 Pierre Singaravélou, *L'École française d'Extrême-Orient ou L'institution des marges (1898–1956): Essai d'histoire sociale et politique de la science coloniale* [The French School of the Far East or The Institution of the Margins (1898–1956): Essay on the Social and Political History of Colonial Science] (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1999).

77 David Todd, *A Velvet Empire: French Informal Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021).

78 Blanchard and Lemaire, eds., *Culture coloniale*.

79 Stig Förster, Wolfgang J. Mommsen, and Ronald Robinson, eds., *Bismarck, Europe, and Africa: The Berlin Africa Conference 1884–1885 and the Onset of Partition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Christine de Gemeaux and Amaury Lorin, eds., *L'Europe coloniale et le grand tournant de la Conférence de Berlin. 1884–1885* [Colonial Europe and the Great Turning Point of the Berlin Conference: 1884–1885] (Paris: Ed. le Manuscrit, 2014).

It almost goes without saying that colonial expansion has attracted particular attention from researchers interested in French globalization projects.⁸⁰ And indeed, globalization projects (strictly speaking up to the present day and thus long after decolonization⁸¹) cannot be meaningfully analyzed without considering the colonial experience and ambition.⁸² In this volume, Damien Tricoire explores the connection between colonialism and the Enlightenment, which raises the question of the extent to which the foundations of European modernity can be separated from this very experience of colonialism.

The connection between colonialism and knowledge production for globalization projects has been intensively researched in recent years, including the establishment of special institutions that collected and systematized knowledge about distant territories and fed it back to the administrators of the colonies as colonial science.⁸³ The case of colonial medicine is particularly interesting because the interplay of experiences in the colonies with scientific breakthroughs in the metropolis is intricate and discernible, so that Aro Velmet could speak of Pasteur's Empire.⁸⁴ While this case, as with the economic exploitation of the colonies⁸⁵ and the military use of the inhabitants of the colonies

80 Martin Thomas, ed., *The French Colonial Mind*, vols. 1 and 2 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011); Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *Histoire de la France coloniale* [History of Colonial France] (Paris: Pocket, 1996).

81 Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel, and Sandrine Lemaire, *La fracture coloniale. La société française au prisme de l'héritage colonial* [The Colonial Divide: The French Society through the Prism of Colonial Heritage] (Paris: La Découverte, 2005).

82 Robert Aldrich, "The French Overseas Empire and Its Contemporary Legacy," *European History Quarterly* 40, no. 1 (2010): 97–108; Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *Enjeux politiques de l'histoire coloniale* [Political Issues of Colonial History] (Marseille: Agone, 2009).

83 Romain Bertrand, "Les sciences sociales et le 'moment colonial'. De la problématique de la domination coloniale à celle de l'hégémonie impériale" [The Social Sciences and the "Colonial Moment": From the Problem of Colonial Dominance to the One of Imperial Hegemony], *Questions de recherche*, no. 18 (2006); Pierre Singaravélou, ed., *L'empire des géographes. Géographie, exploration et colonisation, XIXe-XXe siècle: actes du colloque, Bordeaux, Maison des sciences de l'homme d'Aquitaine, 13–15 octobre 2005* [The Empire of Geographers: Geography, Exploration, and Colonization. Proceedings of the Colloquium in Bordeaux at the Maison des sciences de l'homme d'Aquitaine, October 13–15, 2005] (Paris: Belin, 2008); Pierre Singaravélou, *Professer l'Empire. Les "sciences coloniales" en France sous la IIIe République* [Professing the Empire: The "Colonial Studies" in France under the Third Republic] (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2011); Thomas Bernon, "La science des races: la Société Ethnologique de Paris et le tournant colonial (1839–1848)" [Race Studies: The Ethnological Society Paris and the Colonial Turn (1839–1848)], *La Révolution française*, no. 15 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.4000/lrf.2448>.

84 Aro Velmet, *Pasteur's Empire: Bacteriology and Politics in France, Its Colonies, and the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020); for the second half of the twentieth century, see also Jessica Lynne Pearson, *The Colonial Politics of Global Health: France and the United Nations in Postwar Africa* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018).

85 Bouda Etemad, *De l'utilité des empires. Colonisation et prospérité de l'Europe* [The Usefulness of Empires: Colonization and Prosperity in Europe] (Paris: Armand Colin, 2005); see also the critical assessment

in the French army, very clearly points to the power asymmetry of the underlying globalization projects, such projects were entangled with others especially at times of war,⁸⁶ and there are also opposing projects that were dedicated to supporting the colonized in their struggle for liberation and independence, that aimed at the cultural emancipation of the colonized, and that chose a socialist vision of solidarity among the exploited as their starting point.

The defeat of Nazi Germany in 1940 by no means meant the end of imperial ambitions or of French globalization projects, as Rachel Chin shows in her contribution to this volume. However, these ambitions were now articulated and advanced by the Vichy regime of Marshal Pétain and the Committee for a Free France under Charles de Gaulle, who vied for influence over France's remaining colonial possessions. One relied on the alliance with Germany, the other on its anchoring in the alliance with Great Britain and its presence in North Africa. If in 1939 the huge empire had given hope of winning the struggle with Germany, after 1940 it served as an inspiration and resource for an early re-establishment of French grandeur, in a sense as a deep hinterland in which the German advance could be exhausted and halted. It was above all the support from the African colonies that gave de Gaulle a de facto legitimacy for his Free France movement, and it is hardly an exaggeration to say that between 1940 and 1943 the continued existence of French globalization projects depended essentially and in a much more fundamental way than at any other time in French history on developments in the colonies. This also shaped the visions of France's re-emergence as a global power since the Normandy landings in 1944. The idea was firmly anchored in the public consciousness that only as an imperial nation-state could France once again play a leading role in the global game of powers. The elaboration of French globalization projects entered a new round.

However, these globalization projects now also encountered a heightened sense of the new possibilities of the administrators, elites, and populations in the colonies, as the experience of France's existence dependence on support from Africa had not passed them by without a trace. The Brazzaville Conference in January 1944, organized by the Provisional Government of the French Republic, had reinforced the conviction that the empire would not survive without far-reaching reform. Nicolas Bancel shows the complicated paths to decolonization and makes it clear that the complexity of the situation at the end of the war meant that the previously prevailing principle of self-financing of the colonies had to be broken, and, paradoxically, emancipation from colonial dependence

of the argument in Jean-Charles Asselain, "Fortunes coloniales" [Colonial Fortunes], *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, no. 5 (2007): 90–103; Hubert Bonin, Catherine Hodeir, and Jean-François Klein, eds., *L'esprit économique impérial (1870–1970): Groupes de pression et réseaux du patronat colonial en France et dans l'empire* [The Imperial Economic Spirit (1870–1970): Pressure Groups and Networks of Colonial Entrepreneurs in France and the Empire] (Paris: Société française d'histoire d'outre-mer, 2008).

86 Elizabeth Stice, *Empire between the Lines: Imperial Culture in British and French Trench Newspapers of the Great War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2023).

necessitated closer ties with the former colonial metropole. This new context gave birth to new globalization projects, which Silke Mende reports on in her reconstruction of Francophonie, which was by no means aimed solely at the preservation and dissemination of the French language, but rather provided the framework for a whole range of intercontinental alliances that saw the light of day in the course of the second half of the twentieth century. The community of French speakers soon also manifested itself as an international organization and as an alliance of francophone elites in North America, Southeast Asia, North Africa, and parts of sub-Saharan Africa.

Jena-Numa Ducange, who coordinated a global history of socialisms elsewhere,⁸⁷ approaches the problem of alternative globalization projects from another angle and tells the story of French participation in socialist counterprojects, and Gillian Glaes looks—from below—at the solidarity of workers from the metropolis and colonies in French industry in the 1960s as an actual counterproject to the transnational alliance of entrepreneurs. Thomas Höpel discusses the long history of feminism as a globalization project with concrete roots in the history of French emancipation.⁸⁸

These examples alone show that the colonization of territories outside *l'Hexagone* was not the only globalization project that people from France pursued. The examples of the Enlightenment, the pursuit of cultural hegemony, the expansion of economic networks, or the struggle for recognition of one's own scientific and technological solutions to global problems show that there were different actors and motivations that led to such projects. The effort to make the French capital a globally recognized center of cultural production, scientific knowledge, and of social theories that went hand in hand with architectural efforts⁸⁹ resulted in the mobilization of resources (of the whole country and its colonies) and the attraction of the best minds (as students, artists, or researchers). Charle has impressively demonstrated this centering on Paris, especially in the period before World War I,⁹⁰ and declared it (in the synthesis of his exceptionally broad research

87 Jean-Numa Ducange, Razmig Keucheyan, and Stéphanie Roza, eds., *Histoire globale des socialismes, xixe–xxie siècle* [A Global History of Socialisms, Nineteenth to Twenty-First Century] (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2021).

88 See also the much debated book by Robin Mitchell, *Vénus Noire: Black Women and Colonial Fantasies in Nineteenth-Century France* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2020).

89 On the transformations that happened to the meaning of buildings, see Gwendolin Lübbecke, *Die "Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration" im Palais de la Porte Dorée. Transformationen eines Kolonialpalastes von der "Exposition coloniale" 1931 bis heute* [The "Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration" in the Palais de la Porte Dorée: Transformations of a Colonial Palace from the Colonial Exposition of 1931 to the Present] (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2020).

90 Christophe Charle, *Paris, "capitales" des XIXe siècles* [Paris, "Capitals" of the Nineteenth Centuries] (Paris: Seuil, 2021); the global dimension is focused in Michael Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Thomas Brisson, "Paris capitale intellectuelle des Arabes?" [Paris, Intellectual Capital of the Arabs?], in *La vie intellectuelle en France*, vol. 2, eds. Christophe Charle and Jeanpierre Laurent (Paris: Seuil, 2016), 819–822.

in this volume) to be a general feature of what he calls imperial societies. In the university city on the southern outskirts of Paris, with its arrangement of buildings dedicated to different countries and regions of the world, and in the intense transculturalism of campus life, this claim of a metropolis of global significance is manifested, in which the future of the planet is (co)decided intellectually.⁹¹ This is seconded by a specifically French tradition of cultural policy, presented by Thomas Höpel in this volume and which, on the one hand, had an inspiring effect on the manifestations of cultural policy in many other parts of the world but which, on the other hand, was also subject to adaptation to the strategies and practices of other cultural policies due to the universality of its claim. Kathleen Schlütter uses the policies over recent decades regarding higher education to show processes that point in the same direction when the proclaimed universalism of specific solutions meets global competition in which French educational elites want to assert themselves. The various examples show a more general connection that has steadily intensified in the second half of the twentieth century. The universalist legitimization of French globalization projects faces the shrinking possibilities for action and diminishing resources, which force alliances with other globalization projects and in the process cause the paradox of particularist universalism to falter more and more.⁹²

However, as Therese Mager shows in her chapter, this does not mean that the idea has already been abandoned that the “particular” is the “general.” Although right-wing populism is opposed to a vaguely defined globalism, it is simultaneously pursuing a specific globalization project that even refers to its French character in a particularly explicit way while at the same time entering into alliances with other projects (even if it is Putin’s neo-imperialism). This contrasts with the effort to demonstrate a renewed capacity for international action with a simultaneously European and transatlantic alliance and a commitment in various regions from the Middle East to the Pacific, whereas the French presence in the Sahel and West Africa is coming under increasing criticism from the populations and (new) governments of these regions. The situation for French globalization projects has undoubtedly not become any easier in the mid-2020s. But that in no way means that they have been discarded. On the contrary, they are once again undergoing change. However, as this volume shows, this is not an entirely

91 Guy Berthiaume, ed., *La Cité internationale universitaire de Paris. 75 ans d'évolution* [The Cité internationale universitaire in Paris: 75 Years of Development] (Paris: MEC, 2001); Dzovinar Kévonian and Guillaume Tronchet, eds., *La Babel étudiante. La Cité internationale universitaire de Paris (1920–1950)* [The Student Babel: The Cité internationale universitaire of Paris (1920–1950)] (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2013); Dzovinar Kévonian and Guillaume Tronchet, eds., *Le Campus-monde. La Cité internationale universitaire de Paris de 1945 aux années 2000* [The World Campus: The Cité internationale universitaire of Paris from 1945 to the 2000s] (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2022).

92 Markus Messling, *Universalität nach dem Universalismus. Über frankophone Literaturen der Gegenwart* [Universality after the Universalism: On Francophone Literature of Our Times] (Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, 2019); Franck Hofmann and Markus Messling, eds., *The Epoch of Universalism 1769–1989/L'époque de l'universalisme* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021).

new situation. In fact, the constant need to adapt to changing coordinates is a defining characteristic of globalization projects, at least in modern history and especially under the global condition.

Interim Conclusion

As a kind of preliminary interim conclusion, it can firstly be stated that globalization projects are presented and communicated with a universalistic claim that tends to refer to the entire globe but that the individual globalization projects are each aimed at globalizing a (geographically more narrowly tailored) specific “world.” “Globalization” does not mean that an evenly and fairly networked world was created for the benefit of all, but rather that this networking served the interests of the main sponsors of this globalization project and by no means the interests of all participants to the same extent.

The French settlers who set off for North America opened up new lands for themselves, which had often been denied them at home, and cultivated close contacts with the inhabitants of the land they claimed. These interactions were usually without alternative, as the settlements were far from viable on their own and the links back to France were far too tenuous, protracted, and uncertain to establish such viability. This is not to mention the need to fend off competition from other settlers and to gain indigenous support for this as well. It was no coincidence that British colonists spoke of the French and Indian Wars, which dragged on for decades and worked for a long time against the establishment of absolute supremacy. Only towards the end of the conflicts, which had been ongoing since the late seventeenth century, was the outcome clear and led French commentators (and later their Canadian colleagues) to refer to the wars as *guerre de conquête* (wars of conquest), which cost control over a contiguous settlement area from the Ohio Valley to Acadia. The serious geopolitical realignments of the French globalization projects, discussed in detail in this volume, demonstrate that we must narrow the geography with which these projects sought to globalize changing parts of the planet.

Secondly, globalization projects cannot be viewed in isolation but must be analyzed in the context of competing projects. Looking solely at the duopoly of political power of the British and French in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries fails to grasp the complexity of the simultaneity of other globalization projects—such as those of the Russians, Spanish, and Portuguese as well as the Chinese, Indians, and Japanese, including many other actors. The Seven Years’ War, which was fought in many different theaters, is an impressive example of the need to coordinate such projects, which clashed with numerous competitors in places such as the North American coastal regions and prairies and had to be pursued in different locations around the globe at the same time. Foreign policy-makers and the owners of large trading houses took on these coordination tasks with relatively modest means, if we compare the knowledge and

personnel resources available to them with the rapidly growing apparatuses of the relevant foreign and war ministries, banks, and internationally active companies in the nineteenth century, as well as the rapidly multiplying and expanding institutions of knowledge production. The marriage of imperialism and colonialism between the 1870s and the 1940s bears witness to the competition between globalization projects, as well as to their division of labor in controlling territories and resources that could not be mastered alone, but required mutual learning.

Here, too, the Seven Years' War is noteworthy as a caesura, in which England initially undertook a fundamental transformation towards a fiscal-military state for the competition fought on many of the world's oceans. Even at the end of the war, the massive increase in the tax rate, which was used to finance the expansion of the Royal Navy, was not reversed. In all other European empires, a period of more or less successful reform attempts followed in order to achieve a comparable mobilization of resources for the next phase of competition for global expansion. As is well known, this led to the final crisis of the *ancien régime* in France, which failed to persuade the first two estates to participate in the tax revenue. When the credit from the Geneva bankers was exhausted, there was nothing left but a fundamental social reorganization, which released the church estates and part of the feudal landholdings for sale as *biens nationaux*, thus improving the financial basis for successful warfare in the short term and considerably broadening the basis of taxation in the long term.

The Revolution of 1789 was undoubtedly more than a simple restructuring of the tax base for a globalization project in crisis, as planned and pursued by the various ministers of Louis XVI. It is also undeniable that the Revolution represented an impressive response to the British challenge and led to comparable patterns of a fiscal-military state under Napoleon. The use of settler groups, missionaries, and other diasporic groups for a globalization project that often spanned long distances as a loose network without effective communication was, like the efforts to coordinate the many theaters of this project, shaped by the self-reflective experiences of this globalization project as well as by the observation of competing projects.

The territorialization of globalization projects undoubtedly progressed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but this process nevertheless remained unfinished and suffered from additional stress during the Age of Decolonization, which was not synchronous. Further technological advances in transport and communication did not eliminate the fundamental fragmentation of the world that every globalization project had to deal with.

Thirdly, a fundamental change can be observed in spatial patterns between the globalization projects up to the end of the eighteenth century and those that followed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The conditions of emergence of the French globalization projects described above (but not only those) resulted in a diversity of settings and a widespread lack of central coordination, which the French crown was unable to achieve despite its sometimes explicit claims to control. Actors were able to

evade attempts at such control in very different ways—by buying offices that enabled privileges over the general regulations, by smuggling and inventive accounting, through international alliances with financiers, or simply by migrating to areas that did not belong to the territory of the respective empire. As a result, the early globalization projects were based on networks rather than territorialized societies. These networks have their reference points in France, as the crisis of the *colons* in 1790 shows, but their members are not necessarily bound to France by political loyalty, as the extensive network of Huguenot communities after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes impressively demonstrates, as does the behavior of the émigrés and the planters during the revolutionary period. In the second wave of colonization, the development of the territories through new infrastructures and more efficient enforcement of legislation was more successful, but it repeatedly came up against inherent contradictions because the prevailing spatial format of the nation-state-cum-empire wanted to prevent the legal equality of all inhabitants as citizens at all costs. Counterdrafts of a fundamental equality of all participants in a globalization project, such as those on which the socialists' drafts of an international community were based, soon failed in the lowlands of nationalism and (in the case of the Communist International) due to the hegemonic claims of Joseph Stalin's Soviet Union.

Fourthly, by observing the spatial patterns of globalization projects, conclusions can also be drawn about their social and cultural history. If we consider a globalization project to be French, we arrive at this assessment because the key players cite "France" as the most important reference point in the justification of their actions. In this way, they designate their own origin or the legitimization of their actions for the benefits of this community, regardless of whether this refers to the state, a territory, a society, or a nation. This reference remains vague and can also change over time. However, it is undisputed that a French globalization project (or any other project based on such a territorial container) involves significantly more actors than those from France. No globalization project could succeed or even be conceived as such if it did not take into account the participation of actors other than the members of its own community. This is quite obvious in the case of colonialism and the imperial expansion associated with it, but, of course, it also applies to the economic or cultural networks that undertake or plan to "globalize" a certain part of the world or at least develop effective discourses about it. This presents a substantial task of taking up further research on globalization projects, such as the French, to actually empirically trace these networks and spheres of influence and not to limit oneself to those elites who, with the help of their globalization project, try to gain control over that part of the world whose exploitation is in their interest.

The history of globalization projects anchored in France thus goes back a long way, encompassing multiple strands. Exploring such projects is also based on a very recent trend: the growing interest in "Global France" and "Global French." After the period of deep mistrust of the globalization paradigm, which was interpreted as an offshoot

of an American quest for cultural hegemony, French historiography has recalled its tradition of interest in world history, with some historians tracing such efforts back to Montesquieu and Denis Diderot and others pointing to the Annales school and Fernand Braudel. Regardless of how far back this tradition goes, it should be noted that the generation of historians born around 1970 have revived the interest in global contexts of French history in the country.

However, these academics are no longer the sole experts of this investigation, even if direct access to archives from Aix-en-Provence to Vincennes is an invaluable locational advantage. There has been a significant change in the historiographical weather because France, along with its colonial expansion, has been so central to the history of globalization, attracting the interest of global, imperial, and colonial historians around the world and becoming the subject of more comprehensive comparisons.

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Huguenots and Their Global Distribution

Introduction

Global and *globalization* are fashionable terms. Today, every historical subject that claims to be of some importance comes as global or as having contributed to the historical process(es) of globalization. This is certainly also true for some themes in early modern history. There have been substantial discussions whether Europe's imperial expansion, colonization, and the increasing interconnectedness of worlds and peoples in the early modern period should be framed in terms of globalization.¹ Together with other scholars, historians Christopher Bayly and Jürgen Osterhammel have described the early modern period as a time of accelerated globalization, as the first "global age."² According to these scholars, the expansion of European and non-European empires triggered a degree of interconnectedness not known before the 1500s. For these increasing interconnections, historians such as Jonathan Israel have emphasized the role of early modern global diasporas, such as Sephardi Jews.³

This contribution inquires into the global distribution of another early modern diaspora, that of French Protestants, or Huguenots. It looks into their active and passive roles in what the editors have dubbed France's globalization project. In the second half of the sixteenth century, French Calvinists served France's discoveries⁴ of the New

1 See, e. g., Reinhard Wendt, *Vom Kolonialismus zur Globalisierung. Europa und die Welt seit 1500* [From Colonialism to Globalization: Europe and the World since 1500] (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2007).

2 Christopher A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World: 1780–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Jürgen Osterhammel and Niels P. Petersson, *Geschichte der Globalisierung. Dimensionen, Prozesse, Epochen* [History of Globalization: Dimensions, Processes, and Epochs] (Munich: Beck, 2003); André Gunder Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); J. R. McNeill and William H. McNeill, *The Human Web: A Bird's-Eye View of World History* (New York: Norton and Company, 2003). See also Pim de Zwart, *Globalization and the Colonial Origins of the Great Divergence* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

3 Jonathan Israel, *Diasporas within a Diaspora: Jews, Crypto-Jews and the World Maritime Empire, 1540–1740* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

4 On the problems of the terms *discovery/discoveries*, see Edmundo O'Gorman, *The Invention of America: An Inquiry into the Historical Nature of the New World and the Meaning of Its History* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1972); see also Susanne Lachenicht, "How the Americas Came to Be Known as 'the Americas': A Historical Approach to the Western Hemisphere," in *Cultural Mobility and Knowledge Formation in the Americas*, eds. Volker Depkat and Britta Waldschmidt-Nelson (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2019), 13–29.

World and French expansionist endeavors. From the 1550s, especially after 1685, with the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, many Huguenots fled their *patria* (homelands) and resettled in England, Ireland, and the Dutch Republic, including their overseas colonies in the Caribbean, North America, South Africa, and the northeastern parts of South America. They also fled to Protestant territories within the Holy Roman Empire; to Scandinavia; and, from the early eighteenth century, to Russian Saint Petersburg. Strictly speaking, these *réfugiés* (refugees) then acted outside what the editors call the French globalization project. However, can we speak of *a* or *the* French globalization project for the early modern period? If we understand globalization projects as attempts to discover, conquer, colonize, inhabit, and control new worlds and if these attempts increased mobility and interconnections, was there *one* French globalization project or were there several ones? More generally, can these projects be national ones, as the term *French* suggests? Or are these projects always transnational, especially in their effects?⁵ For this chapter, the questions therefore are: Did the Huguenots' global distribution and the networks they formed—internal and external, weak and strong ties—serve French or French Protestant interests, or also Protestant empire-building, as much as commerce and trade did? Did all of this distribution and networking enhance global connections and interactions far beyond French interests? And, at the same time, did this serve the French imperial state as well?

This chapter will analyze how the Huguenots' transnational networks linked people, goods, and knowledge within and outside their diaspora, as well as which actors within this so-called global diaspora enhanced processes of interconnection and which actors did not. This chapter will also investigate for whom these networks served, voluntarily and non-voluntarily. Against the background of some general remarks on the actors in Europe's early modern expansion and the role played by France and French actors, the chapter will then assess more generally the role of diasporas in early modern processes of increasing interconnections. It will then provide insights into the distribution of Huguenots between the mid-sixteenth and late eighteenth centuries, before it inquires into Huguenot networks and their specific French Protestant endeavors to discover, conquer, and subdue old and new worlds, spiritual and worldly ones. I will do so through three axes: (1) imperial endeavors and colonization; (2) commerce and trade; and (3) the refuge, in relation to the Huguenot self-fashioning as *le refuge* (religious diaspora) and French Reformed nation.

5 On the term *transnational* and its use for the early modern period, see Bartolomé Yun Casalilla, "Transnational History: What Lies Behind the Label? Some Reflections from the Early Modernist's Point of View," *Culture and History Digital Journal* 3, no. 2 (2014): 1–7; Susanne Lachenicht, "Early Modern Diasporas as Transnational Nations: The Examples of Sephardi Jews and Huguenots," *Yearbook of Transnational History* 5 (2022): 41–72; Volker Depkat and Susanne Lachenicht, "Nations, Nationalism, and Transnationalism Revisited," *Yearbook of Transnational History* 5 (2022): 1–39.

European Expansion and Its French Actors

As mentioned above, historians Bayly and Osterhammel have emphasized the global connections and globalization within the early modern period, particularly in the realm of finances—for example, the silver trade in the sixteenth century—or trade and commerce at large from the mid-eighteenth century onward.⁶ Not only European imperial states but also actors within the Indian Ocean or Chinese worlds enhanced connections and entangledness at a global scale.⁷ From a more Eurocentric perspective, historians of the Atlantic World, together with proponents of postcolonial studies, have emphasized how European expansion, that is to say imperial endeavors and colonialism, furthered the voluntary and involuntary mobility and interconnections of regions, localities, finances, institutions, humans and nonhumans, knowledge, and the production, distribution, and consumption of goods.

Among the voluntary and involuntary actors of increasing interconnectedness, we find imperial states and their institutions; conquistadors and private venturers; trading companies; the Catholic Church and its religious orders; Protestant churches and their missionary arms; and migrants, including voluntary migrants, religious refugees, enslaved people, and indentured servants. Seamen, soldiers, maroons, privateers and pirates, smugglers, scientists, indigenous nations, and producers and consumers of goods, as well as authors, producers, and readers of encyclopedias, maps, dictionaries, and natural histories, were active in forging new links within and between metropolitan and colonial spaces and in the so-called hinterlands or backcountry. This process of protoglobalization or early phase of globalization also had nonhuman actors: pathogens, plants, animals, and others.

While these many actors enhanced interconnectedness and what we might today dub globalization, their intentions were more complex or even contradictory to their effects. Imperial, economic, and spiritual actors and intentionalities overlapped, competed with, and complemented each other.⁸ Some of these actors had clear imperial, religious, and national agendas in their intentions and actions. At the same time, they produced increasing interconnections, as well as transnational or supranational spheres.

In comparison to Portugal and Spain, France was one of the latecomers in Europe's imperial endeavors to discover, conquer, subdue, and missionize parts of the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, and Far Eastern worlds. Official efforts only started in the 1520s. In its early colonial ventures, France depended on domestic and foreign investors, seafarers, and adventurers commissioned and entitled by the French crown to explore, discover,

⁶ Bayly, *The Birth*; Osterhammel and Petersson, *Geschichte*, 20–45.

⁷ Bayly, *The Birth*.

⁸ Susanne Lachenicht, Lauric Henne-ton, and Yann Lignereux, "Spiritual Geopolitics in the Early Modern Imperial Age: An Introduction," *Itinerario: Journal of Imperial and Global Interactions* 40, no. 2 (2016): 181–187.

appropriate, and exploit territories and resources not yet known to Europeans. This was the case during the so-called contact phase under the leadership of the Florentine Giovanni da Verrazzano in 1524 or of the Breton Jacques Cartier in 1534 or with the official founding of Quebec in 1608 by Pierre Du Gua de Monts and Samuel de Champlain. After 1610, other nonstate actors were active in colonizing and setting up missions in French Canada, namely Jesuits, Récollets, and Ursulines.

In France's colonial enterprises, trade companies became more important from the late 1620s onward with the founding of Richelieu's *Compagnie des Cent-Associés* (*Compagnie de la Nouvelle France*). Endowed with monopolies and the powers of a *seigneur*, a number of small trade companies had to find settlers for New France, to defend France's overseas territories against the British and indigenous Americans, and to convert the latter to Catholicism. Many trade companies in New France and the French Antilles failed to accomplish these aims not least because of interimperial competition with Britain and because they were too small in comparison to their Dutch and British rivals. For other parts of France's imperial endeavors, trade companies were more successful, as with the *Compagnie des Indes*, founded in 1664.⁹ It was to contribute to the development of a mighty navy and to spread French civilization and Catholicism across the world; it was to become a powerful arm of the French nation, of state and empire. The *Compagnie des Indes* merged in 1719 with the *Compagnie du Sénégal*, the *Compagnie de Chine*, the *Compagnie du Mississippi*, and the *Compagnie de la Louisiane* into the *Compagnie perpétuelle des Indes*, which held together much of the French Empire, from the Upper Mississippi Valley to the West African Coast to the Bay of Bengal in South Asia, and it became responsible for the collection and management of taxes in France. Next to missionaries, trade companies, explorers, and state institutions, two other groups are deemed to have played a significant role in French colonization projects: France's Sephardi Jews and Huguenots, two victim and trade diasporas.

Early Modern Diasporas and Globalization

Diaspora is an analytical term that describes groups of dispersed or scattered people. Some have been labeled victim, imperial, trade, or labor diasporas or a mix of these categories.¹⁰ For the early modern period, Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews as well as Arme-

9 Erin M. Greenwald, *Marc-Antoine Caillot and the Company of the Indies in Louisiana: Trade in the French Atlantic World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2016), 13–14.

10 Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), IX–XI.

nians have been described as the most powerful diasporas, linking worlds and peoples.¹¹ Although research has often emphasized the role of diasporas' internal networks for globalization processes, more recent research makes evident that it was the combination of internal and external networks that made diasporas successful go-betweens, connecting different worlds, peoples, knowledge, and goods. Sociologists distinguish between strong ties (family networks) and weak ties (agents that do not belong to a close-knit network or community)—not only with regard to diaspora communities.¹² To make networks work, categories such as trust and uneasy trust relations have come into focus in more recent years, for both strong and weak ties. The term *uneasy trust relations* describe the networks and the relations within, which are marked by taking the risk that the partners in these networks will not necessarily prove trustworthy.¹³ However, it looks like these relations foster in particular ways entangledness and global connections, especially in religious networks as well as in commerce and trade. Networks “based on weak ties can gather new information because weak networks may expose people to more information as they tend to tie diverse groups together.”¹⁴ Research has made clear that both early modern diasporas' internal and external networks enhanced processes of interconnection and globalization.

The Huguenots' Global Distribution

Today, Huguenots are considered one crucial early modern global diaspora. Through their internal and external networks, they connected France, England, Scotland, Ireland, the Dutch Republic, Switzerland's Reformed cantons, a number of territories within the Holy Roman Empire, Scandinavia, and Russia, as well as the Western European imperial powers' colonies or vice royalties in the Caribbean; the British, Dutch, and French colonies in North and South America; and the Dutch colonies in South Africa and Indonesia. The mobility of people, family, church, and trade networks of France's

11 See, e.g., Ina Baghdiantz-McCabe, Gelina Harlaftis, and Ioanna Pepelasis Minoglou, eds., *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks: Four Centuries of History* (Oxford: Berg, 2005); Dagmar Freist and Susanne Lachenicht, eds., *Connecting Worlds and People: Early Modern Diasporas* (London: Routledge, 2016).

12 Mark Granovetter, “The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited,” *Sociological Theory* 1 (1983): 201–233.

13 Dagmar Freist, “Uneasy Trust Relations, Transcultural Encounters, and Social Change: Diasporas in Early Modern Europe,” in *Agents of Transculturation: Border-Crossers, Mediators, Go-Betweens*, eds. Gesa Mackenthun and Sebastian Jobs (Münster: Waxmann, 2013), 63–84.

14 Ann M. Carlos, Karen Maguire, and Larry Neal, “A Knaveish People...: London Jewry and the Stockmarket during the South Sea Bubble,” *Business History* 50, no. 6 (2008): 728–748, at 733.

Huguenots are thought to be more than relevant for French expansionist intentions and, in consequence, for globalization processes in the early modern period.¹⁵

The distribution of Huguenots started in the 1550s, with the persecution of these Calvinists in France. With the Wars of Religion (1562–1598) and the massacre of thousands of French Protestants during Saint Bartholomew's Night (1572), increasing numbers of Huguenots went into exile. An estimated 20,000 French Protestants left France between 1562 and 1660 and settled in the Reformed Swiss cantons, the northern Netherlands, the Palatinate, and England. In the period between the 1560s and 1680s, Huguenots went back and forth, returning to France for trade, commerce, or marriage or simply because they entertained hopes that the peace treaties of Longjumeau (1568), Saint-Germain-en-Laye (1570), and Beaulieu (1576) would last. During this *premier refuge*, French Protestants formed multiethnic communities in exile, together with Protestant Walloons, Palatines, and other groups having fled from persecution in the Spanish Netherlands and the Holy Roman Empire.

When, in 1685, King Louis XIV of France revoked the Edict of Nantes, some 150,000 to 200,000 (of an estimated 750,000) French Protestants left France. Again, they settled not only in the Netherlands, the Reformed Swiss cantons, the German Palatinate, and England but also, now, in Brandenburg-Prussia, Scandinavia, Ireland, the Americas, and South Africa. Estimates vary with regard to the exact number of Huguenot refugees. It is said that Switzerland accommodated some 22,000 refugees; England 40,000 to 50,000; the Netherlands 50,000 to 70,000; Brandenburg-Prussia between 15,000 and 20,000; and Denmark, Sweden, and Russia some 2,000 refugees. Ireland might have received the number of 3,500 refugees, and the British colonies in North America 2,500.¹⁶ After 1685, the *Grand Refuge* thus came into place. Huguenots now sought to establish a *France protestante à l'étranger* (Protestant France abroad), not only in Brandenburg-Prussia, as Etienne François has claimed,¹⁷ but also in transcending all (possible) countries of Huguenot refuge. The Huguenot refuge became what we today might want to dub a global diaspora.

15 See, e. g., Susanne Lachenicht, "The Huguenots' Maritime Networks, Sixteenth–Eighteenth Centuries," in *Connecting Worlds and People: Early Modern Diasporas*, eds. Dagmar Freist and Susanne Lachenicht (London: Routledge, 2016), 31–44.

16 See Susanne Lachenicht, *Hugenotten in Europa und Nordamerika: Migration und Integration in der Frühen Neuzeit* [Huguenots in Europe and North America: Migration and Integration in the Early Modern Period] (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2010), 34–42, including the secondary sources quoted.

17 Étienne François, "La mémoire huguenote en Hesse, en Allemagne et dans les autres pays du *Refuge*" [Huguenot Memory in Hesse, Germany, and Other Refuge Countries], in *Die Hugenotten und das Refuge. Deutschland und Europa. Beiträge zu einer Tagung*, eds. Frédéric Hartweg and Stefi Jersch-Wenzel (Berlin, Colloquium, 1990), 235.

Huguenots and French Colonization Schemes

In the interimperial competition for the discovery, evangelization, and colonization of the New World, France not only was a latecomer but also had failed to establish confessional unity: conflicts, followed by civil wars (1562–1598), ravaged the country, translating into highly confessionalized intrainperial conflicts in the sixteenth century. Was there only one French colonization and missionizing project? Or do we have to distinguish between French Catholic and French Protestant ones? From the available primary sources, it seems that in some of France's colonization projects of the sixteenth century French Catholics and Protestants fought each other for territory and confessional supremacy. At the latest with the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, did Huguenots in exile become “agents and victims of empire”¹⁸—only of Protestant empires, such as the emerging British and Dutch? Or did Huguenots still play a major role in France's colonization projects? Research by Frank Lestringant, Bertrand van Ruymbeke, Mickaël Augeron, Paula Wheeler Carlo, Owen Stanwood, and more recently Nicholas Canny and myself has shown how Huguenots became complex inter- and intrainperial players in the process of European colonization.¹⁹ Through their internal and external diasporic networks, which coexisted with formal imperial networks, Huguenots fostered entangledness not only within their diaspora but also in connecting France, the British Empire, and the Dutch Empire through diplomacy, commerce and trade, and church and family networks.

After the exploration voyages of Verrazzano and Cartier in the 1520s, 1530s, and 1540s, France made first attempts to found colonies in North and South America in the 1550s and 1560s. In some of these schemes, Huguenots played a prominent role. In 1555, the Huguenot admiral Gaspard de Coligny claimed parts of Brazil, the France

18 Israel, *Diasporas*, 1.

19 Frank Lestringant, “Geneva and America in the Renaissance: The Dream of the Huguenot Refuge 1555–1600,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 26, no. 2 (1995): 285–295; Paula Wheeler Carlo, *Huguenot Refugees in Colonial New York: Becoming American in the Hudson Valley* (Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2005); Bertrand van Ruymbeke, *From New Babylon to Eden: The Huguenots and Their Migration to Colonial South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006); Mickaël Augeron, Didier Poton, and Bertrand van Ruymbeke, eds., *Les huguenots et l'Atlantique: Pour Dieu, la Cause ou les Affaires* [The Huguenots and the Atlantic: For God, the Cause, or the Business], vol. 1 (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris Sorbonne (PUPS) / Les Indes savantes, 2009); Mickaël Augeron, Didier Poton, and Bertrand van Ruymbeke, eds., *Les huguenots et l'Atlantique: Fidélités, racines et mémoires* [The Huguenots and the Atlantic: Loyalties, Roots, and Memories], vol. 2 (Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2012); Nicholas Canny, “A Protestant or Catholic Atlantic World? Confessional Divisions and the Writing of Natural History,” *Proceedings of the British Academy* 181 (2012): 83–121; Susanne Lachenicht, “Histoires naturelles, récits de voyage et géopolitique religieuse dans l'Atlantique français, XVIe et XVIIe siècles” [Natural Histories, Travelogues, and Religious Geopolitics in the French Atlantic, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries], *Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique Française* 69 (2016): 27–45; Owen Stanwood, *The Global Refuge: Huguenots in an Age of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

antarctique, at Guanabara Bay in Rio de Janeiro. Even though the colonization project should have been a joint Catholic and Protestant one, conflicts between the Catholic governor Nicolas Duran de Villegagnon and Huguenot colonists and pastors threatened the colony's survival and made it easy for the Portuguese to reconquer these parts of Brazil. From two famous French accounts of this colonial venture—*Les singularitez de la France antarctique* (The Singularities of Antarctic France, 1557), by André Thevet (1516–1592), a Franciscan friar and cosmographer, and the *Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil* (Story of a Journey Made in the Land of Brazil, 1578), by the Huguenot Jean de Léry—the confessional struggles between French Protestants and Catholics become apparent. Léry explains the Huguenots' desire to found a permanent refuge—far away from Europe.²⁰ He became an advocate of Huguenot spiritual geopolitics, a Huguenot design of French and Protestant colonization in the New World. Huguenots were eager to found a colony (or several ones) serving as a durable refuge for French Protestants and from which they could spread the gospel.²¹

Coligny's second attempt to colonize parts of the Americas came in 1562, when he sent Jean Ribault, a Huguenot privateer, to found a French colony in La Floride, in today's South Carolina. With the settlement of Charles Fort soon lacking support from France, where the first Huguenot War preoccupied Coligny, Ribault sought to gain help from the Huguenots' ally, England, for the failing colony of Charles Fort—which failed. With the end of the first Huguenot War, Coligny planned to relieve the Charles Fort colony but had to learn that it had already been abandoned. In the second attempt to claim North American territory for France, René de Laudonnière, a Huguenot captain from Poitou, established Fort Caroline. Not only internal conflicts but, even more so, also Spain's attempts to stop French colonial endeavors in North America and, more importantly, to eliminate "heretics," (French Huguenots) led to the brutal destruction of Fort Caroline in 1565. While Spain spared some French colonists, it committed massacres among the Huguenot settlers of Fort Caroline.²²

There has been some discussion whether these French attempts of the 1560s, led by the Huguenot admiral Coligny, should be dubbed a French Protestant or a French

20 Jean de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Bresil* [Story of a Journey to the Land of Brazil], 1st ed. (1578), 2nd ed., edited by Frank Lestringant (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1994), 161–162.

21 Louis Binz, "Le Huguenot et les sauvages: Jean de Léry et son *Histoire d'un voyage au Brésil* (1556–1557)" [The Huguenot and the Savages: Jean de Léry and His Story of a Trip to Brazil (1556–1557)], *Annales de la 3era Universitat d'estiu Andorra* 84 (1985): 47–59; Frank Lestringant, *Le Huguenot et le Sauvage. L'Amérique et la controverse coloniale en France, au temps des guerres de religion* [The Huguenot and the Savage: America and the Colonial Controversy in France at the Time of the Wars of Religion] (Paris: Aux Amateurs des Livres, 1990); Frank Lestringant, *André Thevet, cosmographe des derniers Valois* [André Thevet, Cosmographer of the Last Valois] (Geneva: Droz, 1991).

22 Van Ruymbeke, *From New Babylon* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 1–2; David MacDonald and Raine Waters, *We Could Perceive no Sign of Them: Failed Colonies in North America, 1526–1689* (Yardley: Westholme, 2020), 40–41.

(that is to say, Catholic and Protestant) colonial venture. Some scholars have argued that contrary to the France antarctique colonial project, the Charles Fort and the Fort Caroline projects were not specifically Huguenot attempts toward colonization, despite strong Huguenot participation. Instead, it would have been Coligny's goal "to integrate Huguenots into a national colonial policy that would enrich France and enhance its prestige while breaking the Iberian monopoly on the riches of the New World."²³

In France's ventures to conquer and colonize Canada, Huguenot participation was prominent to some degree. On Cartier's third voyage to the St. Lawrence River, King François I of France nominated Jean-François de la Roque, a Huguenot nobleman from Normandy, to be the governor of the colony. Even though the colony of Charlesbourg-Royal was abandoned in 1542, further attempts to colonize Canada were made in the late sixteenth century. France's more successful colonization and missionizing schemes, however, only came after the end of the Huguenot Wars, that is to say from 1604 onward. Huguenots participated in the expeditions led by Du Gua de Monts and Champlain on the Saint Lawrence River and in Acadia (today's Nova Scotia). French Protestants even supported (and took profit of) Marie de Medici's missionizing schemes after the assassination of her husband in 1610, Henry IV of France.²⁴ With regard to Canada and Acadia, Huguenots seem to have indeed been an integral and voluntarily integrated part of France's colonization schemes. In 1627, however, Richelieu officially excluded Huguenots from colonization in New France or Canada—which did not hinder French Protestants from arriving and permanently settling in New France, though.²⁵

Even though the sixteenth-century French colonial expeditions had failed, Ribault's and Laudonnière's travel accounts, published in France and England, drew England's interest to Huguenot seafarers and colonizers for English colonial ventures—and vice versa. In the ensuing decades, and especially after 1685, France lost many of its Protestant seafarers, captains, and nobility interested in funding colonial ventures to its archenemy, England. In the 1620s, Antoine de Ridouet developed plans to settle French refugees south of Virginia, in Florida, which was followed by ideas of establishing the new colonies of the Carolanas. After the Restoration of the Stuarts in 1660, Huguenot refugees reminded the English crown of earlier plans to plant new colonies with French refugees in the Carolanas. In 1679, the ship *Richmond* brought Huguenots to the Carolanas. The instigators, Petit and Guérard, Huguenot refugees in England, saw themselves as

23 Van Ruymbeke, *From New Babylon*, 2–3, at 3.

24 MacDonald and Waters, *We Could Perceive no Sign of Them*, 147–166.

25 Leslie Choquette, "A Colony of 'Native French Catholics'? The Protestants of New France in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *Memory and Identity: The Huguenots in France and the Atlantic Diaspora*, eds. Bertrand van Ruymbeke and Randy J. Sparks (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 255–266, at 255–256.

completing the work of Coligny: founding a safe haven for France's Protestants in the New World.²⁶

From the 1680s, large numbers of Huguenots arrived in the Dutch provinces. Many of them remained in the cities of Rotterdam and Amsterdam, where Walloon churches had already been established in the sixteenth century. A small number of Huguenots aided further settling the Dutch colonies at the Cape of Good Hope, that is to say in South Africa; others became active in the Dutch Batavia trade.²⁷ With the revolution of 1688–89, the Dutch invasion by William III, and the ensuing Jacobite Wars (formerly called the Glorious Revolution), Dutch and English imperial endeavors merged to a certain extent. Not the least to reward Huguenot soldiers in his regiments, William III granted French Protestants additional land in the English colonies in North America, namely in Virginia.²⁸ While there were plans to establish one large Huguenot colony on the Île d'Eden (today France's La Reunion), these plans, developed by Henri Duquesne in his *Recueil de quelques mémoires servant d'instruction pour l'établissement de l'Île d'Eden* (Collection of Some Memoirs Serving as Instructions for the Establishment of the Island of Eden), failed.²⁹

There was however a place of refuge closer to France than the New World: the colonization of Ireland after 1689 was one of the largest colonization schemes, in which Huguenots cooperated with Protestant courts, in particular the English court under William III. Under the auspices of Henri de Massue—the official representative of the French Huguenots at the court of Louis XIV and, in exile, lieutenant general of William III's army in Ireland—de Massue attempted to move thousands of Huguenot refugees from the Reformed Swiss cantons to Ireland.³⁰ He was helped by Gaspar de Perrinet (1645–1710) and Henri de Mirmand (1650–1721). Protestant princes tried to solve the “refugee problem” of the 1690s in using Huguenots to make Ireland, predominantly inhabited by Catholics, Protestant. Huguenots were meant to help secure Ireland as William III's most important colony in what was to become the United Kingdom. In

26 Van Ruymbeke, *From New Babylon*, 4–5.

27 Matthew Glozier, “Huguenots and the Dutch East India Company (VOC),” *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society* 29, no. 3 (2010): 385–396.

28 David E. Lambert, *The Protestant International and the Huguenot Migration to Virginia* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 1, 14, and 100–127.

29 See, e. g., Mme Alexandre de Chambrier, *Henri Mirmand et les réfugiés de la Révocation de l'Edit de Nantes, 1650–1721* [Henri Mirmand and the Refugees from the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, 1650–1721] (Neuchâtel: Attinger Frères, 1910), 150–154; Paolo Carile, “La Réunion, ‘refuge’ protestant à la fin du XVIIe siècle dans un projet d'Henri Duquesne” [Reunion, a Protestant “Refuge” at the End of the Seventeenth Century in a Project by Henri Duquesne], in *Huguenots sans frontières: Voyage et écriture à la Renaissance et à l'Âge classique*, ed. Paolo Carile (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2001), 97–136.

30 Raymond Pierre Hylton, *Ireland's Huguenots and Their Refuge, 1662–1745: An Unlikely Haven* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2005).

these plans, Virginia and La Reunion were backup plans should the Irish colonization scheme fail.³¹

In the Protestant International—as John Boshier and Robin Gwynn call the inter-imperial and diasporic diplomatic networks—England was to become a major player, using France’s Huguenots in its attempts to outplay Spain and, later, France.³² Or did Huguenots use the English and Dutch imperial powers for their own colonization and missionizing schemes? Was there a competing French colonization and missionizing project of French Protestants?

Trade and Commerce

Prior to the onset of persecutions in France in the 1680s, Huguenot merchants had been important in global trade: from La Tremblade, Nantes, La Rochelle, Bordeaux, and other French port cities, they had been active in the trading of wine, salt, fish, textiles, sugar, molasses, and slaves. Some contemporaries thought that Huguenots and their connections with London, Amsterdam, Hamburg, the French Antilles, New York, Boston, Suriname, and Charleston dominated or controlled much of France’s international trade.³³ With trade partners and centers in Amsterdam and links to the United East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, VOC) or in London to the Royal Africa Company and the East India Company, Huguenots built or joined trade networks reaching across South Africa to India, China, Malaysia, and Indonesia.³⁴ Other Huguenot trade networks linked the Baltic Sea to the Atlantic World. From Saint Petersburg, they traded grains, timber, salt, and fish.³⁵

With the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 and the emigration of Huguenots from France’s overseas colonies, contemporaries thought that this would put an end to these Protestants’ role in France’s trade. France’s economic decline after the 1680s was

31 Lambert, *The Protestant International*, 24.

32 John Boshier, “Huguenot Merchants and the Protestant International in the Seventeenth Century,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 3, no. 52 (1996): 77–102; Robin Gwynn, “The Huguenots in Britain, the ‘Protestant International’ and the Defeat of Louis XIV,” in *From Strangers to Citizens: The Integration of Immigrant Communities in Britain, Ireland and Colonial America, 1550–1750*, eds. Randolph Vigne and Charles Littleton (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2001), 412–424.

33 Warren Scoville, *The Persecution of Huguenots and French Economic Development, 1680–1720* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), 134–138; Franklin Kopitzsch and Ursula Stephan-Kopitzsch, “Franzosen in den Hansestädten und in Altona zwischen 1685 und 1789” [French in the Hanseatic Cities and in Altona between 1685 and 1789], in *Deutsche in Frankreich, Franzosen in Deutschland, 1715–1789*, ed. Jean Mondot (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1992), 283–295, at 283.

34 Glozier, “Huguenots and the Dutch East India Company,” 385–396.

35 Lachenicht, “The Huguenots’ Maritime Networks.”

interpreted as a consequence of Huguenot emigration.³⁶ Warren Scoville had already shown in the 1960s that France's economic crisis after 1685 had been caused by Huguenot emigration but to a small degree;³⁷ more recent research on the social and economic networks of exiled Huguenots in Charleston, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Hamburg, and London shows that Huguenots in diaspora maintained strong ties not only with their families in France but also with Catholic merchants in port cities such as Nantes, La Rochelle, or Bordeaux. Many Huguenot merchants and manufacturers had not fled the country but converted to Catholicism to secure properties and trade networks.³⁸ Huguenots thus used their family bonds and their strong ties as commercial bonds to help disseminate French goods such as paper, wine, textiles, furniture, and others—as the case of the London-based Huguenot merchant Theodore Janssen illustrates, among many others.³⁹ Many Huguenot merchants also developed close bonds with partners in the French Caribbean or in Canada. Even though after 1685 Huguenot networks were (most likely) not predominant in France's early modern trade networks, they continued to play an important role and fostered France's Atlantic, Indian Ocean, and Asian networks of trade next to the Dutch Republic's and Britain's trade and commerce.

Next to strong ties with other Huguenot merchants both in the refuge and with new converts in France, successful Huguenot merchants also forged and solidified weak ties or uneasy trust relations with English merchants in London, as exemplified by the Charleston Huguenot merchants. The latter became disproportionately important for England's trade with the Carolinas through commercial and social bonds between South Carolina's Huguenot and English merchants. From the second generation of exile onward, Charleston Huguenot merchants married into English Anglican and Presbyterian merchant families.⁴⁰ Weak ties were also important in the Atlantic triangle trade for Huguenots residing and working from other port cities, as illustrated by the case of the Boston Huguenot merchant Peter Faneuil. Although Faneuil maintained his uncle's family networks and intensely used them for his commercial activities, he continuously further developed the firm's weak ties: the Faneuil firm traded with France (Bordeaux in particular), Antigua, Barbados, Jamaica, Spain (Bilbao), the Canary Islands, the Dutch Republic and England. Its commercial web included partners in the Catholic Spanish, the Catholic French, the Protestant English, and the Protestant

36 See the literature cited in Scoville, *The Persecution*, 253–257.

37 Scoville.

38 Scoville, 259, 288.

39 See, e.g. Elsbeth Veale, "Sir Theodore Janssen, Huguenot and Merchant of London," *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 26, no. 2 (1995): 264–288.

40 R. C. Nash, "Huguenot Merchants and the Development of South Carolina's Slave-Plantation and Atlantic Trading Economy, 1680–1775," in *Memory and Identity: The Huguenots in France and the Atlantic Diaspora*, eds. Bertrand van Ruymbeke and Randy J. Sparks (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 208–240.

Dutch worlds. The Faneuil firm traded fish and salt from and to Newfoundland and Labrador; slaves from the West African Coast; molasses and sugar from the Caribbean; textiles from Europe; and rum and molasses to Europe, England, Hamburg, and the Netherlands. Faneuil's letter books reveal that in the 1730s most of his trading partners, numbering more than 50 at the time, had an English, Irish, or Scottish background or worked for firms in London, New York, Bordeaux, Antigua, Jamaica, Bilbao, Amsterdam, London, and Hamburg. Miguel Pachecoda Silva, most likely belonging to the London Sephardi diaspora, was one of Faneuil's most important trading partners. In the long run, the firm's economic success thus depended less on this Huguenot internal than on external networks or so-called weak ties.⁴¹

Global Refuge and French Reformed Nation

Did Huguenots, as a diaspora community, form a global refuge, a community linked through mobility and networks around the globe? And did this nation in exile mean to conquer, subdue, and evangelize (parts of) the world? These questions need to be answered from two angles: (1) from the perspective of the existing Huguenot networks and their effects and (2) from that of the self-fashioning of these French Protestants.

From the available sources, we can see through spiritual and family as well as trade and intellectual networks how Huguenot families were linked across boundaries and oceans. Family correspondence networks were of use to the internal integration of Huguenot communities within and across boundaries, providing news about family, life, marriage, and death; gossip about neighbors; the exchange of cooking recipes; home schooling; boarding school systems; and professional needs, in order to find a position as tutors, military personnel, gardeners, or tobacco planters.⁴² There seemed to have been several Huguenot worlds that might have thought of themselves as being one well-connected refuge but in fact were not, or only to some extent. It looks like the global refuge constructed internal boundaries between more Anglo-American-Dutch and German-Scandinavian-Russian transregions. While there were links between all these Huguenot worlds, contacts were stronger within specific transregions.

The same is true if we look into the spiritual networks of French Protestants in exile. Between the 1550s and the 1680s, England, the Netherlands, the Reformed Swiss cantons, and the Palatinate saw the establishment of Huguenot and Walloon churches, which served Protestants in exile from France and the Low Countries as centers of worship, relief, and aid in the establishment of new lives and communities. Through these churches and their correspondence networks, Huguenots also sought to build a

41 Lachenicht, "The Huguenots' Maritime Networks," 31–44.

42 Lachenicht, "The Huguenots' Maritime Networks," 34.

new French Reformed orthodoxy, liturgy, and church discipline. These churches of the refuge maintained correspondence networks to control the influx and onward migration of Huguenots and to provide testimonials or certificates for fellow Protestants so that the latter could be accommodated in towns and guilds. In addition, these networks helped in controlling endogamous marriages.⁴³

After 1685, Geneva became (again) an important center for the spread of French Protestantism. From then on, Geneva missionaries tried to keep up clandestine Huguenot congregations in France, the churches of the desert, which allowed crypto-Protestantism to survive in France up to the French Revolution. Geneva and (under the auspices of Antoine Court) Lausanne not only served the survival of Protestantism in France but also formed pastors for other centers of the refuge, such as Berlin and Brandenburg, London, Dublin, Amsterdam, New York, or Charleston. Switzerland and, for the Anglo-American-Dutch parts of the refuge, Amsterdam were nodes for different networks.⁴⁴ However, not only did these Huguenot churches of the refuge link French Reformed congregations to each other—from Berlin to Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and London and from London to New York, New Paltz, and New Rochelle or Charleston—but they also maintained close correspondence networks with Halle Pietist churches, Moravian brethren, and Anglican or Dutch Calvinist churches. The church registers of the French Church of Saint Esprit in New York show that their networks include Geneva, Amsterdam, London, Rotterdam, Charleston, New Rochelle, and New Paltz, whereas direct contacts with the Berlin center of Huguenot life did not exist.

In sum, there was not just one Huguenot church network but several ones, internal and external, which could overlap to some extent but did not form one global network. Huguenots served as pastors in French and Dutch Reformed as well as Anglican churches in England and North America or as missionaries of the London-based Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. The Huguenots' internal and external spiritual networks thus played an important role not only in forming a more or less coherent refuge but also in the Protestant International, a loose network of Protestant churches formed against the Catholic hydra, France.

Did Huguenots imagine themselves as a French Reformed nation? As a nation with its own agenda, with imperial, spiritual, and economic agendas? Researchers such as Myriam Yardeni, Hubert Bost, and myself have shown how French Protestants in France began to imagine themselves as the better French nation. From the 1550s, Huguenots came to understand themselves as God's chosen part of the French nation in France.⁴⁵

43 Lachenicht, *Hugenotten*, 254–336.

44 Lachenicht, *Hugenotten*, 254–336; Lachenicht, "The Huguenots' Maritime Networks," 34–35.

45 Myriam Yardeni, "Refuge et encadrement religieux de 1685 à 1715" [Refuge and Religious Leadership from 1685 to 1715], in *Idéologie et propagande en France: colloque organisé par l'institut d'histoire et de civilisation française de l'université de Haifa*, ed. Myriam Yardeni (Paris: Picard, 1987), 113–124; Hubert

With the *Grand Refuge*, this self-fashioning as a French Reformed nation became even more pronounced; in exile, Huguenots held that they were superior to all other nations and especially to the Catholic French nation at home.⁴⁶ This Huguenot nationalism *avant la lettre* continually adapted to changing political and cultural contexts and thus survived the building of nation-states in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as it made successful attempts to integrate mutatis mutandis into nationalist narratives of the hosting societies and states.

In Brandenburg-Prussia and later within the German Empire of 1871, Huguenots presented themselves successfully not only as God's elect but as the "best Germans," having largely contributed to Prussia's might. In North America, Huguenots blended into the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant model or were identified as French Puritans (in the US North) or as French Southern planers (in the US South).⁴⁷ In some instances, especially in periods of increased nationalism, such as in Europe during the Napoleonic Wars or during the Great War, Huguenots emphasized their assimilation; in others, they would choose or be associated with different national belongings. Huguenots in early modern England or British North America adopted in some contexts a Protestant English identity⁴⁸—which meant that they claimed to be English subjects of the English crown and of its nation—while in other instances they presented themselves to be French Protestant, of "pure" French descent.

Apart from these variations in self-fashioning, the Huguenot refuge, as much as other diasporas, increasingly blended with other ethnic and/or religious groups. In seventeenth-century and particularly eighteenth-century Brandenburg-Prussia, the privileges of the French Reformed nation opened up to refugees of other territorial origin, languages, and denominations: Lutherans, Swiss Reformed, Dutch Reformed, and many other. By the late eighteenth century, these rights could also be transferred to French émigrés, that is to say French Catholics flying from revolutionary France.⁴⁹ While Huguenots promoted the purity and homogeneity of this nation in exile, these narratives ran counter the growing heterogeneity of its members, with marriages becoming more

Bost, *Ces Messieurs de la R.P.R. Histories et écritures de huguenots, XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles* [The Gentlemen of the Supposedly Reformed Religion: Histories and Writings of Huguenots, Seventeenth–Eighteenth Century] (Paris: Champion, 2001), 281–82; Myriam Yardeni, *Enquêtes sur l'identité de la "Nation France". De la Renaissance aux Lumières* [Investigating the Identity of the "French Nation": From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment] (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 2004), 20–21; Susanne Lachenicht, "Huguenot Immigrants and the Formation of National Identities," *The Historical Journal* 50, no. 2 (2007): 309–331.

46 Lachenicht, "Huguenot Immigrants," 309–331; Lachenicht, *Hugenotten*, 209–240.

47 Lachenicht, "Huguenot Immigrants," 18–23; Lachenicht, *Hugenotten*, 72–73, 231–232, and 483–504; Bertrand Van Ruymbeke, "From France to *le Refuge*: The Huguenots' Multiple Identities," in *Diaspora Identities: Exile, Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in Past and Present*, eds. Susanne Lachenicht and Kirsten Heinsohn (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2009), 53–68, at 64.

48 Van Ruymbeke, "From France to *le Refuge*."

49 Lachenicht, *Hugenotten*, 168–174.

exogamous, transcultural and transnational practices becoming more pronounced, and the self-fashioning as a French Reformed nation becoming more problematic.

Conclusions

Between the 1550s and 1685, the French Reformed nation—God’s chosen people, as Huguenots came to understand themselves—served France’s imperial endeavors to some extent in the realm of colonization schemes as well as in commerce and trade. In times of persecution, however, Huguenot efforts to found their own colonies where they could find permanent refuge and spread the gospel increased. The watershed of 1685—the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the flight of 150,000 to 200,000 Huguenots from France—should have put an end to French Protestants playing a role in France’s colonization schemes. Huguenot networks tell a different story, though. Huguenots, with their strong and weak ties to trading partners in France, still played a significant role for France’s economy, one of the backbones of its colonization schemes and a motor in globalization processes. French Protestants thus seem to have used both Catholic and Protestant imperial states for their advancement as God’s chosen people not only to survive but also to colonize and evangelize new worlds. Enhancing the French Reformed nation thus fostered transimperial and transnational cooperation both with subjects of the archenemy, Catholic France, and Protestant empires, such as the Dutch or the British. As other diasporas, the French Reformed nation thus linked many, often antagonistic, worlds, from Saint Petersburg to Copenhagen, from Berlin to Amsterdam, from Amsterdam to New York, from Suriname to Indonesia via South Africa, or from London to Geneva and the Cevennes mountains.

The French Reformed nation’s imperial and spiritual interests coexisted with family networks and economic interests, which transcended confessional and imperial boundaries. Commercial networks, in particular, served the interests of the French Reformed nation, of France, and to some extent the Protestant empire. The Huguenot diaspora and its many individuals and families, willingly or not, thus were important actors in early modern globalization processes that depended on the conflicts and cooperation of empires and the many actors within.

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Universalist Enlightenment: Historical Genealogy and Global Issues of the Concept of (French) Civilization

The Concept of (French) Civilization: Monarchical and Intellectual Emergences

The concept of civilization is one of the French concepts of identity through which the French national, cultural, and collective identity has been defined for more than two centuries in very different discourses, ranging from political speeches to literature and from textbooks to journalistic essays. Associated with the term *civilizing mission*, civilization represents at the same time a concept that involves global issues: a desire to set an example and the vision of a model that aims to be universal. Georges Duhamel, a writer and member of the Académie Française as well as a physician, argues in his work *Civilisation française*—written in 1943, published in 1944, and originally intended to be the introductory chapter for a great work entitled *La France immortelle*¹—that “France is not absent from any of the adventures, from any of the undertakings, [and] from any of the victories of Western civilization:”

From its origins, from the moment it began to assert its national existence until the bitter days when I write these pages, France has always taken a considerable, often initiating and altogether glorious part in the researches, in the experiments, [and] in the works of civilization.²

The concept of civilization, which played a central role in the French identity, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, emerged in the mid-eighteenth century. It first appeared in the Marquis de Mirabeau’s *L’ami des hommes ou Traité de la population*, published in 1757, where it is contrasted with “barbarism” and is defined as a process of evolution of arts and industry that can increase the wealth of societies and the well-being of its populations.³ In his work *L’ami des hommes ou Traité de la population*, in

1 Georges Duhamel, *Civilisation française* [French Civilization] (Paris: Hachette, 1944), foreword, 1.

2 Original in Duhamel, 14: “Depuis ses origines, depuis le moment où elle a commencé d’affirmer son existence nationale, jusqu’aux jours amers où j’écris ces pages, la France a pris une part toujours considérable, souvent initiatrice et somme toute glorieuse aux recherches, aux expériences, aux travaux de la civilisation.”

3 Marquis de Mirabeau, *L’ami des hommes ou Traité de la population* [The Friend of Men, or Treatise on Population] (Avignon: n.p., 1756), second part, chap. 8, 176. See on this point Joachim Moras, *Ursprung und Entwicklung des Begriffs der Zivilisation in Frankreich (1756–1830)* [Origin and Development of the Concept of Civilization in France (1756–1830)] (Hamburg: Seminar für Romanische Sprachen und Kultur, 1930), 35–36. See also Bertrand Binoche, “Civilisation: le mot, le schème et maître-mot. Introduction”

which the very first references are found to the term *civilization* in its not political but cultural and social meaning, Mirabeau (a physiocrat and staunch opponent of encyclopedists) considered “without contradiction” religion as “the first mainspring of civilization.”⁴ Following after Mirabeau, the term civilization is found in other authors’ works from the 1760s onward: in particular, not only in the work of physiocrats such as Dupont de Nemours or of the “economic philosopher” Nicolas Baudeau, in his *Éphémérides du citoyen ou chronique de l’esprit national* (1766), but also in *L’antiquité dévoilée par ses usages* (1766) by Nicolas-Antoine Boulanger, who contrasts “savage” and “civilized” peoples and introduces a perspective of historical development with the term civilization.⁵ In a programmatic way, we find the concept of civilization from the title of the work *L’homme moral, ou les principes des devoirs, suivis d’un aperçu sur la civilisation* (1784) by the historian and encyclopedist Pierre-Charles Lévêque, who had written and published this work after his return from Saint Petersburg, where he had spent time between 1773 and 1780. Reviewing from travelers’ accounts of the various primitive societies of the globe, that are supposed to be in “the most crude state,” Lévêque ends up noting that this state is hypothetical and that even the most remote and distant peoples of a state of civilization “had already reached some degrees of perfectibility.”⁶ But rather than considering, like almost all his contemporaries, Europe

[Civilization: The Word, the Schema, and Master Word. Introduction], in *Les Équivoques de la Civilisation*, ed. Bertrand Binoche (Paris: Champ Vallon, 2005), 9–30. Binoche defines civilization as a “master word” and a “schema,” defining the latter as a “meta-concept” that “radiates throughout a discourse” (14) and implies a narrative or story of evolution.

4 Mirabeau, *L’ami des hommes*, first part, chap. 8, 136.

5 Nicolas-Antoine Boulanger, *L’antiquité dévoilée par ses usages, ou Examen critique des principes Opinions, Cérémonies & Institutions religieuses & politiques des différens Peuples de la Terre* [Antiquity Revealed through Customs or Critical Examination of the Principles, Opinions, Ceremonies, and Religious and Political Institutions of the Different Peoples of the Earth], vol. 3 (Amsterdam: Marc Michel Rey, 1766), 404–405: “Enfin, je regarde comme un corollaire de toutes les vérités, qui ont été établies dans cet ouvrage, que lorsqu’un peuple sauvage vient à être civilisé, il ne faut jamais mettre fin à l’acte de civilisation en lui donnant des loix fixes & irrévocables: il faut lui faire regarder la législation qu’on lui donne comme une *civilisation continuée*: elle doit lui apprendre à agir, non par routine ou par habitude, mais elle doit aussi lui apprendre à raisonner sur toutes ses actions & sur la loi elle-même” (Finally, I consider as a corollary of all the truths, which have been established in this work, that when a savage people comes to be civilized, it is never necessary to put an end to the act of civilization by giving it fixed and irrevocable laws: it is necessary to make it look at the legislation which one gives it as a continued civilization; it must teach it to act, not by routine or by habit, but it must also teach it to reason on all its actions and on the law itself). Lucien Febvre pointed out that this work was published after the author’s death in 1759. His definition of the word *civilization* is thus hardly later than its appearance in Mirabeau’s work. See Lucien Febvre, “Civilisation: Evolution of a Word and a Group of Ideas,” in *Civilisation. Le mot et l’idée*, eds. Lucien Febvre et al. (Paris: La Renaissance du Livre, 1930), 1–55, at 5–6.

6 Pierre-Charles Lévêque, *L’homme Moral, ou les Principes des devoirs, suivis d’un Aperçu sur la civilisation* [The Moral Man, or the Principles of Duties: Followed by an Outline of Civilization], 4th ed. (Paris: De Bure, 1784), 393.

and the Mediterranean world of Greco-Roman antiquity as the cradle of civilization, he asserts, on the contrary, in an original dialectical argument:

It is the Asian peoples who have enlightened Europe. They have clothed us for a long time and taught us how to clothe ourselves [...]. It is from them that we received the sciences, or at least their first elements; it is they who brought us arts that were still in the making, and others that we have since only imperfectly imitated. Our less favorable position might never have permitted us to emerge from barbarism by our own efforts: but we owe to this harsher situation an energy unknown to them, and scarcely were we their disciples when we became for them masters whose progress they could not follow: so much is our superiority over the inhabitants of the other parts of our globe!⁷

The 1771 edition of the *Dictionnaire de Trévoux* is the first French dictionary to include an entry on “Civilisation” (in the cultural sense of the word), which literally reproduces the first occurrences of the term in Mirabeau’s work, in which he had emphasized the importance of religion for the civilization process 15 years earlier.⁸ While the term civilization is closely linked to the religious dimension in the *Dictionnaire de Trévoux* and initially also in Mirabeau’s work, it is already partially detached from it in Mirabeau’s later work *L’ami des femmes ou Traité de la civilisation*, written in 1768 but remaining unpublished:

The civilization of a people is the softening of its morals, the urbanity, the politeness and the knowledge spread so that the decorum is observed and detailed laws are respected. [...] Civilization does nothing for society, if it does not give it the ground and form of virtue; from the womb of societies alleviated by all the ingredients just mentioned, the corruption of humanity has emerged.⁹

7 Original in Lévêque, 462–63: “[C]e sont les peuples Asiatiques qui ont éclairé l’Europe. Ils nous ont long-temps vêtus & nous ont appris à nous vêtir [...] C’est d’eux que nous avons reçu les sciences, ou du moins leurs premiers éléments; c’est eux qui nous ont apporté des arts encore naissants, & d’autres que nous n’avons depuis qu’imparfaitement imités. Notre position moins favorable ne nous eût peut-être jamais permis de sortir par nous-mêmes de la barbarie: mais redevables à cette situation plus dure d’une énergie qui leur est inconnue, à peine étions-nous leurs disciples, que nous sommes devenus pour eux des maîtres dont ils n’ont pu suivre les progrès: tant est notre supériorité sur les habitants des autres parties de notre globe!”

8 See the entry on “CIVILISATION,” *Dictionnaire de Trévoux*, vol. 2, 6th ed. (1771): “La Religion est sans contredit le premier et le plus utile frein de l’humanité; c’est le premier ressort de la civilisation” (Religion is unquestionably the first and most useful brake on humanity; it is the mainspring of civilization). The *Dictionnaire de Trévoux* explicitly refers to Mirabeau for this new meaning of the term: “L’ami des hommes a employé ce mot pour sociabilité” (The friend of man used this word for sociability).

9 Original in Marquis de Mirabeau, *L’ami des femmes ou Traité de la civilisation* [The Friend of Women, or a Treatise on Civilization], quoted from Moras, *Ursprung und Entwicklung*, 38: “La civilisation d’un peuple

Unlike the terms *civility*, *civilize*, and *civilized*, with which it has semantic affinities since they all refer to a polite, honest, and sociable lifestyle,¹⁰ the term *civilization*, in the cultural and not legal sense,¹¹ is relatively rare in eighteenth-century dictionaries. It is thus missing in the *l'Encyclopédie* by Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond d'Alembert as well as in its supplements published in the 1770s, as well as in the *l'Encyclopédie* of Yverdon. In contrast, it entered the philosophical and political vocabulary of the encyclopedists from the mid-1770s such as Helvétius, d'Holbach, Guillaume Thomas Raynal, and Diderot; Diderot used it from 1773 in his *Refutation d'Helvétius*, where he related the state of civilization to the "happiness of man in general," which he nevertheless saw as "far less remote from the state of the wilderness than is imagined."¹² From 1774, the term began to play an important role in major works in the history of philosophy and politics of the second half of the eighteenth century, such as Raynal's *Histoire des deux Indes* (on which Diderot co-authored) and Nicolas de Condorcet's *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* (1795).

But it was not until the 1830s that encyclopedic dictionaries started to include more extensive entries using the term civilization. In the article "Civilisation" from the *Encyclopédie des gens du monde*, by the historian Johann Heinrich Schnitzler (who came

est l'adoucissement de ses mœurs, l'urbanité, la politesse et les connaissances répandues de manière que les bienséances y soient observées et y tiennent bien de lois de détail: [...] la civilisation ne fait rien pour la société, si elle ne lui donne le fond et la forme de la vertu; c'est du sein des sociétés adoucies par tous les ingrédients qu'on vient de citer qu'est née la corruption de l'humanité."

- 10 See the entry on "CIVILISÉ," *Dictionnaire de Trévoux*. Also in the *Dictionnaire de Trévoux*, see the entry on "CIVILITÉ": "Manière honnête d'agir, de converser dans la société. *Civilitas*" (Honest way of acting, of conversing in society. *Civilitas*); also see the entry on "CIVILISER": "rendre civil & poli, traitable, sociable [...]. La Prédication de l'Evangile a civilisé" (to make civil and polite, treatable, sociable [...]. The preaching of the Gospel has civilized). On the history of the concept of *civility*, see Roger Chartier, "Civilité" [Civility], in *Handbuch politisch-sozialer Grundbegriffe in Frankreich, 1680–1820*, vol. 4, eds. Rolf Reichardt and Eberhard Schmitt, in cooperation with Gerd van den Heuvel and Anette Höfer (Munich: Oldenburg, 1986), 7–50.
- 11 The second meaning of the term can also be found in the entry on "CIVILISATION," *Dictionnaire de Trévoux*: "terme de Jurisprudence. C'est un Acte de justice, un jugement qui rend civil un procès criminel. La civilisation se fait en convertissant les informations en enquête, ou autrement" (jurisprudence term. It's an act of justice, a judgment that makes a criminal trial civil. Civilization is achieved by transferring information into investigation, or otherwise). The terms *civilize* and *civilized* also include a legal meaning; see also the entry on "CIVILISER": "en termes de Palais, signifie, recevoir un criminel en procès ordinaire, ou rendre un procès civil de criminel qu'il étoit" (in legal parlance, means to receive a criminal in a due process of law, or to make a civil case out of a criminal case, which it was).
- 12 Denis Diderot, *Refutation of Helvétius* (1773). Text presented by Roland Desné, with the collaboration of Didier Kahn and Annette Lorenceau. Presentation by Roland Desné and Gerhardt Stenger. See also the commentary by Roland Desné with the collaboration of Gerhardt Stenger, in Denis Diderot, *Refutations. Idées VI* [Refutation: Ideas VI] (Paris: Hermann, 2004); Denis Diderot, *Œuvres complètes* [Complete Works], vol. 24, digital ed. (2004), 421–767, at 721; see also Denis Diderot, *Œuvres complètes* [Complete Works], vol. 2 (Paris: Garnier, 1875), sec. 8, chap. 3; Moras, *Ursprung und Entwicklung*, 51.

from Alsace), the term is defined as follows: “Civilization is the more or less absolute development and perfection of the intellectual and moral faculties of man united in a society.”¹³ The article “Civilisation” written by the French anthropologist and politician Julien-Joseph Virey in the *Dictionnaire de la conversation et de la lecture*, published in 1834, derives the notion from the Latin terms *civis* and *civitas* (citizen and city) and provides the following clarification by distinguishing civilized societies from those that have not reached a certain degree of perfection:

It is not the purpose here to explain the foundations of any human society; *civilization* is rather its supplement or perfection; for many nations which are fairly well constituted under religious or political government are nevertheless not civilized and, indeed, they have little or no ability to become civilized; there are some who have placed obstacles in the way of further progress, preferring to it a stagnant state.¹⁴

These definitions and the cultural and political reflection that frame them contain two major base components of the notion of the term civilization in its French meaning: on the one hand, the opposition between civilization and barbarism—between civilized peoples and primitive and barbaric peoples—which is generally associated with the notion of progress and an evolutionary conception of human history and, on the other hand, the idea that the cultural perfection implied by the concept of civilization is, in an unequal manner reflecting varying degrees of evolution, rooted in different societies of the globe, referred to as “civilizations” in the plural. Thus, in his article “Civilisation,” Virey states:

Without claiming to deny to any human race the right to any kind of development to which it may lay claim, it must nevertheless be shown by the facts of history, and even by the physiological constitution of its organization, that there are those which are more favorable to the exercise of the intellectual faculties and to civilization than other races.¹⁵

Other contemporaries, notably Antoine de Rivarol, added a third dimension to these two dimensions of the concept of civilization, that of its expansionist, even “missionary” dynamic, which will shape its semantics to the present day, as Régis Debray shows in his work *Civilisation: Comment nous sommes devenus américains* (2017). Debray contrasts, admittedly rather schematically, the concept of civilization, which he sees

13 Johann Heinrich Schnitzler, “CIVILISATION,” in *Encyclopédie des gens du monde*, vol. 6, ed. Alexis-François Artaud de Montor (Paris: Treuttel & Würtz, 1836), 120–125, at 120.

14 Julien-Joseph Virey, “CIVILISATION,” in *Dictionnaire de la conversation et de la lecture*, vol. 4, ed. William Duckett (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1834), 407–421, at 407.

15 Virey, 407–408.

as governed by “expansive dynamics,” with the concept of culture, which is focused on a single defined territory and is therefore self-contained: “A culture builds places, a civilization builds roads. It presupposes and requires a foreign policy. A civilization acts, it is offensive. A culture reacts, it is defensive. That would be *civilisation*, the right term.”¹⁶

However, the idea (or concept in the linguistic sense) of civilization, “invented” and conceptualized by the Enlightenment intellectual movement, was introduced long before the creation of the word. According to Jean Starobinski, it is a “unifying concept” and a “synthetic vocabulary for a preexisting concept that had previously been formulated in multiple and diverse ways: refinement of manners, education of the mind, development of civility, cultivation of the arts and sciences, flourishing of commerce and industry, [and] acquisition of material comforts and of luxury.”¹⁷ It can certainly be argued with some justification that the idea and process of civilization in France was a monarchical “invention” or, more precisely, a concept born out of the apology of the French monarchy under the reign of Louis XIV, on the one hand, and of the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, on the other hand. The debate between supporters of ancient cultures and of modern cultures—which began with the apologetic poem “Le siècle de Louis le Grand,” recited by Charles Perrault before the Académie Française on January 27, 1687, and which lasted until the beginning of the eighteenth century—reflected on the superiority of French culture under the reign of Louis XIV over the models of Greco-Roman antiquity. The debate thus revived older debates, dating back to the Renaissance and the reign of François I. In particular, this period had seen the appearance, with Joachim Du Bellay’s *Défense et illustration de la langue française* (1549), of a first apologetic discourse on the French language, literature, and culture,¹⁸ which was inseparable from a panegyric discourse on the reigning monarch. Apologists for the Bourbon monarchy in the seventeenth century and in particular for the reign of the Sun King, such as Perrault and Bernard Le Boyer de Fontenelle, similarly sought to show that French culture had achieved a level of perfection in all areas that was not only above that of the ancient models but also above that of other contemporary societies and cultures: in literature, arts, and sciences as well as in architecture, theater, music, and painting. The conception of a history marked by progress and perfection and by the idea that France

16 Régis Debray, *Civilisation. Comment nous sommes devenus américains* [Civilization: How We Became Americans] (Paris: Gallimard, 2017), 25.

17 Jean Starobinski, “Le mot civilisation” [The Word Civilization], *Le remède dans le mal. Critique et légitimation de l’artifice à l’âge des Lumières* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989), 11–59, at 15.

18 On this continuity of discourse between the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* and the French Renaissance, in particular Du Bellay and La Pléiade, see Hubert Gilot, *La Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes en France. De la Défense et Illustration de la langue française aux Parallèles des Anciens et des Modernes* [The Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns in France: From Defense and Illustration of the French Language to Parallels between the Ancients and the Moderns] (Paris: Edouard Champion, 1914), first part, chap. 1; on Du Bellay, see Gilot, *La Querelle*, chap. 2, 44–49.

had reached the highest degree of cultural development among the modern nations thus contained in its infancy the matrix for the concept of civilization and, as a model for other peoples, that of civilizing mission. Thus, in his *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes*, Perrault has a character who defends the superiority of modern civilization say:

I do not say that the centuries of Alexander and Augustus were barbarous, they were as polite as they could be, but I claim that the advantage of our century in having come last and benefiting from the good and bad examples of the preceding centuries has made it the most learned, polite, and refined of all.¹⁹

The term civilization, which emerged half a century later, thus crystallized ideas that were originally limited primarily to academic discussion of the alleged superiority of the aesthetic and intellectual models of antiquity. Fundamentally, however, this debate produced a model and a vision that were linked to the expansionism and the political domination strategies of the monarchy under the Bourbons: the notion of the exemplarity of French civilization, which was to serve as a model for other societies in Europe and around the world.

Models and Practices of French Civilization

Duhamel's short essay on French civilization, published during the horrors of World War II and under the impact of the trauma of France's 1940 defeat, paints a comprehensive picture of the various practices associated with the idea of civilization. These include values such as humanism, civility, and critical thinking (and the resulting forms of intellectual and social behavior) as well as areas such as literature and the arts, theater²⁰ and music, science and crafts, and fashion and gastronomy. In all these areas, Duhamel asserts that French civilization has played a pioneering role and, since the end of the seventeenth century, has achieved a high level of civilization that raises it to the same level or in many areas even to a higher level compared to other civilizations that he briefly mentions, such as the other European civilizations or the great Asian civilizations.

19 Charles Perrault, *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes (1688–1692)* [Parallels between the Ancients and the Moderns, (1688–1692)], in *La Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, ed. Anne-Marie Lecoq (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 361–380, at 367. See also Charles Perrault, *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes en ce qui regarde les arts et les sciences* [Parallels between the Ancients and the Moderns in the Arts and Sciences] (Munich: Eidos Verlag, 1964).

20 Rahul Markovits, *Civiliser l'Europe. Politiques du théâtre français au XVIIIe siècle* [Civilizing Europe: Politics of French Theater in the Eighteenth Century] (Paris: Fayard, 2014).

He attributes to French civilization, in its various dimensions, the quality of a globally-oriented model, a concept whose genealogy can be traced back to the last decades of the seventeenth century. This is also true for the prominent place he gives to the French language. “If the men of foreign peoples like to learn French,” he states, “to speak and write it, it’s because our beautiful language is the key to a great civilization.”²¹

In his *Discours sur l’universalité de la langue française*, Rivarol conceptualizes, in a way that was both pioneering and paradigmatic, these close links between the aesthetic and linguistic valorization of the French language and its claim to worldwide dissemination, which he designates from the start through the use of the term *universality*. In his speech, he revives in certain aspects the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* in his first sentences: “The time has come to say the French world, as once the Roman world.”²² This speech by Rivarol was written in 1783, in the context of the Peace of Paris, confirming the independence of the United States of America, which also marked, in his eyes, the end of British preponderance overseas and a major reversal in the history of the American continent. “The history of America is now reduced to three periods,” he writes in conclusion: “slaughtered by Spain, oppressed by England, and saved by France.”²³

Rivarol’s concise but dense *Discours sur l’universalité de la langue française*, at the same time marked by a pathetic rhetoric, contains—without explicitly mentioning the concept of (French) civilization, which was still barely used in the 1780s—all the elements that characterize this concept. Rivarol, who was inspired in particular by Voltaire’s *Essai sur les mœurs and the siècle de Louis XIV* as well as by the article “French” in his *Dictionnaire philosophique*,²⁴ places the French language at the center of his perspective of the universal character of French civilization by developing a phenomenology of its excellence, based in particular on the characteristics of clarity, harmony, elegance, and strength, predestining it to not only become the language of diplomacy in Europe but also replace Latin as the universal language. This apologia of the French language is anchored in Rivarol’s work in a series of reflections that aimed at legitimizing France’s leading role within European civilization. Thus, he highlights France’s central geographical and geopolitical position between the countries of the Global North and the Global South, a mediating position between the extreme poles that favors synthesis and creative innovation. Regarding the century of Louis XIV, Rivarol asserts:

21 Duhamel, *Civilisation française*, 60.

22 Antoine de Rivarol, *De l’universalité de la langue française. Sujet proposé par l’Académie de Berlin, en 1783* [The Universality of the French Language: Speech that Won the Prize at the Berlin Academy, 1783] (Paris: Charles Pougens, 1800), 1.

23 Rivarol, 44.

24 See on this subject Christian Thimonier, “Rivarol ou un feu d’artifice sur l’eau” [Rivarol or Fireworks on the Water], in *Discours sur l’universalité de la langue française, 1784. Discours préliminaire du Nouveau Dictionnaire de la langue française, 1797*, ed. Antoine de Rivarol (Vigny: Ordre Européen des Chevaliers de Gutenberg, 1984), 7–35, at 16.

Paris fixed the floating ideas of Europe and became the focus of sparks spread among all peoples. Descartes' imagination reigned in philosophy, Boileau's reason in verse; Bayle laid doubt at the feet of truth; Bossuet thundered over the heads of kings; and we counted as many types of eloquence as great men.²⁵

Rivarol then emphasizes that French civilization, since the reign of Louis XIV, has reached perfection in all cultural fields—theater, literature, press, science, philosophy, dress, and the art of living—and has established what he calls “a kind of empire that no nation has ever exercised,”²⁶ giving the French language a hegemonic place in Europe. Books, print culture, and especially literary works occupy a central place in Rivarol's vision of French civilization and its universal role. He affirms that France's “books compose the library of the human race.”²⁷ He postulates that, “above all,” French theater, which was disseminated abroad not only through original editions but also through translations and adaptations, “completed the education of Europe.”²⁸ He also points out that “our books, quickly translated in Europe and even in Asia, became the books of all countries, of all tastes and of all ages.”²⁹ And he concludes at the end of his speech that it is the books that would have given “immortality” to the French language. Rivarol thus builds, in the wake of the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* and around the intertwined centrality of language and literature and their claim to universality, a vision of France as a literary and cultural nation par excellence.

Priscilla Parkhurst Clark, in her book *Literary France: The Making of a Culture*,³⁰ traces the historical genealogy of French literature back to the nineteenth century as well as its partial survival and, to a certain extent, its persistence. In no other culture has the figure of the writer, sometimes associated with that of the intellectual (“The writer as intellectual hero”³¹), acquired such prestige as in France. This is reflected in the importance given to writers in the national Pantheon, dedicated to the “Great Men of the Fatherland,” and in the large number of people who attended the funerals of great national writers, such as Victor Hugo in Paris in 1885 (two million people); in the number of Nobel Prizes in Literature awarded to French writers—a total of 15 between 1901 (Sully Prudhomme) and 2022 (Annie Ernaux), more than for any other

25 Original in Rivarol, *De l'universalité de la langue française*, 25–26: “Paris fixa les idées flottantes de l'Europe et devint le foyer des étincelles répandues chez tous les peuples. L'imagination de Descartes régna dans la philosophie, la raison de Boileau dans les vers; Bayle plaça le doute aux pieds de la vérité; Bossuet tonna sur la tête des rois; et nous comptâmes autant de genres d'éloquence que de grands-hommes.”

26 Rivarol, 27.

27 Rivarol, 30.

28 Rivarol, 26. Rivarol mentions here explicitly Corneille, Racine, and Molière.

29 Rivarol, 26.

30 Priscilla Parkhurst Clark, *Literary France: The Making of a Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

31 Clark, 159–191.

literary nation; and finally in the worldwide impact of French literature, which is seen as an exemplary model often also in the colonial and non-Western world. This effect is even evident in anticolonial African intellectuals and writers critical of France, such as Bernard Dadié of the Ivory Coast, who had been imprisoned in 1949 for “anti-French” activities. However, in a poem published in 1950 titled “Ce que m’a donné la France” (What France Has Given Me), which radically attacked colonial oppression by France, he expressed his admiration for revolutionary France and for French writers such as Voltaire, Balzac, and Hugo, who treated “qui traitent l’homme en frère” (all men as brothers).³²

Even if the French language and its global diffusion have occupied a place of first importance within the French conception of civilization since the end of the eighteenth century, other cultural and symbolic practices have also occupied an important function, in particular fashion and gastronomy. These two cultural practices, which are considered as signs of the development of a refined civilization and deeply embedded in daily life, experienced a diffusion across Europe and eventually worldwide from the mid-seventeenth century, particularly in relation to the prestige of the royal Court of France. Rivarol emphasizes in his *Discours sur l’universalité de la langue française* that the “productions of the mind were joined by those of industry. Pompoms and fashions accompanied our best books abroad because everywhere people wanted to be sensible and frivolous as in France. So it happened that when our neighbors received furniture, fabrics and fashions that were constantly renewed, they lacked the terms to describe them.”³³

French fashion and luxury goods were also a recurring and important theme in the French-language almanacs published and circulated throughout Europe in the eighteenth century and during the Napoleonic period. French-language almanacs published in Germany in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—such as the *Almanach de Gotha*, the most important and widely distributed aristocratic almanac of the time, which was published between 1764 and 1944 in French in Gotha, Germany, and in parallel in German—were important vehicles for the transmission of information on all aspects of fashion and luxury goods in France, from the latest dresses and wigs to the most sophisticated and refined fabrics, clocks, watches, and pieces of furniture, for which these almanacs often also indicated prices and addresses of suppliers.

French gastronomy, listed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as part of the world’s cultural heritage since 2010, has been an important element of French civilization since the mid-seventeenth century. Initially, the diffusion of culinary art, accompanied by a refined know-how on menu courses,

32 Bernard B. Dadié, “Ce que m’a donné la France” [What France Has Given Me], in *Le Démocrate. Organe quotidien du Parti Démocratique de la Côte d’Ivoire*, no. 148 (September 2, 1950): 2.

33 Rivarol, *De l’universalité de la langue française*, 26.

table service, and the pairing of various dishes with drinks, was articulated through broadly circulated (for the time) books published by the editors of the *Bibliothèque Bleue* of Troyes. The first of these books was the *Cuisinier François*, published in 1650, which was translated into English as early as 1653 (*The French Cook*), and later into Swedish (*Then frantzöske kochen*, 1664), German (*Der Frantzösische Koch*, 1665), and Italian (*Il Cuoco francese*, 1683). Subsequently, the *Pâtissier français* (1662) and *L'École des Ragoûts* (1668) were widely distributed in France, including the provinces and the countryside, through numerous reprints, and then abroad through translations, sometimes abbreviated but generally keeping the explicit reference to France as a quality label.³⁴ With the invention of the institution of the restaurant in 1765, this first national then transcultural and global diffusion of a French-style culinary art was anchored in new sociability practices, moving from “aristocratic civility” to “bourgeois habitus.”³⁵

Auguste Escoffier (1846–1935), arguably the most famous French gastronome, transformed the dissemination of a concept of culinary art into a true French globalization project. His *Guide culinaire* (1903), translated into ten languages and continually reprinted, became a worldwide reference for high-quality cuisine. The magazine *Le Carnet d'Épiqueure*, founded in 1911, aimed to promote English tourism and, more generally, international tourism in France by showcasing the appeal of fine dining. Escoffier developed the idea of the *Dîners d'Épiqueure* (dinners of Epicurus) organized by the Ligue des Gourmands, an international restaurant club he founded in 1912. Offering the same menu simultaneously in restaurants across many countries around the world, Escoffier and the French culinary arts achieved world fame. The tenth and last Dîner d'Épiqueure in 1914 gathered more than 10,000 guests in restaurants in 140 cities in Europe and North America. The idea and the initiative continues until today, notably through the Disciples Escoffier International network present not only in Europe, Asia, and North America, but also in Africa and Australia.

Narratives on the Process of Civilization (Raynal and Condorcet)

The concept of civilization, in its modern meaning introduced by Mirabeau and afterwards by numerous thinkers of the late eighteenth century, implies a precise notion of historical development. This development is closely linked to the idea of progress, including intellectual, ethical, and material progress, as well as to the idea of perfectibility. Consequently, it implies a historical narrative that is teleological but not necessarily

34 Florent Quellier, “Grand siècle: tout le raffinement de l’aristocratie” [The Great Century: The Sophistication of the Aristocracy], *La Cuisine et la table, une culture française. L'Histoire, Collection*, no. 97 (2022): 38–43.

35 Antoine De Baecque, “Le restaurant, invention d’un rite bourgeois” [The Restaurant, Invention of a Bourgeois Ritual], *La Cuisine et la table, une culture française. L'Histoire, Collection*, no. 97 (2022), 54–59, at 54.

linear. Such a narrative postulates a visionary and sometimes utopian culmination of a development that “stands in antinomic contrast to a supposed first state (nature, savagery, [and] barbarism). This stimulates the mind to imagine the ways, causes, and mechanisms of the journey through the centuries.”³⁶

Two emblematic works of the French Enlightenment can be considered as paradigmatic narratives of the civilization process: the *Histoire des deux Indes* (1770–1780), edited by Raynal, and the *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* (1795), by Condorcet. While focusing their vision of history on Europe, they present a global vision of the political, economic, and cultural history of the world in which the process of civilization and also the concept of civilization play an important role.

The *Histoire des deux Indes*—edited by Raynal and written by himself and a team of collaborators, among whom were Diderot, Alexandre Deleyre, and Antoine-Laurent de Jussieu—was the first great historical work of the eighteenth century to give an important function to the concept of civilization. Raynal's work, which appeared in 1770, 1774, and 1780 in three different, successively modified and expanded versions, became a bestseller of its time, with some 50 editions as well as translations (in whole or in part) into all the major European languages. The book had an undeniable influence on the development of a new political language and on political debates that agitated France in the last two decades of the ancien régime and the first two years of the French Revolution, such as the development of the colonial trade, the slave trade, slavery and its abolition, and colonialism and its criticism, as along with major political questions such as the sovereignty of the people and parliamentarianism. The term civilization appears in this work more than 40 times, starting with the second version published in The Hague in 1774 and mostly in passages written by Diderot.

The concept of civilization is thus embedded for the first time in a comprehensive historical narrative, that is to say of European colonial conquests overseas since the mid-fifteenth century. Within this narrative, it has a double meaning: on the one hand, as a term for an advanced state of society and, on the other hand, as a term for a project—colonial, political, or governmental—aimed at promoting a process of civilization. Most occurrences of the term civilization in the *Histoire des deux Indes* refer to the first meaning, noting higher or lower degrees of civilization for different societies and cultures around the globe according to “traces” and “imprints” of civilization perceptible through such indicia as the condition of the dwellings (e. g., with or without windows, made of wood or stone, and so on) and the presence of more sophisticated forms of cultural expression and communication, especially through writing and printing. In the chapter on Guinea, it is stated:

36 Starobinski, “Le mot civilisation,” 17.

Nothing about these settlements bears the marks of a somewhat advanced civilization. The houses are built of tree branches or rushes attached to poles driven so deep into the ground that they can withstand the winds. Windows are rarely seen.³⁷

In addition to the criteria related to material culture, however, the degree of civilization in the view of Raynal and his associates can also be measured by other factors: the presence of institutions such as justice and a functioning state apparatus; the dissemination of rational knowledge (which is opposed to “barbaric” beliefs and “superstition”); the existence of a third estate “without which there would never have been among any people either arts, enlightenment or liberty”³⁸ and that can maintain commerce and ensure the functioning of an enlightened civil society; the achievement of a certain level of prosperity; and, finally, a number of values. The most important values among these are justice, tolerance, equality (considered the antithesis of any form of servitude and slavery, which are deemed incompatible with an advanced state of civilization), and the valorization of trade.

The second dimension of the use of the term civilization, which includes a project to be realized, is developed in the *Histoire des deux Indes* primarily by Diderot. Distancing himself from any form of civilizing process directed by the Catholic Church and Christian missions, as in Paraguay for example, Diderot understands this project as an action aimed at not only “bringing a savage people into civil status, but also freeing a slave people.”³⁹ In particular, in his reflections on the civilization of Russia, formulated in 1772 under the title of “Political Fragments” and inserted for the most part into the *Histoire des deux Indes* since 1774, Diderot sketched the outlines of a civilizing project that would be fundamentally different from the colonial and missionary undertakings of the present and past and thus would contain an anticipatory (or utopian) dimension. Civilization is understood both as a political project and as a “slow and unpredictable (or uncontrollable)” process⁴⁰ that leads a society from barbarism to civilization. Diderot

37 Guillaume-Thomas Raynal, *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* [A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies], book 11 (Geneva: Pellet, 1780), chap. 15; See also Guillaume-Thomas Raynal, “Mœurs, habitudes et occupations des peuples de la Guinée” [Mores, Habits, and Occupations of the Peoples of Guinea], in Guillaume-Thomas Raynal: *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes*, vol. 3, eds. Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink et al. (Paris: Centre International d’Étude du XVIIIe siècle, 2020), 136.

38 Raynal, *Histoire philosophique*, vol. 1, book 5, chap. 23, 537.

39 Gianluigi Goggi, “Diderot et le concept de civilisation” [Diderot and the Concept of Civilization], *Dix-huitième Siècle*, no. 29 (1997): 353–373, at 362. On the transfer of the concept of civilization in Russia, see also Georges Dulac, “Quelques exemples de transferts européens du concept de ‘civilisation’ (1765–1780)” [Some Examples of European Transfers of the Concept of “Civilization” (1765–1780)], in *Les équivoques de la civilisation*, ed. Bertrand Binoche (Seyssel: Éditions Champ Vallon, 2005), 106–135.

40 Goggi, “Diderot,” 372.

declares any state of slavery, as well as *corvée* (forced labor) or capitation tax,⁴¹ incompatible with civilization. Concerning the civilizations of the peoples of the Amazon, the Rio Negro, and the Orinoco, he further states: “These peoples must have enjoyed the benefits of civilization for centuries before they bear its burdens.”⁴² And being aware that any process of civilization can lead to forms of slavish imitation and can threaten the destruction of cultures, Diderot criticizes “the passive imitation of foreign models and a renunciation by Russians of their national character,” using the example of Russia’s civilization project propagated by Peter I and Catherine II: “They must remain Russians and have ‘a national character, but different from the one they had.’”⁴³

In his *Esquisse d’un tableau historique des progrès de l’esprit humain*, Condorcet also develops a narrative for the development of human societies, albeit on partly quite different premises than Raynal and Diderot, in which the notions of progress, enlightenment, and civilization assume central conceptual and argumentative functions. The work was written in 1793, but not published until 1795, a year after Condorcet’s death, and the author, unlike Diderot, emphasizes France’s leading role in the process of civilization. Condorcet’s work—which is divided into ten “epochs,” starts from the union of human beings into “peoples,” and marks a “primitive” state of the development of human societies—culminates in the last two “epochs” in the period from René Descartes to the French Revolution, encompassing the Enlightenment in particular, and in a forward-looking chapter on the “future progress of the human mind.” Condorcet’s vision of the history of civilization is thus characterized by the increasing development of knowledge, a differentiation of social and governmental structures, and a growing sophistication of social practices. This overall movement, however, is interrupted by long periods of regression and decadence, between the end of the Roman Empire and the High Middle Ages, and is also marked by phases of “restoration.” The belief that people of all societies and cultures could reach the same advanced level of civilization, despite their very unequal stages of development and obvious cultural peculiarities, is rooted in Condorcet’s anthropological assumption of the existence of “similar capacities”:

The formation of societies, the onset of the first arts, [and] the resemblance observed in the customs of nations which have reached the same degree of civilization are the natural result of the development of similar faculties and presuppose neither a common tribe whose

41 Raynal, *Histoire philosophique*, vol. 3, book 13, chap. 10, 317.

42 Raynal, 317.

43 Original in Goggi, “Diderot,” 357: “imitation passive de modèles étrangers et une renonciation de la part des Russes à leur caractère national. Ils devront rester russes et ‘avoir un caractère national, mais différent de celui qu’ils avaient.’” The quotation from Diderot in single quotation marks is taken from Guillaume-Thomas Raynal, *Histoire des deux Indes* [History of the Two Indies], vol. 2, book 5 (Amsterdam: n.p., 1770), 205.

chiefs would have received a celestial instruction nor a primitive people whose traditions are preserved but [those] to whom progress would have to be explained in some other way.⁴⁴

France and, subsequently, the USA appear in the historical and philosophical narrative developed by Condorcet as the leading nations in the process of civilization, whose driving forces are “reason”⁴⁵ and the dissemination of knowledge through books and print, made possible by the invention of printing in the fifteenth century. Condorcet attributes a pioneering role in this evolution to France, but more recently also to the United States of America, which he legitimizes as follows:

Shall all nations one day approach the state of civilization attained by the most enlightened, the freest, and the most free from prejudice peoples such as the French and the Anglo-Americans.⁴⁶

According to Condorcet’s historical and philosophical vision, it is from these centers, France and the USA, which emerged victorious from the War of Independence, that a cultural and social process of civilization of all the societies of the globe would unfold. The term civilization is, to a certain extent, sacralized in Condorcet’s work, which implies the fundamentally negative semantization, even the “demonization,” of its antonyms. Condorcet, whose anticolonialist and antislavery positions are unambiguous,⁴⁷ sees in

44 Original in Nicolas (Marquis) de Condorcet, *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain. Fragment de l'histoire de la 1re époque* [Outlines of an Historical View of the Progress of the Human Mind: A Fragment of History from the First Epoch], in *Condorcet, Œuvres*, vol. 4, eds. Arthur Condorcet O'Connor and François Arago (Paris: Firmin Didot frères, 1847), 290–381, at 380–81: “La formation des sociétés, l'intervention des premiers arts, la ressemblance qu'on observe dans l'usage des nations qui sont parvenues au même degré de civilisation, est la suite naturelle du développement de facultés semblables, et ne suppose ni une tige commune dont les chefs auraient reçu une instruction céleste, ni un peuple primitif dont on conserve les traditions, mais dont il faudrait expliquer les progrès d'une autre manière.” On this point, see also Keith Michael Baker, *Condorcet, Raison et politique* [*Condorcet: From Natural Philosophy to Social Mathematics*], trans. Michel Vovelle (Paris: Hermann, 1988), 464.

45 On this point, see Rolf Reichardt, *Reform und Revolution bei Condorcet. Ein Beitrag zur späten Aufklärung in Frankreich* [Reform and Revolution in Condorcet: A Contribution to the Late Enlightenment in France] (Bonn: Röhrscheid, 1973), 31–47.

46 Original in Nicolas (Marquis) de Condorcet, *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain. Suivi de Fragment sur l'Atlantide* [Outlines of a Historical View of the Progress of the Human Mind: Fragment Tracking on Atlantis] (with introduction, chronology, and bibliography by Alain Pons) (Paris: Flammarion, 1988), 265–266: “Toutes les nations doivent-elles se rapprocher un jour de l'état de civilisation où sont parvenus les peuples les plus éclairés, les plus libres, les plus affranchis des préjugés, tels que les Français et les Anglo-Américains.” On this passage, see also Pierre Michel, “Barbarie, Civilisation, Vandalisme” [Barbarism, Civilization, and Vandalism], in *Handbuch politisch-sozialer Grundbegriffe in Frankreich (1680–1820)*, vol. 8, ed. Rolf Reichardt (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1988), 22.

47 See especially Nicolas (Marquis) de Condorcet, *Réflexions sur l'esclavage des nègres et autres textes abolitionnistes* [Reflections on Negro Slavery and other Abolitionist Texts] (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003).

the process of civilization a secular task and project that replaces, in a way, the Christian missions whose abusive and proselytizing nature he never ceases to criticize.⁴⁸ This civilizing mission aims at educating, emancipating, and civilizing, and it gives Europe, especially the France of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, a leading role among the European peoples. In the tenth epoch of his *Esquisse d'un tableau historique sur les progrès de l'esprit humain*, Condorcet specifies this French and European civilizing mission that he sees detached from colonization:

But the moment is undoubtedly approaching when we will no longer show them only corrupters or tyrants, but will become useful tools or generous liberators. [...]

Then the Europeans, confined to a free trade and too enlightened about their own rights to play with those of other peoples, will respect the independence they have so brazenly violated up to now. [...]

These vast lands will offer them [the Europeans] here numerous peoples who, to civilize themselves, seem only waiting to receive from us the means and to find in Europeans brothers to become their friends and disciples; there, nations enslaved under saintly despots or stupid conquerors, crying out for liberators for so many centuries; elsewhere, almost savage peoples whom the harshness of their climate keeps away from the comforts of a *perfected civilization*, while the same harshness repels those who would bring to them the benefits of that civilization.⁴⁹

For Condorcet, a revolutionary politician and heir to Enlightenment thinking, the process of civilization thus involves “a becoming and a sacred value” as it is “light in expansion.”⁵⁰ At the same time, he claims for France the historical role as “the avant-garde (or the lighthouse) of civilization,”⁵¹ a view adopted by numerous French intellectuals and politicians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries from very different

48 On this point, see also Starobinski, “Le mot civilisation,” 33–34.

49 Original in Condorcet, *Esquisse*, 268–270: “Mais l’instant approche sans doute où, cessant de ne leur montrer que des corrupteurs, ou des tyrans, nous deviendrons pour eux des instruments utiles, ou de généreux libérateurs. [...] Alors les Européens, se bornant à un commerce libre, trop éclairés sur leurs propres droits pour se jouer de ceux des autres peuples, respecteront cette indépendance qu’ils ont jusqu’ici violée avec tant d’audace. [...] Ces vastes pays lui offriront ici des peuples nombreux, qui semblent n’attendre pour se *civiliser*, que de recevoir de nous les moyens, et de trouver des frères dans les Européens, pour devenir leurs amis et leurs disciples ; là, des nations asservies sous des despotes sacrés ou des conquérants stupides, et qui, depuis tant de siècles, appellent des libérateurs ; ailleurs des peuplades presque sauvages, que la dureté de leur climat éloigne des douceurs d’une *civilisation perfectionnée*, tandis que cette même dureté repousse également ceux qui voudraient leur en faire connaître les avantages.” On this passage, see also Starobinski, “Le mot civilisation,” 34–36.

50 Starobinski, “Le mot civilisation,” 36.

51 Starobinski, 36.

backgrounds, from Napoleon Bonaparte⁵² to Jules Michelet⁵³ and from Victor Hugo,⁵⁴ Jules Ferry, and Georges Duhamel to Régis Debray. However, Condorcet's vehemently advocated idea of fundamentally separating civilizing mission from colonial conquest was to prove illusory and utopian for at least a century and a half.

Nevertheless, Condorcet's discourse, marked by ambivalences, as well as that of other contemporaries, raises doubts as to whether the process of civilization through "education" or "liberation" could take place not only peacefully, with the consent of the peoples concerned, but also through coercion or even force, violence, and arms.⁵⁵

Civilizing Mission and Colonialism

The Enlightenment's grand narratives about the global process of civilization and the role France played in it emphasize the fact that this role is explicitly or implicitly closely linked to colonial conquests. Indeed, in the *Éphémérides du citoyen ou chronique de l'esprit national* of the physiocrat Baudeau, beginning in 1766, the terms *civilization* and *European civilization* are used to envision a civilizing mission whose successful fulfillment, guided by an enlightened spirit and ideals of humanity, would have spared France the loss of Canada in the Seven Years' War (1756–1763). Baudeau's reflections

52 See, e.g., Bonaparte's speech to his troops embarking on the expedition to Egypt, quoted in Moras, *Ursprung und Entwicklung*, 24, and Starobinski, "Le mot civilisation," 36: "Soldats! vous allez entreprendre une conquête dont les effets sur la civilisation et le commerce du monde sont incalculables" (Soldiers! you are about to undertake a conquest whose effects on civilization and world trade are incalculable).

53 Michelet claimed for France "le pontificat de la civilisation nouvelle" (the pontificate of the new civilization), thus following a "transfert de sacralité" (transfer of sacredness) from the religious to the civilizational. See the quote in Moras, *Ursprung und Entwicklung*, 24.

54 See the following quotes from Victor Hugo in Wolfgang Schmidt-Hidding, ed., *Europäische Schlüsselwörter. Wortvergleichende und wortgeschichtliche Studien* [European Keywords: Word Comparative and Word Historical Studies], vol. 3 (Munich: Max Hueber, 1967), 24, where the Christian mission and the secular civilizing mission are also contrasted: "Le peuple français a été missionnaire de la civilisation en Europe [...] On peut dire que dans notre siècle il y a deux écoles. Ces deux écoles condensent et résument en elles les deux courants contraires qui entraînent la civilisation en sens inverse, l'un vers l'avenir, l'autre vers le passé; la première des deux écoles s'appelle Paris, l'autre s'appelle Rome" (The French people have been missionaries of civilization in Europe [...] One can say that in our century there are two schools. These two schools condense and summarize in themselves the two contrary currents that drive civilization in opposite directions, one toward the future, the other toward the past; the first of the two schools is called Paris, the other is called Rome). See also Starobinski, "Le mot civilisation," 37. Starobinski characterizes this quotation from a speech by Hugo after his exile "l'expression la plus complète de cet accaparement national de la civilisation, épiphanie du sacré de l'âge moderne" (as the most comprehensive expression of this national appropriation of civilization, epiphany of the sacred of the modern age).

55 On this point, see also Arnaud Orain, Jean-Luc Chappey, and Antoine Lilti, "Usages de l'absent. La figure de Lapérouse et la Révolution française" [Using the Absent: The Figure of Lapérouse and the French Revolution], *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 76, no. 1 (2021): 47–82, at 71–75.

are formulated in the conditional, that is to say they develop a vision of history *that could have gone like this* if those responsible had been better informed and enlightened. They sketch the outlines of an alternative colonization project that does not rely on war and domination but on peaceful understanding, civilizational acculturation, and the intermingling of colonizers and colonized peoples:

The civilization of the North Americans should undoubtedly have been considered as one of the first objects of the policy which directed our colonies. [...] We could have gradually won over these natives; converted them not only to the Christian faith but also to European civilization; made them more or less true French by adoption; taken charge of their children, whom they would willingly give to be educated when their trust has been won; given them a truly French education; and crossed the races in their settlement, that is to say joined an American to the daughter of a European-born settler and a well-educated young Indian to a Frenchman. From the second or third generation, you would have had only one very numerous, very robust people, [who would have been] very easy to govern for the metropolis, but very difficult to subjugate for our enemies.⁵⁶

The article “Sauvages” in the *Encyclopédie des gens du monde* of 1844, following on from the article “Civilisation” in the same dictionary, mentions very explicitly the connection between the process of civilization and colonial conquest, which is here free of utopian notions while at the same time rejecting the slave trade and slavery that Bonaparte’s France had reintroduced in 1802:

Be that as it may, in spite of the efforts of civilization, which daily advances from conquest to conquest, we are forced to agree that the wilderness is far from being completely eradicated from our globe. To begin with, we count in Africa numerous Negro peoples who have no laws and no reasonable organization, and some of whom know neither the ties of marriage nor

56 Original in Nicolas Baudeau, “Des colonies françaises aux Indes Occidentales” [From the French Colonies to the West Indies], *Éphémérides du Citoyen, ou Chronique de l’Esprit National* 5, no. 3 (1766): 34–64, at 60–62: “La civilisation des Américains Septentrionaux auroit dû sans doute être considérée comme un des premiers objets de la politique qui dirigeoit nos Colonies. [...] On auroit pu gagner peu-à-peu ces Naturels, les convertir non-seulement à la foi Chrétienne, mais encore à la civilisation Européenne, en faire à peu-près de vrais François par adoption, se charger de leurs enfants, qu’ils donnent volontiers à instruire quand on a gagné leur confiance ; leur donner une éducation vraiment française, & croiser les races dans leur établissement, c’est-à-dire, joindre un Américain à la fille d’un Colon né dans l’Europe, & une jeune Sauvage bien élevée à un François. Dès la seconde ou troisième génération, vous n’aurez eu qu’un seul peuple très nombreux, très robuste, très facile à gouverner pour la Métropole, mais très difficile à subjuguer pour nos Ennemis.”

paternity: it is they who provide the richest fodder for the shameful trade known as human trafficking.⁵⁷

The author of the article, the writer and administrator Ernest-Antoine Déadde (alias Saint-Yves), by no means not only limited these uncivilized and still “savage” territories to the African and American continents but also, following Raynal’s *Histoire des deux Indes* and the writings of Catherine II, included the territories annexed by Russia in Eastern Siberia:

Many peoples in Eastern Siberia and on the neighboring islands also live in a state of savagery. The day will undoubtedly come when, following the example of their civilizing ancestors, they too will completely discard the swaddling clothes of barbarism and remember the high destinies promised to our species, which man can achieve only through ceaseless effort and courageous struggle.⁵⁸

Heir to the France of the age of Enlightenment and the French Revolution, the republican France of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw in its civilizing mission a foundation and the legitimization par excellence of its colonial empire. The discourse of the colonial exhibitions wanted to be part of the continuity of a discourse from which the polyphony and the critical and discordant voices, such as those of Diderot and Condorcet, were deliberately discarded. As a case in point, French books aimed at educating schoolchildren in French Algeria and French West Africa. The African adaptations of *Tour de la France par deux Enfants* (1877), a bestseller of the Third Republic’s education system, such as *Les étapes d’un petit Algérien dans la province d’Oran* (1888), by Jules Renard, and *Moussa et Gi-gla: Histoire de deux petits noirs* (1916), by Louis Sonolet and Auguste Pérès,⁵⁹ were meant to be exaltations of a globalized French-style civilization project. This project was based both on material culture and on the values

57 Original in “SAUVAGES,” in *Encyclopédie des gens du monde*, vol. 21, ed. Alexis-François Artaud de Montor (Paris: Librairie de Treuttel et Würtz, 1844), 60: “Quoi qu’il en soit, et malgré les efforts de la civilisation qui marche tous les jours de conquête en conquête, nous sommes forcés de convenir que l’état sauvage est loin de se voir entièrement extirpé de notre globe. Nous comptons d’abord en Afrique de nombreuses peuplades nègres, sans lois, sans organisation raisonnable et dont quelques-unes ne connaissent ni les liens du mariage, ni ceux de la paternité: ce sont eux qui fournissent la plus ample pâture à l’infâme trafic connu sous le nom de traite.”

58 Original in “SAUVAGES”: “Beaucoup de peuples de la Sibérie orientale et des îles voisines vivent également à l’état sauvage. Un jour viendra sans doute où, suivant l’exemple de leurs aînés en civilisation, eux aussi se dépouilleront complètement des langes de la barbarie, et se souviendront des hautes destinées promises à notre espèce et que l’homme ne peut atteindre que par des efforts incessants et des luttes courageuses.”

59 On this point, see Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, “Von Phalsbourg nach Marseille und Dakar. Zum ‘Tour de la France par deux enfants’ (1877) und seinen kolonialen Adaptationen” [From Phalsbourg to Marseille and Dakar: On the “Tour de la France par deux enfants” (1877) and Its Colonial Adaptations], in *Tour*

of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, being shared by a “France of the five parts of the world.”⁶⁰

Postcolonial Challenges, Functions, and Survival of a Concept-Narrative

The concept of civilization and the French universalist narrative that it implies met with fierce criticism after World War II and was radically questioned by African and Caribbean politicians and intellectuals. They exposed the ambivalences and contradictions associated with the civilizing project in its specifically French form, which since the end of the eighteenth century had combined “the cosmopolitan universalism of the Enlightenment and the patriotic proselytism of the Revolution.”⁶¹ The work of the Caribbean writer Aimé Césaire, who, together with Léopold Sédar Senghor, was one of the spokesmen of the Négritude movement, is emblematic in this respect. In particular, in Césaire’s *Discours sur le colonialisme* (1950), the concept of civilization and the narratives associated with it play a central role.

“This speech is an act of accusation and liberation,” Césaire writes at the beginning of his work, only to then denounce the false promises and ideological narratives associated with the phrases “white civilization” and “so-called European civilization.”⁶² In the face of the barbarism of World War II and the Holocaust, Europe would have lost any legitimacy to “civilize” other cultures around the globe. Rather than carrying a civilizing mission, colonialism had instead been a “human-exploiting and dehumanizing machine, a machine for destroying civilizations that were beautiful, dignified, and fraternal.”⁶³ In this way, Césaire radically questions the French and, by extension, the Western mission of civilization. Faced with the Indochina War (1946–1954) and the massacres in Madagascar in 1947 that cost tens of thousands of victims, to which he refers, Césaire defends the thesis that colonization has profoundly “decivilized”⁶⁴ the colonizer and

de France. Eine historische Rundreise. Festschrift für Rainer Hudemann, eds. Armin Heinen and Dietmar Hüser (Wiesbaden: Franz-Steiner-Verlag, 2008), 127–135.

60 Octave Hombert, *La France des cinq parties du monde. Avec une carte* [France in the Five Parts of the World: With a Map] (Paris: Plon, 1927). On this work, see also Jean de Lacave, “Notre bibliothèque” [Our Library], *La Revue Indigène*, no. 226/227 (1927): 207–208.

61 Orain, Chappey, and Lilti, “Usages de l’absent,” 72.

62 Aimé Césaire, “Discours sur le colonialisme (1950)” [Speech on Colonialism (1950)], *Césaire, Œuvres complètes*, vol. 3 (Fort-de-France: Désormaux, 1976), 355–371, at 359.

63 Césaire, 357.

64 Césaire, 362: “Il faudrait étudier comment la colonisation travaille à *déciviliser* le colonisateur, à l’*abrutir* au sens propre du mot, à le dégrader, à le réveiller aux instincts enfouis, à la convoitise, à la violence, à la haine raciale” (It would be necessary to study how colonization works to decivilize the colonizer, to dumb down him in the true sense of the word, to degrade him, to awaken him to buried instincts, to covetousness, to violence, to racial hate).

that its promises of progress and humanism have been transformed into violence and barbaric acts. Without fundamentally questioning the process of civilization and its potentially emancipatory scope (through humanist values and education in particular), Césaire challenges the association between civilizing mission and colonialism that had been at the heart of the French globalization project since the beginning of the Third Republic (1870–1940).

Many politicians and intellectuals from the countries of the French colonial empire defended positions close to those of Césaire: such as Bernard Dadié, writer and future minister of the independent Ivory Coast;⁶⁵ Mongo Beti, militant writer and spokesman for anticolonialism in Cameroon;⁶⁶ or Boubacar Boris Diop, Senegalese journalist, intellectual, and writer as well as defender of African languages and radical critic of French political, economic, and cultural neocolonialism in Africa. The contemporary generation of African intellectuals, such as Diop, has however gone much further than Césaire in distancing itself from the civilization project. Césaire had mainly pointed out the contradictions between the promises of the civilization project, with which he at least partially identified,⁶⁷ and the colonial realities, which were often fundamentally different.

There are other voices, however, such as that of the Moroccan writer Driss Chraïbi. In his novel *La Civilisation ma mère* (1972), set in 1930s Morocco, then a French protectorate, he describes the slow transformation of society as a result of the civilization process in its material (appearance of new objects such as the iron and institutions such as the cinema) and intellectual (especially through schools and books) dimensions. The example of the protagonist's mother, who is at the center of the novel, nevertheless highlights the emancipatory potential of French civilization, even though it is considered and appropriated in a radically critical perspective. It is, in fact, thanks to her encounter

65 See, e. g., Viviane Uetto and Marc Adoux Papé, eds., *Hommage à Bernard B. Dadié, père-fondateur de la littérature ivoirienne d'expression française* [Tribute to Bernard B. Dadié, Founding Father of French Ivorian Literature] (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2019), 9–14, at 11: “Cet Autre, qui s'avancait avec les armes de la nouveauté et de la séduction, était prêt à faire retentir les balles de plomb de ses fusils contre ceux qui ne se plieraient pas à l'Ordre de Sa Civilisation. Ce même Visiteur, vite mué en Conquérant-colonisateur, ne prenait garde qu'il défigurait ainsi par ses actions cette Civilisation étrangère qu'il nous présentait comme la meilleure” (This other, who came forward with the weapons of novelty and seduction, was ready to fire the lead bullets of his guns against those who would not bend to the order of his civilization. This same visitor, quickly transformed into a conqueror-colonizer, did not take into account that he was disfiguring by his actions this foreign civilization that he presented to us as the best).

66 See, e. g., Mongo Beti, “Identité et tradition (1978)” [Identity and Tradition (1978)], *Le Rebelle*, vol. 1 (Paris: Gallimard, 2007), 46–62.

67 Beti, 360: “Qu'est-ce en son principe que la colonisation? De convenir ce qu'elle n'est point: ni évangélisation, ni entreprise philanthropique, ni volonté de reculer les frontières de l'ignorance, de la maladie, de la tyrannie, ni élargissement de Dieu, ni extension du Droit” (What is colonization in principle? To agree on what it is not: neither evangelization; nor philanthropic enterprise; nor will to push back the frontiers of ignorance, disease, tyranny; nor expansion of god; nor extension of the law).

with French civilization, the culture of the written word, her readings, and the many new human contacts she makes that his mother successively distances herself from the role of the traditional and obedient woman she had long embodied.

After two centuries, the concepts of French civilization and civilizing mission lost their function and role project in the context of decolonization as key identity-forming concepts of a French-style globalization. During this upheaval, these concepts were radically challenged not only by the successive movements of decolonization, which denounced their colonial character, but also by their deep contradictions. They were linked to a national narrative constructed since the eighteenth century that saw France at the forefront of a process of civilization to which it had itself arrived, following a slow, multisecular evolution. The conservative and monarchist historian and politician François Guizot, in his *Histoire de la civilisation en France* (1846), traces this long process of France's access to the highest degrees of civilization, both socially and intellectually. For Guizot, France is without question "the most civilized country in Europe," "the country whose civilization is the most complete [and] the most communicative," and the one that "has most struck the European imagination."⁶⁸

Writings such as those by Duhamel, celebrating French civilization and its global mission, which appeared in the midst of World War II and in a deeply divided France, show that this concept-narrative, together with the rhetoric that characterizes it, served as a "cement of identity" for the French nation, even, and especially, in times of crisis. Based on the distinction between a "culture" that is considered to be specific to a people and a nation and the "civilization" that "tends to universality,"⁶⁹ the concept of French civilization has thus resolutely distanced itself in an almost manifest manner from the German *Kultur*, perceived as particularistic, limited, and compartmentalized. The opposition between German *Kultur* and French civilization became politicized after the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71) and culminated on the eve and during World War I. The journalist and historian Jacques Bainville proclaimed in 1912: "French civilization is a superior civilization and German *Kultur* is only a form of barbarism."⁷⁰ With the anticolonialist movements, however, the notion of civilizing mission was largely discredited and with it, at least partially, also that of civilization.

68 François Guizot, *Histoire de la civilisation en France depuis la chute de l'Empire romain jusqu'en 1789. Cours d'histoire moderne professé à la Faculté des Lettres par M. Guizot* [History of Civilization in France from the Fall of the Roman Empire to 1789: Course of Modern History Taught at the Faculty of Letters by M. Guizot], vol. 1 (Paris: Pichon et Didier, 1829–1832), 3.

69 On this point, see also Aimé Césaire, "Culture et colonisation. Communication au Congrès des écrivains noirs. Paris, 1956" [Culture and Colonization: Communication to the Congress of Black Writers. Paris, 1956], *Césaire, Œuvres complètes*, 433–457, at 437.

70 Jacques Bainville, *Journal 1901–1918* (Paris: Plon, 1918), 103. See also Jörg Fisch, "Zivilisation, Kultur" [Civilization, Culture], in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, vol. 7, eds. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2004), 679–774, at 756.

The publication of the book *Civilisation: Comment nous sommes devenus américains* by Régis Debray, an influential French intellectual and also during some time a political advisor and a close political companion of François Mitterrand, president of France between 1981 and 1995, reflects the astonishing survival of the concept and, perhaps even more so, of the very idea of a French civilization that is at once singular, universal, and exemplary. This concept refers to the universalism of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution and in particular to that of human rights and democracy, despite current challenges. The recent emergence of the threat of “decivilization,” a concept born in 2023 from an exchange between political scientist Jérôme Fourquet and President Emmanuel Macron following the work of Norbert Elias, also seems symptomatic of the still quite strong valorization of the term “civilization” in French society. French civilization is further used as an intellectual weapon defending the “cultural exception,” implying the will to protect the cultural sphere against the neoliberal capitalist grip, American hegemonic pretensions, and the rise of violence in modern societies like the contemporary French society.

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Enlightenment and French Colonial Projects: Policies and Ideas

Introduction: The Birth of Modern Colonialism?

As a rule, scholars of the Enlightenment see the eighteenth century as the era of the dawning of modernity, even though they do so in different and often contradictory ways. Many specialists of eighteenth-century history and culture search in the Enlightenment for the roots of liberal and democratic modernity. By contrast, the postmodern feminist and postcolonial critiques identify in the Enlightenment the beginning of new oppression. Accordingly, in scholarship, the philosophers are credited for having invented both anticolonialism and the ideology of modern colonialism. Enlightenment apologists think that the information and ideas from overseas had helped Enlightenment philosophers not only to criticize European societies but also to reflect critically on the activities of Europeans in the Americas, Africa, and Asia. They believe that major philosophers had granted “cultural agency” to any human being, rejected the worldwide spread of European civilization, and developed a critique of colonialism.¹ Especially Guillaume Thomas François Raynal and Denis Diderot are frequently regarded as precursors of modern anticolonialism. In the past decades, Raynal’s (and Diderot’s) *A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the Two Indies* (thereafter: *A History of the Two Indies*), a multi-volume work first published in 1770, and very much expanded in the following editions, has become a key work of the so-called Radical Enlightenment, which is said to have resolutely advocated the modern ideas of equality and freedom.²

By contrast, in the early 1970s, Michèle Duchet noted that philosophers, instead of fighting colonialism, had supported colonial expansion through their writings. Though

1 Sankar Muthu, *Enlightenment Against Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Jonathan I. Israel, *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man 1670–1752* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Jonathan I. Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution and Human Rights, 1750–1790* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

2 Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment*, 413–442; Guillaume-Thomas Raynal, *La Bible des révolutions. Textes et citations extraits de l’Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des européens dans les deux Indes, de Guillaume-Thomas Raynal* [The Bible of Revolutions: Texts and Quotes from the Philosophical and Political History of European Settlements and Trade in the Two Indies, by Guillaume-Thomas Raynal], eds. Gilles Bancarel and François Paul Rossi (Millau: Éditions Clapas, 2013).

the Enlightenment authors expressed compassion for the fate of the subjected “savages,” they pleaded at the same time that they be civilized.³ Since the twentieth century, post-colonial scholars have equated the Enlightenment’s claim to progress with an “Enlightenment project” that apparently existed in a “homogenizing and totalitarian discourse,” an “abstract and imperialist fiction,” and the will to move against the diversity of the world.⁴ The core project of the Enlightenment was, so they claim, the replacement of all local and traditional norms and all transcendental beliefs with supposedly universal notions of the rational. In this view, Enlightenment philosophy excluded other cultures.⁵ In addition, since the 1970s, the emancipatory character of Enlightenment anthropology has been fundamentally questioned. Numerous scholars today emphasize the emergence of racist theories in the eighteenth century, and even the Shoah is sometimes understood as a consequence of the Enlightenment.⁶ The limits of the Enlightenment struggle against slavery are also emphasized.⁷

Finally, Edward Said’s thesis, according to which the Europeans have constructed a passive, immobile Orient, also had an impact on the study of the Enlightenment, even though Said himself located the emergence of imperialist Orientalism as late as around 1800. During the eighteenth century particularly within Europe, with the help

3 Michèle Duchet, *Anthropologie et Histoire au siècle des Lumières* [Anthropology and History in the Age of Enlightenment] (Paris: Maspéro, 1971), esp. 18.

4 John Gray, “After the New Liberalism,” *Enlightenment’s Wake: Politics and Culture at the Close of the Modern Age* (Milton Park: Routledge, 1995), 120–131 and 120–124; Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (London: Duckworth, 1981); Malick W. Ghachem, “Montesquieu in the Caribbean: The Colonial Enlightenment between Code Noir and Code civil,” in *Postmodernism and the Enlightenment. New Perspectives in Eighteenth-Century French Intellectual History*, ed. Daniel Gordon (Milton Park: Routledge, 2001), 7–30, at 7; Robert Wokler, “Projecting the Enlightenment,” in *After MacIntyre*, eds. John Horton and Susan Mendus (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 108–126.

5 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Towards a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); Uday Mehta, “Liberal Strategies of Exclusion,” in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, eds. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 59–86.

6 George Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (New York: Fertig, 1978); Richard H. Popkin, “The Philosophical Basis of Modern Racism,” in *Racism in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Harold E. Pagliaro (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1973), 245–262; Pierre Boulle, “In Defense of Slavery: Eighteenth-century Opposition to Slavery and the Origins of Racist Ideology in France,” in *History from Below*, ed. Frederick Krantz (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 219–246; Robert Bernasconi, “Kant as an Unfamiliar Source of Racism,” in *Philosophers on Race: Critical Essays*, eds. Julie K. Ward and Tommy L. Lott (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 145–166; Andrew Valls, ed., *Race and Racism in Modern Philosophy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Sara Eigen and Mark Larrimore, *The German Invention of Race* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006); Silvia Sebastiani, *The Scottish Enlightenment: Race, Gender, and the Limits of Progress* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013); Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1997).

7 Louis Sala-Molins, *Les Misères des Lumières. Sous la raison, l’outrage* [The Miseries of Enlightenment: Under Reason, Outrage] (Paris: Laffont, 1992).

of Enlightenment concepts, borders were drawn between “progressive” and “backward” regions, between “civilization” and “barbarism.”⁸ Hence, some researchers hold that modern colonialism has its ideological roots in the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment thinkers, so they claim, had made European reason absolute and had infantilized non-European peoples. They pronounced them backward and declared the European model to be the only authoritative one.⁹ In a postmodern interpretation, Condorcet, whose remains were ceremonially transferred to the Pantheon in 1989 thanks to the role assigned to him as a pioneer of the rights of black slaves and women, mutates into an imperialist.¹⁰

In my view, scholars of both sides postulate lines of continuity between the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries all too quickly. Many follow the premise that there was such a thing like “modernity,” yet they rarely define what they mean by it. A comparison of colonial ideology, projects, and practices from the seventeenth to the twentieth century may bring a much more complex and nuanced picture than that of both sides of the controversy described above. For example, Saliha Belmessous has recently pointed to continuities between French colonial political approaches in seventeenth-century Canada and those in nineteenth-century Algeria, which puts into question the assumption that the eighteenth century was a watershed in the history of colonial ideology. Belmessous questions the periodization of French colonial history commonly used in historiography and proposes that the first (early modern) and the second (modern) colonial empire should not be viewed separately from each other. At the same time, Belmessous shows that the assimilation project was repeatedly abandoned and undermined by racist assumptions.¹¹

The validity of this continuity thesis must be examined along with the thesis of an epochal rupture in the eighteenth century. Still, while it does not neglect moments of doubt, the plurality of visions, and ruptures, this recent scholarship points out to the fact that there may have been an ancien régime French globalization project that was still influential in the nineteenth century. As we will see in the following, this globalization project was closely linked to a certain vision of French national history and identity. It rested on the idea that France had been civilized by the Romans and should now take up the torch, establishing its rule in “barbarian” lands and civilizing the indigenous

8 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge, 1978); Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilisation in the Mind of Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

9 Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*.

10 Condorcet as an anti-imperialist: Muthu, *Enlightenment Against Empire*, 2; Condorcet as an imperialist: Daniel Carey and Lynn Festa, “Introduction,” in *The Postcolonial Enlightenment: Eighteenth-Century Colonialism and Postcolonial Theory*, eds. Daniel Carey and Lynn Festa (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1.

11 Saliha Belmessous, *Assimilation and Empire: Uniformity in French and British Colonies, 1541–1954* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

peoples. This ancien régime grand design presented both continuities and differences to the Third Republic's French globalization project.

Changing Colonial Politics after the Seven Years' War

In the late Enlightenment, there were undoubtedly major changes in French colonial policy. As early as the late 1740s, Joseph-François Dupleix had begun to build a territorial empire in southern India. It was a decisive step toward a new kind of colonialism in Asia when the French Compagnie des Indes and its British counterpart, the East India Company, took over entire indigenous political entities.¹² At the same time, however, it should be noted that this policy of expansion remained very controversial. Dupleix was even recalled to France because of the costs generated by his aggressive course. Even his partisans only tentatively legitimized his expansionist course. They were most likely advancing arguments of climate theory to justify the takeover of South Asian territories. Their dominant defense pattern was to present expansion as an unplanned side effect only of individual and politically astute decisions to protect French settlements from British aggression.¹³ Dupleix and his followers thus were far from propagating the idea of a civilizing mission like the British and other colonial rulers in modern India.¹⁴ With the demolition of French forts in India after 1763, ambitious expansion plans on this subcontinent were no longer on the agenda anyway. At best, the French could only have the ambition to stop British expansion in alliance with local princes.

It is only after the Seven Years' War (1756–1763) that a clear influence of Enlightenment ideas on colonial projects and policies is palpable. This had to do, above all, with the fact that the development model of the plantation island came under increasing criticism. Initially, it being questioned had little to do with abolitionism, which only emerged in the 1770s and crystallized into a movement in the early 1780s. It was mainly due to the fact that colonial civil servants and ministry officials predicted an uncertain future for the Caribbean island colonies, not so much because they seriously contemplated a slave rebellion but rather because they considered the defense of the

12 Philippe Haudrère, *La Compagnie française des Indes au XVIII^e siècle* [The French East India Company in the Eighteenth Century] (Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2005), 713–773; Peter James Marshall, “The British in Asia: Trade to Dominion, 1700–1765,” in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 2, ed. Michael Mann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 487–508.

13 See Dupleix's defence in Joseph François Dupleix, *Mémoire pour le Sieur Dupleix contre la Compagnie des Indes, avec les pièces justificatives* [Brief for Sieur Dupleix against the Compagnie des Indes, with Supporting Documents] (Paris: Le Prieur, 1759); see also Haudrère, *La Compagnie française des Indes*, 738–749. On climate theory as a colonial ideology see Robert Travers, “Ideology and British Expansion in Bengal, 1757–72,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 33, no. 1 (2005): 7–27.

14 On imperial ideology in nineteenth-century India, see Gerald Studdert-Kennedy, *Providence and the Raj: Imperial Mission and Missionary Imperialism* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1998).

islands against the British to be a difficult, if not impossible, undertaking. Great Britain had conquered Guadeloupe in 1759 and Martinique three years later, and while the Versailles government had regained these islands in the Peace of Paris, its worries about the future of these possessions did not abate. As a consequence, *conseils de fortifications* (fortification councils) were established in the Lesser Antilles, and the islands' military elite argued about the sense or otherwise of various plans and construction works to improve fortifications.¹⁵ Yet the military and administrative elites were under no illusions. They were not optimistic about the French ability to defend the Caribbean islands.¹⁶

To be sure, the Ministry of the Navy tried to reinforce local militia, but this policy provoked new tensions and even violent uprisings (especially in the most important French colony, Saint-Domingue) because the Creoles vehemently resisted being taken into military service and opposed the integration into the "white" units of men with "one-eighth of black blood."¹⁷

While the insurgents of Saint-Domingue saw a breach of contract between motherland and colony in the compulsory militia and the growing tax burden, the civil servants and military had a fundamentally different understanding of the relations between France and its overseas possessions. For them, the colonies were a creation of the mother country and consequently subordinate to the interests of France. In their eyes, the current conflicts resulted from the fact that the plantation owners had become corrupted by luxury. The settlers were not patriotically minded because they were only interested in their own financial situation. They were also corrupted by slavery, were scrupulous about the superiority their skin color gave them, and refused to work. Indeed, they did not care whether they were ruled by the king of France or by the king of England, and perhaps even favored British rule. While slaves could not be expected to work for France, colonial politicians could place little trust in plantation owners, to whom they attested a lack of patriotic spirit.¹⁸

15 On the fortification councils and the discussions see the memoranda in the Archives nationales d'Outre-mer in Aix-en-Provence (ANOM), especially in the Dépôt des fortifications des colonies (DFC): ANOM, DFC, VI/mémoires/27, no. 195, 205–207, 227, 235, 238; VI/mémoires/28, no. 306, 367, 378; VI/mémoires/29, no. 390, 399, 413; XI/mémoires/48, no. 219–221; XI/mémoires/49, no. 330, 337; XXXIII/mémoires/1, no. 27, 31, 34, 36, 41, 42, 61, 62; XXXIII/mémoires/2, no. 73, 74, 76, 78, 80; XXXIII/mémoires/3, no. 112, 115, 118–197, 209.

16 See, e.g., ANOM, DFC, VI/mémoires/26, no. 140; DFC, VI/mémoires/27, no. 243, 282, 283, 325, 335; VI/mémoires/29, no. 396; XXXIII/mémoires/1, no. 27, 34, 40, 41, 59, 76.

17 ANOM, DFC, VI/mémoires/26, no. 121; VI/mémoires/27, no. 190, 191; XI/mémoires/48, no. 280; XXXIII/mémoires/1, no. 48, 49, 58; see also John D. Garrigus, *Before Haiti: Race and Citizenship in French Saint-Domingue* (New York: Palgrave Mc Millan, 2006), 109–139; Charles Frostin, *Les Révoltes blanches à Saint-Domingue aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles. Haïti avant 1789* [The White Eevolts in Saint-Domingue in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Haiti before 1789] (Paris: Éd. De l'École, 1975), 181–209.

18 Frostin, *Les Révoltes blanches*, 16–18; Garrigus, *Before Haiti*, 110 f.; ANOM, DFC, XXXIII/mémoires/1, no. 27, 40, 63 (p. 4–8); DFC, XI/mémoires/49, no. 332, "Mémoire au sujet de la Martinique" [Memory about Martinique], n.d.; DFC, VI/mémoires/28, no. 347, "Projet de réforme des milices" [Militia Reform

Such ideas not only were shared by the royal officials of the Caribbean but also were common topoi in the public spheres of the Atlantic world. Even a slave owner like Thomas Jefferson believed that slavery had a perverting effect on the moral condition of the master.¹⁹ Étienne-François de Choiseul, minister of the navy between 1761 and 1766 and of foreign affairs between 1766 and 1770, tried to create a new patriotism, an endeavor for which he relied on the talents of Enlightenment writers like Raynal.²⁰ This may explain partly why the criticism of self-serving colonists, corrupted by luxury and slavery, plays a central role in the *History of the Two Indies*. Raynal contrasted them with the good “republican” settlers, who were considered hardworking and committed to the common good.²¹ In so doing, he followed the ideal of small landowners cultivating their fields with their own hands, which the physiocrats—an Enlightenment current of economic, social, and political thought initiated by François Quesnay and Honoré Gabriel de Riqueti, Marquis de Mirabeau—advocated.

After the Seven Years’ War, many French thus became convinced that the slavery-based plantation colony was not a sustainable model in the long run. Physiocracy played a major role in articulating, legitimizing, and qualifying this uneasiness and soon proved to influence colonial policy in a decisive manner. In 1763, Choiseul had a new colony established according to the physiocratic model in Guyana in the region of Kourou, next to the old colony of Cayenne. He forbade slavery in this region, and instead of Africans, it was Canadian and German immigrants who were to cultivate the soil themselves. Choiseul had 17,000 settlers brought to South America, but the experiment ended in an epidemiological catastrophe that cost thousands of lives. In Kourou, slavery was outlawed for the first time in the French colonial empire. This happened not so much in the name of humanity and certainly not as part of a plan to abolish slavery in all overseas territories. The measure was much rather aimed at creating industrious and patriotically minded small owners who would make the crafts flourish and be good soldiers. Yet it was without doubt part of an Enlightenment critique of slavery that was of physiocratic origins.²²

Project], n.d.; DFC, VI/mémoires/29, no. 405, “Mémoire sur l’administration générale de la Guadeloupe” [Mémor on the General Administration of Guadeloupe], 1786.

19 Thomas Jefferson, “Notes on the State of Virginia,” in *Race and Enlightenment*, ed. Emmanuel Eze (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 95–97.

20 Guy Chausinand-Nogaret, *Choiseul. Naissance de la gauche* [Choiseul: Birth of the Left] (Paris: Perrin, 1998), 87–91, 124, 149–162, 309–314; Gilles Bancarel, *Raynal ou le Devoir de vérité* [Raynal or the Duty of Truth] (Paris: Champion, 2004), 106 f., 113–144.

21 Andreas Pečar and Damien Tricoire, *Falsche Freunde. War die Aufklärung wirklich die Geburtsstunde der Moderne?* [False Friends: Was the Enlightenment Really the Birth of Modernity?] (Frankfurt: Campus, 2015), 129–152.

22 Marion Godfroy-Tayart de Borms, *Kourou, 1763. Le dernier rêve de l’Amérique française* [Kourou, 1763: The Last Dream of French America] (Paris: Vendémiaire, 2011).

Another terrain of Enlightenment colonial experimentation was Madagascar. Similar ideas to those behind the Kourou project are noticeable in the plans of a French expansion on this great island of the southwestern Indian Ocean. These projects were formulated in the late 1760s by Louis Laurent de Fayd'herbe, count of Maudave. According to this former governor of Karaikal in India, the population of the Mascarene islands (today's Mauritius and Île de La Réunion) had become "licentious" through slavery.²³ Madagascar was to develop more "healthily" than its neighbors and also than the Caribbean islands, where "un corps de peuple" (a body of people) was lacking:

There are only masters, who are everything, and slaves, who are nothing, so that the former only serve to benefit the motherland as consumers and the latter only as suppliers of food. The crafts do not develop because of a lack of free and skillful hands. There is a lack of resources for warfare: as one will find neither soldiers nor seamen in this kind of settlement.²⁴

For Maudave and after a whole range of authors and colonial administrators during several decades, Madagascar was to be a second Saint-Domingue (today's Haiti), only better because it would be free of slaves.²⁵ The establishment of a new colony in Kourou, Guyana, was thus accompanied by innovations in colonial policy that, a few years later, were also to be implemented in Madagascar. At the same time, however, the physiocratic model of a settlement colony that was behind the Kourou project differed markedly from the plans for Madagascar in that the indigenous population was largely absent from the deliberations of the governor of the new Guyanese colony—the chevalier of Turgot, a brother of Anne-Robert Turgot, the famous physiocratic economist and later minister of finance.²⁶

And this is where the history of the French attempts at colonial expansion on Madagascar becomes most central to French colonial and intellectual history: Maudave and his followers pleaded for a "soft" colonial expansion through the assimilation of the natives. They envisioned to turn gradually all the Malagasy into Frenchmen and to create a new "Oriental France" in the southern Indian Ocean. This idea was influenced by physiocratic thought, but still a major innovation in the 1760s. Indeed, Maudave was the first French politician to formulate clearly the idea of a "civilizing mission," that is to claim that there was a moral duty of Europeans to civilize "savage" and "barbarian" peoples. In 1772, he declared that the founding of a new colony on Madagascar should

23 ANOM, DFC, XVII/mémoires/88, no. 27, fol. 1, anon., "Projet d'un établissement à Madagascar. 21 novembre 176[?]" [Project of an Establishment in Madagascar: November 21, 176[?]].

24 ANOM, DFC, XVII/mémoires/88, no. 40, p. 12, memorandum by Maudave, n.d.

25 ANOM, DFC, XVII/mémoires/88, no. 26, Maudave to Praslin, April 28, 1767; ANOM, Séries géographiques, MAD 7 15, Cossigny, "Mémoire sur la colonisation de Madagascar" [Memory on the Colonization of Madagascar], April 7, 1802.

26 Godfroy-Tayart de Borms, *Kourou*, 80.

not follow the usual rules because it was “une sorte de mission politique” (a kind of political mission).²⁷ Settlers, craftsmen, and soldiers were to be “doivent être considérés en quelque sorte comme des Apôtres d’État” (regarded like apostles of the state).²⁸ Subsequently, this idea was taken over by the physiocratic circle of Pierre Poivre on the Île de France (today’s Mauritius) and then by philosophes of the metropole like Raynal, who endorsed the project of a “soft” colonial expansion by assimilation of the Malagasy and formulated in *A History of the Two Indies* a passionate call to French politicians to civilize “barbarian” peoples:

What an honour it would be for France to drag a people out of the abomination of barbarism; to introduce them to honourable customs, good order, wise laws, a benevolent religion, useful and pleasant arts, to elevate them to the rank of enlightened and civilised nations? Statesmen, may the wishes of philosophy, the wishes of a fellow citizen reach you!²⁹

Subsequently, this project of a “soft” expansion through civilizing and assimilation was formulated regarding other parts of the world. Among others, imperial actors dreamed of a francization (an assimilation to the French nation) of the indigenous peoples of South America.³⁰

The increasing criticism of slavery and the slave trade in the 1770s and 1780s spurred publicists to forge new colonial expansion plans. French-speaking authors and politicians began to think harder about alternatives to the plantation colony based on slavery, and some conceived the idea that their fatherland should establish colonies in Africa. The scheme to establish plantations south of the Sahara was not entirely new as the governor of Senegal, Louis Moreau de Chambonneau, had already submitted this proposal in 1688.³¹ However, this idea only gained relevance with the criticism of the Caribbean development model, as a text by the physiocrat Dupont de Nemours from the year 1771 shows.³²

27 ANOM, DFC, XVII/mémoires/88, no. 40, p. 38, memorandum by Maudave, n.d.

28 ANOM, DFC, XVII/mémoires/88, “doivent être considérés en quelque sorte comme des Apôtres d’État” [Should Be Considered in Some Way as Apostles of the State].

29 Guillaume-Thomas Raynal, *A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies*, vol. 2 (London: Strahan, 1783), 268 f.

30 ANOM, DFC, XII/mémoires/62, no. 207, “Considérations sur les malheurs de la France pour servir d’introduction à un essai sur Cayenne, par M. de Meuron” [Considerations on the Misfortunes of France to Serve as an Introduction to an Essay on Cayenne, by M. de Meuron], 1774; XII/mémoires/62, no. 218, Bessner, “Précis sur les Indiens, par M. de Besner” [Precis on the Indians, by M. de Besner], 1774.

31 Benjamin Steiner, *Colberts Afrika. Eine Wissens- und Begegnungsgeschichte in Afrika im Zeitalter Ludwigs XIV* [Colbert’s Africa: A History of Knowledge and Encounters in Africa in the Age of Louis XIV] (Munich: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2014), 373.

32 Pierre-Samuel Dupont de Nemours, “Observations sur l’esclavage des nègres” [Observations on Negro Slavery], *Éphémérides du citoyen*, no. 6 (1771): 162–246, at 242; Pernille Røge, *Économistes and the*

Other projects that testify to a rethinking of colonial policy issues by the French elites concern territories in the Mediterranean such as Corsica. According to premodern theory, which declared latitude to be the decisive factor regarding climate, it ought to have been quite possible to grow sugar cane in the warm regions of the Mediterranean.³³ Based on such ideas, high-ranking politicians pinned their hopes on an agricultural development of the island. The minister of foreign affairs Charles Gravier, count of Vergennes, thought of having cotton, tea, and spices produced in Corsica, while in 1785, the minister of finance Charles Alexandre de Calonne established a colony for this purpose.³⁴ During the French Revolution, Constantin François Volney also tried to produce colonial products on his Corsican estate, which he christened “Petites-Indes” (Little Indies).³⁵ In his *Essai chronologique, politique et historique sur l’isle de Corse* (Chronological, Political, and Historical Treatise on Corsica), Ferrand Dupuy, who also wrote a memorandum on Madagascar, presented the island of Corsica as a future agricultural and commercial center if France were to establish settlements there. “The Corsican,” according to Dupuy, was still rough, unapproachable, sinister, and bloodthirsty, but this was only as a result of foreign invasions. He was humane, gentle, and compassionate toward the stranger who did not come to enslave him. If one brought him the knowledge of civilization, he would be guided by reason and no longer by passions. The powerful French monarchy should protect “the Corsican” and make him a happy citizen.³⁶

Of more consequence were similar projects that were conceived in the 1780s with regard to Egypt. In his *Lettres sur l’Égypte* (Letters on Egypt) from 1783, Claude-Etienne Savary described Egypt as a country ruined by the tyranny of the Beys and claimed that

Reinvention of Empire: France in the Americas and Africa, 1750–1802 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

- 33 Gabriel Debién and Carl Lokke, *L’Expédition d’Égypte et les projets de culture coloniale* [The Egyptian Expedition and Colonial Culture Projects] (Le Caire: Imprimerie de l’institut français d’archéologie orientale, 1940), 337–339; Patrice Bret, “Des ‘Indes’ en Méditerranée? L’utopie tropicale d’un jardinier des Lumières et la maîtrise agricole du territoire” [“Indies” in the Mediterranean? The Tropical Utopia of an Enlightenment Gardener and the Agricultural Mastery of the Territory], *Revue française d’histoire d’Outre-mer* 86, no. 322/323 (1999): 65–89, at 69 f.
- 34 Charles Gravier, *Mémoire historique et politique sur la Louisiane, [...] suivi par d’autres mémoires sur l’Indostan, Saint-Domingue, la Corse et la Guyane* [Gravier, Historical and Political Memoir on Louisiana, [...] Followed by other Memoirs on Indostan, Saint-Domingue, Corsica, and Guyana] (Paris: Le Petit, 1802), 243–251; Leclerc de Montlinot, *Essai sur la transportation comme récompense, et la déportation comme peine* [Essay on Transportation as a Reward and Deportation as a Penalty] (Paris: Gratioz, 1797), 54–56.
- 35 Constantin François Volney, *Œuvres complètes de Volney, comte et pair de France [...], mises en ordres et précédées par la vie de l’auteur* [Complete Works of Volney, Count and Peer of France [...], Put in Order and Preceded by the Life of the Author], vol. 1 (Paris: Bossange, 1821), XVIII.
- 36 Ferrand Dupuy, *Essai chronologique, historique et politique sur l’isle de Corse [...]* [Chronological, Historical and Political Essay on the Island of Corsica [...]] (Paris: Bastien, 1776), especially the preface and 30–75.

through large irrigation projects, a civilized state like France could create a flourishing colonial agriculture. In his paper *Voyage en Syrie et en Égypte* (Travels through Syria and Egypt), published in 1787, the philosophe Volney also called for the conquest of the land by the Nile. In his eyes, the Egyptian population was tired of oriental despotism and longed for a well-ordered state like France that would bring progress; the Egyptians were ready to rise up against the Beys and for the French.³⁷

The French invasion of Egypt, the largest colonial expansion attempt of the revolutionary period, was directly inspired by the publications of these philosophers. Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand, the minister of foreign affairs who introduced the idea of making a French colony of the land by the Nile, had read Volney. His aim was to create a substitute for Saint-Domingue in the eastern Mediterranean. He and his circle were convinced that in the future France would be able to import all its colonial goods from Egypt. Drawing on Volney's publications, Talleyrand claimed that the people of the Nile would rise against the Mamluks and welcome the French with open arms. Thus, the idea of the compelling superiority of French civilization played a role in the policy planning of the directorate. General Napoleon Bonaparte saw himself as the representative of a regenerated nation that would bring progress and freedom to the world. He considered the Ottoman Empire to be fossilized and doomed to collapse. On the ruins of this empire, new nations like the Arabs, Greeks, Armenians, and Egyptians would soon arise, and he would be their liberator. Inspired by these assumptions, Bonaparte, on his arrival in Alexandria, found the resistance of the population to the invaders hard to understand.

The imaginary that formed the intellectual basis for the French invasion of Egypt thus also shares similarities with the utopian vision that authors of texts on Madagascar had developed, although one important difference cannot be overlooked. For Talleyrand and Bonaparte, an assimilation of the Egyptians was not on the agenda. To win over the population, the French presented themselves as the guardians of Islam instead. The last commander of the Army of the Orient, Jacques Menou, even converted to Islam. But the bizarre mixture of French revolutionary and Islamic rhetoric did little to convince the Egyptian elites. Far from pleasing them, as the French had hoped, the revolutionary verbal attacks against the Catholic Church shocked them deeply. To the Egyptian elites, the French revolutionaries seemed to be atheists.³⁸

In relation to Madagascar, Egypt, Corsica, South America, and sub-Saharan Africa, the ideas of Enlightenment and progress gave rise to fantasies of the civilizing and

37 Henry Laurens, *Les Origines intellectuelles de l'expédition d'Égypte. L'orientalisme islamisant en France (1698–1798)* [The Intellectual Origins of the Egyptian Expedition: Islamizing Orientalism in France (1698–1798)] (Istanbul: Isis, 1987); Henry Laurens et al., *L'Expédition d'Égypte, 1798–1801* [The Expedition to Egypt, 1789–1801] (Paris: Colin, 1989).

38 Debien and Lokke, *L'Expédition d'Égypte*, 337–354; Laurens et al., *L'Expédition d'Égypte*, 18–30, 75–99, 277–297; Laurens, *Les Origines intellectuelles*, 105 f.

domination of vast territories and large populations and inspired actual attempts at expansion consequently; this fact speaks in favor of the thesis of the postcolonial studies that the Enlightenment gave rise to modern colonialism. The French elites did not always go so far as to seek an assimilation of all these peoples. However, the idea of a colonial expansion guided by the authority that civilization supposedly gave the French ushered in a new era of colonial politics. The Enlightenment prompted a new expansionist and civilizing policy also in other European empires like the Spanish, Portuguese, and Russian ones.³⁹

Old Approach, New Coat of Paint?

Nevertheless, the thesis that the Enlightenment invented modern colonialism and thus heralded a departure from premodern colonialism may be too schematic. The fact that the novelty of the civilizing and assimilation approach after the Seven Years' War must indeed be put into perspective supports Belmessous's thesis of continuity. The program of the civilizing and assimilation of foreign peoples represented an innovation in colonial policy after 1763 yet was by no means an invention of the eighteenth century. For example, Maudave drew much of the inspiration for his colonization plans from the work of a seventeenth-century governor of Madagascar, Etienne de Flacourt. Already in the mid-seventeenth century, Flacourt had declared the civilizing and assimilation of the Malagasy the goal of future French policies regarding the Great Island, and his expansion project had served as a basis for the colonization attempt in Madagascar by the French East India Company (Compagnie des Indes Orientales), founded under Jean-Baptiste Colbert. Similar ideological explanations can be found in the semiofficial paper on the founding of the Royal Trading Company, François Charpentier's *Relation de l'établissement de la Compagnie française pour le commerce des le commerce des Indes Orientales* (Narrative of the Establishment of the French Company for the Trade with the East Indies) from 1665, which opens with the following words: "The French nation cannot remain confined in Europe. It must spread to the farthest reaches of the world. Let the barbarians henceforth feel the gentleness of its rule, they shall civilize themselves after its example."⁴⁰

These texts about Madagascar are not the earliest examples of the French program to create colonies by assimilating natives. In Canada in the seventeenth century, the

39 David Weber, *Barbaros: Spaniards and their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); Damien Tricoire, ed., *Enlightened Colonialism: Civilization Narratives and Imperial Politics in the Age of Reason* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

40 François Charpentier, *Relation de l'établissement de la Compagnie française pour le commerce des Indes Orientales, dédiée au Roy* [Relation of the Establishment of the French Company for the Trade of the East Indies, Dedicated to the King] (Paris: Cramoisy, 1665), 1.

royal administration had set itself the goal of “francizing” the natives. The “Indians” were to become Catholic, settled, industrious, well behaved, and French speaking. The aim of the francization policy was not merely to turn the “savages” into Frenchmen, but even to make them better Frenchmen than those living in France. For this reason, the colonial administrators in New France, like Maudave later, welcomed marriage unions between the French and the “savages” as a civilizing instrument.⁴¹

The francization policy of the Grand Siècle, in turn, was based on sixteenth-century ideas about history, namely both on the earliest stadial models of history, formulated by missionaries in the context of the Spanish expansion in the Americas, and on the new narrative of French national history invented during the Renaissance. For the Dominican friar Bartolomé de Las Casas (1484–1566), the “savages” of the Americas were similar to the ancestors of the Europeans and the Mediterranean peoples, who had been just as uncivilized in ancient times. All human beings were rational and called by God to live in a state of civility. The Jesuit José de Acosta (1540–1599) developed these ideas in the second half of the sixteenth century. In his opinion, the ancient Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans had violated natural law just as the “Americans” were doing now. They were to be regarded rather like children, that is to say, as people who lived in a state that corresponded to the childhood of humanity. If the use of reason was taken as a yardstick, the “barbarian” peoples could be categorized into three levels. The first group (Chinese, Japanese, and Indians) comprised “reasonable” nations, which, although pagan, lived in a state of civility. The peoples at the second level lived “in republics” and had a formal cult, but they knew neither written laws nor philosophy. These included the pre-Columbian Mexicans and Peruvians. Acosta assigned to the third category those peoples who, according to him, lived like animals, had no reason, and did not follow natural law. The first goal of missionary work was to bring all people to the same level of reason and civility. As Acosta put it, “first make them human and then make them Christian.”⁴²

The ideas of the stages of civilization and of a policy of civilizing that Spanish missionaries had invented had a major long-term influence on French colonial policy.

41 Belmessous, Saliha, “Être français en Nouvelle-France. Identité française et identités coloniales aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles” [To Be French in New France: French Identity and Colonial Identities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries], *French Historical Studies* 27, no. 3 (2004): 507–540, at 510–520.

42 José de Acosta, *De natura novi orbis libri duo. Et De promulgatione evangelii apud barbaros sive De procuranda Indorum salute, libri sex* [Two Books on the Nature of the New World: And on the Promulgation of the Gospel among the Barbarians, or on Procuring the Safety of the Indians, Book Six] (Coloniae Agrippinae: Mylius, 1596), 324. For Acosta’s approach and influence, see Claudio Burgaleta, *José de Acosta, S.J. (1540–1600): His Life and Thought* (Chicago: Jesuit Way, 1999), 47–50, 78–98; John Elliott, *The Old World and the New, 1492–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 28–53; Pierre Berthiaume, “L’héritage de José de Acosta” [The Legacy of José de Acosta], in *Jesuit Accounts of the Colonial Americas. Intercultural Transfers, Intellectual Disputes, and Textualities*, eds. Marc André Bernier, Clorinda Donato, and Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 308–325.

Nevertheless, the Spanish and the French did not follow the same approach in their colonial policies. In the Americas, the Spanish state supported the establishment of so-called reductions, which were strictly separated from the Spanish settlements. The Jesuits adhered to the principle that one should tolerate all cultural differences that were not detrimental either to religion or to the “natural destiny” of humankind to live in society. Consequently, their aim was certainly not to make Spaniards out of the inhabitants of Mesoamerica and South America. The Spanish Jesuits pursued a policy of civilizing, but not one of assimilation. The Spanish laity were forbidden even from entering the reductions. Their ideal was segregation to protect the “Indians” from the corrupting influence of the Spaniards.⁴³ In French Canada, the situation was different. Although the Jesuits and Franciscans in New France were also afraid of the bad moral influence of the European settlers, they did not build closed reductions but, instead, villages near the French settlements. Segregation was not desired; on the contrary, in the seventeenth century, the royal officials aimed to mix the French and the indigenous population so as to civilize and assimilate the latter. Many Jesuits would have preferred to establish closed mission territories as in Spanish America, but this was denied to them.⁴⁴

Assimilation efforts seem to have been a specific feature of French colonial policy in the seventeenth century. This had more to do with the humanist project of a national history in the Renaissance than with the influence of the missionary orders. Since the sixteenth century, the French elites were convinced that the French were descendants of the Gauls. This generally accepted thesis had far-reaching consequences for the national self-image. Their own ancestors were now no longer well-mannered Greeks from Troy but barbarians who had been colonized and civilized by the Romans. In the eyes of the early modern French elites, the French had reverted to barbarism with the collapse of the Roman Empire. Only gradually did they catch up again by imitating antiquity. While the intellectual, artistic, and political elite sought to civilize their own country, there was now an opportunity overseas to apply a civilizing program to real “savages.”⁴⁵ To this end, the early modern French adopted ancient topoi to describe the “barbarians.” Just as Julius Caesar had described the ancient Gauls as a “resourceful people, very capable of imitation,”⁴⁶ the “barbarians” of the Americas or Madagascar were considered capable of adopting civilization. Thus, the kingdom of France could follow in the footsteps of Rome.

43 Burgaleta, *José de Acosta*, 45–50, 78–95.

44 Saliha Belmessous, “Assimilation and Racialism in Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century French Colonial Policy,” *American Historical Review* 110, no. 2 (2005): 322–349, at 335; Catherine Ballériaux, *Missionary Strategies in the New World, 1610–1690: An Intellectual History* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 113–131.

45 Sara Melzer, *Colonizer or Colonized: The Hidden Stories of Early Modern French Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

46 Iulius C. Caesar, *The War for Gaul*, book 7 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1869), section 22: “summae genus sollertiae atque ad omnia imitanda et efficienda, quae a quoque traduntur, aptissimum.”

Yet despite the effective power of this narrative throughout the early modern period, the program of assimilating the “savages” of the Americas only prevailed at first for a few decades. As early as the late seventeenth century, the royal colonial government in Canada largely abandoned efforts to turn the “Indians” into Frenchmen and, around 1700, finally declared them dangerous. By this time, it was well understood by Canada’s administrative elite that the francization policy had been a failure. The assimilation policy had not transformed the “savages” into Catholic French-speaking peasants, while the coexistence of the French with the natives, from the point of view of the administrators of Canada, had created a hard-to-control class of “feral” men: the *coureurs des bois* (wood rangers), who married into “Indian” families and became acculturated. The governor-general Pierre de Rigaud de Vaudreuil claimed in 1706 that “Indian” women transmitted their “bad blood” to their children and forbade mixed marriages. According to him, the American “savages” were fickle, dishonest, deceitful, and cruel due to the pernicious influence of the climate. In the face of the failure of the assimilation policy, a racist discourse thus gained acceptance and consequently; francization was followed only in individual cases.⁴⁷ Similarly, in the late seventeenth century, the imperial actors also abandoned ambitious assimilation plans on Madagascar. The French of the first half of the eighteenth century dreamed of an expansion of global trade, of the exploitation of natural resources, and of the creation of strong companies of commerce in “the Indies” rather than of territorial expansion of the civilizing and assimilation of “savages” and “barbarians.”⁴⁸

If one considers the flourishing and occasional questioning of the dreams of civilization and assimilation in the seventeenth century, it is not so much the invention of a modern colonialism that can be seen during the late Enlightenment as the return to an old approach to colonial politics. Nevertheless, there were some differences between the idea of expansion through civilizing and assimilation in the seventeenth century and the ideas of expansion during the late Enlightenment. After 1763, the assimilation project was placed in the larger context of universal history, and thus the francization projects were conceived as a chapter not only of national history but also of human history, which gave them a stronger normative force. The French globalization project was now conceived as a part of a global historical process.

It is no coincidence then that many of the formulations and basic ideas of the assimilation projects of the eighteenth century are reminiscent of the writings of Jesuit missionaries. Raynal’s *History of the Two Indies* contains exactly Acosta’s formulation

47 Belmessous, “Être français en Nouvelle-France”; Belmessous, “Assimilation and Racialism.”

48 Arnaud Orain, *La Politique du merveilleux. Une autre histoire du système de Law* [The Politics of the Marvelous: Another History of Law’s System] (Paris: Fayard, 2018); John Shovlin, “Commerce, not Conquest: Political Economic Thought in the French Indies Company, 1719–1769,” in *New Perspectives on the History of Political Economy*, eds. Robert Fredona and Sophus A. Reinert (Cham: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018), 171–202.

that the “savages” should first be turned into “human beings” before being made good Christians, and Maudave took up this formulation.⁴⁹ This reception of Acosta during the Enlightenment certainly originated in the fact that the stadial history of civilization, which underpinned civilizing and assimilation projects, was itself based on Acosta’s placing of human societies at different stages of universal history. The Enlightenment utopia of nonviolent colonial expansion, that is to say, the constitution of a new kind of empire that would win the hearts of the subjugated, was based on the Jesuit program of the *conquista espiritual* (spiritual conquest). Jesuits deliberately wanted to adopt the role of the ancient Romans, that is to say, the imperial masters who brought morality to the peoples. In their view, however, this conquest should now take place by “soft” means.⁵⁰ When Enlightenment authors and administrators advocated an expansion by “soft” means, they implicitly followed precisely this model. Their unstated source of inspiration lay in the many Enlightenment publications about the “Jesuit state” in Paraguay, which, despite the otherwise virulent anti-Jesuit polemic, stylized it as a symbol of a “soft” and civilizing colonial expansion. A prominent example of this trend was again Raynal’s *History of the Two Indies*.⁵¹ The unacknowledged influence of the Jesuits on the late Enlightenment expansion projects explains why Enlightenment authors and politicians eventually presented the francization policy inherited from the seventeenth century as a mission and thus invented the idea of the civilizing mission. Actors in political and intellectual life who saw themselves as philosophes or friends of the philosophes thus transferred religious ideas to the field of state politics.

The colonial-political rupture during the late Enlightenment can be further relativized if one explores the practice of (aspired-to) colonial rule beyond the discourse about a “soft colonial expansion. Not only did the idea of a peaceful and civilizing expansion usually mask violent long-established practices of military conquest and slavery, as can be observed in the case of Madagascar,⁵² but Enlightenment authors and politicians also had a tendency to present long-established peaceful practices as instruments of a new kind of “soft” policy. For example, Maudave was in favor of permitting mixed marriages, seeing them as a lever for “gentle subjection,” even though such marriages were already common practice in Madagascar. He and his successors also presented the acquisition of Malagasy properties as a break with the policy of conquest. In doing so, one author

49 Raynal, *Philosophical and Political History*, vol. 4, 248. On Maudave, see ANOM, C 5A 2, no. 11, fol. 3, transcripts of documents on Madagascar.

50 Girolamo Imbruglia, “A Peculiar Idea of Empire: Missions and Missionaries of the Society of Jesus in Early Modern History,” in *Jesuit Accounts*, eds. Bernier et al., 21–49.

51 Raynal, *Philosophical and Political History*, vol. 4, 246–267. For the Jesuits in Paraguay, see Barbara Ganson, *The Guaraní Under Spanish Rule in the Río de la Plata* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

52 Damien Tricoire, *Der koloniale Traum. Imperiales Wissen und die französisch-madagassischen Begegnungen im Zeitalter der Aufklärung* [The Colonial Dream: Imperial Knowledge and the Franco-Madagascan Encounters in the Age of Enlightenment] (Cologne: Böhlau, 2018), 85–181.

referred to the example of William Penn, who had bought land from the indigenous population.⁵³ In the second half of the eighteenth century, this example was considered the epitome of good colonial practice. Raynal, for example, presented the creation of Pennsylvania as one of the greatest benefactions in the history of humankind.⁵⁴ However, one may ask whether the “acquisition” of land was a fundamentally different practice from the usual payment of tribute to the princes of the African coast.⁵⁵ The allegedly new “enlightened” colonial practice was not as revolutionary as it wished to appear.

The Enlightenment and Modern Colonialism

It can also be questioned how far there was a continuity in colonial ideas from the Enlightenment period into the era of the Third Republic. It seems indeed hardly possible to claim that the assimilation policy of the Enlightenment period prevailed in the nineteenth century. To be sure, from a legal-historical point of view, the assimilation policy did experience a breakthrough in 1794 when, in connection with the first abolition of slavery in the French colonial empire, the National Convention declared that the same laws should apply in the colonies as applied in France. As a result, their inhabitants became French citizens. At the same time, however, new forms of bondage were introduced to keep the plantation economy going. The French elites saw a true assimilation of the former slaves only as a distant goal. This objective remained on the agenda during the Restoration period in the small remnants of the colonial empire. During the Restoration (i. e., after 1814–15), the “free people of color” were treated as largely equal to “whites” in legal terms, and full equality followed in 1831. From 1848, with the second abolition of slavery, this assimilation policy affected the entire population of the small overseas territories.⁵⁶

Nevertheless, in the territories conquered in the second half of the nineteenth century, the French decision-makers pursued a different policy: the French state made a clear legal distinction between French citizens and indigenous peoples. The overwhelming majority of the population in the colonies thus consisted in effect of “subjects” who were

53 ANOM, DFC, XVII/mémoires/88, no. 34, fol. 10; ANOM, DFC, XVII/mémoires/88, no. 81, fols. 3, 13, anonymous letter to the minister of the Navy, November 6, 1786; MAE, Asie 4, no. 74, fol. 2, “Mémoire pour un établissement à Madagascar” [Memoir for an Establishment in Madagascar].

54 Raynal, *Philosophical and Political History*, vol. 9, 1–14.

55 Christina Brauner, *Kompanien, Könige und caboceers* [Companies, Kings, and Caboceers] (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2015), 247–254.

56 Denise Bouche, *Histoire de la colonisation française: Flux et reflux (1815–1962)* [History of the French Colonization: Flux and Reflux (1815–1962)], vol. 2 (Paris: Fayard, 1991), 100–108.

largely ruled according to separate laws. The Muslims of Algeria, for example, were subject to Islamic law. The French administration established separate neighborhoods and institutions for the Christian colonists. It favored segregation. Most importantly, it expropriated many Algerians to give to French and European settlers the best agricultural land.⁵⁷

From the late nineteenth century onward, the state also propagated racist theories. Although the parliamentary commissions of the incipient Third Republic had proclaimed assimilationism in the 1880s, around 1900 the state elites largely rejected it. The conviction prevailed that the “principles of the Enlightenment” applied in general to all humankind but could only be fully applied in the case of a “white” population. The French administrators used the indigenous peoples for forced labor on a large scale. Especially in Africa, they legitimized this by saying that the “Negroes” had to be taught to be industrious. After World War I, a veritable policy of “racial segregation” was added when officials of the administration and politicians in official statements condemned sexual contact between “whites” and “blacks.” Instead of assimilating entire nations, the colonial ministry sought to “associate” with indigenous elites of those peoples who were considered “rudimentarily civilized.” This policy of symbolic participation in power by some elites pertained especially to North Africa, Southeast Asia, and central Madagascar.⁵⁸

If one considers that the authors of the late Enlightenment had propagated the idea of assimilating the “barbarians” and generally advocated “mixed marriages,” then modern colonialism does not seem to have been the realization of their project. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, one can instead observe a gradual departure from the ideal of assimilation. Most strikingly, patterns of interpretation based on race theory were largely absent from the Enlightenment projects of colonial expansion in Guyana, Madagascar, West Africa, or Egypt, even if in the Caribbean and in parts of Enlightenment philosophy racist ideology was already firmly established.⁵⁹ Yet, all these innovations were barely

57 Benjamin Stora, *Histoire de l'Algérie coloniale (1830–1954)* [History of Colonial Algeria (1830–1954)] (Paris: La Découverte, 2004), 12–39.

58 Raymond Betts, *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory, 1890–1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), especially 10–20; Alice Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895–1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), especially 1–9 and 75–164; Bouche, *Histoire de la colonisation*, 108–143; Gilles Manceron, *Marianne et les colonies. Une introduction à l'histoire coloniale de la France* [Marianne and the Colonies: An Introduction to the Colonial History of France] (Paris: La Découverte, 2003), 132–210; Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison, *La République impériale. Politique et racisme d'État* [The Imperial Republic: State Politics and Racism] (Paris: Fayard, 2009), 109–177; Francis Koerner, *Madagascar. Colonisation française et nationalisme malgache* [Madagascar: French Colonization and Malagasy Nationalism] (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1994), 43–56, 177–204.

59 Pierre Pluchon, *Nègres et Juifs au XVIIIe siècle. Le racisme au siècle des Lumières* [Negroes and Jews in the Eighteenth Century: Racism in the Age of Enlightenment] (Paris: Tallandier, 1984); Boule, “In Defense

reflected in the plans for colonial expansion; on the contrary, the Enlightenment projects of assimilation contrasted sharply with the racist theories that ultimately shaped the modern era much more forcibly than the late Enlightenment idea of a “soft” expansion.

Conclusion: Enlightenment Colonialism and the Ancien Régime French Globalization Project

The diachronic comparison between different French approaches to colonial policy from the seventeenth to the twentieth century shows that both the thesis of continuity and the thesis of the invention of modern colonialism during the Enlightenment must be questioned. Arguing against the former is the fact that French colonial policy and imagination were characterized by clear ruptures. In the history of the French colonial empire, the policy of civilization and assimilation cannot be considered to have been a continuous thread. On the other hand, however, it is precisely these ruptures that show that the thesis according to which the Enlightenment initiated modern colonialism should also be treated with caution. To postulate that there was a coherent “modern colonialism,” and that this “modern colonialism” took roots in the Enlightenment, is not convincing. We should be careful with the established narrative that declares the eighteenth century to be the founding era of “modernity.” The colonial projects and enterprises for the Americas, Africa, and Europe show instead that the decades from around 1760 to the early nineteenth century may be considered a distinct and clearly self-contained epoch of colonial history, namely that of “philosophical” colonialism.

This Enlightenment globalization project took up core Renaissance ideas and mixed them with a more general theory of human history that had been crafted by Catholic missionaries. As in the seventeenth century, it linked French national history and identity with a colonial expansion project. But this history and identity were now “universalized”: they were considered part of universal history. The French had now a universal “mission civilisatrice.” This gave them a strong appeal that reached deep into the modern era. And yet—this French globalization project was again heavily modified in the second half of the nineteenth century, when assimilationism was abandoned and racist thought gained a foothold in both the public sphere and the state.

of Slavery”; Carminella Biondi, *Mon frère tu es mon esclave. Teorie schiaviste e dibattiti antropologico-razziali nel settecento francese* [My Brother You Are My Slave: Slavery Theories and Anthropological-Racial Debates in Eighteenth-Century France] (Pisa: Goliardica, 1973); Pečar and Tricoire, *Falsche Freunde*, 83–104.

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The Global Battle for Women's Rights and French Feminisms

At different points in history, French feminists have provided an important impetus to the global struggle for women's rights. Initially, they fought for women's rights within France and advocated change in the French gender regime and gender orders in French institutions. However, French feminisms also have played a global pioneering role, and many French feminists have understood their commitment not primarily as a national project but as a global one for gender equality. Although numerous studies in recent years have shown that the relationship between men and women and the construction of gender roles have been central to the construction and functioning of societies in all parts of the world, the most sustained feminist demands and struggles erupted in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Western Europe, particularly in France during the Revolution of 1789.

This chapter discusses the development of the French women's rights movement from the eighteenth to the twentieth century on two intertwined levels: on the one hand, how the struggle for women's rights in France is presented and, on the other hand, how this struggle has influenced the globalization project of French feminism and its transnational and global networking.

As starting point, a very broad definition of feminism is offered, as outlined by Karen Offen, because only such a definition makes it possible to relate the different efforts to improve women's rights throughout history and in different countries.¹ Feminism as a system of ideas as well as a sociopolitical movement thus strives to overcome male dominance and the oppression of women in a society. In this understanding, the term, which was only coined at the end of the nineteenth century,² is also suitable for the debates and struggles that had already taken place before. However, since there were various cultural and ideological differences between the different French women's rights activists, it is better to speak of feminisms in the plural than of a universal feminism.

A key reference point for the globalization project of French feminism was the Revolution of 1789, during which the early feminists were the first to claim civic and thus political rights, setting new standards in the struggle for women's rights attracting attention and discussion beyond France. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth

1 Karen Offen, "Was Mary Wollstonecraft a Feminist?," in *Globalizing Feminisms, 1789–1945*, ed. Karen Offen (New York: Routledge, 2010), 5–17, at 15 et seq.

2 Karen Offen, "Sur l'origine des mots 'féminisme' et 'féministe'" [On the Origin of the Words "Feminism" and "Feminist"], *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 34, no. 3 (1987): 492–496.

centuries, this founding moment ensured French influence in the global women's rights movement, which developed in many European countries and in North America in the nineteenth century. In addition, the Enlightenment legacy of reason and progress and the legacy of the feminists of the Revolution of 1789, who sought universal equality beyond gender, shaped the globalization project of French feminists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The Origins of Feminism in the Enlightenment

Criticism of the subordinate status of women did not first arise in Europe in the French Revolution or in the nineteenth century. In fact, the debate about this began in France as early as the late Middle Ages with the so-called *Querelle des femmes*, which was largely a literary debate that spread throughout Europe and focused on issues such as marriage, female domination, education, and scholarship.³

The Enlightenment then took the discussion of women's roles and equal rights for women and men to a new level, particularly owing to its secular nature. It facilitated the questioning of conventional institutions, values, and structures in existing societies, especially those embodied or controlled by the Catholic Church. Often therefore emphasizes that the Enlightenment also possessed a strong feminist side.⁴

Many Enlightenment thinkers took up the argument of François Poullain de La Barre, who was the first to develop a philosophical underpinning for the theory of gender equality based on Cartesian philosophy. In *De l'Égalité des deux Sexes* (On the Equality of the Two Sexes, 1673), he argued that male domination was not natural but was largely instilled by society. He therefore advocated the improvement of women's education. His famous summary was "The mind has no sex."⁵

Enlightenment thinkers, seeking to grasp previous knowledge and asking many questions about the world in which they lived, quickly became concerned with the differences that societies made between men and women and the reasons put forward for them. After Poullain de La Barre, many Enlightenment thinkers argued that these differences were neither God-given nor naturally conditioned, but socially constructed.⁶

3 See Gisela Bock and Margarete Zimmermann, "Die Querelle des Femmes in Europa. Eine begriffs- und forschungsgeschichtliche Einführung" [The Querelle des femmes in Europe: An Introduction to the History of Concepts and Research], in *Geschlechtergeschichten der Neuzeit. Ideen, Politik, Praxis*, ed. Gisela Bock (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2014), 69–99.

4 Karen Offen, *European Feminisms 1700–1950: A Political History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 28 et seq.

5 Anette Höfer and Annette Keilhauer, "Femme" [Women], in *Handbuch politisch-sozialer Grundbegriffe in Frankreich, 1680–1820*, vols. 16–18, eds. Rolf Reichardt, Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink (Munich: Oldenbourg 1996), 9–83, at 31.

6 Offen, *European Feminisms*, 34 et seq.; Höfer and Keilhauer, "Femme," 38–40.

In the salons of the seventeenth and especially eighteenth centuries, a sociability bringing together women and men developed that also addressed these questions. From France, new forms of sociability spread to England, Holland, the German principalities, and the small kingdoms of Central Europe. The Paris salons merged the aristocratic institution of leisure with the literary salon of the Enlightenment. They became a Europe-wide example of *mondanité* (cosmopolitanism) and the institutional center of the Republic of Letters, integrating scholars from all over Europe and the United States into the debates through correspondence. Women played a central role in these salons because, as *maîtresses de maison* (hostesses), they provided a place for encounters and intellectual exchange.⁷

The Enlightenment opened up debate not only on fundamental philosophical issues but also on elements that shaped the social life of the time, such as matrimonial law and the restrictions placed on girls and women in education and economic activity. Many male philosophers focused emphatically on “woman” and “female nature.” These include Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, and Condorcet, the leading French philosophers of the Enlightenment, whose writings have already been widely studied. But this debate also allowed women and their male supporters to develop a vast arsenal of concepts, notions, and arguments.⁸

Enlightenment feminism pointed in several directions: as part of the discourse on universal rights, it emphasized that women had the right to fully develop spiritually and intellectually. Then Enlightenment feminism argued for greater recognition of so-called feminine values, such as feelings and emotions, which would complement the rationality of men. Finally, it underscored the public benefits of women to society by pointing out the strategic social importance of women as mothers, as educators of children, and as partners of men. Although such issues had already been debated in Italy, France, and England since the fifteenth century, the eighteenth century now saw an increase in those engaging in such debates, as well as greater public participation. The number of writings criticizing the existing gender order increased significantly. They came from different literary genres such as fiction, drama, and poetry. Likewise, the topic was treated in philosophical essays, polemical pamphlets, and legal treatises. The discussion was also inspired by the fact that women in the eighteenth century were

7 Antoine Lilti, *Le monde des salons. Sociabilité et mondanité à Paris au XVIII^e siècle* [The World of Salons: Sociability and Mundanity in Eighteenth-Century Paris] (Paris: Fayard 2005), 408–414; Dena Goodman, “Enlightenment Salons: The Convergence of Female and Philosophic Ambitions,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 22, no. 3 (1989): 329–350; Höfer and Keilhauer, “Femme,” 40–42; Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* [The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society] (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1990), 89–107.

8 Offen, *European Feminisms*, 31.

active as writers, journalists, scientists, and artists and participated in literary, art, and scientific discourses.⁹

The increasing literacy of men and women of the upper social classes in the cities secured a considerable audience for these works. In France, literacy levels doubled in the eighteenth century, rising from 14 to 27 percent for women and from 29 to 47 percent for men.¹⁰ Women also made up a considerable part of the authorship of the Enlightenment, which is remarkable because of the legal discrimination against women authors.¹¹

Issues of gender inequality therefore occupied an important place in the Enlightenment publications that flooded the market. This also very quickly led to controversy over the question of how the relationship between the sexes should be shaped. Here, those who wanted to maintain gender hierarchies in the name of tradition and those who postulated the equality of the sexes and demanded the emancipation of women from male domination faced each other. Both sides no longer based their arguments primarily on theological or philosophical arguments but, above all, on new findings about the human body and human society from the so-called natural sciences and also from ethnology.¹²

The Enlightenment thinkers also criticized the institution of arranged marriage, which would not be based on real love. Daniel Defoe had already described this form of marriage as marital fornication in 1727. Montesquieu discussed at length the subordination of women in the male-dominated family in *De l'esprit des lois* (The Spirit of Laws) of 1747. In his view, only the republican constitution would bring women real legal freedom. The criticism of marriage was taken up and deepened after 1750 by a wave of

9 Offen, 32 et seq. For the participation of women in literary discourse, see Höfer and Keilhauer, "Femme," 42–43. For the inclusion of women in scientific discourse, see the example of the Marquise du Châtelet in Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, "Vom 'Gelehrten' zum philosophe. Selbstverständnis und Rollenbilder des 'Intellektuellen' im französischen Aufklärungszeitalter" [From "Scholar" to Philosopher: Self-Image and Role Models of the "Intellectual" in the French Age of Enlightenment], in *Kritik in der Frühen Neuzeit. Intellektuelle avant la lettre*, eds. Rainer Bayreuther et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2011), 305–325, at 320–323. With regard to the consideration of female painters in the discourse of art criticism, which oscillates between artistic mastery and gender stereotypes, see Bernadette Fort, "Esthétiques et imaginaire sexuel: La femme peintre dans les Salons" [Aesthetics and the Sexual Imaginary: The Female Painter in the Salons], in *Le règne de la critique. L'imaginaire culturel des Mémoires secrets*, ed. Christophe Cave (Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur 2010), 269–293.

10 Roger Chartier, *Die kulturellen Ursprünge der Französischen Revolution* [Cultural Origins of the French Revolution] (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 1995), 86; French original: Roger Chartier, *Les origines culturelles de la Révolution française* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1991).

11 Carla Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment: How French Women Became Modern* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 36–38; Carla Hesse, "Reading Signatures: Female Authorship and Revolutionary Law in France, 1750–1850," in "The French Revolution in Culture," ed. Lynn Hunt, *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 22, no. 3 (1989): 469–487.

12 Offen, *European Feminisms*, 33 et seq.

fiction penned by women.¹³ Among Enlightenment thinkers, there was a prevalent and widespread critique of gender relations, with a particular focus on women's education. After Poullain de La Barre, proponents of women's education assumed that men and women had comparable intellectual potential. In contrast, there was an antifeminist, utilitarian direction in France that took its starting point from Archbishop Fénelon's treatise *De l'éducation des filles* (The Education of Daughters, 1687). Fénelon rejected the frivolity of court life and the salons and sought to reform the French aristocracy. He argued that the daughters of the nobility should be educated primarily as mothers and managers of the household, thus making them useful members of the family.¹⁴ Rousseau followed up on this argument in the mid-eighteenth century. In his writings *Julie ou la Nouvelle Héloïse* (Julie or the New Héloïse, 1761) and *Émile, ou De l'éducation* (Emile, or on Education, 1762), he emphasized that education should prepare women to serve men.¹⁵

In the second half of the eighteenth century, numerous authors reacted to Rousseau's plea for male supremacy, not only in France. These included the Swedish poet Charlotta Nordenflycht, the British feminist Mary Wollstonecraft, and the Spanish educational reformer Josefa Amar y Borbón.¹⁶ In France, the expert for state and international law Gabriel Bonnot de Mably warned in 1776 that the republic would not consist of men alone. Neglecting women's education could have serious consequences, for as educators of children they would have a de facto public task of immense importance. Many other Enlightenment philosophers agreed with this view and considered women's educational activity to play an important role in the progress of civilization.¹⁷ Under the influence of the French Enlightenment, the Prussian king Frederick II also emphasized the important role mothers had as educators (of the people).¹⁸

However, many authors drew the line at high politics and the military. Even Mably, who still advocated women's education, vehemently opposed women in politics. He felt they undermined morals, laws, and government. Montesquieu argued similarly. Women already had so many natural advantages, so it was argued, that equal participation in power would lead to despotism. Some male writers of the eighteenth century thought women were already so influential and powerful in private life that power in public life

13 Offen, 36–37.

14 Höfer and Keilhauer, "Femme," 15.

15 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile oder Über die Erziehung* [Emile, or on Education], 12th ed. (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1995), 394–420.

16 Offen, "Was Mary Wollstonecraft a Feminist?," 5–17, at 6.

17 Offen, *European Feminisms*, 40 et seq.

18 Friedrich II., "Brief eines Genfers über Erziehung an Herrn Burlamaqui, Professor in Genf" [Letter from a Geneva Resident on Education to Mr. Burlamaqui, Professor in Geneva], in *Friedrich's des Großen Pädagogische Schriften und Äußerungen*, ed. by Jürgen Bona Meyer (Langensalza: Beyer, 1885), 220–231, at 228 et seq.

was reserved for men. Restif de la Bretonne's position is particularly radical: women must be forbidden in principle to write and read in order to confine them to domestic affairs.¹⁹

Voltaire saw things differently, pointing out that society depended on women. He also made fun of the fact that women were excluded from the succession to the French throne. Condorcet demanded as early as 1787 that in a republic, women with property should have the right to vote and hold offices on the same basis as men with property because they would be quite capable of being responsible citizens.²⁰

Thus, in the eighteenth century, there was already a fully developed feminist consciousness among some women and men from the privileged estates. And the opposing positions, which saw the previous gender order in danger, were also already very clearly expressed. Until the end of the eighteenth century, the debate revolved primarily around two issues: the education of girls and the male-dominated institution of marriage.²¹ It involved leading figures of the Enlightenment and many now lesser-known women and men. Accordingly, there was a broad debate about the emancipation of women in France. Through the institutions of the Enlightenment, publications, reading societies, and salons, many impulses went from France to other European countries and even to the United States; at the same time, French Enlightenment thinkers took up suggestions from there. The French Revolution took this debate to the next level, focusing on the issue of women's citizenship and their role in the community.

The Revolution of 1789 as a Feminist Challenge

The French Revolution challenged all the institutions and practices of the ancien régime, and this included gender relations and the organization of the family.²² Although feminism already existed in the Enlightenment, the Revolution unleashed an impressive flood of feminist demands. The women's question moved to the center of political understanding about society. The feminist demands formulated in the Revolution and the news of a new position for women in French society spread rapidly and emphatically throughout Europe, sparking debates in France and beyond its borders.

In the first five years of the Revolution, new practices developed, and feminist demands were repeated and put forward with increasing vehemence; at the end of this

19 Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (London, New York: Routledge, 1992), 90 et seq.

20 Offen, *European Feminisms*, 44–45.

21 Offen, 28.

22 Elisabeth G. Sledziewski, "Die Französische Revolution als Wendepunkt" [The French Revolution as Turning Point], in *Geschichte der Frauen. 19. Jahrhundert*, eds. Geneviève Fraisse and Michelle Perrot (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 1994), 45–61, at 45 et seq.; Hunt, *The Family Romance*; Höfer and Keilhauer, "Femme," 50.

period, antifeminist discourse increased, and the containment of previous women's political gains began.

Both women and men sought to redefine or control the role of women in society through words, symbols, and images. The first petition by women was published as early as after the convocation of the Estates General: the anonymous *Pétition des femmes du Tiers-État au Roi* of January 1, 1789 reflected the basic demands of the Enlightenment era. It demanded that women's interests also be taken into account and that the king work to this end. The disadvantaged economic situation of women was cited as a fundamental problem, and the intrusion of men into areas of trade previously reserved for women was criticized. It also called for better women's education so that future mothers could raise their children to be loyal subjects.²³ This petition initiated a wave of similar petitions, pamphlets, and complaints by women (rediscovered in libraries and archives since the 1980s), some of them already exhibiting a new quality: they explicitly criticized the fact that women were excluded from the Estates General and demanded their own representatives.²⁴

One of the most radical feminist documents of the Revolution was published after the women's march to Versailles in early October 1789: the women's petition to the National Assembly, also anonymous, criticized the fact that the French people were called free but half were still subjugated. It proposed a decree that explicitly abolished all male privileges, which included active and passive suffrage, access to all public offices and military ranks, and equal civil rights for men and women.²⁵ As Offen points out, women's civic rights were a central theme of the revolutionary era. This means that the complete emancipation of women was already conceivable and was also perceived as a danger by opponents.²⁶

The revolutionaries, however, did not accommodate women on this issue. Abbé Sieyès had already distinguished between active and passive citizenship in his draft constitution from July 1789; he included women among the latter, along with children and foreigners. The National Assembly followed Sieyès in December 1789 and excluded women from the right to vote.²⁷

During the discussion of the new constitution, adopted in 1791, the debate on women's rights and citizenship was revived. In 1790, the Enlightenment philosopher and mathematician Condorcet, in his work *Sur l'admission des femmes au droit de cité* (On the Admission of Women to the Right of Citizenship), spoke in favor of granting women

23 "Pétition des femmes du Tiers-État au Roi, 1er janvier 1789" [Petition of the Women of the Third Estate to the King, January 1, 1789], <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k426525/f10.item.texteImage#>.

24 Offen, *European Feminisms*, 51 et seq.

25 "Requête des Dames à l'Assemblée Nationale, 1789" [Women's Petition to the National Assembly, 1789], <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k426587?rk=21459;2#>.

26 Offen, *European Feminisms*, 56.

27 Offen, 52 et seq.

equal rights, both civil and political. He certainly recognized that men and women were not equal. However, the position in society is not determined by nature but by education and social life. Therefore, the exclusion of women would be discrimination and would go against the principles of the Revolution. Therefore, all women with property should also be given the right to vote.²⁸

However, this opinion was not held by the majority, and the Constitution of 1791 decided against the civic equality of women, to whom only civil rights were recognized. Women became individuals with their own rights that they could exercise independently—that is to say, as civil legal persons—but political rights were denied to them.²⁹

The paradox of this legal position became immediately apparent to some men and women. Therefore, it is not surprising that Olympe de Gouges published her *Déclaration des droits de la Femme et de la Citoyenne* (Declaration of the Rights of Women and Citizens) in September 1791, after the adoption of the new constitution. Gouges pointed out that the universalism of rights proclaimed by the Revolution was a sham because the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* actually applied only to men. She now extended the declaration to women as well. She aimed with the text at a political mobilization of women and demanded the unrestricted right to vote for women; however, her influence over French women remained small. She tried in vain to establish a women's club. This was compounded by a political lack of instinct, since after the failed escape from Varennes she defended the king and addressed her statement directly to the queen, who was particularly hated.³⁰ For this reason, the *Déclaration des droits de la Femme et de la Citoyenne* met with little applause from the members of the National Assembly, and women also responded to it with little enthusiasm. Her declaration was nonetheless, along with Condorcet's *Sur l'admission des femmes au droit de cité*, a key milestone in French feminists' globalization project for equality between women and men. Both texts took the discussions of the Enlightenment one step further and drew the logical conclusions from them.

However, women did not just excel with petitions and declarations. Carla Hesse shows that the number of women publishing increased considerably after 1789. It is interesting to note that the majority of their published writings had political content (251 out of 626 published works between 1789 and 1800), were part of contemporary discussions in a variety of ways, and thus became involved in the debate about the appropriate place of women in society. This contradicts the long-held cliché that women

28 Sledziewski, "Die Französische Revolution als Wendepunkt," 54 et seq.

29 Sledziewski, 48–50.

30 Sledziewski, "Die Französische Revolution als Wendepunkt," 57; Gisela Bock, "Frauenrechte als Menschenrechte. Olympe de Gouges' transnationale Wiederentdeckung" [Women's Rights as Human Rights: Olympe de Gouges' Transnational Rediscovery], in *Geschlechtergeschichten der Neuzeit*, ed. Bock, 155–167; Susanne Petersen, *Marktweiber und Amazonen. Frauen in der Französischen Revolution* [Market Women and Amazons: Women in the French Revolution], 2nd ed. (Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1989), 82 et seq.

wrote mainly novels. Some of the better-known female authors published their texts not only in France but simultaneously also in several large European cities through European publishers. In this way, French women writers spread the debate about the appropriate place for women in society in the Western world.³¹

But women did not only act with the pen, they also intervened in the revolutionary processes. French historian Dominique Godineau, drawing on contemporary accounts, aptly characterized women as incendiaries.³² During the more or less spontaneous uprisings, women acted as a driving force. Already during the riots in the spring of 1789, which took place because of high grain and bread prices and increasing famine, women played a leading role. Spectacular was the march of the women of Paris to Versailles on October 5, 1789, with which the women forced the king to move from Versailles to the capital, where he was henceforth under the supervision of the people. With this first "Women's Day," women had not only demanded the right to participate in political life but also exercised it directly.³³ Women also later actively participated in the so-called *Journées révolutionnaires* (revolutionary days), and they constituted the majority in the stands of political bodies. Contemporaries repeatedly criticized the zeal with which they attended political meetings. For the women, it was a way of getting involved concretely and symbolically in the political sphere. They made themselves heard loudly, disrupting the proceedings by shouting, clapping, and interjecting. During the Revolution, the public gallery also served to monitor the elected officials. By taking their seats in the public gallery, women demonstrated their participation in political power, even though they were not legally entitled to do so.³⁴

Women thus became involved in the political process through action. And they demonstrated their public usefulness, which the creators of the Constitution of 1791 contested, by creating women's clubs throughout France as early as 1789. In all, such clubs were established in at least 56 cities.³⁵ The women's clubs not only turned to charitable activities that had ceased in many places after the dissolution of the Catholic orders but also drafted numerous petitions with a variety of objectives and debated "women's issues" and everyday political topics.³⁶ As the Revolution progressed, a number

31 Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment*, 37–41, 53–55.

32 Dominique Godineau, "Töchter der Freiheit und revolutionäre Bürgerinnen" [Daughters of Liberty and Revolutionary Citizens], in *Geschichte der Frauen*, eds. Fraisse and Perrot, 25–43, at 26 et seq.

33 Petersen, *Marktweiber*, 63–69.

34 Dominique Godineau, "Femmes en citoyenneté: pratiques et politique" [Women in Citizenship: Practices and Politics], *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 300 (1995): 197–207, at 204 et seq.

35 Suzanne Desan, "Constitutional Amazons: Jacobin Women's Clubs in the French Revolution," in *Re-creating Authority in Revolutionary France*, eds. Bryant T. Ragan and Elizabeth A. Williams (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 11–35, 177–186, at 178.

36 Claudia Opatz, "Die vergessenen Töchter der Revolution – Frauen und Frauenrechte im revolutionären Frankreich von 1789–1795" [The Forgotten Daughters of the Revolution: Women and Women's Rights in Revolutionary France from 1789–1795], in *Grenzgängerinnen. Revolutionäre Frauen im 18. und 19. Jahr-*

of these clubs increasingly took part in public politics, raising the question of women's full civic participation and their active involvement in the political decision-making process.³⁷

In Paris, these tendencies manifested themselves with exemplary acuity. Various women's clubs were active there and articulated their political demands in a very offensive way. Especially the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women (*Société des républicaines révolutionnaires*)—created on May 12, 1793, in the face of military threat—played an important role. Its 200 to 300 members came from the working classes. The leading figures were the chocolatier Pauline Léon and the provincial actress Claire Lacombe. The club, which collaborated with the Jacobin Club and the even more radical Cordeliers Club, was close to the sansculotte movement and involved in the struggle between the Montagnards and the Girondins. Its members attracted attention by their dress: they wore red pants and Jacobin caps. The club also championed the economic demands of the popular movement, such as price controls and fixed prices.³⁸ In September 1793, club members instigated the so-called cockade war by demanding that all women also be forced to wear the cockade, which had already been compulsory for men since April 3, 1793. This was clearly a question of political equality: Women were to be taken seriously as political subjects, and the cockade was a symbol of citizenship.³⁹

Finally, the club asked that women be armed to protect the Revolution. Indeed, since 1791, there had been requests to integrate women into the national guard, but this was always rejected by the revolutionaries. On April 30, 1793, the National Convention prohibited by decree the presence of women in the army, with a few exceptions. The bearing of arms was above all a symbol of women's aspiration to civic equality: by becoming a member of the national guard, one was recognized as a citizen. Especially for working women, this was more important than women's suffrage, which was limited by the census.⁴⁰

Godineau recognizes many signs of some recognition of women as political subjects in Year II (1793).⁴¹ This led to a backlash among revolutionaries. Many Jacobins in Paris as well as in the provinces were critical of this development because it ran counter to the traditional image of women.⁴² The National Convention did decide on Septem-

hundert, eds. Helga Grubitzsch, Hannelore Cyrus, and Elke Haarbush (Düsseldorf: Pädagogischer Verlag Schwann-Bagel, 1985), 287–312, at 290 et seq.

37 Desan, "Constitutional Amazons," 23–25; Höfer and Keilhauer, "Femme," 63–68.

38 Petersen, *Marktweiber*, 172–175.

39 Petersen, 172–175, 196–200.

40 Dominique Godineau, "De la guerrière à la citoyenne. Porter les armes pendant l'Ancien Régime et la Révolution française" [From Warrior to Citizen: Carrying Arms during the Ancien Régime and the French Revolution], *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire* 20 (2004): 5–10, <http://journals.openedition.org/clio/1418>.

41 Godineau, "Femmes en citoyenneté," 200–202.

42 Desan, "Constitutional Amazons," 29–35.

ber 21, 1793, that all women must wear a cockade in public. However, this decision was tactically motivated to end the disputes caused by the cockade war and because the club was supported by numerous sympathizers and by the Parisian sections.

But in reality, the resistance of the revolutionaries grew stronger because they feared new demands for political equality that could destabilize society. This is why, on October 30, 1793, the banning of all women's clubs, and in particular the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women, was declared. In the statement of reasons for the request, the Montagnard André Amar, an influential member of the Committee of General Security, stressed that political activity would be contrary to the nature and role of women in society.⁴³

After the ban on women's clubs, there was a fierce press campaign against politically active women. The appearance of women in Jacobin caps was now considered shameless, indecent, and immoral.⁴⁴ A profound change in public opinion set in, and only few voices now rose in support of equal rights for men and women. The Paris Commune banned women from wearing pants at the end of November 1793.⁴⁵

The last active political engagement of women occurred in the Prairial Uprising of 1795, in the face of the increasingly difficult supply situation and the price explosion after the abolition of the Law of Maximum.⁴⁶ As a result, women were forbidden by the National Convention, under threat of arrest, to form groups with more than five members. After the suppression of the uprising, women now also lost their individual right to petition and were no longer allowed to attend National Convention meetings.⁴⁷

Overall, it was a matter of drawing a clear line between the private and the public and in this way restoring the social order of the sexes.⁴⁸ The family was seen as the foundation of society, and a clear division of roles between the sexes was envisaged. This gender order was justified with recourse to the natural sciences, with reference to the natural order. This was done through the "universal science" of anthropology that developed in the eighteenth century, which anchored a new anthropological view of medicine and was able to establish itself in French society after the Thermidor in the course of a medical Revolution. With this new view, it was scientifically justified that women were only suitable for domestic activity. The physician and physiologist Pierre-Jean-Georges Cabanis, among others, was

43 Hunt, *The Family Romance*, 119.

44 Petersen, *Marktweiber*, 213.

45 *Gazette Nationale ou le Moniteur Universel*, no. 70, November 20, 1793, 281.

46 Godineau, "Töchter der Freiheit," 27.

47 Godineau, "Femmes en citoyenneté," 205.

48 Desan, "Constitutional Amazons," 30. For the restoration of the conservative concept of women, see Höfer and Keilhauer, "Femme," 78.

instrumental in determining the content of this new medicine.⁴⁹ The view of the different nature of man and woman, which he advocated entirely in the spirit of Rousseau, gained authority. He stated that the different roles of men and women in society, their special characteristics, and their different lifestyles would be determined by the different gender physiology—skeleton, muscle structure, and nervous system.⁵⁰ While the male sexual organs would function independently of the brain, female sexuality would permeate the entire body. Because of this mental disposition, women would be unsuitable for public offices in administration and government. Women would therefore not be able to represent themselves adequately and would need a man to do so. His treatise *De l'influence du sexe sur le caractère des idées et des affections morales* (On the Influence of Sex on the Character of Moral Ideas and Affections) experienced numerous new editions in the nineteenth century.⁵¹

French civil law followed this reasoning. The Directory, the current revolutionary government, then interpreted the liberal law of divorce in favor of men and began to remove some of the more radical legislative changes in favor of women, without touching the substance of the reforms. It was only Napoleon Bonaparte who enshrined a patriarchal reaction in the Civil Code of 1804, rolling back many of the civil law gains for women.⁵²

Developments in the wake of the French Revolution were followed closely in the Western world, and the differing positions were taken up and fed into debates about the reorganization of gender roles. This concerned, on the one hand, the feminist achievements and demands articulated in the Revolution. In England, Mary Wollstonecraft published her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in 1792 as an echo of the French debates and events. She criticized the exclusion of women from political rights by the Constitution of 1791; for her, political rights were natural rights that belonged equally to women and men. Even more central to her, however, was the fact that women were not accepted as rational human beings and that men were made the sole representatives of the species. This meant that women lost the opportunity to decide to what extent they wanted to take on responsibility in the community. She saw motherhood as a specific contribution to the community and demanded that it be recognized as such. Through better education of women and girls, women should become independent and equal

49 Elizabeth A. Williams, "The French Revolution, Anthropological Medicine, and the Creation of Medical Authority," in *Re-creating Authority*, eds. Ragan and Williams, 79–97, at 87–93; Hunt, *The Family Romance*, 157 et seq.

50 Claudia Honegger, *Die Ordnung der Geschlechter. Die Wissenschaften vom Menschen und das Weib 1750–1850* [The Order of the Sexes: The Sciences of Man and Woman 1750–1850] (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 1991), 157–160.

51 Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment*, 131 et seq.; Offen, *European Feminisms*, 67.

52 Hunt, *The Family Romance*, 161–163.

actors. On this point, she explicitly went beyond Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand, to whom she dedicated her writing and who only foresaw a girls' education that would prepare women for their future activity as wives and mothers.⁵³

The Prussian privy councilor and mayor of Königsberg, Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel, went much further in his demands, although he, too, operated in an environment critical of women's rights. Based on the events of the Revolution, he anonymously published *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Weiber* (On Improvement of the Civil Status of Women) in 1792, after learning that women in France had not been granted civil rights. Following Poullain de La Barre, he assumed that the inequality of women was not natural but socially created. Their inequality would be due to the egoism of the male sex and the fear that women would compete with him and ultimately dominate him. In the spirit of the Enlightenment, Hippel criticized the patriarchal marriage system and demanded that women be given the same educational opportunities as men and even that they be taught in coeducational teaching institutions. In addition, he took up radical feminist positions, namely equal rights for women as well as their own female representatives in the government, explicitly linking up with Gouges's declaration.⁵⁴

The Hamburg school principal Amalie Holst followed Hippel in her 1802 work *Über die Bestimmung des Weibes zur höhern Geistesbildung* (On the Destiny of Women for Higher Intellectual Education) and strongly opposed Rousseau's argumentation. She emphasized that nature had endowed women and men with the same abilities and that they were first and foremost human beings. Women were therefore very much entitled to higher education and science. Holst explicitly polemicized against Cabanis's theses but remained bound to a social ideal of the estates, which excluded women of the lower estates from higher education. At the same time, she advocated complete equality in marriage.⁵⁵

The Swedish poet Thomas Thorild, who also applauded the French Revolution, stated in his 1793 work *Om kvinnökönets naturliga höghet* (On the Natural Sovereignty of

53 Sledziewski, "Die Französische Revolution als Wendepunkt," 58 et seq.; Offen, "Was Mary Wollstonecraft a Feminist?," 7–15.

54 Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel, *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Weiber* [On Improvement of the Civil Status of Women] (Berlin: Vossische Buchhandlung, 1792), 105–06, 163, 171 et seq., 193–199, 233–236.

55 Amalie Holst, *Über die Bestimmung des Weibes zur höhern Geistesbildung* [On the Destiny of Women for Higher Intellectual Education] (Berlin: Heinrich Frölich, 1802), XIII–XIV, 2–3, 7–9, 13–17, 21 et seq., 111; see also Elke Spitzer, *Emanzipationsansprüche zwischen der Querelle des Femmes und der modernen Frauenbewegung: Der Wandel des Gleichheitsbegriffs am Ausgang des 18. Jahrhunderts* [Emancipation Claims between the Querelle des Femmes and the Modern Women's Movement: The Changing Concept of Equality at the End of the Eighteenth Century] (Kassel: Kassel University Press, 2002), 163–170, <https://portal.uni-kassel.de/kup/d/9783933146724>.

Women) that women had the same rights as men because they were human beings first.⁵⁶

To a greater extent than the feminist demands, however, antifeminist positions were taken up and determined the discussions and then also the institutionalization of a binary gender model that pushed women out of the public sphere. In fact, the number and loudness of those who advocated antifeminist positions and rejected equal rights for women by resorting to alleged “nature” were much greater. This tendency was already noted by Ursula Geitner for the German “revolution tourists.”⁵⁷

Even the first renowned German fashion magazine, the *Journal des Luxus und der Moden*, which had around 25,000 readers during the revolutionary period, referred to the feminist movement in France on several occasions, usually ironically and with the comment that it contradicted the nature of women.

The feminist movement in the French Revolution was accordingly seen primarily as a threat. In 1795, Johann Gottlieb Fichte had noted “a certain aspiration of women, a dissatisfaction of the same with their political situation,” as one of the “peculiarities of our time” and at the same time emphasized, quite in the spirit of the majority of the French revolutionaries, that female nature envisaged the subordination of women to men and their exclusion from the exercise of political rights.⁵⁸

In the German states, the ideas of French anthropological medicine, which asserted a close entanglement of moral and physical factors, were taken up, and a special female anthropology was also established, which was subsequently championed by poets and philosophers.⁵⁹ Karin Hagemann points out that the discourse of masculinity that began to unfold in Germany in 1800 and intensified in the wake of the national uprising against Napoleon was “a reaction to the elementary insecurity, primarily of bourgeois male self-esteem, caused by female involvement in the French Revolution [...] which was seen as a threat to male supremacy in society and the state.”⁶⁰

56 Svante Nordin, “Thomas Thorild – Der Umstürzler im Reich des Theaterkönigs” [Thomas Thorild: The Subversive in the Kingdom of the Theater King], in *Thomas Thorild (1759–1808). Ein schwedischer Philosoph in Greifswald*, eds. Carola Häntsch, Joachim Krüger, and Jens E. Olesen (Greifswald: Panzig, 2008), 9–20, at 16 et seq.; Karin Hoff, “Aufgeklärte Provokationen. Thomas Thorilds ästhetische und literaturkritische Experimente” [Enlightened Provocations: Thomas Thorild’s Aesthetic and Literary Critical Experiments], in *Thomas Thorild*, eds. Häntsch, Krüger, and Olesen, 21–39, at 21 et seq.; Offen, *European Feminisms*, 60.

57 For the German world, see Ursula Geitner, “‘Die eigentlichen Enragés ihres Geschlechts.’ Aufklärung, Französische Revolution und Weiblichkeit” [“The Real Enragés of Their Sex”: Enlightenment, French Revolution, and Femininity], in *Grenzgängerinnen*, eds. Grubitzsch, Cyrus, and Haarbusch (Düsseldorf: Pädagogischer Verlag Schwann-Bagel, 1985), 181–217, at 187–213.

58 Honegger, *Die Ordnung der Geschlechter*, 186.

59 Honegger, 182–192.

60 Karen Hagemann, “Nation, Krieg und Geschlechterordnung. Zum kulturellen und politischen Diskurs in der Zeit der antinapoleonischen Erhebung Preußens 1806–1815” [Nation, War, and Gender Order: On

Similar reactions occurred in other European countries. In his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), Edmund Burke condemned the activities of women in the French Revolution; they would challenge male authority in the family and the gender-specific distribution of roles. He criticized contractual marriage as a rupture of civilization that would endanger society as a whole.⁶¹ In English politics, it was further assumed that women's interests had to be looked after primarily by (married) men because women had no will of their own and were dominated by men.⁶²

The dominant antifeminist discourse led to a polarization of "Geschlechtercharaktere" (gender characters), as Karin Hausen outlined in a seminal essay in 1976.⁶³ This resulted in a bourgeois gender model that pushed women into the private sphere and increasingly reduced their civil rights.

French Feminism and the Worldwide Struggle for Women's Rights in the Nineteenth Century

In the first half of the nineteenth century, women writers in particular turned against the patriarchal reaction, addressing in their works the issues of self-determination regarding marriage, moral autonomy, and independence from parental control. They maintained a form of subaltern counterpublic, as defined by Nancy Fraser.⁶⁴ Once again, French women writers such as Germaine de Staël and later George Sand, who were appreciated far beyond France's borders, were the leaders in this field.⁶⁵ In England, too,

Cultural and Political Discourse in the Period of Prussia's Anti-Napoleonic Revolt, 1806–1815], *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, no. 4 (1996): 562–591, at 577.

61 Offen, *European Feminisms*, 68–69, 72 et seq.

62 This is what liberal parliamentarian Charles James Fox said in the House of Commons during a debate in 1797, see Offen, 73.

63 Karin Hausen, "Die Polarisierung der 'Geschlechtercharaktere' – eine Spiegelung der Dissoziation von Erwerbs- und Familienleben" [The Polarization of "Gender Characters": A Reflection of the Dissociation of Work Life and Family Life], in *Sozialgeschichte der Familie in der Neuzeit Europas*, ed. Werner Conze (Stuttgart: Klett, 1976), 363–393.

64 Nancy Fraser, "Neuere Überlegungen zur Öffentlichkeit. Ein Beitrag zur Kritik der real existierenden Demokratie" [Recent Reflections on the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Real Existing Democracy], in Nancy Fraser, *Die halbierte Gerechtigkeit. Schlüsselbegriffe des postindustriellen Sozialstaats* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp 2001), 129.

65 See Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment*, 130–156; Offen, *European Feminisms*, 104; Annika Haß and Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, "L'Almanach des Dames (1801–1840) als Medium weiblicher Geschmacksbildung und Forum 'feministischer' Debatten" [L'Almanach des Dames (1801–1840) as a Medium of Female Taste Formation and Forum of "Feminist" Debates], in *Französische Almanachkultur im deutschen Sprachraum (1700–1815). Gattungsstrukturen, komparatistische Aspekte, Diskursformen*, eds. Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink and York-Gothart Mix (Göttingen: V&R Unipress 2013), 279–307, at 291–303.

a broad spectrum of writers and social critics emerged who addressed a reorganization of gender roles.

The July Revolution of 1830 again reinforced the demands for women's emancipation and also accentuated them on the social level. Once again, the Paris events stimulated feminist discussion and action in Europe. In France, a new generation of activists emerged around utopian socialists who, like Charles Fourier and the Saint-Simonists, had supported the struggle for women's rights. Two of them, Jeanne-Désirée Véret and Marie-Reine Guindorf, founded *La Femme libre* in 1832, the first feminist newspaper in France in which only women published; it appeared under changing titles until 1834 and was finally called *La Tribune des femmes*.⁶⁶ The first issue made an appeal to women and took up fundamental demands of the Revolution of 1789: "Until today, women have been exploited and tyrannized. This tyranny, this exploitation must end. Like man, we are born free, and half of the human race must not be unjustly subjected to the other."⁶⁷

This appeal was received in many European countries, from Scandinavia to the Italian and German states, the Netherlands, and Russia. The British feminists Anna Doyle Wheeler and John Stuart Mill also found inspiration here.⁶⁸ The new female self-confidence was carried to Germany by authors of Young Germany such as Heinrich Heine, among others; thus, a whole series of women writers formed in Germany during the Vormärz period, whose works took up the French discussion about the emancipation of women, about a marriage based on love, and (in Louise Otto's case) also about the social misery of women workers.⁶⁹

The utopian socialist feminists of the 1830s advocated women's liberation not only in France and Western Europe but also in the so-called East, particularly the French colonies. They sought a cultural transformation of colonial society through the liberation of women. This included in particular the journalist Suzanne Voilquin, who also worked for *La Tribune des femmes* and was close to the Saint-Simonists. Voilquin went to Egypt in 1834, where some French Saint-Simonists tried to advance the standing of local population. She said Egyptian women needed guidance from Western feminists. She advocated a form of civilizing mission even before it became official doctrine in the

66 Christine Bard, *Histoire des femmes dans la France des XIXe et XXe siècles* [History of Women in France in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries] (Paris: Ellipses, 2013), 25; Michèle Riot-Sarcey, *La démocratie à l'épreuve des femmes. Trois figures critiques du pouvoir 1830–1848* [Democracy in the Test of Women: Three Critical Figures of Power 1830–1848] (Paris: Albin Michel, 1994), 61.

67 Original in "La Femme libre" [The Free Woman], August 1832, 1, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k85525j/f2.image>: "La femme, jusqu'à présent, a été exploitée, tyrannisée. Cette tyrannie, cette exploitation doit cesser. Nous naissons libres comme l'homme, et la moitié du genre humain ne peut être, sans injustice, asservie à l'autre."

68 Offen, *European Feminisms*, 97.

69 Ute Gerhard, *Frauenbewegung und Feminismus. Eine Geschichte seit 1789* [Women's Movement and Feminism: A History since 1789], 3rd ed. (Munich: Beck, 2018), 29–32.

Third Republic. At the same time, however, she rejected national imperialism, which acted through the exercise of military power.⁷⁰

The growing thematization of the women's question since the July Revolution of 1830 prepared the ground for a broad involvement of women in the Revolution of 1848, despite various setbacks such as the refusal of divorce by the Chamber of Peers in 1831 and 1833 or the restrictive laws enacted in September 1835.⁷¹ The Revolution of 1848 no longer had the same character of uniqueness as the Revolution of 1789. Women took an active part in the Revolution of 1848 in various countries. They founded various committees, societies, clubs, and newspapers not only in France but also in the German states and in the Habsburg Empire.⁷² The civil and civic equality claimed by the women activists was, however, denied to them everywhere. The Second Republic conveyed, again, a widely perceived antifeminist message. In June 1848, as part of the repression of the revolution, women's clubs were banned in France, and many women activists were forced into exile. The established newspapers had already shown their opposition to women's clubs and the women's rights movement.⁷³

In the aftermath of the Revolution of 1848, however, the first transnational networks of feminists emerged, in which French activists also played a significant role. One example is Jeanne Deroin, a teacher from a working-class background and "one of the founders of modern feminism"⁷⁴ who had already worked on the newspaper *La Femme libre* in the 1830s. Together with Véret, she founded the newspaper *La Politique des femmes* in 1848 and then *L'Opinion des femmes* by herself in 1849. She was the first woman to register her candidacy in the elections to the Legislative Assembly, but she was not nominated by the democratic socialists.⁷⁵ In 1849, she created the Association fraternelle et solidaire de toutes les associations, a federation of more than a hundred workers' cooperatives, and advanced her feminist and socialist ideals. As a member of

70 Carolyn J. Eichner, *Feminism's Empire* (New York: Cornell University Press 2022), 91–94.

71 Riot-Sarcey, *La démocratie à l'épreuve*, 181 et seq.

72 Sylvia Paletschek and Bianka Pietrow-Ennker, "Women's Emancipation Movements in Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century: Conclusions," in *Woman's Emancipation Movement in the Nineteenth Century*, eds. Sylvia Paletschek and Bianka Pietrow-Ennker (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 301–333, at 311; Rüdiger Hachtmann, "... nicht die Volksherrschaft auch noch durch Weiberherrschaft trüben" – der männliche Blick auf die Frauen in der Revolution von 1848" ["... not to tarnish the people's rule by women's rule as well": The Male View on Women in the Revolution of 1848], *Werkstatt Geschichte*, no. 20 (1998): 5–30; Carola Lipp, ed., *Schimpfende Weiber und patriotische Jungfrauen. Frauen im Vormärz und in der Revolution 1848/49* [Scolding Women and Patriotic Virgins: Women in the Vormärz and the Revolution of 1848–49] (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1998).

73 Offen, *European Feminisms*, 112; Riot-Sarcey, *La démocratie à l'épreuve*, 226; Michèle Riot-Sarcey, "Emancipation des femmes 1848" [Emancipation of Women 1848], *Genèses*, no. 7 (1992): 194–200, at 195; Michèle Riot-Sarcey, *Histoire du féminisme* [History of Feminism], 3rd ed. (Paris: La Découverte, 2015), 43 et seq.; for Germany, see Hachtmann, "Volksherrschaft."

74 According to Riot-Sarcey, *La démocratie à l'épreuve*, 170.

75 Bard, *Histoire des femmes*, 26; Riot-Sarcey, *La démocratie à l'épreuve*, 233, 245–249.

the association's central committee, she was arrested in 1850, tried, and sentenced to six months in prison. In 1851, she founded the *Almanach de femmes*, which she continued to publish, after emigrating to Great Britain in 1852, until 1854. After 1852, she made the almanac an international newspaper, published bilingually, reporting on women's activities in the fields of science, art, and politics from around the world. Later, she came into contact with the new leaders of the women's rights movement in France, Léon Richer and Maria Deraismes, as well as with the International Workingmen's Association.⁷⁶ Véret also fled France due to political persecution and settled in Belgium. She also continued her commitment to women's rights, later also as a member of the Socialist International.⁷⁷

While in most European countries the further development of the women's movement was initially prevented by political repression, feminist organizations, which were also able to celebrate their first legislative successes, developed in the USA and England in the 1850s.⁷⁸

The Second Empire, by contrast, with its restrictive domestic policies, severely limited the room for maneuver for feminists at the beginning. Women's rights activists directed their attention toward the education of girls, and in the 1860s the first educational institutions were established for women from the lower classes as well. In addition, some women published texts that argued for gender equality.⁷⁹ It was not until the liberalization of the empire at the end of the 1860s that the scope for feminist activities in France broadened again. In 1868, women activists gathered at public lectures and discussion meetings. They soon found themselves on the editorial board of *Le Droit des Femmes*, a newspaper founded by Richer in 1869, which expressed numerous women's demands until 1891. In April 1870, Deraismes and Richer founded the Association for Women's Rights (Association pour le Droit des Femmes), a society that is seen as the organizational departure of the French women's movement, but which came under pressure from 1873 onward from the conservative monarchist government of the *Ordre moral* (moral order) movement and was dissolved in 1875.⁸⁰

76 Riot-Sarcey, *La démocratie à l'épreuve*, 257–259, 267, 274–279.

77 Ulla Wischermann, Jeanne-Victoire Jacob, and Jeanne-Désirée Véret, "Französische Frühsozialistinnen" [French Early Socialist Woman], in *Klassikerinnen feministischer Theorie. Grundlagentexte Band I (1789–1919)*, eds. Ute Gerhard, Petra Pommerenke, and Ulla Wischermann (Königstein/Taunus: Ulrike Helmer Verlag, 2008), 41–53, at 42.

78 Offen, *European Feminisms*, 119–122; Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker, "Women's Emancipation Movements," 312.

79 Bard, *Histoire des femmes*, 26; Riot-Sarcey, *Histoire du féminisme*, 50 et seq.; Florence Rochefort, "The French Feminist Movement and Republicanism, 1868–1914," in *Woman's Emancipation Movement*, eds. Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker, 77–101, at 81; Laurence Klejman and Florence Rochefort, *L'égalité en marche. Le féminisme sous la Troisième République* [Equality on the Move: Feminism under the Third Republic] (Paris: Presses de la fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1989), 32.

80 Klejman and Rochefort, *L'égalité en marche*, 34–46, 48, 52 et seq.

Women were also active in the Paris Commune, and some even took part in the barricade fights in uniform. However, their demand for political participation was rejected by the commune leadership.⁸¹ Nevertheless, during the suppression of the Paris Commune, women were treated with the same harshness as men; hundreds fell during the fighting, and 115 were later sentenced.⁸² Leading figures of the socialist women's movement, such as André Léo (pseudonym) and Louise Michel, were forced into exile in 1871.⁸³

As a result of the events in Paris, initiatives to internationalize the feminist movement initially left out the French feminist movement, which was considered too radical. Many feminists outside of France distanced themselves from French extremism, for example the international group Solidarity: Association for the Defense of Women's Rights (Solidarité: Association pour la Défense des Droits de la Femme), which included women from England, Switzerland, Germany, and Italy.⁸⁴ Deraismes, the best-known women's rights activist of the early Third Republic, tried to avoid these prejudices through a more reform-oriented approach and refrained from overemphasizing the tradition of the Revolution of 1789.⁸⁵ Other feminists, such as Hubertine Auclert, Léonie Rouzade, Paule Mink, and Michel, who were closer to the socialist movement, pursued the universalist globalization project of the French women's movement of the Enlightenment and Revolution of 1789 more aggressively. They also were among the earliest critics of French colonialism but remained committed to the French civilizing mission that sought to improve the situation of women in the colonies.⁸⁶

In the mid-1870s, the more reform-oriented Richer made contact with an American feminist with the aim of establishing an international association of women's rights activists, but this still failed.⁸⁷ Despite this, international contacts were established early on through the newspaper *Le Droit des Femmes*. However, there were definitely conflict lines between the various national women's movements.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, during and after the world's fair in Paris in 1878, French feminists were able to regain the initiative.

81 Offen, *European Feminisms*, 146 et seq.

82 Bard, *Histoire des femmes*, 27.

83 Klejman and Rochefort, *L'égalité en marche*, 50.

84 Offen, *European Feminisms*, 144, 148, 151.

85 Annette Keilhauer, "Die Ambivalenz des Öffentlichen: Mediale Inszenierungen und Frauenrechte im Frankreich des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts" [The Ambivalence of the Public: Media Productions and Women's Rights in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century France], in: *Medienereignisse im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*, eds. Christine Vogel, Herbert Schneider, and Horst Carl (Munich: Oldenbourg 2009), 145–163, at 153–154.

86 Eichner, *Feminism's Empire*, 7, 25, 34. On the French civilizing mission, see the chapter about French cultural policy and its global ambitions.

87 Klejman and Rochefort, *L'égalité en marche*, 52 et seq.

88 Annette Keilhauer, "Internationalisation ou dialogue de sourds? Négociations transnationales autour du premier Congrès international du droit des femmes de 1878" [Internationalization or Dialogue of the Deaf? Transnational Negotiations around the First International Congress on Women's Rights in 1878],

Deraismes and Richer convoked the first International Women's Rights Congress on this occasion, which met for two weeks in the French capital and focused on the transnational oppression of women. Women's rights activists from various European countries and the USA took part.⁸⁹ The congress initiated a new phase of international networking among women's rights activists, which led to the establishment of permanent international women's organizations.⁹⁰ Feminists in various European states began to organize their efforts more strategically not only within countries but also internationally.⁹¹

Even if French feminists symbolically took the lead with this congress, they still relied on women's rights activists from other countries for the organization and financing. The congress also exposed the national and social tensions between women's movements in different countries.⁹²

Auclert, who initially had joined liberal feminists Deraismes and Richer, broke with them because they only stood up for civil rights and not full political rights. In 1881, she founded the feminist newspaper *La citoyenne* to advocate French women's suffrage and full citizenship. But the newspaper also looked beyond national borders. Auclert and her collaborators developed a feminist imperialism that advocated the introduction of feminist-inspired laws in the colonies. She represented a republican universalism and a Franco-assimilationism, which also assumed a French civilizing mission and was intended to improve the lives of the Arab population in particular. She rejected the existing imperialism that relied on military strength and opposed it to a feminist imperialism that would pursue a humanitarian mission and strive for peaceful and charitable dissemination of its values. With her republican feminism, Auclert aimed to improve the situation of women in France and its colonies, whereby the women in the colonies would be assimilated into French culture.⁹³

On the issue of women's suffrage, which the 1878 congress had not touched, American feminists then took the initiative.⁹⁴ Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, two leading activists in the American women's suffrage movement, traveled to France and England in 1882–83 and formed a committee of correspondence as a precursor to an international women's suffrage association.⁹⁵ European feminists then attended the convention of the National Woman Suffrage Association in Washington, DC, in 1888.

in *Le premier féminisme allemand 1848–1933*, eds. Patrick Farges and Anne-Marie Saint-Gille (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion 2013), 131–146, at 135–137.

89 Offen, *European Feminisms*, 151.

90 Leila J. Rupp, "Transnational Women's Movement," *Europäische Geschichte Online (EGO)*, June 16, 2011, <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/ruppl-2011-en>.

91 Keilhauer, "Internationalisation ou dialogue de sourds?," 133–134.

92 Keilhauer, 138–146.

93 Eichner, *Feminism's Empire*, 82–90.

94 Offen, *European Feminisms*, 152–154.

95 Leila J. Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 15.

The first permanent international women's organization, the International Council of Women, was founded at this congress. It was conceived of as an umbrella organization of national women's councils, but these had yet to be formed.⁹⁶ This took place in Germany in 1894 with the founding of the Federation of German Women's Associations (Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine) and in France in 1901 with the formation of the National Council of French Women (Conseil National des Femmes Françaises).⁹⁷ The activity of the International Council of Women was limited in the early years to the organization of international congresses held every five years. It was a conservative organization, headed for many decades by women from the European upper nobility, which took no position on women's suffrage in the first decades.⁹⁸

The French women's rights movement responded in 1889, the centenary of the Revolution of 1789, with its own French and International Congress of Women's Rights (Congrès français et international du droit des femmes), again organized by Deraismes and Richer, which received considerable press attention.⁹⁹ Some competition with the American women's rights movement was reflected in the announcement for this congress, penned by Deraismes, in which she characterized the French women's movement as the forerunner of the women's rights movement, which gave it a universal program.¹⁰⁰ Historical self-assurance was fundamental for the women's rights movement to gain legitimacy.¹⁰¹ This time, the congress passed a resolution demanding political rights for women, explicitly picking up on feminist demands from the Revolution of 1789.¹⁰²

Despite all its activities, the French women's rights movement remained only a small lobbying movement until the end of the 1880s. This changed from around 1890, when a new generation of activists who had been socialized during the years of the Third Republic emerged, graduated from women's educational institutions, and worked in philanthropic women's associations or had entered the rapidly expanding urban labor market for female employees. Now, in fact, a broader feminist movement developed

96 Kristina Schulz, "Sozialistische Frauenorganisationen, bürgerliche Frauenbewegung und der Erste Weltkrieg. Nationale und internationale Perspektiven" [Socialist Women's Organizations, Bourgeois Women's Movements, and the First World War: National and International Perspectives], *Historische Zeitschrift*, no. 298 (2014): 653–685, at 659.

97 Christina Klausmann et al., "Internationale Kongresse der alten und neuen Frauenbewegung" [International Congresses of the Old and New Women's Movement], *Feministische Studien*, no. 2 (1994): 100–136, at 101; Bard, *Histoire des femmes*, 29.

98 Rupp, *Worlds of Women*, 19–21.

99 Offen, *European Feminisms*, 158–159.

100 "Annonce du second congrès du droit des femmes lancée par Maria Deraismes" [Announcement of the Second International Congress of Women's Rights Launched by Maria Deraismes], *Revue internationale* (1889), printed in Maria Deraismes, *Ce que veulent le femmes. Articles et conférences de 1869 à 1891* (Paris: Syros, 1980), 95–100.

101 Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker, "Women's Emancipation Movements," 301 et seq.

102 Klejman and Rochefort, *L'égalité en marche*, 83.

with new ideas, associations, and leaders, in which men no longer exercised leadership functions.¹⁰³ Beginning in the 1890s, the term *feminism* took hold in France. Eugénie Potonie-Pierre had called for the creation of a French Federation of Feminist Societies (Fédération française des sociétés féministes) in the newspaper *Le Droit des Femmes* in September 1891, and this federation had convened a General Congress of Feminist Institutions (Congrès général des institutions féministes) in May 1892. From then on, the term spread in common usage, first in France, then in Belgium and Switzerland, and from 1894 in the Anglo-Saxon world. Florence Rochefort emphasizes that feminism truly became in vogue in Paris after the turn of the century.¹⁰⁴

The formation of international women's organizations had repercussions for the French women's rights movement, as described above, because it led to the consolidation of existing women's associations or made certain issues the focus of their work. It is also evident that the national women's movements, also in France, received new impulses to a greater extent through transnational networks. The National Council of French Women was finally founded in 1901 after years of strenuous efforts by leading American activists of the International Council of Women. From then on, the umbrella organization was dominated by moderate and philanthropic women's associations. The French Union for Women's Suffrage (Union Française pour le Suffrage des Femmes) was founded in 1909 at the suggestion of an international women's organization, the International Woman Suffrage Alliance. The latter organization had been initiated in 1904 in Berlin by American and German feminists as a rival organization to the International Council of Women. On the occasion of its fifth anniversary, it was looking for a national member organization in France. The French Union for Women's Suffrage was able to establish itself very quickly throughout the country with a targeted campaign for women's local and regional suffrage and also found support for its work among the already existing women's rights associations.¹⁰⁵

This fragmentation of international organizations, which was to increase after the outbreak of World War I and in the interwar period, demonstrates the coexistence and sometimes opposition of different goals of feminist action. Nevertheless, the various international congresses did reach a certain degree of understanding on fundamental issues, especially with regard to social problems affecting working and professional life and the bourgeois double standard on sexual matters.¹⁰⁶ Despite limited political successes at the national level, especially with regard to women's suffrage, the concerted efforts of national women's associations and international women's organizations, as

103 Rochefort, "The French Feminist Movement," 90 et seq.

104 Offen, "Sur l'origine," 495 et seq.; Offen, *European Feminisms*, 183–186; Rochefort, "The French Feminist Movement," 92.

105 Klejman and Rochefort, *Légalité en marche*, 150–152, 275; Rupp, *Worlds of Women*, 21 et seq.

106 Rupp, "Transnational Women's Movement"; Klausmann et al., "Internationale Kongresse," 101; Offen, *European Feminisms*, 232–236.

along with the acknowledged progress in some countries within and outside Europe, brought the issue of women's emancipation very much to the forefront of social and political discourse.

In France, prior to World War I, the women's rights movement had successfully advocated various demands, including, among others, the right to practice legal and medical professions, to be admitted to municipal commissions, and to plead before the courts. In 1909, the first law on maternity protection was passed in parliament, giving women protection against dismissal eight weeks before and after childbirth. In 1913, women were granted a four-week paid leave of absence after childbirth. The first chamber of the National Assembly even came out in favor of women's suffrage at the municipal level in 1909, but the more conservative senate immediately vetoed it and repeatedly rejected it several times during the interwar period.¹⁰⁷

French Feminism and the Global Struggle for Women's Rights in the Twentieth Century

As a result of World War I, the internationalism of French women's suffrage associations fractured. The leaders of the French sections of the Council of Women and the International Woman Suffrage Alliance voted unanimously for national mobilization for war in 1914 and preached an often radical patriotism. They were not alone internationally in this stance. Only a minority of women's rights activists advocated an end to hostilities and a nonviolent resolution of conflicts after 1914. The feminist organizations of France categorically refused to participate in the international socialist women's conference in Bern on March 28, 1915, which opposed the war. Nor did they participate in the Women's Peace Congress at The Hague in April and May 1915, which would lead to the founding of the third major international women's organization, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). The few feminists who openly sympathized with it were expelled from the existing associations. The French socialist Louise Saumoneau, who attended the socialist women's conference in Bern, was imprisoned for two months after her return.¹⁰⁸

107 Klejman and Rochefort, *Légalité en marche*, 258 et seq.; Christine Bard, *Die Frauen in der französischen Gesellschaft des 20. Jahrhunderts* [Women in the French Society of the Twentieth Century] (Cologne: Böhlau, 2008), 21 and 110; Rochefort, "The French Feminist Movement," 101.

108 Bard, *Die Frauen*, 9 and 31–33; Klausmann et al., "Internationale Kongresse," 103; Schulz, "Sozialistische Frauenorganisationen," 665 et seq.; Françoise Thébaud, "Der Erste Weltkrieg. Triumph der Geschlechtertrennung" [The First World War: Triumph of Gender Segregation], in *Geschichte der Frauen. 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Françoise Thébaud, ed., (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1997), 33–91, at 38–40; Klejman and Rochefort, *Légalité en marche*, 192.

During the interwar period, the French feminist movement became further fragmented. Radical feminists remained a minority and did not find a real home in the left-wing parties either.¹⁰⁹ Many then became involved at the international level, in international women's associations or the League of Nations. In this way, French feminists continued to make their mark on the global struggle for women's rights and at the same time were able to circumvent the widespread exclusion from politics that persisted at the national level. Examples include Marguerite de Witt-Schlumberger and Ghénia Avril de Sainte-Croix, who were appointed by the French government to commissions of the League of Nations. Sainte-Croix, vice president of the International Council of Women in the 1920s, also served as an official delegate to the Joint Standing Committee of Women's International Organizations, which was created in 1925 by the major international women's organizations to better represent the goals of women's rights movements to the League of Nations and the International Labor Organization and to place women on important committees.¹¹⁰

Indeed, the international activism of the women's rights movement grew considerably in the 1920s. It included a range of goals such as improving educational opportunities for women; reforming matrimonial law; fighting for occupational equality; combating trafficking in women, antirearmament, and antiwar efforts; fighting alcohol and drug abuse; and fighting discriminatory citizenship laws in many states.¹¹¹

During the Colonial Exhibition of 1931, French feminists organized the third Estates General of Feminism (États-Généraux du Féminisme) on colonialism. Less critical of the imperialist practices of French colonial policy than Auclert, Michel, or Mink, these French feminists saw *L'Œuvre Coloniale* (colonial work) as a patriotic and humanitarian work intended to bring French power and the benefits of Western civilization to the world. At the same time, they expressed their solidarity with the colonized women and a certain form of feminist imperialism: they demanded, for example, access to school for girls, the protection of young girls from early marriage, improving health care, the protection of working women, and the application of the ten-hour day, but at the same time a greater involvement of French women in the colonial work. Somewhat paternalistically, the feminist activists assumed that women in the colonies would need guidance from Western women on their way to freedom and equality. Consequently,

109 Bard, *Die Frauen*, 95–106.

110 Offen, *European Feminisms*, 350; Karen Offen, "'La plus grande féministe de France.' Mais qui est donc Madame Avril de Sainte-Croix?" ["The Greatest Feminist of France": But Who Is Madame Avril de Sainte-Croix?], *Archives du féminisme*, www.archivesdufeminisme.fr/sommaires-des-bulletins/bulletin-09/offen-k-grande-feministe-france-mme-avril-sainte-croix/#r3; Rupp, "Transnational Women's Movement."

111 Offen, *European Feminisms*, 343–344.

women's suffrage was only demanded for French women in the metropole but not for the native population of the colonies, regardless of whether they were women or men.¹¹²

In the interwar period, however, the leading positions in the major international women's organizations were mostly held by feminists from the United States and Great Britain.¹¹³ Their increasing predominance is also reflected in the forms actions took: the worldwide survey on the status of women initiated by the League of Nations in 1935 was prompted by initiatives of women's rights organizations from North and South America. In the most active international women's organization of the interwar period, the WILPF, Anglo-Saxon dominance was particularly evident, even if two French antiwar activists, Gabrielle Duchêne and Camille Drevet, also played a role.¹¹⁴ The French section of the WILPF stood out especially owing to its fight against fascism and for social rights. Under Duchêne's leadership, the French section was instrumental in the creation of the World Committee of Women Against War and Fascism (Comité mondial des femmes contre la guerre et le fascisme) in Paris in 1934, which, while pro-communist in outlook, continued to be supported by the WILPF.¹¹⁵

French feminists maintained their leadership in this field after World War II. In late 1945, the first international congress of women after the end of World War II was held in Paris, where the Women's International Democratic Federation was founded. The organization soon became the umbrella organization of communist women's associations and also successfully built up organizations in parts of the Third World.¹¹⁶

The commitment of international women's organizations paid off in general after 1945: for example, the principle of equal rights for men and women was included in the United Nations Charter, and the United Nations created in 1946 a Commission on the Status of Women. Its activism, according to Leila Rupp, formed the bridge, at least for European and neo-European countries, from the first to the second wave of the women's movement that began in the late 1960s.¹¹⁷ In addition, there was also the emergence of independent women's movements in the countries that struggled for their liberation from colonial oppression after 1945.¹¹⁸

112 The Estates General of Feminism have been organized since 1929 by the National Council of French Women. They were conceived of as a step toward women's suffrage. See Régine Goutalier, "Les États généraux du féminisme à l'exposition coloniale, 30–31 mai 1931" [The Estates General of Feminism at the Colonial Exposition, May 30–31, 1931], *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 36, no. 2 (1989): 266–286, at 267–68, 285; Yvonne Knibiehler and Régine Goutalier, *La femme au temps des colonies* [Women in Colonial Times] (Paris: Stock, 1985), 111–113, 247.

113 See Rupp, *Worlds of Women*, 63–70.

114 Offen, *European Feminisms*, 357–361.

115 Rupp, *Worlds of Women*, 31; Offen, *European Feminisms*, 364 et seq.

116 Klausmann et al., "Internationale Kongresse," 104; Rupp, "Transnational Women's Movement."

117 Rupp, *Worlds of Women*, 223 et seq.

118 Bonnie G. Smith, *Global Feminisms since 1945* (London, New York: Routledge, 2000).

In France, despite the introduction of women's suffrage in 1944, there was a renewed revaluation of motherhood after the end of the war and a repression of female individuality and self-determination. The Fourth Republic recognizably continued the legacy of the Vichy regime. Women had played an important role in the Resistance, but overall the Resistance movement proved indifferent to gender equality.¹¹⁹ And women's organizations, from the communist Union of French Women (Union des femmes françaises) to the Catholic Civic and Social Women's Union (Union féminine civique et sociale), also supported the parties' pronatal policies and the associated mother and family ideology after 1945. After all, leading feminists criticized the fact that indigenous women were largely left out of the expansion of suffrage in the African colonies. This led to a change in the law in 1951 that gave mothers with two children the right to vote, although this suffrage change did not stop the independence movements in the colonies. The same was true in Algeria, where women were granted the right to vote in 1958 in an attempt to turn the tide of the war.¹²⁰

The developing Cold War reinforced the orientation toward motherhood. The Women's International Democratic Federation, founded in late 1945 with the support of the communist Union des femmes françaises, encouraged women to focus on their maternal duties in the struggle against nuclear weapons and armaments in the face of rising international tensions. After 1951, March 8 was also celebrated as the International Day for the Struggle for Peace and the Happiness of Children. The struggle for gender equality was put on hold in favor of a pacifism wedded to the class struggle.¹²¹

In this climate of maternalism, where feminist ideas were seldom debated and women were underrepresented in political parties and bodies, Simone de Beauvoir's book *Le Deuxième Sexe* (*The Second Sex*) appeared in 1949. The central message, "One is not born a woman, one becomes one," jarred in the conservative climate four years after the end of the war. The book was condemned by both conservatives and communists when it was published. The Catholic Church even put the book on its list of prohibited books. In particular, topics such as abortion, involuntary pregnancy, sexuality, and lesbian love were unacceptable to the postwar society striving for normality. Despite the controversy surrounding it, or perhaps because of it, the book enjoyed great success, not only in France but also beyond its borders: the first volume sold 20,000 copies after only two weeks. However, the book was partly misunderstood. In the USA, *The Second Sex* was sold in drugstores with a naked woman on the cover and the subtitle "How to Improve Your Sex." In France, the book contributed significantly to raising awareness, especially among young women. In fact, in *Le Deuxième Sexe*, Beauvoir linked up with the long

119 Riot-Sarcey, *Histoire du féminisme*, 83–84.

120 Bard, *Die Frauen*, 196–197.

121 Riot-Sarcey, *Histoire du féminisme*, 89.

line of feminist authors, not least Poullain de La Barre, and thus also established a bridge between the feminist movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the new women's movement of the twentieth century.¹²²

However, the volume developed its most profound effect in first decades after its publication, becoming seminal for the second wave of the women's movement. Karen Vintges regards Beauvoir's thought as a paradigm of modern feminism, and Ursula Konnertz considers her book as a milestone for the second women's movement and a founding text for feminist theory. Indeed, central authors of the New Women's Movement in the USA drew on Beauvoir, including Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique* of 1963 and Kate Millet in her 1970 bestseller *Sexual Politics*. Beauvoir was celebrated as an icon of feminism by supporters of the international women's movement, and she also became a point of reference for feminists in the Federal Republic of Germany and then the German Democratic Republic (GDR).¹²³

The text strengthened the movement in France in the 1950s and 1960s that advocated individual liberation for women and self-determination of one's own body—both of which Beauvoir had addressed in *Le Deuxième Sexe*. Thus, despite the ruling government's family ideology, the practice of contraception increased in France, and a law enacted in 1965 meant that husbands could no longer forbid their wives from pursuing a profession.¹²⁴

For some women, the fight against the Algerian War also became a crucial factor in the emergence of a feminist consciousness. The war and the treatment of Algerians committed to independence triggered protests in feminist circles in France, in which Beauvoir, Marguerite Duras, Simone Signoret, Nathalie Sarraute, and Madeleine Rébérioux, among others, took part. This led to increased demonstrations in France toward

122 Susanne Rauscher, "Simone de Beauvoir (1908–1986)," in *Klassikerinnen feministischer Theorie. Grundlagentexte Band II (1920–1985)*, eds. Ulla Wischermann, Susanne Rauscher, and Ute Gerhard (Königstein/Taunus: Ulrike Helmer Verlag, 2010), 62–67, at 65; Ursula Konnertz, "Simone de Beauvoir: Das andere Geschlecht. Sitte und Sexus der Frau" [Simone de Beauvoir: The Second Sex. Morality and the Sexus of Women], in *Schlüsselwerke der Geschlechterforschung*, eds. Martina Löw and Bettina Mathes (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2005), 26–58, at 32, 52; Florence Hervé, "Simone de Beauvoir – 'Das ganze Leben'" [Simone de Beauvoir: "The Whole Life"], in *Das Paris der Simone de Beauvoir*, ed. Inga Westerteicher (Dortmund: edition ebersbach, 1999), 11; Imke Schmincke, "Wie 'Das andere Geschlecht' zu einer 'Bibel' des Feminismus wurde" [How "the Gender" Became Feminism's "Bible"], *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 51 (2019): 25; Martina Reuter, "Subjugation, freedom, and recognition in Poulain de la Barre and Simone de Beauvoir," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* (2022), doi: 10.1080/09608788.2022.2074364; Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment*, 149–151.

123 Schmincke, "Wie 'Das andere Geschlecht' zu einer 'Bibel' des Feminismus wurde," 24–27; Karen Vintges, "Zur Aktualität von Beauvoirs Denken" [On the Topicality of Beauvoir's Thought], *50 Jahre Das andere Geschlecht*, special issue of *Die Philosophin. Forum für feministische Theorie und Philosophie* 10, no. 20 (1999): 99–113; Konnertz, "Simone de Beauvoir," 52, 54.

124 Riot-Sarcey, *Histoire du féminisme*, 93.

the end of the war, in which a committed minority of activists participated.¹²⁵ The struggle against the imperialist policies of the West and the prospects of decolonization sensitized many activists to the subordinate position of women in France and the former colonies.

The feminist movement of the 1970s definitively anchored the idea of gender equality in society and achieved the liberation of the female body and sexuality, which was reflected in legislation and also in university research. Notwithstanding, in daily life, the distribution of roles between men and women changed only gradually. And in politics, too, women were slow to break the male monopoly—despite the creation of a State Secretariat for the Status of Women in 1974 and a Ministry for Women's Rights in 1981.¹²⁶

The second wave of the women's movement since the end of the 1960s can be characterized in particular by its breadth and diversity. In addition, transnational exchange represented a catalyst. Setting the pace of the second wave for European and neo-European countries was the women's rights movement in the United States, whose ideas were quickly adopted in Europe. Early on, the US National Organization for Women had contacts with French activists. The French Women's Liberation Movement (*Mouvement de libération des femmes*) in the early 1970s drew on the American models.¹²⁷

In the 1980s and 1990s, the French women's rights movement received particular impetus from European and global initiatives; worthy of mention here are the European Commission's Women in Decision-Making expert network, created in 1992, and the fourth United Nations World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995.¹²⁸ At a conference in Athens in November 1992, the network adopted a declaration that declared as a central goal to fill functions in the administration and political leadership of states according to the principle of parity. For France, former minister of health Simone Veil and the first prime minister Édith Cresson signed the declaration.¹²⁹ Such directives adopted at the international level were then implemented at the national level, resulting in an interplay of globalization and nationalization. In 2000, France thus became the first country to legislate parity between men and women on candidate lists for elections.¹³⁰ In this way, the demands of the feminist pioneers of the Revolution of 1789 eventually became part of the official French narrative of progress. At the same

125 Bard, *Die Frauen*, 196–198.

126 Bard, 210–211.

127 Riot-Sarcey, *Histoire du féminisme*, 97; Bard, *Die Frauen*, 201.

128 Gill Allwood and Khursheed Wadia, "French Feminism: National and International Perspectives," *Modern and Contemporary France* 10, no. 2 (2002): 7.

129 Yves Denéchère, "Parité et droits des femmes dans l'Union Européenne (1992–2012)" [Parity and Women's Rights in the European Union (1992–2012)], *Cahier d'Histoire immédiate* 41 (2012): 77–94.

130 Riot-Sarcey, *Histoire du féminisme*, 105.

time, the government has struggled to come to terms with the catalog of feminist demands, which has expanded since the 1990s and 2000s.

Since the turn of the millennium, the feminist movement has turned more strongly toward marginalized groups in society, immigrant women and also those excluded because of their gender orientation. Even though the heterosexual norm has been denounced since 1970 and various lesbian groups have also formed, visible lesbian activism has developed only since the 1990s. The feminist movement benefited from the critique of groups long considered sexual deviants and has gradually embraced gender theory, although this has not been without controversy as the gender concept has long been viewed with great skepticism and as something foreign, a “theory from overseas.”¹³¹

Although the French parliament passed the government's marriage-for-all project in 2013, conservative voices in politics and society continued to be heard and sometimes even increased. Feminism, which was increasingly associated with the gender debate, also faced rejection.¹³² The language discussion, in particular, exemplifies the lack of understanding toward the debate. In 2017, the then prime minister Edouard Philippe instructed French ministries not to use gender-neutral constructions. The starting point was a heated debate about a textbook that had used gender-neutral expressions. The French Academy (Académie française), as the supreme guardian of French, spoke out against “inclusive language” the same year. In May 2021, France's minister of education Jean-Michel Blanquer banned the use of gender-inclusive written language in schools and in his ministry.¹³³ The parity law, which was tightened again in 2014, led to a higher proportion of women in parliament, but men continue to dominate in high parliamentary and government functions.¹³⁴

In this respect, the French feminist movement sees itself continuing the struggle for equality: however, it is no longer about the liberation of an indeterminate collective on the model of the Enlightenment but more specifically about specific individuals and groups of society in France and the world who are discriminated against because of their social position, their origin, or their gender identity and sometimes because of all three factors.

131 Bard, *Die Frauen*, 206; Riot-Sarcey, *Histoire du féminisme*, 103; Cornelia Möser, “Aspekte der Gender-Debatte in Frankreich und Deutschland” [Aspects of the Gender Debate in France and Germany], *Trajectoires. Revue de la jeune recherche franco-allemande* 1 (2007), also online, December 16, 2009, <https://doi.org/10.4000/trajectoires.99>.

132 Riot-Sarcey, *Histoire du féminisme*, 106.

133 “Bildungsminister verbietet geschlechtergerechte Sprache an Schulen,” *Der Spiegel*, May 7, 2021, <https://www.spiegel.de/panorama/bildung/frankreich-bildungsminister-jean-michel-blanquer-verbietet-geschlechtergerechte-sprache-an-schulen-a-a46e403d-3f83-4a1d-8e9f-cf43c826af9e>.

134 Cécile Calla, “Parität ist aus der französischen Politik nicht mehr weg zu denken” [Parity Is an Integral Part of French Politics], *Frauen Macht Politik*, <https://www.frauen-macht-politik.de/themendossiers/paritaet/frankreich-paritaet-in-der-politik/>.

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The Rise and Fall of the Atlantic as an Arena of French Colonialism

From the moment in 1492, when the Genoese explorer Christopher Columbus, on a voyage of discovery sponsored by the Spanish monarchy, made landfall in the Bahamas, a new Atlantic world was opened up to western Europeans. News of the discovery traveled rapidly across Europe, and these voyages marked the beginning of centuries of exploration and colonization in the Americas. In the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, it was primarily the preserve of the Iberian powers, Spain and Portugal, whose empires grew rich from the bullion and precious metals they extracted from their territories in Central and South America. The earliest French attempts to found colonies in Brazil, in 1555 at Rio de Janeiro and in 1612 at São Luís, had been unsuccessful as they were thwarted by Portuguese and Spanish settlers backed by their respective governments in Europe. France's first successful incursions into the Americas were concentrated further north, following Jacques Cartier's expeditions to the St. Lawrence River in the 1530s. In 1605, Port Royal was founded in the French colony of Acadia (in what is today Nova Scotia), three years before the explorer and cartographer Samuel de Champlain founded Quebec, which was to become the capital of the huge but sparsely settled fur-trading colony of New France. During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, France would establish at least 14 colonies in the Americas.¹

New France

France's first colonies were widely scattered, with little evident coordination between them. In Canada, separate colonies were established at Placentia in Newfoundland; in Acadia; on Île Royale (now called Cape Breton Island); in the Upper Country north of the Great Lakes; and 400 kilometers along the valley of the St. Lawrence. On Île Royale, France built a defensive fortress at Louisbourg. But how significant was this as a venture in colonization?

In the first 60 years, these territories attracted only some 3,200 settlers from France, many of them trappers living in isolated communities in the interior.² In wider geopo-

1 James Pritchard, *In Search of Empire: The French in the Americas, 1670–1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), xvii.

2 Allan Greer, *The People of New France* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 5–6.

litical terms, however, this scattered empire made greater sense, stretching like a bow across the interior of the North American continent, an area defined by the great rivers of the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi and linked by the huge basin of the Great Lakes. Those trekking westward opened up uncharted territory and cleared forest land for farming. They also discovered the source of the Mississippi River, from where they followed its course southward. In 1682, it was a French expedition that first canoed the length of the Mississippi down to the Gulf of Mexico. The settlement of Louisiana followed, with Biloxi in 1699, New Orleans in 1718, and Baton Rouge in 1720.

While the British colonized the eastern seaboard, French settlers, despite their small numbers, threatened to take control of the rich, open lands to the north and west. Settlement, however, proved slow. By the middle of the eighteenth century, Quebec still had fewer than 70,000 French settlers, and British colonists outnumbered the French in North America by around ten to one. But the French did not give up without a struggle. They carefully mapped the territories they lived in and, crucially, traded with the native peoples they encountered, allowing them to establish a durable presence in the region and to dominate the trade in furs and timber. As the Canadian historian David Hackett Fischer remarks, the meeting held by Champlain with leaders of the local Native American tribes at Tadoussac in 1603 marked the start of an alliance between the founders of New France and three Indian nations from the surrounding region, which was destined to create one of the strongest bonds between Europeans and Native Americans: “Each entered willingly into the relationship and gained something of value in return. The Indians acquired a potential ally against their mortal enemies, the Iroquois. The French won support for settlement, exploration and trade.”³ It was a significant coup for France in a world where indigenous peoples, imperial forces, and settlers competed for space in this part of North America.⁴

New France proved resistant to permanent settlement. Though France had installed an intendant in Montreal to govern the colony, it remained a land of scattered trading posts and trappers’ huts and was subject to harsh weather. Men earned a livelihood from fur trading and fishing, far removed from the comforts of urban life. It was not a lifestyle that attracted many women to cross the Atlantic, and the emigrants from France were overwhelmingly male, which caused a major problem for the colonial government, since by the 1660s unmarried French men outnumbered unmarried French women in New France by 12 to 1. This meant that any increase in population could only be achieved through immigration, and it left the colony exposed to invasion from British or Spanish predators.

3 David Hackett Fischer, *Champlain's Dream: The Visionary Adventurer Who Made a New World in Canada* (Toronto: A. A. Knopf, 2008), 134.

4 Jeffers Lennox, *Homelands and Empires: Indigenous Spaces, Imperial Fictions, and Competition for Territory in North-Eastern North America, 1690–1763* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017).

To try to rebalance the population, Louis XIV offered any woman who agreed to move to New France and marry a colonist free passage across the Atlantic and a small dowry, and between 1662 and 1673 some 800 women, known as the *filles du roi*, took up the offer. A high proportion emigrated from La Rochelle and the surrounding provinces of Aunis, Anjou, and Poitou. Many were women born into wealthy families that had fallen on hard times, who, without a substantial dowry, could not hope to make a good marriage in France. The chance to start out again with a dowry and a guaranteed husband might have seemed appealing and with time might have allowed them to regain something of the wealth and status they had been born into. But gossip and rumor were less kind, inferring that they were little better than prostitutes, willing to sell themselves for money and social status. When the *filles du roi* arrived in New France, they were introduced to the eligible bachelors of the colony, and in this way—it was hoped—they would contribute to a policy of wider colonization. It was hoped that their arrival would provide an incentive for male workers who had finished their contract in New France and soldiers of the Carignan-Salières regiment (which had just been demobilized) to settle in the colony. It could only, however, provide a short-term solution to the problem; increasingly it would be Native American women, not French emigrants, who satisfied the sexual needs of the settlers, among whom mixed marriages and miscegenation were widespread.⁵

French fishermen embarked on long and arduous voyages to fish for cod from the Grand Banks of Newfoundland from the sixteenth century, but relatively few settled there or became colonists. In the main, indeed, the fish were caught and marketed by vessels sailing from French ports to which they returned without ever touching land in the New World. Fishing was big business: by mid-century, the French fishing fleet comprised over 400 vessels and employed almost 10,000 fishermen in what could be considered a lucrative form of commerce. At one time as many as 17 French ports sent trawlers on fishing voyages to the waters off Newfoundland, but over time the industry became more specialized, with larger vessels and bigger crews requiring greater sums of capital investment, and from around 1580, the boom years were over.⁶ Cod fishing became concentrated in a small number of ports on a coastline stretching from Saint-Malo to the Bay of Biscay, with the Grand Banks fishing industry largely restricted to Le Havre and Honfleur on the Channel coast—ports conveniently sited to send their catch on to the Paris market—and to Nantes and Les Sables d'Olonne near the mouth of the Loire. And though fishing continued to be profitable into the eighteenth century, it was regularly disrupted by recurrent wars, and the requirement for fishing

5 Gustave Lanctot, *Filles de joie ou filles du roi: Étude sur l'émigration féminine en Nouvelle-France* [Filles de joie or filles du roi: A Study of Female Emigration to New France] (Montréal: Éditions du jour, 1966), 11–18 and 55–56.

6 Gilles Havard and Cécile Vidal, *Histoire de l'Amérique française* [History of French America] (Paris: Flammarion, 2003), 36–37.

vessels to carry cannon to defend themselves against attack further added to costs and to the price of insurance. By the eighteenth century, some progress had been made in establishing fisheries in New France, at Louisbourg and on Île Royale, but they led to limited settlement as the majority of the fishermen returned each year to France at the end of the fishing season.⁷ Fishing would never play a major part in the process of colonization.

The Caribbean

Farther south, French explorers and merchants turned to the islands of the Caribbean, which they, like the British, began to colonize in the first half of the seventeenth century. At first, the Caribbean was largely the preserve of privateers and explorers, with corsairs from Britain, France, and Holland seizing prizes and laying claim to territories on various West Indian islands. They were often freebooting adventurers and buccaneers working on their own account or with unofficial backing from the government in Paris—*flibustiers* like Pierre Belain d'Esnambuc, who, with support from Louis XIII's chief minister, Cardinal Richelieu, laid claim in 1625 to the island of Saint-Christophe (today St. Kitts) before establishing permanent French settlements on the larger islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique ten years later.⁸ Among the smaller islands that France colonized in these years, the most significant were Saint-Martin and Saint-Barthélemy, which, as St. Bart's, would be a Swedish colony between 1784 and 1878, after which it would be sold back to France.

But by far the most prized French colony in the Caribbean was Saint-Domingue, the western part of the island of Hispaniola and one of the islands on which Columbus had landed back in 1492. By the eighteenth century, Saint-Domingue would be the richest island in the Antilles, far outstripping Britain's Caribbean islands of Jamaica and Barbados in its production of sugar, indigo, and molasses. For much of the seventeenth century, in contrast, it was a lawless place, thinly populated by communities of pirates and buccaneers who made a living by attacking commercial vessels arriving from Europe. Only after 1660 did these men recognize the authority of the French king, and only then did Saint-Domingue experience permanent settlement, with the cultivation of

⁷ Pritchard, *In Search of Empire*, 98–101.

⁸ Marcus Rediker, *Les hors-la-loi de l'Atlantique: pirates, mutins et flibustiers* [Outlaws of the Atlantic: Pirates, Mutineers, and Privateers] (Paris: Le Seuil, 2017); see also Pierre Margry, *Origines transatlantiques: Belain d'Esnambuc et les Normands aux Antilles d'après des documents nouvellement retrouvés* [Transatlantic Origins: Belain d'Esnambuc and the Normans in the West Indies Based on Newly Rediscovered Documents] (Paris: A. Faure, 1863).

tobacco in the 1670s and indigo in the 1680s.⁹ In 1665, Saint-Domingue was officially claimed as a French colony by the king of France. A new era in French Atlantic history was opened up.

The arrival of French colonists in the Caribbean was part of a wider development across the Atlantic world. By the second half of the seventeenth century, much of the profit from the Atlantic came from the plantation economy, producing colonial goods like coffee, tobacco, sugar, and indigo, which were highly prized in Western Europe and opened up a global market for European merchants and shippers. Sugar, especially, was in high demand as the taste for tea drinking and the cult of coffee houses became marks of urban sophistication.¹⁰ In the market for colonial goods, Spain and Portugal were increasingly challenged by their northern rivals—Louis XIV dreamt of a new colonial age—and by the end of the century, Spain was forced to recognize the claims of Britain and France to footholds in the Caribbean. An Anglo-Spanish treaty in 1670 recognized Britain's right to colonize Jamaica, while at Ryswick in 1697, Spain recognized French control of the island of Tortuga and Saint-Domingue.¹¹ England and France were no longer bit players in Atlantic commerce, and the scene was set for the colonial wars that came to define the eighteenth-century world, not only in the Atlantic territories that lay to the west but also in India and the Indian Ocean to the east. If these were years of Atlantic expansion for France, they also brought settlements in India and on the Indian Ocean islands of Mauritius and Reunion.

Until then, it had been hard to identify any coherent imperial policy that was being pursued by the French monarchy or to sense how colonial policy was linked to the broader diplomatic and political aims of the state. Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Louis XIV's minister for the navy, was probably the first government minister to see Atlantic expansion in a strategic way, relating the growth of colonial trade to military power and the capacity to defend the country against external enemies.¹² Similarly, in Britain, it was only from the mid-seventeenth century that the government began to construct a clear maritime-imperial system that allowed it to develop the maritime and financial sinews of power that would serve Britain so well in the eighteenth-century wars. With regard to America, Edmund Burke tellingly remarked, there were no precedents on which to base policy: "The object is wholly new in the world. It is singular; it is grown up to this magnitude and importance within the memory of man; nothing in history is parallel to

9 Carolyn Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint-Domingue Revolution from Below* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 15.

10 James Walvin, *Fruits of Empire: Exotic Produce and British Taste, 1660–1800* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 117–131.

11 Paul Butel, *Histoire des Antilles françaises* [History of the French West Indies] (Paris: Perrin, 2002), 51–88.

12 Dale Miquelon, "Jean-Baptiste Colbert's 'Compact Colony Policy' Revisited: The Tenacity of an Idea," *Proceedings of the Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society* 17 (1993): 12–23.

it. All reasonings about it that are likely to be at all solid must be drawn from its actual circumstances.”¹³

The lack of central planning should not, however, be taken to mean contemporaries had no understanding of the globalization they were promoting. Not all initiatives rested with the state; in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, indeed, it would be absurd to expect the state to play such a role. As Richard Drayton argues, much of the early enthusiasm for colonial expansion was mercantile and had its roots in the port cities of the French Atlantic that would be its most notable beneficiaries. Municipal authorities, chambers of commerce, and individual investors and merchant houses embraced the potential of the Atlantic world as merchants, commercial agents, planters, and administrators left France to seek their fortune overseas. Soldiers and administrators followed as the state responded to commercial pressure for colonization. Globalization was less an ideology than a response to civic ambitions and the needs of an expanding mercantile economy, a process that was dependent on the agency of many different interests and individuals.

In the frequent Anglo-French wars of the eighteenth century, however, New France began to unravel, and after the War of the Spanish Succession, France's first colonial empire was visibly contracting. The Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 resulted in France losing its claims to Acadia, Hudson's Bay, and Newfoundland to Britain. But much worse was to follow as a consequence of France's disastrous performance in the Seven Years' War. At Paris, in the ensuing peace negotiations, the French were forced to abandon the rest of New France, with the sole exception of the fishery islands of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon, to Great Britain and Spain, with Britain receiving the rest of French Canada, Acadia, and the parts of French Louisiana that lay east of the Mississippi River. Spain was rewarded with the Île d'Orléans and the territory of Louisiana west of the Mississippi, and though this land was subsequently returned to France under the secret Treaty of San Ildefonso in 1800, the loss of Canada meant that it had far less strategic value or potential for further gains on the North American land mass.¹⁴ France's colonial interest in the Americas became increasingly concentrated on its island possessions in the Caribbean, or what remained of them after the slave insurrection in Saint-Domingue during the French Revolution, until Napoleon Bonaparte's failure to recapture Saint-Domingue in 1802 and the defeat of his army by Toussaint Louverture effectively ended his interest in colonizing the American mainland. In the following year, he sold Louisiana to the United States for 15 million dollars in the Louisiana Purchase, an agreement that deprived France of its foothold on the North American continent

13 Daniel A. Baugh, "Maritime Strength and Atlantic Commerce: The Uses of a 'Grand Marine Empire,'" in *An Imperial State at War: Britain from 1689 to 1815*, ed. Lawrence Stone (London: Routledge, 1994), 185.

14 Havard and Vidal, *Histoire*, 451–453.

and opened up land west of the Mississippi to future westward expansion by the United States.¹⁵

Atlantic Commerce

The Atlantic world had been the main focus of France's first overseas empire, which was the source of great wealth and economic development during the late seventeenth century and across much of the eighteenth century.¹⁶ The French Atlantic ports all benefited, with levels of prosperity in Nantes and especially Bordeaux surpassing Paris itself. The merchants were at the heart of the imperial system, providing the credit that facilitated the West India trade and writing the bills of exchange that crisscrossed the Atlantic.

Much of Bordeaux's commerce concerned direct exchanges with the islands, *en droiture*, with wines, flour, and industrial goods—wines from the Médoc and flour from the mills of Tonneins and Marmande—sent out from France to the colonists, while sugar, coffee, and indigo dominated the return cargoes. Colonial traffic almost tripled between 1749 and 1788, from some 36,000 tons to over 87,000 tons when measured by weight. When expressed in the value of colonial goods imported, that growth was even more impressive, rising from a figure of 20 million livres before 1750 to 163 million 20 years later. Between them, the ports of Bordeaux, Nantes, Marseille, and Le Havre/Rouen were responsible for 90 percent of French commerce, and the population of the two wealthiest ports, Bordeaux and Nantes, increased by some 300 percent in the course of the century.¹⁷

Their fortunes cannot, however, be measured in colonial imports alone. Bordeaux's wealth stemmed also from the re-export of colonial produce to much of northern Europe, a trade that was largely undertaken by ships of other European countries, particularly Britain, Denmark, Holland, and several German states. Much of this trade passed through Amsterdam, then later through Hamburg and the Hanseatic ports, and Bordeaux merchants were pioneers in trade with Russia, conducted through Saint

15 Piero Gleijeses, "Piero Napoleon, Jefferson, and the Louisiana Purchase," *International History Review* 39, no. 2 (2017): 237–255.

16 For a fuller discussion of the commercial prosperity of the Atlantic ports in the eighteenth century, see Alan Forrest, *The Death of the French Atlantic: Trade, War and Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 41–59.

17 François Crouzet, "La conjoncture bordelaise" [The Economy in Bordeaux], in *Bordeaux au 18e siècle*, ed. François-Georges Pariset (Bordeaux: Fédération historique du Sud-ouest, 1968), 287–323.

Petersburg and Archangel. These cities prospered because they were the vital vectors for colonial goods into so much of northern and central Europe.¹⁸

Even in the “golden age” of the eighteenth century, there was one major threat to Atlantic prosperity, and that was war, especially the recurrent naval wars that pitted the French against their principal commercial rivals, Great Britain. War and the accompanying naval blockades risked cutting the Atlantic sea routes and led to both the loss of ships and cargoes, capture by English naval vessels, and huge hikes in the rates charged for maritime insurance. Many merchants were tempted—and encouraged by their government—to arm their vessels and turn to privateering, lying in wait for ships flying enemy flags that were returning from the Caribbean laden with precious cargoes. But privateering was always risky, exposing crews to capture and internment as prisoners of war in English gaols.¹⁹ British blockades of the French and Spanish coasts presented another threat, forcing French vessels to remain in port and increasing reliance on neutral shipping to maintain even limited commercial contacts. Each successive war brought losses for French shipping and recession for the Atlantic ports, none more than the disastrous Seven Years’ War, when French trade with the Americas virtually ceased.²⁰

The Slave Trade

Though voyages *en droiture* continued to dominate the affairs of many French merchant houses, others were increasingly lured by the huge profits that could be generated by fitting out vessels for slaving voyages to the West African coast. The slave trade was already well established between Africa and the Americas: over the period of the trade, from 1526, the year of the first voyage, to the mid-nineteenth century, it has been estimated that some 12.5 million slaves were shipped from Africa, of whom 10.7 million arrived in the Americas—the largest forced migration in human history. France’s part in the slave trade was at first quite modest: indeed, until about 1673, Dutch vessels probably carried more slaves to France’s Caribbean sugar islands than the French themselves, and French slavers made little progress in non-French markets.

After 1713, however, when the monopoly of the Guinea Company was ended, French ports invested heavily in slave voyages, supported by the crown through generous

18 Peter Voss, “Le commerce bordelais et la route d’Arkhangelsk à la fin du dix-septième siècle” [Bordeaux Trade and the Arkhangelsk Route at the End of the Seventeenth Century], in *Négoce, ports et océans, 16e–20e siècles*, eds. Silvia Marzagalli and Hubert Bonin (Bordeaux: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 2000), 135–147.

19 Forrest, *The Death of the French Atlantic*, 53–59.

20 Patrick Villiers, “Le commerce colonial pendant la guerre de Sept Ans” [Colonial Trade during the Seven Years’ War], *Enquêtes et documents* 17 (1990): 32.

subsidy schemes. Again in 1776, when it was thought necessary to relaunch slaving in a bid to compete more effectively with Britain, the monarchy offered inducements to merchants to encourage them to engage in the trade, offering a prime of 15 livres for every African safely landed on the islands. After the end of the American War of Independence, the sums involved were hugely increased: by 1786, merchants would earn 160 livres for every slave who disembarked in Martinique or Guadeloupe and 200 livres for all those taken to Guyana and the southern part of Saint-Domingue.²¹ By the eve of the revolution, foreign companies were registering their ships in France so that they might profit from these subsidies. The transformation was dramatic. Between 1716 and 1793, French vessels transported over a million Africans to the Americas, and during the 15 years up to 1793 they were carrying an average of 24,000 slaves each year from West-Central Africa, the Bight of Benin, and Senegambia.²²

The expansion of the plantation economy on Saint-Domingue and the islands of the Lesser Antilles meant that there was a seemingly insatiable demand for slaves, which French merchants were eager to satisfy. The rewards were always tempting, and for many the risks seemed worth taking. Slave voyages were particularly long and hazardous. Crews were afflicted by fevers and a range of deadly tropical diseases between the coast of Africa and the Caribbean. In Africa itself, ships' captains had to negotiate with duplicitous merchants and local princes, ready to cheat and defraud them, and to face the possibility of long months spent in protracted negotiations, of ships becalmed in African waters, of sick and rebellious slaves, or of crewmen mutinying against the conditions on board or absconding at the first opportunity to sell their services to a rival. There was nothing certain, nothing guaranteed about the returns they would make.

Nevertheless, the opportunity to fill their holds with able-bodied Africans seemed to many an easy solution to the problem of finding an outbound cargo, and if they were lucky there were huge profits to be made. The historian Jean Meyer has pointed out some of the best returns from Nantes slave voyages in the years immediately before the Revolution of 1789: in 1785, one ship returned a 100 percent profit; another in 1784 chalked up 110 percent; a third, in 1789, an eye-watering 120 percent.²³ But others were captured or beached on rocks. A storm-free crossing, a cargo free of disease, and a rapid turnaround on the West African coast—these were the guarantors of commercial

21 Bertrand Guillot de Suduiraut, *Une fortune de haute mer: François Bonnaffé, un armateur bordelais au 18e siècle* [A Fortune from the High Seas: François Bonnaffé, a Shipowner from Bordeaux in the Eighteenth Century] (Bordeaux: Confluences, 1999), 72.

22 David Eltis and David Richardson, "A New Assessment of the Transatlantic Slave Trade," in *Extending the Frontiers: Essays on the New Transatlantic Slave Trade Database*, eds. David Eltis and David Richardson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 26–27.

23 Jean Meyer, *L'armement nantais dans la deuxième moitié du 18e siècle* [Maritime Traffic in Nantes in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century] (Paris: SEVPEN, 1969), 394–411.

success. This was the prospect that enticed so many to set sail westward in full knowledge of the dangers that lurked ahead.

Fitting out a slave ship in a French port incurred substantial costs and considerable borrowing. The slaves, to be purchased on the African coast, would have to be paid for, of course, but the initial expenditure was more complex. A sturdy ship was needed to withstand Atlantic waves and fast-flowing currents; credit had to be raised; and an experienced captain was required, one with knowledge of Atlantic currents and trading conditions with African princes and slave traders. It was imperative not to leave France ill-prepared. Carpenters were needed to insert the additional slave deck in the ship's hold—an operation usually carried out once the vessel had left port—along with a crew prepared to spend long months at sea.

When they left the French coast, slave ships carried cargoes for different markets and destinations. In Africa, they would trade guns, ammunition, and the brightly colored textiles prized by their African clients, whereas in Saint-Domingue, the market was for flour, fine wines, and industrial products from France and Europe. They also took care to carry the sorts of goods that African kings and princes would accept as presents, an essential part of the ceremonial that took place before trading could begin. And they could not leave port without taking on board the equipment they might need if they had to defend the ship from attack or carry out emergency repairs in the event of a storm. Ships' logs reveal the items of equipment that all captains deemed essential, including spare parts for the ship: sails, ropes, anchors, nails, replacement masts, candles, and firewood. They also carried a range of weaponry to use in the event of an attack or at the first sign of rebellion from the slaves in the hold: there were cannon and firearms as well as gunpowder and bullets. These were in addition to the firearms that could be used as presents for African traders, as merchandise to sell to planters in the Caribbean, or as means of self-defense against raiders, pirates, and privateers.²⁴

Though most merchants had few qualms about trading in human beings—indeed, most saw slaves as just another cargo to be turned to when trading conditions favored it—the late eighteenth century witnessed the beginning of a moral crusade against slaving, one that had its roots in Enlightenment humanism and notions of the rights of man. Pressure groups like the Amis des Noirs became more powerful with the onset of the Revolution in 1789, and for them the fight against slavery was of paramount importance, a global fight, not just a French one. They recognized the powerful crusade that was being waged in England against the slave trade by nonconformists and Quakers, as well as by parliamentarians like William Wilberforce, and they admired the emotional power of Thomas Clarkson's abolitionist tracts, some of which had been translated into French.

24 Aka Kouamé, "Les cargaisons de traite nantaises au 18^e siècle. Une contribution à l'étude de la traite négrière française" [Eighteenth-Century Slave Trade Cargoes from Nantes: A Contribution to the Study of the French Slave Trade] (PhD thesis, Université de Nantes, 2005).

Clarkson was a superb publicist for the abolitionist cause, in France as in England. He had, among English antislavery campaigners, a unique knowledge of the French West Indies, which won him admirers both in France and across the Caribbean.²⁵ In particular, his popularization of the most famous symbol of the abolitionist cause—an image of the cross-section of the English slave ship, the *Brooks*, with its human cargo stacked head to toe, naked, on both levels of the hold—made a lasting impression on public opinion. In 1789, Clarkson had sent a thousand copies of the engraving to Paris as part of an unsuccessful campaign to win the support of the National Assembly, but the image was taken up by abolitionists across France to become a major weapon in their armory.²⁶

Though they had no immediate victory to celebrate, insurrections and revolt on France's Caribbean islands, most notably Guadeloupe and Saint-Domingue, soon pushed the French authorities into making concessions, and in 1794, France became the first country in the world to pass legislation prohibiting both the institution of slavery and the trafficking of Africans. These measures threatened the whole basis of France's Atlantic economy, and merchants in all the Atlantic ports gave vent to their disillusion and desperation as they looked out at empty docks and abandoned vessels. Guadeloupe and Martinique were both occupied by the British, while the revolution on Saint-Domingue meant that "the pearl of the Antilles" was lost to France forever.

Though Bonaparte tried to retake Saint-Domingue and legislated to restore slavery in France's remaining colonies, he could do little to regenerate the slave trade or restore the prewar prosperity of French sugar islands.²⁷ The defeat of Charles Leclerc's expedition marked a last desperate gamble, while the continuing British blockade of the Atlantic coast dramatically reduced the number of voyages to the Caribbean. Britain's own abolition of the slave trade in 1807 made London even more determined to abort French efforts to resume slaving expeditions after 1815, though the two decades that followed were characterized by clandestine voyages, especially from Bordeaux and Nantes.²⁸ France's second abolition of slavery had to wait for the Second Republic in 1848. By then, the French Atlantic boom was over, and new imperial adventures awaited, in the Indian Ocean, the Far East, and Africa.

25 Ellen Gibson Wilson, *Thomas Clarkson: A Biography* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), 125.

26 Marcel Chatillon, "La diffusion de la gravure du *Brooks* par la Société des Amis des Noirs et son impact" [The Dissemination of the *Brooks* Engraving by the Société des Amis des Noirs and Its Impact], in *De la traite à l'esclavage*, vol. 2, ed. Serge Daget (Nantes: Centre de Recherche sur l'histoire du monde atlantique, 1988), 136–137.

27 Yves Bénot and Marcel Dorigny, "1802: la rupture avec les principes de la Révolution" [1802: The Break with the Principles of the Revolution], in *Rétablissement de l'esclavage dans les colonies françaises*, eds. Yves Bénot and Marcel Dorigny (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2003), 7–10.

28 Serge Daget, *Répertoire des expéditions négrières françaises à la traite illégale, 1814–50* [Directory of French Slave Expeditions for the Illegal Slave Trade, 1814–1850] (Nantes: Centre de Recherche sur l'histoire du monde atlantique, 1988).

Transatlantic Migration

The expansion of the French Atlantic also involved considerable migration of French-speaking people to France's American colonies, though on a lesser scale than in either of the British or Iberian empires. Empires were built around human mobility—some, but by no means all, from the old continent to the new. Finding labor for France's overseas colonies was never going to be easy, and before turning to slavery for a solution the French authorities attempted to lure their fellow Frenchmen to seek a new life in the Americas. Those who left were drawn from a wide spectrum of trades and professions: some paying their own way, others sailing as *engagés*, their passage paid in return for a period of contracted labor once they had reached Louisiana or the West Indies. The more prosperous migrants were merchants set on enriching themselves and on exploiting the growing market for colonial produce. But most were men of modest means, who could not raise the money needed for the price of their ticket but were imbued with ambition and a sense of adventure.

The *engagés* would sign a sworn contract before a notary, accepting to work for three years for French *colons* (colonists), who, in return, paid for their passage and expected to be rewarded through higher productivity and cheap labor. Substantial numbers elected to stay on after their legal commitment was over. Some bought land and became plantation owners in their turn, clearing ground for cotton or sugar cane and, after several good harvests, employing their own slaves to spare themselves the hard manual labor of tilling the soil. Others stayed as seamen, artisans, or small shopkeepers and went on to play a full part in the local economy. They had been chosen for the skills that they brought to a community that was sorely in need of them, and they helped build a diversified French community in the Caribbean. The scheme lasted from 1699 to 1772, and by the time it was wound up, there was no longer any call for indentured labor, with few Frenchmen coming forward to sign on for the voyage across the ocean.²⁹ Thereafter, the harsh, back-breaking work in the cotton fields and sugar plantations of the Americas would be reserved exclusively for enslaved Africans.

Whereas the *engagés* were often persuaded to cross the Atlantic because of poverty and high unemployment at home, others were driven to migrate by considerations of personal safety. Huguenots, for instance, facing persecution after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, might have sought their fortunes in the Americas, though, as a result of their suffering at the hands of the Catholic Church, they were more likely

29 Christian Huetz de Lemp, "Engagement et engagés au 18e siècle" [Engagement of Employees and Remunerated People in the Eighteenth Century], in *Commerce et plantation dans la Caraïbe, 18e–19e siècles*, ed. Paul Butel (Bordeaux: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 1992), 65–70.

to settle in British colonies than French.³⁰ But the majority of Frenchmen crossing the Atlantic in the eighteenth century went by choice, lured by the opportunities that awaited them in the New World.

Among them were government employees, administrators sent to man posts in the colonies; others were officers and soldiers with a mission to protect life and property in France's overseas possessions. Their loyalty was to France, and most went in the knowledge that when their term of duty was over, they would—provided that they survived the heat and fevers of the tropics—retire back to France, in all likelihood to their native province. Others were agents of commercial houses, often young and ambitious, many of them the younger sons of established merchants in Nantes or Bordeaux. Or they were artisans, tradesmen, and small shopkeepers who dreamt of setting up their own business in the colonies.³¹ In Le Cap and Basse-Terre, they found many of the comforts to be found in an eighteenth-century French provincial city, with inns and meeting halls, theatres and masonic lodges, and printing presses and bookshops; they had no reason to regard their time in the Caribbean as a retreat from civilization.³² Though disease was rife and mortality rates high, those arriving from France could hope to enjoy a familiar lifestyle in the tropics.

The majority of planters, too, had sailed from France, often from these same Atlantic ports of Bordeaux and Nantes, with the aim of making their fortune in the Caribbean. Unlike the merchants and administrators, however, many of them settled in the colonies to manage their plantations, making Saint-Domingue or Guadeloupe their permanent home and choosing to integrate into creole society. Not all those setting out from France can be dismissed as adventurers or men seeking to rise in society. Indeed, among the early plantation owners were scions of long-established aristocratic families from the west and southwest of France, counts and marquises who invested in large properties in the West Indies or who married into colonial fortunes. Magistrates on the Bordeaux Parlement also figured among plantation owners in all three Caribbean colonies: Michel Figeac observes that Pocquet de Lilette spent the major part of his life on Martinique, while others made repeated voyages to the islands to visit their properties and conduct

30 Mickaël Augeron, "Les huguenots et l'espace atlantique" [The Huguenots and the Atlantic Region], in *Les Huguenots et l'Atlantique*, vol. 1, eds. Mickaël Augeron, Didier Poton, and Bertrand van Ruymbeke (Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2009), 17–31.

31 Jacques de Cauna, *L'Eldorado des Aquitains: Gascons, Basques et Béarnais aux Îles d'Amérique, 17e–18e siècles* [El Dorado of the Aquitains: Gascons, Basques, and Béarnais in the American Isles, Seventeenth to Eighteenth Century] (Biarritz: Atlantica, 1998), 319–337.

32 Anne Pérotin-Dumon, *La ville aux îles, la ville dans l'île: Basse-Terre et Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe, 1650–1820* [The City with the Islands, the City on the Island: Basse-Terre and Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe, 1650–1820] (Paris: Karthala, 2000), 13–16.

their affairs.³³ Not every plantation owner exposed himself to such risk; some of the biggest investors in the Caribbean economy were men who never crossed the Atlantic, preferring to entrust the management of their estates to professional managers with whom they maintained a regular correspondence. Over several generations, the planters' culture, their approach to their lands, and their treatment of the men who worked them would be radically transformed.³⁴

Not all the migrations began in Europe, as wars and diplomatic incidents affected the fate of France's colonies and their inhabitants. In 1755, Acadians in Nova Scotia found themselves dispersed by force when they refused to swear an unconditional oath of loyalty to the British crown in a forced migration known as *le grand dérangement*. Many were driven south, often to Philadelphia or to ports in Massachusetts, Virginia, Maryland, and South Carolina. The "dispersal" occurred later, with thousands of exiles sailing in multiple waves, east to Europe or south to the Caribbean. Many settled in Louisiana, where they kept their distinctive Cajun culture alive.³⁵

French settlers in Saint-Domingue were also forced to flee, driven from their homes by the killings and arson that characterized the slave insurrections of the 1790s. Some, of course, returned to France to throw themselves at the mercy of friends and relatives. More commonly, they stayed in the Americas, hoping for a speedy return to their plantations or seeking a new life in another colony where they might maintain their slaveholding lifestyle. Some went, usually temporarily, to neighboring Jamaica; others passed to Cuba, where they were initially welcomed by the Spanish authorities and joined established French-speaking communities around Santiago-de-Cuba. But the welcome did not last, and following Napoleon's invasion of Spain in 1808, they were forced to move on again, to New Orleans and the Mississippi delta or to the cane fields of Virginia or the Carolinas. There they joined other creoles who had fled after arson attacks on their plantations and the destruction of their cities in 1793; the burning of Le Cap following an attack from the sea by the military governor, François-Thomas Galbaud, led to the white colonists abandoning the city,³⁶ while the torching of Port-au-Prince resulted in the evacuation of 10,000 people to Norfolk, Virginia.³⁷

33 Michel Figeac, "Une société de plantations: le rêve américain des aventuriers d'Aquitaine" [A Plantation Society: The American Dream of the Adventurers from Aquitaine], in *Mémoire noire. Histoire de l'esclavage*, ed. Caroline Le Mao (Bordeaux: Mollat, 2020), 137.

34 Frédéric Régent, *Les maîtres de la Guadeloupe. Propriétaires d'esclaves, 1635–1848* [The Masters of Guadeloupe: Slave Owners, 1635–1848] (Paris: Tallandier, 2019).

35 Christopher Hodson, *The Acadian Diaspora: An Eighteenth-Century History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 197–198.

36 Jeremy Popkin, *Facing Racial Revolution: Eyewitness Accounts of the Haitian Insurrection* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007), 180–232.

37 Natalie Dessens, "Napoleon and Louisiana: New Atlantic Perspectives," in *Napoleon's Atlantic: The Impact of Napoleonic Empire in the Atlantic World*, eds. Christophe Belaubre, Jordana Dym, and John Savage (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 66.

Diaspora from Saint-Domingue

In the southern United States, francophone plantation owners might have expected to be welcomed into the sympathetic fold of a slave-owning culture not dissimilar to the one they had left behind. Some also received financial help. From 1794, the US Congress allocated a sum of 10,000 dollars “for the relief of certain inhabitants of Santo Domingo,” while in cities from Charleston to Philadelphia, local committees provided aid to refugees from the island. Not all exiles from Saint-Domingue remained on slave plantations, and not all migrated to the American South. In Philadelphia, they found a kindred spirit in the entrepreneur Stephen Girard, who like many of them had come—as Étienne Girard—to the United States from his previous career in Bordeaux and Le Cap. Girard had reached the American mainland in unusual circumstances, when his ship was forced aground at the mouth of the Delaware River in 1776, and he stayed on to become one of the wealthiest men in America. But he did not lose touch with his own people, and in 1794, he sent several ships to Saint-Domingue to evacuate the survivors of the slave insurrection. In the longer term, he offered help to young Frenchmen setting out on careers in the New World, and as a founder member of the Philadelphia branch of the Société Française de Bienfaisance, he would be a major benefactor to the exile community in the United States.

North America might no longer be an outpost of French colonialism, but for a considerable number of Frenchmen during the French Revolution and the Restoration monarchy—Napoleon’s brother Joseph among them³⁸—it offered a welcome place of refuge from persecution or political reprisals at home. For many of those fleeing France, the United States would be a temporary staging post before they could safely return home, and they left little permanent mark on American society. But the Dominicans were different and their cultural influence more permanent. There is still today a distinctive creole culture in the lower Mississippi valley, in the Gulf States, and around Charleston and Savannah that can be traced to families fleeing the Haitian Revolution.³⁹

Whereas French settlers were generally welcomed in the United States, regardless of whether they arrived directly from Europe or from Saint-Domingue, their slaves were less welcome. Americans had read about the violence and savagery of the Haitian Revolution, the arson attacks on plantations, and the brutal murders of entire families, and they feared that their own slaves might become infected with the same insubordinate spirit were they to mingle with the French. The French, it was argued, had shipped their slaves from different parts of the West African coast, from different and more troublesome tribes, whose arrival in America could only invite further insurrection.

38 Thierry Lentz, “A Few Words about Joseph Bonaparte’s Stay in America,” *Napoleonica. La Revue* 29, no. 2 (2017): 2–7.

39 Alfred N. Hunt, *Haiti’s Influence on Antebellum America: Slumbering Volcano in the Caribbean* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1988), 45.

The French Jacobins had abolished slavery and freed men previously enslaved, giving them freedoms that the American slaveowners had no intention of extending. And the experience of revolution had been itself exhilarating, giving slaves a new sense of their own strength and providing them with a hero in Toussaint Louverture, who had showed them how freedom could be won and fought for. Dominican slaves had already started arriving in the 1790s through Charleston and Norfolk (New Orleans at the time was still part of Spanish Louisiana), which gave the issue a degree of urgency across the slave-owning American South. State legislatures were fearful of the threat posed to their communities by what the Virginia congressman John Randolph described as “the maroons, brigands and cut-throats from St Domingo,” and they rushed to pass laws to curtail the freedoms of all blacks, free and slave, and to forbid the future entry of blacks from the French Antilles.⁴⁰ Far from dying out in the wake of its abolition in Haiti, slavery may even have expanded as a result of the revolution there. Cuba dramatically expanded sugar production to take the place of Saint-Domingue, while in the American South, the Louisiana Territory was opened up to both settlement and slavery.⁴¹

There was no place for the former *colons* in postindependence Haiti. Many had lost everything in the insurrection and had little choice but to return to France. The Atlantic had always been a two-way thoroughfare for seamen, merchants, soldiers, and administrators plying their way back and forward between the French mainland and overseas plantations and garrisons, and after Haitian independence in 1804, the remaining white colonists desperately tried to find a passage on the last commercial vessels leaving for France. What awaited them was an uncertain future: while some could return to their families, others found themselves destitute and unwanted, reduced to accepting charity or seeking shelter in hastily opened refuges. At first the French responded by offering public assistance to those arriving from the Caribbean and supplying them with basic necessities, but as the numbers arriving continued to rise, especially with the defeat of Leclerc’s army, they restricted state assistance to those refugees who gathered in five coastal cities—Bordeaux, Marseille, Nantes, Lorient, and La Rochelle. Funds were limited, with priority given to mothers with small children. Those without lodging risked being interned in institutions, often in buildings that had previously been used by the army, and they were provided with a soup kitchen. Beyond that, there was little help until, in 1825, France imposed an indemnity of 150 million francs on the new state of Haiti, with which to reimburse them and their descendants.⁴²

Not all those landing in Europe from the Caribbean were white—nor had they ever been. Africans were not such a rare sight on the quaysides of France’s Atlantic ports, as

40 Hunt, 107.

41 Laurent Dubois, “The Revolutionary Period in Haiti, 1791–1804,” in *Common Routes: St Domingue–Louisiana* (New Orleans: The Historic New Orleans Collection, 2006), 70.

42 Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, “The Specter of Saint-Domingue,” in *The World of the Haitian Revolution*, eds. David Geggus and Norman Fiering (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 318.

across much of the eighteenth-century returning merchants, sea captains, and colonial officials had brought their valets and manservants back to France, where, by dint of setting foot on French soil, they would be freed from slavery. Others came as seamen on vessels returning from the Americas or passing through the port cities on their way to Paris. In a census taken in 1777 in Bordeaux, 274 black slaves and 75 free men of color registered their residence in the city and surrounding department, but recent research suggests that there were many who chose not to register and that the true figure by the end of the eighteenth century may have been as high as 700.⁴³ Their presence was largely tolerated, but following the revolution in Haiti, the French authorities would be more circumspect and less welcoming.

Black refugees entering France from Saint-Domingue were not allowed to re-embark for the colonies, and they were kept out of Paris; the government proposed to incorporate the able-bodied males among them in military units, whom they would send under white commanders to islands off the French coast. In Britain, the majority of French prisoners of war arriving from the West Indies in the 1790s, captured during fighting on the southeast Caribbean islands of St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Antigua, and Grenada, were black or of mixed race (2,080 of 2,512 in the listing made in 1797).⁴⁴ In 1807, the prefect of the Gironde collected further statistics on those who had arrived in Bordeaux since the first risings on Guadeloupe and Saint-Domingue. In all, there were 164 names on the list, 90 of them black, the others mulattoes. They included widows, men of working age, and mothers with small children. They worked in the professions open to people of color in the French colonies: carpenters, painters, stonemasons, manservants, and day laborers among the men; seamstresses, laundresses, and domestic servants for the women. Most had integrated easily into the workforce.

Conclusion

With the loss of Saint-Domingue and the sale of Louisiana, it might seem that a discrete chapter in French colonial expansion had run its course. But can this be seen as the end, in any meaningful sense, of a French globalization project? With so many individual actors involved, so many decisions often taken in pursuit of profit or of family strategy, it would be easy to dismiss the claim that this should be seen as part of a coherent globalization policy. But it was also part of something wider, stretching beyond the Atlantic world. Colonial goods were imported through the Atlantic ports to be exported

43 Julie Duprat, *Bordeaux métisse. Esclaves et affranchis du 18e à l'Empire* [Mixed-Race Bordeaux: Slaves and Freedmen from the Eighteenth to the Empire] (Bordeaux: Mollat, 2021), 69.

44 Abigail Coppins and Jennifer Ngaire Heuer, "Race, Freedom and Everyday Life: French Caribbean Prisoners-of-War in Britain," in *Life in Revolutionary France*, eds. Mette Harder and Jennifer Ngaire Heuer (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), 126–130.

across Europe, and France's mercantile networks were also developed to the east, to India, Madagascar, and the islands of the Indian Ocean. There were networks within Europe, too, contracts with banks and merchant houses in Holland, England, and Ireland, and with the Hanseatic ports along the North Sea and Baltic coasts. The French Atlantic was part of a wider process, and though France's interest in the Atlantic world as a colonizing power undoubtedly diminished after the Napoleonic Wars, the thirst for global expansion did not. The merchants of France's ports increasingly turned their attention elsewhere, to the Levant, the East Indies, and China, and from France's colonization of Algeria in 1830, the dream of empire increasingly turned to Africa and Asia.

Nor is it entirely fanciful to think of the expansion into the Atlantic world during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as an exercise in French globalization. While initiatives were often individual, they were part of a wider context in which national interest and government investment played a significant part. The wealth that came back from the Americas helped to fund France's war machine, and the wars that France fought often had colonial rivalries at their core. The Seven Years' War, indeed, broke out in the Americas, as a colonial conflict between France and Britain. And even in peacetime, the French government had involved itself in Atlantic expansion, financing voyages of exploration, providing merchant shipping with naval convoys, and offering military protection to transatlantic colonies and trading posts. In wartime, France responded to merchants' alarm by issuing *lettres de marque* and legalizing privateering. Catholic missionaries and government administrators supported the spread of French culture and the French language. Writers and philosophes brought the reality—and some of the color—of colonial life to a wider French public, while scientists and cartographers explored the diverse riches of France's transatlantic possessions. Moreau de Saint-Méry's study of Saint-Domingue, written on the eve of the French Revolution, is perhaps the most significant example.

Though revolution may have resulted in the loss of Saint-Domingue and the reduction of France's Atlantic footprint, it did not cut France off from the Americas. The country retained other Caribbean colonies, most notably Guadeloupe and Martinique, which remain departments of France to this day. More significantly, perhaps, its withdrawal from Louisiana opened up a new chapter in relations with the United States, which had its own imperial ambitions and which shared with France a recent revolutionary heritage. Some have argued, indeed, with Robert Palmer and Jacques Godechot, that it was their experience of an "Atlantic Revolution" and their commitment to ideas of liberty and the rights of man that helped define their place in the postrevolutionary world. Although there were periodic tensions between two countries, there were few serious rifts. The territorial expansion of the United States was largely accepted by France, which remained more suspicious of Britain's ambitions in the Americas. This view was reflected in French public opinion, which for much of the nineteenth century was fascinated by the United States, by its exoticism, its model of democracy, its technological progress,

and its modernity. But it also aroused French misgivings. The French knew that it was only by maintaining good transatlantic relations in two world wars and into the postwar era that their nation could hope to remain a significant player in the Atlantic world, though doing so meant accepting a more modest role as a partner in American hegemony.

Postscript

France today is still deeply marked by its Atlantic experience, even if it did not produce the strong colonial legacy in the Americas as did Britain or Spain. Little of that first empire lived on into the nineteenth century, and, as Bill Marshall points out, French cultural influence in the Atlantic world has suffered as a consequence. Whereas some 350 million people speak English and Spanish as a first language worldwide, French is the first language of, at most, some 20 million people outside the Hexagone.⁴⁵ These include, of course, the inhabitants of former French colonies in the Caribbean—Martinique and Guadeloupe are still overseas departments of France, along with Guyane on the South American mainland—and of the French West African territories from which slaves were shipped to the Americas. In the postwar years, many people from these territories migrated and continue to migrate to France, often arriving and settling in the Atlantic port cities from which the eighteenth-century slavers sailed. There, as citizens, they have become active in a postcolonial movement to explain and understand France's involvement in the Atlantic world and especially its responsibility for the seizure and sale into slavery of their ancestors.

Over the last quarter of a century, France has come a long way in opening up a debate on the slave trade, and all the cities that engaged in slaving have contributed, building memorials, inaugurating exhibitions, and commemorating the heroes and heroines of abolitionism. A national holiday (on May 10) celebrates the victory of the abolitionist cause, and France is the first country to have made slavery and the slave trade “crimes against humanity.” The battle today is over public memory, fought out on both sides of the Atlantic, in Haiti and Guadeloupe as much as on the island of Gorée in Senegal or in the port cities of metropolitan France. It is a battle in which the descendants of those sold into slavery in the eighteenth century have become active, and at times vociferous, participants.⁴⁶

45 Bill Marshall, *The French Atlantic: Travels in Culture and History* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), 6.

46 Renaud Hourcade, “Commemorating a Guilty Past: The Politics of Memory in the French Former Trade Cities,” in *Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in the Public Space*, ed. Ana Lucia Araujo (London: Routledge, 2012), 131.

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Algeria (1760–1831)

Introduction

Since 1536, France and the Ottoman Empire, which for a long time covered the southern shore of the Mediterranean as far as the border of Morocco, were partners. Their political rapprochement was promoted by François I and Süleyman the Magnificent. Within this Ottoman framework that the Kingdom of France and the revolutionary regimes that succeeded it maintained between 1760 and 1831 a tenuous but permanent relationship with the Regency of Algiers, 700 kilometers from the port of Marseille. For four centuries, the main card played by France with the Ottomans concerned the protection of Oriental Christians in the Levant because, in fact, Christianity in the Barbary regencies of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli had been eliminated in the thirteenth century. However, in the nineteenth century, the Franco-Ottoman friendship deteriorated to the point that the late Ottoman Empire entered into a close alliance with Germany.¹

The cause of this deterioration is linked to French military activism in the Mediterranean and growing colonial greed. Since the reign of Louis XIV, France decided to put an end to the ancient threat from Barbary corsairs to its coastlines and ships in the Mediterranean, bombarding Algiers and providing protection for its ships and their crews. For the Sublime Porte—the Ottoman government—Algiers was essential because it was the main contributor to the Ottoman tax system. Istanbul, however, whose provinces were quite free, showed no disapproval after Algerian privateering was curtailed, as it did not have the necessary fleet to face the French. However, when revolutionary France, led by Napoleon Bonaparte, invaded Egypt in 1798, the matter was serious enough for the Sublime Porte to ally itself with the English in order to drive out the French army, which it successfully did in 1801. The Egyptian expedition of 1798 offered France numerous new insights into a world it did not know. This Napoleonic experience prepared the minds of French actors for a new adventure.

Following the Seven Years' War (1756–1763), France no longer had a colonial empire. In 1760, a disastrous year in the fight against England, France definitively lost two jewels of its first empire: Montreal in Canada and Pondicherry in India. The Peace of Paris put an end to its colonial possessions, except for a few “sugar islands.” In 1760, no one thought of taking over the Regency of Algiers, which was experiencing thriving

1 Odile Moreau, *L'Empire ottoman au XIXe siècle* [The Ottoman Empire in the Nineteenth Century] (Paris: Armand Colin, 2020).

trade. However, during the French Revolution, a dispute arose between France and the Regency of Algiers over wheat purchases in Algeria by the National Convention, which was never settled. Although trade relations between the two countries continued, the matter became a political one. *Alger*—Algiers, according to the French formula of the time—was then a maritime power led by a dey at the head of a little-known continental country. The regency exercised its power on the sea. From the Mediterranean came not only Ottoman support and reinforcements but also Christian captives, who made the city of Algiers rich in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It was through the Mediterranean that not only wheat flowed to France, which made the regency wealthy in the eighteenth century, but trade by sea also was carried out with Istanbul and the Levant. It was every year by sea that the annual tribute was brought to Istanbul.

Threats also came from the sea, however, such as from Spain and then from ships and expeditions of European and American powers. From 1827 onward, the French threat became more apparent. That year, France launched a maritime blockade of Algiers. In 1829, just as the blockade was about to end, serious maritime incidents exacerbated French antagonism. In July 1830, France seized Algiers and drove out the Ottomans. In 1831, the French army, which had landed in Algeria, did not yet know that the conquest of the country had begun, or the history of French Algeria.

This chapter reveals why the Regency of Algiers was a key part of the Ottoman Empire. It then goes on to explain how Paris, Marseille, and Algiers had a historical dispute with many twists and turns. Lastly, the chapter shows how and why the expedition to Algiers took place after the historical dispute seemed to be settled.

The Regency of Algiers: The Powerful and Rich Western Bastion of the Ottoman Empire²

The Regency of Algiers: An Ottoman Province with a Military and War-like Tradition

For three centuries, the sultan of Algiers, called dey since 1671, ruled the western Ottoman province of the empire. He fought against the Spaniards (present in Oran), the rebellious tribes of the regency, and the sultan of Fez, who tried to seize the western part of his territory. Tlemcen, the ancient capital of the Zayyanid dynasty, which dominated central Barbary before the Ottomans, was the focus of intense fighting with the Kingdom of Fez. There were 18 wars between the two empires, punctuating these three centuries. In the eighteenth century, the Alawy dynasty of Fez wanted to seize Tlemcen and Oran. In 1647, an agreement established the Tafna river as a border for the Turks, who had a garrison at Nedroma. But the Alawites returned to the charge: defeated, they lost Oujda

2 This section includes analysis from Pierre Vermeren, *Histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine. De la Régence d'Alger à Bouteflika (XIX–XXIe siècles)* [History of Contemporary Algeria: From the Regency of Algiers to Bouteflika (Nineteenth to Twenty-First Century)] (Paris: Nouveau Monde Éditions, 2022).

and then the eastern Rif, and the Moulouya river became the new border between the empires. These territories were taken over in 1795 by the Cherifians. Harassing the Turks of Oran, they took Tlemcen one last time from 1830 to 1834.

The dey of Algiers also ran a state corsair enterprise targeting ships in the Mediterranean and even on the ocean. But since the end of the seventeenth century, this activity had been hampered.

The Ottoman society in the Regency of Algiers was primarily urban and had little to do with the lives and freedoms of Arab and Berber tribes. It was ruled, governed, and commanded by 25,000 Ottomans, including 15,000 janissaries, to which 15,000 Kouloughlis (mixed offspring of Ottomans and low-status Arab-Berber women) must be added.

In this country of three million inhabitants, the Ottomans formed a small social layer. The cities of the regency were subject to this ruling class from the heart of the empire, which governed a segmented society. The Turkish masters were assisted by the Kouloughlis and their Kabyle auxiliaries, soldiers, merchants, or craftsmen; the authorities accepted corsairs, often converted Christians, but dominated European slaves and captives. The Moors were the Sunni Arabs and city dwellers of the regency; they lived alongside the Jews, who ranged from the miserable artisan to the prosperous businessman. At the lower end of the social ladder was the black slave population, which was continually replenished by the Saharan slave trade.

Outside the cities, the world of *qabail* (the word for tribes in Arabic, meaning Kabyles) was autonomous, ranging from the makhzen tribe, which was linked to the state, to the Saharan tribe, which never had contact with the Ottomans. Indirect government by tribal chiefs in the name of the sultan was pushed to its extremes.

In Istanbul, the janissary corps, known as *mamelukes*, was massacred in 1826 to reform the army; nothing of the sort happened in Algiers, where the janissaries remained an all-powerful corps.³ Since 1671, they had elected the dey from within the army. The *odjak*, a militia of janissaries composed of small units of infantry soldiers, chose the chief of Algiers, who recognized the religious tutelage (*imperium*) of the sultan-caliph of Istanbul, to whom it paid its biennial tribute. The dey was assisted by a *kiaga* (counselor) appointed by the *diwan* (council) of Algiers. This large governmental body assisted the *diwans*. It was composed of the main janissaries of the *odjak*, the *taïfa* (corporation) of the captains and owners of *raïs* (corsair ships), representatives of the Ottoman Hanafi Islamic rite, and the urban Moors. Some 800 to 1,500 people made up the large *diwan*.

The dey was at the head of several administrative entities: the city of Algiers; the sultan's patrimonial domain—Dar es-Sultan—around the city, notably in the Mitidja plain; and three *beyliks* (provinces) whose capitals were Oran in the west, Médéa in

3 Henri-Delmas de Grammont, *Histoire d'Alger sous la domination turque (1515–1830)* [History of Algiers under Turkish Rule (1515–1830)] (Paris: Editions Bouchène, 2010).

the center, and Constantine in the east. Many territories evaded the authority of the dey. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the regency exercised its authority over 31 percent of northern Algeria. The regency was a complex conglomeration of tribal groups, who were forced to pay, the annual tax to the sultan, although often trying to circumvent it. The annual tax was volatile, subject to regular renegotiation and litigation. According to the Alsatian officer Louis Rinn, around 1830 Algeria (excluding the Sahara) had 516 tribes or fractions of tribes (*çoffs* in Berber or *leffs* in Arabic): 224 tribal groups in the Beylik of Constantine, 157 in Oranie, 62 in the Titteri, and 73 around Algiers. A total of 126 tribes or groups were considered makhzen, auxiliaries of the Turks and exempt from taxes, and 104 were submissive; that is 230 out of 516.

At the head of the beyliks were Kouloughlis, members of large families protected by a few hundreds or thousands of Ottoman officials and soldiers of the odjak. The Ottomans placed permanent garrisons in the strategically important cities. Each city controlled by the Turks was surrounded by walls and opened onto a countryside populated by allied tribes. This *bled el-makhzen*—under the control of the central authority—was opposed to the *bled el-baroud*—the unsubdued country of gunpowder. Indirect governance was exercised by the makhzen tribes, then by the rallied chieftaincies who replaced the odjak in the countryside toward the insubordinate.

Algiers was subject to a military government. Its organization was based on the infantry corps of janissaries and that of *raïs*. The two corps were in competition within the diwan, but they were also complementary because the janissaries were paid for a long time thanks to the booty seized by the *raïs*. Outside Algiers, the janissaries and their local allies ensured stability. In strategic or threatened regions, they built *borj*, forts where the troops were stationed. *Borj Bou-Arredj* is located at the junction of the Bibans, the Kabyle mountain range, and the highlands in the Medjana plain.

In Algiers and in the beyliks, the janissaries formed a separate caste, subject to their chiefs. Masters of Algiers, they were cut off from the local population by the ban on mixed marriages. However, these soldiers imposed their governance and disobedience on the city, as shown by moments of tension when deys were assassinated. Nevertheless, from 1766 to 1791 Dey Mohamed Ben Othmane reigned, who ensured unprecedented stability. Instability returned after him, with eight deys ruling until 1818. Hussein Dey reigned until the arrival of the French.

The Richest Province of the Empire after Istanbul?

Algiers was the most significant province of the Ottoman Empire because of the income it produced, the gold of the Sudan, the trans-Saharan trade, its wheat production, and privateering. It was also especially important province because of its strategic position, being in contact with the Christians on land (Spanish) and on sea (French) and with Morocco. The geographical distance—it generally took two months by sea to cross the Mediterranean by sail—did not result in holding a minor political rank. The presence in

Fez of an Arab sultan-caliph descended from Mohammed cast a small shadow compared to the power of the Ottoman sultan, who claimed to rule over all Muslims.

The Sublime Porte attached great importance to the bond between the dey and the empire: even if Algiers demanded since 1659 to elect its head, the suzerainty was never broken. Several measures maintained this link: the removal of the Kouloughlis in Algiers, the refusal to marry by the dey, the absence of a dynasty as in Tunisia, and the renewed sending of Ottoman janissaries during the coming three centuries.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, *corso* (privateering), the first activity of Algiers, was carried out in the name of the sultan of Istanbul against Christian and hostile ships.⁴ The *raïs* armed their ships for privateering; the greatest *raïs* were “renegades,” Christians converts to Islam. Privateering was a major resource of Barbary Algiers, greatly amplified by the threat that Algiers posed to the littorals of the Western Mediterranean.⁵ The sharing of cargoes, the sale of European slaves, and the repurchasing of captives made Algiers rich in the seventeenth century. The Mediterranean was subjected to these raids without any possible repression because Algiers did not trade and seemed impregnable. The only way to escape these unrelenting raids was to pay an annual tribute to Algiers, which the Europeans did in the eighteenth century (see below).

To put an end to Algerian privateering, the British fleet, beginning in 1672, then that of Louis XIV, bombarded Algiers in order to obtain guarantees of safety for their ships and on the French littorals. Shaʿban Dey (r. 1689–1695) brokered peace with the two powers he could not face alone: England in 1682 and France in 1689.

Between 1695 and 1725, the regency embarked on an economic and political transition to offset its impoverishment. Political instability was the order of the day. The land and naval military forces of the regency turned against their Barbary and Ottoman neighbors (Tunis and Tripoli). Wars of pillage were waged against the Cherifian Empire and the Regency of Tunis. Although led by the powerful sultan Moulay Ismaïl (r. 1672–1727), his Moroccan troops were defeated and retreated to the border. The issue was, however, more economic than military.

In addition to the privateering, the oldest and most constant resource of Algiers came from the slave trade and the trans-Saharan trade with Sudan, which provided gold, slaves, and animal products. The Saharan route linking Algiers to Timbuktu was coupled with east-west camel trade routes, linking not only Tlemcen and Fez to the west but also Constantine, Tunis, Tripoli, and Cairo to the east. Finally, Algiers sold wheat produced by tribes to Europe, which made its incredibly wealthy in the eighteenth century: it was “the century of wheat” (1725–1815), according to the historian Lemnaouar Merouche.

4 In the eighteenth century, when the Europeans had practically put an end to privateering at their expense, it was still practiced at the expense of the sultan, whose Tunisian, Libyan, Greek, and other ships were plundered by the Algerians.

5 Lemnaouar Merouche, *Recherches sur l'Algérie à l'époque ottomane: La course, mythes et réalité* [Research on Algeria in the Ottoman Period: Privateering, Myths, and Reality], vol. 2 (Saint-Denis: Bouchène, 2007).

There were also commercial relations by sea with eastern cities and ports. Less important than Europe, these relations were steady and focused on certain products. This trade privileged Egypt and Greece in the Levant, from the ports of Mostaganem (west), Algiers, and Bled El Aneb (Annaba, formerly known as Bône). Algiers exported slaves, silk belts, and coral and imported cotton cloth from Smyrna (in Anatolia), Istanbul, and Alexandria; silks, Indian *foutas* (fabrics), belts, caftans, carpets, hookahs, and earthenware from Greece and Anatolia; pottery from Rhodes and Alexandria; and porcelain from China and Japan. This trade mobilized three or four Ottoman ships per year; it continued in parallel by land with pilgrims. Finally, at the end of the eighteenth century, two or three Livornese ships, crewed by Tuscan Jews of Andalusian origin with houses in Tunis and Algiers, participated in the redistribution of oriental products mixed with European products: muslin from India; chests, ribbons, and velvet from Damascus; as well as crystals, mirrors, cotton canvas, silk, cashmere, satin, velvet, coffee, and coffee pots.

At the very end of the eighteenth century, the revolutionary period and the Napoleonic Wars fanned the final flames of privateering. Three upsurges can be observed: in 1793, between 1802 and 1810, and after 1812. This is the time of the corsair Raïs Hamidou. The Barbary merchant ships were then banned from European ports. But after this brief upswing for privateering, in which the Algiers corsairs spared French ships, things turned abruptly at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The Congress of Vienna decided to put an end to the slave trade across the globe. Algiers was forbidden to enslave Europeans, to export black or European slaves to Istanbul, and to import from the Levant slaves from the Caucasus or the Balkans. Moreover, with peace returning and England taking control of the seas, together with a growth in trade, maritime insecurity was no longer accepted: as a result, the northern Europeans now collaborated. As early as 1815, the Americans imposed their free movement in the Mediterranean by bombing Algiers. Then the Anglo-Dutch expedition of 1816 did the same. Lord Exmouth ravaged the Algerian fleet stationed at the Bay of Algiers and put an end to privateering.

The Internal Degradation of the Power of Algiers at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century

Since the decline of privateering in the late seventeenth century and the subsequent decrease in wheat trade in the early nineteenth century, the city of Algiers had been steadily declining. The city population plummeted from 100,000 inhabitants in the seventeenth century to 30,000 around 1830. Despite this decline, Algiers still served as a regional commercial hub, in particular for the Sahel of Algiers and Médéa, facilitating imports to the area.

By 1800, Algiers held some 2,000 resident prisoners, and privateering was becoming a remnant of the past. In 1816, the fleet was destroyed, effectively ending this practice. Until that time, Algiers had been buying a lot of navigational and weapon materials (sails, ropes, cannons, bullets, and gunpowder). The French king had forbidden the sale of such materials to Barbarians, prompting the English and later the Dutch to export these goods to Algiers. The Dutch were the first to export these materials to Algiers in the seventeenth century, supplying 700 to 800 barrels per year. Later, they extended their exports to the concessions of Bône and Colla, which they had acquired in France (see below).

The dey of Algiers was a high Ottoman dignitary, occupying a position several ranks below the sultan in the imperial protocol. He was the elected head of the city and the Regency of Algiers and had authority over Dar es-Sultan and the beyliks. He negotiated treaties with foreign powers and was the guarantor of the sultan's empire in the province. He was responsible for collecting taxes on the behalf of Istanbul from those residing and operating within the regency (taïfa, dignitaries, odjak, beyliks, tribes, merchants, etc.) and then organizing the transport of tax revenues in a biennial convoy. Although not fulfilling a strict religious function, they dey ensured that prayers were conducted in the mosques and assemblies of the province on every religious holiday and every Friday in the name of the sultan-caliph of Istanbul.

In 1817, Dey Ali Khodja took control of the janissaries after they had marched on Algiers to overthrow him. He crushed them with a force comprising 6,000 Kouloughlis from the beyliks, led by loyal Turkish officers and reinforced by Kabyle soldiers from the Zouaoua confederation (the later Zouaves). A total of 1,200 janissaries were killed. Of the survivors who had asked for forgiveness and *Aman* (protection), many returned to Anatolia. This event ended the omnipotence of the janissaries, which weakened the city and Ottoman power.

Since Ali Khodja (r. 1817–18), the power of the dey was significantly strengthened. He governed alongside his ministers in the diwan, which was reduced in size and specialized in specific areas of expertise. The dey had the authority to choose his successor. The janissaries were kept at a distance from the palace, located at the top of the kasbah and guarded by Kabyle soldiers. He also relied on the Kouloughlis to help in governing the province. The last dey of Algiers, Hussein Dey, ruled for 12 years until 1830.

In 1830, the regency had 15,000 Turkish soldiers, supported by makhzen tribes. The odjak took control of the taïfa of the raïs, which created a problem of paying the janissaries. However, Ottoman governance of the regency was flexible and inexpensive in terms of men. During the last 13 years of the regency, a weakened odjak defended Algiers, when the French instituted a siege and bombarded the city beginning in 1827.

However, the bled-el-Turk (the lands under the control of the janissaries) only covered one-sixth of northern Algeria, in the heart of the regency, around the large cities and Algiers. While the seat of power resided in Algiers, the city itself, along with urban settlements, represented only 5 percent of the population.

Dar es-Sultan was the dey's own personal domain. This rich, well-exploited, and cultivated territory was not safe from tribal tensions, such as conflicts involving the Kabyle tribes in 1768. The city of Algiers was governed by the emirs of the Biscaras tribe, who played a role in nighttime surveillance. This tribe fulfilled a function similar to that of the janissaries, who were quartered in barracks and designated quarters. In addition to the dey's palace in the kasbah, the city of Algiers spread out over a vast slope to the sea, comprising very distinct districts and populations.

Whereas Christian captives were rare, the black slave population remained rather large, despite declining due to dwindling numbers. In addition to Turks, Kouloughlis, and slaves, the city also housed Jews, Moors, and Kabyles. The Jewish community was very diverse, assigned to both the most thankless tasks like sewer cleaning and the most rewarding higher functions. For instance, the Livornese Jews exported grain from Algiers, engaging in speculation activities in Europe. The Moors—the Sunni bourgeoisie—constituted the main community of the Algerian population. They were the bourgeois (*hadaris* or Moriscos) often originating from Andalusia, from which they were expelled at the beginning of the seventeenth century. They were craftsmen (specializing in silk, leather, embroidery, etc.), musicians, merchants, clerics, lawyers, and so on. Finally, the Kabyles, specifically the men of these tribes, were an integral part of the city, about 10 percent of the population, including the Zouaoua. They sold agricultural products (oil, vegetables, wool, etc., in which their tribes were specialized), as well as worked as gardeners or servants, for example in the European consulates.

The power games between the dey and the beys, between the beys and the Kouloughlis, between the beys and the military chiefs, and between the tribal chiefs themselves could turn to violence when one of the parties became weak. This military society resolved its conflicts by force of arms. In 1792, for example, the dey of Algiers had the rebellious bey of Constantine, Salah, who had been in office for over 20 years, strangled and then tortured, together with the killing of all his ministers. The operation resulted in the acquisition of gold worth 12 million dinars and numerous valuable goods. This event is part of a pattern where the beys accumulated wealth, coinciding with the decline of Algiers. The beys to the east (Constantine) and west (Mascara/Oran) made fortunes in wheat in the eighteenth century, arousing the desires of the dey.

Some tribes paid their tribute only after they had engaged in armed resistance. Conflicts between the Kabyle kingdoms and Algiers occurred time and again: for example, the conflict spanning from 1758 to 1773 in all of Kabylia or the one from 1805 to 1813 in the valley of the Soummam in the east. In 1767, Kabylia, with its 69 tribes, rebelled: Iflissen—in coastal Kabylia—refused to pay taxes. In the *mahallah* (army troop) sent there, 300 Turks were killed, and the others forced to flight. The dey had the leader of the mahallah, Tagha, strangled for cowardice and replaced him with Khodja Kheïl El-Ouali. The following year, the dey sent 4,000 soldiers and 12,000 makhzen from Titteri and Oran, supported in the east by the bey of Constantine. This force was opposed by 40,000 Kabyles, led by the marabout Si-Ahmed-u-Saadi. The army was defeated;

1,200 Turks, including the khodja, and 3,000 *goumiers* (auxiliaries) were killed. As a result of this event, the Mitidja region was devastated, and Algiers was threatened with famine. In 1769, the dey sent another expedition to surround the mountains, aiming to starve the tribes living there. In October 1773, six years after the crisis began, the bey of Constantine intervened in the Hodna and sent 60 heads, 400 pairs of ears, and 50 prisoners to Algiers. It is possible that a good harvest had eased tensions between the groups; ultimately bringing an end to the crisis.

Great Kabylia, the region encompassing the Djurdjura mountains, was deeply engrained in the collective memory of the Kingdom of Koukou, spanning the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which almost permanently subordinated the region. French witnesses of the eighteenth century therefore concluded that the Turks occupied the regency but did not govern it, especially since the lands of the Berber tribes (Ka-ba-il) extended far beyond the Kabyle retreat of the twentieth century.

Before 1830, 200 principalities, or tribes, were considered independent, rejecting central authority and refusing to pay taxes. They occupied most of the territory that was outside the control of Istanbul: the mountainous massifs of the Tell, the steppes of the high plateaus, and the Saharan border. The Berber tribes dominated but shared the territory with Arab or mixed tribes: autonomy remained the ultimate goal. Ottoman dominance in the central Maghreb was largely superficial. For instance, the brotherhood of the Ouled sidi Cheikh in the southwest of the Oranie region remained independent from the Turkish control.

The partial control of the country by the Turks and the recurrent conflicts between chieftainships raise the question of “colonizability,” that is to say the susceptibility to colonization. Is this concept, promoted by the philosopher Abdelmalek Bennabi, who knew the metropolis and the French language well and was close to the Muslim reformists, applicable?⁶ The Algerian historian Mahfoud Kaddache believes that the colonization of the country was less the result of the poverty of Algiers, which was rich, and more due to Ottoman decadence and the scientific advancements of Europe.⁷ Bennabi considers, on the other hand, that the people of Algeria were in a semi-vegetative state, a situation heavily aggravated by the industrialization of Europe after 1830.

6 Abdelmalek Bennabi, *Colonisabilité* [Colonizability] (Alger: Dar El-Hadhara, 2003). These are press articles from the middle of the twentieth century collected, selected, annotated, and prefaced by Abderrahman Benamara, with afterword by Dr. Omar Benaïssa.

7 Mahfoud Kaddache, *L'Algérie durant la période ottomane* [Algeria during the Ottoman Period] (Alger: Editions Office des Publications Universitaires, 1998).

The Regency of Algiers and France Nurtured a Historical Dispute that was More or Less Settled in the 1820s

The Memory of Piracy and the Kidnapping of Christians Haunted the French Memory in the Mediterranean

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the dispute between Algiers and France was largely based on the memory of the privateering and the captives of Algiers, as can be read in the works of Molière or in other texts from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Marseillais and the Provençals as well as the Languedocians and the Corsicans have not forgotten the centuries-long danger that came from the seas, when ships and shores were frequently raided by Barbarians. Certainly, since Louis XIV, this practice had considerably decreased, especially for the French, but the memory of the hostility remained vivid in the south of France.

To comprehend the magnitude of these past connections, it is important to note that out of 100,000 free inhabitants in Algiers during the middle of the seventeenth century, there were 30,000 to 35,000 Christian captives in the city; this figure fell to 2,000 around 1800. In addition to merchants and sailors, the coastal populations in Languedoc, the islands of the regency, and Italy were frequently raided. It is estimated that the Christian captives, considered negotiable commodities despite being enslaved, numbered 1.3 million over three centuries, with 850,000 being captured between 1580 and 1680. The goal of the privateers was to sell them back to their families at a good price, which was a considerable source of income. The Franciscan religious order, which had settled in the ports of the Barbary since the Middle Ages, specialized in this repurchasing of captives. After the religious wars in the first half of the seventeenth century, England and France gradually took back control of the Mediterranean.

When the French conquered Algiers in 1830, there were still some 400 prisoners there, many of whom were elderly and isolated. The taïfa of the raïs fell apart due to the widespread prohibition of piracy at sea and ceded power to the janissaries. The French expedition therefore had only a distant connection to the practice of privateering, which had fallen into disuse since 1815. In Marseille, Rome, and Corsica, the expedition was perceived in some respects as revenge.

France and the Western Powers Bought Peace in Algiers and Ended the Christian Slave Trade

The fleet of Louis XIV bombarded Algiers on several occasions—1682, 1683, and 1688—but in the end had to accept a brokered peace. Although privateering experienced an irreversible decline, Algiers was never taken. The Spanish military suffered a similar defeat in front of Algiers in 1775, resulting in the loss of approximately 8,000 Spanish soldiers. This was followed by another failed attempt in 1783, leading to a diplomatic agreement in 1785. Algiers seemed impregnable, and the Spaniards were forced to pay

a fee not to have their ships captured. They finally ceded Oran, which was devastated by an earthquake in 1790.

Privateering declined as European states became richer and more coordinated, agreeing to pay allowances to Algiers for free circulation. These were substantial, with Venice, for example, paying 50,000 gold bars per year, Spain 120,000 francs, France 200,000 francs, and England 267,500 francs. However, these indemnities did not fully compensate for the decline in privateering activities, which partly explains the attacks on neutral or allied ships, land wars, and wheat exports.

In 1756, Algiers even levied a tribute from Tunis, which had to send oil annually to light the mosques in Algiers. Finally, in 1805, the bey of Tunis, Hammouda Pasha, revolted and attacked caravan drivers from Constantine in his regency. The dey of Algiers, Ahmed Khodja, sent a frigate in retaliation in 1807 to plunder La Goulette, the outer harbor of Tunis. In return, Tunis attacked the Beylik of Constantine with 50,000 men. After months of fighting, reinforcements from Algiers pushed back the Tunisians. The thousands of ears of the defeated fighters were sent to Algiers on donkeys as a sign of victory. The war was merciless.

In 1815–16, the American and European fleets definitively destroyed Algerian privateering, at a time when the French were forbidden to wage any war since the Congress of Vienna. Therefore, the reasons that could have pushed France to intervene in Algeria and to seize Algiers—on which Louis XIV and even more precisely Bonaparte had worked—disappeared in the 1820s.

The blockade of the port of Algiers that France began on June 16, 1827 was linked to other issues, encompassing a mixture of commercial, judicial, diplomatic, and political circumstances. However, the blockade ceased to be linked to privateering, despite the pretext provided for its initiation.

France was a Major Client of Algiers to which it Tried to Impose Trade Conditions

Since the sixteenth century, due to privateering, Algerian ships were not allowed to trade in the Christian ports of the Mediterranean.⁸ This restriction fueled the temptation of privateering, as their ships returned and sought safety behind the impregnable walls of Algiers. However, in Africa, Christians were never far. They maintained *presides* (prisons for the Spanish) or bastions. Spain had continuous presence in Oran from 1509 to 1708 and then again from 1732 to 1792. The Turks settled there during that time, and then the city came under French control in 1831. In the seventeenth century, the French had a commercial establishment in the small town of Collo further east (from 1604 to 1685), where they exploited coral. The relations between the kings of France and the sultan authorized this privilege. From 1550 to 1827, the French, in spite of difficult circumstances, also settled in La Calle on the borders of the Regency of Tunis and in

⁸ Kaddache.

several bastions, where they exploited coral and then exported wheat sold by the tribes to Provence. These activities were either tolerated or endured by the deys, depending on the period. Thus, the concession was renewed in 1714 for Bône, La Calle, and Collo.

Although Algiers was long confined to the maritime business at which it excelled, it never gained the naval and commercial dominance over the Mediterranean that the Ottomans finally lost in 1571 at the Battle of Lepanto in the western Mediterranean. The Algerians, constantly under the threat from the Order of Malta, which forbade Barbarians to dock in Christian ports in the name of the pope, did not possess a merchant fleet. They were content to board Christian and sometimes Ottoman ships.

Thus, especially after the end of privateering, the Algerians depended on foreign merchants and fleets to supply the city. They did not impose a prohibition on trade, including with the Spaniards. The Spaniards were not important suppliers to the Regency of Algiers, but they did sell wine, brandy, salt, potatoes, and red haiks and caps woven and dyed in Andalusia. War, privateering, and religion did not prevent them from doing business, and certain habits acquired in Andalusia persisted.

During the eighteenth century, the wheat trade dominated the exports from Algiers. However, other forms of trade were also taking place, which were both stable and lucrative. The Livornese and Christians supplied the ports of the regency, first Algiers, which needed not only textile products and food but also weapons and materials to maintain its fleet.

Algiers' most important partner, however, was the Kingdom of France, either directly through the port of Marseille or via Livorno or other Italian ports. On the French side, trade was handled by the Royal African Company (*Compagnie royale d'Afrique*), which owned 100 to 120 ships. It was the company that negotiated concessions for coral with Algiers and especially with the sheikhs of the surrounding Arab tribes. For instance, the French rebuilt the mosque of La Calle. During the renewal of the agreement with La Calle in 1764, the concession was obtained against an annual indemnity.

In 1768, 11 Provençal ships docked in the port of Algiers, bringing goods from all over the Mediterranean. In 1773, three Marseillais settled permanently in Algiers. From 1776 to 1787, Marseille shipped 2.8 million livres tournois' worth of goods and imported 6.2 million from Algeria. This resulted in a large deficit for France but served as a source of foreign exchange earnings for Algiers.

Increasing quantities of wheat were exported to Marseille from the beyliks of Mascara and Constantine; in the Beylik of Constantine, wheat cargoes were said to have increased tenfold. According to Ismet Touarti, between 1710 and 1830, Algeria exported more than 2,193,000 cargoes of wheat to Marseille, equivalent to 263 million tons, a considerable figure. It is estimated that 65 percent of the total volume was exported between 1769 and 1795, mainly under the control of Jewish Algerian merchant families.

The Algerians tried to settle in Marseille, where the Muslims had a cemetery (for the "Orientals"), but they were not allowed to trade. Therefore, the Livornese Jews from Algiers occupied the vacant space, which eventually angered the people of Marseille, so

that at the end of the eighteenth century they forbade them to stay in the city for more than three days. Algiers was an important exporter of coral and wheat to France. The former product accounted for a considerable portion of the cargo transported by ship. The latter became very important during the revolutionary wars, and Algiers played a crucial role in supplying wheat to the French armies during the Italian and Egyptian campaigns.

What was new during this period was that trade in Algiers was gradually leased, sometimes literally, by some Livornese Jewish families—originally from Tuscany—who increasingly resided in Algiers and became important players in Algerian finance and trade. The growing influence of Jewish traders angered the merchants of Marseille, as the Livornese families were building up fortunes at their expense, especially during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods. This led to growing conflict between the regency and France. As an example, the Busnach family sold wheat to France during the National Convention.

The Algiers Expedition: An Old Idea Finally Realized for Political Reasons

Louis XIV and Napoleon Dreamed of Conquering Alger

From the seventeenth century onward, the French political authorities and the merchants of Marseille—the first trading partners after becoming victims of the Algerian economy—became less concerned with conquering Algiers, and even less with conquering the territory of the regency. Instead, their primary concern was putting an end to the long-standing threat posed by this city on the Mediterranean. To be sure, the eighteenth century was quite peaceful as a result of Algiers refraining from attacking French vessels, together with the wheat trade reaching peak levels. Revolutionary France, facing internal unrest and later requiring provisions for its military campaigns, traded with Algiers. The fact that the beys of Constantine and Oran supplied wheat to the French fleet in Egypt through the Livornese Jews in Algiers proves that Ottoman solidarity had run its course and that Algiers and its merchants had become autonomous.

Nevertheless, did France have a plan to colonize the regency? This is a theory very deeply rooted in Algeria and, moreover, based on facts. In fact, since the ancien régime, there had been plans that undoubtedly reflect the will to appropriate Algiers in order to ruin it. However, after Louis XIV's ships bombarded the city and obtained, in exchange for a tribute, the guarantee that the Barbary corsairs would not attack French ships, the urgency diminished. During the revolutionary wars and later during the empire, Consul Bonaparte, who became Napoleon I in 1804, again considered attacking Algiers. During the turmoil and wars in Europe, privateering was actually revived. After returning from the Egyptian expedition in 1801 and the defeat by the English, Bonaparte considered capturing Algiers to disrupt the India route. (Several letters on the subject show his interest in this undertaking.)

In addition to repeating the conquest of Cairo, the conquest of Algiers would be a way to outdo the monarchy, which had never accomplished this feat. It would also allow France to avenge the defeat at Aboukir, where 15 French ships had been destroyed or captured by Nelson's Royal Navy in August 1798, a battle that established British superiority in the Mediterranean. But the war on the frontiers and then the planned invasion of England in 1805 took Bonaparte elsewhere. The military defeat of the Franco-Spanish fleet off Cape Trafalgar on October 21, 1805 against Admiral Nelson's fleet was a disaster: two-thirds of the Franco-Spanish fleet was destroyed by the outnumbered British.

Bonaparte turned this defeat, after a forced march of his army through Europe, into a land victory at Austerlitz on December 2, 1805. Thereafter, he did not give up the conquest of Algiers. He even corresponded assiduously on the subject of Algiers, taking an interest in the debt claimed by the National Convention (see below), especially due to the fact that the Algerians continued to trade with the English despite the continental blockade imposed from 1806 to 1808. In the summer of 1808, he commissioned Captain Boutin, who had been sent to Algiers on a secret mission, to draw up an accurate inventory of the city's defenses. The latter planned a landing at Sidi Ferruch (Sidi Fredj in Arabic), since the city could not be taken by sea but could be taken by land.

Absorbed in other more urgent tasks, Bonaparte never landed near Algiers. But Captain Boutin's project would be implemented more than two decades later.

An Old Commercial and Judicial Quarrel between Paris and Algiers Degenerated into the Algiers Expedition

When the Royal African Company was dissolved by the National Convention in 1794, the Livornese traders Jacob Bacri and Michel Busnach took over. They became major suppliers of wheat to France, which paid only part of it, leaving a debt of eight million francs. This debt remained unresolved for more than 30 years, leading to legal proceedings by the court in Paris, to payments and partial settlements, to accumulating interests, and then to misappropriation of funds. The Livornese traders, in an attempt to recover their debit, managed to transfer the claim to the dey, who was their debtor. The French authorities stated that they had paid their part, but the consul in Algiers, the profiteer Pierre Deval, plotted with the Livornese to maintain the outstanding debt. On April 30, 1827, the dey struck the consul with his fan (fly whisk), leading to a deterioration in relations between Algiers and France.

The story begins with Deval, a consul by profession appointed consul general of France in Algiers in September 1814. Deval was a *drogman* (translator) trained in Paris and in the Levant. He was charged with settling the long-standing debt of Jacob Bacri and to sign a contract with the dey to take over the French concessions. The contract was signed on March 29, 1818. But at the end of April 1827, Hussein Dey learned that La Calle had been fortified without his consent. Furious, he summoned the consul.

The dey, facing challenges due to the end of the regency's foreign trade activities and confronted with revolts from tribes suffering under the tax system, demanded news from the consul, who was summoned on April 30, 1827. The dey demanded that seven million francs be paid, since the king had not answered him. Dissatisfied with Deval's answer, which he considered provocative, the dey gave him a blow with his fan. France considered this gesture a *casus belli*, since there was no official apology. On June 16, 1827, the blockade of Algiers began.

It is therefore this story of a 30-year debt that was the direct cause for the Algiers expedition and the indirect cause for the colonization of Algeria. The reality, however, was a little more complicated than that because a private commercial debt, modest in size and already judged (or even paid, even if the payment was diverted), could not have been the only reason for such a turn of events. Indeed, the historical events and the far-reaching consequences remind us that history sometimes obeys coincidences rather than necessities. Nevertheless, the two-year blockade of Algiers, which resulted in an expedition and finally the conquest of the city in July 1830, says something else about the parties involved. Both the Restoration and the dey government were in distress, and they considered the crisis to be a way to resolve the difficulties they were facing. Given that the city had never been taken in three centuries, the crisis was not perceived as a major threat from the Ottoman side.

On the French side, the Restoration had been confronted with challenges since Charles X's accession to the throne in 1824. His prime minister, Joseph de Villèle, was a monarchist who longed for the *ancien régime* and relied on the ultras, a political faction, to govern. His policies alienated him from liberal opinion, and he was not averse to military ventures to weld the nation together. Simultaneously, he imposed measures that were unpopular with a large part of the public.

One such measure was the law enacted in 1825 known as the *milliard aux émigrés*. The blow with the fan by the dey of Algiers in 1827 offered him the opportunity of a *casus belli*, which he seized. In the two months that followed, the blockade of the port of Algiers was decided and implemented, after the dey of Algiers had rejected the proposed ultimatum of surrender in June.

The blockade lasted two years. The attempts by Algerians to leave the port were curtailed by the French navy. In 1829, while the French were considering lifting the blockade, two serious incidents exacerbated the situation: the crew of a French sloop was decapitated in Kabylia, and the ship *La Provence*, which had several parliamentarians aboard to negotiate the lifting of the blockade, was fired upon by the Algiers guns in July. The squadron did not respond, but the affair sealed the decision to invade, particularly given that the new Polignac government was in dire straits. A military venture was deemed appropriate. The plan of conquering the regency, imagined by Napoleon in 1808, was unpacked. The expedition, after having received a positive vote by the government in Paris, was set up in Toulon during the winter and spring, according to Boutin's plan, under the leadership of the minister of war Louis de Bourmont.

France Landed in Algeria for Domestic Political Reasons, but Stayed there for Military Reasons

During the winter and spring of 1830, an armada reminiscent of that of 1798 for the Egyptian campaign was set up in the port of Toulon. It included 103 military vessels and more than 350 transport ships, which were to carry 37,000 soldiers, their escorts, horses, weapons and ammunition, and supplies. The destination was the bay of Sidi Ferruch, 30 kilometers west of Algiers. After setting sail from Toulon on May 25, the fleet landed on June 14, 1830. In Algiers, the news prompted the dey to urgently establish a contingent of troops combining the remaining janissaries and their deputies, coming from makhzen tribes, as well as the troops sent by the beys from the interior. This army, under the command of Agha Ibrahim, comprised 30,000 to 50,000 men. The force was less well trained in combat and less coordinated than Bourmont's army, led by a staff that had fought in Spain and on various European fronts during the time of the empire.

The campaign progressed quickly. After the first victory at Staoueli on June 19, 1830, Algiers was captured and surrendered on July 5. At ten in the morning, Bourmont's army marched into the city and took possession of the forts: Algiers was opened for the first time since Charles V. The surrender agreement assured the safety and respect not only for the dey's family and his house but also for the women of Algiers, as well as the preservation of economic activities and the "free exercise of the Mohammedan religion." However, already on July 10, the dey and his entourage were taken to Europe, with 1,300 janissaries being sent back to "Constantinople." In the end, 10,000 Turks were brought back to Greece on French ships, and the archives of the regency were burned. While the decision to remain in Africa had not been made, Ottoman power was effectively decapitated.

News of the capture of Algiers reached Paris on July 9, 1830, but it was too late to save the regime, which had just lost the parliamentary elections. On July 25, 1830, Polignac attempted a coup against the Chamber of Deputies and the press, triggering an uprising in Paris. The Glorious Three (Les Trois Glorieuses) took place in Paris on July 27, 28, and 29. The Restoration regime collapsed, making way for the July monarchy. Louis-Philippe of the House of Orléans became the new head of state. He inherited the problems surrounding Algiers, with which he did not know what to do because no plan had been drawn up. Not being a priority for the regime, a decision was not taken before 1834.

Shortly after assuming his position as commander of Algiers, General Bourmont was dismissed due to his loyalty to the Bourbons, replaced by General Bertrand Clauzel on August 12, 1830, who held the post for six months. No decision was made on the status of the occupied territories in Africa, as Paris had other and more pressing matters to deal with. The army thus had a free hand in implementing military, coercive, and political

initiatives that characterized this “period of anarchy.”⁹ This partial occupation lasted four years. Thus, two underlying aspects of French Algeria emerged: the omnipotence of the army, on the one hand, and the autonomy of local decision-making, on the other hand.

The military conquered Dar es-Sultan, including the Mitidja region, which, despite resisting the French army, rejected the offers of help from the confederation leader Ben Zanoun. Indeed, it was in the nature of the makhzen tribes to enlist in the successors of the Turks, even if they were Christians. Some officers attempted to occupy the Titteri capital, Médéa, which they had devastated in November 1830 before turning back. Damrémont captured the port of Oran in the west in January 1831 and placed a dey there, while others occupied the port of Bône in the east in April 1832. The coast was only partially occupied for several years, while the sultan of Morocco occupied Tlemcen and Mascara.¹⁰

For the merchants of Marseille, this expedition and then the partial occupation were an opportunity to make large profits, since their competitors in Algeria had disappeared and since the army was demanding many supplies. In the same way, for the archbishop of Marseille, Algeria immediately appeared as a territory for missionary work to convert the Muslim locals, although this aspect did not concern the army. The latter in turn saw a land of conquest and opportunities to revive the glory of arms. Eventually, all these interests presented Paris with a *fait accompli*. One example is the annual credit allocations for Algeria in the form of civil service and military, which provoked a heated debate in the Chamber of Deputies, with many parliamentarians wanting to reduce the requests as they were considered too expensive.

The conquest of Algeria is inseparable from the military history of France. To understand the real causes of the conquest of Algeria, one should not look for causes that have disappeared (the privateering), have been anticipated (the search for a new market), or have been anecdotal (the fan blow by the dey of Algiers to the French consul in 1827). All this may explain the blockade and the expedition of Algiers but not the installation of a colony or the conquest of the country. The causes are fundamentally rooted in nationalism and military aspirations.

The French army that remained in 1830 was led by former officers of Bonaparte. Adorned with military glory and filled with nostalgia, these officers had been unemployed for 15 years. They knew that military adventures in Europe were impossible because they would result in the occupation of France again. They dreamed of rebuilding an empire, like England had by acquiring Louisiana, Canada, and India at the expense

9 Charles-André Julien and Charles-Robert Ageron, *Histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine. La conquête et les débuts de la colonisation 1827–1871* [History of Contemporary Algeria: The Conquest and the Beginning of Colonization 1827–1871], vol. 1 (Paris: PUF, 1964).

10 Colette Zytynicki, *La Conquête. Comment les Français ont pris possession de l'Algérie (1830–1848)* [The Conquest: How the French Took Possession of Algeria (1830–1848)] (Paris: Tallandier, 2022).

of France in 1763. In addition, the monarchy of Charles X, in dire straits, wanted to invigorate its army and revive its military glory in order to escape its looming political crisis. This convergence of interests led to the “conquest of Africa,” with Charles X initiating the undertaking. The army, after its victory in 1830, did not let go of its prey. Bonaparte’s former officers took advantage of the situation to renew the war, which they led from 1830 to 1847. A “New France” was reborn, succeeding the American losses in 1763.

Conclusion

The French landing in Algeria and the ensuing settlement marked a fundamental turning point in the history of the former Regency of Algiers, renamed “Algeria” by the French in 1839. The chapter of the Ottoman Regency of Algiers was definitively closed in 1830, with one form of colonization being replaced by another. French Algeria was officially born in 1848, at the end of a long phase of conquest that began in 1830 and was officially declared in 1834. For France, Algeria became the means to rebuild its army and to wage a war that was forbidden in Europe. The British accepted such a move as this war in Africa did not threaten their interests in India. France thus had *carte blanche* in Africa, a card it would use to conquer the entire northern part of the continent, until its European neighbors awoke and began their own invasions in the 1880s.

But even if Algeria was the means for France to revive the colonial project of New France in Africa, the country devoted limited resources to these operations, which were never undertaken at a national scale. Algeria was colonized rather accidentally, driven primarily by the will of the army. The new colony never attracted many French immigrants or much capital and public funds. A minimal colonization was undertaken, which never diverted Paris from European and world issues. Most of the work was done in the north, with Algeria remaining a poor agricultural colony. The inhabitants of Algeria, Arabs and Berbers, were not expelled like the native Americans of North America. They remained in their settlements but seem to have been forgotten after the conquest was complete. In Algeria, an overseas and provincial France developed that had little interest in the natives living there. They were encouraged to be forgotten and to live on their own, with the exception of the minority who stayed in the cities in the north.

Thus, French Algeria, celebrated in Paris by all French leaders from 1848 to 1958 (when Charles de Gaulle returned to power), was a strange political, institutional, and economic construction. Officially, it was a French region among others, similar to Brittany or Normandy, populated by French people and integrated into the laws, territory, and economy of France. However, the vast majority of the inhabitants of this “colony” (a term that was never abandoned) were French without benefiting from the political rights attached to citizenship, which was the political and legal pillar of

the system inherited from the French Revolution. Like French women until 1945, Algerians could not vote and were a political minority; however, there was no real political prospect of assimilation for them because they were very much the majority in Algeria. Their accession to political equality would mean the end of this provisional and unfinished construction of French Algeria, which the French citizens of Algeria (who called themselves “Algerians”) refused to allow to pass by obstructing such a status change through their representatives in Paris. In this way, the drama of the Algerian War was a distant but inexorable legacy of the nineteenth century.

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Arab France from Revolution to Empire

The first substantial modern migration from the Middle East and North Africa, a group of several hundred men, women, and children from Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Libya, and the Sudan, disembarked in France not simply as foreign migrants or refugees; they were a manifestation of the interlocking relationships between France and the wider world in the revolutionary age. Their arrival in 1801–02 coincided with the “end” of the French Revolution, a coordinated series of imperial actions that worked to solidify the coup d'état led by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1799–1800. In February 1801, the Austrian emperor traded Belgium and parts of Germany and Italy for peace in the Treaty of Lunéville. In July, the Concordat of 1801 restored the institutional dominance of the Catholic Church in France. In March 1802, the Treaty of Amiens effectively sealed French domination over the continent for the next decade. In the following months, white émigrés who had fled the French Revolution were allowed to return, while emancipated blacks were returned to slavery by force, as the 1794 abolition was revoked. The last pretense of a democratic republic ended with the restoration of hereditary rule, as the Tribunat declared Bonaparte first consul for life, amending the constitution to enshrine the succession of his future male progeny.¹

The arrival of the “Egyptian refugees,” as they would later be known, speaks to the wider global frame of this crucial moment. Although long excluded from the French historical narrative except as an exotic footnote, they have much to say about the processes that formed France as a polity interconnected with Europe, the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, and beyond. This chapter sets out to trace the intersecting lines that produced this expatriation, together with what it can tell us about the revolutionary age and its imperial sequels. The trajectory of these people offers a different lens on the developments of the French Revolution, the Napoleonic empire, and the Restoration and of modern France more generally. It suggests that the conception of the French nation-state as the primary outcome of the revolution is at best partial and insufficient and that the strengthening of empires—both contiguous and colonial—was

1 See Isser Woloch, *Napoleon and His Collaborators: The Making of a Dictatorship* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001); Howard G. Brown, *Ending the French Revolution: Violence, Justice, and Repression from the Terror to Napoleon* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007); Yves Bénéot and Marcel Dorigny, eds., *Rétablissement de l'esclavage dans les colonies françaises, 1802: ruptures et continuités de la politique coloniale française (1800–1830) aux origines d'Haïti* [Restoration of Slavery in the French Colonies, 1802: Ruptures and Continuities of the French Colonial Policy (1800–1830) at the Origins of Haiti] (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2003).

central to shutting down revolutionary claims that threatened the underpinnings of the European order. At the same time, it maps France not from above as a territorial, cultural, or sovereign unit but from below as a concentration of intersecting networks running outward in multiple directions.

Arab France in the sense of the project of an exogenous group seeking to establish themselves in the territory is one among many patterns of connection, interaction, correspondence, and mobility in this period. It was dominated by the commonality of the Arabic language and the predominance of Palestinian Christians in a larger group that came to be composed of Copts, Egyptian Muslims, Algerian Jews, formerly enslaved people from the Sudan and other parts of Africa, and even people of color from the Caribbean—administratively relegated to what has become known as the “Depot of Egyptian Refugees” in Marseille. At the same time, this is just as much a story of disconnection in a period where political polarization and war on a global scale hardened frontiers, intensified the policing of identity, and sent millions into political exile.² It is also a story of complex, overlapping racial and religious categories employed by the central state, by local officials and social groups, and by the “refugees” themselves.

Arab France overlaps and interconnects with other configurations, whether Muslim France, Black France, or Jewish France.³ It is plural, both in this composition from multiple networks and in the emergence of new iterations at different moments, from the medieval to the colonial and postcolonial. Arab France played an important role in the construction of a pan-Arab cultural identity transcending regional and religious differences that became dominant during the twentieth century and reemerged in new ways in the “Arab revolutions” of 2011 and their sequels.

The French Revolution and Islam

That the migration of a substantial population from the further shores of the Mediterranean should be a consequence of the French Revolution is an indication that the revolution was never simply “French.” In one sense, this is true of all revolutions: the conditions in which they occur are never contained strictly within the arbitrary frontiers

2 See Vincent Denis, *Une histoire de l'identité* [A Story of Identity] (Seyssel: Champ Vallon et Société des études robespierristes, 2008); Friedemann Pestel, “French Revolution and Migration after 1789,” *European History Online* (2017), <http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/europe-on-the-road/political-migration-exile/friedemann-pestel-french-revolution-and-migration-after-1789>.

3 The viciously antisemitic use of “la France juive” in the nineteenth century should not prevent us from recognizing the multiple Jewish networks—Sephardi, Ashkenazi, religious, and secular—that have been integral to the shaping of modern France. Trica Danielle Keaton, T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, and Tyler Stovall, eds., *Black France / France Noire: The History and Politics of Blackness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).

of a state, and their resonances and ramifications may set off uprisings elsewhere or spark nervous regimes to crack down. The ideas and symbols they generate often travel, particularly as large-scale political upheaval leads individuals and groups to flee and others to join the revolutionary cause. This was all the more the case for France—an empire with footholds on four continents and trading networks across the globe, a cultural hegemon in Europe and a major military power.

But it is also the consequence of the way in which the revolution itself was conceived from the first as transnational, global, and universal rather than simply “French.” Revolutionaries fully expected the transformation they put in place to exceed the bounds of France. If, as David Armitage suggests, the American Declaration of Independence was conceived in the consciousness of a kind of “world opinion,” and not only in regard to American posterity; the legislators of the United States did not imagine themselves as drawing up a model for all humans.⁴ Indeed, they sought primarily to detach themselves from a spreading global power. In contrast, French revolutionaries were explicit from the first that they were addressing the human race, and the rights “of man” that they formulated sat alongside those of the citizen to endure this universality. They spoke not only of the New World but also of Europe more broadly, along with Asia, and Africa: one of the symbols of this universality was a group of figures incarnating these four regions, dancing merrily around a liberty tree. The African was usually dressed in the loincloth of a slave, the American in the costume of the “savage,” and the European in a hat. The fourth figure, Asia, was conceived implicitly as Muslim, wearing the turban characteristic of early modern Islamic dress.

The Muslim world of the eighteenth century straddled the eastern and southern edges of Europe: it was indeed through the Islamic world that the French Revolution could reach Asia and Africa. In this sense, Muslims were a key component of the revolution’s global vocation. In the earliest stages of the revolution, the aristocratic critique of monarchical absolutism through the distorting mirror of “oriental despotism” continued to exert a powerful sway.⁵ Yet Muslims, as we have seen, were prominent in the major European and world crises of the 1780s, in which France was expected to play the role carved out by its interference to support the American Revolution.

In 1787, Austria joined Russia to attack the Ottoman Empire in the hope of carving up its European territories between them: the bookseller Siméon-Prosper Hardy wrote in his journal that all of Paris had “turned Turk”—so great was the general sympathy for the Ottomans, whom many saw as unjustly abandoned by France. It was whispered that France’s fiscal crisis was exacerbated by Marie-Antoinette, who, in addition to profligate spending, had convinced her husband to divert French funds to her brother,

4 David Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

5 Thomas Kaiser, “‘The Terrible Turk...’ The Evil Empire? The Debate on Turkish Despotism in Eighteenth-Century French Political Culture,” *The Journal of Modern History* 72 (2000): 6–34.

the Austrian emperor, in his war against Muslims. It was an open secret that a well-known figure at court, Ishak Bey, had been sent to France to seek French assistance in placing the young prince Selim on the throne, thereby averting a disastrous collapse. The arrival in 1788 of an embassy sent by the leading Muslim rebel in India, Tipu Sultan, fruitlessly seeking French assistance against British expansion (and reputedly offering large sums of money in return for armaments), thrust these questions further to the forefront of public opinion. The monarchy's failure to renew treaties with North African states threatened shipping and exacerbated the subsistence crisis, as Jacques Necker revealed in his *Compte-Rendu*, a report for King Louis XVI.

Thus, on the brink of revolution, Muslims could incarnate both the tyranny and the incompetence of the monarchy. It is characteristic of the dynamics of that early period that some liberal aristocratic writers already sought to present Muslims differently, deploying the emotional register of sentimental fraternity that played an important role as a foundation of revolutionary "feeling."⁶ These emotions were not only inchoately universalist but also political in specific ways. Muslims, along with Jews, had already been deployed as figures of religious diversity who could dilute the bitter taste of Catholic-Protestant civil enmity.⁷ Yet Jews presented their own complex problems: although only a tiny fraction of France's population, they counted very wealthy and well-integrated Sephardi groups in the west of France and larger communities in the east, who were already violently targeted in the peasant uprisings in the summer of 1789 known as the Great Fear. As revolutionaries turned to the nationalization of Church properties to resolve the state's crippling debt, the "universalizing" role of Muslims became significant in the way that it helped to recontextualize these difficult measures as a world-historical drama. On December 24, 1789, Muslims were made eligible as "non-Catholics" for all the rights of French citizens, even as Jews were suspended from these rights due to fears of popular violence fanned by deputies from Alsace.

By luck or design, the German-born intellectual of Dutch origin Jean-Baptiste de Cloots (later known as Anacharsis Cloots), author of a long treatise that employed Muslims to parody the claims of the Catholic Enlightenment, featured several Muslims, Arabs, and other "orientals" in his deputation to the National Assembly in June 1790, along with a large group of other "foreigners," including various Europeans, "Americans," and people of color. The Arab member of the deputation, Denis Chawich, even advanced to the tribune to deliver a speech to the assembled deputies. The rapturous enthusiasm inspired by this sight of the "four corners" of the world made flesh set the scene for

6 William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Sophia Rosenfeld, "Thinking about Feeling, 1789–1799," *French Historical Studies* 32 (2009): 697–706. This is discussed in greater detail in chapter 1 of Ian Collier, *Muslims and Citizens: The French Revolution and Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020).

7 See, e.g., Chrétien Guillaume Lamoignon de Malesherbes, "Mémoire sur le mariage des protestans" [Essay on Protestant Marriage], Paris 1785.

the patriot party to propose the abolition of noble titles. If the night of August 4, 1789 had struck a blow in eliminating or redeeming most of the “feudal” taxes paid to the French nobility, the night of June 19, 1790 delivered the coup de grâce in eliminating their distinction, which, as the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen declared, would henceforth be based only on “social utility.”

Thus, Muslims became deeply entangled with the notion of revolutionary universality, even as their actual presence in the French Revolution remained largely invisible or untraceable. When refractory Catholics (those who refused to accept the constitutional restructuring of the church) protested against revolutionary measures, they conjured visions of infidel Muslims and Jews voting, appointing religious personnel, and building mosques and synagogues in nationalized church buildings. Their opponents, rather than dismissing the conception that Muslims would become part of France’s social and religious environment, doubled down on the insistence that births, deaths, and marriages be taken out of the hands of Catholic clergy, who could not serve the full diversity of religions in France.

That politicization of religion continued apace into the more radical phase of the revolution, as Jacobins themselves came into conflict over what should replace the Catholic Church, a mainstay of French life for a millennium. Some, like Cloots (who had been awarded French citizenship and elected as a deputy), pushed for the absolute destruction of all religion: not only Christianity but also Judaism, Islam, and all other “cults” (although often substituting them with a cult of nature). Others, like Maximilien Robespierre, insisted on the more conservative approach of sponsoring a rationalist cult of the “supreme being,” and many of the key dechristianizing radicals found themselves at the mercy of the guillotine. This civic deism, celebrated in a national festival on June 8, 1794, was understood by many to bear some resemblance to Islam, long conceived (inexactly) as purely monotheistic.⁸ Thus, during the most radical phase of revolutionary transformation, Islam and Muslims were swept up into the internal politics of religion in France.

The one thing on which revolutionaries seemed to agree was that Muslims were particularly susceptible to the new ideas because of both their similarities and their differences from Europeans in terms of social and religious institutions: lacking a land-holding nobility of blood, any equivalent to the Catholic Church, or family relations to the French monarchy, but possessing a literate and civilized culture, cognate conceptions of brotherhood, and even the precedent of “revolutions” that had taken place in Muslim

8 Islam has multiple forms, in which intermediaries, saints, martyrs, and others play crucial roles, and Islamic Law (shari’a) constitutes a far greater dimension than early modern Europeans credited. However, the contemporaneous Wahhabi movement did assert a militant, purist monotheism. See Giovanni Bonacina, *The Wahhabis Seen through European Eyes (1772–1830)* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

politics during the eighteenth century.⁹ Yet they disagreed on what that receptiveness meant in practical terms. The Girondins associated with the group around Jacques Pierre Brissot, Jean-Marie Roland, and other deputies, who rose to influence in 1791 and 1792, sought to encourage fellow peoples to rise up against their tyrants. But in the context of the war that the Girondins launched against Austria in the spring of 1792, followed by war with Britain in early 1793, the newly declared republic found itself increasingly isolated: the sole major power that remained neutral, even favorable, to France by 1794 was the Ottoman Empire, along with the North African states under its aegis. Robespierre, the most influential figure after the fall of the Girondins, notably opposed the war—or any project of spreading the French Revolution by force—and insisted on the necessity to solve the problems in France before attempting to intervene beyond its borders. He denounced the enthusiasm for “revolutionizing” Muslims as a plot to turn the Ottoman Empire against France. With the fall of Robespierre in the revolutionary month of Thermidor (July 1794), many of the ideas and policies of the disgraced Girondins returned to the fore, including the militant universalism that Robespierre had vehemently opposed, which would carry the republic outward beyond France’s borders.

A generation of French children was educated in these ideas. On 10 Frimaire, year II (November 30, 1793), a deputation of “children of the sansculottes” from the Parisian section of Arcis declared to the National Convention that they welcomed “Jews or Muslims or Protestants” to their school: “We do not bother them with the doctrine of a god they despise; we only ask them if they are, or want to become, patriots.”¹⁰ Some of these young men might have been old enough to join the army that departed for Egypt four years later. The commander of that ill-fated expedition himself spent considerable time in the early years of the French Revolution developing his ideas about the Muslim world: one of his early literary forays was a short story entitled “The Prophetic Mask,” drawn from Abbé Marigny’s *History of the Arabs*. His choice to land 40,000 French troops on the shores of Alexandria and to invade and conquer a province of an empire that remained neutral and even supportive of France was, in important ways, a legacy of these revolutionary conceptions about Islam and the Muslim world.

9 Works on the “revolutions of Persia” were published throughout the eighteenth century, and the father of the revolutionaries André and Marie-Joseph Chénier, Louis de Chénier, published Louis de Chénier, *Révolutions de l’empire ottoman* (Paris: Chez l’auteur, 1789).

10 M. J. Mavidal and M. E. Laurent, eds., *Archives parlementaires de 1787 à 1860* [Parliamentary Archives from 1787 to 1860], 81 vols. (Paris: P. Dupont, 1875–1889) (henceforth AP), vol. 80: 403.

The Global Context of the French Conquest of Egypt

The decision to invade Egypt in 1798 appears an almost criminally foolish strategy. Ostensibly paired as the second “wing” of an attack on Britain, it is very difficult to see the concrete plan for linking these roughly simultaneous attacks, and the lack of coordination across the two doomed both to failure. There were certainly those in the Directory who welcomed a potential end to the instability of the French Revolution, even if it meant defeat. At the same time, the Egyptian campaign was confusedly inscribed across a series of mutually contradictory conceptions: the global extension of the republic and the defense of revolutionary values, the support of Indian resistance against British colonialism and the acquisition of new French colonies, and the punishment of the arrogance of the Mamluks and the personal glorification of Bonaparte. On the surface, the campaign appeared to continue an earlier logic of isonomic revolutionary expansion, but ultimately it served as a rupture, providing the “laboratory” for a new kind of Napoleonic empire that synthesized revolutionary modernism with ancien régime extractive colonialism. Egypt was not the outlier but the heart of the Napoleonic empire, and the existence of the “Egyptian” emigration in France was in fundamental ways a corollary of that centrality.

As early as 1789, with the rapid territorial reorganization transforming the patchwork of provinces agglomerated over centuries into a centralized state, new territories were being added: beginning with Corsica, which became “French” in 1789,¹¹ and continuing to the papal territory of Avignon in 1791, Savoy and Nice in 1792, and overseas colonies in 1794–95.¹² This expansion cannot be understood as a swerve toward empire, or, as British historians once argued, as the continuity of ancien régime foreign policy. Nor can it be considered as the natural outcome of an age of revolutions that were imperial in essence, as Jeremy Adelman suggests.¹³ The logics of the French Revolution profoundly disrupted the arrangements on which early modern European colonial empires were constructed—slave labor, corporate monopoly, and a growing noble-

11 Jean Defranceschi, *La Corse française: 30 novembre 1789–15 juin 1794* [French Corsica: November 30, 1789–June 15, 1794] (Paris: Société des études robespierristes, 1980).

12 Peter Sahlins, “Natural Frontiers Revisited: France’s Boundaries since the Seventeenth Century,” *American Historical Review* 95 (1990): 1423–1451; Bernard Gainot, “Métropole/Colonies: Projets constitutionnels et rapports de forces 1798–1802” [Metropolis/Colonies: Constitutional Projects and Balance of Power 1798–1802], in *Rétablissement de l’esclavage dans les colonies françaises, 1802. Ruptures et continuités de la politique coloniale française, 1800–1830: aux origines d’Haïti*, eds. Yves Bénot and Marcel Dorigny (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2003); Miranda Spieler, “The Legal Structure of Colonial Rule during the French Revolution,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 66 (2009): 365–408.

13 Jeremy Adelman, “An Age of Imperial Revolutions,” *American Historical Review* 113, no. 2 (2008): 319–340; Manuel Covo and Megan Maruschke, “The French Revolution as an Imperial Revolution,” *French Historical Studies* 44, no. 3 (August 2021): 371–397.

bourgeois synthesis—and opened up a chaotic field of competing imperial and anti-imperial models.

Equally, the logics tore through the European balance of contiguous land empire, energizing irredentist movements, undermining religious institutions, and promoting insurgency against established landowning elites. Yet those empires struck back in shattering ways: overrunning revolutionary Brabant in 1790 and Liège in 1791, invading France and its colonies in 1793, partitioning Poland in 1794, and crushing the resistance of the enslaved people in Curaçao in 1795 and by the Society of United Irishmen in 1798. The French Revolution was in itself neither imperial nor anti-imperial: it contained the germs of new resistances and new forms of empire. Its centrifugal forces encouraged the insurgency of peoples against the authority of “tyrants,” yet in France itself the very notion of “the people” worked against claims to distribution of sovereignty, as shown by the brutal extinction of insurrections in the Vendée, in Lyon, or in Marseille. The republic was a strange creature: “one and indivisible” yet expanding by the implacable logic of universalism, as endangered “patriots” in neighboring lands pricked French pride for support.

Bonaparte’s own experience speaks to these complexities. Growing up as a fierce Corsican patriot, he reluctantly received his military training at the hands of his French oppressor: yet with the French Revolution, he turned against the irredentist (and pro-British) nationalism of his Corsican compatriots, and his family was forced to flee to Marseille as refugees in 1793. As Michael Broers suggests, revolutionary ideology sparked older conflicts between outward-facing coastal societies and the intense, clan-based loyalties of the inland.¹⁴ Bonaparte’s emerging imperial vision was Mediterranean rather than Atlantic: he was easy prey to the long-held view that the Ottoman Empire was disintegrating and that France’s division of the spoils would be Egypt.¹⁵ Yet he was also deeply imprinted by Enlightenment conceptions about Islam, retooled in important ways by the role that Muslims came to play in the revolutionary imagination.

In 1798, when General Bonaparte led some 40,000 French troops to land in Egypt, French territory already stretched eastward into Belgium and as far as the Rhine in Germany. In the south, French troops occupied Piedmont and Tuscany and annexed the Ionian islands off the coast of Greece as French departments. The French-sponsored “sister republics” stretched from the Netherlands in the north to an unbroken line running from Switzerland to the toe of Italy, but this isonomic arrangement was already giving way to the protoimperial conception of the *Grande Nation*—Henry Laurens suggests that Muslim elites in the Ionian islands contributed to Bonaparte’s first use

14 Michael Broers, *The Napoleonic Mediterranean: Enlightenment, Revolution, and Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co., 2016), 6–7.

15 Henry Laurens, *Les Origines intellectuelles de l'Expédition d'Égypte: l'Orientalisme islamisant en France (1698–1798)* [The Intellectual Origins of the Egyptian Expedition: Islamizing Orientalism in France (1698–1798)] (Istanbul: Editions Isis, 1987).

of this idea.¹⁶ Certainly, it was during this time that Bonaparte began to correspond with Talleyrand, the former constitutional bishop now turned foreign minister, who was pushing a new colonial policy to the Directory.

Talleyrand's *Essai sur les avantages à retirer de colonies nouvelles dans les circonstances présentes* (Essay on the Advantages to be Derived from New Colonies under Present Circumstances) in 1797 suggested that France had long planned to colonize Egypt in preparation for a future separation from the American colonies. Talleyrand followed up with another memorandum more fully catering to revolutionary preconceptions about the Muslim world.¹⁷ He invoked multiple and contradictory justifications for the invasion: colonization, subjugating the ruling Mamluks to assist the Ottoman sultan, extending the republic, responding to complaints of ill-treatment by French merchants in Egypt, chasing the British out of India, and reviving French commerce in the Levant and North Africa. Bonaparte later annotated this report on his return to France, highlighting its exaggerations and falsehoods: yet in 1798, still a young general among others in the revolutionary army, he chose not to question any of these assertions and indeed encouraged these speculations, adding to them his own fantasies of personal glory that would also glorify the republic. Talleyrand had personally assured Bonaparte that he would travel to Constantinople to obtain the sultan's permission for France's action against the rebellious Mamluk rulers in Egypt. However, it is clear that he had no intention whatsoever of doing so and knew well that this action would provoke the wrath of this important neutral power, which had stoutly refused to join the coalition against France.

In fundamental ways, the invasion of Egypt followed a logic that had emerged out of revolutionary universalism, yet Talleyrand adroitly used it to achieve several key outcomes. Firstly, sending a vast segment of the revolutionary army (and its most popular general) to other side of the Mediterranean, where they were stranded by the obvious naval superiority of Britain, weakened the republicans in the Directory. Adding the Ottomans to the coalition against France, something this action was certain to provoke, further added to the crisis of the revolutionary regime. Should France hold onto Egypt by force, the principles of the republic would be fatally weakened, and if Egypt was lost, the Directory would move further into crisis, precipitating a change of government—which is precisely what took place in 1799, after Bonaparte left his army stranded in Egypt, dodged the blockade in a small boat to return to France, and seized power in the coup of Brumaire.

Through the force of propaganda, Bonaparte would refashion the defeat in Egypt into a glorious victory, even transforming the notorious story of his decision to poison

16 Henry Laurens, *Orientales* [Oriental] (Paris: CNRS éditions, 2007), 90.

17 Jacques-Pierre La Jonquière, "Rapport au Directoire exécutif, Paris, 25 pluviôse an VI" [Report to the Executive Board, Paris, February 13, 1798], *L'Expédition d'Égypte*, vol. 1: 154–168.

his plague-ridden soldiers before retreating from Palestine into a vast painted image showing him bravely touching the infected bodies, as though wielding the power to heal them.¹⁸ In effect, however, the occupation of Egypt was a kind of laboratory—not only in the scientific sense, as Nicole and Jean Dhombres recognize, but also in terms of Napoleonic rule.¹⁹ The recruitment of hundreds of engineers, scientists, draftsmen, and medical personnel was central to Bonaparte's conception of the expedition—and indeed the framing of it as an “expedition” rather than an invasion—and served to rehabilitate it as a great victory of “modernity” in a once glorious but now backward land. These experts were not the heralds of the Orientalism that Edward Said imagined; almost none of them had any training at all in the languages, religions, or histories of Egypt or the wider “Orient.”²⁰ Indeed, it was the lack of such expertise that compelled the French occupiers to recruit a number of Arabic-speaking intellectuals, including Mikhail Sabbagh, Eliouss Bocthor, Gabriel Taouil, and Rufa'il Zakhur, who would play an important role in the emigration. These men would join the Napoleonic elite, albeit in a more limited role than the other *Égyptiens*, as the “old boys from Egypt” were known. As Louis Bergeron noted, these companions of Bonaparte's first grand foray into civil rule would become the inner circle of Bonaparte's imperial ruling elite, providing one-third of prefects and leading ministries, military administrations, and cultural institutions.²¹ This was a “meritocracy” in which merit was largely determined by loyalty and proximity to Bonaparte himself.

The Dynamics of Occupation and the Genesis of the Emigration

When the French landed in Egypt, they carried with them Arabic printing presses looted from Rome, where they had been used to manufacture materials for Christian proselytism (Propaganda Fide). Bonaparte used them instead to produce proclamations and orders to the Egyptian people, alternately cajoling and threatening them in phrases that attempted to mimic the Qur'anic style but must have appeared bizarre and almost parodic to its Muslim readers. On multiple occasions, Bonaparte proclaimed that the French were Muslims, and better Muslims than the Mamluks (many of whom were themselves not born Muslims but converted as slaves). Bonaparte would later claim that he entered Egypt with a conscious policy to “govern men in the way the majority wish

18 Antoine-Jean Gros, *Bonaparte visitant les pestiférés de Jaffa (11 mars 1799)* [Bonaparte Visiting the Plague House at Jaffa (March 11, 1799)], 1804, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

19 Nicole Dhombres and Jean Dhombres, *Naissance d'un nouveau pouvoir: Sciences et savants en France (1793–1824)* [Birth of a New Power: Sciences and Scholars in France (1793–1824)] (Paris: Payot, 1989).

20 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

21 Louis Bergeron, *France Under Napoleon*, trans. R. R. Palmer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 53.

to be governed” and in this sense to have “become Muslim” in order to govern Egypt, in the same way that he had “become Catholic” in order to finish the war in the Vendée or “become ultramontanist” in order to placate Italian priests. This claim appears dubious even at face value because the Bonaparte family *was*, to all intents and purposes, Catholic and ultramontanist.²² Bonaparte’s “Islamic policy” was not really a policy at all but a failing attempt to apply haphazard literary conceptions of Islam to an actual Muslim society. Juan Cole sees in this situation a kind of “creolization” that characterized the three-year occupation as French officers converted formally to Islam, adopted local customs, and married or consorted with local women.²³ As Jacques-Olivier Boudon suggests, however, we must recognize the physical and sexual violence that was an intimate part of this hybridity.²⁴ Intersecting conceptions around religion, color, race, and gender functioned across a system profoundly marked by multiple and overlapping slave trades.

The French entered a social structure in which Muslims, Christians of various confessions, and Jews all lived together in a system governed by the Qur’anic exhortation to toleration on the basis of differentiated rights and obligations. Non-Muslims could not aspire to high ranks or great intellectual achievement, which was associated with the great institutions of Islamic learning like the Al-Azhar mosque, whose *ulama* (clerics) were a powerful force in society. Non-Muslims could not ride horses, carry swords, or wear certain colors and were forbidden from fighting in the army. To repay the protection offered to them by the state, they were subject to special taxes. At the same time, the domination of power by Muslim households encouraged rulers to place religious minorities in positions of trust, as they were not linked to rival families. The Copts, long-established Egyptian Christians, took key roles in the financial administration in Cairo, while the more recently arrived “Syrian” Christians, who were Uniate Catholics, displaced Jews to take over the lucrative positions of customs in the ports.²⁵

It seems clear that Bonaparte believed at first that he would primarily rule through the Muslim majority, who would embrace him as a new leader. An early experiment in assuming Islamic dress was rapidly abandoned as a result of the derision it inspired

22 This phrase, reported by Roederer, dates from 1800 and emerged in the context of the question of reestablishing slavery (Pierre-Louis Roederer, *Autour de Bonaparte: Journal du comte P.-L. Roederer, ministre et conseiller d'état* [Around Bonaparte: Diary of Count P.-L. Roederer, Minister and State Councilor] (Paris: H. Daragon, 1909), 16).

23 Juan Cole, “Playing Muslim: Bonaparte’s Army of the Orient and Euro-Muslim Creolization,” in *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, c. 1760–1840*, eds. David Armitage and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 125–143.

24 Jacques-Olivier Boudon, *La Campagne d'Égypte* [The Egyptian Campaign] (Paris: Bêlin, 2018).

25 Nasir Ahmad Ibrahim, “Muqawama tahta as-satah: Al-mubashirun al-aqbat wa-l-hamlat al-faransiyya” [Resistance under Its Foundations: Coptic Missionaries and the French Campaigns], in *Mi'ata 'am 'ala-l-hamlat al-faransiyya (ru'iyya masriyya)*, ed. Nasser Ahmed Ibrahim (Cairo: Maktabat ad-Dar al-'Arabiyyat al'Kitab, 2008), 56–106.

among his own officers, and instead he sought to require all Muslim notables serving in the new administration to wear tricolor sashes and cockades. He demanded the French remain dutiful and respectful toward Islam, claiming they were thus better Muslims than the Mamluks who had ruled Egypt for centuries. Historians have confused the issue by taking on faith later assertions that Bonaparte won widespread admiration from the Egyptians, who called him “Sultan el-Kebir” (the Great Sultan)—a highly improbable assertion for which no source is provided and which appears to have arisen from satirical British accounts. Some Muslim notables certainly took the opportunity to cozy up to the new regime. For example, Sheikh El-Bekri joined the governing *diwan* (council) appointed by Bonaparte and offered the general both his daughter in marriage and a teenage Mamluk of Armenian origin as a personal servant: in return, he was restored to the prestigious role of *naqib al-ashraf* (head of the descendants of the prophet Muhammad’s family).²⁶ But many of the leading Muslim clerics remained in close connection to the ousted Mamluks, who were by no means the sybaritic foreign caste that Bonaparte claimed them to be.

Muslim resistance continued to foment below the surface, fueling the discontent of the people over taxation and the requisition of livestock and transport animals. In October 1798, the people of Cairo revolted en masse against the occupiers, straining the French defenses. The uprising was ultimately crushed with artillery shelling, and the remaining rebels massacred in the great mosque of Al-Azhar, where they had taken refuge. The sacred precincts and copies of the Qur’an were defiled, leaving deep resentment among the Muslim population and attracting fighters from the Maghreb, Syria, and the Arabian Peninsula to the defense of Islam. Viewing the French as foreign Christian usurpers, the Muslim rebels in Cairo also attacked the Greek Orthodox and Syrian Christian quarters of the city.

From their first battles, the French had begun to recruit turncoats, incorporating in their ranks a number of Mamluk fighters left behind after the rapid defeat of their once feared army. Now the disaffected Christians joined the French, attracted by the ideology of equality. With the destruction of the French fleet at Aboukir Bay, Bonaparte developed a highly improbably strategy of marching on Constantinople but found his army tied down by dearth and disease in Palestine. Local Christians in the region of Acre joined in the failed attempt to defeat the much-reviled Ottoman governor Ahmad Djazzar Pasha and were compelled to flee en masse to Cairo with the French army. Soon after his army’s return to Egypt, Bonaparte sailed back to France, leaving his troops stranded. His successor, General Jean-Baptiste Kléber, a thoroughgoing republican who largely opposed the hostile expansion of French rule, sought to remedy the critical situation by negotiating treaties with the leading Mamluks who had pulled back into Upper Egypt, but the British allies of the Ottomans refused to ratify them. In early

26 Michael Winter, *Egyptian Society Under Ottoman Rule, 1517–1798* (London: Routledge, 1992), 191.

1800, a new uprising in Cairo, now driven by powerful Muslim grievances, targeted the Coptic quarters, and one of the leading Coptic notables, General Yaḳub Hanna, turned to the French to form a new battalion of self-defense, the Coptic Legion (Légion Copte).

Kléber—assassinated by a young Syrian who sought to avenge the death and desecration committed in the revolt of Cairo—was succeeded by Jacques Menou—now known as Abdallah-Jacques because he had converted to Islam in order to marry a local woman. Menou made yet another swerve of policy, hoping to retain Egypt as a permanent French colony. Although he vocally shared many Muslim prejudices against the local Christians, he continued to allow them to fight in the French army, and when the peace treaty was finally concluded with Britain and the Ottoman Empire, provided a clause for those who chose to leave their homeland to do so freely and without reprisals. General Yaḳub led a large force of several thousand Copts, many of them reluctantly joining the evacuation through their loyalty to the general, but his sudden death during the crossing led many to desert and return to Egypt. Thus, the largest group among those who arrived in Marseille were in fact Palestinian Christians, while among the others were Muslims, Copts, Orthodox Christians, and men and women of color who had been enslaved in Egypt. When they arrived in France, they joined a smaller number of emigrants who had already made the crossing, and they were followed by a small but steady flow across the Mediterranean, driven by instability in Egypt and Syria and attracted by the growing community in France.

The leading group among these expatriates dubbed itself the Egyptian Legation: the aim of these men was to travel immediately to Paris for the official peace conference, representing a wider network of Egyptians who sought independence under the French aegis, in order to remove Egypt from the rivalry between the French and British superpowers.²⁷ However, as they came to understand the shifts that were taking place in France, their projects changed: lacking the leadership of Yaḳub, who had the status of a general, they were increasingly cast as refugees. They sought at first to establish some kind of official Egyptian colony in Marseille, suggesting the adaptation of one of the former religious properties into a “harem-hospice” that could house the women and children. These projects received no response. Finally, at the point of emerging from quarantine in Marseille, they turned to the prospect of military enrolment for the men of the group, accompanied by assistance for their families. It was this proposition that was immediately accepted, by direct order of Bonaparte, now first consul. However, their suggestion that their corps should be called the Arab Tribe of Egyptian Horsemen was rejected, and Bonaparte insisted that they should be named after the very group he had reviled in his proclamations: “Mamluks.” French spelling of the term varied

27 See George A. Haddad, “A Project for the Independence of Egypt, 1801,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 90 (1970): 169–183.

wildly, and it bore little relation to the real Egyptian Mamluks.²⁸ The violence and luxury Bonaparte had condemned in Egypt was now useful for the creation of a new kind of representation of power in France. The figure of the simply dressed consul, man of the people, was flanked by richly caparisoned “oriental” fighters who encoded the promise of violence that would greet any attempt to resume the revolutionary upheaval of the 1790s. It is under this rubric of “Mamluks” that an Arab community would emerge across the two decades that followed.

The Rise and Fall of Arab France

The first Arab France that emerged in the wake of the arrival of these “refugees” in 1801 was no Arab France at all: it was a motley collection of individuals and families with little in common, different only in number from the largely accidental and temporary presence that had preceded it. The attempts of the members of the Egyptian Legation to reach Paris were stymied, and only a handful of “useful” and well-connected interpreters and religious personnel were permitted to reside in the capital on an individual basis. Mikhail Sabbagh, a Melkite Catholic from Acre, became a copyist of oriental manuscripts at the National Library, and Dom Raphaël de Monachis (Rufa’il Zakhur), who had personal connections to Bonaparte, was appointed as professor of spoken Arabic at the School for Oriental Languages. The Arabic correspondence preserved at the Municipal Library in Geneva reveals that this position in Paris gave Sabbagh an influential position, receiving and giving favors to his compatriots located in Marseille, who were unable to gain this favorable status. Thus, the Arabic language became a source of cohesion and power for emerging networks between Paris and Marseille, and outward across the Mediterranean. At the same time, several Mamluks enrolled in the cavalry of the imperial guard were stationed in Melun, near Paris, allowing them to visit the capital regularly.

In Marseille, the various segments of the population, divided by class, color, and confession, had little in common at first except for the assistance they were paid by the Ministry of War, and even this was divided into classes. The wealthiest and most influential members of the emigration, such as the widow of General Yaḳub, did not receive any “pension,” while others were able to secure combined assistance for their large families, giving them a comfortable means of existence. Many of the young men who had come alone to France and were now surviving on a very small pension, particularly after the reorganization of the Mamluk corps in 1804, were highly discontented with the inequities, and those who were allocated only a daily ration of bread for subsistence,

28 French spellings included Mamelouk, Mameluck, Mameluk, Mamelouck, and even Mamelu. Since no distinction was made in French between “real” Mamluks and the French guards, I will use “Mamluk” for both.

which included some formerly enslaved servants, had even greater animus against those they accused of corruption and self-enrichment. Religion was a divisive factor: the large group of Uniate (Melkite) and Coptic Catholics were able to profit from the resurgence of the Catholic Church sponsored by the Concordat of 1801, whereas Orthodox Christians, Copts, and Muslims were treated as foreign groups. Observers of the time noted the dispersal of the wealthy, integrated Catholics into the town, while the others clustered on the edge of the urban space, creating a kind of “Egyptian village” near the Cours Gouffé.

A significant number of black women who were servants or concubines of French officers arrived in France, and some were given permission to work or live outside of Marseille. After the revocation of abolition in 1802, as France tried and failed to reimpose slavery in Saint-Domingue, racializing ideas grew in power, and these independent black women in particular were targeted with hostility from the population. In 1806–07, after Marseille was reintegrated as a single municipality (after its division into three during the French Revolution), the mayor sought to use a series of police reports on these so-called *nègresses* to whip up a racial panic, accusing them of disorderly conduct, prostitution, maternal negligence, and even cross-dressing as men.²⁹

Clashing with the prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône (the former deputy Antoine Claire Thibaudeau), the mayor attempted to have the Egyptians incarcerated into a physical depot in one of the local fortresses, the same way that people of color had been confined in slave *dépôts des noirs* (depots for blacks) by the royal edict of 1777, which had been enforced again with the decree of 1802.³⁰ The notables of the emigration did not at first apprehend the danger posed by this policy but soon came to recognize that the demand to hand over a list of the “troublemakers” was deadly serious. They drew up a careful list of “troublemakers” of their own, designating a group of young men who were challenging their authority. These men were briefly imprisoned in the fortress, but the attempt proceeded no further due to the personal connections with the emperor that some of the leading “refugees” could draw upon.

Indeed, over the course of the empire, rather than reducing the assistance to the “Egyptian refugees,” a series of decisions augmented it, allowing the addition of children born in France and, after 1810, permitting relocation to Paris, where a new “pay-office” was opened. The last members of the second generation were still receiving pensions up to the 1890s, creating a bond between government and population that anticipated the later developments of the welfare state. At the same time, this pension was awarded not as a result of need but in return for services rendered and losses incurred in Egypt. It

29 Ian Coller, “Race and Slavery in the Making of Arab France” in *War, Empire and Slavery, 1770–1830*, eds. Richard Bessel, Nicholas Guyatt, and Jane Rendall (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 61–80.

30 Pierre H. Boulle, *Race et esclavage dans la France de l'Ancien Régime* [Race and Slavery in Ancien Régime France] (Paris: Perrin, 2007); Sue Peabody, “There Are No Slaves in France”: *The Political Culture of Race and Slavery in the Ancien Régime* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

did not make the “Egyptians” into citizens but rather tolerated auxiliaries, anticipating the treatment of the Harkis expatriated to France after the Algerian War. Nonetheless, some dimension of the original project of political exile remained in spite of the new conditions, above all in the institution of Arabic classes at the Lycée in Marseille, which became a training ground for the young men of the second generation, taught by Gabriel Taouïl, a Melkite priest with close connections in the church. Ellious Bocthor, a far more competent Arabist than Taouïl, was excluded from competition for this role as a Copt closely associated with the leading Muslim member of the Egyptian Legation, Abd el-‘Al Aga. When Bocthor first arrived with Abd el-‘Al in Paris in 1811, he was greeted with hostility and placed under police surveillance. Eventually, he found a “useful” employment: translating documents for the Ministry of War. Ultimately, under the Restoration, he would be appointed to the chair of Arabic at the School for Oriental Languages and produce the first French-Arabic dictionary. Nonetheless, a series of Arabist intellectuals emerged from the classes run by Taouïl, most notably Joseph Agoub and Joanny Pharaon, who would become influential during the Restoration. Indeed, none of the many Arabic intellectuals in France produced any significant work under the empire, apart perhaps from some sycophantic poems praising the emperor, penned by Sabbagh.

The dynamics that shaped these individual lives speak to the wider cultural, racial, and religious politics of the Napoleonic empire, currents that have received more attention in the context of occupations outside of France.³¹ Stuart Woolf notes how central the Egyptian occupation was in forming “the interdependence of political concerns and scientific curiosity [that was] to play so major a role in the Consular administration.”³² But, as Jean-Luc Chappey suggests in his study of the Society of Observers of Man (*Société des observateurs de l’homme*), this open-ended “curiosity” was shunted aside in favor of a more mechanistic deployment of knowledge in the furtherance of imperial and colonial aims.³³ The replacement of ideology by imperial pragmatism in some sense completed the process that had begun in the Egyptian “laboratory”: the proximity to this structure of power by those designated as “Egyptians” not only offered them significant advantages but also put their difference of religion, origin, and color (whether real or staged) to work for the regime in multiple ways.

31 See Stuart Woolf, *Napoleon’s Integration of Europe* (London: Routledge, 1990); Michael Broers, *Europe Under Napoleon* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021); Ute Planert, ed., *Napoleon’s Empire: European Politics in Global Perspective* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

32 Stuart Woolf, “French Civilization and Ethnicity in the Napoleonic Empire,” *Past & Present* 124 (1989): 102.

33 Jean-Luc Chappey, *La Société des observateurs de l’homme: des anthropologues au temps de Bonaparte* [The Society of Observers of Man: Anthropologists in the Time of Bonaparte] (Paris: Société des études robespierristes, 2002).

The presence of the Mamluks close to the imperial center was a reminder of the violence essential to the maintenance of the empire, which the emperor chose not to incarnate in his own person as he remade himself as a legitimate ruler, marrying into the imperial family of Austria and putting his own imprint on the French Civil Code. The hypervisibility of the Mamluks, with the crescent of Islam on their turbans, transformed Islam into a powerful symbolic presence while effectively erasing the actual presence of Muslims themselves. Bonaparte placed religious minorities back into *consistoires* (communal organizations): Muslims were not recognized as a religion and thus remained invisible. Nonetheless, they were tolerated for their potential usefulness in a future French reconquest of Egypt, yet not so flagrantly as to threaten negotiations with the Ottomans and British. Only after 1810, when the stabilization of the Egyptian regime under Muhammad 'Ali became evident, were the "Egyptians" permitted to establish themselves in Paris: most however remained in Marseille, where they had settled over the course of a decade.

The close connection to the Napoleonic regime would prove to be a dangerous liability when the empire collapsed in 1814–15. A number of Mamluks accompanied Bonaparte in exile to Elba and returned with him for his attempted reconquest of France in March 1815. The "Hundred Days" that followed were a time of exaltation followed by destruction for many in the Egyptian village in Marseille. Local observers described with fury the prominence of those they called Mamluks and *nègresses* in the celebrations of Bonaparte's return. When the news of the defeat at Waterloo reached the town on June 25, 1815, the Bonapartist troops withdrew in fear for their lives, leaving the town unprotected. Royalist crowds moved through the streets, lynching those they accused of loyalty to the emperor.

In the case of the Egyptians, however, political, racial, and religious motives were mixed. Many identified them with the Mamluks who had been vilified by opponents of the emperor, such as Benjamin Constant and François-René de Chateaubriand.³⁴ At the same time, the first to be targeted and killed were women of color, who had gained protection from their status as Egyptians but were now subject to a double racial and political animus. The attack on the Egyptian village left at least a dozen dead, and probably many more, as reports described bodies thrown into the sea or buried in mass graves. The attacks themselves, like most such massacres, combined racial, political, and personal motives. But the administration's incarceration of the survivors in Fort St-Jean (the same fortress where the mayor had proposed incarcerating them in 1806), rather than attempting to hold the murderers responsible for their crimes, demonstrates the larger racial and religious frames within which this violence was understood.

34 See Ian Coller, "The Jacobin and the Mameluke: Islam, Race and Political Culture at the End of Empire," in *From the Napoleonic Empire to the Age of Empire: Empire after the Emperor*, eds. Thomas Dodman and Aurélien Lignereux (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023).

In the wake of this massacre, the Egyptians became at once less visible and more integrated as a community. Although some leading Mamluks very conspicuously turned their coats to join the royalists, the larger community in Marseille organized in new ways against the attempt to force them out of France. When the Restoration authorities drastically slashed pensions, the widow of General Yaḡub, Maryam Hanna, traveled with her nephew to Paris to plead the case of these impoverished survivors of the massacre and burning of the Egyptian village. The predominance of eastern Catholics among the leading refugees put them in a position to secure new connections to the Bourbon regime by building a Melkite church in Marseille, consecrated in 1821. Others, including the prominent Muslim Abd el-ʿAl, converted to the Catholic faith, offering further prestige in the eyes of the church.³⁵ Indeed, the Restoration proved surprisingly positive for many of those who had survived the massacre, or at least for those capable of navigating these changes. Authorities offered to pay a full year's pension in advance in return for the refugees returning "home" to Egypt. Some took the deal, but a number of them returned, insisting they had been persecuted for converting to Christianity, an argument well placed to secure them readmittance to France, sometimes even to the pension lists, while maintaining their connections across the Mediterranean.

Those connections were renewed in powerful ways by the 1826 mission to France of a contingent of students sent by the viceroy of Egypt, Muhammad ʿAli. Drawn from a variety of leading families, these students have often been portrayed as eager proselytes of France's modernizing culture. In fact, their experience in France was far more mixed. The administration in Egypt had little interest in the "general culture" encouraged by the French education system, and the students in many ways constituted a "gift" (in the Maussian sense) that implicated France in supporting the Egyptian regime in its growing challenge to the Ottoman Empire—like the famous giraffe sent by the viceroy around the same time. The only member to benefit significantly from the mission was its imam, Rifaʿa al-Tahtawi, who would become a major figure of the Nahda (awakening) across the Arabic-speaking world, publishing a widely-read account of his five years in France. Tahtawi has often been taken as a model for an Islam sympathetic to France, yet much of his interaction was not with the French but rather with the French Arabs of the second generation. He would translate the French poetry of his teacher Joseph Agoub

35 Rifaʿa al-Tahtawi wrote in 1826: "In the city of Marseille there are many Christians from Egypt and Syria, who accompanied the French during their retreat from Egypt. All of them wear French clothes. It is rare to find a Muslim among those who left with the French: some of them have died, whereas others have converted to Christianity – may God preserve us from that!" (Rifaʿa al-Tahtawi, *Takhḡis al-ibriz fy talkhis bariz* [An Imam in Paris: Al-Tahtawi's Visit to France, 1826–1831], trans. Daniel L. Newman (London: Al Saqi, 2002), 154).

into Arabic and would learn much about the July Revolution of 1830 from another teacher, Joanny Pharaon.³⁶

Both of these important figures of the second generation would find their place in France upended by the events of 1830, as the teetering regime of Charles X launched a last-ditch attempt to regain popularity by invading Algiers, accusing the dey of insulting French honor after he struck the French consul with his fan (fly whisk). The origin of that imbroglio was the support offered to the fledgling French republic by an earlier dey (Hassan Pasha), who loaned large sums of cash to French merchants to allow them to purchase grain at a time when the Midi was threatened with famine. The debts to Algiers were shrugged off by Bonaparte and then by his Bourbon successors: their ultimate settlement landed the loss on the Algerians, while French creditors were paid. The invasion of Algiers was as sudden and brutal as that of Egypt three decades earlier and in many ways took Bonaparte's invasion as a model. As the new regime of the July monarchy took charge of this new "possession" in North Africa, former officials from the occupation of Egypt were recalled, and they sought to recruit the "Egyptians" from France as soldiers and interpreters. Pharaon found himself in 1831 trying to negotiate the seizure of the principal mosque in Algiers for the French governor, Savary, one of the "old boys from Egypt" who had become the duke of Rovigo under the empire. Where Bonaparte had allowed his troops to defile Al-Azhar, Savary went even further, forcibly converting the mosque into a cathedral in order to implant a permanent French colonization. As the French opened fire on the mosque with 4,000 Muslims barricaded inside, those like Pharaon caught in between were compelled to choose whether they were French or Arab.

The project of creating an Arab France—never articulated in these exact terms but discernible from the lives and works of these exiles becoming refugees and citizens—was in tatters. Agoub, appointed as professor of Arabic at the Lycée St-Louis, was inexplicably fired from his post and returned to Marseille, where he died shortly afterward. George Sakakini, another of the second generation of French Arabs, would be passed over to replace Taouïl for a Frenchman, Eusèbe de Salle, a graduate of the School for Oriental Languages, who argued that "ignorant" refugees were incapable of teaching Arabic in a "French" manner. Not for another century or more would Arabs take major positions in teaching Arabic in France. The community that had coalesced around this institution was largely dispersed, although the networks across the Mediterranean continued and took new forms in the era of the Tanzimat reforms in the Ottoman Empire, the changing

36 See Rifā'a al-Tahtawi, *Nazm al-'uqūd fī kasr al-'u*: La lyre brisée, dithyrambe de M. Agoub, traduit en vers arabes par le cheykh Réfaha [He Organized Al'aqds in the Palace of Al'a: The Broken Lyre, Dithyramb by M. Agoub, Translated into Arabic Verse by Cheykh Refaha] (Paris: AH, 1827); F. Rossignol and J. Pharaon, *Histoire de la Révolution de 1830 et des nouvelles barricades* [History of the Revolution of 1830 and the New Barricades] (Paris: Ch. Vimont, 1830), 18.

fortunes of Egypt, and the spreading domination of France in North Africa and the Middle East.

Conclusion

The Arab France—never fully realized—that stretched between these two acts of French aggression in North Africa did not end in 1830, but it was transformed in radical ways from a communal project of constructing a French Arab identity into a colonial project of dominating Arabs (now recoded as Muslims) and the multiple forms of resistance to that project. Recognizing the long-buried history of that project is not simply an act of memory but a rethinking of many encrusted aspects of the French past and the part they played in larger currents of world history.

France and its history are Arab and Muslim in complex and overlapping ways. This should surprise no one. France emerged as a sociopolitical reality in a context deeply imprinted by relations to Islam and the flourishing societies and cultures on the western and southern shores of the Mediterranean. At different times in its history, the territory that constitutes France today has participated in multiple formations of sovereignty connecting Europe to the Middle East and North Africa, from crusader kingdoms in the Holy Land to “Saracen” city-states in the French Midi, from Ottoman enclaves to fully fledged colonies, and from territories annexed to the republic to decolonized “special relationships” in the international order. This complex pattern of historical relationships is peculiarly French and has been of significance in defining what France has come to mean.

In thinking “globally” about France, it is first necessary to dismantle many of the assumptions that form the self-evidence of what we mean by “France.” Territorially, almost every part of France has at some time been under another sovereignty. The capital has been in Paris, Bordeaux, Bourges, Versailles, and Vichy. “France” has been located in North America, India, Southeast Asia, and Africa and remains spread today across Europe, South America, the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean, and the Pacific. French diasporas spread across the world, while other diasporas spread to France. “France” meant different things to those who spoke French and those who spoke Brezhoneg or Basque or Catalan or any one of dozens of different local patois, just as it means different things today to those who speak Tamazight or Tamil or Khmer. We can no longer speak of “France” as if it refers to the telos of a historical development: thinking about France globally should not mean mirroring French projects of global expansion or their historical legacies. Instead, we need to comprehend both the contingency of France as territory, kingdom, empire, nation, and republic and the plurality of its co-construction among many entangled and competing formations.

To map an Arab France in this period, then, is not to draw hard lines of identity or to privilege ethnic or linguistic differences over religious ones. It is a heuristic that allows

us at once to recognize the larger project of a multigenerational settlement in France, a project that was a constituent part of modern French history, and that makes visible aspects of that history that other lenses do not. It is to suggest that “France” is not an autochthonous, essential, and closed outcome dictated by the continuity of the French state, the unchanging identity of the French “people,” or even the rich diversity of the French territory, but the provisional result of a vast multiplicity of lives, shaped by both *longue durée* and contingent elements and built stably or precariously across multiple transnational networks.

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(Dis)entangling the French Globalization Project in the Age of Revolutions*

It seems counterintuitive to discuss the French Revolution of 1789, a national political moment, in light of a French globalization project. The Revolution is an event associated with the birth of the French Republic in 1792 and modern nation-states in world history, while, at the same time, the “Frenchness” of this state was yet to be realized. Elites undertook a nationalizing project throughout the nineteenth century to turn the residents of France into Frenchmen.¹ And yet, few can deny that the Revolution had an outsize impact on European and broader world history. The calls and claims of revolutionaries themselves intended the Revolution to be a universalist world-making project, one that would have implications beyond France. More than 200 years after the Revolution, the language of rights, liberty, and citizenship continues to shape societal ideals in much of the world.

In the last decades, historians have firmly situated the French Revolution in a series of interconnected revolutions that reshaped the empires and states between the 1770s and 1830s. The Age of Revolutions—a framework for an entangled history of the revolutions that rocked the Atlantic world from around the time of the American War of Independence (1776–1783), the French Revolution (1789–1799), the Haitian Revolution (1791–1804), and the Spanish American wars of independence (1808–1833)—was characterized and preceded by connectivity: increased imperial and interimperial trade despite mercantilist policies, long-distance and transatlantic intellectual exchanges, and migration and unfree mobilities. In this chapter, I will not recount the whole history of the French Revolution’s many dramatic twists and turns.² Instead, I aim to narrate how it is that historians today find themselves at a point of describing a French globalization project during the French Revolution. That is to say, in what sense is this heuristic tool helpful in understanding globalization at the turn of the nineteenth century and the position of France in driving and surviving globalization?

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1 Eugene Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976).

2 Among many titles, a wonderful recent comprehensive history of the French Revolution is Jeremy D. Popkins, *A New World Begins: The History of the French Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 2019).

This contribution traces the nature of the French globalization project in three different ways. The first section evaluates the literature on the global turn in the history of the French Revolution, bringing into focus the historians' role in entangling an Atlantic revolutionary history and the history of globalization.³ The second section focuses on the nature and reorganization of empires during the Age of Revolutions, in particular France and the USA. It is through this combination—literature on the global turn, globalization, and empire—that historians can conceptualize a French globalization project during the French Revolution as opposed to a national revolution that impacted parts of the world, including in French colonies. Contemporaries operated in an arena of competing agendas that crossed empires, such as American and transatlantic slave economies. The third section traces global histories of connections and mobility that are emblematic not only of entanglements across empires but also of how actors disentangled themselves from a changing French globalization project that had shared facets with other competing projects of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

From the Global Turn to Globalization

The historiography of the French Revolution has traditionally situated these events in a national context. In the last decades, especially since the Revolution's bicentennial, transnational and global perspectives have gained currency.⁴ But historians still do not agree on what a global turn entails and how this historiography situates the French Revolution's importance in world history. As Manuel Covo and I have outlined elsewhere, there were a number of important advances in the historiography of the French Revolution that spurred the so-called global turn or, as Lynn Hunt calls it, histories that questioned a purely "internalist" account.⁵ Influential interventions include social history/history from below, postcolonial studies, and the new imperial history, which together led to the so-called global turn in the history of the French Revolution. These impulses share a similar genealogy with the development of global history, addressed by Richard Drayton and David Motadel as a field or set of concerns born out of a number of historiographic interventions.⁶ That is to say, unlike David Bell's portrayal of global

3 For the aims of global historians in research and teaching, see Patrick Manning, *Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

4 David Armitage and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, eds., *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, c. 1760–1840* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Suzanne Desan, Lynn Hunt, and William Max Nelson, eds., *The French Revolution in Global Perspective* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013).

5 Manuel Covo and Megan Maruschke, "The French Revolution as an Imperial Revolution," *French Historical Studies* 44, no. 3 (2021): 371–397; Lynn Hunt, "The French Revolution in Global Context," in *The Age of Revolutions*, eds. Armitage and Subrahmanyam, 20–36.

6 Richard Drayton and David Motadel, "Discussion: The Futures of Global History," *Journal of Global History* 13, no. 1 (2018): 1–21. Katja Castryck-Naumann offers a much longer and diverse set of conceptual

history placing new items on French historians' agendas, these developments were born out of longer debates and impulses from within the field of French history itself.⁷ In this perspective, historians of the French Revolution have not reached a consensus on whether globalization was a potential cause or only a context for the revolutionary story.⁸

In a comparative framework of democratic revolutions of the Atlantic world, historians most notably coupled the French Revolution with the American Revolution, leading to new insights on both. In the 1950s, Robert Palmer and Jacques Godechot, drawing on an older historiography, reinvigorated this approach in which the French Revolution became one of several revolutions and revolts in the Atlantic.⁹ From the tradition of a comparative perspective, scholars have also located the interconnections among revolutionaries and shared intellectual traditions, drawing these revolutions together. This research is related to an Atlantic history perspective that, inspired also by Fernand Braudel's *Mediterranean*, takes bodies of water as frameworks in which history unfolds.¹⁰ While this historiography remained focused on the North Atlantic and did not account for wider impacts, causes, and interconnections beyond that space, it was an important approach precisely because it challenged the methodological nationalism central to history as a discipline and the histories of national revolutions in particular.¹¹

Inspired by approaches in social history and history from below, interest in the Black Atlantic and more broadly dispossessed people—indigenous people, sailors, and so on—has widened the scope of investigation beyond elite revolutionaries to understand

concerns and innovations in the emergence of the global turn from the perspective of teaching. See Katja Castryck-Naumann, "Long-Term and Decentered Trajectories of Doing History from a Global Perspective: Institutionalization, Postcolonial Critique, and Empiricist Approaches, before and after the 1970," *Journal of Global History* 14, no. 3 (2019): 335–354.

7 David A. Bell, "Questioning the Global Turn: The Case of the French Revolution," *French Historical Studies* 37, no. 1 (2014): 1–24.

8 For alternative positions to the global turn, see Bell, "Questioning the Global Turn"; Sarah Knott, "Narrating the Age of Revolution," *William & Mary Quarterly* 73, no. 1 (2016): 3–36; Paul Cheney, "The French Revolution's Global Turn and Capitalism's Spatial Fixes," *Journal of Social History* 52, no. 3 (2018): 575–583. The discussion among historians remained mixed in David A. Bell et al., "L'âge des révolutions: Rebonds transnationaux" [Age of Revolutions: Transnational Rebounds], *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, no. 397 (2019): 193–223.

9 Jacques Godechot, *La grande nation: L'expansion révolutionnaire de la France dans le monde de 1789 à 1799* [The Great Nation: The Revolutionary Expansion of France in the World from 1789 to 1799] (Paris: Aubier, 1956); Robert R. Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760–1800*, 2 vols. (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1959–1964).

10 Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, 2 vols., trans. Sian Reynolds (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

11 Manuela Albertone and Antonio de Francesco, eds., *Rethinking the Atlantic World: Europe and America in the Age of Democratic Revolutions* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Nathan Perl-Rosenthal, "Atlantic Cultures in the Age of Revolution," *William & Mary Quarterly* 74, no. 4 (2017): 667–696.

how people excluded from newly emerging forms of rights and citizenship navigated and shaped the outcomes of these revolutions. This intervention was not exclusive to a redefinition of revolutionary history but certainly challenged the aforementioned Atlantic framework through the lens of non-European or subaltern actors, impacting maritime history and global history alike.¹² Shifting the focus to other actors has also entailed a spatial reorientation. In connection to the American Revolution, histories from the interior or “vast early America” have widened the spatial lens.¹³ Histories of sailors or merchants and other figures on the margins have led to better understandings about the scope and meaning of citizenship during the Age of Revolutions and in the early American republic.¹⁴ French Black Atlantic scholarship meanwhile has entangled the French Revolution closely with events in the Caribbean and the Haitian Revolution in particular.¹⁵ C. L. R. James’s 1938 *The Black Jacobins* was revisited by scholars who over time promoted and developed a vibrant field of American and French scholars who had long neglected the centrality of the Haitian Revolution. That is to say, while American historians had focused on the interior, the borderlands, and the high seas, historians of the French Revolution had concentrated initially on Caribbean events, especially in Saint-Domingue (Haiti), though they also more broadly worked on a variety of colonial sites such as India, Senegal, or Madagascar.¹⁶

The newfound significance of the Haitian Revolution in the historiography of the Age of Revolutions led to a snare in the entangled and shared global histories of the outward

12 See the link between these made by Lasse Heerten, “Mooring Mobilities, Fixing Flows: Towards a Global Urban History of Port Cities in the Age of Steam,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 34 (2021): 350–374, 352–353.

13 For a discussion on “vast early America,” see the wonderful essays in the forum: Eliga Gould and Rosemarie Zagarri, “Situating the United States in Vast Early America: Introduction,” *The William & Mary Quarterly* 78, no. 2 (2021): 189–200, as well as Karin Wulf, “Vast Early America: Three Simple Words for a Complex Reality,” *Humanities* 40, no. 1 (Winter 2019), <https://www.neh.gov/article/vast-early-america>.

14 Nathan Perl-Rosenthal, *Citizen Sailors: Becoming American in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015); Lawrence Hatter, *Citizens of Convenience: The Imperial Origins of American Nationhood on the U.S.-Canadian Border* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2017).

15 Julius S. Scott, *The Common Wind: Afro-American Currents in the Age of the Haitian Revolution* (London: Verso, 2018).

16 Damien Tricoire, *Der koloniale Traum: Imperiales Wissen und die französisch-madagassischen Begegnung im Zeitalter der Aufklärung* [The Colonial Dream: Imperial Knowledge and the Franco-Madagascan Encounter in the Age of Enlightenment] (Cologne: Böhlau, 2018); Pernille Røge, *Economistes and the Reinvention of Empire: France in the Americas and Africa, c. 1750–1802* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Pernille Røge, “The Directory and the Future of France’s Colonial Possessions in Africa, 1795–1802,” *French Historical Studies* 44, no. 3 (2019): 477–497; Pernille Røge, “Rethinking Africa in the Age of Revolution: The Evolution of Jean-Baptiste-Léonard Durand’s *Voyage au Sénégal*,” *Atlantic Studies* 13, no. 3 (2016): 389–406; Elizabeth Cross, “India and the Compagnie des Indes in the Age of the French Revolution,” *French Historical Studies* 44, no. 3 (2021): 455–476.

impacts of the American and French revolutions.¹⁷ The successful slave revolts resulting in the overthrow of French colonial rule on Saint-Domingue in 1804 and the establishment of the first black republic exposed the contradictions of French and American revolutions based on rights, citizenship, and participatory democracy (at least as an outcome if not a motivation for their movements).¹⁸ To stabilize its control over the island, France abolished slavery in its empire by 1794 and extended French citizenship to men regardless of skin color, a ruling enlarged to encompass the whole empire in its Constitution of 1795 (year III). But abolition was short-lived. Haitian independence overthrew Napoleonic rule on the island and the potential reinstatement of colonial slavery.¹⁹ As David Armitage outlines in his global history of the American Declaration of Independence, Haiti was the next state in the Americas to declare independence following the American Revolution and before Spanish American independence movements, which weaved an American Revolution in sovereignty closely to the Haitian case, while conversely the French Revolution occurred in a metropole of a colonial power that was successful at maintaining its colonies during the revolutionary decade. The Haitian Revolution, in this global history, became part of a first wave of decolonization. In scholarship on the global impact of these revolutions, the American and French cases became de-coupled, forming separate, parallel global histories of their larger influence, with the US case being closely connected to new forms of state sovereignty, declarations of independence, and decolonization.²⁰

While the American Revolution featured more prominently in questions of state sovereignty on a global scale, Hunt weaves the French Revolution into a long history of

17 For a review of the scholarship on the Haitian Revolution in a global perspective, see Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, "Beyond *The Black Jacobins*: The Haitian Revolutionary Historiography Comes of Age," *The Journal of Haitian Studies* 23, no. 1 (2017): 4–34.

18 For the argument that these were revolutions about sovereignty, not democracy, see Wim Klooster, *Revolutions in the Atlantic World: A Comparative History* (New York: New York University Press, 2009). For a similar argument connected to the question of empire, see Jeremy Adelman, "An Age of Imperial Revolutions," *American Historical Review* 113, no. 2 (2008): 319–340.

19 An analysis of the parallels built by the kingdom of Haiti to a restorationist and post-Napoleonic Europe can be explored in Friedemann Pestel, "Une restauration atlantique: légitimations politiques, cultures matérielles et mobilité entre les pays germaniques et haïti, 1804–1825" [An Atlantic Restoration: Political Legitimizations, Material Cultures, and Mobility between Germanic Lands and Haiti, 1804–1825], *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 397, no. 3 (2019): 77–97.

20 David Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007). In contrast, Pierre Serna draws the French Revolution back into the fold of a history of independence and sovereignty in his essay; see Pierre Serna, "Every Revolution is a War of Independence," in *French Revolution in Global Perspective*, eds. Hunt, Desan, Nelson, 186–206, previously published in Jean-Luc Chappey et al., eds., *Pour quoi faire la Révolution* [Why Make Revolution] (Paris: Agone, 2012), 19–50. For Serna, the French Revolution represents the birth of an anticolonial republicanism, which was full of contradictions and manifested over the long term.

human rights.²¹ Nevertheless, not only did subaltern contemporaries call into question the universalism of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and “fulfillment” of these ideas in the Haitian Revolution, but as Adom Getachew argues, the Haitian case also established other universal claims linking citizenship to blackness and arrival/presence on Haitian soil, thus disrupting a nineteenth-century Caribbean in which slavery not only persisted but also deepened its presence on islands like Cuba.²² The Haitian Revolution moreover exposed the hypocrisy of an independent USA based on liberty that maintained racial slavery and exclusion. In contrast, Haiti established a free-soil state guaranteeing the free status of any black person to step foot on Haitian soil.²³ Gary Nash argues that the American Revolution could have had a wider impact on world history if its leaders had embraced the growing British, French, and homegrown abolitionist movements.²⁴ For France, by 1848, abolitionism was once again on the agenda as its own abolitionist leaders such as Victor Schoelcher, who had traveled extensively in the Americas and Africa to learn about slavery, entered the provisional revolutionary government.²⁵ France thereby reabolished slavery throughout its empire almost half a century after having reinstated it.

Centering the Haitian Revolution in the Age of Revolutions also entailed highlighting the colonial question. Including the experiences in the colonies of the French Revolution exposed the vastly different types of sites included in the empire at the moment of the French Revolution, from the Caribbean and Indian Ocean islands to trading posts on coasts of Africa and Asia, as well as sites and locations considered for potential French rule. Though there were also some uprisings, by and large these locations experienced the French Revolution differently than the inhabitants of Saint-Domingue. The administrators of these places often relied on ancien régime thought or practices, not necessarily

21 Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007).

22 Samuel Moyn, “On the Nonglobalization of Ideas,” in *Global Intellectual History*, eds. Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 187–204; Adom Getachew, “Universalism After the Post-Colonial Turn: Interpreting the Haitian Revolution,” *Political Theory* 44, no. 6 (2016): 821–845.

23 Ada Ferrer, “Haiti, Free Soil, and Antislavery in the Revolutionary Atlantic,” *American Historical Review*, 117, no. 1 (2012): 40–66.

24 Gary Nash, “Sparks from the Alter of ’76: International Repercussions and Reconsiderations of the American Revolution,” in *The Age of Revolutions*, eds. Armitage and Subrahmanyam, 1–19.

25 For the long history of French abolition since the French Revolution, see Marcel Dorigny, ed., *Les Abolitions de l’esclavage. De L. F. Sonthonax à V. Schoelcher. 1793, 1794, 1848* [The Abolition of Slavery: From L. F. Sonthonax to W. Schoelcher. 1793, 1794, and 1848] (Saint-Denis: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 1995). See also work on the longer Haitian influences on the 1848 abolition: Kwon, Yun Kyoung, “Forgotten Island of the Liberator: Haiti’s Influences on Victor Schoelcher’s Abolitionism, 1833–1848,” *Histoire sociale/Social History* 53, no. 107 (2020): 69–90.

on new revolutionary policies.²⁶ These accounts offer some suggestions on the role that colonies and colonial actors played (or did not play) in shaping the French Revolution as it unfolded in the metropole.

While the authors and readers of these histories have thought of these works in terms of a global turn, the question of globalization remained a backdrop but was not universally problematized. How could a national, political revolution relate to globalization, a process of global economic connectivity and integration? In 2010, Hunt summarized the state of the field:

Work on the colonies has not entirely dislodged an internalist account, in which external causes and influences replace the internal ones. More attention to those external causes and influences would be most welcome, but in the end, we need an account that can persuasively link external and internal causes, effects, and processes.²⁷

Bringing together Hunt's statement regarding the internal and external causes in combination with Suzanne Desan's call to globalize and internationalize the French Revolution beyond a national framework, both authors joined forces with William Max Nelson to edit a volume, *French Revolution in Global Perspective*, in which both globalization and empire (or imperial reform) became two key interventions in a global perspective that linked the reorganization of domestic society with both international reverberations and a world-making project.²⁸ The volume focuses on finance, knowledge circulation, and trade. Hunt's chapter details not only the well-known case of the threat that bankruptcy posed to the crown, leading Louis XVI to call on the Estates General, but also how the French kingdom had lost an overview of the complexity of financial transactions and flows in a growing commercial empire entangled with Spanish and British activities and financed internationally.²⁹ The success of French expansion in the slave trade and other forms of commerce; their extended involvements in Asia, Africa, and the Americas; and the growth in the state power needed to shore up these concerns as international and domestic creditors lost confidence in the government, she claims, were important factors in the leadup to Revolution. In other words, globalization may also be one of the causes for the Revolution of 1789.

26 Røge, "The Directory"; see also Malick Ghachem, *The Old Regime and the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). Malick Ghachem makes the argument that the massive changes in Saint-Domingue also relied on ancien régime notions.

27 Hunt, "The French Revolution in Global Context," 22.

28 Suzanne Desan, "Internationalizing the French Revolution," *French Politics, Culture, & Society* 29, no. 2 (2011): 137–160; Hunt, Desan, and Nelson, eds., *French Revolution in Global Perspective*.

29 Lynn Hunt, "The Global Financial Origins of 1789," in *French Revolution in Global Perspective*, eds. Hunt, Desan, and Nelson, 39–52.

The global turn in the history of the French Revolution encompasses a number of perspectives and concerns that have not left comparative or Atlantic approaches behind. Hunt's own aforementioned chapter compares French and British financial and commercial concerns in the 1780s. Yet the move from describing a global context—and therefore also the limits of the Revolution's influence—to a global perspective that asks about the nature and role of globalization in the Revolution is innovative.³⁰ The growing empirical research on connectivity during the Age of Revolutions challenges the national historiographies of these revolutions and leads to questions about the implications of these (re)interpretations in transnational, transimperial, and transregional perspectives.³¹ At least one iteration of the resulting global turn in the study of the Age of Revolutions focuses on globalization and respatialization;³² this perspective relies in part on the longer engagement in global history with the spatial turn and the dialectics of de- and reterritorialization.³³ Far from only providing a backdrop to important developments, it is through this lens that historians can explore a French globalization project that linked the reorganization of the metropole, the nation, and colonies with a world-making project.

Reorganization of Empire

There is a degree of ambivalence between the global and imperial history perspectives used to investigate the French Revolution. Interest in the global has received new attention, even as scholars caution that past historians cared about international competition, the financial system, and global warfare too.³⁴ What is perhaps newly emphasized is the history of the colonies and the reorganization of the empire to manage slave revolts, smuggling, and all sorts of other imperial and transnational challenges. These reforms

30 For questioning the limits or reach of the French Revolution, see Peter Hill, "How Global Was the Age of Revolutions? The Case of Mount Lebanon, 1821," *Journal of Global History* 16, no. 1 (2021): 65–84.

31 For an overview of the global turn and the history of the French Revolution, see Manuel Covo and Megan Maruschke, "The French Revolution as an Imperial Revolution," *French Historical Studies* 44, no. 3 (2021): 371–397. For a transregional perspective on the transformation of the French Empire during the French Revolution, see Megan Maruschke, "The French Revolution and the New Spatial Format for Empire: A Nation-State with Imperial Extensions," *French Historical Studies* 44, no. 3 (2021): 499–528.

32 Megan Maruschke and Matthias Middell, eds., *The French Revolution as a Moment of Respatialization* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019).

33 For global history and the spatial turn, see Matthias Middell and Katja Naumann, "Global History and the Spatial Turn: From the Impact of Area Studies to the Study of Critical Junctures of Globalization," *Journal of Global History* 5, no. 1 (2010): 149–170.

34 See Pierre Serna's cautionary message about this longer historiography in Bell et al., "L'âge des Révolutions," 206–207.

involved both the reorganization of domestic and international space and their delimitation; the Age of Revolutions might have entailed aspects of the first decolonization, but this respatialization did not result in the end of empire.³⁵ The Revolution transformed ancien régime France into a French republic, but it also remained an empire.³⁶ The ancien régime colonial empire survived the French territorial losses that predated the American Revolution and the Seven Years' War, as it preserved control over colonies. Though the empire was small in terms of territory, its pointillist structure spanned from the Caribbean to Senegal to the Indian Ocean. France preserved its colonies throughout the revolutionary decade, and the empire transformed substantially between 1789 and 1815.

The French Empire was not the only imperial power to restructure itself during this period. The British, the Spanish, and the newly established United States of America likewise sought new forms of organization during these decades that, on the one hand, were meant to quell domestic or imperial unrest and, on the other hand, served as mechanisms to expand territorial or commercial sovereignty.³⁷ These empires did so by promulgating constitutions, reforming citizenship, or introducing other rights that more clearly delineated the metropole from the colonies and the citizens from the colonial subjects than had been the case under the ancien régime composite empires. Josep Fradera highlights *specialité* as a ruling principle in which colonies were either excluded from constitutions or had separate constitutions that differed from constitutions applicable in the metropole. For example, though the USA lacked formal colonies, Article 4 of the American constitution designates various types of American space (states and territories). The insular cases later passed by the US Supreme Court reflected this earlier understanding of multiple types of space, including those in which the constitution did not (yet) apply, which had already a strong textual and legal basis in the first decades of the republic, built “atop a vast array of colonial situations.”³⁸ During the Age of Revolutions in the French and Spanish empires, the constitutions applied to the whole space and inhabitants of the empires (through the Constitution of 1795 and the Cádiz Constitution, respectively), though these reflected brief moments in which moving beyond the principle of *specialité* was tested.

There are both a broader and a deeper origin for some of these transformations of French space and its relation to globalization projects. Just as historians of the French

35 Maruschke, “The French Revolution,” 515.

36 See discussion on the relationship between citizenship and empire in Jane Burbank and Frederic Cooper, *Empire in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), chap. 8.

37 Josep M. Fradera, *The Imperial Nation: Citizens and Subjects in the British, French, Spanish, and American Empires*, trans. Ruth McKay (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

38 Fradera, *The Imperial Nation*, 161; for the larger textual context of early US law, the constitution, and political thought, see 154–161.

Revolution look to methodologies and concepts meant to help historians deal with transnationality, entanglements, and circulations, historians who study empire and globalization may also look to the history of the Revolution for inspiration on how empires transformed and the nature of globalization at the turn of the nineteenth century. In terms of the interplay between domestic and international space, or respatialization, I consider three examples briefly.³⁹ The first is the remaking of metropolitan space through departmentalization. Second is the relationship between national markets and international trade. Third is the space of slavery and abolition within an imperial and international framework. Imperial reform was not limited to questions about political rights but to the overall structures of trade and commerce within and across empires as well as inside the metropole. These three topics are not distinct subjects but are interrelated. The French were trading human beings along with other commodities resulting from slave labor. These people found themselves present in the empire and demanded freedom and recognition within the French national project, even from distant colonies.

First, the National Assembly debated and planned departmentalization in 1789, which was a project to dissolve ancient régime provinces and overlapping jurisdictions and to reorganize metropolitan space into evenly divided territorial units.⁴⁰ Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès and Jacques-Guillaume Thouret were early proponents of new administrative divisions and formed the Committee on Division. These new units eventually determined a new relationship between French citizens and the state. Though early proposals imagined these sites as electoral units, they became central to the comprehensive remaking of the citizenry and the unification of France under the new principle of sovereignty of the people. That is to say, “territory would become a resource both for state development and for the spread of revolutionary ideology.”⁴¹ Despite these domestic considerations in 1789, the revolutionary state later (or promised to) departmentalized the colonies. The largely enslaved black population of colonies such as Saint-Domingue were not initially considered potential citizens of France and the colonies, although some colonists argued it was a “province” voluntarily tied to France rather than a colony possessed by France.⁴² Instead, the colonies were meant to govern through their own assemblies. The Constitution of 1795 reaffirmed the Directory’s commitment to abolition and that

39 Maruschke and Middell, *The French Revolution as a Moment*.

40 An important text on the topic remains Marie-Vic Ozouf-Marignier, *La formation des départements. La représentation du territoire français à la fin du 18e siècle* [The Formation of Departments: The Representation of French Territory at the End of the Eighteenth Century] (Paris: ÉHÉSS, 1989).

41 Alan Forrest, “The Reorganization of Administrative Space in France and its Colonies,” in *The French Revolution as a Moment*, eds. Maruschke and Middell, 169–187, at 170. See also Alan Forrest, “Reimagining Space and Power,” in *A Companion to the French Revolution*, ed. Peter McPhee (Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2013), 91–106.

42 Manuel Covo, “One and Indivisible? Federation, Federalism, and Colonialism in the Early French and Haitian Revolutions,” *French Historical Studies* 44, no. 3 (2021), 399–427, at 417.

the colonies were meant to be departmentalized (Title I, Articles 6 and 7). Though on paper they became departments, many of the electoral and administrative meaning that had filled these spaces never materialized.⁴³ By the Constitution of 1799 (year VIII), *specialité* reigned once more in the French colonies. However, for both the revolutionary and Napoleonic states, departmentalization was a project to remake the relationship between spaces and places in the empire.⁴⁴ Under Napoleon Bonaparte, the Council of State revised the judicial and administrative elements of these divisions, which no longer functioned as sites of democratic connectivity between citizen and state but as sites of central administrative oversight. As I argued elsewhere, the restructuring of the metropole—now governed by a sovereign people, or in other words, citizens—was already *the* major shift in the organization of the French Empire, and departmentalization was a key mechanism by which this project was realized.⁴⁵

Second, market reform and international trade reform were central aspects of the French Revolution, though to be sure, certain economic ideas and practices preceded the Revolution. John Shovlin, emphasizing the political power of commerce, shows the extent to which free trade in political policy and concrete projects gained ground in French and British negotiations in the eighteenth century.⁴⁶ These trade talks were to have effects on trade in far-ranging sites, such as across the Channel, in the Caribbean, and in South Asia (through East India Company relations). Shovlin emphasizes that British and French policymakers debated where and when free trade could be a beneficial strategy, rather than centering their policies on all-or-nothing ideals of protectionism versus free trade. Within the metropole too, France remained economically fragmented by internal customs barriers that restricted goods within France from the colonies, as well as goods from other European countries. Shortly after promulgating the Declaration of the Rights of Man, deputies removed customs barriers within France for the grain trade and forbade exports.⁴⁷ Discussions on internal customs were not separated from but instead entangled with questions on the management of imperial and external trade, as Jeremy Whiteman shows. Covo demonstrates the extent to which citizenship, republicanism, liberty of commerce, and departmentalization were all considerations in

43 Bernard Gainot, "The Constitutionalization of General Freedom under the Directory," in *The Abolitions of Slavery: From Léger Félicité Sonthonax to Victor Schoelcher, 1793, 1794, 1848*, ed. Marcel Dorigny (New York: UNESCO Publishing, 2003), 180–196; Miranda Spieler, "Legal Structure of Colonial Rule," *William & Mary Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (2009): 365–408.

44 Or as an ambiguous assimilationist project to move beyond empire, see Bernard Gainot, "La naissance des départements d'Outre-mer: La loi du 1er janvier 1798" [The Birth of the Overseas Departments: The Law of January 1, 1798], *Revue Historique des Mascareignes* 1 (1998): 51–74.

45 Maruschke, "The French Revolution," 516.

46 John Shovlin, *Trading with the Enemy: Britain, France, and the 18th Century Quest for a Peaceful World Order* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021).

47 Jeremy J. Whiteman, *Reform, Revolution, and French Global Policy, 1787–1791* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 145.

a broader debate on global trade and commercial sovereignty in the French republican empire.⁴⁸ A national market and a French globalization project were produced in tandem.

Third, extending citizenship to free people of color and the formerly enslaved (and for that matter, abolishing slavery within the empire) cannot be disentangled from the attempt to stabilize the heart of the French imperial economy, Saint-Domingue's plantation system. French commerce also involved the purchase and sale of human beings. Slavery was at the center of the French globalization project, and Alan Forrest describes in this volume the people and laborers, professional skills and expertise, and the infrastructure and natural resources behind the trade in captured Africans. The question of slavery had however long plagued legal developments between the colonies and metropolitan France. Despite assimilationist tendencies across the empire, the principle of free soil (that presence in certain spaces guaranteed enslaved people their freedom) in the metropole and legal slavery in the colonies signaled a divide between colonial and metropolitan legal traditions.⁴⁹ This long-standing principle of *specialité* became a point of conflict during the early years of the French Revolution in Saint-Domingue as colonists sought a framework for empire that would guarantee their inclusion and representation in the new National Assembly, strengthening the trade relationship with the metropole and simultaneously guaranteeing the continuation of slavery on the island.⁵⁰ These flashpoints on issues related to departmentalization, trade and markets, and free soil and slavery were part of a contentious reorganization of the French globalization project's domestic and international space that resulted in neither the birth of the French nation-state nor simply in the continuation of empire.

The extension of citizenship to black men and the formerly enslaved throughout the empire was entangled with the production of other categories, such as foreigner/alien or refugee/émigré, and subjecthood in the French Empire and beyond.⁵¹ Contemporaries involved in the French globalization project as planters and enslavers constructed themselves as refugees during the Haitian Revolution, fleeing to the USA and Cuba, often with people they claimed as their slaves. Merchants too participated in the lucrative

48 Manuel Covo, *Entrepot of Revolutions: Saint-Domingue, Commercial Sovereignty, and the French-American Alliance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

49 Sue Peabody and Keila Grinberg, eds. *Free Soil in the Atlantic World* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014) (published also as a special issue of *Slavery & Abolition* in 2011); Matthias Middell, "France, the Abolition of Slavery, and Abolitionisms in the Eighteenth Century," in *Enlightened Colonialism: Civilization Narratives and Imperial Politics in the Age of Reason*, ed. Damien Tricoire (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 247–267.

50 Covo, "One and Indivisible?"

51 Jan C. Jansen, "Aliens in a Revolutionary World: Refugees, Migration Control and Subjecthood in the British Atlantic, 1790s–1820s," *Past & Present* 255, no. 1 (2022): 189–231; Michael Rapport, *Nationality and Citizenship in Revolutionary France: The Treatment of Foreigners, 1789–1799* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

trade between Saint-Domingue and the United States, leveraging identities as refugees or as citizens of the USA to do so.⁵² That is to say, elements of the French globalization project in the Atlantic world, as masterfully laid out in this volume by Forrest, involved a number of transnational endeavors, or rather activities, commonly shared across Atlantic economies, including racial slavery and plantation labor. When the continuation of slavery in the French Caribbean was first threatened by enslaved people themselves on the island of Saint-Domingue and later abolished in Paris, applicable throughout the empire, planters had three options, and only two they could stomach. Apart from simply releasing their slaves, they could seek refuge in British-occupied parts of the island where slavery persisted or flee to other sites in the Americas such as Cuba or the USA. Due to the transnational elements that underscored the French project, these actors and many others disentangled themselves from it in varying degrees during the Age of Revolutions, some temporarily and some permanently.

Disentangling from the French Globalization Project

The literature of the last decades has shown the extent to which the revolutionaries behind these national movements were highly mobile: their transimperial connections enabled the very exchange of ideas, military support, and financing that made these revolutions possible. Some of these travelers included well-known figures such as the Marquis de Lafayette or Francisco de Miranda, but these rarer individual trajectories were accompanied by the mobility of lesser-known revolutionaries as well as those simply escaping violence or seeking economic or political opportunities.⁵³

These revolutions, slave revolts, and wars of independence mobilized and rendered mobile the opposition to revolution. At least 60,000 loyalists and escaped enslaved people crossed over British lines during the American War of Independence. White loyalists later brought 15,000 enslaved people with them to other parts of the British Empire.⁵⁴ Many black loyalists freed by Lord Dunmore's decree settled in Nova Scotia, Jamaica, Sierra Leone, and England or were later convicted of crimes in London and

52 Manuel Covo, *Entrepôt of Revolutions: Saint-Domingue, Commercial Sovereignty, and the French-American Alliance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), chap. 8. This resembles the flexible citizenship practices linked to trade opportunities in the northwest between British North America and the USA before the War of 1812: Hatter, *Citizens of Convenience*.

53 See, e. g., Janet Polasky, *Revolutions without Borders: The Call to Liberty in the Atlantic World* (New Haven, 2015); Vanessa Mongey, *Rogue Revolutionaries: The Fight for Legitimacy in the Greater Caribbean* (Philadelphia, 2020); Simeon Simeonov, "Miranda in the Balkans: Decadent Despotism, Consulship, and the Making of a South-Eastern Revolutionary in the Age of Revolutions," *Journal of Global History* 16, no. 3 (2021): 375–394.

54 Estimates from Maya Jasanoff, "Revolutionary Exiles: The American Loyalist and French Émigré Diasporas," in *The Age of Revolutions*, ed. Armitage and Subrahmanyam, 38. See also Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's*

transported to Australia or Sierra Leone, thus transforming the British Empire.⁵⁵ Yet, many loyalists also remained in the USA after independence in 1783, and each state and community dealt individually with their punishment, atonement, and reintegration into American society.⁵⁶ These loyalists who remained did so often by crossing state lines, thereby altering the boundaries of US citizenship as a result.⁵⁷ In short, their politics were transformative for new states and enduring empires alike. Maya Jasanoff has further called on historians to rethink the Age of Revolutions as an age of refugees.⁵⁸ These counterrevolutionaries were no less central than revolutionaries to the respatialization of the Atlantic world and the reform of empire that accompanied these revolutions.⁵⁹

According to Jan C. Jansen—bringing together the scholarship on British loyalists, French émigrés and colonists, and Spanish American exiles—the tumultuous revolutionary era set a quarter million people on the move, often for political reasons.⁶⁰ A subset of the growing literature on the transimperial entanglements during the Age of Revolutions focuses on the mobility of these and other counterrevolutionaries, exiles, and refugees who escaped violence, sought economic and political opportunities within or across empires, or plotted alternative projects.⁶¹ For French refugees from revolutionary turmoil, many had been deeply involved in common elements of the French globalization project that shaped all European colonial endeavors in the New World as members of the clergy, planters, or merchants in the French Caribbean. They engaged in New World missionary work, the slave economy, and colonial commerce, which was shared across the British, Spanish, French, Portuguese, and later American

Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary Atlantic World (New York: Vintage Books, 2011), 351–357. In her book, Jasanoff explains in more detail her estimate of 60,000.

55 Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles*; Cassandra Pybus, *Epic Journeys of Freedom: Runaway Slaves of the American Revolution and their Global Quest for Freedom* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006).

56 Rebecca Brannon, *From Revolution to Reunion: The Reintegration of the South Carolina Loyalists* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2016).

57 Emily Yankowitz, “‘Negative Patriots’: How Former Loyalists’ Movement Between States Shaped the Development of American Citizenship, 1781–1790,” *Age of Revolutions*, February 20, 2023, <https://ageofrevolutions.com/2023/02/20/negative-patriots-how-former-loyalists-movement-between-states-shaped-the-development-of-american-citizenship-1781-1790/>.

58 Maya Jasanoff, “Revolutionary Exiles: The American Loyalist and French Émigré Diasporas,” in *The Age of Revolutions*, Armitage and Subrahmanyam, eds., 37–58.

59 The divide between revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries was easily transgressed as political movements unfolded, and many people fled for reasons that were not ideological. Jan C. Jansen, “Flucht und Exil im Zeitalter der Revolutionen: Perspektiven einer atlantischen Flüchtlingsgeschichte (1770er–1820er Jahre)” [Flight and Exile in the Age of Revolutions: Perspectives on an Atlantic Refugee History (1770s–1820s)], *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 44, no. 4 (2018): 495–525.

60 Jansen, “Flucht und Exil,” 495–496.

61 For refugees’s alternative projects, see, e. g., Jan C. Jansen, “American Indians for Saint-Domingue?: Exile, Violence, and Imperial Geopolitics after the French and Haitian Revolutions,” *French Historical Studies* 45, no. 1 (2022): 49–86.

projects. These refugees of revolutions in the British and Spanish cases revitalized and transformed the empires to which they fled, but in the French case, reviving the French Empire through the movement of French refugees remained an unrealized plan.⁶² Instead, the French refugees contributed to the settler colonialism and slave societies of Cuba and the USA. They disentangled themselves, some only temporarily, from a French project to remain active in these elements of transatlantic and New World empire that the French Revolution disrupted: trade networks, relations with Rome, and the continuation of racial slavery.⁶³

The French experienced several avenues and pathways of flight. Excluding from this chapter the extensive research done on the history of flight within Europe, the metropolitan French and the Caribbean French both fled the empire in large numbers for the USA during the 1790s.⁶⁴ Starting in 1791, the white population of Saint-Domingue began leaving the island to escape the violence of the first uprisings. The height of such evacuation took place in 1793 during the Battle of Cap-Français. Over 100 ships left for US port cities with an estimated 4,000 refugees following the burning of the city.⁶⁵ In many respects, this flight was unorganized and spontaneous. Some colonists had not planned their city of arrival. Even so, these destinations were dependent on long-standing transimperial features of the French globalization project: the deepening trade relations between American port cities and Saint-Domingue since at least the American Revolution as well as the commercial and financial interpersonal relationships that sustained these networks.⁶⁶ The second reason these locations were attractive was

62 For Britain, see Keith Mason, “The American Loyalist Diaspora and the Reconfiguration of the British Atlantic World,” in *Empire and Nation: The American Revolution in the Atlantic World*, eds. Eliga H. Gould and Peter S. Onuf (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 239–259; Jassenoff, *Liberty’s Exiles*; for Spanish American exiles and the long-standing loyalty to the crown in the Caribbean, see Nicolás Alejandro Gonzáles Quintero, “The Monarchical Caribbean: Tomas Wood, Exiles, and Royalist Strongholds during the Spanish American Independence Wars,” *World History Connected*, February 2019, https://worldhistoryconnected.press.uiillinois.edu/16.1/forum_quintero.html; for France: Manuel Covo, “Why Did France Want Louisiana Back? Imperial Schemes, Political Economy, and Revolutionary Ventures in a Caribbean Borderland,” in *The French Revolution as a Moment*, eds. Maruschke and Middel, 23–46, at 42.

63 For the question of clergy, see the ongoing research by Miriam Franchina on the role of the Catholic Church in Saint-Domingue: Miriam Franchina, “A Transatlantic Battle of Robes: French Priests in the Haitian Revolution,” *French History*, 2022 advance access, <https://doi.org/10.1093/fh/crac002>.

64 For a comprehensive history of the exile from France, see Friedemann Pestel, *Kosmopoliten wider Willen: Die ‘monarchiens’ als Revolutionsmigranten* [Cosmopolitans against Their Will: The “Monarchiens” as Revolutionary Migrants] (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015).

65 Gary B. Nash, “Reverberations of Haiti in the American North: Black Saint Domingueans in Philadelphia,” *Pennsylvania History* 65 (1998), 44–73, 48–49.

66 Alan Forrest outlines the assistance from a prominent French-American merchant in Philadelphia, Stephen Girard, in his contribution to this volume. For a longer analysis of the trade networks and later flight, see Covo, *Entrepot of Revolution*.

the persistence of a plantation economy based on racial slavery in the USA after the American Revolution. These white refugees, apart from the violence of the Haitian Revolution, were also fleeing the local and later empire-wide abolition of slavery. They used their social positions, business ties, and kinship networks to bring people they enslaved with them to locations such as the US south where they could continue to hold other humans in bondage.⁶⁷

Some planters chose to reintegrate into the French project when the opportunity presented itself. Already in 1793, the National Convention in Paris agreed that while metropolitan émigrés were enemies of the French Revolution, the Caribbean refugees portrayed themselves and were largely perceived in France as apolitical victims of slave revolt and colonial warfare.⁶⁸ In the early stages of the French Revolution, the Assembly had already taken steps to establish a pension for earlier neglected refugees of colonial territorial losses. Approximately 30 years after the loss of these territories in the Seven Years' War, the National Assembly of France issued a law of restitution in 1791 to support Acadian and Canadian civilian and military officers and their families through the disbursement of pensions.⁶⁹ For the newer French refugees from colonial turmoil in Saint-Domingue, a list was drawn up and a fund was established to rectify lost "property" for those families who returned to France. By 1798, many of the French exiled across Europe, North America, and the Caribbean by the French and Haitian revolutions had arrived in metropolitan France after years spent seeking refuge outside the confines of the French Empire. These include some of the Saint-Domingue refugees who fled to the USA and/or Caribbean colonies like Jamaica and Cuba.⁷⁰

Many of the planters who had either brought enslaved people with them as they fled or who had hopes of returning to Spanish, French, or British Caribbean colonies stayed on in the Americas. Even if for some their stay was short lived, the French presence in American society in the 1790s as well as the presence of French people of

67 See ongoing research from Frances Bell, including "'Thrown into this Hospitable Land': Saint-Dominguans in Virginia, 1796–1870," *Age of Revolutions*, January 26, 2021, <https://ageofrevolutions.com/2021/01/26/thrown-into-this-hospitable-land-saint-dominguans-in-virginia-1796-1870/>.

68 Ashli White, *Encountering Revolution: Haiti and the Making of the Early Republic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 119.

69 Christian Ayne Crouch, "The French Revolution in Indian Country: Reconsidering the Reach and Place of Atlantic Upheaval," in *The French Revolution as a Moment*, eds. Maruschke and Middell, 85–105, 89.

70 Refuge seeking often involved multiple stops and destinations, and some refugees spent time in these locations before traveling to the USA or subsequently left the USA for Caribbean destinations. Refugees generally arrived in Jamaica as prisoners after being captured by the British during their journey. For French exiles in the USA, see Darrell Meadows, "The Planters of Saint-Domingue, 1750–1804: Migration and Exile in the French Revolutionary Atlantic" (PhD thesis, Carnegie Mellon University, 2004).

color had a large impact on American society.⁷¹ After 1793, French refugees continued to arrive on American shores. In 1809, the French planters who had reestablished themselves on another island of Caribbean slavery, Cuba, were expelled following the Napoleonic invasion of Spain. They found themselves on the move, especially toward New Orleans, with their “domestics.”⁷² These enslaved people were trafficked, with the acknowledgement of Congress, into the USA despite the 1807 US ban on the international slave trade.⁷³ Further French refugees from the Napoleonic empire arrived on American shores from Europe and the Caribbean in 1815, who followed in the footsteps or rather joined the economic ventures and community of prior French refugees.⁷⁴

A number of transatlantic infrastructures supported their movement and integration across empires. Masonic lodges in the British and Spanish Caribbean and North America proved to be important sites where French refugees could make use of and rebuild their social networks in exile across empires.⁷⁵ While lodges helped the French to move beyond the confines of French territory, other lodges formed important connective functions for strengthening ties across the British Empire.⁷⁶ In American towns such as Philadelphia, local churches that catered to French needs and philanthropic societies helped to foster financial support for the refugees while also providing them with social networks. Several infrastructures that had supported national and competing imperial projects were also structures refugees used to dislodge themselves from the French Empire while still finding fraternity on the move.

Other American-wide institutions such as slavery and the exclusion of people of color from political projects in the revolutionary Atlantic created fractures in the French community. Over the course of the 1790s, French black people and people of color increasingly sought refuge and community in “African” churches, such as Philadelphia’s

71 François Furstenberg, *When the United States Spoke French: Five Refugees Who Shaped a Nation* (New York: Penguin Press, 2014); Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia’s Black Community, 1720–1840* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 134–171.

72 For the movement to New Orleans, see Nathalie Dessens, *From Saint-Domingue to New Orleans: Migration and Influences* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007).

73 Andrew J. Walker et al., “Impunity for Acts of Peremptory Enslavement: James Madison, the U.S. Congress, and the Saint Domingue Refugees,” *William & Mary Quarterly* 79, no. 3 (2022): 425–452.

74 Rafe Blufarb, *Bonapartists in the Borderlands: French Exiles and Refugees on the Gulf Coast, 1815–1835* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2005).

75 Cécile Révauger and Charles Porset, eds., *Le Monde maçonnique des Lumières: Europe, Amériques et Colonies* [The Masonic World of Enlightenment: Europe, Americas, and Colonies] (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2013); Jan C. Jansen, “Brothers in Exile: Masonic Lodges and the Refugees of the Haitian Revolution, 1790s–1820,” *Atlantic Studies* 16, no. 3 (2019): 341–463.

76 Simon Deschamps, “From Britain to India: Freemasonry as a Connective Force of Empire,” *E-rea: Revue électronique d’études sur le monde anglophone* 14, no. 2 (2017), <http://journals.openedition.org/erea/5853>; Jessica L. Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire: Freemasonry and British Imperialism, 1717–1927* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

Mother Bethel.⁷⁷ Many people who had technically been freed by local and Parisian decrees outlawing slavery remained enslaved and were brought to Cuba, Jamaica, or the USA. In Philadelphia, which had a law of gradual abolition in place since the 1780s, the Pennsylvania Abolition Society helped to indenture many of the enslaved French people who had been granted freedom under the law, and the French consul tried to establish freedom suits from outside the formal boundaries of the French Empire. Still, many remained enslaved after their journey to the USA. Some arrived not as (or rather with the so-called) refugees but had been coerced by American captains in Martinique and Saint-Domingue who tricked black people with the promise of employment and sold them into enslavement in the USA, as Ashli White details, leading Toussaint Louverture in 1801 to issue a proclamation in American newspapers against the kidnapping of French citizens from his colony.⁷⁸ After independence, Haitian statesmen from both the Haitian kingdom and the republic sought to counter the persistence of slavery and the slave trade in the Caribbean and wider Atlantic.⁷⁹ They moreover attempted, rather unsuccessfully, to entice black Americans to seek refuge from the racist exclusion of American society in Haiti.

White French refugees continued their involvement in slavery and settler colonialism in the USA and the Caribbean. At times, their ventures furthered US interests, and sometimes their activities were aimed at the recovery of a French project. The US land grants to Canadian refugees of the American Revolution, which came to fruition in the 1790s, along with the boom (and bust) of private land schemes for French exiles in western Pennsylvania further exacerbated the displacement of native peoples, who were violently uprooted by US settler colonialism and warfare.⁸⁰ As François Furstenberg argues, from the US interior looking east, the period from 1754 to 1815 represented a single continuous struggle of native peoples to maintain control of the trans-Appalachian West, not a period of distinct revolutions and warfare.⁸¹ In part enabled by French military losses in the region of North America, French settlers

77 Gary B. Nash, "Reverberations of Haiti in the American North: Black Saint Domingans in Philadelphia," *Pennsylvania History* 65 (1998): 44–73.

78 White, *Encountering Revolution*, 152.

79 Chelsea Stieber, *Haiti's Paper War: Post Independence Writing, Civil War, and the Making of the Republic, 1804–1954* (New York: New York University Press, 2020); Marlene L. Daut, *Baron de Vastey and the Origins of Black Atlantic Humanism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Ferrer, "Haiti, Free Soil, and Antislavery."

80 Evan Taparata, "No Asylum for Mankind: The Creation of Refugee Law and Policy in the United States, 1776–1951," (PhD thesis, University of Minnesota, 2018); Evan Taparata, "Refugees as You Call Them": The Politics of Refugee Recognition in the Nineteenth-Century United States," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 38, no. 2 (2019): 9–35; for the French in Azilum, Pennsylvania, see Frances Childs, *French Refugee Life in the United States* (Baltimore, 1940).

81 François Furstenberg, "The Significance of the Trans-Appalachian Frontier in Atlantic History," *The American Historical Review* 113, no. 3 (200): 647–677, at 650.

continued to live in the region, and French officers shaped Spanish policies. French refugees played a particular role as active agents in the European common effort to push west, and French policymakers continued to harbor dreams of reestablishing an official French presence, at least until the sale of Louisiana to the USA.⁸²

Citizen Genêt, the revolutionary minister plenipotentiary of France to the USA, was not the only high-ranking French official to stir up a filibuster soon after his arrival to the country in 1793. His plot involved the seizure of Spanish New Orleans. New Orleans and Louisiana territory had long been connected to the centrality of Saint-Domingue within the French Empire.⁸³ Another part of his scheme involved outfitting French corsairs for warfare in the Caribbean in French efforts to maintain control over Saint-Domingue. All the while, American trade in Saint-Domingue increased substantially in this decade.⁸⁴ Following Haitian independence, in 1806, another French ambassador to the USA, Louis Marie Turreau de Garambouville, penned a plan after the independence of Haiti that was never put into action but would have involved French refugees and Native Americans retaking the island for France.⁸⁵ The dream of a revitalized French Empire in Louisiana and Saint-Domingue lost its luster only gradually.

A large gap exists in the French historiography on empire between the loss of Saint-Domingue and the invasion of Algeria in 1830, especially as the European Napoleonic empire appeared so disconnected from the concerns of overseas colonial efforts.⁸⁶ Myriad French efforts seemed to flounder or contradict one another as republican, authoritarian, and monarchical forms of state sovereignty fluctuated in the metropole. French imperial policies remained in flux for many decades after the fall of the Napoleonic empire, and though formal French territories had steadily decreased since the Seven Years' War, this territorial contraction can hardly be understood as the end of any French globalization project.⁸⁷ The French remained busy between Mexico and the invasion of Algeria.⁸⁸ French slave traders continued to traffic Africans to the New World well into the nineteenth century, long after the transatlantic trade was rendered

82 Covo, "Why did France Want Louisiana Back?"

83 Furstenberg, "Significance of the Trans-Appalachian Frontier," 668; Covo, "Why did France Want Louisiana Back?"

84 For a longer-term perspective on American and French trade in Saint-Domingue, see Covo, *Entrepôt of Revolutions*.

85 Jansen, "American Indians for Saint-Domingue?"

86 Christophe Belaubre, Jordana Dym, and John Savage, eds. *Napoleon's Atlantic: The Impact of Napoleonic Empire in the Atlantic World* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

87 David Todd, "A French Imperial Meridian, 1818–1870," *Past & Present* 210, no. 1 (2011): 155–186; Alan Forrest, *The Death of the French Atlantic: Trade, War, and Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

88 Edward Shawcross, *France, Mexico and Informal Empire in Latin America, 1820–1867: Equilibrium in the New World* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

illegal, as Mary Lewis has recently shown.⁸⁹ While the French settler and planter lobby remained unsuccessful in its desire to see Saint-Domingue restored as a French colony, French merchants were eager to reestablish legal trade with an independent Haiti. These commercial agents shaped French recognition of Haitian independence and the 1825 indemnity that has irreparably damaged the Haitian state and economy to this day.⁹⁰

Conclusion

This chapter explored several features of disentangling the histories of the Age of Revolutions. Historians have played an important role in framing the significance of these revolutions in global history narratives, leading to new understandings of these events and their importance for intellectual inquiries of the present. The “discovery” of the Haitian Revolution as a central moment in the Age of Revolutions made even clearer the myriad actors, spaces, overlaps, and impacts of the entangled and comparable French and American revolutions in global history. This historical intervention opened the door for conversations about the relationship between empires, nations (or nation-states), and world-making projects in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. At least some of the legacies of these events are still with us today, and therefore this period of intense change—of economic, political, and social crisis—is perpetually a site of historical interrogation and revision.

In many ways, the French globalization project was indistinguishable from the French Empire in this period. France maintained its colonies during the French Revolution and remained an imperial power long after. Significant elements of this project either operated transnationally or were common features across all New World empires, despite particularities: racial slavery, the transatlantic slave trade, privateering, soldiering, planting and farming, and missionary work, to name a few. Though on the surface it appears that historians of the global turn in the history of the French Revolution have been focusing on (even “fetishizing”) connections and entanglements, they have been doing so cognizant of the many ways these interconnections were attempts by contemporaries to disentangle one’s family and fortune from a French globalization project, by declaring the independence of Haiti or by resettling in other empires. I do not mean to overemphasize disconnection, as we have seen that even French people of color in the USA could remain active in French or Spanish endeavors long into the

89 Mary Dewhurst Lewis, “Repairing Damage: The Slave Ship *Marcelin* and the Haiti Trade in the Age of Abolition,” *The American Historical Review* 125, no. 3 (2020): 869–898.

90 Mary D. Lewis, “A Commercial (Neo)colony? The Role of the Merchant Lobby in France’s Recognition of Haitian Independence,” *Age of Revolutions*, June 20, 2022, <https://ageofrevolutions.com/2022/06/20/a-commercial-neocolony-the-role-of-the-merchant-lobby-in-frances-recognition-of-haitian-independence/>.

nineteenth century.⁹¹ These strategic maneuvers across empires highlight the precarity but not the singularity of a French globalization project in the 1790s.

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Robert Aldrich

France in the Indo-Pacific in the Long Nineteenth Century

People of soldiers and apostles,
Pioneers along all roads,
Illuminating the path for others,
Preparing for all the tomorrows!
This glory is yours above all,

Warrior and Christian France
Whether with terrible or s benign gaze;
It is you who were chosen by God
To rejuvenate old Asia
And awaken the Orient!

Henri de Bornier¹

In 1863, the now forgotten but then popular writer Henri de Bornier published a 20-page poem entitled “La France dans l’Extrême Orient,” which earned the 30-year-old author—dramatist, critic, and later director of the Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal—a prize from the Académie française. After evoking once grand Asian civilizations now fallen into somnolence and decadence, the work enjoined de Bornier’s compatriots to awaken the “Far East” and reap the rewards. The missionary was the *héros de la foi*, destined to bring the Gospel if on occasion also to receive the crown of martyrdom. The trader would open the doors to commerce, “ces portes qu’il veut nous fermer—que les brise” (these doors that he [the Asian] wishes to close to us—let them be broken down). For the soldier, “le jour de l’épée est venu! Soldats, la cause est bonne et juste la conquête” (the day of the sword has arrived! Soldiers, the cause is good, and the conquest is just). The poet also summoned the scientist, the legislator, and the scholar to support the

1 Original in Henri de Bornier, “La France dans l’Extrême Orient” [France in the Far East] (Paris: Charles Douniol, 1865): “Peuples-soldats, peuples apôtres, Pionniers de tous les chemins, Éclairant la marche des autres, Préparant tous les lendemains! Cette gloire est surtout la tienne, France militaire et chrétienne, A l’œil terrible ou souriant; C’est toi qui par Dieu fus choisie, Pour rajeunir la vieille Asie, Et pour réveiller l’Orient!”

cause because “ta plus puissante arme, ô France, c’est ton âme” (your most powerful arm, o France, is your soul).²

De Bornier’s work reiterates ethnocentric tropes about Asia and boasts about France’s mission and glory with his clarion call sounding at a time of rising European engagement with the “East.” In the decades before the publication of his poem, Western aggression had forced China and Japan to “open” to trade and political influence. Engineers were building the Suez Canal, and Ferdinand de Lesseps had plans for another through the Central American isthmus—new maritime routes predicted to revolutionize global commerce and geopolitics. De Bornier’s poem, outlining a wide-ranging French globalization project, captured the sentiments of pro-colonial elites in the France of a Napoleon III imbued with dreams of France’s global vocation.

Not everyone, it should be stressed, was convinced by such arguments about the value of colonies in general, or action in Asia in particular; socialists thought that revolutionary change at home was the goal, while many on the right wing after 1871 felt that recovery of the “lost provinces” of Alsace and Lorraine and defense against a united and increasingly powerful Germany should be a priority. In the mid-1880s, a government in Paris fell because of charges of overextension in Asia. Asia was not the favored terrain for French endeavors for all commentators, even after the creation of a French colonial empire there. Most notably, the geographer Onésime Reclus in 1904 published a book with an incendiary title: *Lâchons l’Asie, prenons l’Afrique* (Let Us Drop Asia, Let Us Take Africa). “Le ciel de l’Extrême-Orient n’est pas pour nous un ciel serein” (the Asian sky for us is not a serene sky), he warned, writing in the year of a war between Japan and Russia in which the former was gaining advantage. No matter the remarkable achievements of French colonizers in Indochina, Asia lay too far away, outside the French grasp, too much terrain for powers more ambitious and powerful than the French to take (“Russians, English, Yankees, Japanese”). To these geopolitical dangers, he added racist comments about “l’homme dit mongoloïde [qui] es en moyenne petit, atténué, laidement féminin” (the so-called Mongolian man [who] is in general small, weak, effeminately ugly), traits the author contrasted with what he considered the athleticism and strength of Africans whom he had seen at universal exhibitions in Paris. France, for Reclus, should turn its attentions away from distant and inhospitable Asia and concentrate on an Africa where a powerful French presence could be revived and thrive.³ Despite such negative views, actions and arguments contrary to those of Reclus continued to champion the consolidation of France’s colonial, diplomatic, commercial, and cultural influence in Asia, though the debate over the

² Bornier.

³ Onésime Reclus, *Lâchons l’Asie, prenons l’Afrique: Où renaître? Comment durer?* [Let Us Drop Asia, Let Us Take Africa: Where to be Reborn? How to Last?] (Paris: La Librairie universelle, 1904), 25, 30.

relative value of France's stakes there versus its stakes in Africa would reoccur at the time of decolonization.

This chapter considers France in Asia, and the wider Indo-Pacific, in the long nineteenth century.⁴ *Indo-Pacific* as a term has gained currency in the early twenty-first century to cover the vast geographical and cultural region extending at its broadest from the west of the Indian Ocean to the east of the Pacific, an even greater expanse than encompassed by the veteran term *Asia-Pacific* and the still older (and Eurocentric) term *Far East* (or *Extrême-Orient*, in French). Enormous disparities mark societies that cover well over half the territory and population of the world, but "Indo-Pacific" is convenient and, within limits, credible as a formulation because of present-day political and economic stakes and because of the trajectories through which European powers moved into the Indian Ocean from the 1500s and then further into Asia, Australasia, and the Pacific islands. Earlier movements created bases for later European colonization and spheres of influence across oceans and continents. Merchants, politicians, and ideologists, as well as navigators, linked these disparate outposts together in imperial theory and practice, although there is relatively little recent historical work that seeks to draw the regions together.⁵

Several specific aims in French actions in the long nineteenth century can be identified. The first, quite simply, was the desire to gain a place in the "eastern" sun, in particular with the acquisition of colonies in Southeast Asia and the South Pacific and with an extension of French holdings in the Indian Ocean. Since France still did not control in 1840 any island or continental possessions in eastern Asia or Oceania and thus held an inferior position compared to Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, and Britain, the establishment of colonies for advocates of engagement with the region was a priority. Paris soon found landfalls in the South Pacific, but not until the 1860s did the French begin to carve out an empire in Southeast Asia. Trading posts, promoters promised, would provide access to the silks, porcelain, tea, spices, and other primary and manufactured goods of the Orient so coveted in Europe.

A second aim was successful competition with France's rivals and enemies. Anglo-French rivalries motivated many of the moves of both the French state and private interests; it should be remembered that, despite periods of amity and indeed of inter-imperial collaboration (as seen during the Second Opium War [1856–1860]), France and Britain remained potential enemies until the Entente Cordiale of 1904. Britain had a commanding position in Asia with bases in India, Ceylon, Penang, and Singapore, as well

4 The chapter expands on a keynote lecture at a conference organized by the Institute for French-Australian Studies, subsequently published as Robert Aldrich, "From the French East India Company to the French in the 'Indo-Pacific,'" *The French Australian Review* 70 (2021): 4–19.

5 John F. Cady, *The Roots of French Imperialism in Eastern Asia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1954), published the year of French withdrawal from Vietnam, provided a pioneering overview of the French in the Far East.

as the Australian continent, by the early 1800s. France was playing catch-up and jousting for position in places ranging from Burma to the Southwest Pacific. From the 1880s, Germany emerged as a new regional rival and possible enemy, an especially worrying situation for Paris as Berlin began its own moves to gain colonies in the Pacific Ocean and concessions in China, and transformed into an industrial and financial powerhouse. France's defeat at the hands of the Prussian army in 1870 continued to rankle, and by the end of the nineteenth century, commentators bemoaned that Germany was besting France in trade from China to Australia.⁶

A third objective was the effort by the French to gain a share of trade and influence in Japan and China. China, with its huge territory, population, and resource base, loomed as a land of unbounded stakes for foreigners, and the decline of the Qing Empire in the late nineteenth century foreshadowed for some the potential fragmentation and takeover of the country by outside powers. In part, French actions in the South Pacific at mid-century and then in Vietnam evidenced hopes that the colonies in Oceania or the rivers in Southeast Asia would provide pathways to lucrative commercial and political spoils in the Qing Empire. Japan was a new and promising terrain as well, and a vogue for all things Japanese (including the artistic mode of *japonisme*) added to the enthusiasm for the “land of the rising sun.”

A fourth objective for the French was the penetration of the Indo-Pacific with French culture: an end in itself, but also a means for governing colonial territories, winning influence elsewhere, and competing with Anglo-Saxon and other cultures. Even in an increasingly secular age, the work of Catholic missionaries underscored the role of religion as a conduit for French culture and influence. The heralded *mission civilisatrice* both exemplified genuine belief in the benefits of European modernity and provided a façade for rapacious and violent acquisition of land, resources, and labor. Summing all this up, the overarching goal was to maintain and strengthen France as a great power: to advance French *grandeur*. The narrative of French greatness was by no means a new one, nor was the notion of a specific, exceptional sort of French vocation though it took different forms during the ages—among other manifestations, the glory of the monarchy, the spread of Catholic Christianity by the “eldest daughter of the Church,” the aggrandizement of French territory within Europe and the extension of its political and commercial power overseas, the spread of the ideals of the Enlightenment and the Revolution of 1789. French thinkers and political elites, more than in any other country in Europe in late modern history (with the exception of Britain and, at certain moments, Germany), regarded their *patrie* (fatherland) as possessing a world-historical role. Although it is anachronistic to quote Charles de Gaulle in the context of the nineteenth century, his vision that “la France n'est réellement elle-même qu'au premier

6 Bert Becker, *France and Germany in the South China Sea, c. 1840–1930* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), is an excellent analysis of big-power political and commercial rivalries.

rang” (France is really herself only when in the first rank) and that “la France ne peut être la France sans la grandeur” (France cannot be France without greatness) encapsulates a sentiment inherited from many of his forebears.⁷

Globalization, long before that word became common currency, was a self-appointed mission advanced by the theorists and practitioners of French foreign and colonial policy, depending on the militancy of its promoters—and their (limited) victory over dissidents who argued that the costs were too high, the priorities were misplaced, or the methods deployed (including warfare, systematic violence, slavery, and dispossession and exploitation of indigenous peoples) were immoral. Expansion in the Indo-Pacific, as elsewhere, totaled more than the sum of its parts. One part incorporated official state strategies and military campaigns, with decisions sometimes taken on the spot by admirals and generals, or by legates and consuls, rather than by senior policy-makers in Paris. The “colonial lobby” in France grouped together public and private cohorts that promoted (and frequently directly benefitted from) the extension of French interests—the lure of great profits for businessmen; accelerated careers for administrators and military officers; boosted electoral fortunes for politicians; and fame for explorers, academics, novelists, and artists.⁸ Actors and promoters of French initiatives thus encompassed various groups in French society, in some cases reflecting regional or sectoral interests: missionaries with a vocation to convert non-Christians, merchants hoping to make money from trade, industrialists searching for raw materials, business communities such as the silk industry in Lyon,⁹ the shipping companies of Bordeaux and Marseille, and leading financial institutions in Paris.¹⁰ A great diversity of individuals, adventurers among them, became involved in the Indo-Pacific. The role of expatriate “ordinary” people—such as tailors, dancing teachers, wine merchants, and bakers—in waving the flag from Singapore to Sydney should not be underestimated. The French “presence,” in short, depended not only on the state but also on particular groups and on random individuals in the Indo-Pacific. The informal or nonstate actors, hacking their way through jungles or setting up shop in outposts far from the metropole, were by no means the least important in projecting and promoting ideas about France and Frenchness, especially in countries over which France lacked formal dominion.

7 Charles de Gaulle, *Mémoires de guerre* [Memories of War], vol. 1, *L'Appel* (Paris: Plon, 1954), 1–2.

8 Stuart Michael Persell, *The French Colonial Lobby, 1889–1938* (Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1983); Robert Aldrich, “Le Lobby colonial de l’Océanie française” [The Colonial Lobby of French Oceania], *Revue française d’histoire d’Outre-Mer* 76, no. 284/285 (1989): 411–424.

9 Jean-François Klein, *Un Lyonnais en Extrême-Orient: Ulysse Pila, vice-roi de l’Indochine (1887–1909)* [A Lyonnais in the Far East: Ulysse Pila, Viceroy of Indochina (1887–1909)] (Lyon: Éditions lyonnaises d’art et d’histoire, n.d.).

10 Hubert Bonin, *French Banking and Entrepreneurialism in China and Hong Kong: From the 1850s to 1980s* (London: Routledge, 2020), and *Banking in China (1890s–1940s): Business in the French Concessions* (London: Routledge, 2020).

The military officers, businessmen, missionaries, settlers, journalists, scholars, deputies, and officials—the list is very long—involved in the French “push” into the Indo-Pacific were decisive in formulating and legitimizing France’s national involvement in the region in several ways. First, through their publications, meetings, speeches, and exhibitions they spread an awareness about often little-known countries, tirelessly undertook propaganda to vaunt the promise these places held for the French, devised plans for “development,” and frequently played, in a jingoistic fashion, on perceived slights to French citizens or to the nation’s honor by indigenous rulers and subjects or by European rivals. The role of individuals in influencing policy—an energetic consul, missionary, or trader—should not be underestimated, especially when he served as one of the only “experts” on the ground, but they also represented sectoral interests of, for example, the church or particular industries.

Second, individuals organized as an effective though never unified nor stable lobbying force. Groups such as the veteran Société des Missions Étrangères de Paris (SMEP) (and more generally the Catholic Church); the navy and army; the chambers of commerce (particularly of port cities); and entrepreneurs such as bankers and silk manufacturers wielded a clout that could inflect government policy. Promoters came together by the early twentieth century into such associations as the Comité de l’Asie française and the Comité de l’Océanie française to coordinate activities and leverage greater recognition of their objectives. Leaders from Napoleon III to Jules Ferry, and ones beyond, proved receptive to the views propounded.

Third, promoters of French efforts took advantage of growing interest throughout Europe (and North America) in Asia and the Pacific, seen in the consolidation of the British Asian empire, forays by new international powers into the region and military campaigns to force open trade in Japan and secure spheres of influence in China as well as to gain colonies, as well as a craze for “Far Eastern” consumer goods and culture. The parameters of these actions and the degree of influence individuals and groups exercised differed from period to period, as did precise objectives and strategies, but certain continuities from the 1600s until the 1900s can be discerned.

From the Old to the New Regime

The foundations for French activities in the Indo-Pacific in the long nineteenth century were laid in the old regime, even if by comparison with several other peoples, the French were late starters. The British and the Dutch challenged the dominant position of the Iberians in Asia with the foundation of their East India companies in the first years of the 1600s, but only in 1664, after a series of earlier fits and starts, did the French have a firmly established Compagnie des Indes Orientales. A year earlier, the foundation of the SMEP gave French Catholics a prime position in missionary activities in Asia, despite competition from Jesuits (whose numbers already in Asia included Frenchmen),

and SMEP priests within a few decades set up fledgling mission stations from Siam and China to the Himalayas.¹¹ Indeed, in the early modern period and in many places for long afterward, the most widely spread cohort of Frenchmen in the Indo-Pacific were Catholic priests. Missionary and merchant activities went hand in hand in the globalizing political aspirations, missionary support, and economic policy of Jean-Baptiste Colbert. The visits of French delegations to the Siamese capital of Ayutthaya, the return visits to Louis XIV's Versailles by Siamese ambassadors in the late 1600s, and the establishment of a "factory" in Surat in India in 1668 were emblematic of the new interest. The building of the aptly named new Breton port of Lorient testified to French long-term intentions in Asia. The French "system," if it can be so labeled, depended on the demand for the commodities from the "East," on the theory of mercantilism that mandated state support for trade by chartered companies and the carving out of areas for commercial monopolies, on diplomatic overtures to Asian rulers to negotiate access, on the promotion of missionary work, on the rivalry with the British and Dutch, and eventually on the acquisition of enclaves or islands as French sovereign bases.

In 1715, France took the uninhabited island (abandoned by the Dutch) that it renamed the Île de France (today's Mauritius), which provided a launching pad for activities in the Indian Ocean and further eastward. The energetic Pierre Poivre—former seminarian, naturalist, and colonial administrator—hoped to acquire plants from the East Indies, acclimatize them to the Île de France, and thus make the French a competitor in the precious spice trade. The plan did not succeed, but the Île de France attracted explorers and philosophers, as well as planters and slave traders; sugar was produced, as in the West Indies, with the labor of enslaved Africans and Malagasy. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's tragic tale of *Paul et Virginie*, published in 1788, bespoke fascination with faraway lands and tropical climes, building on the accounts of European navigators in the South Pacific, such as Bougainville, which had captivated the French since the 1760s.

The year prior to the appearance of *Paul et Virginie* was marked in France by the visit to the court of Louis XVI of adolescent Prince Nguyen Phuc Canh, heir of the emperor of Annam (Vietnam), escorted by Bishop Pigneau de Béhaine of the SMEP. French Catholic missionaries had evangelized Vietnam since the Jesuit Alexandre de Rhodes had landed there in 1624. The young prince and the aging prelate hoped to secure French aid to help the embattled Vietnamese emperor; the French agreed to an expedition. Arriving in 1789, French officers provided training to the Vietnamese military for several years and designed a citadel in Saigon, but the early years of the French Revolution hardly proved propitious for greater French involvement.

11 Gilles Van Grasdorff, *La belle histoire des Missions étrangères, 1658–2008* [The Beautiful History of the Foreign Missions, 1658–2008] (Paris: Perrin, 2007) offers a thorough if not very critical general history.

Meanwhile, in South Asia, French conquerors and merchants made minimal gains and suffered reverses in efforts to gain territory and to challenge the expanding British East India Company during the mid- and late 1700s. The British also repulsed a French invasion of Ceylon in 1782. By the end of the century, hopes for a large French empire on the subcontinent were unrealistic. France nevertheless clung to five small and disconnected posts: the poetic sounding Pondichéry, Mahé, Karikal, Yanaon, and Chandernagore. Paris indeed retained the *comptoirs de l'Inde* until after the Second World War, but they played a greater role in colonialist discourse than in any real benefits they provided.¹²

The French East India Company was a key actor in the French economy for a century, the commercial and political fulcrum for French involvement in the Indo-Pacific, and a vital link in the tripartite state-sponsored coalition of church, crown, and commerce that linked France to the Indies and lands beyond. Its multifarious activities encompassed exploration and scientific investigation, trade, military campaigns, diplomacy, and acquisition of land, and its routes provided conduits for the spread of French political and cultural influence as well as trade goods. The French company nevertheless exemplified the racist perspectives, violence, exploitation, and often corruption that marked all of the East India companies. Profits from the trade enriched French merchants and investors, planters gained wealth from slave labor in the Indian Ocean, and the monarchy and the state treasury earned handsome revenues from the company's customs and taxes. French consumers developed a taste for the products and décor of the "East." The company continued to hold a monopoly on trade east of the Cape of Good Hope until 1790 (only to be liquidated four years later), proof of its longevity as well as its power.¹³

With the end of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, renewed fantasies about ejecting the British from South Asia vanished, and France in 1810 had lost the Île de France to Britain (though keeping the neighboring La Réunion). In the early decades of the nineteenth century, France had thus become a vestigial power in Asia. The attention of many merchants and state policy-makers turned to Africa. Proximity, prior contact, slave trading and the hope of locating and exploiting new riches in the interior of the continent rivetted attention. The old trading posts on the west African coast and, from 1830, Algeria provided lands of hope, and colonialists promised glory as well as profit. However, as will be seen, travelers, scholars, energetic consuls, business people, and

12 Anne Raffin, *Republican Citizenship in French Colonial Pondicherry, 1870–1914* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022), esp. ch. 1; see also Jacques Weber, *Pondichéry et les comptoirs de l'Inde après Dupleix* [Pondicherry and the Indian Trading Posts after Dupleix] (Paris: Denoël, 1996) and *La France et l'Inde des origines à nos jours* [France and India from the Beginnings until Today], 4 vols (Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2019–2022).

13 Philippe Haudrère, *Les Compagnies des Indes orientales: trois siècles de rencontre entre Orientaux et Occidentaux (1600–1858)* [The East India Companies: Three Centuries of Encounters between East and West (1600–1858)] (Paris: Les Éditions Desjonquières, 2006).

politicians never ceased to pursue French involvement in Asia and Oceania, and to promote to sometimes skeptical fellow citizens the idea of a “Greater France” extending to Asia and the Indian and Pacific oceans. In their view, after the turn away from the Americas, a turn east to Asia was as necessary as the turn south to Africa. This was more imperative with the gains being made by the British since London’s own shift of geographical focus. Ever larger parts of India had fallen under the control of France’s main rival, as did Ceylon (fully so in 1815), and southern Burma (from the 1820s). Further east, Britain expanded its colonies to encompass Penang Island off the western coast of the Malayan peninsula in 1786, New South Wales in 1788 (and subsequently the remainder of Australia), Singapore in 1819, and Hong Kong in 1842. With the Spanish entrenched in the Philippines and the Dutch in the East Indies, France was a lesser player among the Europeans. A steady stream of French explorers, La Pérouse, d’Entrecasteaux, and Baudin, among others, following in the wake of earlier eighteenth-century navigators, continued to explore the South Pacific and coasts of Australia and Asia; new knowledge for naturalists, navigators, and social scientists perhaps counterbalanced the lack of territory and trade for the French.¹⁴ Undaunted and, in fact, gaining renewed vigor with early nineteenth-century Catholic revivalism, missionaries remained the most omnipresent Frenchmen in the Indo-Pacific.¹⁵ The task for colonialists and other policy-makers in the nineteenth century was, effectively, to build a formal and informal French empire in the “East.”

Reestablishing France in the Indo-Pacific: The Mid-Nineteenth Century

In the first decades of the nineteenth century, lack of will and wherewithal constrained French expansion in the Indo-Pacific, other than for the continuing work of explorers and the missionaries whose efforts now reached into the islands of Oceania as well as throughout Asia. European continental affairs and, from 1830, the conquest of Algeria further diverted the attention of the state away from more distant places.

Greater initiative was pursued under François Guizot, foreign minister from 1840 to 1848. Guizot promoted the takeover of overseas *points d'appui* or *points de relâche*, islands that could provision navy and merchant ships with water and food (and steamships with stockpiles of coal). Moreover, they would become hubs for expansion of commerce and political spheres of influence and, it was hoped, would offer commercially exploitable

14 John Dunmore, *Visions & Realities: France in the Pacific, 1695–1995* (Waikanae, New Zealand: Heritage Press, 1997), and John West-Sooby, ed., *Discovery and Empire: The French in the South Seas* (Adelaide: University of Adelaide Press, 2013), provide introductions.

15 On the important new missionary orders in Lyon, including their activities in Asia and Oceania, see Yannick Essertel, *L'Aventure missionnaire lyonnaise, 1815–1962* [Lyon's Missionary Adventure, 1815–1962] (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2001).

agricultural or mineral resources of their own. French colonists in 1840 established an outpost at Nossi-Bé off the northwestern coast of Madagascar, and the following year acquired Mayotte, located in the Comoros archipelago in the channel between Madagascar and the eastern African coast. These moves secured ports on burgeoning Indian Ocean trade routes, complementing La Réunion though they failed to provide large territorial expanses or major local commodities.

In the South Pacific, France had been smarting from the 1836 expulsion of two Catholic missionaries from Tahiti, most legendary of the Polynesian islands, by Queen Pōmare IV under the influence of a British Protestant missionary, and also from the British takeover of New Zealand—British colonizers pipped a private French expedition aiming to set up a colony there—in 1840. So, in 1842, a French admiral forced a protectorate on the kingdom of Tahiti (including the Society Islands) and, for good measure, annexed the Marquesas Islands further north. In the 1840s, the French similarly took interest in New Caledonia, but not until 1853, under Napoleon III, did Paris annex the New Caledonian mainland and then the Loyalty Islands. New Caledonia provided a *point d'appui* in the Southwest Pacific, and French authorities intended to use it as well as a penal colony, copying (though, they claimed, perfecting) the system of penal colonization Britain had pioneered (but by then largely abandoned) in Australia. New Caledonia seemed a more salubrious location for prisoners and warders than the “green hell” of Guiana.¹⁶

Colonial expansion in the 1840s and early 1850s thus gave France acquisitions in the Southwest and Southeast Pacific that looked particularly valuable during a period of gold rushes in North America and Australia; rapid colonial development in the Australian colonies; the “opening” of China and Japan; and claims of the commercial and geopolitical ascendancy of the Pacific. The indigenous populations of the islands, as colonized peoples elsewhere, paid a high price for European takeover. Profound transformations in Tahiti had already begun in the late 1700s with the landing of explorers, missionaries, and traders, and French conquest accelerated the process with colonial administration, law codes, and economic exploitation. Europeans had mixed appraisals about Polynesians—though “savages,” their impressive physical attributes prompted comparison with ancient Greeks—while the darker-skinned Melanesians of New Caledonia were viewed far less positively. On the New Caledonian mainland, the French seized control of over nine-tenths of the land area, confining Melanesians (or Kanaks) to the less fertile and more tropical areas of the eastern coast to free up land for convicts and free settlers. The dispossessed Melanesians became increasingly marginalized; resistance, particularly a major rebellion in 1878, was militarily suppressed.

Notwithstanding expansion in the Indian Ocean and the South Pacific, France at mid-century still lacked a sovereign base in eastern Asia. France had piggybacked on

16 Robert Aldrich, *The French Presence in the South Pacific, 1842–1940* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990).

Britain's victory in the First Opium War (1830s–1840s) to secure trade privileges in China with the Treaty of Whampoa in 1844 and a “concession” in Shanghai in 1848; concessions technically were not colonies, but with rights to trade, missionary activity, settlement, and all-important legal extraterritoriality, the differences were not readily apparent. The concession was arranged by a delegation dispatched by Guizot and led by Théodore de Lagrené, a diplomat who may well be considered the key actor in French “penetration” of China for his negotiations in Beijing and, back at home, his robust lobbying for an enhanced French presence in China. Writings by Lagrené and other members of the delegation—such as Auguste Haussmann's capacious *Voyage en Chine, Cochinchine, Inde et Malaisie*, published in 1848—also introduced the French public to Asian countries.¹⁷

For some time, French expansionists had been scouting for an island colony, in line with Guizot's policy. Such islands as Phu Quoc, off the coast of Cambodia, and Poulo Condore, off southern Vietnam, were mooted as potential outposts (and indeed came under French control later in the century), but attention in the 1840s focused on Basilan in the Sulu archipelago, south of the Philippines. Ruled by sultans but nominally claimed by Spain, Basilan appeared a good prey for capture, and the French landed forces there in 1847. Strong opposition from Madrid and the Spanish colonial government in Manila forced their speedy withdrawal, and the July monarchy came to an end without France filling the Asian lacuna in its colonial portfolio.¹⁸

Napoleon III, prince-president in 1848 and emperor after a coup d'état three years later, harbored grand international designs for France and adopted a more aggressive policy than his predecessors.¹⁹ In addition to the *prise de possession* in New Caledonia, he sent French troops into Italy and Crimea, sponsored an ill-fated European empire in Mexico, pursued the colonization of Algeria, and promoted territorial expansion in western Africa. The search for a substantial Asian base continued, with the realm of the emperor of Annam increasingly in French sights. Vietnam enjoyed a strategic location on the South China Sea, remaining unclaimed by other European powers; colonial

17 Chuan-hui Mau and Pierre-Étienne Will, eds., *Missions au pays de la soie: l'ambassade Lagrené (1843–1856) entre science, commerce et diplomatie* [Missions in the Land of Silk: The Lagrené Embassy (1843–1856) between Science, Trade, and Diplomacy] (Paris: Collège de France, 2018).

18 Xavier Huetz de Lemp, “Une pénétration commerciale manquée: La France aux Philippines du milieu des années 1810 au milieu des années 1840” [A Failed Commercial Penetration: France in the Philippines from the Mid-1810s to the Mid-1840s], *Illes et imperis* no. 23 (2021): 127–151; Aileen S. Mendiola-Rau, *The Philippines and France: Discovery, Rediscovery* (Manila: French Embassy in the Philippines, 2019); Denis Nardin, *France and the Philippines from the Beginning to the End of the Spanish Empire* (Manila: National Historical Institute, 1989).

19 Dominique Barjot and Jean-François Klein, eds., *Rencontres impériales: l'Asie et la France. Le “moment Second Empire”* [Imperial Encounters: Asia and France. The “Second Empire Moment”] (Paris: Maison-neuve & Larose/Hémisphères, 2023), published just as the present chapter was being completed, offers an extensive overview and numerous valuable case studies of this period.

promoters hoped that the Mekong River and other waterways would provide navigable access to the much-desired treasures of China. There was a long history of French engagement with Vietnam, dating back to the missionaries in the 1600s; occasional persecution of Catholics in the 1800s offered a *casus belli* for potential French attack.²⁰ That came within a conjuncture of wider colonial military action in eastern Asia.

In the late 1850s, French forces joined the British and Spanish in waging war on the Qing Empire. The Second Opium War, or Arrow War, remains infamous, in particular, for the sacking of the Chinese emperor's "Summer Palace," which forced Beijing to accord further concessions of trading privileges and territory to foreigners. The unsettled situation in China provided an opportunity for a French strike on Vietnam. In 1859, French gunboats attacked ports in the southern part of the country and occupied much of the Mekong delta. The French forced the emperor of Annam to cede three provinces, centered on Saigon, in 1862 (and subsequently other provinces), which they annexed as the colony of Cochinchina. Taking advantage of a crisis in Cambodia, whose king feared intervention by the Siamese (who already controlled a substantial part of historical Khmer territory), the French in 1863 established a protectorate over that country.²¹ By the early 1860s, therefore, France by military means and strong-armed coercion had acquired a major territory in Southeast Asia. Cochinchina would serve as a platform for further expansion to central Vietnam (Annam proper, with the imperial capital of Hue) and Tonkin (northern Vietnam, with the major city of Hanoi).

In mid-century, the French had meanwhile sought advantage in Japan. France, like Britain, sent in warships to coerce the Tokugawa regime to sign treaties and commercial agreements giving Europeans similar rights to the Americans. The major French involvement was the construction of a dockyard and the building of ships; the Yokosuka facility formed part of Japan's military modernization. The decade after the mid-1850s saw growing French interests, but the French compromised their position when, in the late 1860s, they backed the Tokugawa government against those seeking a restoration of the Meiji emperor to full power; indeed, one of the prominent supporters of the shogun on the island of Hokkaido was a renegade French military officer. Later in the century, French diplomats largely repaired the relationship and established an amicable situation for trade. The French exercised other influence as well—Tokyo engaged a French

20 The literature on the French in Vietnam and, more generally, in Indochina, is enormous. Good starting points are Pierre Brocheux and Daniel Hémery, *Indochina: An Ambiguous Colonization, 1858–1954* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), and Christopher E. Goscha, *The Penguin History of Modern Vietnam* (London: Allen Lane, 2016).

21 On the French in Cambodia, see John Tully, *Cambodia under the Tricolour: King Sisowath and the 'Mission Civilisatrice' 1904–1907* (Clayton, Vic.: Monash Asia Institute, 1996); Gregor Muller, *Colonial Cambodia's 'Bad Frenchmen': The Rise of French Rule and the Life of Thomas Caraman, 1840–1887* (London: Routledge, 2006); Penny Edwards, *Cambodge: The Cultivation of a Nation, 1860–1945* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), and the various works of Milton Osborne.

jurist to codify Japanese law, for instance—yet Britain and Germany also competed for positions in the rapidly transforming country.²²

By the end of the Second Empire, in 1870, France was indubitably a power in the Indo-Pacific through its islands in the Indian Ocean and enclaves on the Indian subcontinent, islands in the South Pacific, promising new domains in Vietnam and Cambodia; the entrée to China and Japan; and, as will be seen, some success in establishing a presence in other countries as well. The ignominious defeat in a war with Prussia in 1870–71 put plans for greater expansion in Asia on hold. A nascent colonial lobby in Germany, spearheaded by trading firms, called for the cession of Cochinchina to Germany as part of the peace settlement. A Frenchman serving as an informal intermediary between Chancellor Otto von Bismarck and Empress Eugénie (acting as regent of France after the Prussian capture of her husband) entered into discussions with an indication of willingness to give up France's Southeast Asian colony and even other outposts, possibly in return for the withdrawal of the German demand for Alsace and Lorraine and a reduction in reparations. Bismarck was uninterested in Cochinchina or, in fact, in German colonial expansion in general; the offer was rejected. France retained Cochinchina and Cambodia. In later years, in hopes of effecting a rapprochement with a humbled France and preclude an Anglo-French alliance, Bismarck threw support behind French expansion in Indochina, while Germany nevertheless remained an intense rival of France for commercial gain in the Indo-Pacific.

French Indo-Pacific Colonies in the Late Nineteenth Century

Interest in the Indo-Pacific (though, it should be repeated, the term was not then current) grew even stronger in the last decades of the nineteenth century, even as colonialists commenced the “scramble for Africa.” Efforts continued in Asia and the South Pacific to divide up unclaimed territory, even small and remote islands, and to struggle for spheres of influence. After a period of *recueillement* (reflection) following the war against Prussia, the upheaval of the Paris Commune, and debate about the benefits of costly overseas expansion, the French again began to seek advantage in the Indo-Pacific. The reasons lay in enduring rivalry with Britain and new competition with Germany, the lobbying by merchants (and particularly the Lyonnais silk industry in the case of Indochina), and the perceived imperative for imperial possessions that permeated European political elites of various stripes.²³

22 Richard Sims, *French Policy towards the Bakufu and Meiji Japan, 1854–1895* (London: Routledge, 1998).

23 On geopolitical rivalries and on French expansion in Southeast Asia, see Kees van Dijk, *Pacific Strife: The Great Powers and Their Political and Economic Rivalries in Asia and the Western Pacific* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), chapters 11–12.

In Southeast Asia, efforts focused on enlargement of the French colonial empire. New treaties forced on the emperor of Annam resulted in a “protectorate” over central Vietnam by the mid-1870s, with the French then looking toward Tonkin, ruled as a viceroyalty of the emperor of Annam. Since the Mekong River, it had been discovered, could not be navigated into China, it was hoped that the Red River in Tonkin would provide an alternative route for gaining advantage in southern China. A dispute between a French trader and Vietnamese authorities provided an excuse for an invasion of Tonkin in 1873, but the expedition leader, François Garnier, was famously killed in battle. France gained relatively little from the fighting: opening of the Red River area to trade and authorization to station small garrisons in Hanoi and Haiphong.

A decade later, the French made another assault on northern Vietnam, and the mid-1880s can be seen a crucial moment in French undertakings in Asia. Jules Ferry, appointed prime minister in 1883 and strongly supported by the colonial lobby, was an ardent promoter of expansion in Asia. The government had sent Henri Rivière to Vietnam to investigate various political issues in the early 1880s, and a military conflict soon developed. The Vietnamese enlisted the support of the Chinese and Black Flag Army soldiers in resistance. To make a long story short, circumstances from a decade previously were reprised when Rivière was killed—becoming a martyr like Garnier for comrades and colonialists—but the French fought on in Vietnam, concentrating on the Chinese frontier, and, for good measure, invaded the island of Taiwan and briefly occupied two cities there. An uprising against the French began in Hue in 1885, with the young emperor spirited away from the capital by insurgents resisting the French. But French forces stationed in Hue, supported by reinforcements, defeated the resistance, dethroned the absent emperor (and later tracked down, captured, and exiled him), and installed a new vassal, establishing a full protectorate over Annam and Tonkin.

By the 1880s, French timber merchants had become active in Upper Burma. Known for its tropical hardwoods and gemstones, Burma was a landlocked kingdom after Britain had taken control of the south of the country in wars in the 1820s and 1850s; the British domination created some sympathy for the French in the court of Mandalay.²⁴ Countering British influence and securing profitable logging rights, as well as potential colonial expansion, prompted the French to become involved. Fearing that the French might take over the region bordering India, the British moved in, annexing Upper Burma in 1885 (and, in action paralleling the French in Vietnam, dethroning and exiling the Burmese king). France thus consolidated its suzerainty over Vietnam but lost out on advances in Burma. Expansion came at a political cost for “Ferry le Tonkinois” (the nickname given to Jules Ferry), one of its prime movers, as his government fell in

24 Philippe Preschez, *Les Relations entre la France et la Birmanie au XVIIIe et au XIXe siècles* [Relations between France and Burma in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries] (Paris: Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1967); Lipi Ghosh, “French Economic Enterprises in Theebaw’s Burma (1878–1885),” *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 51 (1990): 714–720.

1885 in reaction to the cost and overextension of the French. Somewhat paradoxically, the colonialist lobby was emboldened and support for the empire strengthened, despite dissidence.

In 1887, Paris joined together, under a governor general, the colony of Cochinchina and the protectorates of Cambodia, Annam, and Tonkin.²⁵ France in the early 1890s then took over territories west of the Mekong River, the principality of Luang Prabang, and several other polities that became Laos, which was also integrated into “Indochine française.”²⁶ Colonialists credited French extension into Laos largely to Auguste Pavie, a consul who prided himself on having negotiated a peaceful submission of local rulers to the foreigners.²⁷ French action in Laos nevertheless brought it into conflict with Siam, which also claimed rights; the Franco-Siamese War (1893) achieved Siamese recognition of French overlordship in Laos. Siam itself looked as if it might be divided between the British to the west and the French to the east, but the resilience of the Siamese monarchy and a point of view in London and Paris that it was better to keep the kingdom as a buffer zone preserved its independence.²⁸ France (like Britain) nevertheless forced the Siamese to cede territory, including in 1907 the province that contained Angkor Wat and other important Khmer sites. Meanwhile, European pressure on a weakened China scored the French a lease on the enclave of Guangzhouwan—which produced little real benefit for the French despite fantasies of turning it into a Gallic version of Hong Kong—in 1898, as well as several further “concessions” in China.²⁹

Indochina, by far the largest French colonial territory in Asia by size, population, and wealth, provided the pivot for French involvement in the Indo-Pacific. Vietnam produced large quantities of rice, coal and, from the early twentieth century, rubber.³⁰

25 “Indochine Française” was an administrative convenience, while the French division of Vietnam into the three separate entities of Cochinchina, Annam, and Tonkin represented a refusal to recognize the cultural and political unity of that country. See Christopher E. Goscha, *Going Indochinese: Contesting Concepts of Space and Place in French Indochina* (Copenhagen: NIAS, 2012).

26 Martin Stuart-Fox, *A History of Laos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), and Søren Ivarsson, *Creating Laos: The Making of a Lao Space between Indochina and Siam, 1860–1945* (Copenhagen: NIAS, 2008), provide good introductions.

27 Hélène Simon, *Auguste Pavie, explorateur en Indochine* [Auguste Pavie, Explorer in Indochina] (Rennes: Éditions Ouest-France, 1997).

28 Patrick Tuck, *The French Wolf and the Siamese Lamb: The French Threat to Siamese Independence, 1858–1907* (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1995); Nigel J. Brailey, *Imperial Amnesia: Britain, France and “The Question of Siam”* (Dordrecht: The Republic of Letters, 2009); Andrew Walker, “Borders in Motion on the Upper Mekong: Siam and France in the 1890s,” in Yves Goudineau and Michel Lorillard, eds., *Recherches nouvelles sur le Laos* (Paris: EFEO, 2008), 1–26.

29 Antoine Vannière, *Kouang-Tchéou-Wan, colonie clandestine* [Kouang-Tchéou-Wan, a Clandestine Colony] (Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2020).

30 Pierre Brocheux, *Une histoire économique du Vietnam: la palanche et le camion, 1850–2007* [An Economic History of Vietnam: The Palanka and the Truck, 1850–2007] (Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2009); Kham Voraphet, *Commerce et colonisation en Indochine, 1860–1945* [Trade and Colonization in Indochina,

The Banque de l'Indochine, whose interests spread well beyond Indochina, grew into one of the most powerful French financial institutions, and many other metropolitan businesses, such as trading and shipping companies from Bordeaux and Marseille, were profitably involved in Indochina. Saigon and Hanoi became bustling cities remodeled along the lines of French urbanism, each with grand government and business buildings, a cathedral, theatre and other amenities, and a neat grid of newly laid out streets next to the precolonial cities. French planters, having dispossessed Vietnamese of large amounts of land, earned profits on the back of indigenous laborers who worked in miserable conditions. Police and the military enforced control and claimed "pacification." Eventually 30,000 or so French men and women resided in Indochina, and migrants also arrived from the French enclaves in India. The French built a rail line from the northern Vietnamese port of Haiphong to the Chinese city of Kunming, in Yunnan, in pursuit (with limited success) of commercial and political domination in southern China.³¹ The ports of Haiphong and Saigon were tied to trade routes to Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and ports in Australia and the Pacific islands. Colonial rhetoric proclaimed the inestimable value of Indochina (even if Cambodia and Laos provided far more limited horizons than Vietnam), as well as the benefits the French were both deriving from and bringing to the territories. They also publicized the exotic charm of France's realm in the *Extrême-Orient*. Images of Angkorian sites, the beauties of Halong Bay, the Buddhist temples of sleepy Luang Prabang, and verdant rice paddies continued to animate French fantasies. The dispossessed, disenfranchised, and exploited Asians had different perspectives.

In the South Pacific, the French mined a newly identified resource—nickel—in New Caledonia, which contained one of the world's largest deposits; nickel was in high demand as an alloy for steel, other industrial uses, and coinage. French judges continued to send convicts to New Caledonia, tarnishing the reputation of the colony, until the 1890s, when transportation ended in hopes of attracting more free migrants. In eastern Polynesia, France gradually took over several other archipelagos to add to the Society Islands (whose monarch was deposed in the 1880s) and the Marquesas Islands as the *Établissements Français de l'Océanie* (now French Polynesia). Phosphate, another subsoil resource in high demand, was mined on the island of Makatea, and the development of plans for a Panama Canal prompted advocates to hype the advantages of Polynesian ports in the age of steamships and transpacific commerce. Lobbyists such as Paul Deschanel, a future president of France, argued that the twentieth century would see the geopolitical and economic axis of the world shift from the Atlantic to the Pacific and that France must make the most of the opportunities in Oceania and Asia.

1860–1945] (Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2004); Michitake Aso, *Rubber and the Making of Vietnam: An Ecological History, 1897–1975* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018).

31 Robert Lee, *France and the Exploitation of China, 1885–1901: A Study in Economic Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) focuses on the railway.

France faced competition in the South Pacific, as elsewhere, from the British and, in the 1880s, from the Germans and Americans; the Germans moved into Melanesia and Micronesia, and they and the Americans divided up the islands of Samoa. Fearing the Germans might spread even further, France took control of the small islands of Wallis and Futuna (in the Central Pacific), where French Catholic missionaries had already established a virtual theocracy in the 1830s, despite a near total lack of significant commercial resources. Another island group of contention was the New Hebrides, north of New Caledonia. Planters and missionaries (competing Catholics, Anglicans, and Presbyterians) from New Caledonia and Australia set their eyes on the archipelago in a bout of Oceanic “subimperialism” and established coconut and other plantations there. An imperial *modus vivendi* eventuated only in 1906 in one of the stranger colonial arrangements. Under a condominium status, neither Britain nor France claimed sovereignty, while each stationed a resident in the New Hebrides’s main town, with the height of the representatives’ flagpoles calculated to be equal. Foreigners “opted” to come under either British or French law; pounds and francs circulated as currency. A British and a French judge sat on the local tribunal, with a third judge appointed by Spain for some years (on the grounds that a Spaniard was the first European to sight the islands). The stateless indigenous population was used as labor but denied political rights. This “pandemonium,” as it was branded, endured until the independence of the New Hebrides, as Vanuatu, in 1980.

French empire-builders at the end of the 1800s made two moves in the Indian Ocean, proclaiming a protectorate over Madagascar—an island slightly larger than France itself—and then turning it into a colony in the mid-1890s. British and Protestant interests had been more substantial than those of the French merchants, missionaries and a handful of settlers, but Britain nevertheless acquiesced to French takeover. The agricultural and mining resources of the Grande Île, along with its large land area and population, promoted grandiose plans for development, migration, and hoped-for profits; as elsewhere the indigenous populations suffered from French exactions.³² In the channel west of Madagascar, the French also moved from Mayotte to take over the remainder of the diminutive Comoros archipelago.

The Mixed Results of French Efforts Elsewhere in the Indo-Pacific

The French project in the Indo-Pacific is sometimes seen largely in terms of colonial conquest. However, the French, through both state-led and private initiatives, were also deeply involved in countries such as Japan and China; space is lacking here for

32 Eric T. Jennings, *Perspectives on French Colonial Madagascar* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Solofo Randrianja and Stephen Ellis, *Madagascar: A Short History* (London: Hurst and Company, 2009).

discussion of those areas.³³ Suffice it to say that French legates and business people, in particular, continued to work for commercial and political advantage right through the long nineteenth century, their overtures engineered through negotiations, treaties, and, in the case of China, military intervention during the Boxer Rebellion.

Elsewhere, close connections between the administration and commercial interests rendered boundaries between official and unofficial moves porous; the French state indeed relied on individual merchants and expatriates and also, as it had traditionally done, and in some places still did, on missionaries to further national interests. Such figures served as agents of French penetration, purveyors of French lifestyles, and exemplars of French culture. They could incarnate French *génie* and advance French *grandeur*—to use words beloved by colonialists—even if the risk existed that they could also embroil France in conflict and scandal. It is not possible to canvass all actions of the French state and private individuals (and indeed much more research needs to be done to document and analyze the range of cases and experiences), but brief overviews of the Dutch East Indies, British Malaya, Korea, and Australia show how French people fanned out across the Asia-Pacific in the nineteenth century. They, in effect, represented France (at least in an unofficial capacity), projecting notions of French life and culture and carrying their impressions of Asia back to the metropole.

French rule over the Dutch East Indies, when the Netherlands came under the dominion of Napoleon, covered only a brief interregnum, but gave the French time to create a new parade ground, baptized the Champ de Mars, and the Club Harmonie in the capital of Batavia (now Jakarta). The area around the club remained a French micro-*quartier* even after the Dutch regained control. One shop of a French tailor selling *prêt à porter* and military clothes, opened in 1823, lasted for a century, and the precinct included a shoe shop, bakery, watch and spectacles shop, housewares emporium, perfumery-cum-beauty salon, and wine shop all operated by Frenchmen. Traveling French actors and singers performed in Batavia, and patrons could take refreshments in the French Café du Théâtre. The city's premier hotel, called the Hôtel de Provence when it opened in 1829 and then the Hôtel des Indes, was similarly French run. Such businesses, as well as French language, music, and dancing teachers, advertised in *La Lorgnette*, a French-language newspaper that managed to publish 43 issues during

33 See Bernard Brizay, *La France en Chine: Du XVII^e siècle à nos jours* [France in China: From the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day] (Paris: Perrin, 2013); Nicole Bensacq-Tixier, *La France en Chine de Sun Yat-sen à Mao Zedong* [France in China from Sun Yat-sen to Mao Zedong] (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2014); J. Weber and F. de Sesmaisons, eds., *La France en Chine, 1843–1943* [France in China 1843–1942] (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2013); and *La Soie & le Canon: France–Chine 1700–1860* [Silk & Cannon: France–China 1700–1860] (Paris: Gallimard / Musée d'Histoire de Nantes, 2010). On Japan, Sims, *French Policy towards the Bakufu and Meiji Japan*; J.-M. Thiébaud, *La Présence française au Japon: du X^e siècle à nos jours* [French Presence in Japan: From the Fifteenth Century to the Present Day] (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008).

5 months between 1875 and 1876. The short life of the periodical no doubt reflects the small size of the French community in Batavia, but the services proffered by the French leave no doubt that for the European and Eurasian elite, France was associated with food, wine, entertainment, and culture.

Elsewhere in the East Indies in the 1820s, the SMEP optimistically had sent a missionary to Muslim Sumatra and then three priests to the still animistic island of Nias in the next decade; converts were few. In 1838, an entrepreneurial Marseille trader shipped Sumatran pepper to Penang, to Singapore, and also back to France. The following year, when another French merchant was killed in an altercation with a trader from Aceh, the French did not hesitate to dispatch a gunboat from La Réunion to burn the Sumatran village. The sultan of Aceh, in conflict with the Dutch, nonetheless appealed for an alliance with France. The French did not follow up, and by the 1850s, French interest in trade and political relations with Aceh was waning, yet Paris maintained a consulate there from 1856 to 1865.

In the 1870s, French interests in the East Indies owed much to one particular individual, François-Xavier Brau de Saint-Pol Lias. A Paris lawyer and banker, Brau joined Paris colonial and geographical societies, traveled overseas, set up companies in Java and Sumatra and in the Malay states that later came under British dominion, and publicized the region in his books. According to Anthony Reid, “his numerous writings depict the opportunities in these countries in glowing terms,” and “Brau saw himself as a French pioneer at the colonial frontier.” He devised plans for a tobacco plantation at Deli (eastern Sumatra) and with business associates whom he recruited, prospected for gold on the island. Despite meagre returns, Brau “remained obsessed with the elusive promise of Sumatra” before transferring his designs to the Southeast Asian mainland by the early 1880s.³⁴ His multiple undertakings illustrate the possibilities that not only motivated men in the “wild east” of Southeast Asia but also represented more of a personal project than a concerted French globalizing one.³⁵ French officials made no moves to colonize any part of Sumatra; the Dutch finally extended their control over the whole island by waging war on Aceh at the end of the century.

Further French initiatives, more private than state driven, took place in parts of Southeast Asia dominated by the British. The SMEP had founded a school and seminary at their Siamese base, Ayutthaya, in 1658; after several moves in the 1700s, it ended up on the island of Penang in 1809, a bit over two decades after the British acquired

34 A. Reid, “The French in Sumatra and the Malay World, 1760–1890,” *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 129, no. 2/3 (1973): 195–238.

35 Bernard Dorléans, *La France et l’Indonésie* [France and Indonesia] (Paris: Kailash, 2002); Denys Lombard, “Voyageurs français dans l’Archipel insulindien, XVIIe, XVIIIe, XIXe siècles” [French Travelers in the Insulindian Archipelago, Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth Centuries], *Archipel* 1 (1971): 141–168, and “Une gazette en français à Batavia: ‘La Lorgnette,’ 1875–1876” [A French Gazette in Batavia: “La Lorgnette,” 1875–1876], *Archipel* 9 (1975): 129–134.

the island. The French operated a school for local children, with nuns arriving from France in 1852 and the French building an impressive church there in 1857. (More than 120 schools founded by French missionaries continue in operation in Malaysia today.) French ships called at Penang's port for trade, and a handful of Frenchmen settled there.³⁶

The SMEP was also present in Singapore, and occasional Frenchmen set up shop. In 1839, a French-named man opened the London Hotel, as well as the colony's first photo studio and theatre. There were two French dentists at the end of the 1830s. By 1871, 51 French people lived in Singapore amidst the total population of 96,000. The French community, still only 128 people 40 years later, included a confectioner, hairdressers, the owner of a sardine cannery, the holder of the franchise for Michelin tires, and the operator of a cinema. The small number of expatriates belies important business interests. The great entrepot in Southeast Asia, Singapore attracted several large French firms. The Messageries Maritimes opened an agency in 1862, its passengers and cargo soon steaming east via the Suez Canal, Aden, and Colombo. Another shipping company, Chargeurs Réunis, operated a regular route to Singapore by 1900. Five years later, the Banque de l'Indochine, hitherto represented only by an agent, established dedicated offices in the same building housing the Messageries Maritimes and Michelin, and staffed them with employees from Indochina and French India. British companies and entrepreneurs overshadowed French ones, but in agriculture, mining, banking, and shipping, as well as such trades as wine marketing and baking, French business-people played some role in the colony.³⁷

Frenchmen appeared elsewhere in the Straits Settlements, including those active in mining tin, one of Malaya's most significant exports. Two men working as engineers (but also publishing ethnological research), Jacques de Morgan and John Errington de la Croix, partnered with Brau in the 1880s to set up what became one of the major tin-mining companies in Perak, joined by three other French mining companies. The Corsican Joseph Bastiani, a sailor on the Messageries Maritimes lines, took up residence in Singapore at the suggestion of Joseph Conrad, and in 1874 he set up a pineapple cannery, opened a boarding house, and began importing French wine, cheese, and other comestibles, then expanding into soft drinks and construction materials; he worked in the colony almost continuously until 1902. The Bordelais Léopold Chassériau operated a sugar plantation for 20 years from 1855; he then established a 1,200-hectare tapioca plantation, planted coffee and pepper, and processed gutta percha. The best-known Frenchman in the Straits Settlements was Henri Fauconnier, from a family of cognac

36 "The French Trail in Penang," a guide developed by the French Embassy in Malaysia: <https://petace.gov.my/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/trailbooklet-Englishfinalprint.pdf>.

37 Maxime Pilon and Danièle Weiler, *The French in Singapore: An Illustrated History* (Singapore: Didier Millet, 2012); J. Sig. D. Rawlins, "French Enterprise in Malaya," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 39, no 2 (1966): 50–94.

distillers in the Charente. After working as schoolteacher in Britain, the 26-year-old moved to Singapore in 1905, obtained a concession for a plantation on the mainland, and amassed considerable wealth from rubber and palm oil. He lived in Malaya until the 1920s (but served in the French army during the First World War [1914–1918]). Literary fame came when his novel *Malaisie*, a portrait of plantation life and evocation of Malay attitudes (the novel was translated as *The Soul of Malaya*), received the Prix Goncourt, France's most prestigious prize for writing, in 1930.³⁸

Another site for French initiatives was Korea. The French presence there effectively dates from the end of the 1830s and the arrival of the first SMEP missionaries, wearing disguises to enter incognito a “hermit kingdom” hardly eager for evangelization. The next three decades saw increased missionary activity despite persecution and occasional execution of foreign priests and local converts. Such actions provided a rationale for French military intervention. After the execution of seven missionaries in October 1866, the French sent in a small fleet from the Far East Squadron in the South China Sea (supplemented by a detachment of troops based in Japan), commanded by Rear Admiral Pierre-Gustave Roze. Their mission was to rescue remaining missionaries, who had actually already escaped to China, and the commander promised vengeance for the earlier death of French clerics. Meanwhile, the French chargé d'affaires in Beijing, Henri de Bellonet, threatened Chinese imperial authorities—Korea was formally a Chinese tribute state—that France would occupy Korea. French ships bombarded the coast, and troops disembarked on Gangwha Island at the mouth of the Han River, in search of a base from which to attack Seoul; the Frenchmen occupied a fortress and pillaged and burned the town. The Koreans mounted a counteroffensive with forces greatly outnumbering the French; efforts by Roze to invade the mainland proved unsuccessful. After a month, the French retreated and sailed away. The French commander “spun” his action into claims of successful chastisement. The French took with them 23 cases of silver and gold ingots, lacquer and jade, as well as 297 books and manuscripts; several thousands of other volumes and scrolls had been destroyed by fire. (The books remained in the Paris Bibliothèque Nationale until they were sent back on indefinite “loan” in 2011.)³⁹

Perhaps because of this aggression, not until 1886 did France and Korea negotiate a treaty, several years after the Japanese, British, and Americans. It provided for the

38 See Srilata Ravi, “Adventure in Malaya: Henri Fauconnier and French Orientalism,” *Asia Europe Journal* 1 (2003): 419–432.

39 Jean-Marie Thiébaud, *La présence française en Corée de la fin du XVIIIe siècle à nos jours* [The French Presence in Korea from the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present Day] (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005); Pierre-Emmanuel Roux, *La croix, la baleine et le canon: La France face à la Corée au milieu du XIXe siècle* [The Cross, the Whale, and the Cannon: France and Korea in the Mid-Nineteenth Century] (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2012); Daniel C. Kane, “Bellonet and Roze: Overzealous Servants of Empire and the 1866 French Attack on Korea,” *Korean Studies* 23 (1999): 1–23.

appointment of a French consul in Seoul, Victor Collin de Plancy. The son of a Jesuit priest known for writings on the occult, Collin (“de Plancy” was a noble pretense) had entered the consular service after his graduation from the *École des langues orientales* and had been posted to Shanghai. After a year in Korea, he was transferred to Japan but returned to Korea as consul and ultimately minister for a decade from 1896. Collin more than anyone else established a renewed French presence in Korea and indefatigably promoted the little-known Asian country back in France.

Several Frenchmen occupied significant positions in fin-de-siècle Korea. In 1898, the Korean government engaged a French postal official to organize telephone and telegraphic services and prepare Korea’s entry into the International Postal Union; he also arranged for Korean postage stamps to be printed in France. Another Frenchman advised on the modernization of the justice system (and translated the Korean penal code into French). French mining engineers worked in Korea, and the director of the Korean railways was a Frenchman; other Frenchmen served as heads of law and agricultural schools, directors of the Korean arsenal, and counsellors in several ministries. Collin’s deputy, Maurice Courant, who became a professor in Lyon, published a four-volume work on Korea.⁴⁰ The declaration of a Japanese protectorate over Korea in 1905 and its annexation five years later effectively ended the French engagement; France had no official representation in Korea again until 1947.

A final example of the French presence in the Indo-Pacific is Australia. The Australian colonies (federated into the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901) were a magnet for migrants during the gold rushes of the 1840s, including a number of Frenchmen, some of whom remained permanently in the country. The production of wool, Australia’s primary export in the nineteenth century, provided raw material for European textile manufacturing, and France became (after Britain) the second largest purchaser of Australian wool (for factories in the Nord region); the French also bought animal skins for processing in Mazamet. The wool trade prompted the *Comptoir National d’Escompte* (forebear of the *Banque Nationale de Paris*) to open in Sydney, and for long it remained one of the only foreign banks with a full banking license. With Australian exports and connections with New Caledonia and Southeast Asia, the *Messageries Maritimes* operated a thriving shipping business. The *Alliance Française* set up branches in Sydney, Melbourne, and other cities, and Australian elites showed a keen interest in French culture; French was the most widely taught modern foreign language in Australian schools. The Marist missionary order established schools in Australia, and they and other French Catholic missionaries moved into the Pacific, including the British (and then Australian) colony of Papua, in New Guinea. By the 1890s, the French community in Sydney was large enough to support a weekly newspaper, *Le Courrier Australien*,

40 Jong-pil Yoon, “Contextualizing Maurice Courant, Pioneer of Korean Studies in Europe,” *Journal of Korean Studies* 21, no. 2 (2016): 325–353.

whose writers commented on local and international issues and whose advertisers included French music teachers, restaurateurs, and others. The journalists also regularly bemoaned the lack of greater French business interest in Australia and the success of German exporters in dramatically outstripping the French in trade, leading to a negative balance of trade between Australia and France. Australia for some others provided an interesting model of social development. Albert Métin, a teacher, writer, and later briefly minister of labor and social welfare, heralded Australia in a 1901 book as a country of “socialism with no doctrine” (*socialisme sans doctrines*), with an impressive system of wage arbitration that, he said, contributed to a high standard of living for workers. In short, beyond the fascination for Australian flora and fauna evidenced by French explorers in the late 1700s, a century later, Australia appeared a vibrant society with many opportunities for the French; for Australians, France continued to represent European high culture as well as a market of raw materials and source of luxury goods and finished products.⁴¹

In multiple ways, French interests spread throughout the Indo-Pacific, even if the record of disparate individuals and small expatriate communities remains less well known than the history of French colonialism in Indochina. Eighteenth-century explorers; commanders of nineteenth-century warships and merchants; consuls such as Roze, Collin, and Pavie; and energetic businessman and boosters like Brau could take credit.⁴² The French presence in the Indo-Pacific region was one of military conquest and aggression, including war in Indochina, mainland China and Taiwan, Siam, Japan, and the Pacific islands: a long list that points to regular use of violence as a tool of foreign affairs. Major business firms were involved in establishing a French presence, led by the Messageries Maritimes and the Banque de l'Indochine. So, too, was the long-lived Paris missionary society. Yet France was embodied as well by scattered individuals who introduced French language, food and drink, and clothing and housewares, engaging in a “soft diplomacy” that left an enduring legacy in the region.

These agents were backed by figures in the metropole: men such as Lagrené, de Lesseps, Ferry, and Deschanel; “captains” of industry and finance like the Lyonnais silk manufacturer and merchant Ulysse Pila; colonial administrators such as Paul

41 Alexis Bergantz, *French Connection: Australia's Cosmopolitan Ambitions* (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2021). On New Zealand, see Alistair Watts, *New Zealand's France: A Different View of 1835–1935* (n.p.: Aykay Publishing, 2021).

42 For case studies of a diplomat and a consul: Désirée Lenoir, *Le Consul qui en savait trop: les ambitions secrètes de la France en Chine* [The Consul Who Knew Too Much: France's Secret Ambitions in China] (Paris: Nouveau monde, 2011), which is about Auguste François, and Philippe Marchat, *Jeune diplomate au Siam, 1894–1900: Lettres de mon grand-père Raphaël Réau* [Young Diplomat in Siam, 1894–1900: Letters from My Grandfather Raphaël Réau] (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2013). More generally, Raphael Israeli, “Diplomacy of Contempt: The French Consuls and the Mandarins in Nineteenth-Century China,” *Modern Asia Studies* 26, no. 2 (1992): 363–394.

Doumer—the governor-general of Indochina from 1897 to 1902, a later French president, and a staunch advocate of a major French role in Asia.⁴³ There were the explorers and travelers who wrote books about their experiences as well as journalists who filled the pages of newspapers and illustrated periodicals with reportage on the Indo-Pacific.⁴⁴

The informal lobby groups coalesced, inside and outside parliament, into powerful defenders and promoters of French actions. The energy of supportive colonial committees was primordial by the end of the nineteenth century in bringing together the disparate interests of those involved in colonialism and in propagandizing a still dubious public about the merits of empire. Their number was joined in 1901 by the Comité de l'Asie française, set up under the presidency of the deputy and arch-colonialist Eugène Étienne with financial support from French chambers of commerce, the colonial government of Indochina, and financial magnates such as the Rothschild family. The committee published a monthly bulletin up until 1940. The periodical, initially edited by Robert de Caix, took a particular interest in China but extended coverage throughout the “Far East,” Australasia, the Ottoman Empire, and Persia. Articles in the first two issues give a taste of the subjects covered: an account of a Paris “banquet asiatique” with speeches by Étienne and Doumer, as well as articles on southern China, the Russian “penetration” of the Qing Empire, the Baghdad railway and railways in Indochina, the French territory of Guangzhouwan, and “our merchant marine in the Far East,” alongside news notes on India, Burma, Korea, Japan, Australia, Turkey, Persia and the Persian Gulf, and Central Asia. The articles, specialized and informative, explicitly enjoined the French to compete with rivals and valorize the nation’s position throughout Asia. In a similar vein, a Comité de l’Océanie française, which began publishing a monthly bulletin in 1902, lobbied for French efforts in the South Pacific islands and relations with Australia.

In the first years of the twentieth century, such committees and their publications testified to the institutionalization of colonialism and imperialism. They reflected multiple efforts to expand and exploit the French position in the Indo-Pacific over the past hundred years. However, they also spoke of the shortcomings vis-à-vis countries such as Britain and Germany and commented with concern on the rise of Japan. They feared that the lack of resolve among France’s elite and public would hamper France’s position

43 On one of the most important figures associated with France in Asia, see Amaury Lorin, *Paul Doumer, Gouverneur général de l’Indochine (1897–1902): le tremplin colonial* [Paul Doumer, Governor General of Indochina (1897–1902): The Colonial Stepping Stone] (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2004).

44 Numa Broc, *Dictionnaire illustré des explorateurs et grand voyageurs français du XIXe siècle, t. II: Asie* [Illustrated Dictionary of the French Explorers and Travelers of the Nineteenth Century, Vol. 1: Asia] (Paris: Éditions du CTHS., 1992), provides an invaluable directory of travelers and their writings. There are many biographies of individuals, including ones such as Évariste Huc, one of the very few Frenchmen in Tibet: Jacqueline Thevenet, *Un Lama du ciel d’Occident: Évariste Huc (1813–1860)* [A Lama of the Western Sky: Évariste Huc (1813–1860)] (Paris: Payot, 1989).

in a part of the world whose centrality to future commercial and political developments they never ceased to proclaim.

French Culture and the Indo-Pacific

The place of cultural brokers within or on the margins of the lobbies was extremely significant in popularizing Asia and the Pacific, directly or indirectly stimulating support for French initiatives. The counterpoint to France in Asia was Asia in France—Asia as portrayed in art and literature, in exhibitions and consumer culture, and through visits of Asian dignitaries and other people, such as delegations from Siam in 1861, Japan in 1862, Vietnam in 1863, and Korea in 1900. The king of Siam came to Paris in 1897 and 1907, and royal visitors soon included the “protected” monarchs of Cambodia and Vietnam. Permanent Japanese and Chinese legations were first set up in Paris in the 1870s, and the same decade saw the first Japanese tertiary students in France. Asia featured with increasing prominence at exhibitions, and Asian studies—the first chair of Chinese at the Collège de France dated to 1814—became more widely taught.⁴⁵

The Indo-Pacific moreover entered into the international French cultural ambit: French scholars investigated Asian languages, religions, and history; archaeologists excavated ancient and more modern sites (none more significant for the French than the Angkorian sites in Cambodia); doctors and medical researchers (such as those connected with the Pasteur Institute) studied and devised prophylaxis and treatment for tropical diseases; scientists investigated flora, fauna, and other phenomena of the natural world; and anthropologists theorized about “primitive” societies in the Pacific while those who called themselves “scientific” discoursed on race and the supposed inferiority of native peoples overseas to Europeans. A seminal institution was the École Française d’Extrême-Orient, founded in 1900 with headquarters then in Hanoi and branches elsewhere, an institution that continues to flourish.⁴⁶ There was already (and still is) the École des Langues Orientales, formally established in 1795, along with various chairs of Sinology, Japanology, and other studies at French universities, as well as scholarly associations and journals (including those in the French colonies, such as *Les Amis du Vieux Hué* in Vietnam). The French presence in the wider world was in part an effort to know about and to study lands beyond Europe—knowledge was closely bound up

45 Pascal Blanchard and Éric Deroo, *Le Paris Asie: 150 ans de présence asiatique dans la capitale* [Le Paris Asie: 150 Years of Asian Presence in the Capital] (Paris: La Découverte, ACHAC, 2004).

46 Pierre Singaravélou, *L’École française d’Extrême-Orient ou l’institution des marges (1898–1956). Essai d’histoire sociale et politique de la science coloniale* [The French School of the Far East or the Institution of the Margins (1898–1956): Essay on the Social and Political History of Colonial Science] (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1999); Catherine Clémentin-Ojha and Pierre-Yves Manguin, *A Century in Asia: The History of the École Française d’Extrême-Orient, 1898–2006* (Singapore: Éditions Didier Millet / EFEO, 2007).

with power, with appreciation of commercial and political opportunities, and with the devising of policies and strategies for securing geopolitical advantage and for the *mise en valeur* of French colonial territories.

Culture, politics, and colonialism intertwined. The late nineteenth-century novelist Pierre Loti, who wrote on Polynesia, Japan, and Cambodia (among other regions), and Victor Segalen, who set one novel in Polynesia and another in China, were both officers in the French navy whose works contributed greatly to the European imaginary of the distant and exotic. Paul Claudel, winner of the Nobel Prize for his poetry and prose, including writings about China and Japan, was also a leading French diplomat in Asia, serving as French consul in several Chinese cities from 1895 to 1909 and ambassador to Japan from 1921 to 1927. French collectors, too, were vital in spreading a certain idea of Asia—notable among them the Lyonnais industrialist Emile Guimet, who founded what is now France's national museum of Asian arts (first established in his hometown, then moved to Paris in 1888), as well as the Parisian banker Henri Cernuschi and Clémence d'Ennery, wife of a popular dramatist, who amassed major collections; yet another significant collector of Japanese objets d'art and Japanophile was the politician Georges Clemenceau.⁴⁷ Gallerists, prominent among them the German-born and Paris-based Siegfried Bing, sparked the vogue for *japonisme*, which spread like wildfire in the late nineteenth century. Japanese and other Asian (and Pacific islands) motifs and styles began to appear in European art, even among artists who never journeyed far from their ateliers. The *expositions universelles* and other fairs displayed Asian art objects, trade goods, and sometimes Asian peoples brought to perform for the public.⁴⁸ Asian artists, especially from China and Japan, made pilgrimages to Paris, considered the center of nineteenth-century artistic prowess and innovation.⁴⁹

If Asia and the Pacific islands were portrayed in France (with an undercurrent of racialism and outright racism) as exotic lands with beautiful arts and crafts, intriguing

47 Ting Chang, *Travel, Collecting, and Museums of Asian Art in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013); Hervé Beaumont, *Les Aventures d'Émile Guimet, un industriel voyageur* [The Adventures of Emile Guimet, an Industrial Traveler] (Paris: Arthaud, 2014) and Françoise Chappuis and Francis Macouin, *D'Outremer et d'Orient mystique: les itinéraires d'Émile Guimet* [From Overseas and the Mystic Orient: The Itineraries of Émile Guimet] (Paris: Éditions Findakly, 2001); Matthieu Séguela, *Clemenceau ou la tentation du Japon* [Clemenceau or the Temptation of Japan] (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2014).

48 See, e.g., Meredith Martin, "Staging China, Japan, and Siam at the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1867," in Petra ten-Doesschate Chu and Jennifer Milam, eds., *Beyond Chinoiserie: Artistic Exchange between China and the West during the Late Qing Dynasty (1796–1911)* (Leiden: Brill, 2019); and Daniel Kane, "Display at Empire's End: Korea's Participation in the 1900 Paris Universal Exposition," *Sunkyun Journal of East Asian Studies* 4, no. 2 (2004): 41–66.

49 See *De Kuroda à Foujita: peintres japonais à Paris* [From Kuroda to Foujita: Japanese Painters in Paris] (Paris: Fragments international, 2007) and *Artistes chinois à Paris* [Chinese Artists in Paris] (Paris: Musée Cernuschi, 2011).

religions, social practices, and “traditional” life, a vital part of the French globalization project was to project France itself as the exemplar and purveyor of modernity. Schools and hospitals, as well as roadways and railways, were intended to manifest the value and, in European views, superiority of Western and particularly French science, medicine, technology, and education. In Vietnam, schools taught in French rather than Vietnamese, educationists arguing that French was a (or *the*) international language and that Vietnamese was inadequate for modern terminology and ideas. Fine art schools, and not just in Vietnam, promoted European styles of paintings and sculpture; even if their instructors favored academic modes and were wary of the avant-garde, some artists developed more innovative styles.⁵⁰ Many poets and novelists around Asia, both in the French colonies and far beyond, avidly read and were influenced by French classical and modernist works.⁵¹ French entertainment, sport, clothing, and food: all were promoted as modern and chic.

To differing degrees, some Asians, especially elite figures educated in Western schools, were attracted to French-style modernity and European culture. The seduction of the new and different offered an alternative to cultural traditionalism, domination by old elites, and the constraints of precolonial societies. Cultural appropriation and adaptation from the West, just as European appropriations and inspirations from the “East,” provided stimulus to old and new forms of creativity.⁵²

Much as the French hoped to inculcate a kind of “Europeanism” among local people, modernity could nevertheless rebound against Westerners. Newfangled ideas might alienate people from ancestral society while not creating allegiance to French colonialism or submission to Western domination. Ideas of nationalism, constitutionalism, parliamentarianism, and anticolonialism circulated with ever-increasing potency, inevitably engendering critiques of European interventions and the models of government, economy, and society propounded by Europeans.

Several examples show the ways in which French cultural domination provoked anticolonialism in both the colonies and in Paris, which became a crucible for dissidents, reformists, and revolutionaries from around the non-European world.⁵³ Leading figures

50 Nadine André-Pallos, *L'Indochine: un lieu d'échange culturel? Les peintres français et indochinois (fin XIX-XXe siècle)* [Indochina: A Place of Cultural Exchange? French and Indochinese Painters (Late Nineteenth–Twentieth Century)] (Paris: EFEO, 1997).

51 Mathilde Kang, *Francophonie and the Orient: French-Asian Transcultural Crossings (1840–1940)* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), provides a fine discussion of the topic; on Japan, Catherine Mayaux, ed., *France–Japon: regards croisés: échanges littéraires et mutations culturelles* [France–Japan: Entangled Views: Literary Exchange and Cultural Change] (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007).

52 See, e.g., Aimée Boutin and Elizabeth Emery, *Cultural Exchange and Creative Identity: France/Asia in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, special issue of *L'Esprit créateur* 56, no. 3 (2016).

53 Kate Marsh, “‘The Only Safe Haven of Refuge in All the World’: Paris, Indian ‘Revolutionaries’ and Imperial Rivalry, c. 1905–40,” *French Cultural Studies* 30, no. 3 (2019): 196–219; Ole Birk Laursen, “Spaces of Indian Anti-Colonialism in Early Twentieth-Century London and Paris,” *South Asia* 44, no. 4 (2021):

of early Vietnamese nationalism—notably Phan Chau Trinh and Phan Boi Chau—were much influenced by the writings of such figures as Voltaire and Rousseau and the ideals of the French Revolution of 1789. A lesser-known figure, however, shows the paradoxes of French influence in Asia. Phan Van Truong, born in 1876, first worked as an interpreter in the French administration in Vietnam. Then he went to Paris, where he took a law degree at the Sorbonne and gained admission to the Paris bar; taught Vietnamese at the prestigious École des Langues Orientales; and became a naturalized French citizen in 1911. He associated with other Vietnamese, including Phan Chau Trinh. Phan Van Truong's apartment became a gathering place for nationalists, as he recalled in *Une histoire des conspirateurs annamites à Paris ou la vérité sur l'Indochine*, an account of the “Five Dragons,” figures who spearheaded Vietnamese nationalism in the French capital. In September 1915, with Phan Chau Trinh, he was arrested and detained for several months on charges of conspiring with Germans. At the end of the First World War, he composed a petition, “Les Revendications du peuple annamite,” which Ho Chi Minh tried to present to participants at the Paris peace conference. However, unlike Ho, who was living in Paris at the same time, Phan Van Truong never became a communist. Calling for liberal reform, he founded a political society and nationalist newspaper, *La Cloche fêlée*. By the late 1920s, the French closed down Phan Van Truong's journal and again placed him under arrest. He was released and returned to Vietnam in 1930 and spent the last three years of his life in quiet retirement.⁵⁴ Phan Van Truong's education, journalism, and nationalism, and his experiences in Vietnam and Paris, show the diverse ways that the French presence in Asia could act on indigenous people.

Reformist and revolutionary ideas from France were not limited to the French colonies. French literature became a great inspiration for writers in China, Japan, and elsewhere. From 1912 to 1927, the Mouvement Travail-Études, spearheaded by Li Yuying (later Li Shizeng), brought young Chinese to France to undertake study and proletarian work. The protean Li was one of the most interesting intermediaries between Asian and European cultures. Arriving in Paris in 1902 at the age of 21, he studied agronomy, chemistry, and biology. He frequented socialists and free thinkers, and with several comrades founded a Chinese anarchist association. He later established contacts with the republican Sun Yat-sen and became Sun's representative in Paris and one of the “four elders” of the nationalist Guomindang movement. Meanwhile, in 1908, he set up a tofu factory in the Paris suburbs—he also published a book on the nutritional and therapeutic benefits of soya beans—and hired Mouvement Travail-Études members as workers. Later participants in the work-study program included the future Chinese communist leaders Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping. The first congress of the Chinese

634–650; Tim Harper, *Underground Asia: Global Revolutionaries and the Assault on Empire* (London: Allen Lane, 2020), provides insight into many figures and their political and geographical itineraries.

54 Pierre Brocheux, “Phan Van Truong, 1876–1933: Acteur d'une histoire partagée” [Phan Van Truong, 1876–1933: Actor of a Shared History], *Moussons* 24 (2014): 19–32.

Communist Party was meanwhile held in the French concession of Shanghai in 1921 and a European branch set up in Paris the following year.⁵⁵ The purveying of French culture in Asia had decidedly varied outcomes.

The French Project in the Indo-Pacific

International relations and colonial conquests were not cogently planned or remotely controlled. The relations among various geographical zones of French interest in the Indo-Pacific were the result of linkages necessitated by the age of sail and steam, contingency, opportunism, and intercolonial rivalries. “France in the Indo-Pacific” never formed a cohesive unit (and *Asie française* remained only a figure of speech, not an administrative reality), but there were connections, and not just those made by early explorers and navigators on their voyages and sea-charts. Maritime routes joined Madagascar and La Réunion to French India, Indochina, and the French islands of the Pacific, and they also linked the French territories to Sydney, Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and the ports of Japan. French shipping firms and financial institutions, especially companies such as the Messageries Maritimes and the Banque de l’Indochine, spread their activities among numerous countries. The French sent deposed Vietnamese emperors into exile in La Réunion (and Algeria) and sent political prisoners from Indochina (and Algeria) to New Caledonia.⁵⁶ There was migration from La Réunion to New Caledonia in the 1800s, and in the early 1900s, Vietnamese and Chinese workers were recruited as laborers for New Caledonia. Vietnam attracted migrants from French India, and the French employed Vietnamese in the administration of Cambodia.⁵⁷ French administrators, military officers, businessmen, journalists, and tourists moved around the countries where France had a presence and beyond—more needs to be known, in fact, about the travels of both the colonizers and the colonized. Promotors of France’s great power status unceasingly emphasized that the French overseas empire stretched to outposts in five continents, some of those bonds foreshadowing the later notion of an Indo-Pacific region.

In the long nineteenth century, the French had maintained a colonial position in the Indian Ocean inherited from the old regime, lost the Île de France, failed to expand

55 Paul Bailey, “Cultural Productions in a New Global Space: Li Shizeng and the New Chinese Francophone Project in the Early Twentieth Century,” in Pei-yin Lin and Weipin Tsari, eds., *Print, Profit, and Perception: Ideas, Information and Knowledge in Chinese Societies, 1895–1949* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 17–38.

56 Robert Aldrich, *Banished Potentates: Dethroning and Exiling Indigenous Monarchs under British and French Colonial Rule, 1815–1955* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018).

57 Karin Speedy, *Colons, créoles et coolies: L’émigration réunionnaise en Nouvelle-Calédonie* [Settlers, Creoles, and Coolies: Emigration from Reunion to New Caledonia] (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2007); Natasha Pairaudeau, *Mobile Citizens: French Indians in Indochina, 1858–1954* (Copenhagen: NIAS, 2016).

further in South Asia, but conquered Djibouti, Madagascar and the Comoros Islands. In eastern Asia, tardily by comparison with other colonizers, they carved out a substantial empire in Indochina, and made efforts, with varying degrees of success, to implant French interests elsewhere in Southeast Asia, Japan, and China. Whether they might have established colonies in the Philippines, Burma, or Korea is a moot point. In the South Pacific, the French acquired a string of islands. Australia provided a territory for profitable French business and cultural initiatives, and despite the small number of French expatriates, there was an episodic or enduring French presence in places such as Indonesia and Singapore, as well as New Zealand. The French missionary presence was, in terms of time and extent, the most widespread and long-lasting of French initiatives. French culture from consumer practices to modernist art and literature permeated elite life throughout the Indo-Pacific, and fantasies of *la vie parisienne* worked their charm. Yet ideas disseminated by the French—liberalism, parliamentarianism, and socialism among them—also challenged colonialism, long-reigning dynasties, and ancestral institutions. The French had not only succeeded in implanting a lasting presence in the Indo-Pacific but also laid the foundations for the questioning and challenging of the very project it had undertaken. The French may have set out to “awaken” these far countries and break down walls between Europe and the “East,” as de Bornier had summoned compatriots to do in his arrogantly and aggressively ethnocentric poem, but the awakened peoples did not become the pliant subjects for which he may have hoped, nor did the French reap all of the benefits of which he dreamed.

The basic structure of the French presence in the Indo-Pacific established by the late nineteenth century remained in place until the middle of the twentieth century but then crumbled with the effects of the Second World War, the end of Indochine française (and withdrawal from the *comptoirs de l'Inde*) in 1953–54, and the decolonization of Madagascar in 1960, the closing of China under the Maoist regime, and the strengthening of the United States as a hegemonic global military and commercial force. Decolonization and the battles against it in black Africa and the Maghreb preoccupied the French state. In the wake of the independence of its territories there, President de Gaulle set as a new priority the maintenance of French political and commercial influence over the former colonies, especially in sub-Saharan Africa: what critics labelled a postcolonial but neocolonial *Françafrique*.

France held on to its Indian Ocean territories of La Réunion and Mayotte (both now fully incorporated as *départements d'outre-mer*) and its three Pacific island territories. After Algerian independence, de Gaulle transferred France's nuclear testing site from the Saharan desert to islands in French Polynesia; testing continued, to the ire of neighboring countries, until the 1990s. French governments of all political orientations opposed independence movements in French Polynesia and New Caledonia (where serious violence erupted in the 1980s and again in the 2020s), as well as in La Réunion. Diplomats and business people from the 1960s onward worked to build the French presence in

India, Southeast Asia, Japan, and then in post-Maoist China, building on political, commercial, and cultural antecedents established in the nineteenth century and earlier. In the early twentieth-first century, French policy-makers have indeed tried to reactivate this legacy, though detouring around the facts of conquest, gunboat diplomacy, colonial exploitation, and war and violence that had been vital to support the French presence. They speak benignly of centuries of fruitful interchange and perceived mutual interests and benefits. The role of the French sovereign territories—Mayotte, La Réunion, New Caledonia, French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna, as well as scattered uninhabited islands and the vast exclusive economic zone that the coastline of French territories provide—are championed as offering beachheads for French initiatives. The remarkable rise of China, with the economic and geopolitical challenges it presents, and connections with such major players in Indo-Pacific politics and economics as India, Japan, Indonesia, and Australia have once again turned the French back to the “East.”

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The French Globalization Project in Indochina: From the Nationalization of the Missionary Project to the Establishment of the *Courrier de Saigon*

Whether we have come to this distant land in search of fortune or following the flag, it matters not: industrialists and merchants, settlers and missionaries, sailors and soldiers, all in different capacities, are equally united in the results of the new colonizing project attempted by France; all can contribute to its success within the limits that are theirs.¹

This quote, excerpted from an anonymous article that appeared in the first issue of the *Courrier de Saigon* on January 1, 1864, highlights the actors involved in the new colonial project attempted by France in what was to become French Indochina in the late nineteenth century. In the historiography of the French colonization of Indochina, following French official writings, the missionaries are often considered actors, among others, of the larger French globalization project that started in the nineteenth century. However, this nationalistic conception, conflating the introduction of Christianity in Southeast Asia with the arrival of French colonizers in the nineteenth century, obscures the earlier global history of missionaries in the region. Although the missionaries' role and presence in Southeast Asia since the seventeenth century were central to the establishment of a project led by French actors on the behalf of the nationalizing metropole, it took over three centuries for the missionary project to be integrated into the French globalization project in Indochina.

The creation of the *Courrier de Saigon* in 1864, two years after the signing of the Treaty of Saigon, was an expression of the colonial administration's agenda to legitimize and promote the colonial lobby vis-à-vis the metropole. The journal served as a link between the metropole and the colony and was used as a political tool that would be central to the future of the French colonial project in Indochina.

This chapter addresses the transformation of the missionary project in Dai Viet² into a colonial project led by political and economic actors on behalf of the nationalizing

1 *Courrier de Saigon*, January 1, 1864, Bibliothèques des Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer, Aix-en-Provence (BIB AOM50064_1864).

2 The name given to the territory of present-day Vietnam during the Ly (1054–1400) and Le (1428–1787) dynasties.

French metropole. In doing so, the chapter will combine literature on seventeenth-century missionary activities in Southeast Asia and an in-depth analysis of the first issue of the *Courrier de Saigon*. In the first part, the chapter will explore the global origins of seventeenth-century missionary activities in Dai Viet and French actors' progressive nationalization of the missionary project until the military campaign of Cochinchina. The second part will show how the nineteenth-century French globalization project in Indochina was defined and promoted in the *Courrier de Saigon*.

The nationalization of missionary activities in the Indochinese peninsula unfolded over three centuries, transforming from a global project under Portuguese patronage to a French colonial enterprise. Initially, the Portuguese Empire established a global missionary presence in the seventeenth century. However, by the mid-century, Portugal's influence waned due to internal conflicts, economic challenges, and rival pressures, leading the papacy to grant French priests authority over the Catholic Church in Dai Viet. This shift paved the way for the creation of the Paris Foreign Mission Society (Mission Étrangère de Paris, MEP), marking the beginning of French dominance in missionary activities. However, the late eighteenth century saw setbacks as anticlerical sentiment in Europe, fueled by the French Revolution, leading to the dissolution of the MEP and to the weakening of the French missionary presence in Indochina. The early nineteenth century brought increased violence against the missionaries by the Vietnamese government, creating martyrs and reinforcing religious fervor. This led the members of the MEP to seek protection from Napoleon III. In 1858, France launched a "punitive" expedition against the persecution of French Catholic missionaries in Dai Nam, with the aim of establishing trade outposts in the region by force. This Cochinchina campaign culminated in the Treaty of Saigon, ceding three southern Vietnamese provinces to France and establishing the colony of Cochinchina.

This process reflected the gradual transformation of the missionary project into a colonial endeavor, as France replaced Portugal as the dominant European power in the region. The French colonial project in Indochina thus emerged from the nationalization of earlier missionary efforts, setting the stage for France's broader imperial ambitions in Southeast Asia.

Portuguese Influence and Jesuit Missions: Precursors to the French Colonial Project in Dai Viet

In the early seventeenth century, decades before the French took over the missionary project, Jesuit missionaries under *Padroado* (Portuguese patronage) settled on the Pacific coast in the central part of Dai Viet. Portuguese fleets made first contact as early as the sixteenth century, with the central port city of Hoi An on their way to find the

maritime route linking their spice-trading post in India to China.³ By the end of the century, Hoi An was “still the place where Portuguese trade ships stopped for fresh water, firewood, and to rest in a voyage from Goa (India) to trading posts in China and Japan.”⁴ Following these initial contacts, the Nguyen lords of Cochinchina invited Portuguese traders to establish a colony in their territory. According to Roland Jacques and based on royal correspondences between the king of Portugal and Viceroy Jerônimo de Azevedo, several projects to establish a Portuguese colony were presented by members of the crown. These projects, however, never materialized because they were opposed by the Portuguese viceroys of India, who saw the projects as competition to their rule in the State of India (Estado da Índia).⁵

The Portuguese crown, nonetheless, supported and financed the establishment of religious missions in Southeast Asia.⁶ In fact, the evangelization of Dai Viet by Portuguese missionaries in the early seventeenth century was a consequence of the ratification of the Treaty of Tordesillas more than a century earlier. The treaty, arbitrated by Pope Alexander VI, divided the world between the Spanish and Portuguese crowns and gave the Iberian monarchies the responsibility of evangelizing the territories of the so-called New World. The right of *Padroado* obtained from Rome meant that “the Kings would have a monopoly over commerce, with the whip of ex-communication for all who trespassed.”⁷ In practical terms, the *Padroado* meant that all missionaries leaving Europe for Asia had to come first to Lisbon to swear allegiance to the Portuguese monarchs, travel exclusively on Portuguese ships, and then operate under Portuguese ecclesiastical authority, whose dioceses of reference were in Malacca and Macao.⁸

Following the violent persecution of Christians in Japan and the banning of Christianity by the Tokugawa Shogunate, Portuguese Jesuits founded a mission in Hoi An in 1615.⁹ According to Anh Q. Tran, “the first decade of the Jesuit mission in Cochinchina

3 Thi Vinh Linh Nguyen and Van Sang Nguyen, “The Portuguese Influence in Hoi An (Vietnam) in Comparison with Malacca (Malaysia) and Ayutthaya (Thailand) during the 16th and 17th Centuries,” *Asian and African Studies* 29, no. 1 (2020): 72–88.

4 Nguyen and Nguyen.

5 Roland Jacques, “Le Portugal et la romanisation de la langue vietnamienne. Faut-il réécrire l’histoire ?” [Portugal and the Romanization of the Vietnamese Language: Does History Need to be Rewritten?], *Revue française d’histoire d’outre-mer* 85, no. 318 (1998): 21–54, at 23.

6 Jacques, 34–35.

7 Wilfred Prakash D’Souza Prabhu, “Padroado Versus Propaganda Fide’: The Jurisdictional Conflict Between Portugal and Rome: State-Church Relations in Sixteenth-Seventeenth – Eighteenth Century Indo-Portuguese History, Its Repercussion on Konkani Roman Catholics of Coastal Karnataka,” *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 66 (2005): 975.

8 William J. Duiker, review of Mark W. McLeod, “The Vietnamese Response to French Intervention, 1862–1874,” *American Historical Review* 97, no. 4 (1992): 1268.

9 Anh Tran, “The Historiography of the Jesuits in Vietnam: 1615–1773 and 1957–2007,” *Jesuit Historiography Online*, 2018, https://doi.org/10.1163/2468-7723_jho_COM_210470.

was relatively successful,” as the missionaries expanded from their initial base in Hoi An to Nuoc Man in 1618 and Thanh Chiem in 1623 while being supported by the southern Nguyen lords.¹⁰ By 1629, however, the Nguyễn rulers turned against the Christian faith, and Jesuit missionaries were banned from Cochinchina due to accusations of enticing people to abandon ancestor worship.¹¹ Throughout the seventeenth century Jesuit missionaries faced constant persecution under the Nguyen lords in Cochinchina, prompting the establishment of a mission in Tonkin in 1627, where they were welcomed with the expectation of securing a trading relationship with Portugal.¹² The Jesuit missionaries who arrived in Dai Viet during the seventeenth century came from a variety of European nations were Italians, French, Spanish, and Portuguese, and their allegiance to their respective homelands was not of primary concern. Instead, they operated under the *Padroado* system, which required them to work within the Portuguese ecclesiastical hierarchy. This reflected a larger religious global project led by missionaries and aimed at spreading Christianity to non-European regions beyond the influence of European states.

At the time of the Portuguese incursion, Dai Viet was divided into two feudal states at war with each other: the Trinhs in the north and the Nguyens in the south. Indeed, the rulers of the Trinhs and the Nguyens, who originated from the same province of Thanh Hoa in the north of the peninsula, opposed each other for over two centuries. According to historian Phan Khoang, on the one hand, the Nguyens accused the Trinhs of usurping the authority of the ruling Le monarchs, while, on the other hand, the Trinhs denounced the Nguyens of having established a rival court in the south and of allegedly preparing a coup d'état to overthrow the Le dynasty.¹³ Each camp justified its opposition to the other by using the power of legitimizing the authority of the Le dynasty.

Although the Trinhs controlled most of the population of Dai Viet, their armies were never able to decisively break through the defensive fortifications erected by the Nguyens at Dong Hoi, the boundary between the north and the south. The ability of the Nguyens to resist the Trinhs' assaults can be explained in part by their more widespread use of European weapons, which were acquired in exchange for tolerance vis-à-vis the Jesuit missionaries. The conflict between Tonkin and Cochinchina remained unresolved until the Nguyens' victory during the peasant revolt of Tay Son, resulting in the coronation of Emperor Gia Long in 1802.¹⁴ Although the conflict between the Trinhs and the Nguyens sometimes benefited the Jesuits, it also created great instability for them when allegiances changed.

10 Tran.

11 Tran.

12 Tran.

13 Phan Khoang, *Viet su: Xu Dang Trong, 1558–1777* [Vietnamese History: The Southern Land, 1558–1777], Vol. 1 (Saigon: Nha Sach Khai Tri, 1970), 317.

14 Mark W. McLeod, *The Vietnamese Response to French Intervention, 1862–1874* (New York: Praeger, 1991), 7.

The difficulties encountered by the Jesuits in Dai Viet led to a questioning of the *Padroado* system altogether. Indeed, according to the reports (1625, 1628, and 1644) on the *Padroado* in Asia written by Francesco Ingoli, first secretary to the recently established Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (also known as Propaganda Fide),¹⁵ the *Padroado* system had experienced many issues for several decades. These included “disagreement between the missionaries of different orders and different countries; laxity in the choice and formation of the subjects; lack of knowledge of the native languages; absence of local clergy; interference of churchmen in civil affairs and even more of the civil authorities in religious affairs; too few missionaries; insufficiency of their material means; [and] the impossibility of promulgating the decisions of the Holy See without the agreement of the kings of Madrid and Lisbon.”¹⁶ Thus, in 1649, Alexandre de Rhodes, perhaps best known for the development of *quoc ngu*, the official language of present-day Vietnam, traveled to Rome to request the establishment of indigenous clergy in Dai Viet to enable the Catholic Church to survive persecution and banishment by local governments. Initially reluctant, Pope Innocent X accepted Rhodes’ proposal to create a hierarchy independent of the *Padroado* and under the direct supervision of the Propaganda Fide.¹⁷

French Ecclesiastical Influence in Dai Viet: The Rise of the Paris Foreign Mission Society

In 1658, following Alexandre de Rhodes’ proposal to establish indigenous clergy in Dai Viet, Pope Alexander VII appointed three French apostolic vicars. François Pallu was assigned to Tonkin, Pierre Lambert de la Motte in Cochinchina, and Ignace Cotelendi to the five southern provinces of China. These appointments marked a significant shift in the region’s ecclesiastical authority and became a founding act of the Paris Foreign Mission Society, established between 1658 and 1664. However, this change led to jurisdictional conflicts between the Propaganda Fide, which supported the French vicars, and the Portuguese *Padroado* system.¹⁸ The conflict was particularly evident in Pallu’s case, as Portuguese authorities prevented him from exercising his ecclesiastical

15 The Propaganda Fide was established in 1622 to provide a centralized oversight to all overseas missions by the papacy in Rome.

16 Jean Guennou, *Les missions étrangères de Paris* [The Foreign Missions of Paris] (Paris: Fayard, 1986), 19.

17 Alain Forest, *Les missionnaires français au Tonkin et au Siam XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles: Analyse comparée d’un relatif succès et d’un total échec* [French Missionaries in Tonkin and Siam Seventeenth–Eighteenth Century: Comparative Analysis of Relative Success and Total Failure], vol. 1 (Paris: Editions L’Harmattan, 1998), 31.

18 Prabhu, “Padroado Versus Propaganda Fide,” 976.

authority in Cochinchina and Tonkin. As a result, Pallu was unable to return to Dai Viet until the mid-1680s.

The MEP aimed to make up for the lack of missionaries in the region administered by the Portuguese. The members of the MEP were all secular priests incardinated in their dioceses of origin in France and placed at the disposal of the Propaganda Fide in direct link with the papacy. The appointment of an ecclesiastical hierarchy independent from the *Padroado* and composed mostly of French bishops was a development of capital importance in the history of Franco-Vietnamese relations, which for France had previously been absent from Dai Viet.¹⁹

The Paris Foreign Mission Society in Dai Nam: From Influential Allies to Persecuted Martyrs

The eighteenth century brought significant challenges for the Catholic Church in France, affecting the recruitment of priests belonging to the Paris Foreign Mission Society for Dai Nam. Despite these difficulties, several notable missionaries continued their work in Southeast Asia, with the missions serving as an alternative to the growing anticlericalism in Europe. A key figure during this period was Bishop Pierre Pigneau de Béhaine, who played a crucial role in maintaining the MEP's presence in the region. In 1774, de Béhaine unified the direction of missionaries in Dai Viet under his authority as apostolic vicar in Ha Tien, close to the border with Cambodia.²⁰ His influence extended beyond religious matters when he became an adviser to Nguyen Anh, the last surviving heir of the ruling family during the Tay Son peasant revolt (1771–1779). De Béhaine saw Nguyen Anh's potential victory over the Tay Son as an opportunity to establish a Catholic empire in Southeast Asia. He advised Nguyen Anh to seek French support rather than Dutch assistance, fearing that a Protestant alliance would undermine French Catholic interests in the region. De Béhaine's support for Nguyen Anh proved significant, as the latter crowned himself Emperor Gia Long in 1802, establishing a new dynasty in Dai Viet. In 1804, Gia Long renamed the unified country Dai Nam (Great South), a name that would persist until 1945. The name change reflected the new dynasty's vision for the country and symbolized the unification of the northern and southern regions under Nguyen's rule.

In 1789, the French Revolution severely disrupted the operations of the MEP and jeopardized its evangelical work in Southeast Asia. The abolition of privileges in France resulted in the loss of tithes and other tax revenues, plunging the MEP into a financial

19 McLeod, *The Vietnamese Response to French Intervention*, 5.

20 John F. Cady, *Roots of French Colonialism in Eastern Asia* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1954), 12–13.

crisis. This instability threatened the progress made by missionaries like Pigneau de Béhaine and challenged the continuity of the French Catholic presence in Dai Nam. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy, enacted on July 12, 1790, placed the Catholic clergy under state control, both economically and spiritually. The MEP directors refused to take the required oath, viewing it as incompatible with their mission, which relied on Roman authority, thus halting the dispatch of new missionaries to Southeast Asia. As violence against the clergy escalated in France, MEP members dispersed and went into exile across Europe, maintaining communication with their missions through correspondence. The revolutionary upheaval extended beyond France, impacting the central authority of the Catholic Church. In 1798, French troops installed a republican government in Rome and suppressed the Propaganda Fide, further complicating the MEP's missionary coordination.²¹ These events collectively significantly challenged the MEP's operations, threatening to undermine decades of work in Southeast Asia.

After Napoleon I's fall and the restoration of the monarchy in 1815, the MEP seminary reopened and regained legal recognition under King Louis XVIII. However, in Vietnam, Emperor Minh Mang launched a severe anti-Catholic campaign in the 1820s, intensifying in the 1830s. The first Catholic martyrs, including a Vietnamese priest and the French missionary François-Isidore Gagelin, were executed in 1833.²² Minh Mang's 1836 edict condemned European priests to death, leading to widespread martyrdom. Between 1833 and 1840, thousands of Christians, including seven French individuals, were killed. The Vietnamese government escalated efforts in 1838–39, conducting extensive searches to capture missionaries and force Catholics to renounce their faith. This repression peaked during Minh Mang's final years but continued under his successors, Thieu Tri and Tu Duc.²³

By the mid-nineteenth century, Emperor Tu Duc implemented harsh anti-Christian policies, exemplified by the execution of two French missionaries, Auguste Schoeffler and Jean Louis Bonard, beheaded in 1851 and 1852, respectively. In response, eight MEP bishops appealed to Napoleon III in 1852, requesting military intervention to protect Christians in Vietnam. However, Napoleon III initially delayed taking action due to other priorities, including the establishment of his rule and the Crimean War. In 1855, Consul Charles de Montigny was dispatched to negotiate the cessation of Catholic repression and trade treaties with Siam and Dai Nam. This diplomatic effort was thwarted in September 1856 by a brief military confrontation at Tourane, further straining relations between France and Dai Viet. This diplomatic failure set in motion a

21 Archivio Storico Propaganda Fide, "Congrégation" [Congregation], accessed July 2, 2024, www.archivio.storico.propaganda.va/content/archiviosorico-propaganda-fide/fr/la-congregazione/congregazione.html.

22 Pierre Brocheux et al., *Indochina: An Ambiguous Colonization, 1858–1954* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 25.

23 Jacob Ramsay, "Mission Revival," *Mandarins and Martyrs: The Church and the Nguyen Dynasty in Early Nineteenth-Century Vietnam* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 58.

series of decisions that ultimately culminated in the more aggressive French expedition the following year.

The situation escalated further in April 1857, when Napoleon III appointed a commission to examine issues related to Cochinchina. This commission concluded that France had a legitimate right to establish a presence in the region.²⁴ Tensions reached a critical point with the execution of Spanish missionary Bishop José Maria Diaz in June 1857.²⁵ This incident led to the French expeditionary army delegates to convince the Spanish consul general in Macao, Nicasio Canete, to join their planned expedition, aiming not only to punish Tu Duc for executions but also to establish a protectorate in the region.

The French Intervention and the Treaty of Saigon: Establishing French Colonial Authority in Dai Nam

In July 1857, despite opposition from his government, Napoleon III ordered Admiral Charles Rigault de Genouilly, the naval commander of the French division in China, to launch a military intervention in Dai Nam. From September 1858 to March 1860, a small expeditionary force of French and Spanish soldiers, including a few missionaries, seized Tourane, a city south of the imperial capital of Hue.²⁶ The siege lasted nearly 20 months as the government of Hue refused to negotiate with France. Encountering unexpected resistance in Tourane, the Franco-Spanish expedition, then led by Admiral Léonard Charner, targeted Saigon, the crucial rice supplier for central Dai Nam, which was accessible by sea. The siege of Saigon lasted one year, ending in February 1861 with French forces decisively defeating the Vietnamese army at the Battle of Ky Hoa near Saigon. Concurrently, the Nguyen dynasty faced internal revolts and instability, weakening its resistance against French advances. In late 1861, Ta Van Phung, also known as Le Duy Phung, a pro-French Catholic Vietnamese rebel leader claiming to have descended from the Le dynasty, led a rebellion against the Nguyen dynasty in northern Tonkin. This uprising pressured Emperor Tu Duc to negotiate with Admiral Louis-Adolphe Bonard, who had succeeded Admiral Charner in commanding the

24 Georges Taboulet, *La geste française en Indochine: Histoire par les textes de la France en Indochine des origines à 1914* [*The French Gesture in Indochina: History of France in Indochina from its Origins to 1914 through Texts*] (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient Adrien - Maisonneuve, 1995), 1, cited in Thu Hang Lê, "Transferts Culturels et Contrôle de l'imprimé Pendant La Colonisation Française Au Viêt Nam: (1862–1945)" (PhD thesis, Lille: Atelier National de Reproduction de Thèse, 2010), 136.

25 James W. Cortada, "Spain and Cochinchina, 1858–1863," *Rivista Di Studi Politici Internazionali* 42, no. 3 (167) (1975): 392.

26 Richard Gundry, *China and Her Neighbours; France in Indo-China, Russia and China, India and Thibet* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1893), 6.

French expeditionary forces in the south.²⁷ The French strategically leveraged Phung's rebellion to intensify pressure on the Nguyen court, creating a two-front challenge for Tu Duc. In 1862, Bonard's campaign culminated in the signing of the peace Treaty of Nham Tuat, also known as the Treaty of Saigon. Ratified in Hue between Admiral Bonard and Emperor Tu Duc in April 1863, the treaty compelled the Nguyen dynasty to cease the persecution of Christians in Dai Nam and grant religious freedom to French and Spanish missionaries: "The subjects of the empire of France and the kingdom of Spain will be able to trade freely in the three ports of Da Nang, Ba Lat, and Quang Yen. The two nations of France and Spain will be able to worship as Christians in the kingdom of Annam [...] freely and without constraint, but those who do not desire to do so will not be forced to do so."²⁸ It also ceded to France the provinces of Bien Hoa, Gia Dinh, and Dinh Tuong, as well as the island of Poulo Condor, thus forming what would be later known as the colony of Cochinchina. Consequently, during the French colonization in the second half of the nineteenth century, the missionary presence experienced a revival and significantly expanded both in numbers and territory. Altogether, the signing of the Treaty of Saigon confirmed the gradual process of nationalization of the French presence in Dai Nam. What began as a global missionary project in Southeast Asia under the *Padroado* and the Portuguese Empire, facilitated by individual French missionaries and the establishment of the MEP, evolved into the foundation for Napoleon III's colonial ambitions in what would soon become French Indochina. The Second Empire not only supported missionary activities but also utilized military power to seize control. This process can be described as one of nationalization, as military and state actors gradually replaced and supported religious figures, laying the groundwork for the incorporation of Cochinchina into the French colonial and globalization project. In the ensuing years, this colonial endeavor was further promoted through the colony's official journal, the *Courrier de Saigon*.

Altogether, the signing of the Treaty of Saigon confirmed the gradual process of nationalization of the French presence in Vietnam. What was originally part of the Portuguese missionary project in Southeast Asia and governed under the *Padroado*, the activities of individual French missionaries and the creation of the MEP acted as the foundation for Napoleon III's colonial project in soon-to-become French Indochina. Indeed, the Second Empire supported missionary activities and eventually used its military power to take control. This process can rightly be described as a process of nationalization as it gradually replaced and supported religious actors with military and state actors, thus preparing the groundwork for the incorporation of Cochinchina

27 Mark W. McLeod, *The Vietnamese Response to French Intervention, 1862–1874* (New York: Praeger, 1991), 50.

28 Henri Galos, "L'expédition de Cochinchine et la politique française dans l'extrême orient" [The Cochinchina Expedition and French Policy in the Far East], *Revue des Deux Mondes* (1829–1971) 51, no. 1 (1864): 181–182.

into the French colonial and globalization project, which in the following years was promoted through the colony's official journal, the *Courrier de Saigon*.

The *Courrier de Saigon*: Extending the Tradition of French Colonial Official Publications

In 1864, the first issue of the *Courrier de Saigon* was published. The *Courrier de Saigon* was created as the official journal of the French colonial government in Cochinchina. The journal continued the legacy of French official publications, which were established in the Revolutionary period to legitimize the government and its actions, on the one hand, and further French colonialism, on the other hand. In effect, the journal was thus used to integrate French Indochina into the empire and promote the French globalization project in Indochina to the economic and political elites in the metropole. To fully grasp how the *Courrier de Saigon* was used to develop the French colonial project in Indochina, it is necessary to lay out the historical development and nature of French official publications since the French Revolution, namely as tools of political legitimacy and colonization.

The *Courrier de Saigon* followed the tradition of the *Moniteur Universel*,²⁹ which was created by Charles Joseph Panckoucke in 1789 to be the “journal of record” of the revolutionary legislatures.³⁰ The *Moniteur Universel* was quickly taken up by Napoleon I at the beginning of the nineteenth century, who used it as an instrument of his political and military propaganda in continental Europe. In fact, throughout the nineteenth century, the *Moniteur Universel* was used and renamed by all successive governments until the newspaper officially became a public organ and until its format was stabilized under the name *Journal Officiel* during the Third Republic. The creation of the *Courrier de Saigon* in 1864 as the official newspaper of French Cochinchina should be understood as the extension of this practice to the new territories colonized by France. In addition to being tools used to legitimize political power, official newspapers were published in the colonies to support the colonial effort, promote, and unite the various factions of the colonial lobby, and create a propaganda tool to shape the narrative of the respective colonies.

In the early years of postrevolutionary France, the old colonies—that is to say, the North American territories, the French West Indies, and the Mascarene Islands—were

29 Suzanne Tucoo-Chala, “La diffusion des Lumières dans la seconde moitié du XVIII^e siècle: Ch.-J. Panckoucke, un libraire éclairé (1760–1799)” [The Spread of Enlightenment in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century: Ch.-J. Panckoucke, an Enlightened Bookseller (1760–1799)], *Dix-Huitième Siècle* 6, no. 1 (1974): 117.

30 Jeremy D. Popkin, *Press, Revolution, and Social Identities in France, 1830–1835* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 71.

the only colonies that already had official journals or publications.³¹ For the colonial societies that were part of the so-called first colonial empire, printing presses were only introduced several decades after colonization. For instance, in the case of Réunion, which came under French control in the 1640s, the printing press was only introduced over a century and a half later, in 1792.³² In the following years, *Le Vrai républicain*, the first Réunionese newspaper was published. It was aimed at “spreading the acts of the Revolution in Bourbon.”³³

At the time of the second French colonial empire, the printing press had become a central aspect of colonization. Indeed, the colonization of Algeria in 1830 was quasi-synchronous with the introduction and use of the printing press. The expeditionary army sent to Algeria created the newspaper *L'Estafette d'Alger* on June 25, 1830,³⁴ three weeks before the signing of the submission treaty between the dey of Algiers and the commander of the French army. The treaty marked the end of the Ottoman Regency of Algiers and with it the beginning of the French military campaign in Algeria. The ephemeral *Estafette* was followed by *Le Moniteur algérien* in 1832, which subsequently became the official newspaper of the colony. As a matter of fact, the creation of *Le Moniteur algérien*, just following the French conquest, set the precedent for future colonial expansion: New Caledonia came under French control in 1853, and *Le Moniteur Impérial de la Nouvelle-Calédonie et dépendances* was created in 1859; Tahiti became a French possession in 1842, and *L'Océanie Française – Journal de Tahiti* was created in 1844.³⁵

Following this practice, the *Courrier de Saigon* was first published in 1864, only two years after a succession of military conflicts led to the signing of the Treaty of Saigon, which ceded the control of the southeastern provinces of present-day Vietnam to France.³⁶ It becomes clear that the creation of an official journal in the years following the conquest of a new territory appears to be part of the French colonization routine. As Laure Demougin argues, establishing an official journal in the colony's early years participated in the colonial effort as the printing presses are among the first infrastructures established in the colonized territories. She notes that the printing press was part of the “arsenal of war”³⁷ and that the symbolic significance of these colonial

31 Auguste Toussaint, “Les débuts de l'imprimerie aux Iles Mascareignes” [The Beginnings of Printing in the Mascarene Islands], *Revue d'histoire des Colonies* 35, no. 122 (1948): 1.

32 Laure Demougin, “Identités et exotisme: Représentations de soi et des autres dans la presse coloniale française au dix-neuvième siècle (1830–1880)” [Identities and Exoticism: Representations of Self and Other in the Nineteenth-Century French Colonial Press] (PhD thesis, Montpellier University 2017), 19.

33 Jean-Louis Joubert, *Littératures de l'Océan Indien* [Literature of the Indian Ocean] (Vanves: Edicef, 1996), 201.

34 The second and last issue of the journal was published on July 5, 1830.

35 Demougin, “Identités et exotisme,” 4–5.

36 Brocheux et al., *Indochina*, 25.

37 Demougin, “Identités et exotisme,” 18.

official journals was as important as their practical efficiency.³⁸ The establishment of a newspaper in a conquered territory served as a powerful tool for cultural domination, allowing the colonizers to shape the narrative and control the collective imagination of a given region.

Shaping Colonial Discourse: The *Courrier de Saigon* and the Vision for French Cochinchina

The first issue of the *Courrier de Saigon*, subtitled *Journal Officiel de la Cochinchine Française*, was published on Friday, January 1, 1864, under the authority of the Directions des Affaires Civiles in Saigon. It laid the groundwork for the journal as well as for the French colonial project in Cochinchina, which was extended to French Indochina in the late nineteenth century. This first issue served several purposes in outlining the French colonial and globalization project in Indochina. Most importantly, it institutionalized the *Courrier de Saigon* as an official political organ and connected the actors of the colonial project to the nationalizing metropole. Moreover, the anonymous first article identified the actors of the colonial project, explained the reasons for colonization, and situated the colony in relation to the metropole and the world.

The first element of the French globalization project furthered by the *Courrier de Saigon* was the creation of the official journal itself. The journal was founded as a bimonthly publication divided into two parts: an official part, with laws and official announcements, and an unofficial part, with news and additional information about the colony. In fact, the publication of the *Courrier de Saigon* was announced in the official part of the journal in the form of a decree signed by the governor of the colony, Pierre-Paul de la Grandière. The decree read:

An official political and commercial journal under the title of *Courrier de Saigon, Journal Officiel de la Cochinchine Française*, will be published on the 10th and 25th of each month starting January 1st, 1864. It will give the official publications of the *Bulletin*, in-depth articles on the resources of the country and the commercial and agricultural questions related to it, the market price of export products, etc.

Furthermore, the governor explained the reasons for the creation of the journal. Per the decree, he stated that

considering that French Cochinchina is little or poorly known in France and the neighboring colonies [and] that inaccurate information given by poorly informed newspapers can harm the

³⁸ Demougin, 18.

true interests and development of our colony, the best way to inspire confidence in industry and commerce is to make known the numerous resources that Lower Cochinchina presents.³⁹

This sentiment was supported in the first article of the issue's unofficial section, which was published without naming the author. According to the article, the journal's mission was to provide an inventory of the resources present in the region to reassure metropolitan capitalists and seek their cooperation by showing them via the journal "what is about to become a prosperous commercial endeavor, whose past offers a sure guarantee."⁴⁰ Additionally, the article identified that one of the missions of the journal, although official in nature, was to change the "erroneous" and "negative" perspectives that the metropole supposedly had on the new colony.⁴¹ The anonymous author further asked the community of colonizers to provide the journal's editors with information and material (i. e., letters, articles, notes, and information) to contribute to the above-stated mission of propaganda for the new colony. The author also explained that the journal is not a literary production—unlike the official journals in the metropole, which have a section dedicated to novelists and writers—but rather a journal where all useful information would find a "common home."⁴² The author insisted that the journal become not only a repository for archiving information about the colony but also a place where the "official" and "true"⁴³ interpretation of government actions in the colony will be made known. To reinforce his point, the author appealed to the readership as follows: "let's not forget the useful help that this journal will give us for this, showing in each act of the authority a step more toward the goal to reach."⁴⁴ Indeed the journal was understood as medium to support various actors to carry out the French colonial project in Cochinchina.

Besides institutionalizing the *Courrier de Saigon* as a tool of the new French colonial project in the Indochinese peninsula, the first article identified the actors participating in the colonial project. The collaboration of a variety of actors is called upon, namely "industrialists and merchants, settlers and missionaries, sailors and soldiers."⁴⁵ In this statement, the "missionaries," whose pioneering activities in Dai Viet paved the way for the later colonization and expansion of the French globalization project in Indochina, were briefly mentioned among other actors, namely the "industrialists" and "merchants,"

39 *Courrier de Saigon*, January 1, 1864, 1, Bibliothèque des Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer, Aix-en-Provence (BIB AOM50064_1864) (own translation).

40 *Courrier de Saigon*.

41 *Courrier de Saigon*.

42 *Courrier de Saigon*.

43 *Courrier de Saigon*.

44 *Courrier de Saigon*.

45 *Courrier de Saigon*.

whose presence seemed to be the most favored. In this section of the article, the anonymous author chose to insert an excerpt from Napoleon III's speech at the opening of the legislative session on November 5, 1863, in which he stated that "we have conquered in Cochinchina a position which, without obliging us to face the difficulties of the local government, will enable us to exploit the immense resources of these countries and to civilize them by trade." The local administration as well as the Annamites (the name of the local population in French) were also identified as actors profiting from the French colonial project. Accordingly, the article stated:

No one will dispute that our French administration, with its powerful unity [and] with its rare merits of simplicity and centralization, is superior in every way to the traditional routines of the Annamite administration. [...] However, it would have been a mistake and an injustice to try to make this substitution abruptly without preparing it for a long period of time, without bringing the native population to understand the benefits and to claim it, so to speak, by itself.⁴⁶

Moreover, the first article of the first issue spelled out the justifications for French colonization, namely the extraction of raw materials in the colonies to stimulate French industrialization and trade as well as the civilizing mission. In doing so, the article explicitly referred to how French industry would profit from the colonial project, namely through the rice trade, maritime commerce, a nascent silk industry, cotton, wood, and cheap labor. In fact, the demographic aspect of the colony also played a role and was considered a valuable resource from the point of view of the author: "We have here at hand what no treasure could replace and what a century of emigration would not give us: I mean a compact and easy-to-govern population, whose number we will have to increase indefinitely."⁴⁷

In presenting the French administration as "superior in every way,"⁴⁸ the article further promised that the French presence would bring "civilization"⁴⁹ to this region in exchange for its economic exploitation: by transforming the "dirt roads"⁵⁰ and "fetid huts"⁵¹ into "spacious streets"⁵² and "clean, airy houses,"⁵³ as well as by opening the rice market to the outside world, the French presence would bring "welfare"⁵⁴ to the

46 *Courrier de Saigon*.

47 *Courrier de Saigon*.

48 *Courrier de Saigon*.

49 *Courrier de Saigon*.

50 *Courrier de Saigon*.

51 *Courrier de Saigon*.

52 *Courrier de Saigon*.

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54 *Courrier de Saigon*.

local population. The new societal order brought by the French power, characterized by “simplicity”⁵⁵ and “centralization,”⁵⁶ would gradually replace the “traditional”⁵⁷ routines of the Annamite administration and thus transform the Annamite society into a prosperous and outward-looking society. In doing so, the narrative put forward by the authors regarding the resources to be exploited in the colony highlights how France, whose voice is embodied by the anonymous author, defined itself as “superior in every way” vis-à-vis the colonized. The colonial effort is thus a defining exercise for the nationalizing French Empire and metropole.

Finally, the first article positions the colony vis-à-vis the metropole and the rest of the world. On the one hand, the author attempted to convince the metropole’s readers of the significant progress made by “the small nucleus of pioneers”⁵⁸ in transforming the colony only a few years after the end of the military campaign in Cochinchina. According to the author, during the siege of Saigon in 1861, the city was characterized by “crowded docks”⁵⁹ and “fetid swamps.”⁶⁰ Three years later, the author described “a city with a regular plan that is developing before our eyes today.”⁶¹ To add to his promotional efforts vis-à-vis the metropole, he invited the potential colonists to overcome their first impressions of the colony. He conceded that the first impressions may be discouraging:

from Cape Saint-Jacques [...] a monotonous horizon of alluvial plains, swampy and without crops, [and] of the endless edge of mangroves, not a village, not even a dwelling, hardly from far away some Annamite boat, [...] haphazardly scattered houses with no apparent plan may bear some vague resemblance to the Californian settlements of the 1850s.⁶²

This description was very soon contrasted with the following statements: “a vast garden, whose incomparable fertility will form the most striking contrast with what he has seen so far.”⁶³ Indeed, the article praised “the new possession that our arms have conquered”⁶⁴ by highlighting “the magnificent development of the waterways that cover the country”⁶⁵ and the “rich panorama of the rice fields.”⁶⁶

55 *Courrier de Saigon*.

56 *Courrier de Saigon*.

57 *Courrier de Saigon*.

58 *Courrier de Saigon*.

59 *Courrier de Saigon*.

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65 *Courrier de Saigon*.

66 *Courrier de Saigon*.

On the other hand, the author positioned the colony in relation to the rest of the world and in particular to other European empires. Indeed, the author noted that France has “nothing to envy the establishments of Spain, England or Holland.”⁶⁷ He qualified France’s choice to place itself in the China Sea as strategic, despite the fact that it may require military support, to which the author appealed: “Never have a few million spent intelligently brought greater results, for they will give us an invulnerable fortress, under the shelter of which our commercial ships will find a sure protection in this distant ocean.”⁶⁸ Altogether, the author positioned Cochinchina as a valuable investment for the metropole as well as a strategic geopolitical asset vis-à-vis the other European powers already well established in the region.

In summary, the creation of the *Courrier de Saigon* as the official journal of the French colony of Cochinchina simultaneously marked the conclusion of a three-century-long process of nationalization that saw the initial missionary project replaced and integrated into the Second Empire’s colonial and globalization project. In fact, while the takeover of the Portuguese missionary project was the result of circumstantial events at times, such as the actions of individual missionaries, the subsequent process of integration into the French colonial project amid a nationalizing metropole following the French Revolution was carried out along a calculated formula, as evidenced using a powerful tool of French state-making and colonization: the *Courrier de Saigon*.

Although the first issue of the *Courrier de Saigon* provides only a glimpse of the French colonial project that began in Cochinchina, it nonetheless reflects the determination with which French political actors, though sometimes in opposition to one another, would continue throughout the nineteenth century to expand and maintain the French presence in the Indochinese peninsula and beyond. As a matter of fact, 20 years after the signing of the Treaty of Saigon, the official journal’s scope expanded in parallel with the colonial project and was rebranded first as the *Journal Officiel de la Cochinchine Française* in 1879 and, finally, as the *Journal Officiel de l’Indo-chine Française* in 1889 for French colonial possession in present-day Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and parts of southern China. Accordingly, the creation of the *Courrier de Saigon* in 1864 was the first step in the announcement and implementation of the French globalization project in Indochina, whose narrative would be further transformed and expanded through the subsequent official journals. While the French colonial project in Indochina ended with the military defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, the legacies of the colonial and globalization project in Indochina can still be felt today, making France home to the second-largest Vietnamese diaspora after the United States.

⁶⁷ *Courrier de Saigon*.

⁶⁸ *Courrier de Saigon*.

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Algeria in French History (1830 to the Present Day)

Introduction

Having lost its first colonial empire and being banned from any expansive undertakings in Europe since 1815, France was threatened with provincialization at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The gradual establishment of the Algerian colony from 1830 to 1834 opened up a new perspective for the country, tempting French political elite to first of all extend the national territory to Africa, as compensation for the left bank of the Rhine lost in 1814. Moreover, Algeria's location in Africa allowed France to renew its imperial project and colonial ambitions, unfolding over the century and diverting France, its leaders, and its army a bit away from European affairs. In the new world of the nineteenth century, the colonization of Algeria by France was a turning point in the relationship between the world and Africa. Apart from South Africa and the trading posts on the route to India, Algeria was the first African territory colonized by Europe. When the opportunity of seizing Algeria appeared during the Restoration, France was still undecided. But within a few years, this territory, largely unknown to the French, was taken over by the nationalist and military forces of France. France did not yet know that it had just embarked on an adventure of no return, one that would reshape and globalize its foreign policy and interests while also propelling the entire African continent into the globalization of industrial capitalism initiated by Western Europe. Algeria, called so since 1839, allowed France not only to re-establish a "New France," referring to the imagination of the New France lost by the ancien régime in North America, but also to make this Algerian colony a bridgehead to launch France's conquest of the African continent. While France had been forbidden any military movement in Europe since Waterloo, the vision of a new French overseas expansion was supported first by the military; then by parts of the Catholic Church; and finally by the French colonial lobby in Paris, which united political, banking, industrial, and commercial interests. In addition, this new push southward by Europe, beginning in 1830, awakened the idea of dividing Africa among the other European powers and colonial powers, which was decided 50 years later at the Berlin Conference.

From 1830 onward, French Algeria quickly became the matrix of this second colonial age, which set out to conquer Africa and Asia in the industrial age; of French colonial policies; and, beyond that, of the colonization of Africa by Europeans. Algeria served as the birthplace of many developments: the formation of the French colonial army, consisting of mixed units and troops of European and colonial soldiers, as well as the

establishment of Indigenous Affairs Offices, initially established as the Arab Offices. Furthermore, Algeria was the territory where the policy of indirect rule à la française was first implemented, which was theorized in the early twentieth century by the British administrator Frederick Lugard.¹ This policy, in place since the 1830s in Algeria, created a form of the government of the “natives” by the local military, political, and religious tribal elites. This form of colonial rule was based on the *indigénat*, the administration and control (i. e., neutralization) of Islam. Additionally, at this time the use of indigenous troops on all fronts, in Africa and throughout the world, became commonplace in the service of European armies. Africans emigrated and departed from their continent, with a migration experiment beginning in 1904 in Marseille before taking off during World War I. Algeria are served as a place to carry out and push the limits of policies of assimilation and “civilization,” with Christian missions focusing on Muslims and “natives” in general, followed by the development policies implemented after 1945. All modern colonial policies were invented and tested on Algerian soil before being spread not only throughout the French colonial empire but also in the Belgian, Portuguese, Italian, and even British colonial empires. Finally, it is worth mentioning that Algeria inaugurated the new colonial era in 1830 and continued to lead it until its end in 1962, with the exception of the Portuguese colonies.

However, Algeria was not only a vector of the new phase of globalization for France but also, since the colonial era and especially after 1962, a vector of diffusion of Africa in general and of Algerians in particular into the world. As Frenchmen and as French soldiers, they traveled and waged war all over the world in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As workers and students in metropolitan France, they acquired unique and pioneering experiences in Africa, whether in unionization, politicization, the discovery of socialism and communism, or the experience and contact with Asians (Vietnamese, Chinese, etc.). The Algerians won the Algerian War not because they defeated the French army on the ground but thanks to their exceptional diplomatic and war communication strategies.² From 1962 onward, Algeria did not lose its role as a pioneer country, as it emerged as a leader of the Third World and of the anti-imperialist struggle, alongside China and Vietnam. Thus, the newly independent country became the main supporter of all Africans living in one way or another under the yoke of colonialism, apartheid, imperialism, and oppressive regimes. Algiers became the mecca for anti-imperialism

1 Frederick Lugard (1858–1945) was a British colonial administrator who served as governor of Nigeria between 1900 and 1919. When he governed northern Nigeria during the war in 1914, he practiced indirect rule relying on native Muslim chiefs, as the French had done in Algeria since the 1830s and then in Indochina. In his book *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (1922), he theorized this mode of colonial government, which he described as indirect rule.

2 Matthew Connolly, *L'arme secrète du FLN? Comment de Gaulle a perdu la guerre d'Algérie* [The FLN's Secret Weapon? How de Gaulle Lost the Algerian War] (Paris: Payot, 2011).

and served as a mouthpiece for Africans and Arabs around the world through its networks and reputation.

Apart from South Africa, in the mid-1960s, Algeria was the most developed and best-equipped country in Africa, with a standard of living far above average. The promise of oil heralded a bright future. However, Algeria's relationship with France remained highly ambivalent. Despite the violence experienced during the Algerian War, the country never broke ties with its former colonizer. The rise of migration in the 1960s, together with remarkable cooperation developing between the two in the 1960s and 1970s, led to a completely new relationship. France thought it had broken with its African past in 1962, but by the beginning of the twenty-first century, experiencing immigration and the emergence and development of Islam in the country, which is strongly linked to Algeria, France began to rapidly transform. As a result, the entire French society has been drawn into a profound process of recomposition, all the while under the gaze of an Algeria that has not forgotten its past.

Considering the points made above, this chapter will examine how Algeria, starting from the legacies of the nineteenth century, was the French and European colonial gateway to Africa. Next, it will address how the short "iron century" (1914–1962)³ shattered these legacies through the violence of industrial war and the spread of political ideologies. Finally, the chapter will outline how the Algerian War, through the "revolutionary populism"⁴ of the National Liberation Front (Front de Libération Nationale, FLN)—bringing together the Third World and Islam—made a lasting contribution to the reconstruction of North-South relations and how this war and its political and migratory consequences transformed France into a postcolonial Western society.

Algeria: Colonial Gateway to Africa and the Legacy of the Nineteenth Century

The Intellectual Legacy of the Nineteenth Century and the Making of a New Imperial Political Imaginary

Nineteenth-century French political discourse aimed to politically justify the French colonial enterprise in Africa. At the beginning of the conquest, drawing parallels with Napoleon Bonaparte's Egyptian expedition, the French claimed that they had come to liberate the inhabitants of Algiers from Turkish oppressors. The Turkish forces were sent back to the East, and a long military conquest began, which was finally realized under the Third Republic. Following, France began its colonizing efforts, framed as a

3 The expression "iron century," used for a long time to describe seventeenth century, was applied to the twentieth century by the French historian René Rémond. René Rémond, *Regard sur le siècle* [A Look at the Century] (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2007).

4 Mohammed Harbi, *Aux origines du FLN. Le populisme révolutionnaire en Algérie* [The Origins of the FLN: Revolutionary Populism in Algeria] (Paris: C. Bourgeois, 1975).

duty of the country to educate and civilize—in the political sense of the word conceived by Napoleon—the “inferior peoples.” The perspective was proclaimed by Jules Ferry, a republican politician, in a statement to the Chamber of Deputies on July 28, 1885. This colonial baton was passed from politicians to scientists.

Colonial anthropologists, who were officers in the colonial army in the mid-nineteenth century and then historians in the early twentieth century, devoted their efforts to justifying the colonization of Algeria and Africa by citing historical precedents in the Mediterranean. France built a New France in North Africa, a country of pioneers compared to the old Louisiana lost in 1763. Algeria was to become the counterpart of the British settlements. However, the Algerian “natives” by far made up the majority of the colony’s population. So “civilization” came before “colonization.”

This ideological framework drew from the concept of civilizing colonization led by Rome, and the French presented themselves as its heirs. In such an understanding, the inhabitants of modern Algeria were compared to the ancient Gauls, who benefited from Roman civilization after heroic resistance, with the Arab leader Abdelkader being likened to the Gallic leader Vercingetorix. Just as the Gauls became Romans, like the Berbers after Carthage, the native population of Algeria in the nineteenth century was destined to become French.

As the Romanization/Christianization of North Africa had been transformed through Arabization and Islamization in the Middle Ages, French archaeologists and historians dug up the Roman and ancient ruins of Algeria: the Roman roads and the site of the cities were restored. In addition, great attention was paid to the rediscovery of the Andalusian-Arab thinker of the fourteenth century, Ibn Khaldun (author of *A History of the Berbers*, translated into French and published),⁵ who declared that the Hilalian Arabs in the twelfth century, who brought Africa back to nomadism, had devastated the Maghreb. Modern France thus took over the work of the Romans, bringing the “Berbers” back to “civilization.”

In this ideological landscape, the “Berber myth” (also called the “Kabyle myth”) unfolded. Among its proponents was Cardinal Martial Lavigerie, archbishop of Algiers and later primate of Carthage, who founded the Catholic missionary society of the White Fathers in Algiers in 1868: he wanted to try out sermons on the Kabyles as a prelude to the evangelization of Africa. The Berbers were considered the original inhabitants of North Africa. In the Middle Ages, they fled from the plains to the mountains to escape the Arabs and retained their language and customs. The Kabyles were

5 Ibn Khaldūn, *Histoire des berbères et des dynasties musulmanes de l'Afrique septentrionale* [History of the Berbers and Muslim Dynasties of Northern Africa], vol. 1, trans. M. le Baron de Slane (Algiers: Imprimerie du gouvernement, 1852).

said to be the twins of the Gauls, “blond and blue-eyed,” according to the persisting myth.⁶

Thus, according to Lavigerie, the forced conversion of the Kabyles would be superficial, and little would be needed to return them to the Catholicism of their ancestors. To this end, supposed evidence was presented: the ubiquitous veneration of *marabouts* (saints) in Kabylia was Catholic heritage, just as the egalitarian village assemblies of the tribes were inherited from the Roman democratic mores.⁷ For him, the French therefore had to rely on the Kabyles to govern Africa, reminding these Muslims of the faith of their ancestors. This led to the excavation of Roman ruins and the teaching of ancient history to the Kabyles. Although the Bonapartist and republican French officers who administered the country after the conquest were skeptical about these theories and limited the presence of the White Fathers to the region of Kabylia, an abundant literature nourished by archaeologists and historians promoted these theories until the middle of the twentieth century.

At the same time, within the colonial milieu of Algerian Europeans, an “Algerianist” literature developed. Culminating in the 1920s, it was prevalent in the work of writers and novelists like Louis Lecoq and Charles Hagel. Hundreds of novels were published, with such themes and perspectives appearing the cinema, the events of the centenary of French Algeria in 1930, and the colonial exhibition in Paris in 1931.⁸

This literature elevated the “Algerians” (i. e., only the Algerian French) to a nation of pioneers and adventurers who braved extreme conditions to settle in Algeria. At great sacrifice and with many deaths, they opened up an abandoned, empty, and uncultivated land. Their masterpiece was the drainage and cultivation of the Mitidja plain, south of Algiers. These builders erected, for example, cities, including Algiers (the Little Paris), 600 villages, railroad infrastructure, and harbors and planted vineyards and fields of wheat. According to their self-perpetuating narrative, these new “Algerians” saw themselves the creators of Algeria.

Resulting from the mixing of European “races” (in the sense of peoples), this group built its own culture, pioneering spirit, and language, Pataouète (which appeared in French dictionaries in 1898). A Catholic people with a popular piety, the “Algerians” exhibited an excessive French republican patriotism—especially the naturalized Italians or Spaniards. Some decisions of the metropolis were contested, but all respected the protective role of the army. These “Algerians” distinguished themselves above all from

6 The historian Charles Robert Ageron analyzes the “Kabyle myth” (also known as the Berber myth) in his thesis published in 1968: Charles Robert Ageron, *Les Algériens musulmans et la France (1871–1919)* [Muslim Algerians and France (1871–1919)], 2 vols. (Paris: PUF, 1968).

7 Ageron.

8 See the website of the Pied-Noir Library for many of these works (with the rare possibility to purchase them): <https://www.librairie-pied-noir.com/>.

the “Arabs,” perceived as an apathetic but dangerous mass, and sometimes from Algerian Jews.

The Question of Assimilation, its Limits, and the Unintended Consequences it Entailed: The Algerian Impasse

The gradual annexation of Algeria to metropolitan France was proclaimed republican policy, known as “assimilation policy.” This term is now associated with groups or individuals assimilated into French culture: for example, the Third Republic assimilated peasants in non-French-speaking regions of France (who spoke a dialect or regional language) and immigrant workers through school and military service. In Algeria, however, assimilation primarily comprised a territorial and administrative process. Under the triple influence of the monarchist, Jacobin, and republican heritage, French authorities in Algeria worked to unify laws, procedures, and institutions between the metropolis and its colony. For example, in 1848 Algeria was divided into departments, like the metropolis had been since 1791.

Assimilation could not be the same as in metropolitan France, although all the inhabitants of colonial Algeria had been French in a pseudo-belonging since 1848. This difficult environment was faced three realities. First, the society was divided on the ground, with the “natives” on the margins of the country and its economy. Second, the French citizens of Algeria desired to retain political, financial, and administrative control of the colony, which meant that the citizenship of the native population had to be steadfastly refused (they were French without being citizens). Third, Paris and the leaders of the national political center were weak, struggling to pursue a coherent and consistent policy in the colony; in the end, they let Algiers undertake its own initiatives. The result was that a slowly unfolding policy of assimilation of the Algerian population, out of step with the “French Algeria” praised by colonial propaganda.

Muslims in Algeria gained citizenship in the colony in 1848 and then French citizenship in stages, which was repeatedly postponed or limited. When they received it in 1958 under Charles de Gaulle, the end of the colonial system was imminent. In fact, only the Jews in Algeria became French citizens collectively on the same day through the Crémieux Decree of 1870:⁹ it is the only time that Paris enacted an act of sovereignty out of loyalty to the French Revolution.

The great unspoken question of how to resolve the impossible colonial equation in Algeria was the following: How, in parallel with attempts to increase the number of French citizens in Algeria, could Muslims be kept from attaining citizenship in order to maintain control of the colony? However, the Muslim population was French and as a result obtained new rights and duties. In 1865, they obtained the right to attain

9 “Décret du 24 octobre 1870 qui déclare citoyens français les Israélites indigènes d’Algérie” [Decree of October 24, 1870, Declaring the Indigenous Israelites of Algeria to be French Citizens], accessed August 3, 2023, <https://mjp.univ-perp.fr/france/d1870algerie.htm>.

French citizenship by abandoning the Sharia (Islamic civil law), which 7,000 “French subjects” of Muslim law did between 1865 and 1954. In 1919, an electoral college was created, gradually being enlarged to include the Muslim elite. The status of taxpayer, the foundation of French citizenship, was applied as of a right of the native population; in 1912, Muslims paid nearly 71 percent of direct taxes, but they owned only 38 percent of the wealth of Algeria.¹⁰ In spite of this, French citizenship was distributed to indigenous Muslims only sparingly from 1919 onward, and the Popular Front did not change this policy. A second Crémieux Decree for Muslims, so to say,¹¹ was the terror inflicted by the “Algerians” against the native population.

While the Muslims were denied citizenship, the colonial party and their vested interests aimed to appropriate the good *arch* (collective) and *melk* (private) lands of the tribes for the benefit of colonization. Until 1914, the tribes were “confined” to their land, with efforts being made to force them to cede their most valuable land through purchase, transactions, or even trials. By the end of the nineteenth century, the area that covered the common law communities—600 villages and a few dozen towns, so-called full-fledged communities (as in metropolitan France)—grew from 20,000 sq km to over 120,000 sq km. This region was where most of the Europeans lived, a small third of colonial Algeria outside of the Sahara.

To ensure the policing of the native population, considered to be “French subjects,” the Code de l’indigénat (1881) —unrelated to Colbert’s Code Noir—created draconian penalties for the natives. Permanent and fussy procedures were imposed to monitor these populations, aiming to prevent leaving, as well as undeclared public demonstrations, including marriages and baptisms. Accordingly, a regime of prior administrative authorization was established to ensure control. The colonial establishment became worried by the conscription of indigenous men in 1911–12 in anticipation of war, as the native population was perceived as taking one more step toward citizenship.

But what to do with the “indigenous masses”? In addition to agricultural colonization by large and small settlers, the French progressively relied on an indigenous workforce, especially during the transition from small village colonization to large industrial and vineyard colonization at the turn of the twentieth century. And there was no possibility of francizing Muslims through schools as only 2 percent of Muslim children attended school in 1914. This is why the army played a crucial role in Algeria. It is the army, as an institution, that would socialize a large part of the Muslim men in the French city.

10 Daniel Rivet, *Le Maghreb à l'épreuve de la colonisation* [The Maghreb Put to the Test of Colonization] (Paris: Hachette Littératures, 2002).

11 “Décret sur la naturalisation des Indigènes musulmans et des étrangers résidant en Algérie” [Decree on the Naturalization of Muslim Natives and Foreigners Residing in Algeria], October 24, 1870, accessed August 3, 2023, <https://mjp.univ-perp.fr/france/d1870algerie.htm>; see also “Décret du 7 octobre 1871, relatif aux Israélites indigènes de l'Algérie” [Decree of October 7, 1871, Relating to the Indigenous Israelites of Algeria].

Its role was much more important than that of the school, which partly explains the history of Algeria in the twentieth century. As will be shown, the military colony gave rise to a military state.

The Rebirth of the French Army in Algeria and the Army of Africa

The defeat of Napoleon's armies, enshrined in the Congress of Vienna in 1814, was a major turning point in the history of France. In addition to the territorial loss of the gains made during the French Revolution and the French Empire, France had to renounce any military operation outside its borders, guaranteed by the Great Powers. The French military was disarmed, and its army could no longer exceed 100,000 men. The result was a paralyzed army comprising too many military officials reminiscing about their glorious memories—from Cairo to Moscow—and bored in the garrison towns. France had thus successively lost its colonial empire (1763), its European conquests (1814), and its military power and autonomy (1815).

The Algiers expedition, tolerated by the British, was led by General de Bourmont, an officer who had survived the Chouannerie and the empire and was linked to the Restoration. The general was dismissed in 1830 by the new French regime. Even though Louis-Philippe lost interest in this victory, it was the army, finally free, that undertook a campaign to make Algeria a French land. Between 1830 and 1834, it seized the coastal cities and the domain of the dey sent back to Turkey, creating a belligerent system in its wake. A marshal of the empire, Soult, forced the king in 1834 to accept the establishment of a French presence in North Africa, entrusting this land to half a dozen generals who had served during Revolution and the French Empire. Thomas Robert Bugeaud (1784–1849), a veteran of the Peninsular War, defeated Abdelkader. Louis Juchault de Lamoricière (1806–1865) was the first governor of Algeria who was not a general during the Revolution: he created the Arab Offices in 1834 succeeded Bugeaud in 1847. The Army of Africa (*Armée d'Afrique*) was created in 1834, with Bugeaud expanding it into a force of 100,000 men, equivalent to the first army in metropolitan France. Equipped with elite units, specialized corps, and indigenous troops, this complete and trained force allowed the French army to regain its glory. It participated in all of France's worldwide battles for over a century and launched itself into the age-old conquest of North Africa. The Crimean War in 1854 and the victory in Sevastopol demonstrated that France has recovered its military power.¹²

The capture of Emperor Napoleon III at Sedan in early September 1870 revealed to France how unprepared its army was, some of which came from Africa, in the face of Prussia and its German allies, who were already equipped with machine guns and were decimating the French infantrymen in their red Garance pants. Faced with Prussia's

12 Alain Gouttman, *La guerre de Crimée 1853–1856, la première guerre moderne* [The Crimean War 1853–1856: The First Modern War] (Paris: Perrin, 2003).

modern artillery, the French army failed to get moving and was forced to retreat under a hail of shells. Within a few months, the Prussians broke the French front, occupying the northern third of France, surrounding Paris, and forcing the government to flee to Tours and later Bordeaux.

For the new republican regime proclaimed by Léon Gambetta in Paris on September 4, 1870, the challenges were immense. The royalists had won the January 1871 elections, and only the political divisions between factions kept them from proclaiming a monarchy. The nascent republic had fired on the decimated revolutionary left in Paris. How to redeem the national honor, rebuild and equip the army, industrialize the country, protect the national territory, and prepare for revenge? What could be done to anchor the republic while modernizing the country, but without being able to compete with Germany in the near future, whose population and forces were visibly growing (from 40 million in 1870 [like France] to 60 million in 1914 [with France having remained at 40 million])?

Ferry and the radicals initiated three major reforms that complemented each other: the reform of the compulsory and laicist school, which was to instruct the Frenchmen in the veneration of the fatherland and the duty of revenge; the reform of the army (beginning in 1873) and of the national defense, to secure the territory and make victory possible against an enemy superior in numbers and wealth; and the revival of colonial expansion, to show that France had lost none of its glory, as well as revolutionary and civilizing breath.

Since war was impossible in Europe, Ferry and the republicans relaunched colonial expansion in Tonkin (Indochina), Tunisia, and Senegal. The new regime wanted to show the French that the republic, like the Second Empire, was conducting a worldwide expansion policy but without losing its wars: it was a matter of overcoming the memory of the defeat of the French armies in Mexico. This is why the victorious expansion in Indochina was so important. It was also a question of competing with the British by measuring France and its might against them on various oceans and continents. Africa took on great importance with the ambition of colonizing the entire Sahara until the turning point of the Fashoda Incident in 1898. The idea of the government and the general staff was also to provide a training ground and battlefields for the navy and then for infantry officers following the reform of the army. Between 1881 and 1914, France created the world's second colonial empire—with very few settlers, instead relying on administrative and military structures—in order to promote its glory, under the waving *Tricolore*. Only Algeria remained a true land of colonial expansion—with peasant settlers—which, incidentally, continued into northern Tunisia, but with human resources declining at the end of the century saw the stagnation of the French population.¹³

13 Pierre Vermeren, ed., *L'Empire colonial français en Afrique. Métropole et colonies, sociétés coloniales, de la conférence de Berlin (1884–85) aux Accords d'Évian* [The French Colonial Empire in Africa: Metropolis

The army was reorganized in stages from 1873 onward on the basis of the German model, and compulsory military service was created ten years later. In this military policy, which was the major project of the Third Republic, the Army of Africa played an important role. In the 1873 reform, it only formed the nineteenth army corps, the other 18 being in metropolitan France. Although the name “Armée d’Afrique” remained in use until the end of the colonial era, it was not only owing to its sentimental connotation.

Only a few hours by boat from the metropolis, Algeria was a permanent testing ground for war. Several generations of young officers gained combat experience through different campaigns: the conquest of Tunisia, the repression of the Ouled Sidi Cheikh (Awlad Sidi Shaykh) in Algeria, the war in southern Tunisia, the conquest and pacification of the Algerian Sahara and then Mauritania, the implementation of Moroccan borders starting in 1903, and then the conquest of Morocco in 1907 and especially 1912.

The Army of Africa had many special units of highly trained elite troops as Africa was in a constant state of war: for instance, the legionnaires (French Foreign Legion at Sidi Bel Abbès), the Zouaves, the hardened mixed units of Algerian riflemen regiments and Moroccan *goums/goumiers* (auxiliaries), the *spahis* (light-cavalry regiments), and the *méharistes* (camel cavalry) for the mounted troops, the Africa battalions or disciplinary battalions. In 1914, even if these units only constituted auxiliary forces in the Great War (4 to 5 percent of all the colonial troops), these seasoned soldiers (the only ones at the beginning) played a decisive role in holding the line north of Meaux in the First Battle of the Marne, then again in 1916 at Verdun, in 1917, and during the battles of autumn 1918. In addition, the introduction of fresh colonial troops sent by the French military command to all fronts allowed it to demonstrate immense reserves to boost the morale of the troops; these units were among the most decorated in the French army.

The victory in World War I and the recognition of the colonial forces served to validate the decisions made by the Republicans over the 40 years prior. The unexpected victory in the Great War was considered justified revenge for a semirural country with 40 million inhabitants. The French army and leadership, for all these reasons, attributed this success in part to the empire, the Army of Africa, and what would later become “Greater France.”¹⁴

and Colonies, Colonial Societies, from the Berlin Conference (1884–85) to the Évian Accords] (Paris: Armand Colin, 2023).

14 Raoul Girardet, “L’apothéose de la ‘plus grande France’: l’idée coloniale devant l’opinion française (1930–1935)” [The Apotheosis of “Greater France”: The Colonial Idea before French Opinion (1930–1935)], *Revue française de science politique* 18, no. 6 (1968): 1085–1114.

1914–1962: The “Iron Century” Shattered the Heritage of the Nineteenth Century and Projected the Algerians into the Industrial War and into the World of Political Ideologies

“French Algeria”: A Magnifying Glass for the Globalization of War

During World War I, some 300,000 “natives” discovered the metropolis and the European war. The Algerian native population, often fighting under the command of a European cadre from their country—72,000 “Algerians” participated in this war—constituted the main strike force of the French colonial troops. A total of 172,000 Muslim combatants from Algeria fought in metropolitan France, that is to say, 38 percent of the colonial fighters in the French army, half of whom were conscripted and half of whom were enlisted, out of a total of 450,000 men. In addition, there were the contingents of the Army of the Orient (Armée d’Orient).

This was not the first international experience of the Army of Africa outside Algeria, which had already been present in the Crimean War, in Indochina, in the Mexican War and the Franco-German War. But this time the commitment changed in quality and quantity. Since 1912, military service has been compulsory for Muslims in Algeria. The small professional army of North Africa, based on voluntary service, grew tremendously. Until then, it was based on the tradition of the makhzen tribes—the military tribes of mercenaries allied with the Algerian forces, and then the Turkish and French forces—with three regiments of 4,000 men each, namely the first, second, and third Algerian Rifle Regiment (Régiment de Tirailleurs Algériens, RTA). A fourth Tunisian RTA was added later. But on the eve of 1914 and during the Great War, the Army of Africa became a mass and conscript army. Recruited throughout Algeria, 300,000 young indigenous people were mobilized, of whom more than two-thirds were sent overseas. For the 4.4 million native population of the country, it was a revolution: all Muslim social groups, all regions, and all families were involved. The barracks and the training centers and camps were an unprecedented opportunity for intermingling among these young. Their entire horizon and vision of the world changed: contacts with the army, military medicine, modern means of transport and armies, the company of Europeans and other Muslims, prospects of war and travel, pay, uniforms, new hygiene and eating habits, a break with the family and peasant environment, forgetting about the *caïd* (bosses) and the local Islamic *marabouts* (leaders/teachers), and so on.¹⁵

But the rupture does not stop there, since two-thirds of these young men were quickly transferred outside Algeria: nearly four out of five to metropolitan France and one-fifth to the Levant. The discovery of the military environment of the Europeans—at least of the chiefs—and of the other Algerians was almost immediately followed by the discovery

15 Gilbert Meynier, *L’Algérie révélée: la Première Guerre mondiale et le premier quart du XXe siècle* [Algeria Revealed: World War I and the First Quarter of the Twentieth Century] (Geneva: Droz, 1981).

of the metropolis, of the metropolitans, and of the war. The legal and moral distinctions between the indigenous population and colonized diminished significantly within the military. In the army, everyone was exposed to the same risks and dangers, with similar rates of loss among soldiers from the motherland and those from Algeria. The nature of military leadership was binding for all, based on rank and merit, a situation far different than the previous legal position of soldiers, even if the colonial rulers in Algeria were tempted to maintain a special status for the locals while regulating and supervising their leave. However, from the time of landing in the trenches or in the hinterland, during leave and rest periods, or while in the hospital, the metropolitan men did not harbor any colonial prejudices and racism against their fellow soldiers from Algeria. On the contrary, they greeted the men from overseas with great respect and pleasure.

This discovery was essential as much for the French of the metropolis as for the Algerians. For the first time, the two peoples discovered each other. Colonization ceased to be a matter just for specialists, colonists, and civil servants, but became a tangible reality. Also for the Algerians, who were fully integrated into the French army and French nationalism, the war in Europe was a revelation. Many Algerians came from the mixed communes and the mountainous regions or high plateaus and had very little contact with Europeans, of whom they knew little or nothing. But even for those who come from the Tell and the cities, discovering Europeans outside the colonial milieu was fascinating: even if racism and segregation were not permanent structures in Algeria, invisible barriers kept the groups apart. In the army, however, there was a constant proximity to the leaders—20 percent of the European soldiers belonged to Algerian regiments—and then there were the front, the rear, the hospitals, the infirmaries (nurses and nuns), the canteen hostesses, and the *marraines de guerre* (war godmothers), all of which brought soldiers into contact and exchange with the French men and women at some point without any colonial barrier. They all had pay, tobacco, wine, food, and weapons; they played, danced, were afraid, died, or got better together.¹⁶

World War I was a completely new turning point in the relationship of the French with their empire, which was invoked as a savior even if the number of colonial soldiers remained small (about 4.5 percent of the soldiers in the French army were colonial subjects). The same was true in reverse, with the relationship of Algerians with France shifting as their own position vis-à-vis the colonial empire transformed.

16 Jacques Frémeaux, *Les Colonies dans la Grande Guerre: combats et épreuves des peuples d'outre-mer* [The Colonies in the Great War: Fights and Trials of Overseas Peoples] (Verdun: Centre mondial de la Paix, 2006).

"Algeria Revealed": From French Patriotism to Algerian Nationalism?

In addition to the colonial soldiers, 120,000 indigenous workers from Algeria were sent to work in factories in metropolitan France within a span of four years.¹⁷ The first major wave of migration to metropolitan France occurred during World War I, ten years after the first Kabyle (and colonial) workers were sent to Marseille in 1904. In the following ten years, the immigration of Kabyle workers amounted to 13,000 men in 1913. They worked in Marseille, in Paris, and in the mines of the north. These single men were given labor contracts lasting a few months or years. The war brutally reinforced the phenomenon. Three-quarters of these men were Kabyles, benefiting from networks, the history of the migration, and the more or less good command of the French language, as the region has enjoyed a much higher education than the rest of the country. Their numbers increased tenfold, resulting in the return of numerous families to their homeland and the creation of new spaces: the factory, the boarding houses, the French town, the union, the restaurants, or the first Kabyle or Arab cafés. No country in Africa had gone through such upheaval by presenting so much diversity to its young men: a silent revolution had begun.

For the historian Gilbert Meynier, this wartime migration constitutes a decisive factor in the history of the construction of the Algerian nation:¹⁸ by leaving their tribe and their enclave—to which the Muslims of Algeria had been assigned since the conquest—300,000 native young men, coming from Algeria to work in the factories and fields of the motherland or to fight on the battlefields of Europe and the Middle East, became aware of the uniqueness of their situation, both vis-à-vis the other French and the other colonized, and of the existence of their own nationality. Can one already speak of an Algerian country or nation when everything seems to be drowned in French patriotism and nationalism? That is a bit premature.

The Great War inaugurated a new political phase in the history of Algerian elites. Before 1914, Muslim Algeria was dominated by its local notables as well as tribal and Muslim chiefs, and before the war, there were only a handful of literate members of the Young Algerians. After 1920, within a few years, an indigenous Muslim political milieu structured itself, ranging from French republicanism to communism and soon Muslim reformism. This completely changed the situation, for the shift to national claims was also the result of the impasse soon identified in the field of political participation.

The Great War was an opportunity to discover the French and their army and above all to become aware of the colonial phenomenon and the identity of the problems they faced on a global scale. On the battlefields of France, the Algerian riflemen discovered colonial troops from all over the world. In the factories, the Algerians not

17 Gilbert Meynier, "Les Algériens et la guerre de 1914–1918" [The Algerians and the War in 1914–1918], *Histoire de l'Algérie coloniale* (Paris: La Découverte, 2012), 229, 234.

18 Meynier, *L'Algérie révélée*.

only rubbed shoulders with French men and women, but also with workers from the colonial empire—Vietnamese, Chinese, Madagascans, Pacific Islanders, and others.¹⁹ They were also joined by 50,000 other North Africans and workers from, for example, Belgium, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. This international army of workers, mixed with women and old French workers, favored exchange, observation, and reflection. For the Algerians, the Kabyles in particular, a new world was emerging.

But their questions related first and foremost to their own origin: What do these men from Algeria have in common and what unites them if not belonging to this country? The French army won victories; they became soldiers, fighters, workers, and heroes, but is this land their homeland as they were always told? Were they convinced that their blood money, together with the power of the Americans, allowed the French to win? Military propaganda may have led them to believe so.

All of them were united by the memory of their childhood and their families who stayed in their *douars* (villages) and communes of origin. They received promises of dignity and emancipation, declared by Georges Clemenceau.²⁰ They knew that the *indigénat* had been suspended, but when they returned home, the *indigénat* was restored. What to do after the war and demobilization? Thousands of Algerians were noncommissioned officers and even officers, thanks to the ranks they had won on the battlefields. They had an esteemed and respected leader, the emir and captain Khaled, Abdelkader's grandson, who was very popular with the military as well as within their ranks. Their regiments were decorated and honored; thousands of fighters had received decorations, as well as the commendation and the camaraderie of French fighters. But what would their future bring?

Between Revolutionary Nationalism and Internationalism: A Franco-Algerian Laboratory
Algerian nationalism emerged in opposition to France, mirroring French nationalism. From the 1920s to the 1960s, a hybrid form of nationalism took shape, borrowing from French (political), German (ethnocultural), and Islamic (*ummah* [communal]) concepts of the nation. From French nationalism, Algerian nationalists learned the political concept of the nation and the importance of the state, the revolutionary state in particular, which created and gave birth to the nation in arms through violence—violence against the colonizer-invader, against feudalities and local particularisms, against cultural and religious distinctions, and against internal enemies. From the German concept, they took the idea of a community united by customs, language, and religion, which excludes

19 Laurent Dornel, "L'appel aux travailleurs étrangers, coloniaux et chinois pendant la Grande Guerre" [The Appeal to Foreign, Colonial, and Chinese Workers during the Great War], accessed August 3, 2023, <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/dossiers-thematiques/les-etrangers-dans-les-guerres-en-france/l-appel-aux-travailleurs-etrangers>.

20 Charles Robert Ageron, "Clemenceau et la question coloniale" [Clemenceau and the Colonial Question], *De "L'Algérie française" à l'Algérie algérienne*, vol. 1 (Saint-Denis: Bouchène, 2005), 257–276.

allogeneous components and foreign bodies. From the Islamic concept, the Algerian nationalists adopted the religious founding component, the sacredness of the *ummah*, and its ability to transcend national boundaries in fidelity and communion with the language and the Qur'anic predictions.

At the turn of the century, a new Muslim youth appeared in Algiers, described as “evolved” by Europeans and as Young Algerians²¹ by historians, in reference to the Young Turks. Having been educated in French institutions and partaken in the French economy, they aimed more at assimilation than at independence, an idea that had not taken root.

Then, after the war, a radical shift appeared in the Parisian suburbs. In the 1920s, through the postwar Algerian immigration, an unprecedented Algerian political organization was born. On March 2, 1926, a so-called mass organization was created in Paris, within the orbit of the French Communist Party, on the impulse of the Communist International (Comintern): the North African Star (Etoile Nord-Africaine, ENA). This party, subsequently banned several times by the French authorities (in 1929, 1934, and 1937), was the first organization to call for independence in North Africa and in Africa (outside Egypt) in the twentieth century. It was the matrix that would lead in less than 30 years to the constitution of the FLN, its direct heir created on November 1, 1954.

The ENA was from the outset focused on independence. The other organizations became so during the Algerian War. Messali Hadj, at the head of the ENA and then of the Algerian People's Party (Parti du Peuple Algérien, PPA), distinguished himself by his “revolutionary populism”²² aimed at the Muslim people of Algeria, with whom he managed to maintain contact. His ascendancy and charisma flourished in the Kabyle working-class milieu in metropolitan France. Hadj broke completely with the indigenous elites, as they had collaborated with the French to control the Muslim people in Algeria. His path was revolutionary. Even though he refused to sponsor the FLN, becoming its enemy during the war, he significantly shaped the party over 30 years.

However, nationalism had another side, an Islamic one, which the French also did not create but helped to spread. The Association of Algerian Muslim Ulema (Association des oulémas musulmans d'Algérie, AOMA) was founded in Constantine—the main Arab bourgeois city of the colony—in 1931 by Sheikh Abdelhamid Ben Badis. More modest and confined to the religious sphere of the notables, the association reassured the French authorities, who still feared, as in the nineteenth century, the threat of the Islamic brotherhoods, a threat that was now obsolete. With cultural and Islamic objectives, this association is inscribed in the Middle Eastern context of Muslim reformism, the Salafia reform, which in Algeria is called *Islah*. It was founded in the heart of colonial Algeria

21 Adria K. Lawrence, *Imperial Rule and the Politics of Nationalism: Anti-Colonial Protest in the French Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 74–78, 84–85.

22 Harbi, *Aux origines du FLN*.

in a highly controlled political, social, and religious space at the initiative of Muslim notables from large urban families that had been declassified by colonization. Their children studied Islamic studies abroad—like Ben Badis, who became their head—at the Ez-Zitouna in Tunis.

The Islahists wanted to return to a mythically transfigured Arab-Islamic Algerian culture. They were very close to the Egyptian Salafists of the late nineteenth century, of whom they were the successors. They focused their militant, religious, and intellectual activities on preserving the Algerian soul and culture, orthodox Arab Islamism. This movement did not care about the cultures of the people, the rural population, and the Berbers: their world was that of the educated Arab elites linked to the cities of the Arab bourgeoisie in Fez, Tunis, and Cairo, but less than 5 percent of the Algerian population had mastered the written Arabic language upon independence.

Colonization saw in the AOMA an opportunity to divide Muslims and weaken the dreaded Brotherhood Islam. Thus, the Islah found no obstacles to its expansion in colonial Algeria from the 1930s onward. It created more than a hundred free schools with the approval of the colonial authorities.

Thus, two nationalisms developed in parallel: on the one hand, the militant political nationalism of the Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties (Mouvement pour le Triomphe des Libertés Démocratiques, MTL), which had a tendency toward the workers and was opposed by the French and, on the other hand, a cultural Arab-Islamic nationalism that was supported by Arab urban notables and scholars and backed by the colonial authorities, which increased its reach. The former, rejecting socialism because of its official atheism, would join the Islamic cause of Islah. The militant force of the PPA and the ideological power of the Salafia would unite to defeat colonial France. In 1962, the FLN won the war, but the Ulema won the minds of the people. Faced with the FLN—being a party of warriors without a dominant ideology—the Ulema would become the country's new ideological matrix, capable of taking back control of the country's religious and cultural leadership.

Since the Algerian War, Algeria Played a Major Role in the Reconstruction of North-South Relations and in the Transformation of French Society

Algeria at War, like Vietnam, Embodied the Extent of the Uprooting from the Age of Empires

The FLN was a party born to wage war because the established political parties were incapable of influencing the colonial machinery. For the FLN militants, it was no longer

time to assimilate or negotiate. The aim was to fundamentally change the existing balance of power and put an end to the “colonial night.”²³

The gamble seemed insane in 1954. Certainly, there was Dien Bien Phu, but Vietnam was on the other side of the world, and there were only 50,000 French there—apart from the army—out of a population of over 30 million. In Algeria, the ratio was one million to eight or nine million inhabitants, and Algiers was 700 kilometers from Marseille. Algeria had been French for over a century, and the Muslim French in Algeria (Français musulmans d’Algérie, FMA) had not demanded independence, often being involved in the army, the administration, or the economy. The people were passive, and their elites participated in the colonial system. To destroy this system (with 2,000 men in 1954), an iron totalitarian machinery needed to be created, along with a relentless struggle waged against the US-backed First Army of Continental Europe and its numerous police forces and intelligence agencies. At the same time, opinions changed all the time. The betrayal of one individual could destroy the struggle and the apparatus: one had to be relentless.

Within eight years, the revolutionary war destroyed the political society and wiped out a large part of the Algerian elite. This was primarily due to the FLN’s relentless fight against elected representatives, collaborators, notables, *marabouts*, political rivals of the Algerian National Movement (Mouvement national algérien, MNA), and other groups. This was due to the fact that the allegiance to the FLN was unconditional: any resistance or refusal to cooperate with the FLN or pay the revolutionary tax meant death. But the colonial authorities and the French army also demand loyalty and allegiance, and failure to comply led to various troubles. Notables, academics, and skilled individuals were the most exposed at the beginning of the war (as during the Bleuite infiltration and intoxication crisis, the FLN, deceived by the French special services, eliminated its own supporters whom it had taken for traitors). The result was a terrible war coupled with a bloody civil war between Algerians, which devastated the sophisticated political society that dominated Muslim Algeria. The result, as the war progressed, was the promotion of military and unranked people to replace these competent personnel, with notables either being killed or fleeing.

As soon as the National Liberation Army (Armée de libération nationale, ALN) was created in 1954, its ten-point charter stated that it had to “develop the intelligence network within the enemy and within the population” (point 6), “develop the FLN’s network of influence among the people” (point 7), and “strengthen discipline within the ranks of the ALN” (point 8).²⁴ Written by experts of the French army and its history, these words have a significant meaning: it was a question of providing the new state

23 Ferhat Abbas, *Guerre et révolution I: La nuit coloniale* [War and Revolution I: Colonial Night] (Paris: Editions Julliard, 1962).

24 Originals: “Développer le réseau de renseignement au sein de l’ennemi et au sein de la population”; “développer le réseau d’influence du FLN auprès du peuple”; “renforcer la discipline dans les rangs de l’ALN.”

to be founded with an intelligence service equal to the tasks of war—the building of a party and an army, the conquest of a people, and the building of a state. War, politics, and diplomacy were not enough: an all-powerful intelligence service was needed. All this accelerated after the clandestine political Soummam Congress in Kabylia (1956). The creation of Algerian intelligence was the work of Abdelhafid Boussouf, alias Si Mabrouk, born in 1926 in Mila in the Constantine region. Never captured, he remained hidden from 1950 to 1954, operating in the Oran region within the MTLD.²⁵

After eliminating the political head of the FLN and architect of the Soummam Congress, Abane Ramdane, in Morocco during Christmas 1957, he joined the provisional government of the Algerian Republic in 1958. As the minister of armaments and general liaison, he was in a position to control the formation of the entire party-state. The Algerian secret police was created, and the militarization of the party accelerated. The Algerian War was far from a romanticized war, won by maquis-partisans who had defeated their adversary: it was a war of bloodthirsty professional soldiers, skilled in all kinds of deceptive tactics to win a victory that on paper was impossible. The French army under de Gaulle destroyed 90 percent of the maquis, and it was the Border Army, stationed in Morocco and Tunisia, that returned to the country and took power in the summer of 1962.

The maquis were destroyed as well as the Algerian political society, together with the student youth. The dramatic departure of the Europeans and the massacre of the Harkis (about 10 percent of whom fled to France) is a tragedy that signifies the violence of the uprooting, paving the way for all types of political and ideological upheavals. All this is part of the brutalization of the world in the twentieth century, foreshadowing the way Algeria and most Arab and African countries would be governed until the end of the Cold War.

Algeria: The Driving Force behind the Construction of an Autonomous Africa and a Neutral South Facing the Dominant Powers

The Algerian revolution was a revolt less against France than against the unequal and discriminatory treatment suffered. The enemy was not France nor the French but “colonialism,” as declared by the militants. Algeria, by the way, welcomed tens of thousands of French *coopérants* (volunteers) from 1962 onward,²⁶ to such an extent that the francophone community there grew even larger than it had been before 1954.²⁷ And

25 Chérif Abdedaïm, *Abdel Hafid Boussouf, le révolutionnaire aux pas de velours* [Abdel Hafid Boussouf, the Revolutionary with Velvet Steps] (Algier: Editions ANEP, 2012).

26 See, e.g., Sabah Chaïb, “Les coopérants français en Algérie (1962–1966). Récits croisés pour une ébauche de portrait” [French Volunteers in Algeria (1962–1966): Crossed Stories for a Portrait Sketch], *Cahiers d’Études africaines*, no. 221/222 (1966): 243–266.

27 The francization of Algerians became a major generational phenomenon for the generations born in the 1950s and 1960s. Before that, schooling was so limited for young Muslim Algerians that, at independence,

tens of thousands of students and civil servant trainees were sent to France. Emigration intensified. The French army left the country in 1964 but remained present in the Sahara. Oil was exploited by Total until 1971. The shutdown was slow.

Let us use the mention of oil to get an overview of the Algerian economy. Until 1945, Algeria was an agricultural colony that imported almost all of its industrial products from the French metropolis. In turn, since the 1880s, it had exported mainly wine to France, causing major problems for the French wine industry in the south of the country. Also other products were exported, such as oranges, orange juice, olives, dates, and wheat. After 1945, a plan for equipping and industrializing the country was adopted. Within ten years, it was mainly the construction industry that was responsible for modernizing and equipping ports, airports, dams, and power-generating facilities. During the Algerian War of Independence, the discovery and exploitation of oil enabled a veritable plan for industrialization and the construction of new cities and neighborhoods to house the poorest of the poor: the Constantine Plan.²⁸ It continued seamlessly from 1958 to 1965, financed by oil and Paris. Algeria began to industrialize for itself. Thus, in the 1960s, wine still represented more than 60 percent of Algerian exports, being sent mainly to France or the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), albeit under less favorable conditions. This accelerated the nationalization of oil by Houari Boumediene in 1971.²⁹ However, it was only after the 1973 oil boom that Algeria was able to embark on an industrialization plan based on the Soviet model of the 1930s (capital goods and steel).

The most astonishing thing is that de Gaulle's France continued to invest massively in this country without a break in 1962, despite the hasty departure of the vast majority of *pieds-noirs* (the French who settled in Algeria). The Constantine Plan invested 200 billion francs in the country until 1965. French oil companies maintained control of production/distribution in the Sahara in the 1960s, notably building the sector for liquefied natural gas (LNG) at the port of Arzew. Algeria then supplied one-third of France's oil consumption. Oil, which was very cheap, remained in the hands of the former colonizer in exchange for a rent.

For Boumediene, the absolute respect of his country's sovereignty did not prohibit the pursuit of an intense cooperation with France. But Algeria wanted to keep several

only 15 percent were literate in French. But after a ten-year schooling plan implemented in 1945, the Algerian War favored the school education of the majority of Algerian teachers (especially young men), a policy that accelerated in the 1960s in the context of cooperation. This late francization of Algerian society, coupled with a progressive Arabization, regressed in stages from 1977 onward. Pierre Vermeren, *Maghreb: la démocratie impossible?* [Maghreb: Democracy Impossible?] (Paris: Fayard, 2004), new edition with afterword *Maghreb, les origines de la révolution démocratique* [Maghreb, the Origins of the Democratic Revolution] (Paris: Pluriel, 2011).

28 See, e.g., <https://www.cdha.fr/le-plan-de-constantine#page>.

29 Luis Martinez, "Algeria: The Illusion of Oil Wealth," *Les Etudes du CERI*, no. 168 (2010): 2–34, https://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/sites/sciencespo.fr/ceri/files/Etude168_english.pdf.

alternatives open to be on the safe side: the USSR supplied it with arms, and the USA helped with oil exploitation starting in 1971, when the nationalization of oil was decided. The support provided by French cooperation was enormous. France ranked Algeria's first commercial partner until 2010. In 1966, there were 14,000 state *coopérants* in Algeria, not to mention their families, diplomats, and *coopérants* in private companies. There were more than 10,000 teachers and 3,400 technical *coopérants*.³⁰ To counter the influence of French volunteers (communists or Christians), which was considered ideologically dangerous, Algeria welcomed a thousand Egyptian Arabic teachers in 1964 and another thousand from Syria in 1967. The regimes got rid of the Muslim Brotherhood, which was determined to Arabize and Islamize this new country.

The apparent but ambivalent alignment with the Soviet camp was also troubling. The FLN was not communist. Not only did the ALN benefit from Soviet support and arms from Eastern Europe, but it also received arms and assistance from Egypt and the Maghreb. The Algerian Republic was not a satellite of the USSR. While it bought arms from the country, supported it in its anticolonial battles, and sent its officers to be trained in Frunze, Algeria had no more vested interests in the Soviet Union.

Algeria was active in the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), created in Addis Ababa in 1963. Algeria advocated two founding principles: the intangibility of colonial borders and the absolute respect of the sovereignty of states, which implies noninterference in the internal affairs of a third state. While the second principle was intended for the countries of the Global North, the first was meant for Africa. At all costs, Algeria wanted to preserve its immense inherited Saharan domain, which allowed the country to take on a leading role in continent.

Driven by its own interests, it became a revolutionary republic. The adopted motto of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria was "By the people and for the people." It was first led by Ahmed Ben Bella. Following a coup d'état known as a *redressement révolutionnaire* (revolutionary rebuilding), Boumediene took power in 1965, remaining in power until December 1978. From 1962 to 1974, Algiers became the crossroads of anti-imperialist struggles.

A 57-minute documentary made in 2017, *Algiers, the Mecca of Revolutionaries*,³¹ recalls the phrase of the famous Cape Verdean independence fighter Amílcar Cabral: "Muslims go on pilgrimage to Mecca, Christians to the Vatican, and national liberation movements to Algiers." The documentary recalls the forgotten history of the great events

30 Sabah Chaïb, "Les coopérants français en Algérie (1962–1966)" [French Aid Workers in Algeria (1962–1966)], *Cahiers d'études africaines* 1/2, no. 221/222 (2016).

31 Amirouche Laïdi and Mohand Ben Salama, *Alger, la Mecque des Révolutionnaires* [Algiers, Mecca of the Revolutionaries], TV documentary (2017).

of international diplomacy, when all revolutionary movements took refuge in Algiers, under the protection of Boumediene and Abdelaziz Bouteflika.³²

The apotheosis of this Third World and international phase was the Pan-African cultural festival in Algiers (Panaf) in July 1969, on the seventh anniversary of the revolution: Algiers was the capital of Africa. It was also the anticommemoration of the centenary of French Algeria 39 years before. This Third World opera was captured in a militant and professional film, as Algiers was one of the great capitals of African cinema: *Pan-African Festival of Algiers 1969*, a political and historical documentary about the aftermath of colonialism and the festival, directed by William Klein in July 1969. The film ends with the statement “African culture will be revolutionary or it will not be.”

Postcolonial Algeria Participated in an Increasingly Clear and Visible Way in the Transformation of French Society until the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century

In 1962, France experienced a real tragedy after the Évian Accords (March 18, 1962). Algerian independence was scheduled, and the French and Algerians were asked to vote on an independence referendum on July 1. The yes vote was overwhelming,³³ but, although the war was officially over, the violence reached its peak. The Border Army was ordered not to intervene, except against the French Secret Army Organization (Organisation de l'Armée secrète, OAS), which attempted a scorched earth policy and increased the number of assassinations. The Border Army, led by Boumediene, prepared to return to the country, and the violence forced the *pièdes-noirs* to flee in the summer 1962 by the hundreds of thousands, a real exodus. Finally, France abandoned its 400,000 Algerian military auxiliaries, the Harkis, who were murdered by the tens of thousands.

With Algerian immigration to France (which doubled during the war) of the European repatriates, the Harkis, and the return of the army and the administration—in addition to the French from Tunisia and Morocco—some two million people settled in France within a few years. France believed that it had “got rid” of Algeria, as de Gaulle said,³⁴ but it had transferred the Algerian question to its own soil. It did not know it yet.

De Gaulle granted amnesty and instigated a collective political amnesia while launching France into the European project. Nevertheless, not only did he cooperate more

32 In the 1960s and 1970s, Algeria used its revolutionary prestige to magnetize all the revolutionary leaders of the Third World. It lured successively Che Guevara (twice), Fidel Castro (twice), Amílcar Cabral, Chou En Lai, Nelson Mandela (before his long captivity), Mehdi Ben Barka, and so on. In 1988, the Palestinian state was proclaimed in Algiers. Ben Bella was undeniably the revolutionary leader most committed to supporting anti-imperialist struggles, of which Boumediene was more suspicious. But Abdelaziz Bouteflika, the faithful minister of foreign affairs from 1963 to 1979, traveled the world and helped spread this revolutionary diplomacy with all liberation movements.

33 Guy Pervillé, *Histoire iconoclaste de la guerre d'Algérie et de sa mémoire* [Iconoclastic History of the Algerian War and Its Memory] (Paris: Vendémiaire, 2018).

34 François Kersaudy, *Le Monde selon de Gaulle* [The World According to de Gaulle], vol. 1 (Paris: Tallandier, 2018).

than ever with Algeria, but he also opened the doors to Algerian immigration to France, which was still believed to be temporary. No one wanted to talk about Algeria anymore, and the state denied that a “war” had taken place (they spoke of the “events” in Algeria). It was not until 1999 that the parliament recognized this term.

Since 1968, Algeria had been negotiating with France on how to proceed with the Évian oil agreement, as well as with the migration agreement, which was renegotiated in a manner very favorable to Algeria. On the first point, Boumediene decided on February 24, 1971 to unilaterally nationalize the hydrocarbon sector and spoke of a “second independence.”³⁵ On this point, he used emigration to France as a way to feed his people, with the reversal of the flow of migration northward acting as a form of revenge. France, without any regret, left the management of Islam and Algerian immigrants in France to Algeria. The Grand Mosque of Paris, which manages Islam in France, even became Algerian territory (extraterritoriality).

To compensate for its weaknesses, Algeria never renounced an initially shameful but then accepted solution: the emigration of poor workers to economically overheated France. Algerian immigration, in addition to the 150,000 Harkis and their descendants who were in France in 1968, reached 800,000 emigrants at that time and one million in 1973.³⁶ France built migrant workers’ hostels, so-called Sonacotral foyers,³⁷ and already several thousand men had their wives or daughters join them from Algeria. Although the oil crisis led to the official end of labor migration to France in 1975, a metamorphosis soon took place with family reunification, which was introduced between 1976 and 1979. Foreign labor migrants were given the right to have their families join them. Thus, within ten years, the Algerian community doubled in size.

During this period, relations between France and Algeria were good, despite the inevitable nationalization of oil. Algeria was one of the most important countries in the Third World. It was also a leader in the Arab League, and its permanent and powerful link with France reinforced its standing. Algerians had won the war and did not have bitter look toward the future. Under François Mitterrand, from 1981 onward, the relationship improved even more, as the French left had entered into a very powerful process of blame regarding colonization and the Algerian War, which it had supported, and it placed all its hopes on the success of a socialist, republican, and democratic Algeria. Unfortunately, the country made very poor economic choices, and the crisis of the

35 Ania Francos and Jean-Pierre Sereni, *Un Algérien nommé Boumediene* [An Algerian Named Boumediene] (Paris: Stock, 1976).

36 Emmanuel Blanchard, *Histoire de l’immigration algérienne en France* [History of Algerian Immigration to France] (Paris: La Découverte, 2018); Benjamin Stora, *Ils venaient d’Algérie: l’immigration algérienne en France (1912–1992)* [They Came from Algeria: Algerian Immigration to France (1912–1992)] (Paris: Fayard, 1992).

37 The Sonacotral (Société Nationale de Construction pour les Travailleurs Algériens) was founded in 1956.

socialist model made the Algerian economy sink after the oil countershock of 1986.³⁸ Within a few years, the economy crumbled because of the collapse of financing from oil rents. The political regime, which was responsible for the distribution of the rents, disintegrated after the Algiers riots in 1988. Then the attempt to quickly liberalize the socialist economy failed. Beginning in 1992, Algeria entered a decade of cruel civil war (the Black Decade) between revolutionary Islamists and the Algerian army. The war claimed at least 200,000 lives and cut Algeria off from the outside world.

To get out of the war won by the army in the late 1990s and turn the page of this nightmare, the Algerian army installed a former loyalist of Boumediene to the presidency of the republic: Bouteflika. He remained there for 20 years. But this man, who was very close to France, where he had spent many years as a minister and diplomat, decided to completely change his attitude toward Paris. Taking advantage of the exceptional oil boom (Algeria collects 800 billion petrodollars in 15 years), he entered into a vengeful memory conflict with France in order to make the civil war of the 1990s between Algerians forgotten. The Algerian War was back in the spotlight, 40 years later, in Paris as well as in Algiers. Using his numerous networks and opinion outlets in France (according to Algeria, five million Algerians and Franco-Algerians live in France), particularly in the press and the intellectual and political world, he established a brutal power struggle with Paris. He refused the friendship treaty proposed by Jacques Chirac in 2005, which sought to reconcile the two countries, and he demanded that France be held accountable for the Algerian War and its colonial past. France was accused of all sorts of atrocities and cultural genocide (and sometimes mass genocide); Algeria demanded recognition of France's crimes and asked that the country official apologize. Some voices even called for considerable compensation (on the model of the forgiveness granted by Germany to Israel [Reparations Agreement between Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany, signed on September 10, 1952]).

In the context of social, economic, and political crisis in France, which was very fragile at the beginning of the twenty-first century, this dispute with Algeria is an element that weighs heavily. The National Front (Front National) and the right wing in general refuse this guilt tripping, while the left wing is much more understanding. The question of Islam in France, the mass terrorism that has struck France in turn, the rise of Islamism in the suburbs (where defeated Algerian Islamists have taken refuge), and the riots and the criminal drug economy in the suburbs, all of them are parts of an unprecedented and highly inflammable landscape. President Macron is trying at all costs to renew peaceful ties with Algeria by recognizing some of Algiers's claims, but everyone senses that this story is not over, more than 60 years after the end of the Algerian War. The good relations of the 1960s between the two countries have never seemed so distant.

38 Pierre Vermeren, *Histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine. De la Régence d'Alger à Bouteflika (XIX-XXIe siècles)* [History of Contemporary Algeria: From the Regency of Algiers to Bouteflika (Nineteenth to Twenty-First Century)] (Paris: Nouveau Monde Éditions, 2022).

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French Cultural Policy and Its Global Ambitions

As political scientist Marie-Christine Kessler pointed out in 1999, France already had a foreign cultural policy before a domestic cultural policy emerged.¹ This was a broad cultural policy in the sense of Pascal Ory, encompassing not only the actions of the state but also the actions of nonstate actors such as religious orders, associations, and societies.² Albert Salon used the term “action culturelle” for this.³ Cultural policy has served and continues to serve as a privileged tool to give French global currency. Initially, this policy was an attempt to spread the cultural achievements of the French elite—language, literature, fashion, and gastronomy—beyond territorial borders to strengthen the prestige of the French crown. Establishing commercial contacts was soon recognized as an added benefit. In addition to the special allure of the French culture, language, and literature, French politicians in the nineteenth century developed a universal sense of mission that referred to France’s position as the home of the Enlightenment and the Revolution of 1789 and thus also as the cradle of universal human rights. The expansion of global relations and the establishment and expansion of the colonial empire were thus legitimized.

Various phases of this globally oriented French cultural policy can be identified. The first phase begins as early as the sixteenth century and reaches its peak with the absolute monarchy under Louis XIV. The radiation of the French culture and language was intended in particular to underpin the French king’s claim to power. In this first phase, French became the dominant language in Europe, the language of diplomacy and the elites. At the same time, France’s first colonial expansion took place, which then suffered a severe setback in the course of the conflict with England in the eighteenth century.

The second phase began with the French Revolution. The revolutionaries were imbued with a universal sense of mission, wanting to spread revolutionary ideals and institutions beyond national borders. This aspiration remained alive well beyond the nineteenth century and became an ideological basis, albeit in modified form in each case, in Napoleonic expansion, which at the beginning of the nineteenth century continued to

1 Marie-Christine Kessler, *La politique étrangère de la France. Acteurs et processus* [The Foreign Policy of France: Actors and Processes] (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 1999), 370.

2 Pascal Ory, *La belle Illusion. Culture et politique sous le signe du Front populaire (1935–1938)* [The Beautiful Illusion: Culture and Politics under the Sign of the Popular Front (1935–1938)] (Paris: Plon, 1994), 19–20.

3 Albert Salon, *L’action culturelle de la France dans le monde* [France’s Cultural Action in the World] (Paris: Éditions Fernand Nathan, 1983), 3.

target Europe in particular, and in French colonial expansion from the mid-nineteenth century onward, which then reached out to Africa, Asia, and Oceania in particular.

The third phase began with decolonization in the twentieth century and the associated renegotiation of France's relations with its former colonies, which resulted in a variety of exchange and cooperation programs. A foreign cultural policy that followed colonial-imperial goals was gradually replaced by a cultural policy influenced by the market, in which competition with other market participants and the wishes and demands of the recipient had to be increasingly taken into account. In any case, foreign cultural policy served the ambitions of the French government in securing a prominent position for France in the world.

French Royalty and Foreign Cultural Policy

Since the sixteenth century, language, as well as culture, had been harnessed for the interests of the monarchy, with Francis I being a prime example. He surrounded himself with French and foreign artists and scholars, with whom he made his court and his person shine, and he also emphasized the French language as an important political instrument with the Edict of Villiers-Cotterêts.⁴ Francis I had also obtained protection for Christians in the Ottoman Empire in the treaty with Suleyman I in 1536. The increasing efforts to spread the French culture and language in the Ottoman Empire built on this foundation until the twentieth century.⁵

In the seventeenth century, Louis XIII first officially endorsed evangelization and assimilation of the resident population by missionaries in the course of colonial expansion in Canada. His first minister, Cardinal Richelieu, also supported François le Clerc du Tremblay, who obtained from the pope the autonomy of French missionary efforts, and then directed a first Capuchin mission to the Levant.⁶ The French monarchy was thus able to send missionaries abroad independently (only Spain and Portugal had been able to do previously) and thus also to expand its cultural influence abroad.

With the imposition of absolute monarchy in the seventeenth century under Louis XIV and the associated expansion of France's power, this kind of cultural foreign policy was intensified.⁷ It took place alongside France's diplomatic and military

4 Salon, 9.

5 Hélène Trova, *Le statut juridique de l'action culturelle et linguistique de la France à l'étranger* [The Legal Status of France's Cultural and Linguistic Action Abroad] (Paris: Librairie Générale de Droit et de Jurisprudence, 1994), 25.

6 Salon, *L'action culturelle de la France*, 9.

7 On the increase of missionary activity under Louis XIV, see Daniel Haize, *L'action culturelle et de la coopération de la France à l'étranger: un réseau, des hommes* [France's Cultural Action and Cooperation Abroad: A Network, People] (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2012), 37.

offensive. The overall aim was to establish the French king's preeminence in Europe. The battle for supremacy in Europe was played out not only on the battlefield but also in the field of symbols through art, culture, language, architecture, and court ceremony.⁸

Louis XIV's most important minister after 1661, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, created a system of institutions that would propagate French leadership in Europe. This concerned above all the various academies that Colbert founded in Paris in the course of the 1660s. Not only did they serve artistic and scientific creation, but they were also always intended to herald royal patronage or directly propagate royal goals. In particular, Colbert conceived the Academy of Inscriptions (Académie des inscriptions), founded in 1663 and also referred to by contemporaries as the "little academy," as an institution of court propaganda. It was primarily concerned with the creation of inscriptions for monuments in honor of the king as well as inscriptions on royal medals. It was not until 1701 that it developed into a research institution for historical and philological disciplines, which also led to its renaming as the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres (Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres).⁹ In addition to the academies, the court supported numerous writers and publicists, also from abroad, who skillfully fought for France's leading role in the Occident.¹⁰

France's increasingly strong role as a model for the elites of Europe since the last third of the seventeenth century was particularly evident in the fact that French clothing and manners were adopted everywhere in Europe. Versailles became a compulsory stop on the cavalier's tour, during which the young nobles were supposed to practice courtly etiquette and make contacts.¹¹ French replaced Latin as the lingua franca. Not only did the aristocratic ruling classes at the European courts begin to communicate in French, but French also became the language of diplomacy: the Peace of Rastatt, negotiated in 1713–14, was drafted in French, the first time ever, and not in Latin. It initiated the

8 Thomas Höpel, "The Versailles Model," *Europäische Geschichte Online*, March 22, 2023, <http://ieg-ego.eu/hoepelt-2010-en>. On the exemplary nature of French culture under the reign of Louis XIV, see also the chapter by Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink.

9 Jürgen Voss, "Mäzenatentum und Ansätze systematischer Kulturpolitik im Frankreich Ludwigs XIV" [Patronage and Approaches to a Systematic Cultural Policy in Louis XIV's France], in *Europäische Hofkultur im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, vol. 2, eds. August Buck et al. (Hamburg: Hauswedell, 1981), 123–132.

10 Peter Burke, *Ludwig XIV. Die Inszenierung des Sonnenkönigs* [The Fabrication of Louis XIV] (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1993), 69–70.

11 See Katrin Keller, "Mein Herr befindet sich gottlob gesund und wohl": *Sächsische Prinzen auf Reisen* ["My Lord Is Blessedly Healthy and Well": Saxon Princes on Their Travels] (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 1994), 473; on the replacement of this model in the last third of the eighteenth century, see Hilmar Tilgner, "Die Adelsreise im Kontext aufgeklärter Reformpolitik (1765–1800): Funktionswandel und Erweiterung der kommunikativen Dimension" [The Nobility Journey in the Context of Enlightened Reform Politics (1765–1800): Functional Change and Expansion of the Communicative Dimension], in *Europareisen politisch-sozialer Eliten im 18. Jahrhundert*, eds. Joachims Rees, Winfried Siebers, and Hilmar Tilgner (Berlin: BWV, 2002), 41–66.

transition from Latin to French as the language of diplomacy, a transition that was completed with the Peace of Aachen in 1748.¹²

The dominance of French also becomes clear when looking at the European press. There were about 1,200 French-language titles in Europe at the time. In the German-speaking world alone, almost 100 newspapers and journals were published between 1686 and 1789, some of which existed for only a few years, others for decades.¹³ The French language also gained increasing importance in sciences after important scientific journals were founded in France, including the *Journal des Savants* in 1665 on Colbert's initiative.

The extent of the turn to the French language and culture is already evident in a 1687 writing by Christian Thomasius, which stands alongside other similar texts from the same period. Here, Thomasius was highly critical of the tendency to follow the French model too closely in terms of clothing, manners, and other ways of life, while at the same time recommending French virtues such as politeness and erudition.¹⁴

Despite such cautionary voices, the role model continued in many areas throughout the eighteenth century. The Prussian king Frederick II communicated mostly in French and considered the German language vulgar.

Even learned diplomats, who often also disseminated French literature and art at foreign courts, were carriers of the French model: French culture thus became a vehicle for preparing diplomatic contacts and treaties. One of the most enigmatic of these *diplomates lettrés* was Cardinal Bernis, who became a member of the French Academy

12 On the enforcement of French in the German lands, see Guido Braun, *Von der politischen zur kulturellen Hegemonie Frankreichs 1648–1789* [From the Political to the Cultural Hegemony of France 1648–1789] (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2008), 181–195; on Europe as a whole, see Marc Fumaroli, *Quand l'Europe parlait français* [When Europe Was Speaking French] (Paris: Éditions De Fallois, 2003); on the transition of the language of diplomacy, see Lucien Bély, *Les relations internationales en Europe. XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles* [International Relations in Europe: Seventeenth to Eighteenth Century] (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1992), 429, 586; Braun, *Von der politischen*, 196.

13 Braun, *Von der politischen*, 197–202.

14 “Frantzösische Kleider, Frantzösische Speisen, Frantzösischer Haußrath, Frantzösische Sprachen, Frantzösische Sitten, Frantzösische Sünden ja gar Frantzösische Kranckheiten sind durchgehends im Schwange [...] wenn man ja denen Frantzosen nachahmen will, man ihnen hierinnen nachahmen solle, dass man sich auf honnétete, Gelehrsamkeit, beauté d’esprit, un bon gout und galanterie befeßige” (French clothes, French food, French household, French languages, French manners, French sins, and even French illnesses are in vogue throughout [...] if one wants to imitate the French, one should imitate them in this, that one applies oneself to honnétete, erudition, beauté d’esprit, un bon gout, and galanterie). Christian Thomasius, *Von der Nachahmung der Franzosen. Nach den Ausgaben von 1687 und 1701* [From the Imitation of the French: After the Editions of 1687 and 1701] (Stuttgart: Göschen, 1894), 3, 36. Much more critical was the text by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, “Ermahnung an die Teutsche, ihren Verstand und Sprache besser zu üben, samt beygefügeten Vorschlag einer Teutschgesinten Gesellschaft” [Exhortation to the Germans to Better Exercise Their Intellect and Language, Together with an Appended Proposal for a German-Minded Society] (Hannover: Culemann, 1846).

(Académie française) at the age of 29 and served for a time as French foreign minister and then as ambassador to Venice and Rome. In addition, the precursors of today's cultural attachés worked at many European courts, such as Denis Diderot in Saint Petersburg with Catherine II or Voltaire in Potsdam with Frederick II. Although they often seemed to work mainly for their own account, they were sometimes used by the French court for secret diplomatic maneuvers.¹⁵

A nonstate cultural policy in which religious orders in particular became important actors accompanied the early form of state cultural diplomacy, which aimed at *rayonnement* (cultural dissemination). These religious orders received financial, political, and administrative support from the monarchy. Thus, Louis XIII already officially promoted the Christianization of the Canadian natives by Catholic missionaries. And in Lebanon, too, there were Catholic missions organized and led by French actors, creating opportunities for the further spread and influence of the French cultural foreign policy.¹⁶ During the reign of Louis XIV, not only did the missionary activity of French orders increase in quantity, but missionaries were now also sent to Africa, Asia, and Central and South America, as well as Canada and the Levant. The Catholic society Congregation of the Mission (Congrégation de la mission—les Lazaristes) and the religious women's organization of the Daughters of the King carried out religious missionary work in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, founding French schools in Madagascar, Tunisia, North America, or the Caribbean.¹⁷ In the eighteenth century, this linguistic and assimilation policy was attenuated and replaced by a more marked orientation toward commercial relations. This was accompanied by the loss of large parts of the French colonial empire in the last third of the eighteenth century.

The French Civilizing Mission: From the Revolution of 1789 to the End of World War II

The Revolution of 1789 marked the beginning of the second phase of French cultural expansion. Focusing on the French people and European peoples, French was praised by revolutionaries (especially those who refused to spread the Revolution by force of arms) as an instrument to free themselves from the domination of the ancien régime, as well as a tool to spread the new values and ideals of the Revolution, such as reason,

15 François Roche and Bernard Pigniau, *Histoires de diplomatie culturelle des origins à 1995* [Histories of Cultural Diplomacy from the Origins to 1995] (Paris: La Documentation française, 1995), 9–11.

16 Salon, *L'action culturelle de la France*, 9.

17 Jean François Raymond, *L'action culturelle extérieure de la France* [France's Foreign Cultural Action] (Paris: La Documentation française, 2000), 16.

science, progress, and freedom, which were considered universal.¹⁸ France was stylized as the torch of Western civilization.¹⁹ Artists, scientists, and philosophers propagated these ideas as much as the revolutionary and Napoleonic armies. They defined general values and ideals as French and nationalized foreign cultural policy.²⁰

The civilizing mission born in the Revolution became an important topos of foreign political and cultural activities in the nineteenth century. Napoleon Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt is often referred to as the birth of the civilizing mission,²¹ with which Bonaparte wanted to implant French values in Egypt. However, this neglects the failures of Bonaparte's policy in Egypt, which instead led to discord and rejection. In contrast, his civilizing efforts in Europe were much more successful, although here, too, widespread implementation failed due to the arrogance of the French "liberators."²² Under Napoleon, according to Jürgen Osterhammel, France became the "first major manifestation of the civilizing authoritarian state. He was considered as instrument of a planned transformation of degenerate ancien régimes at home and abroad."²³

According to Salon, the roots of the civilizing mission can be traced back to the period prior to the Revolution of 1789 when the French monarchy strongly supported Christian evangelization, closely linked to the diffusion of the French language and culture; he also speaks of "French messianism." During the revolutionary period, evangelization was combined at times with language and culture. Although the National Assembly dissolved the Catholic orders in France in 1790 and a schism emerged within the Catholic Church with the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, missionaries working abroad were not affected. They continued to be tolerated and often were further encouraged by the French foreign

18 Rolf Reichardt, *Das Blut der Freiheit. Französische Revolution und demokratische Kultur* [The Blood of Freedom: French Revolution and Democratic Culture] (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 1998), 220, 257–264; Albert Soboul, *Die Große Französische Revolution* [Understanding the French Revolution], 5th ed. (Frankfurt/Main: Athenäum, 1988), 555.

19 Michael Broers, "Le Fardeau du Franc. Aufklärung zu Pferde—Eine Zivilisierungsmission in Napoleons Europa?" [The Burden of the Franc: Enlightenment on Horseback—a Civilizing Mission in Napoleon's Europe?], in *Zivilisierungsmissionen. Imperiale Weltverbesserung seit dem 18. Jahrhundert*, eds. Boris Barth and Jürgen Osterhammel (Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2005), 73–99, at 77. See also the comments on Condorcet's *Esquisse d'un tableau historique sur les progrès de l'esprit humain* in the chapter by Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink.

20 Salon, *L'action culturelle de la France*, 11–12.

21 Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa 1895–1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 17–19; Henry Laurens, *L'expédition d'Égypte 1798–1801* [The Expedition to Egypt 1798–1801] (Paris: Seuil, 1997); Pascal Blanchard and Nicolas Bancel, "La fondation du républicanisme colonial. Retour sur une généalogie politique" [The Foundation of Colonial Republicanism: Return on a Political Genealogy], *Mouvements, des idées et des luttes* 38, no. 2 (2005): 29.

22 Broers, "Le Fardeau du Franc," 76–77.

23 Jürgen Osterhammel, *Europe, the "West" and the Civilizing Mission: The 2005 Annual Lecture of the German Historical Institute London* (London: German Historical Institute, 2006), 15.

policy.²⁴ Republican governments in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries followed this political course as well. In addition, beginning in 1840, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs assumed the cost of passage for missionaries assigned to foreign schools.²⁵

But the decisive factor was the claim of the revolutionaries and their heirs to civilize other states and peoples by transmitting French values and ideals. They declared French as the “language of freedom.” Especially in French departments, for example in the Rhineland, the French administration strongly encouraged the diffusion of the French language. French was to be spread among the population through schools and also through theater performances.²⁶ It was imposed over time as the language of administration and the language of the public sphere (in street names, public advertisements, and schools). A French-speaking partially public sphere emerged, dominated by members of the administration, which, according to historian Wolfgang Hans Stein, would have extended to the whole of society if French rule had lasted longer.²⁷ In other territories not incorporated into France, Napoleon forced the extensive or partial introduction of French institutions, such as the Civil Code and French administrative structures. But even here, the French were imbued with their mission to civilize.

The best example is the model state of Westphalia, founded in 1807. To his brother Jérôme, installed there as king, Napoleon wrote on November 15, 1807:

Your peoples shall enjoy a liberty, an equality, and a well-being unknown to the peoples of Germania, and this liberal government must produce, in one way or another, the most salutary changes to the system of the Confederation and to the power of your monarchy. This manner of governing will be a more powerful barrier, to separate you from Prussia, than the Elbe, than the forts and the protection of France.²⁸

24 Salon, *L'action culturelle de la France*, 13, 32. On the roots of the civilizing mission in the seventeenth century, see also the chapter by Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink in this volume.

25 Trova, *Le statut juridique*, 29.

26 Thomas Höpel, “Der deutsch-französische Grenzraum: Grenzraum und Nationenbildung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert” [The French-German Borderlands: Borderlands and Nation-Building in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries], *Europäische Geschichte Online*, April 11, 2012, <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/hoepelt-2012-de>.

27 Wolfgang Hans Stein, “Sprachtransfer durch Verwaltungshandeln. Französisch als Sprache der Verwaltungsöffentlichkeit in den rheinischen Departements 1798–1814” [Language Transfer through Administrative Action: French as the Language of Administrative Public Sphere in the Rhine Departments 1798–1814], in *Kulturtransfer im Epochenumbruch. Frankreich-Deutschland 1770 bis 1815*, vol. 1, eds. Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink and Rolf Reichardt (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 1997), 259–305.

28 Original in “Napoleon to Jérôme Napoléon, Roi de Westphalie, Fontainebleau, November 15, 1807,” in *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier. Publié par ordre de l'Empereur Napoléon III* 16, no. 13361 (1864), 166–167, at 166: “Il faut que vos peuples jouissent d’une liberté, d’une égalité, d’un bien-être inconnus aux peuples de la Germanie, et que ce gouvernement libéral produise, d’une manière ou d’autre, les changements les plus salutaires au système de la Confédération et à la puissance de votre monarchie. Cette manière de

However, since the imposition of French institutions and culture in Europe was supported by the bayonets of the Napoleonic armies, it provoked in many European states a first wave of nationalism explicitly directed against France. In the German case, this anti-French nationalism was notably pronounced in the early German national movement inspired by Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Ernst Moritz Arndt, Theodor Körner, and Friedrich Ludwig Jahn.

When the second wave of French colonial expansion began in 1830, civilization was enshrined as a central element of colonial ideology.²⁹ In the Third Republic, the civilizing mission became the official ideology and dogma of republican colonial discourse from the 1880s onward. In July 1885, on the occasion of the French intervention in Tonkin, Jules Ferry evoked in the parliament the “devoir de civilisation” (duty of civilization) of the superior races toward the inferior races.³⁰ Advocates of the Third Republic made use of the civilizing and liberating mission to define state identity and legitimize French actions in the colonies. They used foreign cultural policy to secure French influence in the colonies and beyond and intended to underpin France’s global political ambitions by disseminating French values, norms, cultural goods, and the French language.³¹ This conception also included a hierarchy of civilizations.³² The increased attention to the dissemination of the French language and culture in the Third Republic was also related to the French defeat of 1870–71 and the increasing competition with Great Britain and the emerging states of Germany and the United States, which was more and more fought out in the cultural field.

In the nineteenth century, private organizations—at first, again, religious communities, whose numbers increased greatly, especially during the Third Republic—carried out this cultural expansion in the newly acquired colonies and in other parts of the world. France was far ahead of other European countries in this respect: in 1894, out of a total of 70,000 Catholic missionaries, 50,000 were of French nationality.³³ The 28 French Catholic societies dedicated to missionary work benefited from the financial, political, and administrative support of the state. This support was not affected by the anticlerical measures taken in France at the turn of the century and by the separation

gouverner sera une barrière plus puissante, pour vous séparer de la Prusse, que l’Elbe, que les places fortes et que la protection de la France.”

29 Dino Costantini, *Mission civilisatrice. Le rôle de l’histoire coloniale dans la construction de l’identité politique française* [Civilizing Mission: The Role of Colonial History in the Construction of French Political Identity] (Paris: La Découverte, 2004), 86.

30 Jules Ferry, *La république des citoyens* [The Republic of Citizens], vol. 2, ed. Odile Rudelle (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1996), 295–315.

31 Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*, 2; Blanchard and Bancel, “La fondation du républicanisme colonial”; Alice L. Conklin, “Colonialism and Human Rights, a Contradiction in Terms? The Case of France and West Africa, 1895–1914,” *American Historical Review* 103, no. 2 (1998): 419–442, at 428–430.

32 Blanchard and Bancel, “La fondation du républicanisme colonial,” 28–29.

33 Salon, *L’action culturelle de la France*, 20.

of church and state in 1905, which led to the dissolution of religious congregations in France and the prohibition of state funding and subsidization of religious communities on French territory.³⁴ In addition, the French state continued to act as a protective power for Christian missionary societies and Christians in many parts of the world, including Turkey, China, and Ethiopia. State spending on missionary society schools abroad tripled between 1881 and 1912, totaling 2.3 million francs.³⁵ The government also supported the creation of Jesuit universities in Beirut and Shanghai (1908).³⁶ The reason evoked was always the expected influence of the French language and culture abroad as well as the rivalry with other emerging European powers and the United States. It was indeed thanks to the religious missionary societies that the cultural influence of France in Egypt remained high, despite the strong Franco-British competition—a note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs even spoke at the time of a “language war” in Egypt.³⁷ Through their social assistance, their evangelization efforts, and their very intensive training and education efforts, the religious missionary societies strengthened and developed the presence of the French language and culture in Africa, the Far East, and the Mediterranean region.

Non-Catholic missionary societies received considerably less state support. Protestants founded the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (*Société des missions évangéliques de Paris*) in 1822, which began its work in Lesotho. It received only state subsidies for its schools in Lebanon. The Universal Israelite Alliance (*Alliance Israélite Universelle*), founded in 1860, suffered a similar fate. Its founders were French Jews who, since the emancipation of the Jews in 1791, claimed to be part of the French state and culture. The Universal Israelite Alliance was seen as an instrument for the dissemination of French culture, but it focused only on Jews from Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean region, and the Middle East. In 1914, this society operated nearly 200 schools abroad. It did not receive funding for its work in Morocco, Tunisia, and Persia until after the turn of the century.³⁸

Since the end of the nineteenth century, secular associations had also been created. The French Alliance (*Alliance Française*), founded in 1883 by geographers and given a nonprofit status in 1885, was of special importance to France’s foreign cultural policy. The initial name of the organization, which clearly indicates its purpose, was French Alliance for the Propagation of the National Language in the Colonies and Abroad

34 “Loi du 9 décembre 1905 concernant la séparation des Églises et de l’État” [Law on the Separation of the Churches and State], Art. 2, 19; Haize, *L’action culturelle*, 49.

35 Salon, *L’action culturelle de la France*, 21–22.

36 Trova, *Le statut juridique*, 30–31.

37 Roche and Pigniau, *Histoires de diplomatie culturelle*, 14.

38 Salon, *L’action culturelle de la France*, 15, 19–20, and 23; Esther Möller, *Orte der Zivilisierungsmission. Französische Schulen im Libanon 1909–1943* [Places of Civilizing Mission: French Schools in Lebanon 1909–1943] (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 58–59.

(Alliance française pour la propagation de la langue nationale dans les colonies et à l'étranger). The state generously supported the organization, which wanted to spread the French language and culture throughout the world. The French Alliance created a dense global network, especially in Latin America and Europe, and addressed mainly the pro-French elites of these countries. In 1914, there were already several hundred committees around the world, which organized conferences and cultural events. The French Alliance was to help keep pace with other great powers in the race for influence in the world. The government instructed the diplomatic representatives abroad to support its activities.³⁹

In 1902, another secular organization, the French Secular Mission (Mission laïque française), was founded. It was fundamentally committed to the civilizing mission. Its "civilizing work" was to be realized primarily through the dissemination of the French language and culture, primarily through schools. In 1905, the French Secular Mission established its first schools in Saloniki, followed by Ethiopia in 1908 and Beirut and Cairo in 1909.⁴⁰ The focus on education in the civilizing mission also reflects the significant role that education played (including domestically) in the Third Republic. Many teachers of the French Secular Mission belonged to the very specific group of *instituteurs militants* (activist elementary school teachers) who spread republican ideas.⁴¹ From the French point of view, education represented a very central component in the competition between colonial powers.⁴²

State subsidies to private intermediary organizations were mainly geographically determined and went primarily to cultural institutions and schools in the eastern Mediterranean region and, since the turn of the century, to a large extent to Morocco. The Far East, especially China, came third.⁴³

The establishment of an autonomous state foreign cultural policy did not take place until the beginning of the twentieth century. The state efforts of foreign cultural policy outside the colonies intensified after the turn of the century. The French minister of foreign affairs launched a major diplomatic offensive to defend French as the language of diplomacy and law when the United States wanted to impose English as the language of negotiation in the 1902 dispute with Mexico at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague.⁴⁴ The Treaty of Versailles of 1919 was written in both languages. The

39 Robert Frank, "La machine diplomatique culturelle française après 1945" [The French Cultural Diplomatic Machinery after 1945], *Relations Internationales*, no. 115 (2003): 325–348, at 327; Roche and Pigniau, *Histoires de diplomatie culturelle*, 32.

40 Möller, *Orte der Zivilisierungsmission*, 57; Salon, *L'action culturelle de la France*, 23.

41 See Jacques and Mona Ouzouf, *La république des instituteurs* [The Republic of Teachers] (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 134–35.

42 Möller, *Orte der Zivilisierungsmission*, 67.

43 Roche and Pigniau, *Histoires de diplomatie culturelle*, 35.

44 Roche and Pigniau, 22.

supervision of the French abroad and the place of the French language in the main European states were also the subject of increased attention at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after the turn of the century.

In 1909, an Office for French Schools and Works Abroad (*Bureau des Écoles et des Œuvres françaises à l'étranger*) was created within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but it was demoted to an office in 1910. At the same time, the French government began to promote international university relations and created the French Institutes (*Instituts français*) in other countries, the first in Madrid in 1909. By 1933, 28 other institutes had been established. Their purpose was not so much to disseminate the French language and culture as to allow French students and scientists to study in the respective host country.⁴⁵ In 1910, on the initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of National Education, the National Office of French Universities and Schools (*Office national des universités et écoles françaises*) was created, a society designed to promote exchanges of students and teachers of all levels. The office enjoyed a large degree of autonomy but was nevertheless close to state organs.⁴⁶

World War I led to a strengthening of France's foreign cultural policy. This was intended to counteract the strong German propaganda at the beginning of the war; at the same time, it also aimed to secure the loyalty and allegiance of the colonies as well as to cultivate relations with European and American states to secure their neutrality or even to forge alliances. The various cultural associations and societies that had close contacts with foreign elites, such as the committees of the French Alliance, were an important starting point. They placed themselves at the disposal of the state, were provided with increased state funding during the war, and took an active part in French foreign work and propaganda.⁴⁷ Even after the war, their dependence on the state's foreign cultural policy continued. Henceforth, the state assumed a central role in French cultural expansion. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs developed a concrete concept, and financial resources were significantly increased—from 4.5 million francs in 1919 to 70 million francs in 1938 (almost a fourfold increase in spending when inflation is factored in).⁴⁸ Culture was seen as a special asset of the nation and was given a greater role in French diplomacy.⁴⁹ The Office of French Schools and Works Abroad (*Bureau des Écoles et Œuvres françaises à l'étranger*) was transformed into the Service for French Works Abroad (*Service des œuvres françaises à l'étranger*, SOFE) and subdivided into various departments for teaching and cultural exchange, among others. As a subdivision

45 Victoria Znined-Brand, *Deutsche und französische auswärtige Kulturpolitik. Eine vergleichende Analyse* [German and French Foreign Cultural Policy: A Comparative Analysis] (Frankfurt/Main: Lang, 1999), 28–29.

46 Salon, *L'action culturelle de la France*, 24; Roche and Pigniau, *Histoires de diplomatie culturelle*, 50.

47 Salon, *L'action culturelle de la France*, 26.

48 Roche and Pigniau, *Histoires de diplomatie culturelle*, 39.

49 Znined-Brand, *Deutsche und französische auswärtige Kulturpolitik*, 29.

of the Directorate of Political Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this service was from then on responsible for France's cultural expansion in the world.⁵⁰ In addition, other ministries, such as the Ministry of Education, created foreign affairs departments, which sometimes led to disputes over authority. The various government agencies used culture and language in an imperial perspective to maintain and increase the power of France.⁵¹ They were fundamentally understood as propaganda tools for France and French values and were intended to increase French influence in the world.⁵²

In addition to the creation of more French Institutes, whose number increased from 4 in 1914 to 35 in 1939,⁵³ schools were increasingly founded abroad after 1919. In fact, the largest share of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs's cultural expenditures (between 80 and 90 percent in the interwar period) was spent on schools and universities.⁵⁴ In particular, university efforts were stepped up in the interwar period, with strong support for French universities established by congregations abroad (Beirut, Cairo, Shanghai, and Beijing) and the creation of chairs and lectureships at foreign universities. At the same time, the state improved for the first time opportunities for foreign students to study in France, including the awarding of scholarships.⁵⁵

The government used state funds primarily in Syria and Lebanon. Moreover, in contrast to the situation before World War I, the SOFE supported more intensively schools and cultural institutes in Europe, with one-third of the funds allocated to foreign cultural institutions. During the interwar period, foreign cultural policy focused mainly on Europe (especially Central Europe and the Mediterranean basin) and the colonies. Since cultural expenditures in the colonies and protectorates came from the budgets of the respective competent ministries, the SOFE turned to other countries.⁵⁶ In the colonies, the civilizing mission and assimilation remained at the center of cultural policy. The interwar period also saw the conclusion of France's first cultural treaties: in 1929 with Iran, in 1930 with Denmark, in 1936 with Austria and Sweden, and in 1939 with Romania.⁵⁷

As the range of tasks grew, the state, despite its apparatus in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, continued to rely on the work of private associations and congregations, but it increasingly determined the broad policy lines. In 1922, the French Association for Artistic Action (*Association française d'action artistique*) was founded. It emerged from the Service of Studies and Cultural Action (*Service d'études et d'action culturelle*),

50 Trova, *Le statut juridique*, 33.

51 Frank, "La machine diplomatique," 347.

52 Roche and Pigniau, *Histoires de diplomatie culturelle*, 38.

53 Salon, *L'action culturelle de la France*, 28.

54 Roche and Pigniau, *Histoires de diplomatie culturelle*, 41.

55 Salon, *L'action culturelle de la France*, 28.

56 Salon, 26–28.

57 Roche and Pigniau, *Histoires de diplomatie culturelle*, 44.

created during the war by the Ministry of National Education but later criticized for questioning the competence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for all foreign affairs.⁵⁸ With the help of this society, the exchange of artists was significantly increased.

During World War II, the situation for French foreign cultural policy and cultural expansion was difficult, as the war and the German occupation of France limited the French room for maneuver. Thus, France was not allowed to maintain cultural institutions in German-occupied European countries. The financial situation of the Vichy regime was also more than complicated by the plundering of France by the German occupation power and the resulting misery in France, which also limited funding of external cultural activities. In addition, as the war progressed, the deterioration of transportation and communication routes became more and more serious.⁵⁹ The Vichy regime's foreign cultural policy therefore diminished more and more in the course of the 1940s. Moreover, competition soon arose between the Vichy regime and the Free France movement for the many cultural institutions and foreign cultural activities, the latter considered and used as instruments in the war against Germany. The aim was to rally French men and women abroad—including the many French artists and scholars who had emigrated—and to win them over to the cause of Free France. In addition, Free France wanted to use the networks of friends of France to spread their own objectives and to forge alliances. This succeeded only gradually because a separate governmental apparatus of its own could only be built up slowly, and Philippe Pétain and the Vichy regime initially still enjoyed a great deal of legitimacy.

Expansion and Transformation of Foreign Cultural Policy since 1945

The difficult situation since 1940, the demands of the war, and the recovery of France gave rise to numerous reflections that led to the reorganization of foreign cultural policy after the end of the war. For Charles de Gaulle, France's return to strength was to be based not only on economic power, political institutions, and the colonial empire but also, as after World War I, on the influence of the French culture and language in the world. In a speech in Algiers in 1943, he stressed, "We have, once and for all, drawn the conclusion that it is through the free intellectual and moral relations established between ourselves and others that our cultural influence can be extended to the advantage of all and that, conversely, what we are worth can be increased."⁶⁰ This led initially to the transformation of the organizational structures of foreign cultural policy. In 1945,

58 Roche and Pigniau, 58–59.

59 Roche and Pigniau, 61.

60 Original quoted in Roche and Pigniau, 69: "Nous avons, une fois pour toutes, tiré cette conclusion que c'est par les libres rapports intellectuels et moraux, établis entre nous-mêmes et les autres, que notre influence culturelle peut s'étendre à l'avantage de tous et qu'inversement peut s'accroître ce que nous valons."

an autonomous Directorate General for Cultural Relations and French Works Abroad (*Direction générale des relations culturelles et des œuvres françaises à l'étranger*) was created within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to which various departments from other ministries were attached.⁶¹ This created the administrative framework of a newly established and further upgraded foreign cultural policy, whose weight increased considerably in the second half of the twentieth century. The result was a considerably expanded administrative apparatus with, at the beginning, five subdivisions that cooperated with other ministries in certain areas and were assisted by private organizations, but which steered and controlled foreign cultural policy in a centralized manner. This integration of private initiatives into the state's foreign cultural policy is particularly visible in the fact that in 1946 the director of the French Association for Artistic Action took responsibility for artist exchanges within the Directorate General for Cultural Relations and French Works Abroad. Another important innovation after the end of the war was the creation of the function of cultural attaché to embassies, which was also a continuation of the thinking of the 1930s.⁶²

According to Salon, this new setup in 1945 was not a rupture. Rather, it was a matter of resuming the old contacts and continuing the work of assimilation in the colonies, whereby greater attention was now paid to colonial school policy and by which a larger group of the population was to be reached.⁶³ With the help of foreign cultural policy, France's diminished importance in the world was to be compensated, as it had been since 1918, and its former status was to be restored. The teaching of French abroad was a central activity, to which the main department of the Directorate General for Cultural Relations and French Works Abroad was devoted. Many of the 60 bilateral cultural agreements concluded between 1945 and 1961 were aimed at strengthening the teaching of French and the placement of French teachers. The French Alliance was also invited to become involved in the teaching of French. The cultural attachés of the embassies closely observed the degree of integration of French in the respective educational systems. The French Institutes made efforts to complement the language acquisition program with cultural events featuring French films, artists and literary figures, and libraries.⁶⁴

It was only in the course of decolonization that new substantive goals of France's foreign cultural policy can actually be discerned. Imperial power politics was now gradually replaced by a cultural policy geared toward cooperation, which nevertheless remained focused on maintaining French influence in the world.⁶⁵ Primarily, the government

61 Jean Baillou, ed., *Les affaires étrangères et le corps diplomatique français* [Foreign Affairs and French Diplomatic Corps], vol. 2 (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1984), 720–722.

62 Frank, "La machine diplomatique," 328–331.

63 Salon, *L'action culturelle de la France*, 29.

64 Roche and Pigniau, *Histoires de diplomatie culturelle*, 79–80, 82, 84.

65 Frank, "La machine diplomatique," 331.

wanted to counteract the increasing importance of the English language and American culture. And it wanted to counteract too the loss of political influence in the former colonies and in strengthening the position of the French language: through the teaching of French in local schools and universities and through the promotion of elites, whose study visits to France were encouraged and who would later serve as multipliers.⁶⁶ This newly organized foreign cultural work was directed, on the one hand, toward technical cooperation, which played an important role in infrastructure building in the former colonies, and, on the other hand, toward internationally oriented scientific cooperation.

Initially, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs placed the greatest emphasis on combining cultural work and technical cooperation. The renaming of the Directorate General for Cultural Relations and French Works Abroad to Directorate General for Cultural and Technical Affairs (*Direction générale des affaires culturelles et techniques*) in 1956 reflects the importance of this reorientation.⁶⁷ It emphasized the close link between economic and cultural relations. The new substantive goals, which resulted from the new circumstances that arose in the course of decolonization, were specified in a five-year plan presented in 1958, followed by a second five-year plan in 1964. The combination of cultural work and technical cooperation was specifically aimed at France's economic expansion. In the first five-year plan, this was expressed very precisely: "Là où l'on parle français, on achète français" (where French is spoken, French is bought).⁶⁸ The scope of future contracts also depended on the number of foreign technicians trained at French schools.

The hope behind this was to create economic and political links through cultural work. In the former colonies specifically, cultural and technical cooperation was intended to compensate for the increasing loss of political influence. In fact, a large part of the cultural expenditures flowed into the former colonies in North Africa and Indochina. However, the efforts were directed not only at these former colonies but also—in competition with Great Britain, the United States, and Germany—at states in Latin America, the Middle East, or former British colonies such as India.⁶⁹

The "cultural expansion plan" can be understood as part of the Gaullist policy, which sought national independence and restoration of France's position in the world. The Council of Ministers created a committee of senior officials to draw up this plan for the conversion and expansion of cultural and technical work.⁷⁰ As the committee considered French to be under threat, especially due to the rise of English, the cultural offensive had to take into account contemporary opportunities: this included French courses by radio,

66 Znined-Brand, *Deutsche und französische auswärtige Kulturpolitik*, 45–46.

67 Baillou, *Les affaires étrangères*, 726.

68 Original quoted in Trova, *Le statut juridique*, 40 (concerning "Projet de programme d'expansion en 5 ans 1958–1962").

69 Roche and Pigniau, *Histoires de diplomatie culturelle*, 97.

70 Trova, *Le statut juridique*, 37.

the use of other audiovisual media such as television and cinema, and the creation and expansion of libraries and film libraries. French education in foreign countries should be reformed as a whole, and a clear policy line should be defined. Teaching positions abroad should be more attractive to French teachers. In addition, it was planned to systematically send technicians in other countries.

Efforts were directed primarily at foreign elites who would, it was hoped by the French actors, take the fortunes of their countries into their own hands. To this end, the number of scholarships for foreign students was to be doubled. To meet the increasing financial burdens, private donors would also have to be brought in.⁷¹ The second five-year plan continued in this direction, but it also focused on disseminating French to the foreign population, especially to young people, thus making them accessible to the dissemination of French culture through the media.⁷²

Following the two five-year plans, there was a considerable expansion of the staff and budget of the Directorate General for Cultural and Technical Affairs, which in 1968, at 533 million francs, comprised one-third of the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A clear concentration on the former colonies in North Africa and Indochina was evident, for which 75 percent of the funds were used. The sub-Saharan African states and the high level of funding allocated to them, meanwhile, remained the responsibility of the State Secretariat for Cooperation.⁷³ The number of French teachers sent abroad rose from 12,388 in 1961 to 27,236 in 1968, and by 1970, 10 percent of French teachers were working in other countries.⁷⁴

The number of French secondary schools and *lycées et collèges* (high schools) abroad, as well as the numbers of the French Institutes and of the French Cultural Centers (Centres Culturels Français), also increased during the same period (from 1960 to 1968): the number of French high schools from 30 to 37, of the French Institutes from 44 to 59, and of the French Cultural Centers from 92 to 162. In addition, the Directorate General for Cultural and Technical Affairs made efforts to professionalize teachers who taught French as a foreign language: in 1961, on the initiative of the Directorate General for Cultural and Technical Affairs, the Hachette publishing house published the magazine *Le Français dans le monde*, addressed to teachers of French abroad, and a chair in French as a foreign language was created at the Sorbonne.⁷⁵

France's foreign cultural policy in the 1960s also took up the Francophonie movement initiated by African countries in order to strengthen the position of the French language in the world. In 1966, de Gaulle founded the High Committee for the Defense and Expression of the French Language (Haut Comité pour la défense et l'expression de la

71 Original quoted in Trova, *Le statut juridique*, 40: "Projet de programme d'expansion en 5 ans 1958–1962."

72 Baillou, *Les affaires étrangères*, 728.

73 Baillou, 729.

74 Roche and Pigniau, *Histoires de diplomatie culturelle*, 104.

75 Trova, *Le statut juridique*, 42, 44–46.

langue française),⁷⁶ the first francophone institution to do so, but he otherwise remained rather reticent about the Francophonie.⁷⁷

In the 1970s, scientific cooperation intensified. This was reflected in the renaming of the Directorate General for Cultural and Technical Affairs, which in 1969 was switched to the Directorate General for Cultural, Scientific, and Technical Relations.⁷⁸ In addition to the traditional dissemination of the French language and culture abroad and technical cooperation with developing countries, the remit of the Directorate General for Cultural, Scientific, and Technical Relations now also included international scientific cooperation. Geographically, the focus in the 1970s was primarily on the former colonies, the United States, and Western Europe, while activities in Latin America and the Middle East were reduced.⁷⁹ Particularly as a result of economic crisis, the budget of the Directorate General for Cultural, Scientific, and Technical Relations declined in the 1970s. However, the concept of foreign cultural relations remained relatively unchanged. Even though the principles of cooperation and exchange were emphasized, foreign cultural policy was still characterized by a certain sense of mission wanting to spread French values and cultural assets throughout the world. Equality of cultures and reciprocity of exchange did not yet play a central role. In order to oppose the further spread of English, notably Valéry Giscard d'Estaing supported the strengthening of the Francophonie movement and the formation of the francophone states.⁸⁰

New impetus was to come at the end of the 1970s from the report written by Jacques Rigaud, a councilor in the Council of State, at the suggestion of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It marked the beginning of several attempts at reform at the substantive and organizational levels and was also influenced by the foreign policy activities of other countries, especially West Germany and Great Britain. The starting point of Rigaud was the recognition that France was now only a medium-sized power globally. Therefore, the tasks and the means used in foreign cultural policy should be reevaluated. Although France's *rayonnement* was to remain the focus, it was to be supplemented by a cultural exchange characterized by reciprocity of relations and recognition of the mutuality of cultures.⁸¹ Cultural exchange henceforth aimed at mutual enrichment. Rigaud emphasized, "It is no longer possible to think of these relationships in terms of disseminating our culture; they must be mutually beneficial exchanges between our culture and that of

76 Znined-Brand, *Deutsche und französische auswärtige Kulturpolitik*, 50.

77 Kessler, *La politique étrangère*, 428.

78 Baillou, *Les affaires étrangères*, 730.

79 Znined-Brand, *Deutsche und französische auswärtige Kulturpolitik*, 61–62.

80 Znined-Brand, *Deutsche und französische auswärtige Kulturpolitik*, 63; Kessler, *La politique étrangère*, 428.

81 Jacques Rigaud, *Les relations culturelles extérieures* [Foreign Cultural Relations] (Paris: La Documentation française, 1980), 24–25.

others.”⁸² Regarding the promotion of French abroad, Rigaud cautioned that it should be recognized that French was one of several languages of equal importance worldwide, and he recommended that less emphasis be placed on language diffusion. In addition, the Rigaud’s report pointed out that in view of the economic crisis, foreign cultural policy should no longer scatter its activities in a geographically unspecific manner but should focus more strategically on priority regions.⁸³

Rigaud’s report fundamentally changed the discourse on foreign cultural policy in France. However, in view of the change of government in 1981, primarily organizational proposals were implemented for the time being, and the Directorate General for Cultural, Scientific, and Technical Relations was restructured. The Directorate General for Cultural, Scientific, and Technical Relations was now also responsible for foreign cultural work in the 26 African countries for which the Ministry of Cooperation had previously been responsible.⁸⁴ In a second step, the socialist government presented the “Projet culturel extérieur de la France” (Cultural Project Outside France) in 1983, which was confirmed by the Council of Ministers on October 19. It explicitly referred to the conclusions of Rigaud’s report. Thus, it followed Rigaud’s fundamental reflections, such as the principle of reciprocity of cultural exchanges and the rejection of any form of cultural imperialism.⁸⁵

However, it did not question the traditional orientation toward the dissemination of the French language and culture. In contrast, methods and organizational structures were diversified, based on Rigaud’s report, and the professionalization of the staff of foreign cultural and educational institutions and the increased use of new media were especially promoted.⁸⁶ Radio, television, cinema, books, and the press were to help spread a modern image of France and support the use of the French language abroad. The idea was to “marry culture and commerce” and to promote scientific and technological cooperation.⁸⁷ As part of this strategy, the international channel TV 5, broadcast via satellite, was launched in 1984.⁸⁸ The audiovisual media were considered as essential instruments for the promotion and perpetuation of the French language in the francophone regions of the world.⁸⁹

82 Original in Rigaud, 24: “Il n’est plus possible de penser ces relations en termes de diffusion de notre culture; il doit s’agir d’échanges mutuellement bénéfiques entre notre culture et celle des autres.”

83 Rigaud, 34.

84 Trova, *Le statut juridique*, 53.

85 “Projet culturel extérieur de la France” [Cultural Project outside France] (Paris: La Documentation française, 1984), 3, 9–11.

86 Roche and Pigniau, *Histoires de diplomatie culturelle*, 121–125.

87 “Projet culturel extérieur de la France,” 35.

88 Roche and Pigniau, *Histoires de diplomatie culturelle*, 134.

89 “Projet culturel extérieur de la France,” 22.

Especially because of the new principles that emerged from Rigaud's report, the Francophonie movement gained importance in the 1980s. Its political importance was underscored by the first Francophonie Summit, held in Paris in 1986, which was attended by 41 francophone countries, soon followed by other meetings. In 1986, the post of secretary of state for the Francophonie was created, which was transformed into a Ministry of State for Francophonie in 1988, and in 1993 the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of State for Francophonie were merged.⁹⁰ Due to the significant influence of Jacques Chirac, the Francophonie summits were expanded in 1996 into the International Organization of Francophonie (Organisation internationale de la Francophonie),⁹¹ whose most important donor is France. By supporting the Francophonie, whose natural center of power France continues to see itself as, the French government aimed to preserve and consolidate the position of the French language in the world, even if its influence on the Francophonie movement is limited.⁹² This has further stimulated efforts in the field of French-speaking media. The minister of state in charge of Francophonie, Alain Decaux, underlined in 1988: "If we want the French-speaking people to continue to speak French, they must be provided immediately and abundantly with French-language television [...] we must literally flood the French-speaking countries with images, songs, news, [and] fiction in French and do it through television."⁹³

Based on a report by Decaux in 1989, the Foreign Audiovisual Council of France (Conseil de l'Audiovisuel Extérieur de la France) was created to ensure a coherent audiovisual policy abroad, followed by the Canal France International program database, which provided French programs free of charge to developing countries. Funding for TV 5 was also increased: since 1990, the channel has been available in the United States, and since 1992, in Africa and Latin America.⁹⁴ Finally, in 1992, the Franco-German television channel Arte went on the air. Radio-France Internationale remained a central element of this policy. The budget for audiovisual media abroad rose from 982 million francs in 1994 to 1.387 billion francs in 1999,⁹⁵ with funding for television and radio

90 Trova, *Le statut juridique*, 62–65.

91 Ingo Kolboom and Hans Stark, "Frankreich in der Welt. Weltpolitik zwischen Anspruch und Wirklichkeit" [France in the World: World Politics between Aspiration and Reality], in *Länderbericht Frankreich*, 2nd ed., eds. Adolf Kimmel and Henrik Uterwedde (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2005), 376.

92 Kessler, *La politique étrangère*, 420, 425–426.

93 Original in Alain Decaux to the prime minister, Paris, November 10, 1988, quoted in Roche and Pigniau, *Histoire de diplomatie culturelle*, 138: "Si nous voulons que les francophones continuent de parler français, il faut les doter sans délai et abondamment de télévisions en langue française [...] il faut littéralement inonder les pays francophones d'images, de chansons, d'informations, de fictions en français et le faire par l'intermédiaire de la télévision."

94 Roche and Pigniau, *Histoires de diplomatie culturelle*, 139–141.

95 Kessler, "La politique extérieure de la France depuis la fin de la guerre froide" [France's Foreign Policy since the End of the Cold War], in *La culture dans les relations internationales*, ed. François Roche (Rom: École française, 2002), 103–120, at 109.

increasingly eclipsing cinema. In 2006, France 24 (a French news channel) went on the air. In 2008, the holding company Audiovisual Outside of France (Audiovisuel Extérieur de la France) was created to pool structures and finances and create synergies.⁹⁶

Along with the audiovisual sector, French education abroad is the second pillar of foreign cultural policy. In 1990, there were 289 schools, colleges, and high schools in 120 countries.⁹⁷ It was strengthened administratively and financially by the creation in 1990 of the Agency for French Education Abroad (Agence pour l'enseignement français à l'étranger), a public institution under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition, the transition of students to a French or francophone university was encouraged by an increase in the awarding of scholarships, which had been partially abandoned in the 1980s. In 1998, the Directorate General for Cultural, Scientific, and Technical Relations launched the Eiffel Scholarship Program to award scholarships to excellent students, modeled on the Fulbright Program.⁹⁸

The collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe led to an intensive engagement in cultural policy in these states. Attempts were made to revive pre-World War II activities. Until 1994, many French Institutes were created or reestablished, and the French Alliance also resumed its activities in many places. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs created French high schools and *collèges universitaires français* (French university colleges) in Moscow and Saint Petersburg.⁹⁹ French radio became available by satellite or frequency modulation (FM) in Poland, Hungary, Romania, some regions of Russia, and Moldova.¹⁰⁰ For a short period, the resources devoted to Central and Eastern Europe increased significantly, reaching in 1992 double those spent on Western Europe. In the following years, this privileged commitment to Eastern Europe decreased again in favor of work in Western Europe. Only in those Eastern European countries that are closer to the European Union (EU) has the French commitment remained high. In the late 1980s, in connection with the collapse of the communist bloc, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also reactivated its cultural engagement in Southeast Asia.¹⁰¹

The basic orientation of foreign cultural policy has been maintained thereafter, with the exception of numerous more or less successful reforms aimed at a more efficient use of financial resources and personnel. The merger of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and

96 Xavier Greffe and Sylvie Pflieger, eds., *La politique culturelle en France* [Cultural Policy in France] (Paris: La Documentation française, 2009), 201–227, at 210.

97 Roche and Pigniau, *Histoires de diplomatie culturelle*, 142.

98 Kessler, *La politique étrangère*, 397–98; Kessler, “La politique extérieure,” 111.

99 Kessler, “La politique extérieure,” 104–105.

100 Roche and Pigniau, *Histoires de diplomatie culturelle*, 159.

101 Kessler, “La politique extérieure,” 106–108. See also Julia Sattler, *Nationalkultur oder europäische Werte? Britische, deutsche und französische Auswärtige Kulturpolitik zwischen 1989 und 2003* [National Culture or European Values? British, German, and French Foreign Cultural Policy between 1989 and 2003] (Wiesbaden: Deutscher Universitäts-Verlag, 2007).

the Ministry of Cooperation in 1999 even led to a further expansion of the activities of the Directorate General for Cultural, Scientific, and Technical Relations, renamed the Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (*Direction générale de la coopération internationale et du développement*), which took over the responsibility for cultural institutions in sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁰²

It is true that there were regular calls for more coherence in cultural action, but this was only meant to make activities on the four main lines more effective: the dissemination of the French language as the foundation of foreign cultural policy, the organization of academic exchanges and scientific cooperation, technical cooperation, and the strengthening of audiovisual presence in the world.¹⁰³ Even after the turn of the millennium, these principles of France's foreign cultural policy have not changed.

Since the Jack Lang era, the Ministry of Culture has systematized its international commitment (the merger with the Ministry of State for Francophonie in 1993 was a first fundamental step) and in 2004 created its own Delegation for Development and International Affairs, which cooperates with the cultural service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs but whose impact is much less significant.¹⁰⁴

In the first two decades of the twenty-first century, ongoing reform efforts were directed at bundling and better coordinating the various instruments of foreign cultural policy and thus creating synergies, also for reasons of financial policy. These efforts culminated in 2010 with the establishment of the French Institute (*Institut Français*). As a new central body, with public law status but still controlled by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, the French Institute was to coordinate the work of the worldwide network of French Institutes and the committees of the Foundation of the French Alliance (*Fondation des Alliances françaises*). However, the Agency for French Education Abroad remained outside this new structure. The institutions Campus France, which was also created in 2010 to strengthen and promote the French higher education and science system through various internationally oriented measures, and France International Expertise (*France Expertise internationale*, renamed in 2015 to *Expertise France*), which promotes technical support and international expertise of France abroad, have a similar legal status. The creation of these institutions is interpreted as a rapprochement of French foreign cultural policy with European models that are less close to the state.¹⁰⁵

102 Kessler, "La politique extérieure," 113–117.

103 Znined-Brand, *Deutsche und französische auswärtige Kulturpolitik*, 77–79.

104 Greffe and Pflieger, *La politique culturelle en France*, 204.

105 Philippe Lane, *Présence française dans le monde. L'action culturelle et scientifique* [French Presence in the World: Cultural and Scientific Action] (Paris: La Documentation française, 2016), 11 et seq, 29–32, 117–119; Haize, *L'action culturelle*, 84–85, 107; Marie-Christine Kessler, "Cultural Diplomacy," in *Global Diplomacy: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*, eds. Thierry Balzacq, Frédéric Charillon, and Frédéric Ramel (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2020), 227–237, at 232; Haize, *L'action culturelle*, 255–256.

Finally, however, the central role of the French government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cultural relations with foreign countries has never been questioned, and this principle is shared by all political and administrative actors. Foreign cultural policy is implemented directly by the government, and this is especially true for the defense of French and the Francophonie. Cultural attachés and cultural officers abroad have repeatedly criticized the strategy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, saying that it does not take sufficient account of the changed conditions after the turn of the millennium, which means that foreign cultural work is too much determined by local initiatives.¹⁰⁶ Kessler, on the other hand, sees precisely this plurality and diversity as a particular strength of France's foreign cultural work.¹⁰⁷

The teaching of French remains the priority of France's foreign cultural policy. Although the number of French schools and cultural centers abroad has declined slightly over the past decade, France continues to have the world's densest network of cultural institutes and language and foreign schools. With this network, through the Franco-phonie movement, as well as through the expansion of audiovisual media and, since the mid-1990s, the presence of the internet, the position of French in the world is to be defended and expanded. The new "diplomatie d'influence" that Philippe Lane has been noting since 2010, which combines traditional foreign cultural policy with globally operating communication and information technologies and pays more emphatic attention to economic issues, is ultimately no exception.¹⁰⁸

However, it is no longer a question of giving priority to French, but of promoting a linguistic pluralism that must be maintained, for example, by multilingualism in international organizations and the compulsory teaching of two foreign languages. French, in particular, as one of the official languages of the EU, must assert its status as an international language.¹⁰⁹ The fight for the *exception culturelle*, considered as a refusal of a uniformization linked to globalization and granting the cultural sector a special status, points in the same direction: culture is not to be regarded as a commodity like any other. In fact, the French government succeeded in establishing a special status for cultural goods, granting each state a special influence on the cultural sector. Since the term *exception culturelle* is internationally controversial due to its preference for French cultural assets, the French government has increasingly focused on efforts to achieve

106 Haize, *L'action culturelle*, 251–258; Sophie Claudel, Alain Fohr, and Alexis Tadié, "La diplomatie culturelle française face aux défis contemporains" [French Cultural Diplomacy in the Face of Contemporary Challenges], *terra nova*, March 27, 2017, <https://tnova.fr/notes/la-diplomatie-culturelle-face-aux-defis-contemporains>.

107 Kessler, *La politique étrangère*, 393.

108 Lane, *Présence française*, 118.

109 Jean-David Lévitte, "La diplomatie culturelle: un atout pour la France" [Cultural Diplomacy: An Asset for France], in *Histoires de diplomatie culturelle*, by François Roche and Bernard Pigniau (Paris: Ministère des affaires étrangères ADPF: La Documentation française, 1995), 197–198.

cultural diversity since the turn of the millennium.¹¹⁰ It should be added, however, that both objectives already existed side by side in the “Projet culturel” of 1983.¹¹¹ The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) took up this demand with the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, proclaimed in 2001, and the Francophonie adopted the principle in the Declaration of Ougadougou in 2004;¹¹² the EU has taken the same approach in its cultural programs. However, the position of the French government not only aims at plurality and equal coexistence of the different cultures but also has an economic dimension. It wants to limit the competition from the overwhelming American culture industry. Culture thus continues to be seen in economic terms, is intended to help convey a modern image of France abroad, and serves a “diplomatie d’influence.”¹¹³ The problem, however, is that the international presence of the French creative and cultural industries has tended to decline since the turn of the millennium¹¹⁴ despite the institutions created for this purpose, some of which have existed for decades, such as the National Center of Cinematography (Centre national de cinématographie) or the National Book Center (Centre national du livre).¹¹⁵ This area, which also serves to protect and disseminate French culture but has much more pronounced economic aspects, is the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture.¹¹⁶

Summary

Long before the notion “soft power” emerged,¹¹⁷ the French government already practiced a foreign cultural policy aimed at improving its image abroad; winning friends, allies, and trade partners; and transmitting ideas, values, and institutions. France used culture as a weapon, all the more so when other instruments of power became ineffective

110 Hannah-Kristin Elenschneider, *Definition und Verständnis des Kulturbegriffes* [Definition and Understanding of the Concept of Culture] (Munich: AVM, 2009), 68–69.

111 “Projet culturel extérieur de la France,” 25.

112 Kessler, “Cultural Diplomacy,” 236.

113 This was expressed on several occasions by the minister of foreign affairs Bernard Kouchner: “XVIème conférence des ambassadeurs. Allocution du ministre des affaires étrangères et européennes, M. Bernard Kouchner” [Sixteenth Ambassadors’ Conference: Speech by the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Mr. Bernard Kouchner], *Déclarations Officielles de politique étrangère. Bulletin d’actualité du* 28. Août 2008, no. 7.

114 See Greffe and Pflieger, *La politique culturelle en France*, 221–226.

115 See also Bastian Lange, *Kreativwirtschaft international. Schnittmengen zur Auswärtigen Kulturpolitik* [Creative Economy International: Intersections with Foreign Cultural Policy] (Stuttgart: Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, 2017), 32–33.

116 Greffe and Pflieger, *La politique culturelle en France*, 226–27.

117 Joseph S. Nys, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), about culture especially, 44–55; Robert Los, *Soft Power in Contemporary International Relations* (Lodz: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2017), 65–100.

and when France's world power status was increasingly called into question.¹¹⁸ In the twentieth century, culture was increasingly the last asset with which France wanted to and could maintain its international influence. This also led to the emergence of a state cultural diplomacy that increasingly coordinated and integrated the work of private actors and which, after the end of World War II and in the wake of decolonization, became an instrument of influence in every respect. In this context, cultural policy, which until then had been focused on guaranteeing imperial power, was modernized and now sought above all to preserve French influence through cooperation. A certain sense of mission for one's own cultural achievements and values, a French messianism committed to a civilizing mission, certainly persisted.

With the beginning of the Fifth Republic, the teaching of the French language was defined as the cornerstone of foreign cultural policy. It has remained so to this day, even though since the 1980s the idea of reciprocity in cultural exchange and the rejection of any form of cultural imperialism have prevailed. French cultural policy continues to focus on the preservation and expansion of the French language and French influence in the world. However, spreading the French language and culture abroad is not an end in itself. Since French society and its elites are still largely defined by their cultural and linguistic identity,¹¹⁹ it is an indispensable means of self-expression and self-assertion in the world. In view of the increasing decline of the French language in the world, this is associated with high costs and has led to recurring discussions about the reorientation of foreign cultural policy since the 1980s. But it is, as Christophe Charle underlines in his chapter, "based on the identification of this language with the essence of the nation itself." So far, however, there is no other means in sight that can express the French self-image to a similar extent and at the same time act as a global unique selling point.

Important Works to Consider

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Haize, Daniel. *L'action culturelle et de la coopération de la France à l'étranger: un réseau, des hommes* [France's Cultural Action and Cooperation Abroad: A Network, People]. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2012.

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¹¹⁸ Frank, "La machine diplomatique," 325.

¹¹⁹ Compare the statements from Antoine de Rivarol or Georges Duhamel about the greatness and universality of the French culture and language in the chapter by Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink.

- . *La politique étrangère de la France. Acteurs et processus* [The Foreign Policy of France: Actors and Processes]. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 1999.
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From Universalism to Diversity: Francophonie as a French Globalization Project?

Introduction

Francophonie, according to the linguist Jürgen Erfurt, is “a highly complex social phenomenon that is not fully captured by the fact of speaking French or using this language in individual areas of social organization.” Instead, it can be understood “as a language-cultural space of French-speaking communities with their ideologies and forms of interaction, as well as a transnational political-institutional structure of global dimension.”¹ Since the 1960s up until today, Francophonie as a political project has been understood primarily in terms of this institutional component. The starting point was decolonization with the founding of corresponding intergovernmental organizations, such as the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (Agence de coopération culturelle et technique, ACCT), which was established in 1970 and in which the former colonial powers France and Belgium were initially linked to several of their former colonies. The genesis of an increasingly independent policy field was also reflected in the establishment of political departments and offices and was not limited to foreign policy. Domestically, this also included the maintenance and protection of the French language, which was to be ensured in France, for example, with the help of laws, broadcasting quotas, or so-called terminology commissions. International cooperation has been intensified since the 1980s: in 1986, the first Francophonie Summit (Sommet de la francophonie) took place, which has been organized every two years since then, and in 1997, the ACCT was replaced by the International Organization of Francophonie (Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, OIF), to which non-francophone countries have increasingly joined since the end of the Cold War.²

At the same time, organized Francophonie sought to position itself more strongly in the face of the challenges of globalization, which were perceived as increasingly urgent,

1 Jürgen Erfurt, *Frankophonie. Sprache – Diskurs – Politik* [Francophonie: Language – Discourse – Politics] (Tübingen: Francke, 2005), 1 et seq. See also Matthias Middell, “Francophonie as a World Region?,” *European Review of History – Revue européenne de l’Histoire* 10, no. 2 (2003): 203–220.

2 François Provenzano, *Vies et mort de la francophonie. Une politique française de la langue et de la littérature* [Lives and Death of the Francophonie: A French Policy of Language and Literature] (Brüssel: Les Impressions nouvelles, 2011), 11–29.

and to give globalizing processes a francophone character.³ This was exemplified by the 1995 Cotonou Summit, which discussed the “francophone project for the present time and the century to come.” While the host, the president of Benin Nicéphore Dieudonné Soglo, in his opening speech called for “stronger and more concrete solidarity” in view of the globalization of development problems,⁴ the Belgian Roger Dehaybe conceived Francophonie in view of “economic globalization” and “cultural uniformization” as a veritable “continent” of its own, from which the French language should spread further throughout the world:

Certainly, one out of every four countries in the world formally belongs to the francophone movement. Should the Francophonie be satisfied with this apparently flattering observation? The globalization of the economy and the strong tendencies toward cultural standardization challenge it. They require it to consolidate its space, to make the French language a logical continent, and at the same time to spread throughout the world.⁵

As the chairman of a Reflection Committee for the Strengthening of Francophonie (Comité de réflexion pour le renforcement de la Francophonie), established two years earlier, he drew attention to “the diversity and richness of the countries linked by the French language, a language of globality,” again emphasizing “a logical continent in the making.”⁶

3 Jürgen Erfurt, “Quo vadis, Francophonie? Strategien der Globalisierung vs. lokale Prozesse der kulturellen Identifikation” [Quo vadis, Francophonie? Strategies of Globalization vs. Local Processes of Cultural Identification], in *Entgrenzungen. Für eine Soziologie der Kommunikation. Festschrift für Georg Kremnitz zum 60. Geburtstag*, eds. Peter Cichon et al. (Vienna: Edition Praesens, 2005), 113–126.

4 “Discours inaugural prononcé par le Président de la République du Bénin, S.E.M. Nicéphore Dieudonné Soglo” [Inaugural Speech Delivered by the President of the Republic of Benin, H.E. Nicéphore Dieudonné Soglo], *Actes de la sixième Conférence des chefs d’État et de gouvernement des pays ayant le français en partage. Sommet de Cotonou 2, 3 et 4 décembre 1995*, 201–205, at 203, https://www.francophonie.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/actes_som_vi_04121995.pdf: “Le développement fulgurant des moyens de communication, en favorisant les rencontres entre les hommes, la constitution de nouveaux espaces de développement économique, offre aujourd’hui de possibilités accrues d’intégration. La globalisation des problèmes de développement liés à des phénomènes transnationaux comme l’environnement, la gestion de l’énergie, la santé, la sécurité appellent de notre part un autre type de concertation, une solidarité plus forte et plus concrète.”

5 Original in “Intervention de M. Roger Dehaybe, président du comité” [Speech by Roger Dehaybe, Committee Chairman], *Actes de la sixième Conférence*, 81–93, at 87: “Certes un pays sur quatre dans le monde appartient formellement à la mouvance francophone. La Francophonie doit-elle se contenter de ce constat apparemment flatteur? La mondialisation de l’économie et les tendances lourdes à l’uniformisation culturelle l’interpellent. Elles lui imposent de consolider son espace, de faire de la langue française un continent logique et, dans le même temps, de se répandre dans le monde.”

6 “Intervention de M. Roger Dehaybe,” 88.

As the cultural geographer Georg Glasze shows, Francophonie and globalization discourse have been very closely linked since the 1990s.⁷ Francophonie was conceived as the embodiment of cultural diversity and thus as an/the antipode of Anglo-Saxon-dominated globalization, which in turn was equated with homogenization and uniformization:

Thus, the outside and opposite of Francophonie is constituted, and at the same time a task and function is defined: Francophonie as an “indispensable protective wall” against the uniformizing Anglo-Saxon-dominated globalization. Francophonie is thereby sometimes explicitly described as a “more humane” or “different” globalization and in this way linked to the critique of globalization.⁸

This is exemplified by the New Year’s address of the OIF’s secretary general, the Senegalese Abdou Diouf, in 2005:

Cultural and language diversity is [...] at the heart of the action undertaken by the Francophonie. It has become a political issue because without cultural diversity in the current process of globalization, we run the risk of seeing the dialogue of cultures, the balance of a multipolar world, as well as the fundamental values of peace, justice, and democracy weaken.⁹

Since the 1990s, however, Francophonie and globalization have not only been increasingly related to each other but also shared a semantic conjuncture that began in the 1980s and culminated, somewhat delayed, around the turn of the millennium.¹⁰ In both cases though, these were by no means neologisms. According to Olaf Bach, who has intensively studied the conceptual history of globalization, this began “with early evidence

7 Georg Glasze, *Politische Räume. Die diskursive Konstitution eines “geokulturellen Raums” – die Frankophonie* [Political Spaces: The Discursive Constitution of a “Geocultural Space”—the Francophonie] (Bielefeld: transcript, 2013), esp. chapter 5.4.

8 Glasze, 190 et seq.

9 Original quoted in Glasze, 16 et seq.: “La diversité culturelle et linguistique est [...] au cœur de l’action engagée par la Francophonie. Elle est devenue un enjeu politique, car sans diversité culturelle dans l’actuel processus de mondialisation, nous courons le risque de voir fragiliser le dialogue des cultures, l’équilibre d’un monde multipolaire, de même que les valeurs fondamentales de la paix, de la justice et de la démocratie.”

10 See the Google Ngram Viewer for the corpus “French 2019” and the terms “globalization” and “francophonie”: https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=globalisation%2Cfrancophonie&year_start=1800&year_end=2019&corpus=30&smoothing=3 (accessed January 6, 2023), compared to “mondialisation” and “francophonie”: https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=mondialisation%2Cfrancophonie&year_start=1800&year_end=2019&corpus=30&smoothing=3 (accessed January 6, 2023).

of the concept terms globalize and globalization from the middle of the twentieth century.”¹¹ The shaping of the term *Francophonie*, in turn, dates back to the late nineteenth century. Its “inventor” is considered to be the French colonial geographer Onésime Reclus (1837–1916), who used it with an expansionist and social Darwinist tendency in his work *France, Algérie et colonies* (France, Algeria, and Colonies, 1880).¹² Although, as seen, his neologism hardly gained currency in the following decades, it can be argued that an early notion of Francophonie as an idea and language-political practice was already present and even developed as a political project in its own right during this period.¹³ This coincided with the consolidation of the Third Republic, founded in 1870, and was closely linked to other projects it vigorously promoted, especially in the areas of schooling and education. To be sure, the actors often consciously sought to tie in with ideas and practices that went further back in history, especially from the revolutionary period, and sometimes from the early modern period as well. Nevertheless, it was only now, in the late nineteenth century, that language and language policy became an instrument of political-cultural order aimed at establishing and disseminating norms and ideas as well as producing social integration and political cohesion.

This conception of Francophonie was initially supported primarily by an intellectual republican elite that had emerged in the Third Republic since the 1880s and whose center of gravity was the Parisian bourgeoisie. It included politicians, scientists, and intellectuals, and their involvement often overlapped, not least in the many nonprofit associations and scientific societies that were founded in the name of Francophonie in the last third of the nineteenth century. In addition to the French Alliance (Alliance Française, AF), which has existed since 1883 and was consciously nonpartisan and ideologically neutral, these were in particular the Universal Israelite Alliance (Alliance israélite universelle, AIU), which was founded in 1860, and the French Secular Mission (Mission laïque française, MLF), which has existed since 1902. While the AF quickly concentrated on the field of language cultural policy abroad, the AIU and the MLF maintained a dense infrastructure of French schools in the French colonial empire and in French spheres of influence, especially in North Africa, the Near East, and the Middle

11 Olaf Bach, “Ein Ende der Geschichte? Entstehung, Strukturveränderungen und die Temporalität der Globalisierungssemantik seit dem Zweiten Weltkrieg” [An End to History? Emergence, Structural Changes, and the Temporality of Globalization Semantics since the Second World War], *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 68, no. 1 (2020): 128–154, at 128. For more details, see Olaf Bach, *Die Erfindung der Globalisierung. Entstehung und Wandel eines zeitgeschichtlichen Grundbegriffs* [The Invention of Globalization: Emergence and Change of a Basic Concept of Contemporary History] (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2013).

12 Onésime Reclus, *France, Algérie et colonies* [France, Algeria, and the Colonies] (Paris: Hachette, 1886).

13 On this and the following, see Silke Mende, *Ordnung durch Sprache. Francophonie zwischen Nationalstaat, Imperium und internationaler Politik, 1860–1960* [Order through Language: Francophonie between Nation-State, Empire, and International Politics, 1860–1960] (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020).

East.¹⁴ They formed a close-mesh institutional network and were closely linked, both in terms of personnel and finances, to a centralist and now also increasingly interventionist state and its institutions.

Another field that saw the creation of close connections and networks was the French scientific landscape, which underwent significant financial and institutional expansion at the beginning of the Third Republic. Over the course of a scant century, this francophone dispositif kept changing: the internal relationships between individual actors and institutions transformed, and the respective centers of power within the field shifted. Nevertheless, the basic constellation that emerged, especially from the 1880s onward, remained influential into the second postwar period of the twentieth century.

Moreover, from the very beginning Francophonie was directed inward as much as outward. On the one hand, it concerned the regional and cultural integration of the French nation-state, and thus one of the core political tasks formulated by the republicans at the end of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, it was about the relationship to the French colonial empire, which was simultaneously expanding and consolidating during the same period. To the extent that the position of French as an international language appeared increasingly threatened, especially after the end of the First World War, the international dimension of Francophonie came back into focus. Francophonie as a political, initially primarily republican, project very closely intertwined national, imperial, and international politics. Moreover, it emanated primarily from France and thus differed from the strongly multilateral activities surrounding Francophonie that had developed since decolonization.

But to what extent was Francophonie already a French globalization project at that time? How did it differ from that at the turn of the twenty-first century? And how can we trace such a possible early connection between Francophonie and globalization à la française in view of the comparatively late conceptual history of globalization outlined above? On the one hand, a number of complementary or bridging concepts are important for this. These include civilization and universalism as well as the closely related concepts of progress and modernity in a supposedly typically French form. On the other hand, it is worth examining specific fields of practice in which these

14 Cf. Pierre Singaravélou, "Aux origines coloniales de la francophonie. Le rôle pionnier des associations et des sociétés savantes" [The Colonial Origins of the French-Speaking World: The Pioneering Role of Associations and Learned Societies], in *Les Associations dans la francophonie*, eds. Sylvie Guillaume and Noble Akam (Pessac: Maison des sciences de l'homme d'Aquitaine, 2006), 63–74. On the Alliance Française, see François Chaubet, *La politique culturelle française et la diplomatie de la langue. L'Alliance Française, 1883–1940* [French Cultural Policy and The Diplomacy of Language: The French Alliance, 1883–1940] (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006); on the Alliance israélite universelle, see André Kaspi, ed., *Histoire de l'Alliance israélite universelle de 1860 à nos jours* [History of the Universal Israelite Alliance from 1860 to Today] (Paris: A. Colin, 2010); on the Mission Laïque Française, see *Éléments pour une histoire de la Mission Laïque Française, 1902–1982* [Elements for a History of the French Lay Mission, 1902–1982], *Dialogues. Bulletin de liaison des professeurs français à l'étranger*, special issue (1982).

ideas were to be applied and in which Francophonie and globalization manifested themselves before they became known under these terms. Colonial policy and the field of international politics were particularly relevant.

This results in the structure of this chapter, which is divided into three parts. In the first part, the genesis of Francophonie avant la lettre as well as its relationship to the aforementioned bridging and complementary concepts are outlined. In a further step, the two selected fields of practice of francophone politics are examined in turn, first colonial politics, then international politics.

Globalization à la française avant la lettre? Terms, Notions, and Concepts of Francophonie

As already indicated, Francophonie outlines a claim that is by no means a novelty of recent contemporary history, but historically goes back much further. Even though the conceptions of it changed and the links to the late twentieth century were by no means unbroken, they were nevertheless linked to a series of concepts and terms that were to remain formative in different ways in the period that followed and, in turn, (themselves) shared a semantic–content-related/thematic affinity with one another: *progress* and *modernity*, *universalism*, and *civilization*. While these are less clearly identifiable directional terms than, say, *globalization*, they are nevertheless also inherently teleologically charged, which is clearly manifested above all in the verbs and processes associated with them, such as *modernize/modernization* or *civilize/civilization*.¹⁵ Similar to the concept of globalization, they also raise the question of their intended and real scope. For in practice, globalization does not mean a spatial totality in the sense of worldwide distribution, but in the analysis of globalization processes, it is necessary to ask about the actual world-regional distribution and the concrete nodes of spatial densification in a context-bound manner.¹⁶ This is hardly different for the bridging and complementary concepts central to Francophonie. In contrast to globalization, however, they go back primarily to the epoch of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution and can thus

15 Frederick Cooper, “Modernity,” *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 113–149; Wolfgang Knöbl, “After Modernization. Der Globalisierungsbegriff als Platzhalter und Rettungsanker der Sozialwissenschaften” [After Modernization: The Concept of Globalization as a Placeholder and Lifeline for the Social Sciences], *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 68, no. 2 (2020): 297–317.

16 Cooper, “Globalization,” *Colonialism in Question*, 91–112; Jan Eckel, “‘Alles hängt mit allem zusammen.’ Zur Historisierung des Globalisierungsdiskurses der 1990er und 2000er Jahre” [“Everything Is Connected to Everything”: On the Historicization of the Discourse of Globalization in the 1990s and 2000s], *Historische Zeitschrift* 307 (2018): 42–78.

shed light on the extent to which Francophonie already represented a political project with a potentially global claim.

The concept of a specific *génie de la langue* (genius of the language), which has been encountered since the seventeenth century, was initially significant for this. It implies that certain languages have paradigmatic characteristics and that these characteristics also distinguish their speakers. In the case of French, these are in particular “clarity” and “structuredness,” not coincidentally two characteristics that have been labeled as especially “modern.” This formula—which has been taken up again and again since then, by no means only in disputes about Francophonie, and which is still present in the twentieth century—has even made it to the French “place of memory.”¹⁷

In addition, there was a developmental idea that was increasingly related to language issues and closely interwoven with the Enlightenment. It was reflected particularly powerfully in one of the key texts on the French language, Antoine de Rivarol’s essay on the universality of the French language, which was awarded a prize by the Berlin Academy of Sciences in 1784: “*What is not clear is not French; what is not clear is still English, Italian, Greek, or Latin.*”¹⁸ This perhaps most influential, but in any case most quoted, passage of the essay refers the argument of “yet” or “not yet” first to the European languages, to which thereby a lower stage of development is implicitly attested. From this understanding, while French had already reached the teleological vanishing point of progressive development—clarity—the other contemporary as well as classical languages mentioned remained at an earlier stage. In particular, the often unquoted second half of this almost canonical sentence thus establishes a close link between French language and the Enlightenment core category of progress.

This link was taken up and strengthened during the French Revolution. In addition, the relationship between different languages was expanded and intensified by a double language demarcation—on the one hand, against foreign languages and, on the other hand, against the dialects within France. This demarcation is exemplified by two key language documents of the French Revolution. They established fixed attributions and stereotypes that also structured later debates about the status and universal claim of the French language and remained retrievable, especially for subsequent generations of language custodians and language politicians and especially when they placed themselves in a republican or even Jacobin tradition.¹⁹ The first text was the “Rapport du

17 Marc Fumaroli, “Le génie de la langue française” [The Genius of the French Language], in *Les lieux de Mémoire*, vol. 2/3, ed. Pierre Nora (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 910–973.

18 Original in Antoine Rivarol, *De l’universalité de la langue française* [On the Universality of the French Language], ed. W. W. Comfort (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1919), 44: “*Ce qui n’est pas clair n’est pas français; ce qui n’est pas clair est encore anglais, italien, grec ou latin.*”

19 Michel de Certeau, Dominique Julia, and Jacques Revel, eds., *Une politique de la langue. La Révolution française et les patois. L’enquête de Grégoire* [A Politics of Language: The French Revolution and the Patois. The Study of Gregoire] (Paris: Gallimard, 1975); Renée Balibar and Dominique Laporte, *Le français*

Comité de salut public sur les idiomes”²⁰ (Report of the Committee of Public Safety on the Idioms, 8 Pluviôse, year II [January 27, 1794]), penned by Bertrand Barère, a member of the committee. In the report, on the one hand, the deputy of the department of Hautes-Pyrénées addresses the dialects and regional languages present in France in opposition to the French standard language and connects both antipodes with a series of not only stereotypes and ideas but also actors, which can be reduced to the denominator *backward* versus *progressive*. On the other hand, his language purism is directed outward, as expressed in the text’s most famous passage: “Federalism and superstition speak Bas-Breton; emigration and hatred of the Republic speak German; counterrevolution speaks Italian, and fanaticism speaks Basque.”²¹ Brittany, Germany, Italy, and the Basque country were named as the four ends of the French territory from which, from the revolutionaries’ point of view, the French language and thus revolutionary France as such were in particular danger. The second text, the “Rapport sur la nécessité et les moyens d’anéantir les patois et d’universaliser l’usage de la langue française” (Report on the Necessity and the Means to Annihilate the Patois and to Universalize the Use of the French Language, 16 Prairial, year II [June 4, 1794]),²² was just as influential. The author is Abbé Grégoire, who had already drawn attention to himself four years earlier with his famous circular “on the patois and customs of the country people.”²³ Regarding language standardization, he had hoped that his survey would shed light on the language and cultural practices of the French population. Even more than the report by Barère, the report by Grégoire added revolutionary values such as freedom, democratic participation, and human and civil rights to the association of the French language with clarity and structuredness, which had long been established during this period.

national. Politique et pratiques de la langue nationale sous la Révolution française [National French: Politics and Practices of the National Language during the French Revolution] (Paris: Hachette, 1974); Brigitte Schlieben-Lange, ed., “Sprache und Literatur in der Französischen Revolution,” *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* 41 (1981).

- 20 “Rapport du Comité de Salut Public sur les Idiomes” [Report of the Committee of Public Safety on the Idioms], in *Une politique de la langue*, eds. de Certeau, Julia, and Revel, 291–299.
- 21 Original in “Rapport du Comité de Salut Public sur les Idiomes,” 295: “Le fédéralisme et la superstition parlent bas-breton; l’émigration et la haine de la République parlent allemand; la contre-révolution parle l’italien, et le fanatisme parle le basque.”
- 22 “Rapport sur la Nécessité et les Moyens d’anéantir les patois et d’universaliser l’usage de la langue française” [Report on the Necessity and the Means to Annihilate the Patois and to Universalize the Use of the French Language], in *Une politique de la langue*, eds. de Certeau, Julia, and Revel, 300–317.
- 23 Augustin Gazier, *Lettres à Grégoire sur les patois de France, 1790–1794. Documents inédits sur la langue, les moeurs et l’état des esprits dans les diverses régions de la France, au début de la Révolution. Suivis du Rapport de Grégoire à la Convention* [Letters to Gregoire on the Patois of France, 1790–1794: Unpublished Documents on the Language, the Customs, and the State of Mind in the Various Regions of France at the Beginning of the Revolution. Followed by the Report of Grégoire to the Convention] (Genf: Slatkine Reprints, 1969).

During the French Revolution, the idea of progress, already present in Enlightenment discourse and associated with the French language, intensified once again. French even more strongly than before connoted progress, not only temporally but also spatially, which in turn was directed both inward and outward. The “progressive,” French-speaking “center” was contrasted with the “backward” areas of the “peripheries” of the country, where dialects and regional languages were predominant. At the same time, the notion of a universalism mediated by the French language extended far beyond France: “The integrity of the French language, in sum, is at the very core of the concept of universalism,” state Tyler Stovall and Georges van den Abbeele.²⁴ Finally, what is striking about these early Francophonie discourses is their uniformizing character. Language diversity was to be repressed and standardized in the name of the “One and Indivisible Republic”—ironically, a pattern that francophone representatives would in turn hold up for English as the language of globalization at the end of the twentieth century.

This set of ideas, topoi, and attributions shaped in the Age of Enlightenment and revolution remained retrievable from then on: The French language now seemed inseparable from clarity and rationality and was simultaneously regarded as the language of enlightenment and revolution, freedom, equality, and human rights. Conversely, this ideological charge and utopian exaltation already contained a good part of the ambivalences, problems, and challenges that were to characterize the history of the French language and language policy in the subsequent period. Because they represented the universalist France of 1789 more than any other instrument, the ideological and utopian footing of French had the same central predetermined breaking point as the French universalism of revolutionary republican character as a whole. Both had an attractiveness and appeal that extended far beyond (their) own national borders. However, both were characterized as well by a special tension between formulated aspirations and practical implementation. Finally, both were imbued with a downright missionary zeal that hardly tolerated contradiction on the part of those to be “converted” and reacted to it not only with disappointment and offense but also with violence and coercion.

This is underlined even more clearly by another central concept of Francophonie: civilization. In terms of conceptual history, it can also be traced back primarily to the period of the late Enlightenment and the French Revolution, when it became “fully the

24 Tyler Stovall and Georges Van Den Abbeele, “Introduction,” in *French Civilization and its Discontents. Nationalism, Colonialism, Race*, ed. Tyler Stovall and Georges Van Den Abbeele (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2003), 1–16, at 9. See also Jeremy Jennings, “L’Universalisme,” in *Dictionnaire critique de la République*, eds. Vincent Duclert and Christophe Prochasson (Paris: Flammarion, 2002), 275–282; Naomi Schor, “The Crisis of French Universalism,” *Yale French Studies* 100 (2001): 43–64; Markus Messling, *Universalität nach dem Universalismus. Über frankophone Literaturen der Gegenwart* [Universality after Universalism: On Francophone Literatures of the Present] (Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, 2019).

epitome of long-term, irreversible, and unlimited cultural progress.”²⁵ Already in the early nineteenth century, according to Pierre Michel, “a positive, salvation-historical, and progress-philosophical understanding of the concept of civilization” prevailed.²⁶ To these temporal and ideological dimensions, however, a third, spatial one can be added. Following the two geographers Jon May and Nigel Thrift, civilization can also be described as a dynamic, ideologically highly charged “time-space concept.”²⁷ This raises the question of whether civilization was mostly conceived as a singular, that is, as a desirable benchmark, or whether the juxtaposition, coexistence, and opposition of several possible civilizations were conceived in the plural. A look at the colonial-historical practice of Francophonie can shed light on this and on the related question of the relevant spatial reference points.

Francophonie and Colonial Policy

One of the most frequently cited authorities on the policies of the second French colonial empire, whose expansion accelerated massively under republican auspices beginning in the 1880s, was Jules Ferry, the longtime French prime minister. In his often quoted parliamentary speech from July 28, 1885, a few months after his forced resignation, he justified republican colonial policy by arguing, among other things, that France could not settle for a role similar to that of smaller nations, such as Belgium or Switzerland. For the “grandeur of France,” the French language, among other things, played a significant role as a geopolitical factor of influence, since the Republican Party had shown that France “cannot only be a free country [but] that it must also be a great country, exerting on the destinies of Europe all the influence that is its due, spreading that influence over the whole world, bringing its language, its morals, its flag, its arms, its genius everywhere.”²⁸

25 Pierre Michel, “Barbarie, Civilisation, Vandalisme,” in *Handbuch politisch-sozialer Grundbegriffe in Frankreich 1680–1820*, eds. Rolf Reichardt and Eberhard Schmitt, Heft 8 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1988), 7–49, at 22.

26 Michel, “Barbarie, Civilisation, Vandalisme,” 45. See also Lucien Febvre, “Zur Entwicklung des Wortes und der Vorstellungen von ‘Civilisation’” [On the Development of the Word and the Ideas of “Civilization”], in *Das Gewissen des Historikers*, ed. and transl. Ulrich Raulff (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1988), 39–77; Georg Bollenbeck, “Art. Zivilisation” [Art: Civilization], *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 12 (Basel: Schwabe, 2004), column 1365–1379; Birgit Schäbler and Hans-Joachim König, “Zivilisierung” [Civilization], *Enzyklopädie der Neuzeit Online*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2352-0248_edn_a4904000.

27 Jon May and Nigel J. Thrift, *TimeSpace: Geographies of temporality* (New York: Routledge, 2003). Analogous to the concept of the “West,” see Riccardo Bavaj and Martina Steber, eds., *Germany and “The West”: The History of a Modern Concept* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015).

28 Original in Jules Ferry, “Discours du 28 juillet 1885” [Speech of July 28, 1885], *Discours et opinions de Jules Ferry, publiés avec commentaires et notes par Paul Robiquet, tome cinquième: Discours sur la politique*

If the previous section spoke of different conceptions of Francophonie, this paradigmatic quote reveals a number of functions attributed to French in the age of high imperialism. In Ferry's case, this was primarily language as a policy of influence, which included classical means of "conquest" and dominance—"its flag" and "its arms"—in addition to other elements of cultural diplomacy, such as "its morals" and "its genius." Francophonie and language policy were, in this sense, a form of soft power whose concrete manifestations were often accompanied by discipline and coercion.²⁹ This could be observed in the area of domestic policy, such as French language policy toward dialects and regional languages,³⁰ as well as in foreign policy, particularly in colonial policy.

Especially since the 1860s, the beginning of the "age of territoriality," language became an important component in the development, control, and penetration of territory as well as the organization of administration.³¹ Along with railroads and telegraphs, Francophonie can be understood as a form of "soft" infrastructure used by state interventionism. This ranged from the Frenchization of place names to school and education policy. Depending on which part of the empire it targeted, colonial language policy varied greatly in practice. Notwithstanding, it was a central pillar of the civilizing mission. With the help of the French language, a whole set of ideas and concepts were to be disseminated for the supposed benefit of the colonized, especially their elite, who, it was believed, would thereby find a connection to the "civilized" world. Accordingly, mastering French as flawlessly as possible was seen as a guarantor and indicator of "civilization." It was one of the instruments in which countries and populations were temporally located within the dichotomously conceived attribution systems of progressive versus backward, civilized versus wild or barbaric, and finally modern versus traditional. Just like the spatial juxtapositions of center and periphery mentioned above and closely linked to them, these are dynamic relational concepts with different contemporary connotations.

Central to the connection between language and colonial policy was the idea of the civilizing mission. The French variant of this colonial ideology of legitimation was

extérieure et coloniale (Paris: A. Colin & Cie., 1897), 172–220, at 220: "ne peut pas être seulement un pays libre, qu'elle doit aussi être un grand pays, exerçant sur les destinées de l'Europe toute l'influence qui lui appartient, qu'elle doit répandre cette influence sur le monde et porter partout où elle le peut sa langue, ses mœurs, son drapeau, ses armes, son génie."

29 Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

30 Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France 1870–1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976).

31 Charles S. Maier, "Consigning the Twentieth Century to History: Alternative Narratives for the Modern Era," *American Historical Review* 105, no. 3 (2000): 807–831; Charles S. Maier, *Once within Borders: Territories of Power, Wealth, and Belonging since 1500* (Cambridge: Belknap, 2016).

different from that of the other colonial empires.³² This had a direct impact on colonial language policy and the associated concepts of Francophonie, as well as an indirect impact on the main features of an early French globalization project. Especially until the turn of the century, the civilizing mission was characterized by the idea of assimilation.³³ It included the ideal-typical goal of “leading” the indigenous populations out of their supposed “backwardness” and “raising” them to the level of French civilization—even if only gradually and finally in a distant future. Around 1900, this maxim was gradually replaced by the idea of association. It was no longer based on a universal—and therefore French—scale but aimed to develop indigenous societies in their own cultural contexts. Depending on how it was read, the idea of association could be represented from different perspectives. In many cases, it rested on a biologically argued racial thought that had abandoned the idea of a history of human evolution, admittedly at different historical levels but still unified. At the same time, however, it was open to a romanticizing and exoticizing transfiguration of indigenous cultures, whose specific characteristics and traditions were to be preserved.

With regard to the spread of the French language in the colonial possessions, the shift from assimilation to association was open to different interpretations: for a long time, the former had been associated at least with the theoretical perspective of enabling a gradual rapprochement of indigenous populations to French civilization by means of the widespread dissemination of the French language. Conversely, this also meant a devaluation and repression of indigenous languages.³⁴ In view of the increasing expansion and diversity of the French colonial empire as well as the confrontation with a multitude of obstacles and hurdles in the concrete implementation on the ground, this doctrine of assimilation, which was characterized by universalistic connotations, also entered a crisis in terms of language policy at the turn of the century.

On the one hand, the new policy of association was connected with a stronger consideration of indigenous languages in the school curriculum, but, on the other hand, it was connected as well with the official renunciation of a large-scale diffusion of French as the language of the Enlightenment and human rights as well as the supposedly most outstanding access to civilization. The gradual opening to language pluralism and particularism thus implied a slow farewell to language universalism and the associated

32 Boris Barth and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., *Zivilisierungsmissionen. Imperiale Weltverbesserung seit dem 18. Jahrhundert* [Civilizing Missions: Imperial World Improvement since the Eighteenth Century] (Constance: UVK, 2005); Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895–1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

33 Raymond F. Betts, *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory, 1890–1914* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005).

34 Louis-Jean Calvet, *Linguistique et colonialisme. Petit traité de glottophagie* [Linguistics and Colonialism: A Short Treatise on Glottophagy] (Paris: Payot, 2002).

tendency toward uniformization. Nevertheless, the recourse to the idea of assimilation lasted longer in language issues than in other areas of colonial policy.³⁵

This also had an impact on the practice of Francophonie. Depending on the area, schooling, which was so central to the spread of the language, varied qualitatively and quantitatively. This variation resulted from the fact that because the organization of schools was largely the responsibility of the French authorities on the ground, the teachers involved, as well as quite frequently missionaries, had a certain influence on the concrete form schooling took, depending on the type of school.³⁶ Notwithstanding all the differences and, above all, contrary to the official discourse, France's educational policy in its empire remained, overall and a fortiori before 1918, of low intensity and fell short of the full-bodied announcements of French politicians' Sunday speeches. To give just one example, elementary schools in French West Africa had only 2,500 pupils at the end of the nineteenth century.³⁷ In sub-Saharan Africa in particular, the number of schools was exceedingly small, a situation that was not to change markedly there until after the Second World War.³⁸

Nevertheless, from an instrumental administrative perspective oriented toward the smoothest possible processes, at least a certain basic knowledge of French was considered helpful and even indispensable. Consequently, the curriculum was largely geared to imparting basic knowledge, which was mainly aimed at training workers and administrative staff for the lower or, at most, middle levels. Only a small indigenous elite benefited from higher education and French diplomas.³⁹ The vast majority of the population, on the contrary, was familiarized only with basic reading and writing skills.⁴⁰

35 János Riesz, "Assimilation oder Assoziation? Die französische Sprache im Widerstreit der Kolonial-Theorien um 1900" [Assimilation or Association? The French Language in Conflict with Colonial Theories around 1900], *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* 85 (1992): 33–52.

36 Patrick Cabanel, ed., *Une France en Méditerranée. Écoles, langue et culture françaises, XIXe–XXe siècles* [A France in the Mediterranean: French Schools, Language, and Culture, Nineteenth–Twentieth Century] (Grâne: Créaphis, 2006); Esther Möller, *Orte der Zivilisierungsmission. Französische Schulen im Libanon 1909–1943* [Places of Civilizing Mission: French Schools in Lebanon 1909–1943] (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013).

37 Robert Aldrich, *Greater France: A History of French Overseas Expansion* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 225.

38 On West Africa, see Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*, 73–86; Denise Bouche, *L'enseignement dans les territoires français de l'Afrique Occidentale de 1817 à 1920. Mission civilisatrice ou formation d'une élite?* [Education in the French Territories of West Africa from 1817 to 1920: Civilizing Mission or Training of an Elite?], 2 vols. (Lille: Service de reproduction des thèses, 1975). On Algeria, which was also a special case in terms of school policy, see Fanny Colonna, *Instituteurs algériens, 1883–1939* [Algerian Teachers, 1883–1939] (Paris: Presses de la FNSP, 1975).

39 Aldrich, *Greater France*, 224 et seq.

40 Dalila Morsly, *L'enseignement du français en colonies. Expériences inaugurales dans l'enseignement primaire* [Teaching French in the Colonies: Inaugural Experiments in Primary Education] (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010).

On the one hand, as in West Africa, considerations played a role here that, in view of the large number of indigenous dialects, French could take on the role of a *lingua franca*⁴¹—an idea that was to be taken up again, especially in the context of decolonization. On the other hand, it was a matter of certain minimum requirements that, from the perspective of the colonial administration, were oriented toward the needs of everyday colonial life. On a discursive level, however, protagonists of the colonial administration often continued to go beyond purely administrative motives in the context of exercising sovereignty and stabilizing rule. A primarily instrumental and purpose-oriented interpretation of Francophonie thus continued to be anchored in the ideological superstructure of the civilizing mission.

But what does colonial language policy tell us about Francophonie as an element of early attempts at globalization à la française? The fact that the idea of assimilation was increasingly displaced by the principle of association in the practice of French language policy in the colonies as well permits the idea of a coexistence of different cultures and languages in theory. The move away from assimilation also meant a slow departure from the idea of far-reaching language uniformity. For the vast majority of actors involved in language policy, however, it was by no means a matter of an equal coexistence of cultures and languages but continued to be a hierarchical superimposition, a level order of civilizations and their languages in the spirit of the civilizing mission, at the top of which French continued to stand as the “language of civilization” par excellence.

Although culture and civilization were now increasingly conceived in the plural, this by no means meant a renunciation of hierarchization: French, of course, continued to be the measure of all things and should remain so. Increasing headwinds, however, not only came from the ranks of the indigenous population in the colonies but also became more noticeable at the international level, where French, as the traditional language of diplomacy, faced increasingly fierce challenges, especially after the First World War.

Francophonie and International Politics

At least since the turn of the eighteenth century—commonly cited as a prelude with the Peace of Rastatt (1714), which ended the War of the Spanish Succession—French was considered the unchallenged language of diplomacy, even if its status had never been officially established, for example in the framework of an international convention: whether in Vienna in 1815, in Paris in 1856, in Berlin in 1878 and 1885, or in The Hague in 1899 and 1907—all the major international treaties of the long nineteenth century

41 Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*, 84.

had been negotiated in French.⁴² Accordingly, this primacy of the French language in international affairs was regarded by the French side as a kind of customary law. At the same time, it reflected the power-political position of the country in the international structure as well as its capacity to set and enforce norms. However, France's monopoly on language policy and its self-image as an international regulatory power were clearly shaken by the First World War at the latest. At the Paris Peace Conference, of all things, English was introduced as a negotiating language with equal rights, and the Treaty of Versailles, which was particularly important for France, was not drawn up exclusively in French but, equally legally binding, also in English.

The challenge of Francophonie by English had been foreshadowed even before the negotiations began.⁴³ In advance, the representatives of France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, and the United States met in the so-called Council of Ten to determine the preliminaries for the deliberations. These included the question of the negotiating/negotiation and treaty language. During the protracted preliminary discussions on this matter, two points in particular were noteworthy, and they clearly reflected the respective self-conceptions of the adversaries. France argued above all with history and tradition. In addition to classic topoi such as the supposed clarity and accuracy of French, its representatives cited historical prerogatives: "Even Bismarck," said the French minister of foreign affairs Stephen Pichon, "who was not a friend of France, had raised no objection to the use of French in the treaty of Berlin."⁴⁴ Conversely, the US president Woodrow Wilson, in particular, rubbed salt in the wound when he expressly recognized France's privilege but described it as historical and thus belonging to the past:

French has been the language of European diplomacy, but we have now reached the beginning of a new era, and enter upon world diplomacy. It is hardly decisive to follow European precedence which gives the French language this position. The language of the other side of the Globe is English, and this is a congress of the world.⁴⁵

42 Paul Fauchille, "Style et langue diplomatiques" [Diplomatic Style and Language], *Traité de droit international public*, vol. 1, part 3 (Paris: no publisher, 1926), 284–288.

43 Margaret MacMillan, *Peacemakers: The Paris Conference of 1919 and Its Attempt to End War* (London: John Murray, 2002), 62–64; Roxanne Panchasi, *Future Tense: The Culture of Anticipation in France between the Wars* (London: Cornell University Press, 2009), 139–143.

44 "Secretary's Notes of a Conversation Held in M. Pichon's Room at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, on Wednesday, January 15, 1919, at 14:30 O'clock," *Foreign Relations of the United States, The Paris Peace Conference 1919*, vol. 3 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1943), 557–565, at 561.

45 "Notes on the Conversations Held in the Office of M. Pichon at the Quai d'Orsay on January 15, 1919," *Foreign Relations*, 566–577, at 572.

Moreover, English stands for action on a global scale and not merely for a policy related to Europe:

Undoubtedly, French had been the language of European diplomacy in the past, but we were now dealing with a new case. This case did not affect only Europe: the rest of the world had come into the arena. A new Great Power was now concerned in the business of world diplomacy.⁴⁶

French, so the quintessence of Wilsonian argumentation, had moved out of the center of events, both temporally and spatially. It literally appeared as the language of the Old World. The fact that the language question was discussed with such verve underscores the fact that more was being negotiated than a protocolary triviality. The normative change of guard on an international level was up for debate. France, and with it Europe, was the actual audience the message of the self-confident American president was meant for. Although the country and continent may have shaped global political events in past centuries and set international norms and standards, since his country's decisive entry into the First World War, this era was over. A new age had begun in which a young world power, the United States, laid claim to international influence. For the French representatives, this process was all the more painful because Wilson competed with them for the main claim to represent the same values and used a similarly charged civilization rhetoric.

The defeat suffered at the Paris Peace Conference on the language issue was therefore anything but a marginal note for many in the French public. This is exemplified in an article by Julien Luchaire, a Romance scholar and education policy expert, who recalled, in the usual way, the universal potential and great importance of French, especially in a time of increasing international and global interdependencies:

I am afraid that this is a very serious matter, and I would like to have ceded a few square kilometers of the colonies so that it does not come to this. In this new period of history, when the ever-tightening web of international relations and obligations extends over the whole world, what source of prestige and strength can it be for a people to be the sworn translator of the universal constitution, the official interpreter of all peoples, the intellectual mediator of mankind?⁴⁷

46 "Secretary's Notes of a Conversation Held in M. Pichon's Room at the Quai d'Orsay," 557.

47 Original in Julien Luchaire, "Resterons-nous la Première Puissance Intellectuelle?" [Will We Remain the First Intellectual Power?], *Bulletin de la Mission Laïque Française* 16, no. 1 (1919): 14–16, at 15: "Je crains que ce ne soit une très grave affaire, et j'aurais bien cédé, pour qu'elle ne tournât pas ainsi, quelques kilomètres carrés de colonie. Dans cette nouvelle période de l'histoire où s'étend sur le monde entier le réseau, de plus en plus serré de relations et des obligations internationales, quelle source de prestige et de force pour un peuple, d'être le traducteur-juré de la constitution universelle, l'interprète officiel de tous les peuples, l'intermédiaire intellectuel de l'humanité?"

France continued to stake its claim to set international standards and norms owing to the charisma and binding nature of its language. “Removing the universal diplomatic language would be like removing the universal metric system,” commented the journalist Georges Beaume.⁴⁸

Despite or precisely because of the disappointing experiences at the Paris Peace Conference, French representatives continued to insist on the traditional position of French as the language of diplomacy. In particular, the League of Nations, which met for the first time in 1920, was henceforth understood as an arena in which the traditional privilege of the French language was to be defended. This was especially the case since, after the nonratification of the League of Nations Act by the US senate, the United States, the actor who had been largely responsible for humiliating France on the language issue in Paris in 1919, was absent there. Although French was only one of two working languages within the League of Nations, along with English, the majority of Geneva actors used the traditional language of diplomacy.⁴⁹ The fact that the field of intellectual cooperation within the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (ICIC) was particularly relevant to francophone language policy again highlights the extent to which this field was built up into a French retreat. In addition to the Geneva-based ICIC, the International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation (IIIC) was founded in Paris in 1926, largely financed by France. Conceived as an executive body, it was the actual decision-making center and can be considered the real predecessor institution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)—which was founded after the Second World War, was also headquartered in the French capital, and was to play an important role in the history of Francophonie, especially in the second postwar period.⁵⁰ The new focus was reflected as well in a reorientation of French cultural diplomacy since the end of the First World War, which saw a concentration on a classical understanding of culture and education that was strongly focused on foreign elites.⁵¹

Even more decisive for the development of Francophonie, however, was the Second World War. At the beginning of 1945, the French intellectual André Siegfried emphasized its language aspects. He emphasized the continuing prominent role of French over other

48 Original in Georges Beaume, “Le prestige du français” [The Prestige of French], *Le Rappel*, June 17, 1920, 3: “Supprimer la langue diplomatique universelle, ce serait comme si on supprimait le système métrique universel.”

49 Panchasi, *Future Tense*, 143 et seq.

50 Jean-Jacques Renoliet, *L’Unesco oubliée. La Société des nations et la coopération intellectuelle (1919–1946)* [The Forgotten UNESCO: The League of Nations and Intellectual Cooperation (1919–1946)] (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1999); Chloé Maurel, *Histoire de l’UNESCO. Les trente premières années, 1945–1974* [History of UNESCO: The First Thirty Years, 1945–1974] (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2010).

51 Albert Salon, *L’action culturelle de la France dans le monde* [France’s Cultural Action in the World] (Paris: Fernand Nathan, 1983); see also Chaubet, *La politique culturelle*.

languages and described it as his country's core contribution to civilization. From this he derived its continuing international claim:

Is it reasonable to hope that tomorrow, with victors named Churchill, Roosevelt, or Stalin, French will be the language of international diplomacy? [...] However, we should not overdo it with pessimism. The French language remains in the world the language of clear thinking, the language of educated elites, the language par excellence of human thought. [...] I sincerely believe that if we place the discussion on this ground, we have nothing to fear, neither from the masses, nor from the machine, nor from Ford's chain, because the mind has its measure, which is its own. By putting itself at the service of the French language, the French Alliance is at the center of the question that arises for the future of the influence of our country in the world. It works beneficially not only for our fatherland but also for Western civilization, of which we are and remain an indispensable part.⁵²

But Siegfried's optimism lacked real foundations, for both in the London exile and during the preparatory consultations for the founding of the United Nations in the USA, it had become clear that English had gained the upper hand over French. Already there, a language-political strategy was emerging that was to shape Francophonie in the following decades: under the banner of language diversity, so the calculation went, French could in the future become the projection screen of all those who feared Anglo-American dominance, not only in terms of language.

This method achieved its first major success with the founding of the United Nations. After the provisional government of France had been recognized by the Allies and had also signed the Declaration of the United Nations on January 1, 1945, it participated on an equal footing in the San Francisco Constituent Conference, which took place from April to June 1945. Five official languages had been selected for this purpose: English and French as well as Chinese, Russian, and Spanish. However, only English was to be the working language of the conference. The French minister of foreign affairs Georges Bidault, in his speech to the opening assembly on April 26, pointed out this glaring deficiency from the French point of view and demanded the traditional rights of French

52 Original in André Siegfried, "La langue française dans le monde" [French Language in the World], *Revue de l'Alliance Française, nouvelle série* 3 (1945): 5–7, at 6 et seq: "Est-il raisonnable d'espérer que demain, avec des vainqueurs qui s'appellent Churchill, Roosevelt ou Staline, le français sera la langue de la diplomatie internationale? [...] N'exagérons pas cependant le pessimisme. La langue française demeure dans le monde celle de la pensée claire, celle des élites cultivées, la langue par excellence des pensées humaines [...] Je crois sincèrement que, si nous plaçons la discussion sur ce terrain, nous n'avons rien à craindre, ni de la masse, ni de la machine, ni de la chaîne de Ford, car l'esprit a ses mesures, qui lui sont propres. En se mettant au service de la langue française, l'Alliance Française est au cœur même de la question qui se pose pour l'avenir de l'influence de notre pays dans le monde. Elle travaille utilement, non seulement pour notre patrie, mais pour la civilisation occidentale, dont nous sommes et restons un indispensable élément."

as the language of diplomacy. With the support of Canada, the Soviet Union, and some Latin American countries, it was indeed possible to place French alongside English as the working language of all organizations of the United Nations, with the exception of the International Court of Justice.⁵³ It was similar in the case of UNESCO. At the founding conference of UNESCO in London in November 1945, the French delegation, led by Léon Blum, achieved not only that the French capital became the seat of the future organization but also that French became its working language together with English.⁵⁴ The same was achieved for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and subsequently for a large number of other postwar international organizations.

Although, from the point of view of French representatives, these were undisputed successes, pessimistic forecasts for the future remained the order of the day, especially since, beyond the official language policy regulations, English was becoming increasingly prevalent in the everyday practice of international organizations. In the mid-1950s, for example, Michel Debré complained about this and, as a senator, made several official inquiries to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in this matter. In a contribution from February 1955, he painted the future of French in the gloomiest colors and linked this to geopolitical aspects:

We live in a world where the English, Russian, and Chinese languages, which dominate considerable spaces, tend to replace the French language and reduce its importance. I believe I can say that it is good not only for us but also for France to defend, in the face of these languages of vast empires, a language that has traditionally been the language of diplomacy of the world of freedom.⁵⁵

This intervention is particularly interesting insofar as it comes from someone who was to become a protagonist of a new phase in French language policy. This phase began at the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s and coincided, not by chance, with

53 Pierre Gerbet, “Naissance des Nations Unies” [Genesis of the United Nations], *Espoir. Revue de la Fondation Charles de Gaulle* 102 (1995), without pagination; Pierre Gerbet, ed., *Le rêve d'un ordre mondial de la SDN à l'ONU* [The Dream of a World Order from the League of Nations to the United Nations] (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1996), 144.

54 Gerbet, “Naissance.”

55 Original in Michel Debré, quoted in “Protokollausschnitt des Journal Officiel, Sitzung des Conseil de la République am 1. Februar 1955” [Minutes from the *Journal Officiel*, Meeting of the Conseil de la République on February 1, 1955] (handed down in Ministère des Affaires étrangères: Nations Unies – Organisations Internationales, 1944–1959, Côte: 372QO, no. 615): “Nous allons dans un monde où la langue anglaise, la langue russe et la langue chinoise, dominant des espaces considérables, tendent à se substituer à la langue française et à diminuer la place qui est la sienne. Je crois pouvoir dire que ce n'est pas seulement pour nous ni pour la France qu'il est bon de défendre, face à ces langues d'empires immenses, une langue qui fût, traditionnellement, celle de la diplomatie du monde de la liberté.”

the beginning of the Fifth Republic.⁵⁶ Debré became its first prime minister, and as a longtime companion of Charles de Gaulle, he contributed to the reorientation of the francophone project, which from then on moved primarily along the lines described above of an international institutionalization of Francophonie.

This French language policy, which was relaunched in the last third of the twentieth century, and the now formal establishment of the policy field of Francophonie followed a series of insights that the responsible actors had long since come to share. After the Second World War, the global map had finally shifted to new, non-European actors and power centers, to which France belonged less and less. Especially since decolonization, which had already begun in the interwar period and since the 1960s exerted its actual world-historical impact, France found itself being sidelined. Francophonie as a political project had to be adapted to these changing conditions and placed on a different fundament. This applied to France as a postcolonial nation-state, which had to reinvent itself vis-à-vis the countries in its former colonial empire that had become independent, as well as vis-à-vis international politics.

In this context, the French sponsors of the previous francophone project recognized that a polycentric perspective on the French language also had an inherent opportunity: the postulate of diversity increasingly took the place of uniformization and simple ideas of diffusion—which had faced manifold resistance and friction in practice from the very beginning. Cultural diversity was conceived under the umbrella of the French language, and France was designed as *primus inter pares* of all those who did not want to accept an Anglophonie, perceived as one-dimensional, whereby Anglophonie now became above all a synonym for the international supremacy of the USA as well as Americanism and globalization in economic and cultural matters. Especially in relation to the former colonies, which were now independent nation-states, this post-decolonization reinterpretation—from former colonizer to advocate of the weak—contained its own ambivalences and contradictions.

The fact that Francophonie did not renounce its universal postulate even within this new horizon of argumentation of cultural diversity but sought to combine both ways of thinking is underlined, in conclusion, by the contribution of the French president Jacques Chirac to the abovementioned Cotonou Summit of Francophonie in 1995. He began by describing French as a common heritage that extends beyond a single country, promises to overcome borders and manifold divisions, and in no way threatens national or local languages.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, he tied in with the notion of the genius

56 Bernard Cerquiglini, “La politique linguistique” [Linguistic Politics], in *Histoire de la langue française: 1945–2000*, vol. 2, ed. Gérard Antoine and Bernard Cerquiglini (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2000), 597–606.

57 “Discours de M. Jacques Chirac, Président de la République, sur le rôle de la francophonie pour combattre l’uniformité linguistique et culturelle et promouvoir la solidarité et sur les priorités de l’action francophone en matière d’enseignement, de communication et d’aide au développement, Cotonou le 2 décembre 1995” [Speech by Jacques Chirac, President of the French Republic, on the Role of the French-

of the language, established in the early modern period, and the universal potential of French, which he saw as a suitable means of countering the cultural and language uniformity threatened by the dominance of English:

To assert oneself as a francophone is to fight against a major risk for humanity: language and therefore cultural uniformity. I am not one of those who denigrate the English language, whose preponderance is a fact of modern history. However, there is a danger of a loss of influence of other vehicular languages and of a complete eradication of vernacular languages. [...] To defend the influence of the French language is in fact to defend the right to think, to exchange, to be moved, and to pray in a different way. It is to defend the openness to others and thus tolerance.⁵⁸

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Speaking World in Combating Linguistic and Cultural Uniformity and Promoting Solidarity, and on the Priorities of French-Speaking Action in Education, Communication and Development Aid, Cotonou, December 2, 1995], <https://www.vie-publique.fr/discours/178444-discours-de-m-jacques-chirac-president-de-la-republique-sur-le-role-d-> “Ce tr  sor appartient    tous. Il ne saurait   tre per  u comme la langue d’un pays. L’usage du fran  ais est avant tout l’affirmation d’une identit   qui transcende les fronti  res des peuples et des ethnies, les clivages politiques, culturels ou religieux. L’usage du fran  ais ne veut et ne doit en aucune fa  on menacer la vitalit   des langues nationales ou locales, essentielles    la sauvegarde et    l’  panouissement de chaque culture.”

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French Banks and the Financial French Globalization Project (1815 until Today)

Marketplaces have always yearned to exert a key position within the international flows of capital, credit, foreign currency exchanges (FOREX), and patrimonial assets management as well as to become a “capital of capital.” To this end, marketplaces have taken on two functions: first, sustaining the internationalization of companies for the sake of “economic patriotism” and their competitiveness and, second, developing a diversified, robust, and attractive platform of financial and banking services, encompassing thousands of bankers and financiers. Following the rhythms of the opening of economies—despite waves of economic nationalism and protectionism—in Europe and then overseas, together with foreign investments and their insertion into FOREX, the Paris marketplace—acting as a basis for this financial French globalization project led by banks—has ever struggled to resist the hegemony of the city and the competition from Brussels, Berlin, Frankfurt, Switzerland (mainly Geneva, Bâle, and Zurich), or elsewhere.

Parisian bankers, guiding this financial French globalization project, intended to answer the needs of their customers among enterprises, investors, and even the state, providing assistance when they required international supports to fuel their budgets and treasuries, assets management, or foreign borrowings. Each stage of the three successive industrial revolutions (1800s–1880s, 1880s–1970s, and since the 1980s), as well as of business growth or of colonization, could rely on these immaterial but efficient propping-up services—particularly when networks could foster flows of data, mainly thanks to “correspondent banking,” and thus reduce the asymmetry of information and the solvency risks. Accordingly, against the backdrop of establishing and growing markets, French banks have undertaken (re)active banking strategies to set up and defend the Paris marketplace’s financial bridgeheads around the world.

Internationalized Merchant Banks (1810s–1850s)

Honoré de Balzac’s novel *La Maison Nucingen* (1837) was a pioneer to enhance the vitality of *Haute Banque* (merchant bank) houses, as banker Nucingen embodied a mix of Rothschild and a few other merchant bankers. Paris had welcomed Europeanized bankers since the mid-eighteenth century, mainly Swiss merchant bankers, who introduced, updated, broadened, and then developed the skills of financing wholesale trade

all over Europe. They were involved in commercial exchanges of textile materials and clothes, for instance in silk, wool, or cotton, as well as wines. Maurice Lévy-Leboyer's thesis concentrated on the Europeanized activities of several French bankers, beginning as early as the 1820s–1840s: numerous merchant bankers that settled in Paris had immigrated from several countries, for instance Rothschild (1817) and Stern (1835) from Frankfurt; and Isaac Mallet (1723), Jean-François Bartholony (1814), Hentsch (1854), Marcuard (1833), and Frédéric Pillet-Will (1809), followed by Delessert (1777), Perregaux (1781), and Hottinguer (1796), all from Switzerland. Louis-Henri Mirabaud, for instance, transferred his family house from Milan to Paris in 1846 and married the daughter of Paccard, who had opened in Paris a branch of its Genève bank in 1828, which paved the way for Mirabaud-Paccard house.

Merchants and bankers followed a similar process of skill development in their quest to Europeanize: numerous junior bankers attended training held by foreign trading or banking societies, mainly in Germany, Switzerland, and Great Britain. Family contacts facilitated these “scholarly” relationships, with this method of knowledge dissemination being frequently employed in the establishment of sister banking houses, for instance by the Rothschild and Mirabaud families. The trainees spent a few months or even a few years traveling and working at sister banks, or more typically at correspondent banks. These stints provided them with key knowledge in the areas of foreign exchange, exchange bills trading, and gold and silver transfers. They also acquired valuable information about the specificities of each marketplace and the art of assessing international creditworthiness, allowing them to manage reputation risk on a European level as the durability of banks relied mainly on trust as they were at that time not subject to any specific regulation about the consolidation of their balance sheet.

Later, these merchant bankers played a crucial role in Europeanized business. French merchant bankers were particularly involved to a great extent and over a long period of time in Europeanized activities. They were not just legacies of the first contemporary banking revolution (1750s–1850s), as they asserted themselves as key players in financial services as early as the second half of the nineteenth century, when the second contemporary banking revolution (until the 1950s–1960s) was just beginning. Relationships between numerous foreign merchant banks were often made easier due to a linguistic knowledge of German and English or due to the fact that French was commonly used in European business. The areas that became most important within merchant banks were the foreign exchange department; the management of foreign bills to be remitted, discounted, and cashiered; the balance of gold and silver exchanges; and trade finance for colonial commodities.

Each big banking house invested in a dedicated team of experts in charge of these activities: they acted as enclaves of Europeanized habits, knowledge, and relationships within Parisian merchant banking. They were associated with European infrastructure projects, like the building and servicing of railways, canals, harbors, and even mining, where they invested either money or their knowledge and relationship capital to bring

together institutional investors to join the equity and bonds issues. Clues to the breadth and depth of such involvement are now coming to light owing to the mass of correspondence kept in historical archives, which reveals how many working hours were dedicated to Europeanized business by associates and family businessmen.

Constant correspondence was necessary for bankers to maintain an overview of the daily progress of each project, the results of exploration and investigation, the start of construction, and so forth. This was typical in, for example, railway development, in which British bankers as well as metal firms and investors established strong bridgeheads in French railway companies, for instance in the building of the Paris-Rouen line. The group was led by Edward Blount—a British banker active in Paris, where he had founded his own merchant bank, who proved very influential. French bankers and their London counterparts met on numerous occasions to discuss business and to share their perspectives, methods, and knowledge.

In order to either collect investment capital or manage money flows, the London marketplace welcomed a daily relationship with Paris and, among French bank managers, a “British culture” began to take shape. It was reinforced by French bank managers’ involvement in commonplace business activities, for example to sustain wine and spirits exports to Great Britain or cloth exports. Ultimately, this led some Lyon bankers to broaden their scope of partners from Swiss and future Italian partners to British partners—the establishment of a branch of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank (HSBC) in Lyon in 1881 being a symbol of such connections. Another example of the regular contact maintained with the city was seen during the 1870–71 war, when some French bankers crossed the Channel to manage from London their European activities and, in some cases, business in those areas of France unaffected by war; the creation of a London branch of Société Générale in 1871 was a direct result of this tactic. Some bankers also managed their business from locations in Switzerland.

Europeanized French merchant bankers still differentiated themselves from their British counterparts: they were less familiar with the business of acceptance and were far less involved in North and South America, the Baltics, Scandinavia, and northern Germany—and instead were more dedicated to the Rhine and southern European areas. They pursued a truly “cosmopolitan” way of life, thanks to familial connections and intimate relationships with sister companies or family banks active all over Europe; to a European mindset, to the management of exchange bills; to frequent travels through European markets; to links among religious or ethnic communities; and yet also to the engagement with more informal Europeanized marketplaces. The move of upwardly mobile members of the diaspora also favored this European integration.

Internationalization (1860s–1914)

These merchant bank family houses preserved their European influence because, first, they pursued their own development (Rothschild, Perier, Mirabaud, etc.), except when some of them collapsed, and, second, they were committed to the creation of joint-stock banks in the wake of the second contemporary banking revolution. They were often stakeholders in the Comptoir national d'escompte de Paris (1848, with Pinard, Fould, etc.), then Crédit Lyonnais (notably with Hentsch in 1863), Société Générale (with Blount and Koenigswarter in 1864, with Blount as president in 1886–1902) or Paribas (with Bischoffsheim in 1872), before the Banque de l'union parisienne (with Mirabaud in 1904). Diasporic connections continually spurred bankers to become involved in the Paris marketplace, from other parts of Europe (like Hungarian Arthur Spitzer) as well as the Ottoman Empire (Camondo in Paris since 1869), favoring open-minded management of big banks and their European connections.

A community formed around the banking and financial marketplace and the actors involved: a spirit of “coopetition” enticed merchant bank houses and big banks to compete against their European rivals on several business and foreign fields. With branches in London, Brussels, or Anvers, FOREX flows grew. Correspondent banking helped the circulation of commercial bills on a world scale and their discounting on several European marketplaces, for instance for the commercial paper issued about Chinese or South or North American affairs. Available financial flows from treasuries were sent all over Europe, even to Germany or Austria, while Russia sent it to Paris. Société Générale worked in the city with the merchant bank Schröder and financier Ernest Cassel because its branch evolved as an independent mini-house, with its French managers acting as a mini-diaspora. But several Swiss managers had been welcomed at the Paris headquarters of Crédit Lyonnais and Paribas (Édouard Noetzelin and Albert Turrettini, chief executive officers from 1908 to 1918), with even Austrian Émile Ullman at the Comptoir national d'escompte de Paris (CNEP) as its head of the foreign division in 1882 and then its high manager and vice-president from 1908 to 1915, while at Crédit Lyonnais British James Rosselli headed the London branch from 1889 to 1895 and then supervised internal business affairs and was the *administrateur délégué* (managing director) number two from 1895 to 1929.

European syndicates organized and guaranteed international loans in favor of foreign states (Latin American countries, Greece, the Ottoman Empire, Japan, and, last, China) and in favor of companies, notably the Compagnie du canal de Suez and the Compagnie du canal de Panama, and several railway firms. The Paris marketplace also committed itself to promoting industrialization in Central Europe and in Russia. French investment and commercial banks set up syndicates helpful to French firms—both building an array of internationalized investors, supported by French bourgeois savers and private banking houses—and asset management teams. French savings thus became part of the financial French globalization project.

Russia was a main target from 1880 to the 1890s for merchant bankers (Rothschild, then Hoskier, Spitzer, and Gunzbourg) and big banks, which supported railways, coal mining, steel production, textile industries, etc. They organized the flotation on the Paris Stock Exchange of numerous Russian companies, like the Banque de commerce de Russie in 1912 (by the Banque française pour le commerce et l'industrie and Société Générale). In 1901, Société Générale even founded a subsidiary, the Banque du Nord, transformed into the Banque russo-asiatique in 1910, which became the first Russian bank through its assets and deposits, with Crédit Lyonnais using its important branches there. In parallel, four “colonial loans” (1892, 1902, 1907, and 1912) were issued to supply 400 million francs to finance transport infrastructures in the French Empire.

International commercial banking through locations abroad had taken shape: in Russia, in the Far East (the Banque russo-asiatique and the Banque de l'Indochine, active in the French colonies since 1875 and then on several Chinese marketplaces since the mid-1890s), in Egypt, and on the edge of the Aegean Sea (the Banque de Salonique, the Banque impériale ottomane, and the Banque d'Athènes). The Banque de l'Indochine thus financed internal operations in the Asian world, between Indochina and China, from marketplace to marketplace according to the flows of cabotage and local exchanges. Business was settled between banking entities located in the northern Mediterranean, Eastern Europe, and Egypt. Commodities trade was also financed directly by the CNEP agencies in Australia or the US (San Francisco since 1871 and Chicago in 1893, the latter of which closed in favor of New York in 1903).

When the First World War broke out, the Paris banking market was the second banking and finance hub of the world, even if German and French banks had been strong competitors in Russia, in Southeast Asia, in the Balkans, and somehow in South America, where the latter were far less influential apart from some utilities business and financing. “Cosmopolitanism,” for foreign merchant bankers or managers and moreover “open-minded” banks, defined this stage of economic globalization and the French globalization project.

Struggling between Geopolitical Issues and Geoeconomic Banking (1914–1940)

During the First World War, bank branches in London became a crucial tool to guide currency flows toward France or to manage exchange accounts there to finance French imports. Banks helped the Schneider metallurgic, mechanics, and armament group to undertake a big borrowing operation in the United States. A first credit, organized by Schneider and Bonbright, was led in New York by Bankers Trust and in Paris by the Banque de l'union parisienne (BUP): 15 million US dollars were raised. A syndicate brought together several French banks, thus supporting that operation—Rothschild, Crédit Lyonnais, the CNEP, Paribas, the BUP, providing 2.25 million US dollars—fol-

lowed by *Crédit industriel et commercial* (CIC) (1.25 million US dollars) and merchant banks. They made use of their skills for the issuing of French state medium-term credits in neutral states, in Switzerland and in Sweden, which in turn intensified connections between bankers, the state, the *Banque de France*, and industrialists.

The First World War destroyed several international positions. French banks lost their strong interests in Russia, and their influence in the former Ottoman Empire declined bit by bit during the 1920s. For instance, the *Banque impériale ottomane* lost its central bank function and most of its industrial banking activities, becoming a deposit and retail bank, were largely challenged by local institutions, coming to depend upon *Paribas*. As correspondent banking itself was drastically curtailed, large cash flow activities with Russia or Istanbul and with several institutions overseas or in Germany had to be cut off for a while. FOREX activities altogether were disrupted by the crisis of the gold standard and the depreciation of the French franc—a situation that gained momentum through the management of unstable currencies. FOREX departments helped well-off customers and companies to exchange francs against currencies, particularly through the crisis in 1922–23 and in 1925–26.

French big banks had to reconsider their portfolio of international assets. The key debate focused on the ability of Paris to regain competitiveness vis-à-vis London and emerging New York and German aspirations to reestablish its bridgeheads all over Central Europe. But priority was given by the state to the rebuilding of destroyed areas in France: exports of capital was thus forbidden from 1918 to 1928, except with specific authorization to help firms to handle limited investments in foreign countries—leading to a Paris marketplace devoted to public finance, pending German repairs.

To overcome the weakness of the Paris banking market owing to its lack of currencies, a foreign banks' syndicate in 1922 provided currencies to France (about 3.338 million gold francs). The “Morgan loan” in March 1924 supplied the state with a credit line of 100 million US dollars, with *Lazard London* supporting the *Banque de France* with a loan of 4 million US dollars. The latter was repaid at its maturity of three months; the former renewed twice up until December 1924 and then transformed into a long-term loan (25 years) floated in New York by JP Morgan.

Banks proved their usefulness conversely when they accompanied the state's struggle to rebuild the franc. On the one side, *Lazard*—connecting its three entities in Paris, London, and New York—managed to handle FOREX for the French state, as it was in charge of managing a first block of 10 million US dollars from the Morgan loan to be gradually converted into francs in 1925. Afterward, *Lazard* succeeded, starting in June 1925, in selling a reserve of 950,000 British pounds kept at the *Banque de France*. Lastly, *Lazard* enlarged its mission under an agreement with the leftist government in May–June 1926; it sold the currencies provided by the Morgan loan, transferred the francs to the state treasury, and was thus able to pay back an important part of its short-term debt. On the other side, banks provided credits to industrialists called upon to buy currencies on foreign markets for the sake of patriotism, and the *Banque*

de France rediscounted banks for a part of the amount. That latter was equipped with a brand-new foreign exchange department, built up by a specialist who had been a manager at *Crédit Lyonnais*. In November 1926, the *Banque de France* was officially entitled to substitute itself to the state treasury to buy currencies abroad and manage foreign exchange. New skills were developed too on foreign exchange markets, and the *Banque de France* or commercial banks increased their influence there. Later, banks were involved in the negotiations of the Young Plan in 1930 to reorganize the German war debt, with André Meyer at *Lazard* as a major stakeholder.

Banks resumed their strategy of spreading their skills abroad. Big commercial banks refrained from launching new foreign offensives and concentrated their efforts on a very few markets and on the city. Activities in South America focused on commodities trade, leaving aside railway financing and dismantling the *Banque française du Brésil* in 1921. French investment banks (*Mirabaud*, the *BUP*, and *Paribas*, joined exceptionally by the deposit bank *CIC* for some projects in Poland) built networks of business relationships in area of former Austria-Hungary. *Paribas* used a half-bank/half-holding company, the *Banque des pays de l'Europe centrale*, to gain influence in Romania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia. The *BUP* intensified its prewar links with the *Banque commerciale de Roumanie* and the *Banque d'Athènes*. *Schneider's* financial holding company, the *Union européenne industrielle & financière*, conducted business, by itself or in alliance with *Société Générale de Belgique*, with some banks in Hungary or Croatia. Most activities were developed in foreign exchange, in financing commodities and raw materials imports from this area or equipment exports toward it, and in refinancing friendly banks through correspondent banking. This provided the Paris banking market with fresh flows of cash and fees, with banks accompanying French business there, like the *Schneider* group (metallurgic and electrotechnical specialties) and its *Union européenne industrielle & financière* and the *Banque des pays du Nord*, predecessors of the *Banque de l'Union européenne* (*BUE*).

French banks conducted their classical activities in the French colonial empire and in neighboring countries. The *CNEP* maintained and developed its branches in Tunisia, Egypt (Alexandria, Cairo, and Port-Saïd, with 110 employees in 1921, dedicated to cotton exports), Madagascar, India (Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras, from 1860 to 1862), and Australia (since 1880, for wool exports)—with connections to London or Paris—as an “imperial bank” all along the “Indian road” to accompany French wholesalers throughout their purchasing strategies. It remained the correspondent of several colonial banks in the Antilles or Africa through the *Banque de l'Afrique occidentale*. *Crédit Lyonnais* and *Société Générale*, accompanied by less important banks (*Société marseillaise de crédit*; *CIC* in Morocco; the *Compagnie algérienne*; and *Crédit foncier d'Algérie & de Tunisie*) that launched branch networks in North Africa, as this area promised broad activities in financing trans-Mediterranean trade, savings collecting, and exports financing toward northwestern Europe or even the United States (importing most of the Moroccan phosphates).

The investment bank Paribas went on to extend its business relationship networks in Morocco (the Banque d'État du Maroc and the Compagnie générale du Maroc) before establishing a bridgehead in Madagascar as it won the concession of the issuing bank there, the Banque de Madagascar, in 1925. The Banque de l'Indochine represented the whole French banking community in Asia—in addition to activities by French Indochinese entities. It then reinforced its network and staff in China through its main headquarters in Shanghai and along the southeastern Asian coasts (Siam, Singapore, the Straits, etc.), which preferred ample clearing operations.

Economic patriotism exerted its influence when a bank specialized in the financing of foreign trade was established in 1920—the Banque nationale française du commerce extérieur (BFCE)—with capital that led to the federation of several banks, followed in 1927 by a credit insurance company. The Banque de France itself favored the emergence of Paris as a clearance market for acceptances and undertook in 1928 to accept bills remitted by central banks or the Bank for International Settlements. The foundation of the Banque française d'acceptations in December 1929 by the community of the Paris banking market, which could sign bills emitted for the sake of exports credits abroad and thus allow partial refinancing by the Banque de France, gave a push to that policy.

The Paris banking market showed its (ephemeral) vigor through its participation in the rescue of foreign counterparts, such as Kreditanstalt in 1931 by lending cash to the Austria National Bank through a collective credit handled by the Bank for International Settlements. The Banque de France took part in several credits set up in 1931–32 to salvage central banks in Eastern and Central Europe—in Hungary, Germany, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. The Banque de France and French banks were involved in the agreements reached with the Bank of England for a short-term credit to the latter to help it to buy pounds and the same with Belgium. A majority of these activities from 1928 to 1934 were syndicated with the investment bank Paribas as a lead manager, sometimes the influence of the BUP, and deposit banks provided their brokerage edge to implement the purchase of state treasury bills or the floating of bonds. Overall, the Paris banking and finance market broadened as it collected more fees and interest returns and directed cash flows.

Internationalized French Banking for the Sake of Economic Patriotism (1945–1970s)

Supporting French business and the state predominated internationalization strategies in the 1940s–1950s as the country was more preoccupied with financing its necessary imports than launching new international activities. This explains the attempt to gather foreign currencies (US dollars first) to finance raw resources imports and trade deficits. As elsewhere in Europe, French internationalization concerns were increasingly

developed in the 1960s–1970s, which paved the way for internationalized banking practices.

The French banking system was preoccupied with the fate of the overseas colonial empire and then, after the waves of independence, with overseas privileged countries, generally included within the franc zone, an area where the French franc was used up to independence or, in sub-Saharan Africa, with a special franc linked to the French franc—even if the loss of Indochina compelled the Banque de l'Indochine to focus on the Paris marketplace as an investment bank. Banks were thus making efforts to accompany French trade together with more and more industrial firms concerned with Africa's development, as, since 1945, huge state investment programs seemed to open vast outlets to investors, for instance to finance trade moves linked with immense public works programs.

Internationalization was the mission of the BFCE, set up in 1946 to “ease financing of export or import operations.” France equipped itself with such a tool following a trend common in the United States (EximBank) or West Germany. It was the sole institution entitled to receive the official guarantee from the Compagnie française d'assurance pour le commerce extérieur (COFACE), the official credit insurance for export, launched by the state in 1946. Its range of banking products was extended to provide any service needed for trade flows abroad. The BFCE became a crucial tool for import trade: it provided numerous surety contracts to importers, especially in favor of customs administration, then more and more (since the 1960s) in favor of companies submitting their candidacy to foreign importers' tender offers for imports or large engineering projects. Sureties and documentary credits were thus intensively used to sustain the Marshall Plan imports from 1948 to 1952. The BFCE was deeply involved in imports financing, especially for raw materials. Since 1948, its basic task was to offer endorsements for banks credits, supporting short-term credits linked with bills regarding firms' foreign customers or credits formulated as exports prefinancing operations.

Endorsements were increasingly extended to the financing of large equipment projects, as French engineering, metal, and mechanic firms were reinserted within international projects. A turning point was in 1965 with the creation of loans for buyers abroad, granted by banks to foreign buyers of French products in their own country, made possible through correspondent banking, and in their own national currency or in international currencies. Such loans were intended for long-term contracts regarding equipment goods (like complete factories or transport equipment) exported to developing countries. They were set up by commercial banks and the BFCE in favor of foreign importers, which was able to pay cash to French exporters without usual loan and treasury risks. Between 1971 and 1985, the BFCE became the sole distributor of such government-subsidized loans granted for export credits in order to alleviate interest rates.

Classical investment and commercial banks gained international footholds and Paris departments. CNEP's strongholds abroad accompanied French wholesalers throughout their purchasing strategies: in Australia (wool); in Egypt (cotton); India (cotton, groundnuts); and in the United States (cotton purchases and various transatlantic trade flows), through its subsidiary, the French American Banking Company, founded in 1920. Société Générale's branch in Buenos Aires became an active tool to finance raw material imports from Argentina (wool) or to promote French exports there, thanks to important documentary credits. Société Générale's branch in New York undertook multiple activities: as early as the 1950s, it helped to finance (public works and equipment sales) contracts won by French firms in Latin America; it financed France's African territories' coffee sales in the US. But its importance grew as it increasingly financed exports from France itself to the US. Connections between both Lazard in Paris (with Pierre David-Weill) and New York (headed by the expatriated French André Meyer) also grew.

In Europe, history had transmitted to French banks some haphazardly spread entities. Like Crédit Lyonnais, Société Générale had been present in Belgium owing to a subsidiary, Société française de banque & de dépôts, complemented by a branch in Amsterdam, to sustain French-Belgian trade flows: textiles and imports through Anvers, especially cereals. Banks were present in Switzerland, practicing currency exchanges, private banking, and increasingly "trade finance." Spain had welcomed offshoots (Société Générale and Crédit Lyonnais). Société Générale's subsidiary in Alsace-Lorraine since 1871, Sogenal, had closed its branches in Germany in the 1930s, but returned there in 1968 with a representative office in Frankfurt.

In fact, up to the 1980s, French banks did not compete directly with their European colleagues in their own countries, following some untold gentleman's agreement or because of legal obstacles. European banks did not engage in activities all around Europe—aside from very specialized business assumed by Geneva, Luxembourg, and London affiliates or branches. A global banking war—spreading due to universal banking in other European countries—was not considered at that time, and even the few branches opened by Société Générale or BNP in Great Britain intended to limit their customers to the upper crust or to a few firms. They practiced trade finance and FOREX activities.

Bankers' mentalities did not really evolve; their projects could be seen as fragmentary: no global strategy abroad appeared, and only scattered investments were decided. The priority was apparently to profit through specific trade relations with some countries or to reinforce traditional French diplomatic presence there, therefore following a classical geopolitical strategy. Middle Eastern markets attracted French bankers even if British and American banks were predominantly influential there. The Banque nationale pour le commerce et l'industrie (BNCI) and Crédit Lyonnais put Iran as a commercial target, and they opened a common subsidiary, Etebarate, in 1958–59 as a means to gain access to that rapidly growing market, establishing 60 branches by 1975 and becoming involved

with mixed domestic and international customers. Lebanon, Dubai, and Kuwait were also seen as prospects at the turn of the 1970s.

A classical strategy explained the involvement of French nationalized banks in some Latin American countries that French diplomacy or firms traditionally preferred as a way of alleviating British or US commercial domination there. The BNCI opened branches or subsidiaries in several countries (the Banco del Atlantico in Mexico, the Banco Franco-Colombiano, etc.). Under the impulse of high manager Marcel Cazes, Crédit Lyonnais developed an active strategy in Latin America and became the leading French bank in that area, with several subsidiaries acting as bridgeheads for French exporting or purchasing companies. They also evolved more and more toward domestic banking as they developed their own local customer base (for instance, Banco Frances & Brasileiro, set up in 1948), in addition to transatlantic customers. Société Générale was present in Cuba, Mexico, or Argentina (with Banco Supervielle).

The few French banks in North America kept a somewhat low profile: they were only collateral aspects of their international activities. But flows between the USA and their parent company's new worldwide establishments expanded. They therefore reinforced their branches in the USA and in turn in Canada in the 1960s. The Banque Nationale de Paris (BNP), the successor to the CNEP in 1966) established strong North American entities, gaining full control of the French American Banking Corporation in 1971. It began prospecting for half-retail banking through the creation of a subsidiary in California, the French Bank of California, in 1972.

Nowhere was there a consistent international network; each bank had followed somewhat random development abroad, following exceptional opportunities or classical commercial motives. At Crédit Lyonnais, for instance, the Latin America strategy had been imagined by Marcel Cazes, who convinced the bank of taking an interest in crossing the Atlantic Ocean, and he built a somewhat specialized Latin America ring within Crédit Lyonnais (oriented mainly toward Brazil and Argentina). When BNP was formed in 1966, its world networks, inherited from the BNCI and the CNEP, offered, for instance, a few strongholds and numerous loopholes.

In the middle of the 1950s a turning point could be considered to have appeared, as banks noticed new exports trends: public works contracts abroad, equipment goods exports, a beginning of wheat surplus exports, and the emergence of commercial relations with Eastern European countries. When the BNCI established its service specialized in financing foreign trade relations in 1953, it felt that time had come to sustain firms in their move from reconstruction to European and international competition.

Despite this fragmented puzzle, banks' networks were mobilized to help French trade gather momentum in the 1950s–1960s—especially when exchanges were strongly liberalized within the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) and the common market at the turn of the 1960s. They provided them with a wealth of information about market evolution and about potential buyers in a period when everything had to be rebuilt after the depression and the war years. Bankers launched

numerous information campaigns through their travels and various contacts with potential partners abroad. They asserted themselves as leaders of an exporting move, as a vanguard ahead of French business community, owing to “foreign commercial service” and then increasingly to emerging “project financing.” They organized missions abroad to examine business opportunities and a capital of expertise began to pile up in the 1960s. Crédit Lyonnais set up a foreign trade department in 1969, which gathered together every headquarters services in charge of foreign commercial relations, as a think tank at the disposal of branches in France and abroad to promote the large business of wholesale trade and the export business of equipment goods. After about 20 years of almost autarchy (mid-1930s–1940s), bankers became once more internationally minded, globetrotters, renewing their commercial fighting spirit.

French banks were involved in new types of international credits and were first in an export credit system. In addition to classical credits, the French banking system set up different kinds of medium-term loans that could benefit from central banks rediscount. This refinancing by the Banque de France was extended in 1967 to help finance investments and stocks in foreign countries. Proceedings became more flexible too as mere basic documents detailing foreign orders could pave the way to exports credits and rediscount. Banks and the BFCE created the Groupement interbancaire pour les opérations de crédit à l'exportation (GCEX) in 1961 as a corporative institution promoting five-year credits. They benefited from *crédits acheteurs* (buyers' credits), beginning in 1967, and with loans for equipment exports contracted within special bilateral treaties. Numerous studies detailed the progress of its export credits in the 1970s—especially toward Algeria, Eastern European countries (like the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics [USSR] and Poland, at that time huge importers of planting equipment), or Middle Eastern countries. A group of 17 banks organized, for instance, a contract with USSR's foreign trade bank in 1964 with the objective to facilitate export financing. The sudden merger between the CNEP and BNCI in 1966 into BNP, at that time the first French bank nationalized abroad, was conceived as an impulse to strengthening French power abroad: “As for its international activities, the main task of BNP is to bring its help to French exports.”

Toward Multinationalized Banking (1970s–1980s)

A trend emerged in the 1970s by which authorities enticed banks to bear by themselves little by little a heavier load of medium-term credits. They supported therefore massive risks abroad, and the three nationalized commercial banks supported a major part of them as keystones of the French credit system. And, emerging on the Paris market, mutualist Crédit Agricole launched its own international activities in the 1970 for agricultural products exports. The international involvement of banks grew rapidly in the 1970s as currency loans were developing fast, for instance, to finance payments

in advance by firms or to help companies to finance the local part of their contracts as they got more and more local subcontractors to alleviate the costs of their projects. Thus, banks had to provide their customers with foreign currencies if they intended to remain partners with them; this way of internationalization became a national challenge. They required refinancing among the international banking community as French institutions (the Banque de France or Crédit national) might not assume that task; banks lost COFACE credit insurance protection and offered only to sign contracts in francs. French nationalized banks therefore found themselves integrated within international money markets and eurocurrency markets for national commercial interests.

When Germany and France decided to import Soviet gas to balance their imports from the Netherlands and in parallel with several development projects for the exploitation of North Sea oil, gas pipes had to be established. Negotiations between gas importers and the USSR in 1980–81 led to a financial agreement. The bulk of the expenses had to be covered by loans from Western banks or Soviet bonds issues. Two German and French consortia organized the financing of a new Siberian gas pipe. As for France, Crédit Lyonnais led the banking consortium, jointly managed by the BFCE and the BUE. A purchasing credit of 10 billion francs (at a rate of 7.75 percent) was set up in 1981, and a second one in 1982 by Crédit Lyonnais, the BUE, and Paribas to lend 1.4 billion US dollars over eight years to cover 15 percent of the amount of equipment sold to the Russian institutions.

International missions evolved more and more toward a coherent worldwide strategy: French banks had to spread their networks all over the world in order to offer their customers services anywhere and thus reinforce French exports. Close links between German or Japanese banks and their industry and trade customers were raised up as models, with the power of American banks being underlined. The 1970s paved the way for developing a decisive strategy, and BNP reinforced then its leadership in commercial and trade banking among the French business community and the representative of the strength of the Paris marketplace. It preferred a move from a system built around an array of bilateral system to an overall multilateral system. Classical pieces of international networks changed little by little their functions; instead of financing traditional commercial exchanges, they became bridgeheads to promote French equipment exporters.

Entities abroad evolved toward the financing of international trade beyond mere French interests. BNP's subsidiary in New York set up international financing operations with other foreign banks in favor of American companies working in Europe. Each entity became a piece within worldwide multilateral mechanisms and related each one to another. Crédit Lyonnais underlined that evolution in its 1973 annual report by noticing "the growth of a 'supranational' market." BNP San Francisco opened in 1969 to "assume functions within trade flows between countries of Pacific area where BNP group was installed" (annual report).

International trade finance provided banks their first steps within multilateral business. They got access to customers working through arbitragists' speculations and

exchanges in addition to operations relating to petroleum, commodities (especially cereals), and raw materials requiring huge amounts. The multilateral aspect of that business paved the way for new skills and contacts abroad. Crédit Lyonnais's Geneva branch and a special unit at its Paris headquarters provided credits to international traders. Compensation trade operations helped to finance this "countertrade" business on a large international scale. At Crédit Lyonnais, the central unit in charge of these operations was still called the merchant bank department (*Département de Haute Banque*) as if, within the large joint stock bank, some legacy of merchant bank skills and the art of connections was at work for such activities abroad.

In the 1970s, each bank invested to equip itself with a rationalized worldwide network of representative offices, branches, and subsidiaries—whereas BNP was equipped with only ten representative offices in 1969—favoring pioneering times for multinational banking history. Asia was a major objective, and entities flourished there: BNP in Djakarta in 1970, in Singapore in 1971, and so forth; and Société Générale in Tokyo in 1968 through an office and in 1973 through a branch and in Djakarta in 1967. Latin America was explored too: BNP in Caracas in 1974 or Crédit Lyonnais's 1979–1982 program, setting top priorities in Brazil, Chile, and Argentina. The Middle East offered several opportunities (Société Générale in Kuwait in 1970 and BNP in Tehran and Beirut in 1974). Eastern European countries also welcomed several bridgeheads: Crédit Lyonnais and Société Générale in Moscow in 1973, BNP in East Berlin in 1974, and so forth. Large networks were established all over the world: Société Générale, for example, was present in 43 countries in 1975.

As a key financial center and a bridge toward Latin America too, the USA benefited from renewed investments in the 1970s. Crédit Lyonnais began building up a future strong entity: it launched in 1967 a kind of investment bank, the Crédit Lyonnais Corporation, in New York; later, it opened its own Crédit Lyonnais branch in New York in 1971 and two more branches in Chicago and Los Angeles respectively in 1975. The successful Crédit Lyonnais Corporation became the first Crédit Lyonnais foreign agency, collecting in 1972 about 42 percent of the deposit amounts drawn by the whole Crédit Lyonnais's foreign agencies, ahead of Great Britain (20 percent), Belgium (12 percent), Switzerland (11 percent), and Spain and Luxembourg (7.5 percent each); moreover, it carried 34 percent of credits borne by these agencies, ahead of Great Britain (28 percent) and Belgium (18 percent). These foreign networks helped banks to develop the collection of business information and to provide competitive services first to French exporters and second to foreign customers more and more. Links with banks abroad were intensified through correspondent banking agreements or through bilateral business, like Crédit Lyonnais with Eastern European banks, which explains its first-rate activity to finance French exports: it financed a third of French equipment goods exports toward the USSR in 1974.

But the core Western European business was progressively enhanced, with an integrated commercial and banking community taking shape, as studied by Éric Bussière,

the specialist of this Europeanization history. It was born at the turn of the 1960s through the emergence of a euromarket where dollars available in Europe (euro-dollars and recycled petrodollars) were mobilized in favor of interbank credits and then of financial activities. On the one hand, bilateral relations were established between *Crédit Lyonnais* and *Commerzbank* and between *BNP* and *Dresdner Bank*, mainly for cross-border transactions. On the other hand, these same banks and others participated in the large interbank unions that multiplied to issue public or private bonds on the emerging euromarket.

To be more effective, French banks joined forces in “consortial banks,” which were Europeanized investment banks where their teams learned to build their capital of competence in corporate and investment banking on a European scale for about 15 years, until their portfolio of know-how had been sufficiently consolidated to allow them to then operate independently and to establish their own investment banking team on the London market. *BNP* and *Dresdner Bank* were members of the *Société financière internationale*, opened in 1967 (with *Barclays* or *Algemene Bank Nederland (ABN)*), and of the *Abecor* in 1974; *Société Générale* and *Deutsche Bank* joined the *European Banks International Company (EBIC)*, set up in 1967. *Crédit Lyonnais* agreed with *Commerzbank* in 1970 to share skills in financing operations to multinational firms, and they became members of the *Europartners club*. It spread various subsidiaries all over international marketplaces (Amsterdam, New York, Tokyo, and Paris) and became an important tool for *Crédit Lyonnais* to get familiarized with investment and finance banking abroad. Each bank could provide every service within its geographical range to the customers of any of the four banks. To broaden their international banking skills, French banks therefore joined their European counterparts to form some kind of “common international banking schools,” that is to say, consortial banks.

Another move was the building of consortial banks specialized in Middle Eastern business: *Société Générale* took part in the *Banque franco-arabe d'investissement international (FRAB Bank International)* in 1969. *BNP* was involved in the *Banque arabe & internationale d'investissement*, created in 1972. *Crédit Lyonnais* was part of the *Union de banques arabes & françaises (UBAF)*, established in 1969–70, with 17 banks coming from 12 Arab countries; it developed its own international network in the 1970s (Beirut, London, Frankfurt; the *Union de banques arabes & européennes [UBAE]* in Luxembourg; *Union de banques arabes et françaises*, in London; and *UBAE* in Rome).

Owing to every piece of that worldwide puzzle, French banks found themselves more and more deeply involved in international finance markets: their boom allowed them to draw important shares of various euromarkets. Commonly, they joined eurocurrencies interbank markets; then eurocredits markets, with participation to international pools setting up large credits to help international trade or investments. They were also involved in euromarket capital issuing, especially eurobonds, and they stated in their annual reports the issues where they were coleader, appearing thus on “tombstones.” They managed as well to draw foreign investors to French securities market, and they

began to get accustomed to capital markets trading on foreign markets, especially London at that time.

Their Luxembourg entity became a cornerstone of their emerging activities on European markets. Either through their consortial banks or by themselves, they quickly gathered the range of skills, which help to forge emerging international banking. Their entity in London asserted itself as a cornerstone of this deployment. French banks proved their resiliency and did not miss the opportunity to become involved in the new international finance economy, showing their recent skills, particularly in 1966–1974. In 1974, having led or co-led 33 operations with a total amount of 3.42 million US dollars, *Crédit Lyonnais* was ranked in that area among the very first banks in the world for euroloans, whereas only ranked twelfth for eurobonds, as it led or co-led only 13 issues for an amount of 259 million US dollars.

The French state approved of multinationalization as, by itself or through public institutions, in the mid-1970s it began launching massive international bonds issuing to finance huge investments in nuclear electricity, railways, airports, and so forth. In parallel, well-off French or foreign customers profited from that European expansion as French banks built at that time international services in private banking (wealth management). *Crédit Lyonnais* established in Luxembourg in 1971 a specialized private banking department; signs of a coming wave of economic globalization appeared thus as that activity began to be managed at an international level over boundaries limits and local entities.

This upward move of international business led to internal managerial reorganization. Old-fashioned foreign departments evolved toward more professional structures. This revolution was achieved by *Crédit Lyonnais* in 1972, with the establishment of a Directorate for International Business and Cooperation, which supervised several directorates: networks abroad, treasury and exchange, relations with developing countries, relations with wealthy countries, and so forth. This was the ultimate stage of managerial reorganization before the revolution brought about by the economic globalization of the 1980s–1990s—as capital markets and securities operations were still linked to a separate financial affairs division, distinct from international financial operations division, attached to the international directorate.

BNP reformed its structures likewise in 1973 with the opening of an international division, supervising treasury and international business and relations with foreign branches and subsidiaries under one roof. That international division welcomed in 1978 a new international trade department, specialized in commodities exchanges. Such reorganization had become necessary as the international scale and scope of French banks had grown decidedly: BNP employed, for instance, in 1978 about 450 French managers abroad, who supervised about 10,000 employees. They appeared as efficient tools to promote French business abroad because they succeeded in learning any skills used on international markets and showed well-tailored mastership of any specialized exports credits and intricacies.

In the US, BNP and Paribas took advantage of the International Banking Act (1978), which allowed the subsidiaries of foreign banks to benefit from a single frame of regulation. Paribas opened branches in several cities and developed investment banking there. Along with transatlantic commercial banking, BNP formulated a retail banking strategy and set up the French Bank of California in 1972, before purchasing the Bank of the West in 1979, merging them in 1980 to penetrate the then sixth strongest economic region worldwide. All in all, such new business models fostered an internationalized and open-minded business culture among managers shared by the expatriates and the managers of multinational divisions.

The Development of Globalized Finance and Banking (since the 1990s)

The liberalization of banking and finance in many countries, the economic globalization of commercial exchanges within the World Trade Organization (WTO) rules from the mid-1990s, and the supremacy of neoliberal theories urging full competitiveness in Europe enticed bankers to lean toward establishing “a global bank” active in the main “regions” of a globalized economy and tackling a whole range of business activities, either managed by “global heads” sitting at US or European headquarters or decentralized in each country for retail banking. Following such managerial fads, a rush occurred to establish services and subsidiaries almost everywhere, to avoid leaving some room for competitors, and to take every market share available, in particular in emerging countries in Central and Eastern Europe, around the Mediterranean Sea, and even in Latin America or the USA while the promising legacy of decolonization was preserved in Africa.

French banks did not miss such opportunities all the more because they were confronted with the challenge of harsh competition, as the number of foreign banks in France jumped from 100 in 1980s to 200 in the 1990s. Successively, the nationalization of Société Générale, Crédit Lyonnais, the BNCI, and the CNEP—united into BNP—in 1945 or that of Indosuez and Paribas in 1982 by a leftist government in order to finance the competition against the big crisis and the transition to the third industrial revolution, the privatization move in 1986–1988 and 1993–1997, and the change of prevailing economic minds among state and managerial élites reoriented strategies. New laws paved the way for free competition in the 1990s, and amalgamations were encouraged by the state. As a result, a few solid groups took shape, with BNP Paribas (2000), Crédit mutuel (absorbing CIC), Crédit Agricole (controlling Indosuez in 1997 and Crédit Lyonnais in 2003), while Société Générale federated several regional banks.

Such “French champions” had to follow foreign paths to duplicate portfolios of skills and play on business complementarities in commercial or private banking, in investment banking, and in trade finance. “Universal banking” prevailed thanks to reforms in the 1980s–1990s, which explains the “convergence” of activities under one single trademark.

But regulation had to be fine-tuned in consequence in Paris and then in Frankfurt under the guidance of the European Central Bank (and its Single Supervisory Mechanism, headed by a Frenchwoman) from November 2014, after the creation of the Banking Union in 2012.

Even if projects of mergers failed (BNP and Dresdner Bank, Société Générale and Unicredit, etc.), retail banking strategies were conceived all over Europe, with subsidiaries in Greece (Société Générale and Crédit Agricole), in Spain, in Belgium, in the Netherlands, or in the UK, and then also in former communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe, in Czechia (Société Générale with Komerční Banka in 2001) and in Romania (Banca Română pentru Dezvoltare in 1999), in Poland (Crédit Agricole in 2001), and so forth. African networks were refurbished in sub-Saharan Africa; Société Générale got banks in Egypt and Turkey before returning in Russia with Rostok Bank in 2006. Business banking and investment banking were also Europeanized: for instance, Indosuez secured footholds in every Western European country with the intent of asserting itself as a leading bank, mainly against Paribas or BNP.

Dedicated teams were thus strengthened in each “capital of capital”—in Frankfurt, Brussels, and London—to accompany French companies and to draw foreign customers, particularly because of the osmosis between “national” capitalism on a European scale. French banks were not unique in this process as German, Dutch, Belgian, Italian, and British rivals followed the same paths of rapid and intense growth. BNP extended its retail banking in the USA through the purchase of the First Hawaiian Bank in 1998, being federated with the Bank of the West by the BancWest Corporation then joined by the United California Bank in 2001. BNP Paribas became the leader in Hawaii and the fourth one in California and then extending to six other states, mixing retail and private banking.

In parallel, principal financial activities could not but build globalized systems. The development of international models of integration was the key for classical FOREX activities, often through the London market. But exchanges relied on digitalized connections, and that was the case too for flows within the SWIFT network (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication), set up in 1973 and active since 1977. Platforms of digitalized financial markets were developed at the turn of the 1990s. Classical stock exchanges and commodities markets—with offshoots in Chicago, in the case of Crédit Agricole—paved the way for these developments. French banks invested in platforms for “futures,” together with several financial products. They had to become stakeholders in a rapidly growing banking market, basing themselves in New York and in London, which became the hearts of such hubs with thousands of employees, connected to subplatforms in Paris and elsewhere.

BNP Paribas joined the London Metal Exchange (LME) in 2001 because the global metal derivatives market has become a formidable risk hedging instrument for clients of BNP Paribas’ Energy & Commodities business line. The LME provided liquidity, reference prices, and an essential delivery mechanism for global trade in base metals. Its

subentity BNP Paribas Commodity Futures started its activities in 1985 as a broker on the commodity derivatives market. Paribas Capital Markets was created before Paribas Futures Ltd & Commodities Indexed Transactions Group (CITG) in 1985. The merger with BNP (2000) reinforced considerably the strength and then the European leadership on such markets.

The Asian region was structured as a multiform target by each big French bank from the mid-1970s to the 1990s to penetrate such powerful internationalized economies. Powerful business units were active in Japan and Hong Kong. That latter became a hub for managing commercial and investment banking all over Southeast Asia; eight French banks had 2,200 employees there in 1989. Crédit Agricole profited from the integration of Indosuez in 1997 as it was much active in Asia.

A More Lucid and Prudent Economic Globalization since the 2007–2009 Crisis

Such international moves seemed to prove that the universal banking model could be dispatched in every region of the world, pending an eventual offensive in opening China itself. But the 2007–2009 worldwide crisis did exert dire effects on French banks too. Franco-belgian Dexia endured a mortal shock; bad management led to the union of Caisses d'épargne and the Banques populaires into BPCE (with Natixis as an investment bank) and to the assumption of billions of bad debts and assets. But a thorough re-assessment of the strategy of internationalization was achieved by the Paris marketplace, submitted to strict regulation ratios of capital under the guidance of the Basel Committee and strong agreements (Basel II in 2004–2008 and Basel III from 2012). Banks had increasingly to respect prudential ratios and to consider the risk of huge fines from the European Commission because of cartel agreements (Société Générale in 2013) or from the US authorities regarding the lack of observance of American laws when practicing trade finance (in Geneva), private banking, or involvement in “bad practices” when having business in boycotted countries (Sudan, Iran, etc.) with companies that are cheating and/or money laundering.

Numerous subsidiaries were sold in the Mediterranean area because of important losses and the need to recapitalize: in Greece by Société Générale and Crédit Agricole, in Turkey and Egypt by Société Générale, and in Egypt by BNP Paribas (in 2013). Step by step, BNP Paribas in five countries in 2019 and two others in 2022 and Société Générale cut off parts of their African network. Even BNP Paribas chose to sell its huge subsidiary in the USA (Hawaii and California) in 2021, and Société Générale had to give up its Rostok Bank in Russia in 2022. Refocus was the major work: first in pivotal marketplaces, in Europe or in Asia (Hong Kong and Singapore). BNP Paribas focused on its sister banks in Morocco (Banque marocaine pour le commerce l'industrie [BMCI], inherited from BNCI then BNP), Italy (Banca nazionale del lavoro [BNL] in 2006), Poland (Bank Gospodarki Żywnościowej [BGZ] in 2014), Belgium (Fortis in 2009), Luxembourg

(Banque générale du Luxembourg [BGL] in 2009), and even Ukraine (2005), while Crédit Agricole preferred Italy. Investment banking, clearing, and market banking (derivatives, futures, etc.) broadened the size of their operations, digital equipment, and teams of traders even if the Brexit imposed to move some of these latter in Paris.

Economic globalization was still preserved in “ancient” fields, mainly mergers and acquisitions (M&A) and credit or issuing syndication. The investment banking teams prospered because of so much reshuffling of capitalist branches, favoring M&A operations, the emergence of “licorns”—rapidly growing startups—or firms from the start of the third industrial revolution since the turn of the 1980s. Classical banks seized many emerging opportunities despite the hard competition from US banks gaining footholds in Paris (Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan, and Morgan Stanley). But one key event was the revival of two merchant banks: Lazard Paris, London, and New York merged and formed a dynamic transatlantic investment bank, active also in the Middle East. After the nationalization of Rothschild in 1982, another house reappeared in Paris, thanks to the Rothschild banking family; and it merged with the UK sister house in 2003, which gave birth to a competitive rival to Lazard and the investment banking branch of big universal banks.

Transnationalization gathered momentum in the twenty-first century thanks to a globalized management of strategic activities, following the intense diversification of skills. All over Europe and often elsewhere, assets management, consumer credit, leasing, insurance, automotive credit like ALD Automotive (formerly AutoLeasing Deutschland) at Société Générale and Arval at BNP Paribas), and financial transfers services like *Société Générale Securities Services* (SGSS) at Société Générale are assumed by foreign subsidiaries, themselves transformed into universal finance units. Present in Poland since 2001, Crédit Agricole is the leader for consumer credit and leasing, offering the whole range of retail and business products, with 6,000 employees, almost 500 branches, and 2.5 million customers. London is considered the second headquarters of BNP Paribas, with nearly 6,000 employees working in the United Kingdom, from investment to asset management, with also clearing derivatives and various market operations; from insurance to leasing; and from offers to individuals to those offered to companies.

In the 2020s, thanks to its presence in more than 80 countries and more than 200,000 employees, including 160,000 in Europe, BNP Paribas is a European leader in global financial services, with key positions in three major business areas: retail banking, investment solutions, and corporate and investment banking. BNP Paribas Personal Finance unit is the leader in consumer finance in Europe. For corporate and investment banking and investment solutions, it also benefits from a leadership position in Europe as well as a solid and fast-growing platform in Asia. One major asset is a solid position on the equity derivatives market, with capabilities in providing a comprehensive product range of diverse solutions across both flow and structured products and in designing new strategies and innovative solutions to meet all our clients’ demands.

The three complementary businesses—equity derivatives, prime services and cash equities, and research and execution—work together to provide clients with the full spectrum of equity-based services to fulfil their investment, financing, and execution objectives—under the guidance of BNP Paribas Global Markets unit (20,000 employees in 2021), in parallel with the unit Global Equities and Commodity Derivatives—both under the umbrella of BNP Paribas Corporate & Investment Banking. BNP Paribas is one of the world leaders in equity derivatives and in many interest rate, credit, FOREX, and commodity derivatives; in capital markets, where it ranks among the leading European institutions in debt and equities (bond issues and equities, securitization and convertibles); and in structured finance, where it ranks among the world leaders in export finance, financing of assets, projects, energy, and raw materials.

Beginning in the 1980s–1990s, a new wave of economic globalization has been part of the third banking revolution: internationalization of activities, management, workforce, diversification, digitalization, and services to Europeanized or globalized individual or business customers. Under the area of global transaction banking, Société Générale managed in the 2010s a wide spectrum of activities (cash management, correspondent banking, trade finance, factoring, and FOREX). But an effect of this economic globalization has been delocalization of day-to-day and engineering activities in low-cost countries, where skilled employees emerged: Portugal, India (with 3,000s employees at Société Générale and 1,100 at BNP Paribas in 2014), or Singapore. Even the ownership of banks has been opened to foreign investors: in 2015, BNP's capital was distributed accordingly: 25.9 percent to non-European institution investors, 5.1 percent to BlackRock giant assets manager, 44.9 percent to European institutional investors, and 1 percent to the Luxembourg Grand Duchy.

Concluding Remarks

From the merchant banks in the nineteenth century and the big investment or commercial banks from the 1850s–1870s, the Paris marketplace succeeded endlessly to reinvent the financial French globalization project according to adaptive international business models, often with cooperation/coopetition among banks. But, of course, many banks met weakened balance sheets because of overinvestments in foreign countries as well as faced intense crisis (in the 1880s, 1930s, or in 2007–2009): losers had to give way to winners, to “champions,” as what the case is in every European marketplace or in New York. These “champions” succeeded in facing challenges thanks to managerial “agility” and business capabilities: devising organizational processes suited to European then international markets, to effectively manage the relationship between headquarters and local business units, and to federate the range of services and products and in turn developing products for local markets and intimate local knowledge; spreading good

practices across the organization; and managing risks. In these ways, banks have acted as the fulcrum of the financial French globalization project over its long history.

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France as an Imperial Society (19th–20th Century)

As it is clearly shown in the introduction of this volume, as well as in the different chapters of this book, French globalization projects are multifaceted and have passed through very different phases during the last two centuries (from the end of the first colonial empire in America [1763–1804] to the laborious emergence of the “mission civilisatrice”¹ in Africa and Indochina, mainly promoted by the republicans in power after 1880).² This classical “imperialist” reading of French history was largely diffused by schoolbooks and dominant academic historiography in the first part of the twentieth century. It has been largely put into question not only by the new colonial and postcolonial historiography but also by new approaches in social, economic, and cultural historiography about nation-building. Therefore, the synthesis of its results is much more difficult to promote as the preceding simplified pictures. Moreover, they are refused by the large readership of historical books, but also by many mainstream historians (such as Pierre Nora) who attacked the bestseller edited by Patrick Boucheron and a team of young historians (*Histoire mondiale de la France*³), who tried to spread this new global or transnational history in the French context. Due to a dominant “declinist” mood, the majority in French opinion considers “globalization” as a threat against “French identity” and refuses to admit that it is not a foreign conspiracy (viewed as “Anglo-Saxon” in general) but the consequence of the intense entanglement of French history with the whole world for a long period and of French actors’ active participation in world affairs. Reinforced by dominant media outlets that use history as entertainment and evasion, these currents prefer to remember only glorious moments (see the commemorative frenzy since the 1980s and the *patrimoine* [heritage] fever) and try to mask the contradictions present in the French global and imperial process, which explain the

1 Alice Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895–1939* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

2 See the chapters by Damien Tricoire, Alan Forest, Robert Aldrich, Yasmin Najm, and Rachel Chin.

3 Patrick Boucheron ed al., eds., *Histoire mondiale de la France* [World History of France] (Paris: Seuil, 2017; Paris: Seuil, 2018 [enlarged and illustrated version]). A similar project was published on the same framework for Italy; see Andrea Giardina et al., eds., *Storia mondiale dell'Italia* [World History of Italy] (Bari: Laterza, 2017). The comparison of the two books is very illuminating about the two historical unconscious in the two countries in spite of their common affirmation to break with “orthodoxy” (see Christophe Charle, “Histoires mondiales, faire parler l’inconscient des historiens” [“World Histories,” Making Historians Speak Their Unconscious Minds], *Historia Magistra* XI, no. 29 [2019]: 59–75).

difficulties to apprehend some tragic episodes such as Vichy or French colonial wars in the 1950s and 1960s.

This pretention to be unique as a nation who “makes” history is quite old but not specific to the dominant view of French history. The same bias may be noticed for United Kingdom (and it produced a major political result with the Brexit vote, sold to British voters as the birth of a new “global Britain”), Germany (with the controversial and long-lasting debate about the *Sonderweg*), the USA (with the myth of the frontier and “manifest destiny”), and so on. In this chapter, we will defend the thesis that world territorial expansion is not the main characteristic or unique key for this French globalization project. Its double originality (shared with other imperial societies but with a different stress) is to postulate a necessary national unification and a large cultural adhesion in spite of the diversity of populations included in its (changing) frontiers.⁴ In a book published twenty years ago, I proposed this notion of imperial society (as one of the manifestations of a globalization project) to compare the social evolutions between 1900 and 1940 of three major European countries—France, the United Kingdom, and Germany—through this all-encompassing notion.⁵ The point of the work was to break with both the traditional history of empires, which focused solely on the colonial conquests that marked this apogee of European colonization, and the history of nationalisms, which insisted mainly on the “nationalization of the masses” and the spread of an exaggerated and exclusive patriotism as the explanation for the great confrontations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries inside and outside Europe.⁶ These three societies, the wealthiest in Europe and each at the head of a colonial empire on a global scale, were distinguished above all by the successful implementation of a double process of internal (political and cultural unification) and external “globalization” (establishment of overseas spheres of influence not restricted to their colonial empires), especially if one compares them to the old continental European or semi-European empires such as the Austro-Hungarian, Russian, or Ottoman empires. The Ottoman Empire remained caught in a past-oriented geopolitical history (dynastic heritage of the *ancien régime*) and in the conquest or domination of peripheral territories adjacent to their original core lands, with the gradual loss of these territories testifying to the fragility of this

4 France today has still common frontiers with Brazil (in Guyana, French department), North America (Caribbean departments: Martinique and Guadeloupe), territories in the Pacific (French Polynesia and New Caledonia) and the Indian Ocean (Mayotte and La Réunion) and even North Atlantic (Saint Pierre and Miquelon) or Antarctic Ocean (Kerguelen Islands).

5 Christophe Charle, *La crise des sociétés impériales: Essai d'histoire sociale comparée de l'Allemagne, de la France et de la Grande Bretagne (1900–1940)* [The Crisis of Imperial Societies: A Comparative Social History of Germany, France, And Great Britain (1900–1940)], 1st ed. (Paris: Seuil, 2001), 2nd ed. (Paris: Seuil, 2008).

6 George Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1975); new ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

domination and the failure to integrate peripheral religious or linguistic minorities that coexisted within its borders.⁷ The same disintegration was at work in the two other cases.

However, and this is particularly true for France as well as for Germany and, to a lesser extent, for the United Kingdom, this imperial project (colonial, but at the same time political and cultural) also suffered from obvious weaknesses or contradictions, resulting in it being radically called into question several times and having to be completely reformulated after the great crises of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁸ In order to highlight the specificity of this imperial and global project and its limitations in the French case, the interpretation to be sketched in the pages to follow will be schematic due to lack of space. To be completely comprehensive, it would require a detailed consideration of French history from at least the collapse of the Napoleonic empire to the successive reformulations of the European project since the 1960s to the de Gaulle era and even to the project of a cultural empire as an alternative to the “American empire” during the Mitterrand era.⁹ As in the case of Germany and, to a lesser extent, of the United Kingdom, it is under the impact of crises, defeats, or catastrophes that the visions of the French imperial society were constantly redefined and reformulated: loss of Napoleon Bonaparte’s European empire in 1814–15; Franco-British competition for a new colonial empire from the Restoration (beginning of the conquest of Algeria in 1830) to the end of the nineteenth century (Fashoda Crisis in 1898); new failed attempt at hegemony over Europe after 1918 to surround and restrict defeated Germany (constitution of the Little Entente) and push back the threat of Soviet communism; and partitioning of territories conquered by Turkey in the Near East (Syria and Lebanon) and by Germany in Africa (Togo and Cameroon) with the United Kingdom.

In spite of this apparent imperial apogee, celebrated during the Colonial Exhibition of 1931,¹⁰ the soon-to-end Third Republic proved unable of consolidating this empire in

7 Olivier Bouquet, *Pourquoi l'Empire ottoman, six siècles d'histoire* [Why the Ottoman Empire: Six Centuries of History] (Paris: Gallimard “Folio,” 2022).

8 The United Kingdom was confronted with the Irish armed revolt beginning at Easter in 1916 and then with the disintegration of the British Empire, starting with the Indian national movement of the interwar period. However, despite its overall decline, it escaped the humiliating incapacitation of France in 1940 and of Germany after 1918 or 1945, thanks to a close alliance with the new dominant imperial society of the twentieth century, the United States.

9 Recent works have shown the importance of the Napoleonic model or even the Roman past to justify the conquest of Algeria and to give back to the French the pride lost after the defeat of 1814–15. See Jennifer E. Session, *By Sword and Plow: France and the Conquest of Algeria* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011); Christophe Charle, “Les historiens et la conceptualisation des sociétés impériales en France et en Angleterre” [Historians and the Conceptualization of Imperial Societies in France and England], in *La société civile: Savoirs, enjeux et acteurs en France et en Grande-Bretagne 1780–1914*, eds. Christophe Charle and Julien Vincent (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2011), 205–233.

10 Charles-Robert Ageron, “L'exposition coloniale de 1931—mythe républicain ou mythe impérial?” [The 1931 Colonial Exhibition—Republican Myth or Imperial Myth?], in *Les lieux de mémoire. I. La République*,

the face of the protests of the emerging anticolonial movements in Indochina and North Africa. In particular, France suffered a heavy defeat at the hands of Nazi imperialism in 1940, while so-called Free France partially reclaimed national sovereignty, starting in some of the colonial territories (French Equatorial Africa, annexed early on, and North Africa, difficult to win over to Gaullism after the Anglo-American landing in 1942).¹¹ It is remarkable that France was the only European nation whose capital city during the twentieth century was located for a time in Algiers, that is to say, in a colonial space.

Notwithstanding the liberation of the territory of France—with the support of the internal resistance and a reconstituted army, some of which came from the colonies, and undergoing a transformation from vanquished to victorious—after 1945, France was increasingly dependent on the United States, which financed its reconstruction (Marshall Plan) and, from 1952, was part of the Indochina War.¹² Finally, during decolonization, France was once again defeated in Indochina (1954) and then in Algeria (1962), regardless of all efforts to succeed in two long and costly wars (lasting nearly 8 years), which even gave rise—internally—to latent civil wars between supporters and opponents of decolonization.¹³

However, this trajectory cannot be summarized simply as the failure or decline of the “great nation,” defended at the two extremes of the political spectrum for opposite reasons. Despite these imponderables and the constant reformulations of the French imperial project, it is possible to identify some constants that underlie the French conception of an imperial society when looking at the time scale of the last two centuries. They are to be found in the cultural, economic, and political spheres, but always alternating between advances and retreats and based on conflicting forces or conceptions.

Cultural Empire

The first and most constant pillar of this imperial project, even if it was only implemented inconsistently throughout time and space under French rule, was based on the conviction among the elites and part of the middle classes that there was a very ancient French civilization that had been achieved very early on under the monarchy

ed. Pierre Nora (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), 560–591. The author shows in fact that the propagandist function of this exhibition was a failure and recognized by the organizers themselves in spite of the frequentation (around 6 million of visitors) (577 and 584).

11 Eric Jennings, *La France libre fut africaine* [Free France Was African] (Paris: Perrin, 2014).

12 Hugues Tertrais, *La piastre et le fusil: Le financement de la guerre d'Indochine 1945–1954* [The Piaster and the Rifle: Financing the Indochina War 1945–1954] (Vincennes: Institut de la gestion publique et du développement économique, 2002), annex 24.

13 James D. Lesueur, *Uncivil War: Intellectuals and Identity Politics during the Decolonization of Algeria*, foreword by Pierre Bourdieu, 2nd ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001–2005).

through a way of life partly derived from the court society of Louis XIV and the world of eighteenth-century salons.¹⁴ This taste for the pomp of the ruling classes continued even after the French Revolution, particularly not only under the two empires¹⁵ but also through the state patronage of the arts and museums, the culture of eloquence and conversation in the public arena, the attachment to elegance and fashion pursued without interruption by the court suppliers, and then by the Parisian haute couture of the nineteenth century, or again in the centuries-old celebration of French gastronomy exported to the world and recently declared *patrimoine immatériel* (intangible heritage) by official bodies. All these components, imitated by the other court and bourgeois societies of Europe with varying degrees of success in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, provided France early on with international cultural influence, relayed by a language and a literature that claimed to be “universal”—although, in reality, it was only practiced or read by a small minority of the Western elite, even at its height.

Although the global cultural world has changed radically since the French Enlightenment, throughout the period one finds a persistent trace of this flattering self-representation, which compensates for other regressions and returns even more forcefully at critical moments: the foundation of the French Alliance (*Alliance française pour la propagation de la langue nationale dans les colonies et à l'étranger*, 1883) was intended to respond to the defeat of 1871 and to combat Germanic influence in the world;¹⁶ the policy of the Francophonie from the 1970s onward served to forget the loss of the colonial empire and to battle against the domination of the English language after 1945. The massive influx of foreign students from Central and Eastern Europe in the interwar period, as well as from the former colonized countries from the 1950s onward,

14 On the emergence of this notion, see the chapter by Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink in this book. See also Norbert Elias, *La société de cour* [The Court Society] (Paris: Flammarion, 1985); Antoine Lilti, *Le monde des salons au XVIIIe siècle* [The World of Eighteenth-Century Salons] (Paris: Fayard, 2005); Philip Mansel, *Paris capitale de l'Europe 1814–1852* [Paris, Capital of Europe 1814–1852] (Paris: Perrin, 2003); Philip Mansel, *Paris between Empires* (London: J. Murray, 2001); Daniel Roche, *La culture des apparences* [The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the Ancien Régime] (Paris: Fayard, 1989), specially chapter VIII on the role of the nobility in the diffusion of fashions. This phenomenon is relayed by the specialized press in the nineteenth century and the constant presence of foreign aristocracies in Paris; see Alice Bravard, *La vie mondaine à la Belle époque* [Social Life in the Belle Époque] (Paris: Nouveau monde, 2022), 181 et seq.

15 Under the July Monarchy, Louis-Philippe dedicated a section of the Versailles palace to the exaltation of French glory through a collection of historical pictures depicting the great battles from the Middle Ages to the Algerian conquest, thus creating a continuity (referring to *gesta Dei per Francos*) despite the French Revolution (Christophe Charle, “Une certaine idée de l’histoire de France” [A Certain Idea of French History], in *Louis-Philippe et Versailles*, ed. Valérie Bajou [Paris: Somogy éditions d’art, Château de Versailles, 2018], 262–267).

16 François Chaubet, *La politique culturelle française et la diplomatie de la langue—l’Alliance française (1883–1940)* [The French Cultural Policy and Language Diplomacy: The Alliance Française (1883–1940)] (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2006).

played a complementary role, while a vast network of cultural institutes maintained by France in many countries of the world, even those with no long-standing political ties to France, was established.¹⁷ We can also mention the early, and still ongoing, support by the Ministry of Culture for the translation of books into French or from French into other languages or for the promotion of film exports.¹⁸

This linguistic-cultural dimension of the French imperial project is not only a reaction to the intensified competition from other major international languages but also is based on the identification of this language with the essence of the nation itself (hence the early and permanent internal marginalization of local languages). However, it is also a nation open to sharing and spreading the Enlightenment, according to the initial message of the French Revolution, which wished to be a model for the emancipation of other people still subject to the monarchies of the *ancien régime*.

This first cultural “globalization project,” however, despite its apparent universalism, was riddled with inextricable contradictions, because of both the internal antagonism in France between opponents and supporters of the revolutionary heritage that runs throughout the entire nineteenth century and part of the twentieth century as well as the major cultural and religious conflict that divided the population (particularly in rural areas) since the Revolution and the break with the conservative Catholic clergy, and therefore the papacy after 1791 (Civil Constitution of the Clergy).¹⁹ Another contradic-

17 Albert Salon, *L'Action culturelle de la France dans le monde* [France's Cultural Action around the World] (Reworked doctoral thesis in letters, Paris: Nathan, 1983).

18 On this central function of literature in the French influence, see Pascale Casanova, *La république mondiale des lettres* [World Republic of Letters] (Paris: Seuil, 1999); Gisèle Sapiro, ed., *La traduction comme vecteur des échanges culturels internationaux: Circulation des livres de littérature et de sciences sociales et évolution de la place de la France sur le marché mondial de l'édition (1980–2002)* [Translation as a Vector of International Cultural Exchange: Circulation of Literature and Social Science Books and Changes in France's Position in the World Publishing Market (1980–2002)] (research report, Centre de sociologie européenne, 2007); Gisèle Sapiro, *Translatio: Le marché de la traduction en France à l'heure de la mondialisation* [Translatio: The Translation Market in France in the Age of Globalization] (Paris: CNRS éditions, 2009). On the effectiveness of French literary exports and imports, see Christophe Charle, *La dérégulation culturelle: Essai d'histoire des cultures en Europe au XIXe siècle* [Cultural Deregulation: A History of Cultures in Nineteenth-Century Europe] (Paris: PUF, 2015), 514–545. On the protection given to French cinema by the state to hinder the exclusive US domination on the world market, see Olivier Alexandre, *La règle de l'exception. Ecologie du cinéma français* [The Rule of the Exception: Ecology of French Cinema] (Paris: Editions de l'EHESS, 2015); Julien Duval, *Le cinéma au Xxe siècle, entre loi du marché et règles de l'art* [Twentieth-Century Cinema: Between the Law of the Market and the Rules of Art] (Paris: CNRS éditions, 2016).

19 For the persistence of regional political divisions related to this fundamental rupture between the “two Frances,” see Timothy Tackett, *Religion, Revolution and Regional Culture in Eighteenth-Century France: The Ecclesiastical Oath of 1791* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986). It is confirmed in the recent book by Hervé Le Bras; see Hervé Le Bras, *Tableau historique de la France, la formation des courants politiques de 1789 à nos jours* [Historical Overview of France: The Formation of Political Currents from 1789 to the Present Day] (Paris: Seuil, 2022).

tion is that before this cultural globalization project was reformulated in its secular form by the Third Republic or as a “civilizing mission” in the colonies, the spread of French culture, both within and outside the national borders, depended largely on the support of Congregational schools in the poorer parts of France, as well as in the early colonies by the missionary orders. For much of the nineteenth century, neither the state nor the communes invested enough to cover the educational demand in all these territories.²⁰ Thus, the educational universalism inherited from the Revolution remained subject to the antirevolutionary Catholic universalism of Rome and was therefore partly incompatible with the diffusion of Enlightenment ideas. It is difficult to be both the “eldest daughter of the Church” and the “eldest daughter of the Revolution.” The exception to such a balancing act was the *union sacrée* (sacred union) truce in 1914–1918, with France fighting against three empires, which satisfied the republicans, and especially against Germany, notionally identified by French Catholics with Protestantism alone, and against the Ottoman Empire, identified with Islam.

The result was a disappointing and mixed record for the spread of “French civilization” not only outside the borders of metropolitan France but also among the French rural population, which had long lagged behind in terms of literacy (and the use of standard French) until the 1870s–1880s, if compared to that of Prussia or even the United Kingdom.²¹

Even in its more ambitious secular and Third Republic version (Jules Ferry laws [1881–82], the Goblet law [1886], and the Law on the Separation of the Churches and the State [Loi relative à la séparation des Eglises et de l’Etat, 1905]) and with the attempt to school the newly conquered colonial territories from the 1880s onward, this French cultural empire barely concealed the weight of social and racial hierarchies that this all-encompassing national discourse tried to hide or diminish as best it could. In this respect, France differed little from other European societies, which were based on the same unequal but then recognized as “normal” or “natural” foundations between men and women; between upper and dominated classes; and between the white race and other races, which were themselves hierarchically structured and subject to differentiated policies—from the “blacks” to the “almost whites” via the “yellows” and the “mixed races.” But the great difference with the competing Western societies is that the latter, in the absence of a French-style revolutionary episode, had never dreamed of a universal

20 See François Furet and Jacques Ozouf, *Lire et écrire: l’alphabétisation des Français de Calvin à Jules Ferry* [Reading and Writing: Literacy in France from Calvin to Jules Ferry], 2 vols (Paris: Minuit, 1977); Jean-Noël Luc, Jean-François Condette, and Yves Verneuil, *Histoire de l’enseignement en France, XIXe–XXIe siècle* [History of Education in France, Nineteenth–Twenty-First Century] (Paris: A. Colin, 2020); Carole Reynaud-Paligot, *L’école aux colonies: Entre mission civilisatrice et racialisation* [Schools in the Colonies: Between Civilizing Mission and Racialization] (Ceyzérieu: Champ Vallon, 2020).

21 Charle, *La dérégulation culturelle*, table on 103.

utopia based on the fraternity of peoples or the spreading of the benefits of education and advancement through “public” instruction to all, regardless of their milieu of origin.

The most radical advocates of this ideal could therefore use this historical heritage, sacred for a part of the public opinion and for the most left-wing parties, to periodically relaunch this cultural and educational globalization project. It was indeed linked to an important episode of national history that even some conservatives could not completely deny, except for the extreme monarchist right.²² The history of school policies in France or in the territories subject to France shows this shifting of policies of opening or closing as well as of universalization or segregation (by “gender,” “race,” and “religion”) to deepen this imperial cultural project or, on the contrary, to limit it in its extension. Behind this is the fear of triggering a contesting dynamic of other hierarchies that benefit dominant groups: in France, for more than two centuries, the elites have been entrenching themselves in *grandes écoles* (highly selective areas) in which they are overrepresented from generation to generation,²³ while the middle classes use the separation between “private” (mainly Catholic) and “public” education in secondary education to protect themselves from contact with those who want to advance socially from the dominated classes. In the same way, in the various types of colonies, largely separate systems of training were set up according to ethnic origin and background. The authorities thus systematically established certain practical training courses for the “indigenous” minorities, thereby allowing the colonial order to create intermediate categories between colonizers and colonized.

The point, then, is to build a cultural empire whose apparent universalism transfers the manifold hierarchies of French imperial society back to the symbolic order while specifically, however, constantly challenging the conservative order created through reproduction by school categorization. This challenge comes from the outside, by those who are excluded and claim their place within it (who are significantly called the *évolués* [evolved or developed] in the language of the time), in the very name of the values that this order claims to spread. This order is also challenged from within by the most radical political or educational minority that shares the most universalist reading of it

22 During the war in Algeria, ultranationalists who did not want to abandon Algeria rose up to form the Committee of Public Safety (Comité de Salut Public) in the style of the “patrie en danger” (fatherland in danger) of 1792–1794, and supporters of French Algeria wanted to “francize” the “Muslims” in order to cut off the basis of the nationalist insurgency at its roots.

23 Christophe Charle, *Les élites de la République (1880–1900)* [The Elites of the Republic (1880–1900)] (Paris: Fayard, 1987); Pierre Bourdieu, *La noblesse d'Etat: Grands corps et grandes écoles* [State Nobility: Grand Corps and Grandes Écoles] (Paris: Minuit, 1989); Paul Pasquali, *Héritocratie: Les élites, les grandes écoles et les mésaventures du mérite (1870–2020)* [Heritocracy: Elites, Grandes Écoles, and the Misadventures of Merit (1870–2020)] (Paris: La Découverte, 2021); Hervé Joly, ed., *Formation des élites en France et en Allemagne* [Elite Formation in France and Germany] (Paris: CIRAC, 2005); Hervé Joly, *Diriger une grande entreprise au XXe siècle: L'élite industrielle française* [Managing a Large Company in the Twentieth Century: The French Industrial Elite] (Tours: Presses universitaires François-Rabelais, 2013).

and that remains confident in the positive virtues of education and the Enlightenment as a revolutionary heritage: each moment of opening up to the left is thus marked by a relaunch of this cultural or educational project encompassing “new strata” according to Léon Gambetta’s famous formula, which announced, as early as 1872, the forthcoming “democratization” of the republican regime, even though it has still not been fully completed one and a half centuries later.

The latter can be shown in detail, for example, with the university reform of the 1880s, which opened the faculties to new sciences and new categories of students (foreigners and women in particular),²⁴ with the attempts at colonial reform during the Popular Front government, or with the first project of the National School of Administration (École nationale d’administration), which intended to democratize the higher civil service in 1936, as it did later in 1945. The project of structural reform of the education system defined by the Langevin-Wallon Commission during the Liberation period—the policy of enlargement of secondary and higher education in the 1950s and 1960s—and its revival by the left at the end of the 1980s (with the slogan “80 percent of an age group at the baccalaureate level”) follow chronologically and logically the policy of cultural democratization carried out in particular by André Malraux in the 1960s or Jack Lang in the 1980s, with reference to certain ideals already defined at the time of the Popular Front.²⁵

Such an approach is a characteristic and ancient feature of the imperial project based on the diffusion of French culture, which revolves around a recurrent theme of the internal political debates of France’s various parties: what image of France and what version of French history must be disseminated in order to build this symbolic empire. However, how to mitigate this presumption based on, as Pierre Bourdieu stated, the “imperialism of the universal,”²⁶ while it has long been the auxiliary of other far less altruistic forms of imperialism (economic, political, social, and racist).

This was the challenge facing Gaullist authorities in power from 1958 to 1974, which attempted to maintain both French influence overseas through the so-called “cooperation” policy and close ties with the leaders of the new states (what has been called

24 George Weisz, *The Emergence of Modern Universities in France (1863–1914)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); Juliette Rennes, *Le mérite et la nature: une controverse républicaine sur l'accès des femmes aux professions de prestige, 1880–1940* [Merit and Nature: A Republican Controversy over Women's Access to Prestigious Professions, 1880–1940] (Paris: Fayard, 2007); Pierre Moulinier, *Les étudiants étrangers à Paris au XIXe siècle: migration et formation des élites* [Foreign Students in Nineteenth-Century Paris: Migration and Elite Formation] (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2012).

25 Pascal Ory, *La Belle illusion: culture et politique sous le signe du Front populaire 1935–1938* [The Beautiful Illusion: Culture and Politics in the Sign of the Popular Front 1935–1938] (Paris: Plon, 1994).

26 Pierre Bourdieu, “Deux impérialismes de l’universel” [Two Imperialisms of the Universal], in *L’Amérique des Français*, eds. Christine Fauré and Tom Bishop (Paris: François Bourin, 1992), 149–155.

“Françafrique”²⁷), notwithstanding the obstacles resulting from a difficult decolonization. The young men who resisted military service and instead became development *coopérants* (volunteers) in decolonized countries were able to indulge in the illusion of “helping” countries labeled as “underdeveloped” along the path of progress initiated by France and the French Revolution.

In the same way, the massive reception by French universities of foreign students, especially from North Africa or sub-Saharan Africa, allowed future local elites to forget the failure of the educational policy during the colonial period *sensu stricto*. Between 1967–68 and 2006–07, the share of foreign students in higher education increased from 6 to 15 percent, coming mostly from the former colonized countries.²⁸ But here, too, behind this apparent generosity and openness, which broke with the previous barriers and segregation imposed on the colonized peoples, were based on some less altruistic ulterior motives: to maintain and spread the use of the French language overseas; to create ways of influencing the ruling circles of the newly independent countries to prevent them from falling into the Soviet camp or under American influence; to appear as the heir of an open and generous France, in spite of its often violent and unjust colonial past; and to remain the country that welcomes exiles from dictatorship regimes (which has been the case, in part, for political exiles from certain countries in Latin America, Asia, Africa, or the Middle East at various times).²⁹

Economic Empire and Failing Demography

This continued cultural empire also goes hand in hand with an intermittent economic empire. For a long time, French historiography was dominated by a double prejudice

27 Jean-Pierre Bat, *Le syndrome Foccart: La politique française en Afrique, de 1959 à nos jours* [The Foccart Syndrome: French Policy in Africa from 1959 to the Present Day] (Paris: Gallimard “Folio,” 2012).

28 Charles Soulié et al., eds., *Un mythe à détruire? Origines et destin du Centre universitaire expérimental de Vincennes* [Destroying the Myth? Origins and Destiny of the Centre Universitaire Expérimental de Vincennes] (Saint Denis: Presses universitaires de Vincennes, 2012), 397. According to Soulié et al., 48 percent come from Africa, 21 percent from Asia, 24 percent from Europe, and 7 percent from the Americas.

29 Michael Goebel, *Paris capitale du tiers monde. Comment est née la révolution anticoloniale 1919–1939* [Paris, Capital of the Third World: How the Anticolonial Revolution Was Born 1919–1939] (Paris: La Découverte, 2017); Thomas Brisson, “Paris capitale intellectuelle des Arabes?” [Paris, Intellectual Capital of the Arabs?], in *La Vie intellectuelle en France*, eds. Christophe Charle and Laurent Jeanpierre, vol. 2 (Paris: Seuil, 2016), 819–822; Thomas Brisson, *Les intellectuels arabes en France: migrations et échanges intellectuels* [Arab Intellectuals in France: Migrations and Intellectual Exchanges] (Paris: La Dispute, 2008); Dzovinar Kevonian and Guillaume Tronchet, eds., *Le Campus-monde: La Cité internationale universitaire de Paris de 1945 aux années 2000* [The World Campus: The Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris from 1945 to 2000] (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2021).

that recent economic history has tried to challenge. First, many Marxist-influenced economic historians sought to impose the idea that France, as an imperial society, conformed to Leninist definitions of imperialism—hence the popularity of works on the foreign investments of French banks or large corporations or the explanation of certain colonial conquests through primarily economic goals and interest-driven justifications of national capitalism. Second, another group of historians (who not only were less Marxist but also postulated the primacy of economics over all other historical causalities) tried to explain why France had not chosen the same path of industrialization and expansion as its great British rival—sometimes deploring it, sometimes congratulating it—since it had thus saved the French population from being transformed en masse into a salaried proletariat and from being uprooted from its rural origins and deprived of access to any landed property. Although these debates may seem far away today, they nonetheless indirectly shed light on the economic specificities of the French imperial project in its successive economic forms.

The first originality is the discrepancy between imperialism in the Leninist sense and the reality of economic investment in the colonial empire, as shown long ago not only by Jacques Marseille but also by Marxist-inspired authors, like Jean Bouvier.³⁰ Both average savers and large capital owners before 1914 invested much more in foreign state funds or in countries where the rise of a new capitalism was on the horizon (such as Russia) than in the colonial empire in the strict sense, the latter having an archaic and poorly developed economy outside of basic foodstuffs. The formal colonies suffered above all from underinvestment and cost more than they brought in, except for a minority of industrialists and merchants in some more primary, protected sectors, such as tropical products, raw materials, and mines.

In the same way, even if the French colonial project never had the scope or the weight of the British imperial project, it was primarily due to the resistance of the French population to emigrate overseas unless forced to do so. Even in the nearest and oldest colony, Algeria, the number of “colonists” of French origin (267,000 in 1891) was barely greater than that of the non-French European population (215,000). French emigration rates per 1,000 inhabitants between 1871 and 1914 were much lower than those of its larger neighbors: in France they ranged from 0.1 to 0.2 depending on the

30 Jean Bouvier (with R. Girault), *L'impérialisme français d'avant 1914* [French Imperialism before 1914] (collection of selected texts with comments) (Paris and La Haye: Mouton, 1976); Jean Bouvier (with René Girault et Jacques Thobie), *L'impérialisme à la française: 1914–1960* [French-Style Imperialism: 1914–1960] (Paris: La Découverte, 1986); Jacques Marseille, *Empire colonial et capitalisme français: Histoire d'un divorce* [Colonial Empire and French Capitalism: The Story of a Divorce] (Paris: Albin Michel, 1984), new ed. (Paris: Albin Michel, 1989); René Girault, *Emprunts russes et investissements français en Russie 1887–1914: recherches sur l'investissement international* [Russian Loans and French Investment in Russia 1887–1914: Research on International Investment] (Paris: A. Colin, 1973); Jacques Thobie, *Intérêts et impérialisme français dans l'Empire ottoman, 1895–1914* [French Interests and Imperialism in the Ottoman Empire, 1895–1914] (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1977).

decade, while in the United Kingdom they ranged from 4 to 7.6 and in Germany from 0.4 to 1.5.³¹ Moreover, French-born emigrants did not often choose regions of the world where France was beginning to establish its colonial empire. Migrants from the poor departments of the Pyrenees and the Alps went in particular either to Mexico (*barcelonnettes*); to Argentina; to French-speaking Canada; or even more so (as in the case of the Massif Central and Brittany migrants) to Paris, an increasingly dominant capital as a center of industrial and commercial interest.³²

In 1911, it was estimated that there were 300,000 French nationals in the Americas and 279,000 in Europe, their combined amount being a bit less than the 606,000 in Algeria.³³ This is in sharp contrast to the capacity of the United Kingdom or Germany before 1900 to export millions of migrants, either to their empires or to the United States, the dominions, or Brazil. The explanation for this French weakness in accompanying its colonial project with a coherent migration policy obviously refers to the profound divergence in the comparative demographic growth of the three countries. It was at the time when the new foundations of the colonial empire of the Third Republic were being laid that the French population experienced a demographic crisis with a falling birth rate and a high mortality rate, resulting in years of a population deficit on the eve of the 1914 war.³⁴

By the end of the nineteenth century, instead of being a nation of emigrants like its neighbors, France became a nation of immigrants long before other countries.³⁵ Even with the agricultural crisis, which hit it like other Western European countries at the end of the century, the French peasantry, made up of a mass of small landowners, resisted for a long time the proletarianization toward industry. Moreover, when ruin approached or when the heirs no longer had sufficient landed property, the landowners preferred to turn to urban crafts, to “self-employed” small business in commerce or industry, or to small jobs in the local or national civil service. Employers in large-scale industry, incidentally less developed and concentrated than in the United Kingdom or

31 See Dudley Baines, *Emigration from Europe 1815–1930* (London: Macmillan, 1991), table on 10 (for detailed figures, see also Charle, *La crise des sociétés impériales*, 184).

32 From 1850 to 1954, the population of the Paris metropolitan area grew more than sixfold (1 million to 6.7 million). In 1954, it included 21.8 percent of French industrial production and 31.9 percent of trade and services (Jean Bastié, “La population de l’agglomération parisienne” [The Population of the Paris Region], *Annales de géographie*, no. 359 [1958]: 13, https://www.persee.fr/doc/geo_0003-4010_1958_num_67_359_16828).

33 Jacques Dupâquier, ed., *Histoire de la population française* [History of the French Population], vol. 3 (Paris: PUF, 1988), 505.

34 Dupâquier, 354 et seq.

35 See Gérard Noiriel, *Le creuset français: Histoire de l’immigration, XIXe–XXe siècle* [The French Melting Pot: History of Immigration, Nineteenth–Twentieth Century] (Paris: Seuil, 1988); Gérard Noiriel, *Population, immigration et identité nationale en France, XIXe–XXe siècle* [Population, Immigration, and National Identity in France, Nineteenth–Twentieth Century] (Paris: Hachette, 1993).

Germany, then recruited part of their workforce among immigrants from Belgium (in Nord and Pas-de-Calais), Italy (in the Marseille region, Grenoble, and Lyon), Spain and Portugal (in the southwest region), and later Poland (in Nord and Lorraine) and North Africa (in Paris and the Marseille region).³⁶

One could say that France, because of its specific demographic and economic development, became an inverted imperial society. This came to pass not by populating external territories like other imperial societies but by bringing in or attracting workers from dominated countries or countries with a surplus of labor, as most European or, more generally, developed countries did after 1945. It was thus confronted, earlier than others, with social and racial tensions (cf. the anti-Italian riots at the end of the nineteenth century)³⁷ and with the political effects of this discriminatory migration regime that allowed nationals to avoid the most arduous or poorly paid work.³⁸

But is this a “globalization project” or the result of independent causalities over which the elites or those in charge have little control? In the first phase, it is the unintended consequence of multiple long-term historical factors: the partial redistribution of part of the landed property after the French Revolution (sale of the national goods) and the principle of equal division of inheritance in most regions imposed by the Civil Code made it possible for a large number of people living in agriculture or in the countryside (craftsmen and merchants) to remain almost self-sufficient and thus alien to the industrial society that was beginning to dominate northwestern Europe.³⁹ Facing competition from other industrial countries, the French economy positioned itself within certain high-end niches in textiles or luxury goods, which David Todd calls “velvet capitalism”⁴⁰ and which implies a qualified workforce much more than a proletariat hastily trained on the job, appearing later during the “second” industrial revolution (chemistry, mechanical industry, and new consumer goods), where many women, for-

36 Benjamin Stora, *Ils venaient d'Algérie: l'immigration algérienne en France 1912–1992* [They Came from Algeria: Algerian Immigration to France 1912–1992] (Paris: Fayard, 1992), 18 and 145 (160,000 resided in the Paris region after the war; chronic unemployment accelerated emigration to France, despite the obstacles imposed by the authorities; they numbered 250,000 in 1958; it was also in France that the most radical independence movements were born between the wars and that the organizations were financed by deductions from the more or less voluntary salaries of migrant Algerian workers [163]).

37 Gérard Noiriel, *Le massacre des Italiens, Aigues-Mortes, 17 août 1893* [The Massacre of the Italians, Aigues-Mortes, August 17, 1893] (Paris: Fayard, 2010).

38 Ralph Schor, *L'opinion française et les étrangers 1919–1939* [French Opinion and Foreigners 1919–1939] (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1985), 211 et seq; Claire Zalc, *Melting shops. Une histoire des commerçants étrangers en France* [Melting Shops: A History of Foreign Traders in France] (Paris: Perrin, 2010).

39 François Bourguignon and Maurice Lévy-Leboyer, *L'économie française au XIXe siècle* [French Economy in the Nineteenth Century: An Essay of Econometric Analysis] (Paris: Economica, 1985).

40 David Todd, *A Velvet Empire: French Informal Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* [Un empire de velours: L'impérialisme informel français au XIXe siècle], trans. Joseph Felix (Paris: La Découverte, 2022).

mer farm workers, and immigrants were employed. This particular social equilibrium is also partly responsible for the birth restrictions that spread much earlier in certain regions of France (southwestern France, Normandy, and the Paris Basin) than in an industrialized country like the United Kingdom. In the latter, fertility would remain high in the working classes even later and child labor would supplement the resources of working-class families, whereas in a still predominantly peasant France, additional heirs among small landowners would endanger the survival of the farm if it had to be divided.⁴¹

It would be wrong, however, to cite only anonymous collective factors or those visible only at the level of social groups. Contemporaries, especially some members of the elites,⁴² were well aware of the harmful effects of the decline in the birth rate, which weakened France at a time when other neighboring countries had the capacity to mobilize many soldiers due to their high fertility and when military power was based on compulsory military service. However, despite a constant populationist and familialist discourse held by both the governing republicans and the Catholic conservatives since the end of the nineteenth century and, concurrently, its implementation with the 1920 law that criminalized abortion and propaganda against contraception, then with the Code of French Family and Birth (*Code de la famille et de la natalité françaises*, 1939), and finally with the exaltation of large families under the Vichy regime, practical effectiveness was delayed until the postwar baby boom. The private behavior of some of the bourgeoisie and the elites, moreover, generally contradicted the official rhetoric, as studies of family size in the upper classes reveal.⁴³ It is therefore a question of a more or less conscious Malthusian collective choice referring to a social ideal of theoretical equality (which in no way excludes strong inequalities in fortunes and incomes)⁴⁴ while preserving, as far as possible, inheritances and protecting companies and capital from external disturbances, in particular with the return to protectionism in the 1890s.

This may seem in part the opposite of a globalization project and outward economic expansion. However, this is partially or indirectly reflected in the gradual creation of protected markets linked to the colonies (especially in the interwar period). While this benefited some sectors such as textiles and the food industry, at the time of decolonization it would be very harmful for those regions that had established these privileged

41 For the number of children per couple by social category before 1914, see Charle, *La crise des sociétés impériales*, 172.

42 The school of social science founded by Frédéric Le Play, through its sociological analysis of the working class and its antirevolutionary political project, rejects the property rights principles that derive from the Civil Code.

43 See the previous note and Christophe Charle, *Les élites de la République (1880–1900)* [The Elites of the Republic (1880–1900)] (Paris: Fayard, 1987), 335.

44 Adeline Daumard, ed., *Les fortunes françaises au XIXe siècle* [French Fortunes in the Nineteenth Century] (Paris and La Haye: Mouton, 1973); Thomas Piketty, *Les hauts revenus en France au XXe siècle* [High Incomes in Twentieth-Century France] (Paris: Grasset, 2001).

relationships overseas, such as the textile industry in the north and east, the ports of Bordeaux and Marseille, the wine trade in Algeria, and certain mining companies or processing industries linked to plantations (e. g., rubber in Indochina).⁴⁵

Does this paradoxical Malthusianism, since it contradicts the discourse of greatness and the civilizing mission held at the top on the political or cultural level, only translate the internal tensions of a society whose evolution escapes the injunctions of the ruling elites? It would thus be a sort of French version of what British historians have called “absent-minded imperialism” in the United Kingdom, whose empire expanded thanks to activist minorities while the mass of the population did not really adhere to it at the beginning or only used the imperial outlet as a second chance when it had not found its place in a highly unequal and hierarchical class society.⁴⁶ In this case, by the way, the British emigrants tended to go to the United States, Canada, or Australia and rarely to the African or Asian colonies.⁴⁷

In fact, what the sociologist Henri Mendras calls “the second French revolution” to summarize the major economic and social developments of the post-1945 period⁴⁸ shows that there is no intrinsic link between the French social evolution of the nineteenth century and the French globalization project in its various imperial forms. The accelerated modernization of the economy (thanks in particular to the Marshall Plan) after 1945; the relaunched demographic expansion (thanks to the baby boom years, which broke with the former Malthusianism); the renewed immigration not only from the former empire (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, sub-Saharan Africa, or the Far East) but also, above all, from poor Europe (Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Yugoslavia);⁴⁹ the gradual disappearance of school barriers between a primary education reserved for the “people” and a secondary education reserved for the middle and upper classes; the mass expansion of higher education from the 1960s onward; the drastic reduction of

45 On this mixed result at the economic level of colonial protectionism, see Marseille, *Empire colonial et capitalisme français*. For reflections on the economic balance, making a comparison with the British case, see also Bouda Etamad, chapter VII, in *Les empires coloniaux, XIXe–XXe siècle*, ed. Pierre Singaravélou (Paris: Seuil, 2013).

46 Andrew Porter, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Nineteenth Century*, vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

47 Fabrice Bensimon, *L'Empire britannique* [The British Empire] (Paris: PUF, 2013), 40. According to Andrew Porter, 57 percent of the emigrants went to the United States, 20 percent to Canada, 13 percent to Australia and New Zealand, and only 10 percent to the rest of the world, including the other British colonies (Andrew Porter, *Atlas of British Overseas Expansion* [London: Routledge, 1991], 85).

48 Henri Mendras, *La seconde révolution française 1965–1984* [The Second French Revolution 1965–1984] (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), new ed. (Paris: Gallimard, 1994).

49 In 1975, there were 758,000 Portuguese, 710,000 Algerians, 497,000 Spaniards, 462,000 Italians, 260,000 Moroccans, and 139,000 Tunisians in France (a total of 6.2 percent of the total population, a rate slightly lower than that of 1931: 6.5 percent). See Patrick Weil, *La république et sa diversité. Immigration, intégration, discrimination* [The Republic and Its Diversity: Immigration, Integration, and Discrimination] (Paris: Seuil, 2005), 16, 18.

the agricultural population; and the further expansion of cities and industry—all of these ruptures with the specific characteristics of Third Republic imperial society took place against a background of painful decolonization, as if two competing globalization projects coexisted in the discordance of the 1950s and 1960s.⁵⁰

On the one hand, there was a globalization project that was old and difficult to erase at the moment when it seemed anachronistic in the eyes of the rest of the world and of a part of the elites. On the other hand, there was another that was new and partly inspired by the model of the imperial society of the United States—in which it was possible to reconcile external dominance or cultural transmission without official colonies—and relying on the Europe of the Six, in which France would play a central political role before the United Kingdom joined the Common Market (1972), or on the entry of all into consumer society thanks to credit and the forgetting of the austerity regime of France and its disconnected villages. The latter gave way to a France of *grands ensembles* (large housing estates) and suburban houses where life was organized around shopping malls, as in the suburbs of the United States, thanks to the widespread use of the private car. This new France at the end of the twentieth century entered into crisis in the twenty-first century—as indicated by the presence of the far-right candidate in the second round of the presidential election in 2002; the rejection by a majority of the European constitution in 2005; the alternations in 2007, 2012, and 2017 in each presidential election; the periodic riots in certain suburbs with a high immigrant population; the revolt of the Yellow Vests movement in 2017–18; and the growing and massive abstention in elections including presidential voting.⁵¹ For a large part of the population, the previous globalization project seems to have been rejected, with all the protests advocating the withdrawal and the refusal of the outside, whether it is “global” or “European.”

A New Imperial Society?

Sociologists who have analyzed recent changes in French society have proposed numerous terms to describe these contradictory tensions in society between “winners” and “losers” of globalization. The essayists have especially emphasized a long-standing

50 On the adaption of colonial entrepreneurship to decolonization, see Catherine Hodeir, *Stratégies d'Empire. Le grand patronat colonial face à la décolonisation* [Strategies of Empire: The Colonial Big Entrepreneurs in the Face of Decolonization] (Paris: Belin, 2003).

51 On the sociology of this mobilization of “peripheric France,” see Laurent Jeanpierre, *In Girum: les leçons politiques des ronds-points* [In Girum: Political Lessons from the Traffic Circles] (Paris: La Découverte, 2019), 76–84. On the geography of this movement, see Le Bras, *Tableau historique de la France*, 96–97. The main zones are situated in rural and desertified France, where cars are necessary to keep touch with rarefied services.

French specificity: the feeling of decline and the pessimism of public opinion in the short, medium, and long term, which is more prevalent than in other comparable countries that have reached the same stage and are experiencing the same conditions.⁵² Starting in the Gaullist period, the ruling circles themselves rediscovered a new mobilizing discourse of “greatness” based on a certain idea of modernity (for example, under the presidency of Georges Pompidou, the “industrial imperative,” or, with Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, the project of a France of the “middle classes” inspired by the United States⁵³) or a revival of the universalist cultural message of France (under the presidency of François Mitterrand with the exaltation of the revolutionary heritage during the commemoration of the bicentenary, the revival of the European political project, and the support for the democratization of the allied African regimes).

From that point forward, political elites have seemed incapable of renewing the threads between past, present, and future, without which a globalization project, imperial or not, would not make sense (just think of the contradictory messages of Presidents Nicolas Sarkozy and Emmanuel Macron to Africa or Algeria). The last elected presidents only came to power by stigmatizing or rejecting parts of this heritage and only found fragile majorities (as the rapid left, right, and center alternations indicate, since 1986) based on a rejection that leaves part of society out of the game, with a discourse of “crisis” now well established since the 1980s, as the French economy has continued to suffer from massive unemployment, rapidly deindustrializing while maintaining high levels of deficit, whether in public finances or in trade balance.⁵⁴

This dark image has long dominated essayistic and journalistic literature as well and undoubtedly explains the continual rise of extreme right-wing ideas and parties, as the last presidential election in 2022 (with two far-right candidates more or less nostalgic for French Algeria or Vichy) and the entry of a group of 89 Rassemblement National deputies into the National Assembly have once again demonstrated. The latter,

52 Bibliography is very abundant on this theme. See in particular Béatrice Giblin, *Le paradoxe français: entre fierté nationale et hantise du déclin* [The French Paradox: Between National Pride and the Fear of Decline] (Paris: A. Colin, 2017); Christophe Guilluy, *Fractures françaises* [French Fractures] (Paris: Flammarion, 2013). The analogy with the interwar period is striking. See Robert Frank, *La hantise du déclin. La France 1920–1960: finances, défense et identité nationale* [The Fear of Decline, France 1920–1960: Finance, Defense, And National Identity] (Paris: Belin, 1994), new ed. (Paris: Belin, 2014).

53 Christophe Charle, “The Middle Classes in France: Social and Political Functions of Semantic Pluralism from 1870–2000,” in *Social Contracts Under Stress: The Middle Classes of America, Europe and Japan at the Turn of the Century*, eds. Olivier Zunz, Leonard Schoppa, and Nobuhiro Hiwatari (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2002), 66–88.

54 Philippe Ashkénazy, *Les décennies aveugles: Emploi et croissance 1970–2014* [Blind Decades: Employment and Growth 1970–2014] (Paris: Seuil, 2014); Ludvine Bantigny, *La France à l’heure du monde de 1981 à nos jours* [France in the World from 1981 until Today] (Paris: Seuil, 2013); Nicolas Dufourcq, *La désindustrialisation de la France 1995–2015* [The Deindustrialization of France 1995–2015] (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2022).

consciously or unconsciously, cultivate the memory of the old imperial society hierarchically divided between the “native French” (called “patriots” or “Gauls”) and the “others” (migrants, “first” and “second” generation immigrants, foreigners, or “Islamists”).⁵⁵ They also denounce the representatives of cosmopolitan capitalism responsible for the globalization that is crucial to the French working and middle classes.

Can we still characterize France today, as I did at the beginning of this chapter, as an *imperial society*, implying a certain project for a collective and encompassing future and a relative consensus around a certain national pride that could serve as a model to the outside? Without blurring either the failures accumulated in the last decades by the ruling groups or the reluctance shared by many French people according to surveys (especially the younger generation), France still retains some essential attributes of what I have defined as an imperial society: a cultural influence and a social and economic attractiveness that are maintained, despite increasingly discriminatory and so also intended migration policies,⁵⁶ through a positive international image that generates a high level of tourist flow (holding the first rank in the world in 2017) (even if it is increasingly distant from the reality experienced internally) and a relatively large international political and military influence on a global scale (even if this is quickly diminishing, as we have just seen in West Africa, and is more and more dependent on the United States, as we have seen during the Syrian crisis).

For the first time in its history, France also counts a strong minority of expatriates (1.6 million in 2021) active in numerous countries, not just in its former empire (which was unparalleled in colonial times).⁵⁷ The country’s overall student body comprises 11 to 12 percent coming from abroad (358,000 foreign students in 2020), even with the dilapidation of part of its higher education system.⁵⁸ It maintains a political message of openness in international forums based on human rights (notwithstanding often shameful compromises based on economic or strategic considerations with countries that do not respect them). It keeps a certain influence in international institutions (seats on the United Nations Security Council, International Monetary Fund [IMF], United

55 See the chapter by Therese Mager.

56 François Héran, *Le temps des immigrés. Essai sur le destin de la population française* [The Time of Immigrants: Essay on the Destiny of the French Population] (Paris: Seuil, 2007), 26 et seq.

57 While the French emigrate less overall than residents of other comparable industrialized countries (twentieth rank in Europe among those aged 15 and older at the beginning of the twenty-first century), the emigration rate of those who have completed higher education is now almost as high as in other European countries, with the exception of the United Kingdom: 4 percent (Héran, *Le temps des immigrés*, 75; Jean-Christophe Dumont and Georges Lemaitre, “Counting Immigrants and Expatriates in a New Perspective,” *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers*, no. 25 [2005]).

58 Christophe Charle, “Crises universitaires et réformes en France, l’éternel retour” [Higher Education Crises and Reforms in France, the Eternal Recurrence], in *L’Université pour quoi faire*, eds. Stéphane Beaud and Mathias Millet (Paris: PUF, 2021), 19–38.

Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], and climate conferences, thanks to allied or formerly colonized countries).

Finally, it pursues an activist cultural policy that serves as a model for other emerging imperial societies like China.⁵⁹ What it undoubtedly lacks most is a political elite capable of reconciling these orientations and even its remaining strengths. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that this elite is increasingly heterogeneous and out of touch with the “real country”⁶⁰ or is more and more fascinated by foreign models (neoliberal anglophiles, on the one hand, and authoritarian neosovereignists, on the other, with Europeanists of various stripes in between), all of which only win a minority vote in elections from a society that does not really believe to heed any of their speeches and is too disconnected from its own experiences while only perceiving the disadvantages (unemployment, competition with poor countries, decay of public service outside the big cities, and new European regulations imposed by distant authorities located in Brussels). The result is a feeling of personal and collective decline for many groups that hardly corresponds to the themes of greatness and ambition that one candidate or another regularly proposes as a new project.

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⁵⁹ In 2016, the Alliance Française had 800 locations in 112 countries; French schools abroad numbered 492 with 320,000 students, of French or local origin (according to Giblin, *Le paradoxe français*, 182).

⁶⁰ This phenomenon was particularly visible during the 2017 legislative elections with the arrival of a “Macronist” majority, in which the upper classes were particularly overrepresented and out of touch with the population since they were made up of newcomers without local roots. See Etienne Ollion, *Les candidats. Novices et professionnels en politique* [The Candidates: Newcomers and Professionals in Politics] (Paris: PUF, 2021).

- . *La crise des sociétés impériales: Essai d'histoire sociale comparée de l'Allemagne, de la France et de la Grande Bretagne (1900–1940)* [The Crisis of Imperial Societies: A Comparative Social History of Germany, France, and Great Britain (1900–1940)]. Paris: Seuil, 2001.
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French Utilities and the Infrastructural French Globalization Project (19th–21st Century)

For decades, French utilities—social and health services being set apart from this study—were oriented toward infrastructures and services earmarked for the development of a strong national economy (transportation, energy, etc.) and for the livelihoods and economies of local communities thanks to water grids and transportation networks. A vision of localness predominated, but the imperial and colonial expansion opened the doors to some development of utilities and establishment of public works firms overseas until the turn of the 1960s. These utilities acted as buttresses for a French globalization project based on the building of railways, harbors and canals, telecommunications, and power stations conceived by the multiple utility companies involved, which mobilized their know-how in securing French infrastructures abroad.

Nonetheless, rising competitiveness concerning the reinforcement of the French infrastructures, together with leftist minds pleading the reinforcement of the *appareil économique d'État* (state economic apparatus, that is to say the administration of an array of state-owned corporations), paved the way to a refocusing on national and local *modus operandi*—even if the overseas territories (Antilles, Nouvelle-Calédonie, La Réunion, etc.) were also involved. Later, fresh neoliberal trends—first, on a European dimension and, second, along a worldwide openness—questioned such ideological and business models, which led to more internationalized mindsets and practices from the 1990s onward. As a result, the infrastructural French globalization project diversified once again, shifting its foci to new regions of the world while revitalizing old relationships.

Local and National Roots of the Infrastructural French Globalization Project

First dedicated to local or national developments, management, and use, French utilities were directed by a philosophy of localness that involved local railway transportation; networks of small canals; waste, water, and energy management, and so forth. Utilities had even carried out the mission to supply the society and economy with shared services, following the philosophy of common goods—what is understood in France by *bien public* (public good) and *services publics* (public services)—and building up basic infrastructures (energy grids, canals, pipes, railways, ports, airports, etc.) to be financed by the state, by local institutions, or by market issues by quoted companies, along the diversified statutes inherited from the history of politics. It is either that the

investments and management of utilities had been decentralized and externalized for the sake of some liberal minds or that they had been taken control of by local or national authorities because of their low profitability and because political majorities asserted that a public control over utilities was necessary to avoid too much profit would be earned on common goods.

Railways had been privately set up but were nationalized in 1938 and merged into the Société nationale des chemins de fer français (SNCF), with gas and electricity undergoing the same process in 1946 with Gaz de France (GDF) and Électricité de France (EDF), as had already happened for the postal and telephone services in 1889 under the umbrella of Postes, Télégraphes et Téléphones (PTT, 1879). Numerous local institutions (municipalities or communities) demanded the public management of water, waste, and local public transportation, while other ones betted on externalization through concessions to private companies, for instance with water management (Compagnie générale des eaux in 1853 and Société lyonnaise des eaux et de l'éclairage in 1880).

Some paths of internationalization were still followed: telegraph networks crossed frontiers; the postal service made use of maritime connections—with the famous Malle postale for the state exchanges overseas, managed by private companies; and railway connections were managed between European railway companies. The first submarine cable connecting France and the USA was laid in 1869 by the Société du câble transatlantique français and connected Brest to Cape Cod, near Boston, via Saint-Pierre and Miquelon. But those services were quantitatively limited.

The Infrastructural French Globalization Project through Imperialism (1850s–1914)

France challenged its competitors—mainly the United Kingdom, Belgium, and Germany—for international economic expansion. An example is the Société lyonnaise des eaux et de l'éclairage, which was founded for “the acquisition, purchase, leasing, and operation, in France and abroad, of any concession and undertaking relating to water and lighting.” The progressive accumulation of engineering and management skills in France itself could be valued through foreign investments and contracts, even more because the Paris banking marketplace could seize opportunities to finance foreign investments by French firms when they set up sister companies, for instance in Russia, the Ottoman Empire, or even China.

French utility companies were granted concessions to build and manage railway networks or commercial harbors. They were French rooted because of the headquarters being located in Paris, comprising boards and general assemblies, and of the flows of francs to foster the capital and bonds issues, thanks to investment banks, colonial banks, and, for subscriptions, retail commercial banks (with in reverse dividends to be paid to French shareholders—with sometimes Belgian, British, Dutch, or even German

interests as co-stakeholders). Lead managers and engineers were mainly French even if more and more managers and technicians as well as the overall workforce were of local origin. And often French public works entities assumed the building of such services while industrialists could supply equipment.

Internal Western European competition prompted financiers to sponsor railway companies in Spain—as for the Pereire (*Compañía de los Caminos de Hierros del Norte*, with the Madrid–Irun line, in 1856) and the Rothschild (in 1856, this entity merging in 1898 with *Compañía de los ferrocarriles de Tarragona a Barcelona y Francia*)—as private societies until the creation of the public Renfe in 1941.

The Ottoman Empire lured investors and engineers, spurred by *Banque impériale ottomane*, the representative of French capital, in competition with *Deutsche Bank*—supervising the Berlin–Byzance–Baghdad (BBB) railway—and the German–Swiss *Compagnie des chemins de fer orientaux*–*Chemins de fer Beyrouth-Damas-Hauran* (1891) to connect Beyrouth to Damas, followed by *Société ottoman du chemin de fer Damas-Hamah* (1901), *Smyrne-Kassaba* (1901), *Chemins de fer Constantinople-Salonique*, under the guidance of Philippe Vitali, the head of a big public works firm. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Russia became a key target in addition to mining, industry, and banking. French investors and engineers accompanied a company that equipped and managed the navigation of the Moskva River and the Neva River; they set up in 1898 the *Compagnie centrale d'électricité de Moscou* (with the Belgian *Compagnie internationale d'électricité*); they conceived the Nord–Donetz line through a huge project financing the building of a 600-kilometer long railway in 1908 and a few other railways (*Altaï* and *Ouest-Oural* lines by the *Chemins de fer russes*).

Transatlantic business also drew French utilities to Latin America, despite the hegemony of British and then US interests there. Investment banks supported French engineering to conceive and manage railways (in Argentina with *Compagnie française des chemins de fer de la province de Buenos Aires* in 1905, with a 1,600-kilometer railway, and also in 1911; in Chile with *Chemin de fer longitudinal Nord-Sud du Chili* in 1910) and harbors (in Argentina, in Puerto Belgrano in 1911; in Brazil, in Pernambuco in 1906–1909 and Pará in 1906–1916), while Parisian-based bank *Société Générale* oversaw the Callao Port in Peru from 1887, financing it and directly managing its development with French engineers. A primary example of this internationalization move was the Beijing–Wuhan line, financed and built by a French coalition from 1898 (1,136 km) until its Sinicization in 1908.

The Infrastructural French Globalization Project through Colonialism (from the 1880s until the 1950s)

The second colonization move paved the way for investing initiatives under French financial and technical control as the empire was mainly a preserve for French interests.

The economic development of each territory required basic infrastructures, first harbors and railways and then electricity (beginning in the 1920s). “Civilization will follow the locomotive,” argued Governor Paul Doumer. The Banque de l’Indochine and the Paris marketplace set up Chemin de fer de l’Indochine et du Yunnan in northern Indochina in 1901 to assert French predominance in Tonkin.

Public and especially private railway companies crisscrossed North Africa. In Tunisia, several private companies were launched by Italian, English, and French investors—like the Algerian Compagnie des Chemins de fer Bône-Guelma (from 1876 to 1922, when the state set up the Compagnie fermière des Chemins de fer tunisiens). The Compagnie des Chemins de fer algériens (1860) built the first sections before being taken over in 1863 by the Compagnie des chemins de fer de Paris à Lyon et à la Méditerranée (PLM), which was more technically and financially able to build the basic network (Algiers–Oran line, etc.). The Compagnie de l’Ouest algérien (1881) established multiple local routes. Then a vast program was designed in 1907 to connect these networks; implemented until the 1930s, it was based on more public funding. But the PLM remained powerful: although its networks and those of Compagnie de l’Ouest Algérien were nationalized in 1921, it managed most of them afterward, alongside a state-led network. The network of the Compagnie des Chemins de fer du Maroc (created in 1920 by banking groups and the Compagnie du chemin de fer de Paris à Orléans and the PLM) was less dense but grew from 585 kilometers in 1926 to 1,550 kilometers in 1936.

Sub-Saharan Africa emerged as a target for utilities through state programs and the competition of private public works firms. Railways joined the ports and hinterlands: the Dakar-Saint-Louis line (265km in 1885), the Dakar-Bamako-Koulikoro line (1,287 km in 1904–1924), and South-North lines in Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, and Dahomey. While the Transcamerounais, launched by Germany, was finalized by France in the 1930s (Douala-Yaoundé line), the Congo-Ocean line doubled the Belgian line between Pointe-Noire and Brazzaville (over 590 kilometers in 1921–1934). A 1,054-kilometer line linked the Gulf of Guinea to Sudan, from Abidjan to Bouaké (1912) then to Bobo Dioulasso (1933) and finally Ouagadougou (1955). Several public works firms took advantage of these construction yards and become specialists of overseas utilities (Société de construction des Batignolles, Société française d’entreprise de dragages et de travaux publics, Grands Travaux de Marseille, and Schneider). In Indochina and sub-Saharan Africa, “river courier” companies complemented these networks.

The colonies were equipped with modern ports, according to successive programs (Pointe-Noire, Douala, Casablanca, Haiphong, several in Algeria, etc.). A big, efficient harbor was developed in Algiers as early as the 1830s–1840s with long piers, supplemented by other ones in the interwar years in 1950–1953 and 1961–1963. Saigon even became the eighth largest French port for tonnage in the late 1920s. Abidjan grew gradually, with a second wharf in Grand-Bassam, a wharf in Vridi, and a canal of Vridi finally, inaugurated in 1950. Morocco was equipped with ports in Safi and Casablanca before the First World War; then a huge program conceived in 1913 led to a large

port in Casablanca in the 1920s. In each overseas city port and in mainland France, multimodality took shape between navigation, rail, and road; warehouses housed the stocks arriving and departing while ferries and dockers ensured loading and unloading, with probably several tens of thousands of workers dedicated to merchant flows with the empire, French or indigenous.

A new wave of investments focused on electrification. Morocco became a key target of these investments, aimed at providing energy to mining companies, harbors, and cities. In connection with private engineering, electrotechnics, and public works companies (Schneider, etc.), private and state programs were launched in the 1910s–1920s—with a first dam on the Oum El-Rebia River in 1929 and a few coal thermal power plants in Casablanca and Rabat (completed in the 1950s). Meanwhile, several gas and electricity companies were established in the Maghreb empire to manage local production and distribution networks (e. g., the Société constantinoise d'énergie électrique, the Société franco-algérienne d'électricité, etc.), and water utilities were active too (e. g., the Société algérienne des eaux, etc.), several of them depending on metropolitan firms like Compagnie Française Thomson-Houston, whose Compagnie générale de distribution d'énergie électrique managed electricity in Algiers with a major plant in 1907, ceded in 1912 to the Compagnie centrale d'énergie électrique and taken over in 1920 by the Société algérienne d'éclairage et de force, with a new big power plant and another one in Oran being built in the 1920s.

The heritage of the colonial empire was preserved for long after the wave of independences at the turn of the 1960s. The influence of French utilities could still be exerted through contracts for advice in engineering and management, as for new railways in Mauritania (1963) and Gabon (1974–1983). Transfers of technology prevailed; French companies or their subsidiaries developed connections with the new authorities, which needed to enhance their own utilities to face urbanization (water management), the demand for electrification, and the management of harbors and railways. The competition from non-French companies took shape from the 1980s–2000s by European and then also Chinese firms.

The Suez Canal as a Symbol of the Infrastructural French Globalization Project (1857–1956)

With the convergence of imperial and commercial expansionism abroad, Saint-Simonian spirit of positivist development of entrepreneurship, and techniques provided by the first industrial revolution, the idea of connecting the Mediterranean and the Red Sea was seized upon by diplomat Ferdinand de Lesseps. He succeeded in convincing the Egyptian and Ottoman authorities to grant to a French group the concession of a canal through the Isthmus of Suez in 1854 (until 1968). He relied on the Paris marketplace to supply the funds to the Compagnie universelle du canal maritime de Suez, created in

1858, on the technical engineering gained in establishing a dense network of canals in France itself, on industrial knowledge to produce dredgers and tugboats, and on the management skills concerning shipping flows in harbors to establish the canal, the Port Said harbor, and maintenance workshops.

Following its opening in November 1869, the Suez waterway became a major axis for shipping—which explains why in 1875 the UK purchased 44 percent of the capital of the company that had been appropriate for Egypt because the latter had been struggling against financial crisis; as a result, in the 1880s, 10 of the 32 members of its board of directors were Englishmen, among which were shipowners. From the 1880s onward, a dual supervision of the canal took shape, with the French company managing the waterway and the British Empire controlling Egypt.

French engineers and managers led the company until the 1950s from Paris, Port Said, and Ismailia, but they also relied on Greek pilots and various submanagers or workers coming from east and central Mediterranean countries. Through its Europeanized capital, its workforce, its basket of ever-renewed techniques for managing the transit or deepening the canal, the company embodied “growth in open economy” even if a huge majority of the shipping companies crossing the isthmus were British, with German, Dutch, Norwegian, and Italian ships in the twentieth century, joined by Japan and the USA in the interwar period.

The efficiency of the canal was supported by the technical units in ports, which provided ship maintenance and maintenance services for small- and medium-sized vessels and for the canal fleet (tugs, floating cranes, dredges, etc.), thanks to major equipment (presses, foundry, large fleet of machine tools, forge, underwater work, or engine repair).

In 1930, a fifth of the tonnage passing through the Suez was transported by diesel-driven vessels; the growing world economy and the development of overseas empires benefitted greatly from this technological advance. Transits through Suez went up exponentially: between 1895 and 1900, some 3,400 to 3,500 vessels passed through annually, then 6,000 in 1928–29. The yearly tonnage of transit reached records of 20.3 million in 1912, 33.5 million in 1929 and 36.5 million in 1937. Although the Indian peninsula dominated the trade links, the Far East also played a part, as did Oceania and East Africa. Understandably, due to its crude oil, the Middle East too figured prominently in the 1930s (from 2 percent of transits in 1913 to 24.8 percent in 1938). South-North trade dominated the flow and accounted for two-thirds of transits in 1910–1930 as well as in 1935–1937. Cotton, cereals (Indian and Australian wheat and rice), cane sugar, groundnuts, copra, soya, oilseeds, and so forth were sent to Europe as were rubber, jute, and Indian hemp and manganese. Later, Indonesian and Middle Eastern crude oil, too, joined the list. In the 1950s, the canal benefited from the oil revolution and the flows of Asian minerals to welcome more and more South-North traffic. The company succeeded in balancing funds earmarked for the successive programs for modernization (eight from 1870 to the last in 1955–1960) and in delivering important dividends, as it reaped

huge profits—until the nationalization of the canal in July 1956 by the anti-imperialist Gamal Abdel Nasser.

Beyond financial aspects, the impact of such an internationalized utility for the French economy could be summed up by the dramatic progress in the management of waterways and harbors in France itself, in its empire, or even in some Chinese–French concessions. The skills of public works firms were sharpened among their technical and engineering teams, with a chain effect all along the sector, until their subcontractors. A transnationalized capital of experience could thus be developed abroad—even if Lesseps's Panama Canal was a financial failure (1878–1889).

The Contestability of French Utilities, from Liberalization to Transnationalization (since the 1980s)

The key question being asked since the 1980s was: What happened to the spirit of public service, the values of the general interest or common goods, and the control of public power at the heart of the transformation process of the economy of public services/utilities? A European framework for the regulation of entities was conceived; they became “services of general economic interest” (SGEIs) within the ideological framework of liberalization and deregulation even if the legislation continued to strongly regulate SGEIs.

Without unpacking here economic public law or meditation on the new macroeconomic balance of collective services, we must determine how the entities managing SGEIs have been increasingly subjected to financial, economic, and social issues: they were facing challenges regarding their identity and national roots, hence the use of the concept of contestability. Every guaranteed position or local and national monopolies failed because of the liberation of calls for tenders and concessions under the influence of the USA and then of the UK, which led the European Union to open its doors to transnational competition for utilities (air travel, railway, port management, water management, waste management, and energy).

Governments had to adopt decisive laws in 1984 and 1998 for transportation and in 1992 and 2010 for general utilities. An international agreement, the Trade in Services Agreement, was even designed in the 2010s between the European Union and 22 countries (with the USA) to liberalize the economy of public services; even if it had not been concluded, it epitomized the philosophy of intensifying competition in public services. The hunt for dismantling situation rents became little by little a rule through the questioning of the duration of public service delegations and the imposition of rigorous standards of transparency in the negotiation processes upstream and in the management downstream—which could not but entail profitability. These liberalization and competition policies, impulse by the European Union, led to a complete paradigm shift: it aligned the management of collective services linked to the general interest with

the management of collective services integrated into the market economy, hence the terms *marketization* or *commoditization* used in this regard, even more when some utilities firms were quoted on the European stock exchange market (Euronext) and were thus submitted to financialization philosophy.

Such strategic turning points opened the doors to foreign offensives, mainly in energy, then in public transportation. This revolution shook business models and enterprise culture: Could French utilities resist such challenges? Internationalization and transnationalization were strategic paths to be followed to “reinvent business models.”

The Building of Big Utility Groups (since the 1990s)

Paradoxically, the name Suez was reawakened in the field of utilities at the end of the twentieth century. Since 1958, after the end of the Egyptian adventure, it has become the brand name of a financial group, the Compagnie financière de Suez, with its investment bank Indosuez and then with the purchase of the financial holding Société Générale de Belgique in 1988, which controlled several energy utilities. Both were dismantled, and their assets scattered among several groups. A mere holding survived—the Compagnie de Suez—which merged in 1997 with Société lyonnaise des eaux et de l'éclairage, of which Suez had become the controlling stakeholder in 1967–1974.

The Société lyonnaise des eaux et de l'éclairage launched a strategy of internationalization beginning in 1980, mainly in Asia (Macao Water in 1985) and in the UK (Northumbrian Water in 1996, until 2018). In 1988, for the first time, the users served in the distribution of drinking water abroad exceeded those of France: 13 million against 10 million. Whatever the innovative nature of each operation, this did not change the center of gravity of the group: the Société lyonnaise des eaux et de l'éclairage remained a French firm in its power centers, its information networks, and its decision-making procedures; it remained organized around a separation between France and its international enterprises. The process of weaving a transnationalized business model was completed in the 1990s–2000s, after a expansion boom (Buenos Aires, Sydney, Mexico, Rostock, and in a few cities in China in 1993; Manila, Jakarta, and Casablanca in 1997); in 1997, it had 40 million customers for water services abroad compared to 13 million in France. The water and waste management sectors from the various entities were finally merged, leading to the subsidiary Suez Environment in 2002.

Through several financial stages, the group, renamed Suez in 2001, controlled utilities in France and in Belgium, with the Belgian leader Electabel in 2003–2005). This strategy evolving from finance to utilities led to a binational “champion.” It was still reinforced in 2006–2008 when it merged with GDF after the privatization of that coleader of French energy (shared with EDF, which stayed under state control because of its major nuclear plants). GDF Suez was thus born as a giant in utilities: water management, waste

management, overall energy, and energy services to companies. Its name changed to Engie in July 2008.

Transnationalization therefore prevailed as a real European group took shape between 1988 and 2008. The legacy of the Suez Canal was not only a name but also a refreshed spirit of enterprise, now oriented toward a large grouping of utilities, with France and Belgium acting as the historical basis of Engie. It became the third-largest worldwide group in energy (besides oil firms) and supervised a huge subsidiary specialized in nonenergy services, which reused the name Suez within the field of environmental activities (mainly water and waste management).

In parallel, each surviving group revolutionized its business model, and the French economy was equipped with an array of utility champions: EDF and Engie in energy; Suez, Veolia (the inheritor of the *Compagnie générale des eaux*), Paprec, and Saur in local services; SNCF and its subsidiaries Keolis for local transportation services—competing with a subsidiary of the public financial group Caisse des dépôts (Transdev)—Geodis for freight road transportation; and La Poste for postal services, not to mention local public entities. The reshuffling was pursued in 2021–22 when Engie sold its stake in Suez to its rival Veolia. Because the regulator intended to preserve some basic competition, Suez survived with its assets in France and few others abroad, but it had lost its main aspects of a transnationalized group.

The threat of a competitive market for utilities, first mainly on a European field, exerted crucial influence. Those French firms faced stiff competition in France, mainly on the European level, and then worldwide. They were therefore able to achieve their strategies of European and transnationalized developments as “multi-utilities” groups.

Transnationalized Strategies: Water Utilities at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century

This strategic revolution was embodied by the expansion of the infrastructural French globalization project through the establishment water utilities all over the world at the turn of the twenty-first century. Three parallel strategies were followed: for Europe, the USA, and emerging countries. In Europe, there were first concessions gained in Germany with Veolia (Berlin in 1998–2029) and Suez-Eurawasser; in Italy (Suez in Pisa in 2003); and in the UK (Southern Water for Veolia in Northumbrian in 1995—sold in 2003 because of its thin profit margin—Northeast Water, Essex and Suffolk Water for Suez, with 4.3 million inhabitants for potable water and 1.6 million for potable water and 2.6 million for water treatment). Suez allied with the Catalan group Agbar and then purchased it in 2014, establishing solid footholds in the Spain market. The Central and Eastern European countries were also prospected. In the USA, the first contracts were signed in 1998 with Atlanta, the very first large city to privatize water management,

and Milwaukee, leading Suez to control in 2000 the US Water Resources. Australia was penetrated, first in Sydney.

The Chinese boom allowed Suez to federate a consistent pole: Chongqing, Shanghai, and Qingdao, in addition to Macao, were among the 15 cities where it started managing water and sanitation services for a total of 12 million inhabitants through Sino-French Water Development, a joint venture with Chinese partners, at the start of the 2000s. In 2002–03, Veolia obtained water management in the city of Shenzhen (2.2 million inhabitants), near Hong Kong, and in the Pudong district (Shanghai), as well as the management of several water treatment plants. Both also used the association with local communities or societies.

Emerging countries were integrated into this foreign strategy: their giant agglomerations became targets for a transfer of legal and financial expertise and liquid flow management technology. Such a privatization provided a solution to the lack of a sound public economic apparatus; the revenues generated by the management of water networks would go to the expenses necessary for their maintenance and extension. The groups affirmed their desire to become actors of sustainable development and to demonstrate the viability of capitalist intervention in water management in urban agglomerations, even in deprived neighborhoods.

South Africa was a main target (with ten million inhabitants served by Suez in 2002 in the Eastern Cape, the Limpopo province, and Johannesburg), accompanied by Morocco (Casablanca in 1997, with 4 million inhabitants), the Philippines (Manila in 1997), or the Middle East (Amman and Gaza in 1999). Footholds were established in Mexico (7.5 million people served in 2002, including 5 million in half of Mexico City), Chile (Santiago in 1997), Argentina (Buenos Aires in 1993, then the world's largest water concession with 9 million inhabitants), and Brazil. Suez had 9,000 employees in Latin America.

The group could also rely on Degrémont, a subsidiary that provides water treatment technologies and engineering for the construction of its sanitation equipment. All in all, French water capitalism gained some geopolitical and societal legitimacy, beyond its grip on revenues and profits, and the valuation of the common pot of its technologies and engineering.

Following Strategies of Europeanization and Transnationalization in the Twenty-First Century

Energy became a major field for the internationalization of utilities. The young GDF Suez, or Engie, defined a strategy of external growth: in 2010, it purchased the UK International Power, rich with plants in the USA and Australia, and united its assets with its subsidiaries abroad into New International Power. It then became world's first energy utility. Throughout the 2010s, it acquired all over the world societies specialized in

“energy optimization,” for instance Transportadora Associada de Gás in 2019, managing half of the gas pipes in Brazil. Engie’s workforce reached 171,000 in 2019, including not only 137,000 in Europe but also 6,300 in North America, 14,300 in Latin America, 6,700 in Asia and Oceania, 3,500 in Africa, and 3,100 in the Middle East. Europe (with 47.3 billion euros) accounted for a large part of the turnover of 60.1 billion euros, ahead of Latin America (5.3 million euros), North America (4.5 million euros), Asia and Oceania (1.7 million euros), the Middle East (1 million euros), and Africa (0.2 million euros).

Such a rapid and intense growth led to some oversized and overindebted conglomerate at the turn of the 2020s, which explains the reason for the sale of its stake in Suez and of a large part of its activities downstream—management of energy in buildings, for example—to Vinci, a public works company, in 2022. It refocused thereafter on its key assets in utilities as a champion able to compete with Spanish Iberdrola, German RWE, Swedish Vattenfall, or Italian ENEL, to contest the growing influence of Chinese firms in Asia and Africa, and to develop its core skills in gas transportation and thermal plants. While getting rid of its big coal thermal plants (in Australia or elsewhere), it invested in “renewable energy” developments. It is a strong hydroelectric producer in Brazil, the USA, Belgium, and the UK, and it manages wind farms in Canada, Portugal, Australia, Latin America (Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru), Morocco, and South Africa.

On the other hand, the state-controlled EDF had to deal with its own management problems, which depended on the successive governments’ fluctuating policies regarding the financing of its capital, the opening up to European competitors, and the brakes on the restart of an investment program in the nuclear sector, which deprived it of its strong time-tested skills in engineering and led to missing foreign orders, despite a few in China. Nevertheless, it succeeded to launch a technological program dedicated to giant nuclear plants, the European Pressurized Reactor, then the Evolutionary Power Reactor (EPR). In parallel with one plant in France, it set up contracts in Finland and in the UK (two at Hinkley Point, two at Sizewell). But the costs jumped considerably because of big technical deficiencies, and these projects resulted in severe financial setbacks. The alliance with Chinese company China General Nuclear Power Corporation (CGN) has been oscillating more and more: the CGN surpassed EDF on the technological field and concluded contracts in China or elsewhere, and their alliance for a plant in England suffered from the Western demonization of the CGN alongside the anti-Chinese geoeconomic offensive.

Beyond this nuclear industry, EDF designed an international overall strategy in 1990 and chose a few countries as targets to build solid subgroups. The UK prevailed with three companies: London Electricity Board in 1998, SWEB Energy in southwestern England in 1999, and Seeboard in southeastern England in 2002. They merged into EDF Energy in 2002, which acquired in 2008 British Energy, a privatized nuclear power production company, making EDF Energy the largest electricity producer and distributor in the UK. In 2018, EDF Energy employed 15,000 people and had 5.4 million

clients—even if retail distribution activities, equipped with a grid of power lines serving London as well as southeastern and eastern England and providing electricity to 7.9 million, were sold in 2010 to alleviate its debts. The second target was Italy, with first developments beginning in 2005 and the purchase of #2 Edison in 2012.

All over the world, EDF has offered its electro-technological engineering services as advice or as plans for building plants, with hydroelectric power stations like in Brazil in 2019, in Cameroon, in Chile, and so forth, as well as with solar parks (Abu Dhabi) and wind power plants (two in Italy, a huge park in Arabia, etc.). Its subsidiary RTE International, specialized in high-tension grids, acted in parallel in consulting and auditing, providing technical support, or providing equipment. Three strongholds emerged with a 30 percent market share in the UK, Italy, and Belgium; and all in all, 30 percent of the turnover is obtained out of France in 23 countries.

Table 1. EDF's production capacity of electricity, 2021 (Mwe)

Location	Mwe
France	93,195
Abroad (26.64%)	33,849
Europe (16.08%)	20,431
United Kingdom	10,853
Italy	5,826
Belgium	2,047
America (7%)	8,891
USA	5,810
Brazil	1,579
Asia (3.56%)	4,527
China	3,417

Water and waste management evolved considerably to confront the financial and technological requirements of the infrastructural French globalization project. A harsh capitalist battle occurred in 2021 when Veolia launched a bid offer on its rival Suez, which had become independent of Engie and succeeded in concluding huge contracts abroad in the 2010s: water desalination plants in Mexico or Australia and management of water infrastructures in India (New Delhi, Calcutta, Bangalore, Madras, or Mumbai) with 44 million Indians connected in 2016. The intent was to build another French champion in public services able to reach the size required by the globalization project, with the ability to prospect markets while investing massively into water and waste management because of the size of urbanization and high-level consumption, in the Middle East and Asia, for instance. The merger was achieved in 2022, even if the regulation rules to avoid a monopoly were imposed to preserve Suez in France. But Veolia, as a giant company with 230,000 employees, of which 50,000 come from Suez, will assume the transnationalization of its capital of competences all over the world.

Veolia followed a transnationalized strategy, first in the Middle East: 100 million inhabitants there were in need of more and more equipment in public utilities—with seawater desalination plants, water and waste management, air-conditioning systems in commercial malls or buildings—and more and more recycling of polluted waste due to oil and gas plants. The same plans were undertaken in China to tackle contaminated waste, in association with oil group Sinopec (2016). The remnants of Suez itself offered a serious foreign implantation with positions in China, India (since 1978), Australia, the Middle East, and Africa (Morocco, Senegal, and South Africa), which produced 25 percent of its turnover in 2021, with an objective of 40 percent a few years ahead to rebuild its international scope.

Postal services jumped from the sole French market to the European market when La Poste became aware of the necessity to become competitive for the transportation and distribution of parcels. Within the new digital commercial ecosystem, orders exploded when firms directly delivered their consumption goods, either being specialized (like Amazon, Rakuten, CDiscount, etc.) or joining the trend in parallel with their networks of shops. La Poste had to sharpen its skills in that field to evolve from a niche company (Chronopost from 1985) to a large company (Colissimo) and commonplace mass deliveries (business to business and business to customer); it had to be competitive to attract the commercial firms and get their trust. This explains the reason for the creation of Geopost in 1999, which purchased companies managing the DPD franchise all over Western Europe, first in Germany in 2001 (Deutscher Paketdienst, then from 2008 Dynamic Parcel Distribution), or elsewhere, before uniting its brands under the DPDgroup trademark in 2015.

In parallel, the group took over companies in parcel transportation and delivery in Europe (Seur in Spain in 2004, Siodemka in Poland in 2014, wnDirect in the UK in 2014, and BRT in Italy, etc.) and abroad (partnerships in Turkey in 2003 and purchases in South Africa, India, Brazil, Southeast Asia, Egypt, Dubai, etc.). In 2021, DPDgroup was active in 24 European countries. In the 2020s, this branch received 85 percent of its turnover from international subsidiaries, with 41,000 of its 48,000 employees active abroad. While La Poste was steadily increasing its banking and finance retail activities through its French network and under the umbrella of the public group Caisse des dépôts, it revolutionized its business model and culture, thanks to the development of express transportation and delivery, which embodies the third industrial revolution through the offered massive, rapid, and transnational services.

Transportation as public utilities was also affected by internationalization. Public companies (SNCF, Keolis, a subsidiary of SNCF with a share of 30 percent by the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, Transdev, and Régie autonome des transports parisiens (RATP) and private companies (for local bus management) were threatened by European rivals obtaining concessions and market shares in France. They decided to answer it not only by launching offensives in Europe and then abroad to counter-attack—for instance, in front of Deutsche Bahn, Renfe, or Trenitalia—and preserve

their turnover but also and mainly by sharpening their skills and benefitting from their technical and managerial competitive advantages. It was a revolution of their business culture as they had relied for decades on employees with privileged social statuses and on a monopolistic way of life.

It was therefore a huge jump into the struggle to get new concession contracts on foreign markets. First, SNCF could rely on its sister companies joining London (Eurostar), Belgium and the Netherlands (Thalys—merged into Eurostar in 2023), Italy, and Switzerland in the wake of a joint venture with Chemins de fer suisses (CFF) set up in 1984 for high-speed train (TGV) connections, before the Lyria brand was adopted in 2002. Second, each European railway company fought to get concessions for regional services: in the USA, SNCF (through Keolis) won contracts in the Greater Boston area (the sixth largest US suburbs network in 2014), before establishing itself in Virginia (2009) and Massachusetts (2014). It broke through into the UK (London Docklands, Manchester, and then Wales in 2018), Sweden (2003), India (Hyderabad, 2003), or Australia (Melbourne in 2017), before Qatar (RATP in 2017). As early as 2016, SNCF laid off 50,000 employees outside of France versus 210,000 inside France and obtained a third of its turnover abroad, while Keolis got 40 percent of its turnover from its foreign concessions in 2017. In 2018, Keolis began operating the Pujiang line, the first automatic line of the Shanghai metro, as well as the Songjiang tram lines in the suburbs of Shanghai, and it also won a contract worth 6 billion euros to operate the entire Wales rail network: the Wales and Borders network. Last, SNCF intended to manage its own trains between a few countries and started in Spain in 2020.

On the other side, Transdev has grown in France in public transportation since 1989; with the Transdev brand since 1992, its priority was to develop regional coach connections, which led to a portfolio of skills to be exploited in other countries, succeeding in gaining contracts in the USA for fixed-route and shuttle bus systems in several states, in Sweden, and especially in Germany. In 1997, Transdev bought London United, which operated 8 percent of London's buses and won tenders from Nottingham (tramway), Porto (metro), and Melbourne (tramway); it then became the world's leading tram operator. It claimed to be one of the first European public transport operators, especially when, in 2006, it took control of the first Dutch operator, Connexxion, even though it abandoned its activities in Germany, Sweden, Belgium, and Finland in the early 2010s.

Only a few large target areas remain: France, the Netherlands, Canada (purchase of Voyago in 2019 and of the Ontario Line in Toronto in 2022), the UK, Southern Europe, and the Asia-Pacific. With Trenitalia, it cofounded Thelio for a Franco-Italian railway network in 2011 but retired in 2016 from the undertaking to refocus on regional connections, with the plan to relaunch direct lines to Italy in 2025. The perspectives of an alliance with the strong German utilities group Rethmann might be considered after that latter acquired 30 percent of its capital in 2018 and after they merged their transportation activities in Germany, which became thus the second foreign market for Transdev behind the USA.

Following quite the same track, RATP, which managed public transportation in Paris and its suburbs (bus, metro, and tramway), reacted to the threat of losing its monopoly in 2023 and anticipated such a revolution. It set up the RATP-Dev subsidiary in 2002 to prospect tenders in French regions and more and more in foreign ones. It intended to value its capital of competences in the management of lines on a large range of skills to bring overall “solutions” beyond mere driving means of transport. All in all, RATP asserted itself as the third-largest worldwide operator of public transports, with a presence in 14 countries in 2022: London, Italy (Florence and Arezzo), South Africa (Johannesburg), India (Mumbai), Egypt (metropolitan Cairo), etc.

In parallel, RATP and SNCF could rely on their common engineering subsidiary SYSTRA—resulting from the merger of each of their subsidiaries in 1992—to develop transportation infrastructures before implementing management programs. From 50 percent of the turnover obtained abroad in 2012, its shares jumped to 70 percent in 2019, thanks to either the diffusion of its capital of technical reputation or external growth, with specialized companies purchased in 11 countries.

Overall concessions in public services prospered all over the world. First, state authorities longed to finance huge investments to extend and refurbish basic equipment. Second, such an externalization could alleviate the cost of managing public employees. Third, private firms gained more power to negotiate subcontracts and there too to cut expenses. Fourth, economic patriotism had to be taken into account in face of the harsh offensives by Chinese firms.

Airports became a target of infrastructural French globalization project: the state-controlled *Aéroports de Paris* (ADP) wished to spread its baskets of skills abroad, while Vinci, a public works firm, bet on the revenues of concessions to stabilize its revenues, diversifying from motorways to airports (since 1995 in Cambodia) and with ten continental airports (mostly since 2013 in Portugal). Vinci Airports purchased 12 platforms from the US Airports Worldwide in 2018 (Orlando in Florida and other ones in Costa Rica, Sweden, and the UK) and succeeded in the UK (London-Gatwick, purchased as a property in 2019), in Japan (Kansai), or in Brazil (seven airports conceded in 2021). It became in 2019 the second-largest worldwide company, in number of transiting passengers on that (air)field of operating airports, behind Spanish AENA (241 million passengers) and ahead of German Fraport and French ADP (226 million passengers together). But ADP started to challenge internationally its rival and commenced prospecting concessions, the first at Chile (Santiago de Chile, 2016), Turkey (46 percent of Istanbul airport, 2017), and Jordan (Amman, 2018). ADP International (from the ADP Group) thus managed thus 28 airports in 13 countries by 2021.

Concessions of maritime harbors were also concluded by Bolloré Transport and Logistics—a group having prospered since its first paths in 1992, thanks to external and internal growth—in Africa. It managed ports (container terminals and “day ports” connecting maritime and road or railway transport) in several countries (Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Cameroon, Senegal, etc.). But it sold this subsidiary to the Swiss Mediterranean

Shipping Company (MSC) in 2022 to focus on media, either in France or in sub-Saharan Africa (through the purchase of Multichoice in 2024).

Conclusion

Like the whole economy, the growth of public services or utilities under the umbrella of the infrastructural French globalization project was driven by managers and engineers with a spirit of openness to Europe, especially since the shareholders of companies, almost all private until 1938 (railways) or 1946 (energy), outside telecommunications and ports, were led by business bankers eager to make the Paris marketplace participate in the international expansion of capitalism. The financial ambitions and entrepreneurial spirit converged to highlight the technologies and the capital of skills of these companies and spread them abroad, in particular to respond to the British or German offensives, then also North American. Such growth prospects in the open economy explain not only the breakthroughs in Russia as well as the Middle East and Latin America but also the huge project of the Suez Canal.

The construction of a huge colonial empire in Africa and Asia provided an even more exciting opportunity for the infrastructural French globalization project. In each territory, the public authority combined the private and public sectors for the growth of infrastructures and services essential to boost the economy of “development” of natural resources, urbanization, and the daily lives of the populations, whether they were indigenous or European. From the 1890s to independence in the 1950s and 1960s, a field was opened for the deployment of technological engineering and know-how in the management of a public service.

After the relative decline caused by decolonization and the priority given first to the reconstruction and modernization of France—in face of the North American offensive in Europe in particular (the construction of the economic union of Western Europe, the growing integration of transatlantic economies, and the multinationalization of enterprises) followed by transnationalization—changed the European and transnational economic framework. They were stimulated by a global competition for technology markets, particularly in the areas of water and waste management, public transport, energy, postal services, and port management.

The French utility companies therefore had to fight so that the infrastructural French globalization project did not lose ground to European or Asian rivals and in turn to build up counteroffensive technical, managerial, and financial schemes. The dominant thinking in France and especially in Europe in favor of the liberalization of the public service sectors stimulated these struggles since companies, public or private, all engaged in European and transnational deployment strategies.

Thus, there have been several stages in the lives of public service companies: from simple internationalization and colonization to the revival of internationalization and

then to transnationalization—all within the framework of the infrastructural French globalization project. At each of these stages, it became necessary to alter the mentalities and thinking of managers, public or private, to adapt the corporate culture, to diversify the portfolio of technical and managerial know-how, and finally to welcome foreigners among the leadership teams. As a result, the infrastructural French globalization project shifted, expanding and contracting according to the needs and aims of the public works firms.

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French Socialism between Nationalism and Internationalism

The history of socialism is difficult to separate from the idea of “internationalism.” And when speaking of this connection, France occupies a special place. Spontaneously, the famous refrain of the “Internationale” comes to mind: “L’Internationale sera le genre humain” (The international will be the human race). This French song, composed by Eugène Pottier after the Paris Commune of 1871, crossed the world and became the anthem of Soviet Russia and later of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) from 1917 to 1943.¹ It remained a song sung by all the communist parties and, for a long time, by the socialist parties in many countries; and even by the various factions of the extreme left. In China, the “Internationale” is still the official anthem of the Chinese Communist Party.

This immense echo of the “Internationale” has something to do with the original aim of socialism: the idea of socialism refers a priori to a postnational imaginary where the frontiers drawn between proletarians would eventually be abolished.² However, in reality, socialism, especially in France, was built within the national framework. It was de facto “nationalized” by its involvement in the concrete management of power, from “municipal socialism” to the management of the state at the national level.³ Moreover, within socialist organizations, some people were sometimes able to exalt a specifically “national” socialism to the point where their statements came close to the nationalism that ran through the entire political field.⁴ The fact that the “Internationale” is of French origin is an example of ambiguity: the French have long thought of themselves as the legitimate depositories of the revolutionary and socialist heritage.

These contradictions between nation, nationalism, and internationalism have been highlighted in numerous studies since the emergence of scientific research on the labor

1 Marc Ferro, *L’Internationale. Histoire d’un chant de Pottier et Degeyter* [The Internationale: History of a Song by Pottier and Degeyter] (Paris: Noesis, 1996).

2 For a “cosmopolitical” approach to socialism, see Étienne Balibar, *Cosmopolitique. Des frontières à l’espèce humaine. Écrits III* [Cosmopolitics: From Borders to the Human Species. Writings III] (Paris: La Découverte, 2022).

3 Jean-Jacques Becker and Gilles Candar, eds., *Histoire des gauches en France* [History of the Left in France] (Paris: La Découverte, 2004).

4 Jean-Numa Ducange, “Nation,” in *Histoire globale des socialismes*, eds. Jean-Numa Ducange, Razmig Keucheyan, and Stéphanie Roza (Paris: PUF, 2021), 372–380. See also the special issue of *Actuel Marx* 2 (2020): “Nation(s).”

movement in the 1960s.⁵ But now we can revisit the topic in light of new research findings and important methodological developments related to transnational and global history.⁶ For half a century, there has been a national historiography of French socialism and communism, extremely prolix and rich, but objectively focused for a long time mainly on French realities,⁷ while historiography abroad, although considering such realities essential, had already somewhat “provincialized” them.⁸ Thus, in an attempt to create a distance from a certain “methodological nationalism,” I try to take transnational aspects seriously, but without considering everything as transnational. I continue what I have already pointed out for the period 1880–1914 in a chapter of the *Cambridge History of Socialism*, but focusing here on the French case.⁹

I treat “socialism” here in a broad sense: that is, I include the many political currents that emerged from socialism, especially the French Communist Party (Parti communiste français, PCF), which was a structuring party from the 1920s to the early 1980s. I also include (but in a more secondary way, to avoid a long list of examples) certain parts of the extreme left and the trade unions that also had an influence on this history. Still in terms of vocabulary, I will use the term “socialism” first of all because the Socialist Party (Parti socialiste, PS) has existed under this name since 1905 and until today. In France, there has never been a so-called “social democratic party,” and the adjective “social democratic” is not systematically used to refer to the French PS, as some of its members wanted to distinguish themselves from the German and British developments.¹⁰

Instead of a linear history, I have chosen to address three major questions that have arisen for French socialisms in their diversity throughout their history: the relationship to universalism and the international, the colonial question, and finally the relationship to European construction. These three points, while not exhaustive, allow us to understand the hesitations and ambivalences of socialists toward the various globalization projects they have faced since their emergence.

5 See, e.g., *Actes du colloque. Jaurès et la nation* [Proceedings of the Colloquium: Jaurès and the Nation] (Toulouse: Publications de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines, 1965).

6 Matthias Middell, ed., *The Practice of Global History: European Perspectives* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019).

7 See, e.g., Roger Martelli, Jean Vigreux, and Serge Wolikow, eds., *One Hundred Years of History of the French Communist Party: The Red Party* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022).

8 For example, in the *Cambridge History of Political Thought* (2002) French socialism does not appear as a central element in the chapters where this political ideology is discussed.

9 Jean-Numa Ducange, “The Second International 1889–1914,” in *Cambridge History of Socialism*, ed. Marcel van der Linden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 278–299.

10 Alain Bergounioux and Gérard Grunberg, *Le Long Remords du pouvoir. Le Parti socialiste français (1905–1992)* [The Long Remorse of Power: The French Socialist Party (1905–1992)] (Paris: Fayard, 1992).

Universalism and Internationalism: The Sources of Ambivalence

Let us first recall a basic definition of socialism, as it appeared from the 1830s onward in France under the pen of Pierre Leroux in particular: the adjective “socialist” designates those who, from a doctrinal and practical point of view, intend to establish new social relationships aimed at establishing social equality in response to the structural inequalities generated by the industrial society. Although there are French specificities from the beginning, socialism appears in several Western European countries in the first half of the nineteenth century and is thought as an ideology not limited to the borders of this or that country. However, beyond this general definition, no one has proposed a precise definition as such of “nation” and “international” from a socialist point of view. In reality, socialism has always fluctuated between defending the nation and/or emphasizing a postnational world, depending on the conjuncture. Over time, there has been a wide range of positions, from an “absolute internationalism” that rejects any reference to the national framework, which is perceived as negative, to forms of “national socialism,” some of which took the form of extreme nationalist currents.¹¹

Looking at the texts of the founders of “scientific socialism,” we see that this ambiguity existed from the beginning. In the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, it is difficult to characterize their position on the articulation between nation and internationalism beyond the slogan that concludes their text and calls for union (“Proletarians of all countries, unite!”) Indeed, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels only briefly address the national question by affirming:

The working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got. Since the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself *the* nation, it is, so far, itself national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word.¹²

We can then draw at least two interpretations from this quote. The first one is to underline the growing detachment of the proletarians in the context of capitalism; consequently, nobody has interest in feeding any “patriotism” that would delay the formation of the

11 On the ambivalences of internationalism, see besides our book *Quand la gauche pensait la nation. Socialismes et nationalités à la Belle Époque* [When the Left thought the Nation: Socialisms and Nationalities during the Belle Époque] (Paris: Fayard, 2021; forthcoming in English, Leyden: Brill, 2025) the detailed empirical study of the Cominternians by Brigitte Studer, *Reisende der Weltrevolution: Eine Globalgeschichte der Kommunistischen Internationale* [Travelers of the World Revolution: A Global History of the Communist International] (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2020).

12 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, chap. 2, 25, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Manifesto.pdf>; see also Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Marx and Engels 1845–48, Marx & Engels Collected Works*, vol. 6 (London: Lawrence and Wishart), 477–519.

consciousness of the working class. Conversely, if we insist on the last sentence of the quotation, we should take the “nation” seriously in certain circumstances, provided that we do not support the “bourgeois sense” of the word. In this case, then, one can defend the nation in order to advance the cause of socialism: everything depends on the constellation.

Since these references are very general, it is up to socialists of various stripes to define their relationship to the national fact. How does it look specifically in France? First of all, it must be emphasized that socialism in France has special characteristics compared to other European countries. Indeed, it has a special relationship with the international environment and with the various globalization projects that it will encounter in the course of its 200-year history. Certainly, there is a great diversity of currents, and it is better to speak of socialisms. Saint-Simon, Charles Fourier, Pierre Leroux, and, shortly after, Louis Blanc and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon have similarities, but also formidable discrepancies (especially on the question of the state and the use of the same).¹³ However, regarding the question of international relations, it seems to me possible to highlight common features in this early socialism (1830–1860), which will then strongly influence the further fate, in a certain way until today.

First of all, France is one of the great birthplaces of socialism, an ideology that will have a worldwide success. So, there is a kind of de facto centrality reinforced by the fact that in all histories of “utopian socialism” France is always mentioned as a major center of intellectual and theoretical production. From Engels’s famous *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (1883 German edition, 1892 English edition)¹⁴ to recent productions (e. g., rare and little-known texts of this socialism are still being published),¹⁵ the position of the French in the history of socialism is undoubtedly crucial. For its actors and admirers, French socialism has had a universal aura since the first half of the nineteenth century.

Moreover, this centrality is closely linked to the connection of this socialism with the revolutionary idea and its concrete translation into practice. French socialism is difficult to separate from republican and revolutionary history.¹⁶ Even though there were more moderate and reformist socialisms from the beginning (e. g., the adjective “socialist” was popularized by the politically more moderate Pierre Leroux), the revolutionary ideal largely overlaps with the goals of socialism. From 1789 to at least 1871, France appeared

13 François Jarrige, ed., *Quand les socialistes inventaient l'avenir 1825–1860* [When Socialists Invented the Future 1825–1860] (Paris: La Découverte, 2015).

14 Friedrich Engels, *Socialisme utopique et socialisme scientifique* [Utopian Socialism and Scientific Socialism] (Paris: Éditions sociales, 2021 [1880]). Significantly, this summary from the *Anti-Dühring* was first published in French (i. e., before German) with Engels’ approval. English edition: Friedrich Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, Marx/Engels Selected Works, vol. 3 (Progress Publishers, 1970), 95–151.

15 See in particular the publications of the Maison des Sciences de l’Homme de Besançon (Presses Universitaires de Franche-Comté).

16 Claude Mazauric, *L’histoire de la Révolution française et la pensée marxiste* [The History of the French Revolution and Marxist Thought] (Paris: PUF, 2009).

as the country of revolution par excellence, not that it was the only country where revolutions broke out in the nineteenth century. The entire European continent was affected in 1830 and 1845, and recent research has relativized the centrality of France, an overly rigid reading that saw France as the main impulse center.¹⁷ Nor should we forget the significant independence movements and protests outside Europe, such as the independence movements in Latin America, the Taiping Rebellion in China, and others.

Nevertheless, both the French Revolution of 1789–1794 and the Paris Commune of 1871 retained a specific aura for a long time: they laid claim to universality, and everywhere in the world the decisive events were known and thought about. No other “great” country could claim such universality in the nineteenth century. Even if the Revolution of 1789–1794 can sometimes be called “bourgeois,” it nevertheless shows the tangible way that a massive popular uprising can have to change the world. Many actors of the nineteenth century reasoned well in this way: the “Great Revolution” is indeed the French Revolution, in the eyes of many people.¹⁸ As for the Paris Commune, many socialists would quickly consider it to be a founding experience.

The scope of these French events must be considered over the long term and on a large scale. In 1944, just as France was about to end the Nazi occupation, *the* historian of the French Revolution, Georges Lefebvre, evoked it in heroic terms: “No sooner had they come down from the barricades than young men came to me and said: tell us about Her, as if they remembered the ‘Souvenirs du peuple,’ the moving song of Béranger [...] ‘Her,’ you can guess, is the French Revolution.”¹⁹ The Commune, for its part, is from the outset a “global” event, as Quentin Deluermoz has recently shown.²⁰ The fear it unleashed facilitated a rapid flow of information, at a time when the circulation of news from the press agencies was accelerating considerably. And even if they were criticized for their shortcomings (too short, no lasting takeover, etc.), the “Communards” executed during the Bloody Week became martyrs commemorated and celebrated by socialists around the world at the end of the nineteenth century. The communist movement from 1917

17 Sylvie Aprile, *1815–1870. La révolution inachevée* [1815–1870: The Unfinished Revolution] (Paris: Gallimard, 2020).

18 See, e. g., the Russian historiography by Tamara Kondratieva, *Bolsheviks et Jacobins. Itinéraires d'une analogie* [Bolsheviks and Jacobins: Itineraries of an Analogy] (Paris: Payot, 1989). More generally, see Jean-Numa Ducange, *La Révolution française et l'histoire du monde. Deux siècles de débats historiques et politiques* [The French Revolution and World History: Two Centuries of Historical and Political Debate] (Paris: Armand Colin, 2014).

19 Original in Georges Lefebvre, “D’Elle,” *L’Université libre*, no. 3 (September 23, 1944): “A peine descendus des barricades, de jeunes hommes sont venus me dire: parlez-nous d’Elle, comme s’ils se souvenaient des Souvenirs du peuple, l’émouvante chanson de Béranger [...] ‘Elle,’ vous vous en doutez bien, c’est la Révolution française.”

20 Quentin Deluermoz, *Commune(s), 1870–1871. Une traversée des mondes au XIXe siècle* [Commune(s), 1870–1871: A Crossing of Worlds in the Nineteenth Century] (Paris: Seuil, 2020).

onward reinforced this martyrological image of the Paris Commune of 1871 by making it the first concrete attempt of the proletariat to take power. In 1971, the Commune was celebrated all over the world, even in China, where the Maoist regime glorified it in the 1960s as a precursor to the Chinese Revolution. Fifty years later, in 2021, the commemorations still cannot be ignored. The Paris Commune remains an event of great international scope; although it has lost momentum, it has held up significantly better than the Russian October Revolution of 1917, for example, which has now to a great extent vanished into insignificance.

We believe that the long-term celebration of such events is one of the reasons for the “privileged” position of French socialism and communism. Even the Trotskyist extreme left (which was often antipatriotic and refused concessions to the national frame of reference) enjoyed significant success in France in the 1970s, making Paris one of the great capitals of political radicalism after 1968.²¹ This internationalization of socialism developed in the wake of the revolutions of the nineteenth century. The importance of communism and the particular strength of the May/June 1968 movement compared to other countries can therefore be understood not only as French peculiarities, but also in the context of the international echo to global events, whose specifically French dimension, however, has been scrutinized throughout the world.

Even if the manifestations are very different, one can assume that there is a commonality: Many leaders and activists of these currents, beyond all differences, felt that they had a special task at the international and global level. The “French” universalism that had emerged from the revolution of “bourgeois” origin was in a sense superseded by the various forms that socialist internationalism took.

Apart from formal declarations about the importance of France and the legacy of its revolutions, such views have very tangible implications: Can the French language, the language of its history and culture, become the international language of the socialist workers’ movement in a sense replacing the language of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment spoken by Frederick II of Prussia and Catherine II of Russia? The question was seriously posed in the nineteenth century, when German became the great language of socialist internationalism with the strength of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD).²² The idea that France remains the country of revolutions, without which nothing would have been possible, is an idea that was taken up by many actors in the twentieth century, at least until the 1970s. During the process of decolonization, the writer André Malraux—a former companion of the PCF who became an ardent Gaullist and a minister of culture—wrote these very symptomatic sentences in his *Anti-Memoirs* in 1967:

21 Xavier Vigna, *Histoire des ouvriers en France au XXe siècle* [History of Workers in France in the Twentieth Century] (Paris: Perrin, 2012).

22 See Sarah Al-Matary, ed., “Les langues de l’internationalisme ouvrier” [The Languages of Labor Internationalism], *Mil-neuf-cent. Revue d’histoire intellectuelle*, no. 1 (2021).

And wherever the revolution is called not by the proletariat but by the people, the preaching of the French Revolution, the glorification of the struggle for justice proclaimed by Saint-Just to Jaurès, by way of Michelet and above all by Victor Hugo, maintains a prestige at least equal to that of Marxism. In Africa, in Latin America, even when the technique of the revolution is Russian, its language is still French.²³

Aimé Césaire is part of this spectrum when he stated a few years earlier in his work dedicated to Toussaint Louverture: “The first service—temporal—that the Revolution has rendered to colonized peoples is that it has existed [...] The second is that the French Revolution proclaimed a principle of incalculable scope.”²⁴

But in reality, there is a gap between a heroic perception of French revolutionary history—of which Malraux’s words are a telling and at the same time almost caricaturing expression—and the actual balance of power as it has existed in the socialist movement since the 1880s. The real strength of French socialism and then of communism, and even of the extreme left, cannot be compared with the international echo of 1789. From the beginning of the twentieth century, when the Western European socialist parties became established and powerful organizations in several countries, the French “model” was largely challenged by the power of the German and Austrian social democracies of the German-speaking world. Very characteristic in this respect is the attitude of the Russian social democrats between 1880 and 1914. They certainly regarded France and its revolutionary tradition as essential. But the beating heart of the workers’ movement was now in Berlin; the great theoretical journal of world socialism, for example, was the *Neue Zeit*, where many Russian leaders wrote. There was no equivalent of such a journal on the French side. One could evoke “Erfurtianism”: that is to say, the importance of the 1891 Erfurt program of the German social democracy and its international impact.²⁵ It is impossible to compare this with, for example, the very real prestige of a Jean Jaurès, an orator listened to and admired at international socialist congresses, but whose theoretical-political influence next to a Karl Kautsky, for example, remains relatively negligible.

23 Original in André Malraux, *Anti-mémoires* [Antimemories] (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), 19: “Et partout où la révolution n’est pas appelée par le prolétariat, mais par le peuple, la prédication de la Révolution française, l’exaltation du combat pour la justice proclamée de Saint-Just à Jaurès en passant par Michelet et surtout par Victor Hugo, conserve un prestige au moins égal à celui du marxisme. En Afrique, en Amérique latine, même lorsque la technique de la révolution est russe, son langage est encore français.” See also André Malraux, *Anti-Memoirs*, trans. Terence Kilmartin (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), 135.

24 Aimé Césaire, *Toussaint-Louverture. La Révolution française et le problème colonial* [Toussaint-Louverture: The French Revolution and the Colonial Problem] (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1962), 343.

25 On “Erfurtianism,” see the introduction in Lars T. Lih, *Lenin Rediscovered: “What is To Be Done?” in Context* (Historical Materialism Book Series, vol. 9) (Leiden: Brill Academic, 2006), 1–37.

After 1917, one finds a similar phenomenon with the Russian Revolution: following this event, Bolshevism seems to have become the ideology of the twentieth century. One could celebrate the Paris Commune of 1871 as a founding event, but the center was now in Moscow. To a lesser extent, a similar process can be observed in the 1960s with the various socialist models promoted by regimes that distanced themselves from Moscow, each time pretending to link up with “true” communism while displaying universal ambitions: Josip Tito’s Yugoslavia, Enver Hoxha’s Albania, Mao Zedong’s China and not forgetting the dynamics of the “Tricontinental” around Cuba and Fidel Castro.²⁶ These movements, which were generating a strong accession dynamic, seem to have relegated socialism and even French communism to currents that were prestigious but outdated by the new models. All these countries wanted to stand up to Moscow, but also to the old imperialist metropolises in the context of an anticolonial and “anti-imperialist” dynamic at the international level. France was perceived here as a colonial power that had just experienced the collapse of its empire and whose driving force was no longer that of 1848 or 1871.

Apart from the internal power relations in the international labor movement, it is also necessary to bear in mind the relative decline of French influence in the course of the twentieth century, with the collapse of the colonial empire being one of the most important aspects. But other elements must also be cited. Given the early consolidation of national unity and the stabilization of the republican regime from the 1880s onward (despite the numerous crises it went through), French socialists took little interest in specific issues. Significantly, for example, there was no notable reflection on issues of national minorities. Before 1914, the national question in the French context can, to a certain extent, be regarded as largely settled, and critical reflections on the colonial order are relatively limited, though certainly present among some leaders (to which I will come back later). One must also note that French socialist theorists were virtually absent from and made no contributions to the great “imperialism” debate between 1900 and 1920. In the interwar period, French socialism, including communism, also did not provide leading intellectuals in Central Europe such as Georg Lukacs, who was of Hungarian origin but spoke German and lived in Vienna and later Moscow in the 1920s (and largely moved outside the French-speaking world). Communism captivated many intellectuals, but it is difficult to find a significant Marxist theorist in the 1920s and 1930s.²⁷ At most, I could cite the case of Henri Lefebvre, but he did not have the same political experience as the Hungarian thinker.

26 Olivier Dard, ed., *La Révolution culturelle en France* [Cultural Revolution in France] (Paris: Riveneuve, 2017); Françoise Blum, *Les partis communistes occidentaux et l’Afrique: une histoire mineure?* [Western Communist Parties and Africa: A Minor History?] (Paris: Hémisphères, 2021).

27 Isabelle Gouarné, *L’introduction du marxisme en France. Philosovétisme et sciences humaines, 1920–1939* [The Introduction of Marxism in France: Philosovietism and the Humanities, 1920–1939] (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2013).

Nevertheless, it is important not to underestimate the impact of the legacy of French socialism abroad in the long run and the subsequent outcomes it produces in turn. For example, although France's influence was waning, the history of the "Great Revolution" was still taught and known worldwide in the 1960s: 1789 was still considered a paradigm, with the most radical currents of 1793 and 1796–97 heralding later socialism.²⁸ Thus, even when the French Socialist Party seemed to pale in comparison to German social democracy and then to the Bolshevik Party and its powerful battalions, French socialism remained the bearer of the great revolutionary tradition of 1789, revived and "proletarianized" by the Paris Commune of 1871. No other European country has such a historical antecedent. Significantly, already beginning in 1935, the PCF integrated this legacy of the French Revolution from the Popular Front (previously it rejected this revolution, which it understood as primarily "bourgeois") and even made it one of its identity markers.²⁹

Be that as it may, and beyond the multiple divergences, "internationalism" was demanded by all, at least until the 1990s. However, the specific modalities differ: thus the PCF, from 1920 to the collapse of the Soviet Union, was well integrated into a system of international relations that was closely linked to the USSR. Even if some of its positions were vigorously patriotic, to the point of sometimes approaching a form of nationalism, it always claimed "proletarian internationalism." For a long time, this was an alignment with Soviet positions, even if this strong link to the USSR was not unilateral. It also involved regular and close exchanges with representatives of many nationalities. The recent publication of Maurice Thorez's private diary, with entries dating from 1952 to 1964, shows this aspect well: in addition to the Soviet leaders and the USSR ambassador in Paris, whom he assiduously met with, Thorez traveled a lot in the countries of the Soviet bloc and was interested in the history of many countries and cultures.³⁰ It is an internationalism that could be called "selective," since other countries (the USA and, after the Sino-Soviet rupture, China) were viewed very negatively politically. Nevertheless, this focus on the USSR did not prevent a certain patriotism, especially since the glorious history of the "Great" French and Russian revolutions is often recalled: "great" countries with "great" revolutions. Soviet internationalism could take up the baton of French universalism; the first could not exist, so to speak, without the second, at least in the minds of many French communists. And if one descends to the lowest level of the organization, one finds structures that made it possible to better understand the influence of this "Sovietophilia" (which has been the subject of several research studies). For example, in the 1960s, especially through Touristra, the travel organization

28 See, e.g., the Soviet textbook translated into many languages: Albert Manfred, *La Grande Révolution française* [The Great French Revolution] (Moscow: Naouka, 1983).

29 Jean Vigreux, *Le Front populaire* [The Popular Front] (Paris: PUF, 2016).

30 Maurice Thorez, *Journal 1952–1964* (Paris: Fayard, 2020). In German: Maurice Thorez, *Tagebuch 1952–1964* (Essen: Unsere Zeit Edition/CommPress, 2024).

linked to the General Confederation of Labour (Confédération Générale du Travail, CGT, the largest union in the country at the time, very close to the PCF) organized vacations in the communist orbit for a significant part of the lower classes.³¹ Here, too, the Eastern European countries occupied an important place. There is what might be called “Sovietophile globalization” (USSR and satellite states, mainly in Europe, but not only—there were numerous links with Cuba, for example), in which many French communist officials and activists participated. Even though it remained a minority on the scale of French society, this “Sovietophile globalization” was not inconsequential, and, from 1930 to 1980, it impacted a few million French people who learned about the international scene through the communist phenomenon.

On the socialist side, there was no such reference that could be considered the equivalent of the USSR. Nevertheless, the socialists were also highly involved in internationalization projects. Their “internationalist practices”³² were far from insignificant and testify to real and developed transnational relations. In response to the very coherent and structured communist movement, they sought alternatives abroad and were eager to rely on the Socialist International. Between the wars, the planism of Henri de Man in Belgium or the Austrian Otto Bauer’s Austro-Marxism were, for example, important sources of inspiration that gave rise to concrete intellectual and political exchanges, which is just beginning to be better understood.³³ Of course, the system was less structured and more “national” than for the PCF, for which the Communist International (Comintern) plays a decisive role. The French Section of the Workers’ International (Section française de l’Internationale ouvrière, SFIO)/the PS were also more occupied with the exercise of power (national as well as municipal), and their executives were regularly absorbed by their multiple tasks. Thus, there were definitely forms of internationalization that could also be found in radical left groups, which called for a pronounced internationalism that materialized through the existence of “mini-cominterns.”³⁴ For socialists, one of the most important factors in internationalization after 1945 (a phenomenon that was still in its infancy in the interwar period) was the question of European unification (which will be discussed in the third section of this chapter).

31 Sylvain Pattieu, *Tourisme et travail. De l'éducation populaire au secteur marchand (1945–1985)* [Tourism and Labor: From Popular Education to the Commercial Sector (1945–1985)] (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2009).

32 Talbot Imlay, *The Practice of Socialist Internationalism: European Socialists and International Politics, 1914–1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

33 Pierre-Henri Lagedamon is preparing a PhD at the University of Rouen Normandy on this topic.

34 Daniel Bensaid, *Les trotskysmes* [Troskyisms] (Paris: PUF, 2002).

Socialism and the Colonial Question: A Misunderstanding?

Just as it is difficult to systematically link socialism and internationalism, it is not so easy to place anticolonialism close to socialism. At first glance, socialism should be an ideology that challenges the colonial order because it is structurally unequal and contrary to the emancipatory aspirations promoted by the stated goals of equality. But the reality is clearly more ambivalent and complex and has been since the first steps of the socialist current.³⁵

Thus, at the time when the adjective socialist became widespread in France in the 1830s, a political and military event crucial to French history was taking place: the conquest of Algeria. On the surface, there is no direct connection between the two phenomena. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that there are much stronger links between the socialist project and the colonial conquest than has long been asserted in historiography. In fact, the first “utopian” socialists (sometimes called “conceptual”) shared dreams of colonial conquest and wanted to develop their utopian experience in Algeria. “L’Algérie française” (French Algeria) is an expression that often refers to the supporters of the nationalist right in the 1950s and 1960s; but it also has its origins in the left and socialism, which viewed this conquest positively. A large part of the French socialists whom Marx met in Paris between 1843 and 1845, for example, shared this perspective. This is one of the elements that explains why the author of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* initially considered French colonization in Algeria as positive in a general perspective of human “progress.”³⁶ Colonization, in this perspective, served as a means to push back “barbarism” to the profit of the “civilization.”

But even if Marx focused on the colonial question at the end of his days by being clearly more nuanced on the history and political perspectives of non-European peoples, globally, at the end of the nineteenth century,³⁷ justifying colonization in the name of socialism remained a horizon shared by a significant number of militants. Criticism was certainly beginning to be voiced, but the movement remained rather timid and limited. Indeed, it was a socialist influenced by Marxism, Paul Louis, who coined the term “colonialism” in 1905 with his work that radically criticized the French colonization.³⁸ And ten years earlier, in 1896, the congress of the French Workers’ Party (Parti ouvrier français), characterized by its Marxist leanings under the influence of Jules Guesde, had passed a motion criticizing colonization. But, for example, Guesde himself, one of the

35 Charles-Robert Ageron, *L’anti-colonialisme en France de 1871 à 1914* [Anticolonialism in France, 1871–1914] (Paris: PUF, 1973).

36 Jean-Numa Ducange, “The French Edition of *Le Capital* and the Question of Colonialism,” in *Marx and Le Capital. Evaluation, History, Reception*, ed. Marcello Musto (London: Routledge, 2022), 60–70.

37 Marcello Musto, *The Last Years of Karl Marx, 1881–1883: An Intellectual Biography* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020).

38 Paul Louis, *Le colonialisme* [Colonialism] (Paris: Société nouvelle de librairie et d’édition, 1905).

most important introducers of Marxism in France, defended in the French parliament a project of “socialist Morocco” carried out by one of his deputy friends, Lucien Deslinière, where it was explicitly a question of bringing socialism to the “natives” by sending white colonists to teach the inferior peoples how to develop socialism.³⁹ Jean Jaurès, on the other hand, who was more politically moderate than Guesde, was opposed to the project and was more sensitive to the peculiarities of non-European peoples. Thus, Jaurès, who was initially an ardent supporter of colonization, increasingly became a critic of the colonial order, even if he was still clearly operating within the framework of the French Empire.⁴⁰ Among the best-known figures of the time, the one who went furthest and was most consistent in his criticism of colonization was Édouard Vaillant, a former member of the Paris Commune of 1871. A “colonial socialism” thus coexisted with a critique—sometimes fierce—of the colonial order.

Looking at the actors and statements, it seems difficult to draw clearly defined ideological lines. Postcolonial criticism in France usually emphasizes the close link between republicanism and colonization, especially in the famous example of Jules Ferry in the 1880s, who simultaneously introduced important secular laws (*lois de laïcisations*, which made school free, secular, and compulsory) and carried out major colonial expeditions (the conquest of Indochina).⁴¹ It is certainly evident that the justification of the superiority of “civilization” was linked to the history of the consolidation of the republic. In the name of liberty, of the Revolution of 1789, and of the Enlightenment, some republicans confidently and firmly pursued a colonial policy. However, this is only part of the story: apart from the fact that from the beginning there was a republican opposition to colonization (embodied in 1885 by Georges Clemenceau, who later changed his positions), it was sometimes republican socialists who voiced criticism of colonization.

Looking at the communist side, it is interesting to observe the changing positions of the PCF in the post–World War I period. In the beginning, the Communist Party was characterized by clearly anticolonialist positions, following the guidelines of the Comintern, which propagandized the independence of the colonies. Communist leaders spoke out against the Rif War (1921–1926) in Morocco, especially Maurice Thorez, a little-known deputy from the north at the time. He was appointed general secretary of the PCF in 1930.⁴² Then he accompanied and embodied the turn in the international communist movement that led to the founding of the Popular Front in 1935. However, the broad alliance that the Popular Front brought (a union of socialists, communists, and radicals) meant a revision of positions on the colonial question. While the PCF became

39 Fabien Conord and Matthieu Fulla, “Lucien Deslinières. Un socialiste utopique au XXe siècle?” [Lucien Deslinières: A Utopian Socialist in the Twentieth Century?], *Revue historique* 674, no. 2 (2015): 353–382.

40 Jean Jaurès, *Le pluralisme culturel* [Cultural Pluralism] (Paris: Fayard, 2014).

41 In the wake of Edward Said’s work, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Classics, 1972).

42 John Bulaitis, *Maurice Thorez: A Biography* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019).

a strong party (15 percent of the vote in 1936), it was now much more hesitant on the colonial question and de facto abandoned support for independence efforts. In 1939, Thorez spoke of an “Algerian nation in the making,” meaning that the various population groups, including the French population that had emerged from settlement colonization, should be integrated into this nation. After 1945, the PCF advocated reforms within the framework of the French Union (Union française), the new name for the colonial empire. Even during the Algerian War (1954–1962), it was cautious for a long time about demands for independence, even if some of the activists wanted to go further.⁴³ Without going into further detail, one thing can be said for the period 1920–1960: there was no stable and fixed position on the colonial question; “internationalism” was confronted with a difficult situation and with important contradictions as well.

Thus, among both socialists and communists, there was a strong movement of “colonial reformism” that wanted to improve the situation of the colonized population without breaking ties with France. Léopold Senghor, in particular, embodied this movement and demonstrated the existence of a broad, non-communist movement (more likely centered around social democracy) that wanted to improve the situation of the colonized without causing a radical break.⁴⁴ This attitude has recently been reassessed by the historiography of anticolonialism, which until then had largely focused its attention on the most radical and “anti-imperialist” projects, such as those put forward by the communists of Ho Chi Minh, who was present at the founding congress of the Communist Party in December 1920. Both Senghor and Ho Chi Minh (one could also add other figures such as Franz Fanon) stressed the importance of the position of the colonial empire for the future of French socialism and communism in the twentieth century. The extensive engagement of these figures, spanning across the colonies and the metropolis, together with their international political and literary influence (such Senghor’s “Négritude” or Fanon’s radical anticolonial Marxism), contributed to a francophone globalization, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s.

In any case, it must be emphasized that the reform project of the French Union was the dominant perspective for a large part of the socialists for a long period of time. The improvement of the rights of the “natives” or the “évolués” (evolved) was considered within the framework of a close union with France, albeit facilitated and relaxed compared to the previous state of affairs. The decisions taken by the socialist head of government, Guy Mollet, in 1956, together with the traces he left in the collective memory, contributed greatly to discrediting these socialist-influenced attempts at reform. Indeed, starting in 1956, Mollet granted the army special powers (with the approval of the communists in parliament) that paved the way for torture in Algeria. The

43 Alain Ruscio, *Les communistes et l'Algérie. Des origines à la guerre d'indépendance 1920–1962* [Communists and Algeria: From the Origins to the War of Independence 1920–1962] (Paris: La Découverte, 2019).

44 Françoise Blum, “Leopold Senghor,” in *Histoire globale des socialismes*, eds. Jean-Numa Ducange, Razmig Keucheyan, and Stéphanie Roza (Paris: PUF, 2021), 1006–1013.

anticolonial left, which was gaining influence at the time and organizing on the margins or even against the socialist and communist political apparatuses, did not forgive him for such actions. Be that as it may, this mentioning of the Mollet government, apart from the indignation it provoked, testifies to the persistence in the ranks of socialism of the conviction of a certain superiority of France, a notion of worldwide influence that presupposes the maintenance of colonial rule, albeit adapted.

European Construction and Socialism

Significantly, the construction of Europe and globalization are two phenomena analyzed in very different ways in the French socialist scene. In the same way that the articulation between nation and internationalism is complex, the political positioning with regard to supranational structures such as the European Economic Community (EEC), and later the European Union (EU), has proved to be an important dividing factor.⁴⁵

Before 1914, strictly speaking, there was no clearly elaborated “European” project that could have served as a political-ideological matrix for the French socialists. Nevertheless, the perspective of many leaders was to find ways to establish a strong Franco-German union (especially through social and proletarian mobilization) in order to prevent a repetition of the war of 1870–71. In historiography, there was much discussion for a long time about the reasons for this “failure,” pointing out that the socialists had abandoned their internationalist demands. But there are continuities that must be highlighted: the accession to the *union sacrée* (sacred union) in August 1914 was in the name of Valmy and thus of the Revolution of 1792. When the French Republic is attacked, a socialist must defend it: with the exception of militant minorities, all accepted to merge socialism and nationalism. The imperative to defend the republican territory against the Hohenzollern Empire prevails. “Failure” and “betrayal” are political, not historical, terms: but it must be said that the attempt to create an internationalist culture had largely failed, or at least had not been able to avert the risk of war.

Moreover, without denying its shortcomings, it was demonstrated that the creation of the International Socialist Bureau (Bureau socialiste international, BSI) in 1900 was an important instrument of coordination at the European level, rather exceptional for the time, in which the French socialists (Jean Jaurès in particular) played an important role in trying to avert the war. The outbreak of war in 1914 and the persistence of the communist thesis of the “betrayal” and “failure” of the Second International prevented

45 Nicolas Azam, *Le PCF confronté à “l’Europe.” Une étude socio-historique des prises de position et recompositions partisans* [The PCF Confronted with “Europe”: A Sociohistorical Study of Partisan Positions and Recompositions] (Paris: Dalloz, 2017).

for a long time the study of the tangible practice of the BSI.⁴⁶ After 1918, a section of the socialists was no stranger to anti-German hostility. Nevertheless, many of their leaders criticized the Peace of Versailles (such as Jean Longuet) but supported the League of Nations approach and broadly approved of intergovernmental coordination between France and the Weimar Republic to maintain peace on the continent.

The communist movement, on the other hand, unequivocally and en bloc condemned the Treaty of Versailles. In 1923, the PCF protested against the occupation of the Ruhr by Franco-Belgian troops and carried out intensive “internationalist” propaganda. With regard to Europe, it rejected all attempts to build Europe and even the League of Nations, until Joseph Stalin, finally chose the path of diplomatic normalization in 1934. The radical internationalism that defined the communist movement before the change brought about by the Popular Front implied a rejection of all “bourgeois” constructions. This political line is partly found after 1945 in a new configuration. Indeed, the struggle against European construction was a guiding principle of the PCF until the mid-1990s. The battle against the “rearmament of revanchist Germany,” that is to say the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), was part of a broader refusal to accept the legitimacy of the Treaty of Rome (1957). In 1963, the PCF vigorously denounced the Élysée Treaty (which constituted the first act of tangible rapprochement between France and the FRG). The PCF then found more points of agreement with Charles de Gaulle and Gaullism than with the socialists on international issues. De Gaulle sought the best possible path for his country: while being part of the treaties and agreements of Western Europe, he wanted to give his country the means to express a singular point of view. De Gaulle thus made a strategic rapprochement with the USSR and left the integrated command of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the mid-1960s.⁴⁷ These two steps were warmly supported by a PCF aligned with Soviet positions. This is one of the key elements of the “Gaullo Communism” that structured the political life of the country at least until the 1980s,⁴⁸ when the PCF entered a crisis and declined structurally. One of the last expressions of this convergence between communists and part of the French right on issues of sovereignty and Europe was the campaign for the “No” vote on the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 (a well-known representative of the right at the time, Philippe Séguin, defended the “No” vote as did the PCF). However, the treaty was finally adopted by a very narrow majority, at a time when the “socialist countries” in the East had just

46 Andrea Benedetti, “Le Bureau Socialiste International face à la question coloniale: les difficiles chemins d’un traitement supranational, 1900–1914” [The International Socialist Bureau Facing the Colonial Question: The Difficult Paths of a Supranational Treatment, 1900–1914], *Jean Jaurès cahiers trimestriels*, no. 237 (2020): 27–45.

47 Maurice Vaisse, *De Gaulle et la Russie* [De Gaulle and Russia] (Paris: CNRS, 2006).

48 Pierre Nora, “Gaullistes et communistes” [Gaullists and Communists], in *Les lieux de mémoire*, ed. Pierre Nora (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), 357.

collapsed, marking the end of the Cold War and the beginning of a new international conjuncture.

In contrast, the French Socialist Party was the spearhead of European unification. Against the Warsaw Pact, it staunchly defended France's anchoring in the EEC and NATO. This "Western" commitment, among other factors, earned the party a certain isolation from political life in the 1950s and 1960s in the face of the power of the "Gaullo Communists." The antinomic positions between socialists and communists on these international issues were one of the points that made negotiations on a government program difficult.⁴⁹ And when the PS governed, it supported and consolidation European construction, even when communists were involved in the government. "Internationalism" had two different faces as both groups evoked the same principle. The "Sovietophile" globalization was contrasted with the "Europeanist" anchoring of the socialists: two different and competing globalization projects.

After the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the gradual expansion of the EEC, which became the EU in the 1990s, a clear political positioning toward Europe became inevitable. The previous positions were weakening. Part of the extreme left that emerged from Trotskyism, as well as the leadership of a weakened PCF, now tended to favor the European idea, which, despite its shortcomings, seemed to advance the cause of the peoples by abolishing borders. There were political slogans that speak of "another Europe." But the contradictions do not stop there: various groups, including some in the PS and part of the nebulous group around the PCF, were "sovereignist," suspicious or even hostile to Europe and globalization, which were associated with American power and to the idea of the loss of French sovereignty, which in turn was seen as one of the causes of the questioning of the welfare state as it had been built since 1945.⁵⁰ Jean-Pierre Chevènement, who led the left wing of the PS before becoming the founder of an independent sovereignist current, continually embodied this current from 1980 to 2000.⁵¹

An interesting paradox should be noted: the PS and PCF remained strongly linked to international organizations in the 1960s–1980s, but from the 1990s onward, with trade internationalization dramatically expanding, these parties seemed increasingly detached from international structures. However, it would be necessary to qualify this by including precise studies of European parliamentary groups and political foundations (operating largely as a network at the European level), among other phenomena; all

49 Alain Bergounioux and Danielle Tartakowsky, *L'union sans unité. Le programme commun de la gauche, 1963–1968* [Union without Unity: The Common Program of the Left, 1963–1968] (Rennes: PUR, 2012).

50 Pascal Delwit, *Les gauches radicales en Europe, XIXe-XXIe siècles* [Radical Lefts in Europe, Nineteenth to Twenty-First Century] (Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2016).

51 Jean-Pierre Chevènement held the post of minister several times. On his career, see Renault Metz, ed., *Jean-Pierre Chevènement. Le dernier des jacobins* [Jean-Pierre Chevènement: The Last of the Jacobins] (Paris: Nouveau monde, 2021).

these studies are lacking for the moment, at least as far as the French left is concerned. These elements and subjects must be documented by political science research and must be taken into account by historians of politics in the long run.

These observations can be concluded with an interesting anecdote. The way Jean Jaurès, the main founder of the PS in 1905, has come back into fashion in French politics testifies to a kind of narrowing of perspectives compared to previous decades. In the 1960s and 1980s, historiography of French socialism looked at Jaurès from an international perspective, especially in comparison with German and Russian social democracy. In the last thirty years, many Jaurès studies have been conducted from the perspective of French republicanism, without attaching much importance to the transnational dimensions.

Concluding Remarks: Enter of Twenty-First Century Globalization

In 2000, the then French socialist prime minister Lionel Jospin loudly proclaimed his rejection of Blairism as a means for French socialism to redefine itself at the turn of the century, essentially by pointing out the negative aspects of British developments like those of German social democracy.⁵² But the PS's miserable defeat in the 2002 presidential election put an end to this attempt at doctrinal renewal. Nevertheless, it is clear that in the years that followed French society became strongly critical of "globalization," as reflected in the majority "No" vote in the 2005 referendum on the EU Constitution.

Even younger is the trends embodied by Jean-Luc Mélenchon in France (France Unbowed [La France Insoumise], founded in 2017), which was able to gather a considerable number of votes in the 2022 presidential elections and is very critical of European integration. This is not the place to examine this political phenomenon in detail. Let us simply take a work he had published a few years earlier on German politics, in which it is clear how much "internationalism" stands alongside a certain nationalism. In *Le Hareng de Bismarck* (Bismarck's Herring), aimed at Angela Merkel's politics, Mélenchon sketches an altogether essentializing view of the German people and their history.⁵³ Apart from one sentence in which the important works of Karl Marx and Rosa Luxemburg are mentioned in passing, everything that "Germany" and "the Germans" stand for represents something negative. This anti-German nationalism is accompanied by an overall uncritical reference to French history (especially colonial history). Some of the most cartoonish aspects of French nationalism can be found here. Compared to the

52 Thibaut Rioufreyt, *Les socialistes français face à la "troisième voie" britannique* [French Socialists in the Face of the British "Third Way"] (Grenoble: Presses universitaires de Grenoble, 2017).

53 Jean-Luc Mélenchon, *Le Hareng de Bismarck. Le poison allemand* [Bismarck's Herring: The German Poison] (Paris: J'ai lu, 2016).

anti-German rhetoric of the Communist Platform (Kommunistische Plattform, KPF) in the 1950s and 1960s, this nationalism is even more pronounced. The PCF then militated bitterly against the rearmament of West Germany and kept a vivid memory of the resistance to the German occupation, which would sometimes lead to anti-German remarks. But these were usually counterbalanced by statements that there was a “progressive” German culture (Marx and Rosa Luxemburg, but also a tradition of the Enlightenment, the Rätebewegung, etc.), the concrete existence of which was embodied by the German Democratic Republic (GDR). It is interesting from this point of view to note that pronounced forms of Germanophobia continue to exist at the beginning of the twenty-first century, although in a completely different context than that of Thorezian “national communism.” In any case, this last example shows the contradictions that the various leftists face when it comes to defining a political-theoretical line in the face of the multiple processes of internationalization. Thus, the critique of supranational constructions—one of the structural elements of any globalization project—is an important factor in still understanding even those who call themselves heirs of French socialism.

Did these political-ideological currents ultimately influence the fate of the globalization projects that run through contemporary French history? The answer to this question must be nuanced. On the one hand, it can be said that they had a considerable influence. The French globalization project is inconceivable without them, both in terms of the contestations it has provoked (especially by the opposition of the PCF, which was a strong party from 1935 to 1989) and in terms of its acceptance with certain adaptations (especially on the part of the PS, a party that has regularly governed the country and signed European treaties, for example). On the other hand, this project has undergone major developments without them. The Gaullist and then post-Gaullist right has maintained an ambivalent relationship with Europe and the entry of France into globalization processes, but it has *de facto* managed this entry progressively, with a certain consistency. The left, on the other hand, was torn between sovereignists and Europeanists and was unable to develop a coherent overall project. Moreover, the socialists and communists had to take into account strong resistance among their electorate, implying political compromises that were difficult to maintain. These multiple ambivalences remain in a France where “globalization” continues to be fiercely contested, especially on the left side of the political spectrum.

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Empire and Global France during the Second World War

Introduction

On September 3, 1939, the French government declared war against Nazi Germany. During the nearly six years that followed, the French state experienced a level of upheaval that is difficult to understate. The defeat of Allied French and British forces in the spring of 1940 led to the signing of a Franco-German armistice on June 22. This defeat also resulted in a division of French authority. Marshal Philippe Pétain became the head of the metropolitan French government, which would locate itself in the unoccupied southern spa town of Vichy. General Charles de Gaulle became the head of the Free French dissidence movement, based first in London and later in the French colonial empire. Pétain's support of the armistice was the antithesis of de Gaulle's determination to continue the struggle, alongside France's British allies.

This chapter explores the multiple ways in which French, Vichy French, and Free French actors mobilized empire to argue for France's status as a global power during the war years and when planning for the postwar future. It focuses in particular on the language that was used to make these claims. This global and imperial narrative is important because the Second World War was not confined to nation-states and internal national resistance movements. It was a global conflict that involved multiple competing and connected globalization projects. Colonial territories played a pivotal and complex role in this globality. Bringing this imperial dimension to the fore demonstrates how powers like France mobilized empire within this global struggle. It also highlights some of the early ways in which local populations within colonial empires challenged the universalist language underpinning these visions to assert their own policy aims, in direct opposition to existing imperial globalization projects.

The Second World War is a particularly rich context to examine France's relationship with empire, as well as how this relationship shifted over the course of the conflict. French decision-makers from the Third Republic, the Vichy government, and the Free French movement all recognized the value of empire. It was a strategic resource. But its importance transcended the material sphere. For actors in each of these groups, empire played a critical role in the policies of their respective governing bodies and in their

visions of France's position as a global power.¹ Having and holding empire was a way to assert the legitimacy of their authority and their competing visions for France's future, within or without the conflict. Empire was the space in which these competing visions played out, rhetorically and materially.

There is a growing wealth of scholarship that has emphasized the global and imperial nature of France's Second World War. Research by Eric Jennings, Charlotte Faucher, Géraud Létang, and others has underlined the strategic and symbolic significance of empire to Free France and wider external resistance movements.² This historiographical development has not been confined to the French side. Historians of the Second World War have stressed the importance of empire in British and Franco-British narratives of the conflict.³ However, there is still a great deal to be said about the role of empire in the war.

By tracking the imperial narrative of French, Vichy French, and Free French actors across the war years, this chapter will shed light on the ways in which imperial narratives shifted during the conflict, and it will pinpoint some of the factors that influenced these shifts. This approach will also capture the shared experience of the war. No individual or group made policies in isolation, and arguments around empire were a strategic tool that was used to assert and contest claims to speak for France and French interests.

Part I: 1939–1940

In the nine months that preceded the conclusion of the Franco-German armistice in June 1940, the French Empire rapidly evolved to become a symbol of French strength and a guarantee of French victory over German forces. This public and official celebration of empire was all the more remarkable because French interwar efforts to rouse public interest in the empire had not always been viewed as a resounding success. Although 17 films with a colonial theme were released between 1929 and 1939, French colonial

1 This is not to say that de Gaulle's Free French movement constituted a legal government. It simply recognizes that both the Vichy government and the Free French movement sought to position themselves as the authentic representation of French interests.

2 See, e. g., Charlotte Faucher and Laure Humbert, eds., "Beyond de Gaulle and Beyond London: The French External Resistance and its International Networks" (special issue), *European Review of History* 25, no. 2 (2018); Eric T. Jennings, *Free French Africa in World War II: The African Resistance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

3 See, e. g., Martin Thomas and Richard Toye, *Arguing about Empire: Imperial Rhetoric in Britain and France, 1882–1956* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), chap. 5, 6; Martin Thomas, *Fight or Flight: Britain, France, and their Roads from Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), chapter 3; Rachel Chin, *War of Words: Britain, France and Discourses of Empire during the Second World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022); David Edgerton, "The Nationalisation of British History: Historians, Nationalism and the Myths of 1940," *The English Historical Review* 136, no. 581 (2021): 950–985.

lobbyists had, as late as 1937, bemoaned their failure to inject the French public with a sense of imperial pride.⁴ On the other hand, by the late 1920s, there were more than 70 journals and papers in France that were devoted to colonial issues. The colonial exposition held at Vincennes in 1931 attracted 35.5 million ticket buyers in only 5 months. Perhaps of even greater significance is the fact that at the outbreak of war in 1939, over 40 percent of French overseas investment went to the empire. The empire took in and supplied a similar percentage of French exports and imports respectively.⁵

After the outbreak of war, empire was lauded as a source of men and material to support the war effort. By the time that France's colonial troops were fully mobilized in October 1939, they made up 11 percent of the army's total strength.⁶ But empire was also viewed more symbolically. It was a marker of French greatness that was celebrated through sport, film, and commemoration.⁷ It also played an important role in the images of France's wider allied relationships, particularly the Franco-British relationship. On September 3, 1939, the day that Britain and France declared war against Germany, *L'Echo d'Alger* published an article celebrating British imperial unity in the face of the impending battle.⁸ Three months later, France and Britain signed a financial accord that delivered unprecedented levels of economic and financial cooperation. An official statement from the French minister of finance Paul Reynaud celebrated the accord for extending Franco-British cooperation and alliance into the empire.⁹

More protracted debates around empire began in June 1940, as the Allied war effort was faltering in the face of rapid German advances.¹⁰ After launching their invasion of Western Europe on May 10, German forces had quickly broken through Allied defenses in the Low Countries and France. The French government evacuated Paris on June 10. They headed first to Tours and later, on June 14, onward to Bordeaux. The Dunkirk evacuation (May 26–June 4) successfully evacuated 198,000 British and 140,000 Allied

4 Thomas and Toye, *Arguing about Empire*, 157; Marc Michel, "La puissance par l'empire: Note sur la perception du facteur imperial dans l'élaboration de la défense nationale (1936–1938)" [Power through Empire: A Note on the Perception of the Imperial Factor in the Development of National Defense (1936–1938)], *Revue Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer* 69, no. 254 (1982): 35; Martin Thomas, *The French Empire at War: 1940–1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 24.

5 Richard Overy, *Blood and Ruins: The Great Imperial War, 1931–1945* (London: Penguin Books, 2023), 18.

6 Henry Dutailly, "Weakness in French Military Planning on the Eve of the Second World War," in *Military Planning and the Origins of the Second World War in Europe*, eds. B. J. C. McKercher and Roch Legault (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001), 93.

7 Thomas and Toye, *Arguing about Empire*, 158.

8 "Le Canada sera aux côtés de la Grande-Bretagne" [Canada Will Stand by Great Britain], *L'Echo d'Alger*, September 3, 1939.

9 "L'accord monétaire franco-britannique: Déclaration de M. Paul Reynaud" [Franco-British Monetary Agreement: Statement by M. Paul Reynaud], *Le Temps*, December 14, 1939, 1. Reynaud succeeded Edouard Daladier as premier in March 1940.

10 For a detailed summary of these events, see Julian Jackson, *The Fall of France: The Nazi Invasion of 1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

troops. However, this victory of sorts was tempered by growing calls among French political and military leadership for an armistice. On June 12, the French government met for the first time after evacuating Paris. Here, General Maxime Weygand (commander-in-chief of the Allied armies) said that he believed that defeat was inevitable and that France should ask for an armistice. The next day, the venerated Great War hero Pétain voiced his support for an armistice. He furthermore argued that a legitimate French government had to remain on French soil, rather than attempting to continue the struggle from the empire.¹¹ For Pétain, France's global authority, and its globalization projects, could only be maintained and governed from the metropole.

In the days leading up to the French request for German armistice terms, the British government was hopeful that France would choose to continue the war from its empire if it could not do so from the French metropole. This was an outcome that the French premier Reynaud supported, even when he asked the British government on June 15 under what conditions it would allow France to request armistice terms.¹² However, after the French cabinet chose not to accept Britain's suggestion of a Franco-British Union (a hugely symbolic offer, the aim of which was to keep France in the war), Reynaud resigned. His successor, Pétain, requested armistice terms with Germany in the early hours of June 17. A Franco-German armistice was signed on June 22 and went into effect on June 25.

Between June 17 and 25, the role of the French Empire began to diverge from its initial and relatively straightforward position as a wartime asset. In the metropole and empire, French actors, supporters, and decriers of the Franco-German armistice drew on empire to put forward their own claims of authority and legitimacy, as well as their right to speak for the French nation. As the lynchpin of the French globalization project, the future role of the empire was central to these debates.

Immediately after the armistice request became public, French colonial officials began to send missives of support to the metropolitan government, urging it to continue the war with the backing and resources of the empire.¹³ On June 17 and 18, General Charles Noguès, the commander-in-chief of French North Africa, told Weygand and Pétain that all of French North Africa was united in its opposition to an armistice. The French colonial population was demanding to continue the struggle, and "all Muslims are ready

11 Jackson, 104–105.

12 W. M. (40) 168th Conclusions, Minute 1, Confidential Annex, 16 June 1940, CAB 65/13/45, The National Archives (TNA).

13 See, e.g., 9GMII/24, "Armistice franco-allemand: Réaction de l'opinion" [Franco-German Armistice: Public Reaction], June 17, 1940–August 4, 1940, Centre des Archives diplomatiques de La Courneuve, Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères (MAE).

at this time to give their lives so that the French flag continues to fly over North Africa.”¹⁴ He also promised that the region was well positioned to carry on the battle as the seat of a new French government.¹⁵

For a short time, it seemed that Noguès might have had the chance to follow through on his promises. On June 21, 27 French parliamentarians boarded the *Massilia* and sailed for French North Africa with the intention of continuing the struggle from abroad. However, when they arrived at Casablanca on June 24, they discovered that General Charles Huntziger had already signed the armistice. Noguès refused to allow the parliamentarians to disembark.¹⁶ Colonial and mandate administrators from the Levant, French West Africa, and North Africa, who had earlier voiced their support for continuing the struggle, rapidly rallied to Pétain’s government.

At the same time in London, a relatively unknown French general, de Gaulle, was attempting to form a dissidence movement to challenge the Pétain government’s claims to represent France and French interests. De Gaulle, who had been appointed under-secretary of state for defense in Reynaud’s cabinet reshuffle on June 5, had arrived in London on June 17. On June 18, he delivered his now famous appeal on the British Broadcasting Corporation. In it, he called on Frenchmen to continue the struggle, and he argued that France was not defeated—it still had its empire and its British ally. However, the British government declined to recognize de Gaulle as the leader of a French resistance or dissidence movement until June 28.

Between June 18 and 28, British officials remained hopeful that the war might be resumed in the French Empire or that a better-known and more qualified candidate than de Gaulle would emerge. The three British missions sent to Bordeaux to assess the Pétain government’s intentions returned with mixed but not altogether dire messages. Lord Lloyd, secretary of state for the colonies, who departed for Bordeaux on June 18, reported that he thought it was still possible that Pétain’s government would decamp to North Africa if the armistice terms were unacceptable.¹⁷ First Lord of the Admiralty A. V. Alexander also reported his impression, following a meeting with Pétain and the French minister of foreign affairs Paul Baudouin, that the struggle was likely to be continued.¹⁸

14 Original in Nogues to Pétain, June 18, 1940, 9GMII/24, MAE: “les Musulmans sont tous prêts en ce moment à donner leur vie pour que le drapeau de la France continue à flotter sur l’Afrique du Nord.” All quotations following are own translations.

15 André Truchet, “L’armistice de Juin 1940 et l’Afrique du Nord” [The Armistice of June 1940 and North Africa], *Revue d’Histoire de la Deuxième Mondiale* 1, no. 3 (June 1951): 35–37, 39.

16 Chantal Metzger, *Le Maghreb dans la guerre 1939–1945* [The Maghreb in the War 1939–1945] (Paris: Armand Colin, 2018), 87.

17 Julian Jackson, *A Certain Idea of France: The Life of Charles de Gaulle* (London: Penguin Books, 2019), 131.

18 “Note prepared of interviews at Bordeaux,” June 19, 1940, PREM 3/174/4, TNA.

The debates over France's future, which crystalized in June 1940, were not just about whether France could or should continue the conflict or request armistice terms. They were much more complex. For actors on both sides, these debates developed around the question of legitimacy. Who could speak for France? What represented France? Empire played a central role in these arguments, not just as a valuable material and strategic resource. Empire was a formidable symbol of power, prestige, and national legitimacy. The rhetorical and actual wrangling over French colonial territory that would take place in the wake of the armistice demonstrated that debates over what constituted France and French interests were embedded in competing visions of France's imperial globalization projects.

Part II: 1940–1943

After the conclusion of the Franco-German armistice, Pétain began the process of shoring up his metropolitan government. De Gaulle did the same for his Free French movement. Both sides treated access to French colonial territory as a way to consolidate the legitimacy of their respective governing bodies on a local and global scale. On the one hand, having physical access to French colonial territory was a tangible marker of power. It also provided access to material resources, and it could be used as a strategic asset or as a potential bargaining chip. On the other hand, both the Vichy government and the Free French movement recognized and treated empire as a powerful symbolic asset. On a discursive level, each side asserted its right to empire as proof of its respective legitimacy and ability to speak for a wider global French nation.

For Pétain's government, by now settled in the French spa town of Vichy, retaining control over its globalization projects was critical to its claims to represent a sovereign and independent nation. In the immediate aftermath of the armistice and through 1941, the Vichy government made several proposals to German armistice officials. They asked to be allowed to secure and even expand the French Empire. This kind of imperial planning was used to signal the Vichy government's wider legitimacy and to demonstrate that France could still play a valuable role in the new Europe that Hitler's Germany was constructing. Regardless of their feasibility, ambitious plans still continued to be made by Vichy officials for the empire because to do otherwise would compromise their professed sovereignty.

Citing their fear that Germany would seize the French fleet in the wake of the armistice, British forces under the command of Admiral James Somerville bombarded the French fleet at the French North African port of Mers el-Kébir on July 3, 1940. In the wake of this tragedy, Vichy officials considered how they might leverage their imperial

assets to gain greater influence in Germany's Europe.¹⁹ On July 10, Pierre Laval and Admiral François Darlan suggested that the French Army of the Levant could grab Britain's Iraqi oil fields and pipelines at Mosul and Kirkuk.²⁰

Nearly three months later, British and Free French forces attempted, ultimately through armed persuasion, to bring the strategically important French Senegalese port of Dakar into the Free French orbit. Their failure and the staunch resistance of Governor-General Pierre Boisson became another useful example of French imperial unity. Vichy spokesmen cited resistance at Mers el-Kébir and Dakar to demand that France be given a free hand to defend its empire.²¹ None of these (or other) proposals were ever given the green light by German armistice officials. However, they remain instructive as a window into the thinking of Vichy leadership. Imperial policy, no matter how unlikely it was to be actioned, portrayed the metropolitan government as an authentic authority and a formidable global player.

For de Gaulle, empire played an important role in constructing the legitimacy of his fledgling Free French movement. De Gaulle was in a difficult position from the outset. He had left French territory to launch his movement, and this decision went against the French republican tradition, which equated exile with betrayal. He was also financially reliant on his British patrons, a reality that rankled from the outset and only increased over the next four years. Yet, British resources played an important role in promoting Free French authority. Images of imperial unity were central to these efforts. An article published in *The Times* on June 26 articulated particularly well the belief that, when it came to France's desire to continue the war, opinion in the empire and metropole was indistinguishable: "The French Empire is a free empire like our own; and this means that, just as the essential British faith is as firmly held and as clearly expressed in Montreal or Canberra as in Westminster, so there are men who can speak or fight for France in every part of her scattered dominions."²²

The founding documents of de Gaulle's movement placed empire center stage. In late August 1940, five colonial territories in French Equatorial Africa joined the side of the Free French: Chad, French mandated Cameroon, Moyen-Congo, Gabon, and Oubangui-Chari. For de Gaulle, this was a pivotal moment. Having a base in the French colonial empire at Brazzaville not only demonstrated the global legitimacy of the Free

19 For more on the British bombardment of the French fleet in July 1940, see Rachel Chin, "'The Real Question at Issue': Mers el-Kébir and the Rhetoric of Imperial Confrontation in July 1940," in *Rhetorics of Empire: Languages of Colonial Conflict after 1900*, eds. Martin Thomas and Richard Toye (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 91–107.

20 Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940–1944* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), 59–61.

21 Paxton, 68; "Conséquences de l'agression, la victoire de Dakar" [Consequences of the Attack, Victory in Dakar], September 26, 1940, 10GMII/338, MAE.

22 "After the Armistice," *The Times*, June 26, 1940.

French movement but also reflected the wider global narrative that underpinned Free French authority. Free French claims to represent national French interests were, in fact, rooted in the globalization project of empire.

Free France did not constitute a legal French government. However, in the eyes of the French jurist René Cassin, this was irrelevant because Free France represented true French interests, which were “to save French honour, to defend the French Empire, to free France and to give back their liberties to the French people.”²³ In Free French rhetoric, empire allowed de Gaulle to assert the global authenticity of his movement, now physically rooted in Brazzaville, the capital of French Equatorial Africa. The Brazzaville manifesto, delivered by de Gaulle on October 27, 1940, established the political form of Free France and led to the establishment of the Empire Defense Council two days later. The address also claimed that millions of French imperial subjects had chosen to continue the war. This, in de Gaulle’s words, was the tangible proof of his right to speak for France.

Between 1940 and 1943, empire was also the location of a series of armed clashes between Vichy French, Free French, and British forces. These included the battle at Dakar, alluded to above, as well as protracted fighting over the French mandated territories of Syria and Lebanon in 1941. The British role in these battles, as well as others at Mers el-Kébir (1940), Madagascar (1942), and French North Africa (1942), substantially influenced their outcomes. More importantly, however, the rhetoric that surrounded these battles demonstrated the complex strategic and symbolic importance of empire.

Free French discourse portrayed these clashes as essential. In July, de Gaulle stated in his radio address to French listeners that British actions against the French fleet were unavoidable. The fleet would no doubt have been used by German forces against not only Britain but also the French Empire.²⁴ General Edgard de Larminat, now stationed in Free French Equatorial Africa, identified himself as a colonial soldier and called upon the honor of French armed forces at Dakar, which had remained loyal to the metropolitan government, to fight against the Germans and Italians.²⁵ Two days later, Larminat broadcast again. This time, he argued that the French colonial territories that had not rallied to the Free French movement could no longer be thought of as French. In his words, the Vichy government did not control the French fleet or empire. Therefore, it lacked both legitimacy and the wider authority it claimed: “Thus the French navy is in fact placed under the direct control of the enemy. Like the empire, it is no longer French except in name and, we are sure, in heart.”²⁶

23 René Cassin, “Vichy or Free France,” *Foreign Affairs* 20, no. 1 (October 1941): 104.

24 “Allocution de Général de Gaulle” [Address by General de Gaulle], July 8, 1940, 9GMII/295, MAE.

25 “Le mouvement de Gaulle: Appel du Général de Larminat” [The de Gaulle Movement: Call of General de Larminat], September 29, 1940, 10GMII/338, MAE.

26 Original in “Allocution de Général de Larminat” [Address by Général de Larminat], October 2, 1940, 10GMII/338, MAE: “Ainsi la marine française est en fait placée sous le contrôle direct de l’ennemi. Comme

When, in the spring of 1941, Darlan agreed to allow Hitler's forces to use Syrian aerodromes to support an anti-British coup in Iraq, Free France again accused Vichy officials of handing the French Empire to Germany. De Gaulle gave a speech from Brazzaville in which he claimed that if Germany continued the war, it would take over France's empire.²⁷ After the combined British imperial and Free French forces occupied the two Levant states in the summer of 1941, de Gaulle used the Free French information service to equate local Levantine opinion with wider French opinion. Press releases written by the chief of the Free French press services, Paul Henri Sirieux, and official statements delivered by de Gaulle all conveyed the idea that France and its empire were united in their opposition to the Vichy government and in their pursuit of the broader resurrection of French greatness. One of Sirieux's press releases stated, "For the first time since the armistice, the inhabitants of Beirut can show freely their patriotism and attachment to France; the spontaneous celebration contrasted with the oppressive and sad regime instituted by Vichy."²⁸

Like the Free French movement, the Vichy government's official policy discourse, propaganda, and press made France's global empire synonymous with French greatness. A 1941 propaganda service guide proclaimed that "empire" was a "condition of French greatness."²⁹ It also stressed that France could not have carried on the war from its empire. If it had done so, Britain would undoubtedly have taken France's colonial territories for itself: "Imperial war was the death of empire."³⁰ Unlike the Free French discourse, Vichy officials largely refused to engage with or even acknowledge de Gaulle's claims. For the metropolitan government, focusing on British involvement in these imperial clashes was a way to marginalize de Gaulle's movement.

The Vichy government portrayed challenges to the French Empire as simple (and unsurprising) instances of Franco-British imperial crisis—a clash of globalization projects. Following the clashes at Mers el-Kébir and Dakar, a Vichy poster depicted both events over the caption "where else will Britain spill French blood?"³¹ Other well-known posters made it clear that British authorities were intent on making the French Empire

l'Empire, elle n'est plus française que de nom, et, nous en sommes sûrs, de cœur." Note here the use of "General" in Vichy documents, to denote that de Larminat himself lacked authority as a member of the "illegal" and "illegitimate" Free French movement.

27 "Texte du discours de Général de Gaulle à Brazzaville" [Text of General de Gaulle's Speech in Brazzaville], May 18, 1941, AG/3(1)/192, Archives Nationales (AN).

28 Paul Henri Sirieux, Haifa, July 26, 1941, AG/3(1)/202, AN. See also "Politique extérieure du CNF, Syrie-Liban" [CNF External Policy, Syria-Lebanon], March–December 1941, 18GMII/49, MAE.

29 Original in "Guide: Les thèmes de propagande" [Guide: Propaganda Themes], 1941, F/41/266, AN: "condition de la grandeur française."

30 Original in "Guide: Les thèmes de propagande," 1941, F/41/266, AN: "La guerre de l'empire, c'était la mort de l'empire."

31 Ruth Ginio, *French Colonialism Unmasked: The Vichy Years in French West Africa* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 16.

their own. In one, an octopus symbolized the British prime minister Winston Churchill whose tentacles were bleeding from its imperial incursions at Mers el-Kébir, Dakar, and Syria. Another listed historic, present, and (possible) future imperial incursions. Above this list, a British bulldog engulfed a globe mapping past and present offences.

A series of notes in 1942 emphasized that France must reaffirm its position in the world. To do this, it must protect its empire, in particular against the British threat: “England has always grown rich at our expense.”³² In November 1942, the combined British and American troops invaded and occupied French North Africa. Operation Torch was the first in a series of steps designed to recapture continental Europe. The German response to this operation was to occupy the entirety of the French metropole. This act essentially eliminated any claims that the Vichy government was acting as a sovereign state. Still, Laval, now at the head of the Vichy government (Pétain remained titular head of state), claimed that Operation Torch constituted an act of war against France.³³ Pétain called on all Frenchmen to do their duty and to defend the empire against all attacks.³⁴ A published list of the “aggressions” committed by Britain against France from 1940 to 1942 was used to make sense of the current attacks in a longer timeframe.³⁵ Vichy pronouncements were amplified by the press in both the northern and southern zones. Writing in the collaborationist newspaper *Les Nouveaux Temps* in 1943, Guy Crouzet said, “The truth is that England has used the ambition and the political intelligence of the Gaullists to place our imperial positions in such a position that they are at her mercy.”³⁶

Britain’s position within and between these Franco-British arguments over empire was significant.³⁷ It would not be right, even in a volume on French globalization projects, to ignore its role. Britain was an important financial and moral backer of the Free French movement, and images of historic and contemporary Franco-British imperial rivalry played a visible role in Vichy French policy. But the British government also

32 Original in “Rapports avec les pays étrangers” [Relations with Foreign Countries], May 18, 1942, F/7/15320, AN: “L’Angleterre s’est toujours enrichie à nos dépens.”

33 “La France devant l’agression anglo-américaine” [France in the Face of Anglo-American Aggression], *Le Temps*, November 23, 1942, 1.

34 “Les Américains et les Anglais attaquent notre Afrique du Nord” [Americans and British Attack Our North Africa], *Le Temps*, November 9, 1942, 1.

35 “Chronique des agressions britanniques contre la France, de 1940–1942” [Chronicle of British Aggressions Against France, 1940–1942], November 19, 1942, 10GMII/333, MAE.

36 Original in Guy Crouzet, “Fin d’un mandat français: la dissidence dans ses oeuvres” [End of a French Mandate: Dissidence in Action], *Les Nouveaux Temps*, December 3, 1943, F/7/15309, AN: “La vérité c’est que l’Angleterre a utilisé l’ambition et l’intelligence politique des gaullistes pour placer nos positions impériales dans une position telle qu’elles se trouvent à sa merci.”

37 See, e. g., Rachel Chin, “After the Fall: British Strategy and the Preservation of the Franco-British Alliance in 1940,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 55, no. 2 (2019; 2020): 297–315; Rachel Chin (forthcoming chapter) “British Policy and the Construction of Free French Identity: 1940–1941,” unpublished manuscript.

deployed its own measures to link the French Empire to wider notions of French power. Many of these efforts were led by Britain's Political Warfare Executive (PWE), the office responsible for coordinating British propaganda in enemy and occupied nations from 1941. A series of PWE leaflets destined for French North Africa presented the French Empire as proof of France's celebrated past and as imperative for France to restore its future position on the global stage. One of the leaflets featured an image of imperial hero General Lyautey over a caption reading, "his work is in peril—save it!"³⁸

Between 1940 and 1943, de Gaulle's Free French movement and Pétain's Vichy government recognized empire as a powerful tool to promote their respective legitimacy and authenticity. They fought for physical control over French colonial territory. But just as important, the language and imagery that each side used to construct its authority made empire, or the imperial globalization project, central to this process of claim-making. By 1944, the landscape was shifting rapidly from a wartime setting to an emphasis on postwar planning. This shift saw the definitive collapse of the Vichy government and its claims to French colonial territory. It also facilitated a change in de Gaulle's policy, whereby empire was no longer used to signal Free French legitimacy. It was a promise of France's postwar renewal and continued great power status.

Part III: 1944–1945

In the early morning hours of June 6, 1944, Allied troops landed in Normandy. From there, they began to retake metropolitan France from German forces. At 5:00 pm on August 25, de Gaulle returned triumphantly to Paris. By September 9, he had formed his new provisional government. However, de Gaulle had been thinking and planning for France's postwar future much earlier than this. Free France was not the only organization that had the reconstruction and reinvigoration of France on its mind. Internal resistance movements were also thinking about how to restore France's prewar power and influence. While both Free France and the internal French resistance movements prioritized the ongoing war and the liberation of French territory rather than committing to a precise plan for postwar reconstruction, there was one element that garnered cross-party consensus: empire.

The notion that empire was the key to shoring up France's postwar power and prosperity was not new. The idea of France as an "imperial nation-state" and thus a global power was a mindset that had been ingrained in the interwar years, the 1930s in particular.³⁹ In 1931, the Paris International Colonial Exhibition had celebrated *une plus*

38 "Son oeuvre est en péril – SAUVEZ-LA!," 1941, FO 898/515, TNA.

39 Gary Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation-State: Negritude and Colonial Humanism between the Two World Wars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 4.

grande France (a greater France).⁴⁰ By 1944, de Gaulle's provisional government and the emerging dominant French political parties (Communist Party, Socialist Party, and Christian Democratic Party) were considering how to consolidate and reinvigorate France's imperial system. The debates that unfolded between 1944 and 1945, however, revealed two things. First, members of each party believed that empire would play a vital role in bolstering France's postwar status. Second, these same individuals recognized that, in the face of France's very real financial and economic constraints, imperial reform was necessary for the survival of this globalization project. The resulting conversations about the reinvigoration of empire opened up a more complex global debate regarding the role of imperial globalization projects in the postwar world and the role of colonial citizens in deciding their fate.

Every political actor in France during this time had limited recourse to the more traditional trappings of power, including military or economic influence. At the same time, French policy-makers were occupied with the substantial challenge of rebuilding metropolitan France. This meant dealing with large numbers of refugees and displaced persons and considerable shortages of food and housing. Roughly half a million French homes had been destroyed as a direct consequence of the war between 1944 and 1945 alone.⁴¹ These day-to-day concerns took up a great deal of the provisional government's time. But they also reaffirmed the material and symbolic significance of empire. In spite of material shortages and years of reconstruction, the rhetoric of imperial policy was used as evidence of France's global status.

The recognized importance of empire was especially evident in the policy-making language espoused by decision-makers and postwar planners. Gaston Monnerville, former member of the resistance and now member of the Provisional Consultative Assembly, declared, "without the empire, France today would be just another liberated country, but thanks to her empire France is a victorious country."⁴² The rhetoric of socialist resisters tied the success of the resistance to the restoration of France's empire and its national greatness.⁴³ Even the French Communist Party, which had been a vocal critic of British imperialism between 1939 and 1941, believed that France's colonial empire did not just desire to remain part of France. It demanded it.⁴⁴

40 Herman Lebovics, *Imperialism and the Corruption of Democracies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), xiii.

41 Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2006), 17.

42 Gaston Monnerville, quoted in Marc Michel, "Decolonisation: French Attitudes and Policies 1944–46," in *France and the World*, eds. Peter Morris and Stuart Williams (Conference Publication: Association for the Study of Modern and Contemporary France, 1985), 83.

43 Andrew Shennan, *Rethinking France: Plans for Renewal 1940–1946* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 49.

44 Shennan, 164; D. Bruce Marshall, *The French Colonial Myth and Constitution Making in the Fourth Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 145.

The Brazzaville Conference, held between January 30 and February 8, 1944, was one of the most important and visible demonstrations of French thinking about the future of colonial empire. Even though it could not craft binding policies, its recommendations for colonial reforms would shape French policy well into the postwar period. The conference focused on revising French policy in its African colonies. It drew heavily on Félix Éboué's (governor of French Equatorial Africa) text *The New Indigenous Policy for French Equatorial Africa*, written in November 1941, which advocated that French imperial policy should respect and support local traditions, customs, and social structures.⁴⁵

The conference aimed to provide a roadmap for reform that was framed as metropolitan gratitude for imperial wartime sacrifices. It envisioned a postwar French imperial policy that would coordinate and oversee the economic, social, and political development of French Africa.⁴⁶ The conference also served as a very public attempt to garner wider support for France's imperial project, as an inclusive and transnational partnership. In this sense, it was symbolic as well as practical. In an address delivered at the Provisional Consultative Assembly and published more widely in the French press, René Plevin, who would preside over the Brazzaville Conference as commissioner of colonies, stressed that this was not an "imperial conference." Rather, it was "a French African conference."⁴⁷

The Brazzaville Conference thus epitomized wider French imperial mindsets in the final year of the war. French officials assumed that they would be able to withdraw some of the financial and economic resources that they had used to manage their empire (and mandated territories) while still maintaining a privileged position in these territories.⁴⁸

The conference opened on January 30 and brought together all the governors of French Africa, members of the Provisional Consultative Assembly at Algiers, and ranking members of de Gaulle's French Committee of National Liberation (Comité français de Libération nationale, CFLN). The CFLN would declare itself to be the provisional government of the French Republic on June 2, 1944. At the time of the conference, the other Allied powers had granted it varying degrees of recognition, which acknowledged its role in planning for France's postwar administration but stopped short of declaring it to be a provisional government.

45 Félix Éboué, "La nouvelle politique indigène pour l'Afrique Équatoriale française" [The New Indigenous Policy for French Equatorial Africa], Brazzaville, November 8, 1941, FR ANOM 61COL2295, Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer, Aix-en-Provence.

46 Marshall, *The French Colonial Myth*, 103.

47 "A l'Assemblée consultative" [At the Consultative Assembly], *L'Echo d'Alger*, January 15, 1944, 6.

48 For more on the "French imperial mind" and views toward reform, see Martin Shipway, "French Late Colonial Rhetoric, 'Myth' and Imperial Reason," in *Rhetorics of Empire*, eds. Thomas and Toye, 108–120; Martin Thomas and Andrew Thompson, "Empire and Globalization: From 'High Imperialism' to Decolonization," *The International History Review* 36, no. 1 (2013): 1–29.

The debates and discussions that took place at the conference melded together traditional, paternalistic views of French Empire with newer, postwar perspectives that called for the managed renegotiation of imperial relationships. Nowhere was this sense of traditional French authority more evident than in the opening moments of the conference, which featured de Gaulle inaugurating a monument to Savorgnan de Brazza, “the great explorer to whom France owes Equatorial Africa.”⁴⁹

In his opening speech at the conference, de Gaulle celebrated the correctness of the French civilizing mission and the inherent and unbreakable bond between France and its colonies. But he also looked forward to an unspecified day in which French Africa would play a greater role in its own governance.⁵⁰ These ideals of cooperation and partnership between metropole and colony always existed alongside beliefs in the superiority of French culture, society, and governance—the posited immortal genius of France. Moreover, although the conference undeniably represented a substantial shift away from existing colonial practices, its proposed reforms were limited. The preamble of the conference recommendations ruled out self-governance, specifying that any increase in political autonomy was only envisioned within the parameters of empire.

Bruce Marshall argues that one of the most striking features of the conference was the aura of calm in which it was conducted. Through January and February, the conference did not face any organized political opposition, either in the colonies or in the metropole. Marshall attributes this turn of events to the timing and location of the conference—amid war and in the former capital of Free French Africa respectively.⁵¹ In fact, there were a series of nationalist “disturbances” in Morocco at the same time as the conference. But news of these events was heavily censored in the North African press in favor of giving maximum publicity to the proceedings at Brazzaville.⁵² The result of this censorship was that French messaging throughout the conference was uniform and unchallenged.

The conference proceedings were publicized in a range of mediums, which were very much aimed at metropolitan and imperial French audiences. By contrast *The Times*, the British broadsheet newspaper most closely linked to the government line, published only one small article, which referred to “the empire conference to be held at Brazzaville at the end of January,” in the context of the topics to be debated at the second session of the French Provisional Consultative Assembly.⁵³

Of the ten conference sessions, only the first and last were made public. The proceedings of the other eight were conveyed through press reports and via Radio Brazzaville.

49 Original in “La conférence de la France africaine s’ouvrira dimanche à Brazzaville” [French Africa Conference Opens in Brazzaville on Sunday], *L’Echo d’Alger*, January 28, 1944, 1: “le grand explorateur à que la France doit son Afrique Équatoriale.”

50 Marshall, *The French Colonial Myth*, 103–104.

51 Marshall, 114.

52 “Correspondence and Reports,” 1942–1944, FO 898/103, TNA.

53 From our special correspondent, “France After Liberation,” *The Times*, January 3, 1944, 3.

The most detailed press summaries were published in the North African press. However, news of the conference was also published in resistance publications, which were distributed in metropolitan France (metropolitan France was, at that time, fully occupied by Germany). These included internal publications such as *Combat* as well as wider Allied distributions such as *Le Courrier de l'Air* (British) and *L'Amérique en Guerre* (American).⁵⁴

It is impossible to know for certain the impact that publicity about the conference had on popular views of empire. However, the way in which empire and postwar imperial policy was presented in these publications can tell us a great deal about how the future of empire was envisioned and debated. The conference was consistently portrayed as a renegotiation of the French imperial globalization project that would give French African subjects greater autonomy, more rights, and a better standard of living. However, limited political reform was always accompanied by more traditional language, which situated the future of empire firmly within France.

This kind of imperial rhetoric retained and reinforced the global nature of Frenchness. A British Foreign Office summary of the North African press's comment on the Brazzaville Conference noted this trend: "The conference was a guarantee of France's strong position in the post-war world."⁵⁵ British leaflets that were distributed over France by the Royal Air Force adopted a similar message proclaiming, "The France of tomorrow [...] will make it a point of honor to make the populations who trust her reap the advantages of civilization and attain her human ideal wherever her flag flies."⁵⁶ In his closing address, Plevén declared, "We have liberated man from illness, misery and ignorance."⁵⁷

In the wake of the conference, which closed on February 8, representatives from across the French political spectrum reaffirmed the importance of empire as an integral element of France's global influence.⁵⁸ In an interview with a representative of *France-Afrique*, Plevén insisted, "The Brazzaville Conference demonstrated that far from being an exhausted country condemned to the rank of vassal, as Hitler claims and as Vichy admits, France constitutes a solid and united bloc of 100 million men, whose place is always at the forefront of great nations."⁵⁹

54 See, e.g., "La conférence africaine" [The Africa Conference], *Le Courrier de l'Air*, February 3, 1944.

55 "Review of the Foreign Press No. 228," March 16, 1944, FO 371/41860, TNA.

56 "Records of Leaflets disseminated over France," February 1, 1944, FO 371/39102, TNA.

57 Original in "La conférence de Brazzaville est close" [The Brazzaville Conference Is Closed], *L'Echo d'Alger*, February 9, 1944, 2: "Nous avons libéré l'homme de la maladie, de la misère et de l'ignorance."

58 This is not to say that imperial policy was a priority for all or even most French political actors. Traditionally, it was the preserve of a small number of very committed individuals. However, I argue that there was a broad assumption existing across the political spectrum that empire would continue to play an important role in postwar France.

59 Original in "Éclatante démonstration de l'unité française" [Brilliant Demonstration of French Unity], *L'Echo d'Alger*, February 10, 1944, 2: "La conférence de Brazzaville a démontré que loin d'être un pays épuisé

Cross-party consensus was also reflected in the debates of the Provisional Consultative Assembly. Félix Gouin, a French socialist politician and the president of the Provisional Consultative Assembly, described the empire as a vast preserve of material and moral resources that had and would continue to sustain French greatness. In his words, “Do we not have, indeed, beyond the seas, extending and reinforcing the French framework, an admirable and vast empire whose material resources are coupled with intellectual and moral wealth?”⁶⁰

The minister for foreign affairs Georges Bidault similarly ascribed French greatness not only to its empire but also to its position as “guardian of the great interests of civilization.” His address on November 21 regarding France’s future as a great power was met with cheers:

Greater France has 110 million inhabitants and unlimited resources. So, we don’t have to feel overwhelmed by an inferiority complex (Very good! Very good!), which would lead us to consider our country as an appendix, a complement to other states, when we have everything necessary to play, in the family of democratic countries, and be surrounded by the respect and friendship of all our allies, the role of a great nation.⁶¹

Louis Saillant, a French communist and the former chair of the National Council of the Resistance, also saw French greatness as a given in the postwar world: “we will manage to convince ourselves, which is easy, and to convince other countries, which is less easy, of the greatness of the French nation and the universality of its power.”⁶² France’s postwar policies seamlessly linked empire to wider themes of French grandeur.

et condamné au rang de vassal, comme le prétend Hitler et comme l’admet Vichy, la France constitue un bloc solide et uni de 100 millions d’hommes, dont la place est toujours au premier rang des grandes nations.”

60 Original in Félix Gouin, “Débats de l’Assemblée consultative provisoire” [Discussions at the Provisional Consultative Assembly], speech, *Journal officiel de la République française*, November 9, 1944: “N’avons-nous pas, en effet, au-delà, des mers, prolongeant et renforçant l’armature française, un admirable et vaste empire dont les ressources matérielles se doublent d’une richesse intellectuelle et morale?”

61 Original in Georges Bidault, “Débats de l’Assemblée consultative provisoire” [Discussions at the Provisional Consultative Assembly], speech, *Journal officiel de la République française*, November 21, 1944: “La plus grande France a 110 millions d’habitants et des ressources illimitées. Nous n’avons donc pas à nous sentir écrasés par un complexe d’infériorité (Très bien! Très bien!), qui nous pousserait à considérer notre pays comme un appendice, un complément à d’autres États, alors que nous possédons tout ce qu’il faut pour jouer dans la famille des pays démocratiques et entourés du respect et de l’amitié de tous nos allies, un rôle de grande nation.”

62 Original in Louis Saillant, “Débats de l’Assemblée consultative provisoire” [Discussions at the Provisional Consultative Assembly], speech, *Journal officiel de la République française*, November 22, 1944: “nous arriverons à nous convaincre, ce qui est facile, et à convaincre les autres pays, ce qui est moins facile, de la grandeur de la nation française et de l’universalité de sa puissance.”

In these constructions, universalist language painted French power as inherently global, universal, and moral.

While French policy-makers agreed on the dual importance of empire and imperial reform, they could not agree on what it should look like. The debate was divided over two different models of reform: federal, on the one hand, or republican and assimilationist, on the other hand. Jules Moch, a socialist member of the Consultative Assembly, argued that France and its empire constituted a “one and indivisible republic.”⁶³ His conception of imperial France as a united global entity drew on long-standing republican and assimilationist doctrines. Henri Laurentie, the head of the political section of the Colonial Commissariat, favored a looser, federalist model. His ideas were enshrined in the French Union plan, which would eventually go forward in 1946.

These debates were complicated by changes that were taking place within the French Empire. De Gaulle may have believed that “France’s civilizing mission” was still intact at the close of the conflict, but those citizens who were the subject of that mission were not always so sure. Wartime requisitioning and demands on labor resources had fueled colonial unrest. Highly publicized American and Soviet anticolonial rhetoric as well as the language of the much-vaunted Atlantic Charter were attracting the attention of the more educated members of the colonial populations.⁶⁴ The provisional government was under particular pressure in its Levantine mandates and Algeria. It faced global criticism after arresting the newly elected Lebanese government in November 1943 and bombing the Syrian capital of Damascus in May 1945.⁶⁵ Also in May, French colonial authorities and settlers violently suppressed nationalist uprisings in Sétif, eastern Algeria.

News of these uprisings and the French response to them did not go unnoticed. Local and regional nationalist groups deployed France’s conceptions of itself as a benign global power against it in international forums, such as the San Francisco Conference (the birthplace of the United Nations, April–June 1945), and more widely in the press. The British ambassador in Baghdad, Sir Kinahan Cornwallis, warned that French policy in Lebanon was being used by the Iraqi press to incite Arab nationalist militancy.⁶⁶ French analyses of regional Middle East press outlets reported that the Egyptian daily Wafdist newspaper *Al Misri* had called on the CFLN to recognize the death of empire. *Al Misri* highlighted the inconsistency between stated Allied principles and their seeming

63 Martin Shipway, *The Road to War: France and Vietnam, 1944–1947* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), 57.

64 James I. Lewis, “The MRP and the Genesis of the French Union, 1944–1949,” *French History* 12, no. 3 (1998): 280.

65 Both of these events were the result of disputes of Levantine independence. French officials refused to grant Syria and Lebanon independence unless they concluded a preferential treaty that would concede substantial economic and cultural benefits to France.

66 H. M. Ambassador, Baghdad to Foreign Office, November 14, 1943, GB165-0269, Middle East Centre Archives.

willingness to countenance the domination of a large nation over a small one.⁶⁷ Representatives from the Middle East who were delegates at the San Francisco Conference lambasted the French bombing of Damascus: “There were certain countries which regarded liberty, equality and fraternity as fit for home consumption only and not for export.”⁶⁸

These responses to French colonial/mandate violence were significant. The language that was used to condemn these acts mobilized principles that Allied forces and France itself had touted as global but in practice were denied to their colonial empires and mandated territories. A more in-depth analysis of these debates and their development is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, their presence at the close of the war highlights one of the ways in which the postwar world was beginning to shift and in which imperial globalization projects were under pressure. Throughout the conflict, empire had been essential to French claims of “national” greatness. As the war drew to a close, the French provisional government was trying to balance these narratives alongside new ones about imperial reform. However, this balancing act was proving to be very tricky. The war years shifted the relationship of metropolitan states with their imperial territories. Empire remained at the heart of French claims regarding the universality of its power. However, at the close of war these claims were being increasingly contested.

Conclusion

It is still not unusual for scholars, political actors, and the wider public to think of the Second World War in national terms. Narratives of national unity and greatness or of national division and strife are simpler. They make national commemorations, memories, and mourning more straightforward practices. However, what this chapter has done is to demonstrate that wartime narratives were rarely confined to the national. They were rooted in the global and international.

As France’s preeminent globalization project, empire played a substantial role in these narratives. It was embedded in the discourse of French decision-makers throughout the conflict, before and after the Franco-German armistice. Empire was an important material asset. Vichy French, Free French, and British forces participated in pitched battles in a struggle to assert physical dominance over it. However, empire was also hugely important as a moral and symbolic asset, a fact that this chapter has emphasized.

67 Al Misri, November 8, 1943, 4GMII/29, MAE.

68 William Roger Louis, *Imperialism at Bay: The United States and the Decolonisation of the British Empire 1941–1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 543.

These imperial narratives must play an important role in our understanding of French experiences of war. They demonstrate that, when French administrators and officials spoke of France during the war years, they were frequently speaking about imperial France. In these conceptions, France and French power were inherently global. Empire allowed those who were claiming to speak on behalf of France to put forward the idea of a single “greater” and global France, united under one flag and one mission. These narratives of imperial unity would become increasingly contested as the war drew to a close in 1945. As local nationalist groups began to challenge these images, French officials would have to rethink the nature of France’s global power.

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Immigration After Empire: The African Immigrant Community, Political Activism, and the French Globalization Project in Postcolonial France*

Introduction

Senegalese labor activist Sally N'Dongo moved to Paris in 1960, just as his home country declared independence from France, its former colonizer. As an immigrant who spoke little English when he first arrived in France, N'Dongo understood the myriad challenges that other African workers faced, from dilapidated and exploitive living conditions to poorly compensated and dangerous jobs to health crises and struggles with literacy in the French language. During the era of decolonization, immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa were demographically the smallest immigrant group in France. In official censuses, they ranked last in overall population when compared to other immigrant groups.

Yet, through labor migration over the course of the 1960s and into the early 1970s, the African immigrant community grew in ways unanticipated by the French government. While French authorities grappled with how to address what they perceived as the needs of this immigrant group, immigrants ensconced themselves in the political sphere, borrowing from colonial forms of political activism while challenging ideas about postcolonial immigrant civic participation. Especially in the early 1960s, Algerians were seen as the more politically active and therefore dangerous of the non-Western immigrant groups from the African continent. West Africans from countries such as Senegal were viewed as much less politically active and therefore not quite as threatening. Over the course of the 1960s and into the 1970s, though, workers from West Africa challenged these constructions while worrying authorities who panicked over the possibility of alliances with the French Communist Party (*Parti Communiste Français*, PCF) and other political groups on the far-left side of the political spectrum at the height of the Cold War. As authorities continued to parse the meanings of African political activism, activists such as N'Dongo became adept at moving between the concentric circles of fellow African workers, diplomatic representatives from newly emergent West African countries, French officials, and the French media. N'Dongo and others circulated between France and Senegal, traversing borders and cultures while

* This article is dedicated to the late scholar, Tyler Stovall, who inspired to so many historians in and beyond the field of modern French history.

signaling a new and important era in immigrant political activism built on the template established by francophone independence movements, including the Négritude and pan-African movements, throughout the twentieth century. N'Dongo's life and work reflected the globalization of transnational migration in the postwar era and the important circulation of ideas and peoples in the Cold War-influenced era of decolonization.

Immigration and Globalization

The postwar and early postcolonial migration patterns in which N'Dongo participated was part of the globalization process undertaken by France through its colonial empire, dating back to the early modern era in the Caribbean and continuing through the nineteenth century with the establishment of French colonies in North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia, known then as Indochina. As French colonial power spread throughout the world, colonial culture, products, profits, and people circulated back to France. Profits from the slave trade and the slave-based economy in the Caribbean and from forced labor in French West Africa (Afrique Occidentale Française, AOF) and French Equatorial Africa (Afrique Équatoriale Française, AEF) enriched French banks and the French government. Across the centuries of French colonialism, colonized peoples arrived in France, seeking education, employment, and other opportunities. Thus, the global nature of the French Empire reverberated back to France in numerous ways and its multifaceted legacy continued after decolonization. The migration patterns that brought N'Dongo and other African workers to France after 1960 occurred at the height of the Cold War as many former colonies throughout the world gained independence from traditional empires. Officials attempting to understand this population of immigrants often did so through a Cold War lens, straining to ascertain their political leanings, wondering if they were affiliated with communism and worrying that they could be vulnerable to communist propaganda and ideas.

African immigrants arriving in France were also part of large-scale global postwar migratory patterns that saw people from around the world relocating to new places for many different reasons, ranging from persecution and violence to economic and educational opportunities. The arrival of African workers in France occurred as immigrants came from other parts of the former French Empire, including North Africa and Southeast Asia. In terms of European migration, workers from Portugal, for example, traveled to France seeking employment opportunities while also searching for respite from the dictatorship that had controlled the country since the interwar period. In attempting to bolster their labor force, other European countries, including West Germany and Britain, sought out workers from around the world. Britain turned to its own colonial empire and Commonwealth workers, while West Germany recruited guest workers from Turkey. These immigration patterns were part of a global negotiation process regarding the impacts of globalization. As postwar migration continued,

African workers and other immigrant groups in and beyond France through protests and political organization drew attention to the toll of globalization by spotlighting problematic working conditions, low wages, decrepit housing, racism, discrimination, and the legacy of colonialism in perpetuating systems of oppression and violence.

Postwar and Postcolonial Migration

The independence of French colonies in sub-Saharan Africa reconfigured labor migration to France amid postwar globalization efforts and the shifting global balance of power away from traditional colonial powers such as France and toward the superpowers of the United States and the Soviet Union, which dominated the Cold War. The citizenship status of black African workers changed with the demise of the French Empire. Soninké workers residing in France became Senegalese, Malian, or Mauritanian nationals, and some retained their French citizenship. The closing of national borders during independence interrupted Soninké migration patterns, which intensified migration to France because it served as a viable alternative to movement between African nation-states. A priest working in Mali argued at the time that “traditional migration has become difficult due to the closing of neighboring states.”¹ Between 1960 and 1963, West African workers could still freely circulate between their nation-states and France, as they had legally been able to do so between the nationality reform of 1946 and full-scale independence.² They could also obtain French citizenship through aspects of the law of July 28, 1960, which recognized French citizenship of those born in former West African colonies by judicial declaration.³ From 1963 to 1964, France signed bilateral migration treaties with Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal. Agreements between France and its former colonies predicated legal entry into France on the idea that each immigrant from the former colonies would arrive in possession of a labor contract and a medical certificate guaranteeing their health.⁴ Instead of regulating immigration, however, the opposite occurred. Most African workers arrived in France without a labor contract stipulated

1 Original in “40,000 noirs vivent en France, la plupart dans des conditions épouvantables” [40,000 Blacks Live in France, Most in Appalling Conditions], *Les Echos*, July 24, 1963, 18 ACW 22/23, Archives municipales de Saint-Denis (AMSD), Paris: “les migrations traditionnelles sont devenues difficiles par suite de la fermeture des Etats voisins.”

2 Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*, 2nd ed. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 381–383.

3 See “Programme du gouvernement du résorption” [Government Program of the Resorption], November 2, 1970, 19960311, art. 6, Centre des Archives nationales contemporaines (CANC).

4 François Manchuelle, “Background to Black African Emigration to France: The Labor Migrations of the Soninke, 1848–1987” (PhD thesis, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1987), 533–534; see also “Jacques Aubert to M le Premier Ministre, 1963” [Jacques Aubert to the Prime Minister (1963)] and “Sous-Direction des étrangers et de la circulation trans-frontière, December 1970” [Subdirector for Foreigners and Cross-Border Traffic, December 1970], 19960134, art. 15, ANC.

by the accords, and few obtained the proper medical documentation, which continued a longer tradition of undocumented immigration—evidenced, for example, by Soninké workers stowing away on ships when they were not yet considered French citizens. Without these documents, they were technically undocumented immigrants and could be subject to deportation at any moment, which added a layer of precariousness to what became a tenuous existence in France.⁵

Citizenship and Recruitment

Despite these challenges, the appeal of oversea labor remained strong, especially as some workers retained French citizenship after independence through accords negotiated between France and its former colonies in West Africa.⁶ Even government officials, though, admitted that the situation in terms of citizenship remained “complex.”⁷ As recruiters sought workers from former West African colonies and those workers made their way to Paris and other cities throughout France, reflecting the global nature of the postwar labor market, colonial conceptualizations of African subjects lingered well into the postcolonial era. These ideas shaped the ways in which officials and employers viewed the growing community of postcolonial African immigrant workers. In some ways, Africans who arrived in France were not quite seen as immigrants, nor were they viewed entirely as colonial subjects—they were caught somewhere in between. Long-standing colonial ideas about rural African workers who were unable to cope with life in the urban realm circulated readily throughout postcolonial society, with authorities worrying about how immigrants from the former AOF would adjust to life in France. Jean Pradon, president of the Technical Committee for the Center for African and Malgache Assistance, argued that African immigrants might struggle with the “way of life” they encountered in France because of their “communitarian” ways.⁸ Officials also interpreted African workers as problematic within the French economy, claiming that employers viewed them as unfit for factory life because of their perceived inability to work and live within the industrial realm and ranking them last in terms of “desirable” immigrant groups to recruit for employment in France. The racism they experienced, whether latent or overt, was rooted in part in racial conceptualizations of colonial subjects developed in and beyond the French colonial empire.

5 Manchuelle, “Background to Black African Emigration to France,” 533–536.

6 Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and the French Empire, 1945–1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 416.

7 Jean Trillat, “L’immigration des travailleurs noirs en France: Leur adaptation à la communauté française” [The Immigration of Black Workers in France: Their Adaptation to the French Community], November 17, 1964, F1a 5135, CANC.

8 Trillat.

Despite these racialized constructions, companies such as Renault continued to recruit West African workers throughout the 1960s, reflecting the global nature of the postwar labor market. Renault's Billancourt automobile plant, for example, employed one of the largest populations of African workers anywhere in the Paris region. At first, only a few hundred workers from West Africa came each year, but soon, by the mid-1960s, thousands arrived annually, lured by the siren of perceived opportunity. What they encountered, however, was quite different from the prosperous image of France that compelled them to emigrate in the first place. In addition to drastic poverty, little did these workers know that the French government was in the midst of creating a postcolonial surveillance state built upon tactics and techniques used across the twentieth century in France, in its colonies, elsewhere in Europe, and throughout the world and designed to track and monitor postcolonial immigrant communities, including West African workers.

Community Composition

One critical question to explore in terms of positioning African immigration to France within the context of globalization is: What was the composition of the African community as it stood in the Paris region before and after decolonization? Another is: What was the relationship between decolonization and the global dynamics that facilitated African immigration to France in the postwar and postcolonial eras? Between 1960 and 1974 and the suspension of labor migration in 1974, the immigration of West African workers to France was dominated by Senegalese, Malian, and Mauritanian immigrants. A study in 1969 offered a statistical analysis of African nationalities, indicating that 40 percent of black Africans in France originated from Mali, while 25 percent came from Senegal and 25 percent hailed from Mauritania.⁹ At the same time, it also comprised, for the most part, members of the Soninké ethnic group, with Toucouleur and Bambara workers reflecting a small percentage of the workers who went to France in the postcolonial era. By the late 1960s, the Soninké were still the largest group of black African immigrants in France.¹⁰

Although black African immigration to France during this time remained the smallest of the immigrant groups that arrived in search of employment, their numbers increased dramatically in the Paris region and in France overall, compared to the early 1950s. For example, there were approximately 2,000 African workers living in France in 1953 and

9 See "L'étude sur l'immigration des travailleurs africains" [The Study on the Immigration of African Workers], 1969, 19960311, art. 6, CANC.

10 Manchuelle, "Background to Black African Emigration to France," 522.

15,000 by 1956.¹¹ By 1963, the figure was between 22,000 and 30,000.¹² Estimates varied throughout the 1960s. One source from the Police Prefecture (Préfecture de Police) placed the population at 22,000 in 1969.¹³ Others cited figures as high as 50,000.¹⁴ The difficulty in identifying the precise African population stemmed from the growth of undocumented immigration after 1963. Whether documented or undocumented, the increase in the African immigrant population over the course of the 1960s points to the rapidity with which word spread throughout communities in West Africa of the perception of burgeoning economic opportunities in France.

Signs of more permanent settlement also began to emerge in the area of housing. Dating back to the last years of France's colonial empire, African "subjects" of the French colonial empire could obtain French citizenship through reforms undertaken in the colonies after World War II. By 1948, a group of Soninké sailors founded the Foyer du Marin Sénégalais in Marseille, perhaps the first exclusively African *foyer* (a communal residence) in France.¹⁵ The *foyer* provided housing, food, laundry services, and recreational and social opportunities.¹⁶ This and subsequent *foyers* capitalized on another important historical tendency within the Soninké migratory pattern to France and throughout West Africa: namely the desire to reconnect with fellow migrants. Although constructed as temporary at the time, this migratory pattern laid the foundation for permanent settlement in France in the years after independence. African immigrants extended important networks of sociability and furthered kinship networks in Paris that had developed in port towns such as Marseille and Le Havre after World War I. By participating politically in a variety of ways, from riots and rent strikes to formal organizations such as the General Union of Senegalese Workers in France (Union Générale des Travailleurs Sénégalais en France, UGTSF), the emerging postcolonial African immigrant community forced the French government to acknowledge its shortcomings in terms of reception for this migratory group at the local, national, and regional levels.

After World War II, an important distinction must be made between "foreign" workers and "colonial" workers, such as the Soninké sailors and dock workers in Le Havre and Marseille and those who began working in the industrial sector. Foreign workers were

11 Manchuelle, "Background to Black African Emigration to France," 498. One official from the Police Prefecture estimated the population of Malians, Senegalese, and Mauritanian immigrants in 1960 at 1,000, considerably lower than Manchuelle's figure. See also "Maurice Grimaud to M le Ministre de l'Intérieur" [Maurice Grimaud to the Minister of the Interior] 1969, 2018 W, art. 20, Archives départementales du Val-de-Marne (ADVM).

12 Manchuelle, "Background to Black African Emigration to France," 498.

13 "Maurice Grimaud to M le Ministre de l'Intérieur."

14 See "L'étude sur l'immigration des travailleurs africains"; see also "40,000 noirs vivent en France."

15 Manchuelle, "Background to Black African Emigration to France," 201; see also "Les travailleurs originaires d'Afrique noire," November 10, 1964, F1a 5136, CANC.

16 Manchuelle, "Background to Black African Emigration to France," 202; see also "Les travailleurs originaires d'Afrique noire."

subject to immigration procedures and regulations overseen by the National Office of Immigration (Office National de l'Immigration, ONI). The challenging nature of immigration procedures to legally work in France in the postwar era discouraged some potential immigrants from countries such as Italy, Spain, Portugal, or Yugoslavia. But these groups arrived in smaller numbers than were needed by various industries because of the stricter nature of French immigration laws applied to foreign nationals. Colonial migrants from the French Empire in West Africa and North Africa, however, were not subject to the same restrictions as European nationals.

Charles de Gaulle believed in 1944 that it was time to reorient France's relationship with its colonies, especially in the wake of their contribution to the defeat of the Third Reich in World War II. He held the Brazzaville Conference in 1944 as an initial attempt to come up with reform measures, and two years later, colonial inhabitants found themselves in possession of citizenship within the empire with the 1946 reform of the French nationality law. This conference reflected de Gaulle's efforts to retain colonial loyalties in the wake of increasing calls for independence throughout sub-Saharan Africa, especially considering the success of the international pan-African nationalist movement and the outrage that spread throughout British and French colonies in West Africa over their exclusion from the Atlantic Charter (1941). Although they did not have the same rights as French men and women, in 1946 colonial subjects in West and North Africa were granted citizenship in the empire.¹⁷

From the perspective of nationality and residency status, there was less of a legal distinction between French and "colonial" workers than for other foreign workers. Soninké migrants could work and reside in France without adhering to residency restrictions and paperwork requirements. Employers quickly recognized this loophole and identified North and West African colonial inhabitants as potential employees. This is not to say that colonial workers had not made an appearance in metropolitan France prior to 1946, as demonstrated by the migration of the Soninké to Marseille and Le Havre in the 1930s. Yet the lack of residency and employment restrictions proved especially appealing in the post-World War II and post-Great Depression economic expansion. The change in nationality law engendered a shift in the ways in which various industries regarded the colonies—they were now seen as a potentially viable source of labor. Various companies such as the automobile manufacturer Renault began recruiting workers from the French colonies in North and West Africa.

But in the 1950s, labor migration to France changed once again due to historical circumstances. With the commencement and escalation of the Algerian War of Independence in 1954, restrictions were imposed on the Algerian community in France in

17 François Manchuelle, *Willing Migrants: Soninké Labor Diasoras, 1848–1960* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1997), 213.

an effort to curb terrorist activities carried out on French territory by the National Liberation Front (Front de Libération Nationale, FLN).¹⁸ By 1956, Algerians were required to enter France with official visas, thereby making labor migration that much harder to facilitate for private companies looking for easy supplemental labor sources. Algerians themselves reacted decisively to these restrictions. The number of Algerian immigrants entering France dropped precipitously in the late 1950s. In 1955, 194,000 Algerians entered France. One year later, the number fell to 79,000.¹⁹ More Algerians left France than entered the country. Those who stayed had families and were frequently promoted to higher-paying and more prestigious jobs, leaving semiskilled and low-skilled positions vacant.

By 1962 and Algerian independence, the situation changed again and was further complicated by the exodus of French *pieds-noirs* (the French settlers in Algeria) and Harkis (the Algerians who fought for France during the Algerian war). Both groups fled Algeria as the two sides signed the Évian Accords to end the war. The French government also lifted the travel restrictions on Algerians at that point. As a result, thousands of Algerians came to France who were previously unable to enter France because of the visa restrictions imposed during the war.²⁰ With the economic expansion hitting its peak between 1956 and 1962, French industries became increasingly cognizant of the labor shortage that they faced on all fronts, with too few European immigrants; too many restrictions on Algerian workers until 1962; and too few French citizens willing to work in low-level, low-wage, and low-paying jobs.²¹

This is where the recruitment of black African workers and specifically Soninké laborers from Senegal, Mauritania, and Mali came into play. Soninké workers—like their Algerian counterparts until 1956 and the implementation of visa restrictions—could come to France with fewer immigration restrictions placed on European nationals by the ONI. At this point, companies started sending representatives to Marseille and Le Havre in order to recruit the Soninké living and working there as sailors and dock hands. Correspondingly, Soninké workers had already begun to diversify in terms of their economic endeavors and had taken up employment in small-scale factories. Automobile industry executives seized an opportunity to lure these workers to Paris to work in their plants. Renault, which was still a state-owned company, sent recruiters south to Marseille to convince African workers to relocate to the Paris basin and work, for example, at the Billancourt factory.²² Even the Paris city government joined these

18 Manchuelle, *Willing Migrants*, 213–214; Manchuelle, “Background to Black African Emigration to France,” 490.

19 Manchuelle, *Willing Migrants*, 213.

20 Manchuelle, 213–214.

21 Manchuelle, *Willing Migrants*, 214; Manchuelle, “Background to Black African Emigration to France,” 490.

22 Manchuelle, *Willing Migrants*, 213–214.

efforts, recruiting Soninké migrants to work as street sweepers.²³ Recruiters utilized the kinship networks established by the Soninké over a 20-year period.

The independence of French colonies in sub-Saharan Africa reconfigured labor migration to France yet again. The citizenship status of black African workers changed with the demise of the French Empire. Soninké workers residing in France were also “Sene-galese,” “Malian,” or “Mauritanian” nationals rather than French citizens. The closing of national borders during independence interrupted Soninké migration patterns, which amplified migration to France because it served as a viable alternative to migration between African nation-states. Between 1960 and 1963, West African workers could still freely circulate between their nation-states and France, as they had legally been able to do so between the 1946 nationality reform and full-scale independence. France undertook significant reforms in its West African colonies, starting in 1946 and culminating with De Gaulle’s 1958 plebiscite asking whether or not existing West African colonies wanted to stay affiliated with France. The *indigénat* and *corvée* labor systems were abolished, the AOF and the AEF were merged, and the West African colonies were allowed ten representatives in the French National Assembly. Internal governments in France’s African colonies were introduced in 1956, with France retaining control over the military, foreign affairs, and economic planning. This was not enough, however, to keep the West African colonies. By 1960, 13 colonies gained independence.²⁴ They could also obtain French citizenship through a declaration guided by the law of July 28, 1960, which recognized French citizenship of those born in former West African colonies by judicial declaration.²⁵

At the same time, enterprises such as Renault recruited heavily among the Soninké population in Marseille while also fanning out their efforts to include West Africa. Yet formal efforts on the part of enterprises were not the only reason for which black African and Soninké workers made their way to Paris in the late 1950s, throughout the 1960s, and into the 1970s. The Soninké social and economic network that connected Marseille, Le Havre, Dakar, and the group’s homeland proved to be as effective of a recruitment tool as any formal efforts undertaken by various French industries or government organizations.²⁶ Soninké workers in port cities such as Dakar and Marseille spread the word to fellow urban dwellers that there were seemingly endless economic opportunities in the Paris basin. Attracted by the same potential wealth and social promotion that had spurred Soninké migration for generations, young men arrived in Paris ready to take advantage of the French economy and its ever-expanding opportunities.²⁷

23 Manchuelle, 214.

24 See Shillington, *History of Africa*, 381–383.

25 See “Programme du gouvernement du résorption.”

26 Manchuelle, “Background to Black African Emigration to France,” 504.

27 Manchuelle, “Background to Black African Emigration to France,” 504; Manchuelle, *Willing Migrants*, 215–219.

For the most part, African immigrants were employed in specific industries. Many gravitated toward automobile manufacturing and worked in the two of the major French automobile manufacturers: Renault and Citroën. One report indicated that a total of 292 Africans worked for Renault by 1969, the majority of whom were Senegalese in nationality and more than likely Soninké in ethnicity.²⁸ Citroën employed 748 African workers, with Malians constituting the majority of these laborers. African immigrants also found employment as metalworkers and in the construction and textile industries as well.²⁹

There is little evidence to suggest that African workers inhabiting Paris, however, owned bars and hotels as their predecessors had in Marseille. Both kinds of establishments created important social spaces where immigrants could forge and maintain ties with one another, just as they did for other demographic groups. In Paris, however, bar and hotel ownership by non-European immigrant groups was dominated by Algerians. Often, African workers lived in hotels owned and managed by Algerians, which led to friction between the two immigrant groups. Without access to this local form of ownership, African immigrants discovered other ways to reproduce the social ties and kinship networks that had always been prominent within Soninké migration patterns. They found alternate outlets in *foyers* and organizations such as the UGTSF and the Association of North African Workers (Association des Travailleurs Maghrébins, ATM) and used them as viable alternatives to hotel and bar ownership.

Regardless of the industry in which they worked, African workers, like immigrants throughout the world, expected to find economic opportunity in their host country. Instead of fortune, however, they encountered serious problems on almost all fronts, as many immigrants do in a new setting. African labor migrants endured housing difficulties, illness, strained relations with other immigrant communities, and racism and exclusion from the host society. For its part, the French government had almost no coherent or well-thought-out means of receiving these immigrants. Undocumented immigration picked up in the 1960s, and few African immigrants arrived with labor or housing guarantees. Renault housed its African employees, but its provision of shelter proved to be the exception rather than the rule.

Despite these challenges, however, the African immigrant community continued to grow. Between 1960 and 1974 and the suspension of labor migration, the migration of West African workers was dominated by Senegalese, Malian, and Mauritanian immigrants. By 1963, an increase occurred in the numbers of African workers arriving in France, including those coming through informal means. One factor contributing to this development was the French government's emphasis on supplying workers to a growing economy over all else, despite the formal accords negotiated between the French

28 See "L'étude sur l'immigration des travailleurs africains."

29 See "L'étude sur l'immigration des travailleurs africains."

government and Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal. Within a political culture dominated by technocracy and planning throughout the postwar era, there was a surprising lack of control or expertise guiding African immigration to France. And yet, the arrival of African workers alongside so many other nationalities signified the continued globalization of France's workforce, its economy, and its population overall. Thus, globalization within a Cold War context occurred in and beyond France's borders.

Demographic and Employment Profiles

In continuing the tradition set by generations of Soninké migrants, postcolonial African immigration to France was dominated by men between 1960 and 1974. Soninké, Toucouleur, and Bambara male workers arrived from Senegal, Mali, and Mauritania in search of economic opportunity after independence. Early in this migration pattern, many believed that they would work for a few years and then return home. Demographically this was a younger migration pattern, as many of the migrants were under 30 years of age at the time of their arrival in France.³⁰ Those who were married left their wives and children behind in their countries of origin, sending money back to support them and provide capital for investment in various economic endeavors, including real estate.³¹ These migration patterns created important global links between Europe and West Africa and, specifically, France and countries such as Senegal. Historian François Manchuelle highlights the increased "modernization" witnessed in the Soninké homeland as a result of labor migration to France. He explains,

inside houses in (the Soninké villages of the Mauritanian section of Guidimakha), there were modern beds, with mattresses, sheets, blankets, mosquito nets, plates, and oriental rugs made in France. The villagers owned gas lamps, bicycles, and mopeds. The clothing of villagers was markedly better than that of many Africans, even in African cities. Returned migrants wore watches, and had good quality shoes.³²

Not until the 1970s did the number of women and children arriving in France increase. This occurred primarily after 1974 with the end of formal labor migration and the initiation of family reunification. Rather than returning home, as the government intended with the change in immigration law, wives and children joined these immigrants in France.

30 Manchuelle, "Background to Black African Emigration to France," 549–550.

31 Manchuelle, 560–561.

32 Manchuelle, 560.

Social and Economic Networks

Social and economic networks played a critical role in facilitating this global migration pattern. Within the Soninké migration pattern were a well-developed sense of community and the desire to assist and help fellow migrants become established and successful in their newfound employment. In West Africa, it was manifested in the *chambres*, which Manchuelle labeled “a fundamental institution of the Soninké migration.” The *chambres* resembled the *foyers* in which African immigrants lived in the postcolonial period, providing housing as well as social and economic resources.³³ This relates directly to the overarching push factor in the migration to begin with: the desire to amass wealth and social status through temporary economic migration. Immigrants reproduced this characteristic during the interwar and immediate postwar migration to France in port cities such as Marseille and Le Havre and found a convenient outlet in the establishment of all-African *foyers*. Whether they were communities that were directed and controlled such as that of the Foyer du Marin Sénégalais or were managed by a French organization such as SOUNDIATA in the 1960s, *foyers* offered an important milieu for the regrouping of a migratory group that privileged community relations and kinship networks throughout the entire migratory experience. The decision by three sailors in 1948 to open an immigrant-controlled *foyer* created a template that was appropriated by the postcolonial labor migration of Soninké laborers and other black African migrants. Foyers also reflected the important global networks of sociability that emerged and expanded through transnational migration.

What French officials deemed “communitarian” tendencies incompatible with French ways of life, then, were actually long-established global migratory traditions created in rural to urban migration patterns from the Soninké homeland to West African coastal cities such as Dakar in the early twentieth century. They were then reproduced through the various phases of migration to France, including the post-1960 period and the larger-scale migration of black African workers.³⁴ This tendency attracted considerable scrutiny from French officials, who deemed it dangerous, subversive, and threatening while working to break up regroupings of African immigrants through evacuation and relocation procedures. What they did not realize, however, was that this was a continuation of a migratory pattern established in the nineteenth century in West Africa and reinforced in every stage of the Soninké historical pattern of migration.

The establishment of a Soninké-run and -inhabited *foyer* also points to another important characteristic that emerged in the years after World War II: the changing nature of Soninké and West African immigration to France. This migration pattern from West

33 Manchuelle, “Background to Black African Emigration to France,” 124; see also “Les travailleurs originaires d’Afrique noire.”

34 Manchuelle, “Background to Black African Emigration to France,” 123–128, 201–202.

Africa was increasingly an urban one, with more and more migrants arriving in France after having spent several years in Dakar. These were decidedly urban migrants, contrary to the perception put forth by officials who constructed them as arriving from far-flung, rural areas in “underdeveloped” African regions.³⁵ The temporary migration undertaken by generations of Soninké men was lengthening and becoming semipermanent, with migrants returning from Marseille, Le Havre, or Dakar after an entire career’s worth of time away from their homeland, essentially in time for retirement. The status and wealth built up over these long migratory periods allowed an older man to return to his homeland and village as a respected elder at the end of his career. This reveals yet another tendency that contributed to the permanent settlement of an African community in France after 1974, the suspension of labor migration, and the initiation of family reunification. By the mid-twentieth century, the Soninké showed a propensity for longer-term migration and semipermanent settlement, returning home after several years and after an entire career away from their homeland.³⁶

The State’s Response to African Immigration

Despite recruitment efforts and a migratory pattern that dates back to the nineteenth century, African labor migration was regarded as a problem, a perspective developed during the colonial empire. Officials in the Ministry of the Interior and in other government agencies argued that these workers were ill-suited for industrial employment and pondered how to stem the tide of black African migration while attempting to exact control. Until the mid-1960s, the government took few steps to rectify the actual problems that these migrants faced in terms of housing, health care, and unemployment. This is why the work of organizations such as the UGTSF comprises an important development within the African community as it provided the services and support not often found in other facets of French society while also building on an important global emphasis on organization and belonging for immigrant groups in and beyond France. In fact, the African immigrants who organized groups such as the UGTSF built upon an important tradition of political and social organization dating back to the early years of the twentieth century in colonial West Africa.

The organization was not overtly political in its early years because it was trying to assist Africans living in the Paris basin and throughout France. Only when the community’s situation stabilized in terms of health, housing, and employment did the UGTSF begin to concentrate on political and economic developments in the countries

35 Trillat, “L’immigration”; see also “Annexe au Procès verbal de la séance du jeudi 6 février 1964” [Appendix to the Minutes of the Meeting of Thursday, February 6, 1964], 1964, F1a 5136, CANC.

36 Manchuelle, *Willing Migrants*, 209, 211, 212.

of origins—the exact reverse of what most scholars argue are the initial objectives of a newly forming immigrant organization. Workers were viewed as expendable, and those from Africa as more disposable than any other demographic in the workforce. In 1968, one official labeled African immigration to France as an “anarchic immigration” while describing the “massive arrival” of black workers.³⁷ Yet it was not the migration pattern itself that was incorrigible. Instead, French immigration policy fell short in effectively controlling, receiving, or integrating this immigrant group. Organizations such as the UGTSF and the Centre Médico-Social Bossuet served as a means of support at a time when the French government provided few options to which African workers could turn. These developments also point to the fact that even so-called temporary labor migrants sought out the resources necessary to survive and prosper over the course of their stay.

Most of the African workers who arrived in France after 1960 settled in the Paris basin, France’s industrial center.³⁸ And they connected with one another in very specific neighborhoods in Paris and its suburbs. For the better part of the twentieth century, a communist “red belt” emerged on the periphery of Paris. The PCF found substantial support in suburban cities, such as Bobigny.³⁹ Tyler Stovall and other scholars point to the long-standing tension between Paris and its periphery as workers were pushed further and further to the outer edges, beginning in the nineteenth century through Haussmanization and continuing into the twentieth century. By the late 1970s and 1980s, the peripheral neighborhoods and suburbs of Paris were increasingly inhabited by North African and black African immigrants. They often shared the same urban spaces, which led to conflicts and confrontations such as the Saint Denis riot in 1963. For their part, African workers settled in neighborhoods throughout the eleventh, eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth arrondissements and in suburban municipalities such as Saint Denis, Aubervilliers, Montreuil, and Ivry-sur-Seine.⁴⁰ The riots and rent strikes undertaken by African immigrants represented yet another chapter in the Paris-periphery struggle, which was one of the major motivating factors in the French government’s decision to disperse and relocate African immigrants in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

37 See “Objet: Débat sur les étrangers en France” [Subject: Debate on Foreigners in France], 1968, F1a 5052. R. Bonnaud-Delamare à M le Ministre des Affaires Sociales, CANC.

38 Manchuelle, “Background to Black African Emigration to France,” 522–523; see also “L’étude sur l’immigration des travailleurs africains.”

39 Tyler Stovall, *The Rise of the Paris Red Belt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

40 See “40,000 noirs vivent en France”; Jean Dannenmuller, “1,000 Algériens par jour. 1,000 Sénégalais par mois” [1,000 Algerians per Day. 1,000 Senegalese per Month], *Carrefour*, July 21, 1963. See also Trillat, “L’immigration”; and also “Africains noirs présents et au travail en France” [Black Africans Present and at Work in France], *Cahiers Nord-Africains* 86 (October–November 1961).

The post-1974 period witnessed the feminization of African immigration to France and, with this development, the community's first attempt at long-term, permanent settlement. No longer were immigrants migrating for "temporary" labor migration; they now intended to settle and live in France. This raised all sorts of questions for French authorities and the institutions that had assisted male African immigrants throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s—such as SOUNDIATA and the Centre Médico-Social Bossuet. Suddenly their services had to meet the demands of African women, whose needs in terms of living arrangements and health care were different from that of their husbands and male counterparts. *Foyer* management organizations such as Welcome and Promotion (Accueil et Promotion) and SOUNDIATA catered exclusively to African men and their housing needs. Their regulations made no space for female residency within their dormitories. With the changing nature of African immigration and the community's more permanent settlement came a new set of challenges for a host society that had not yet come to terms with the presence of African immigrants in France in the first place.

The ways in which officials understood African immigrants' proficiency in French reveals the difficulties they had in comprehending the true nature of this migratory pattern. Authorities who observed African immigration to France during the 1960s and 1970s perceived these migrants to be illiterate in the French language. In his book *Travailleurs africains noirs en France*, Souleymane Diarra found that out of 1,500 Africans living in France, 35.7 percent could communicate in French. He attributed it to their residence in Dakar prior to arriving in France.⁴¹ One observer described their French linguistic capacity in the following manner: "The linguistic difficulty is considerable. There are few jobs where knowledge of the language is not required."⁴² Some were unable to speak French and knew only their own local languages, including Soninké, the language of the dominant ethnic group. But many of these migrants arrived after living for several years in Marseille and Dakar, which meant that they knew enough French to get by on a daily basis. One of their major motivations in relocating from Dakar to Paris, for example, was the fact that they could make more money—or so they thought—in Paris.⁴³

Such observations point to three important aspects of postcolonial African immigration to France. First, it was initially an urban-to-urban migration, meaning that very few rural migrants arrived in the first years after independence.⁴⁴ Second, French authorities

41 Souleymane Diarra, "Travailleurs africains noirs en France" [Black African Workers in France], *Bulletin de l'Institut fondamental d'Afrique noire*, no. 3 (1968); Manchuelle, *Background to Black African Emigration to France*, 510.

42 Original in Trillat, "L'immigration": "La difficulté linguistique est considérable. Il est peu d'emploi qui dispensent de la connaissance de la langue."

43 Manchuelle, "Background to Black African Emigration to France," 516.

44 Manchuelle, 510.

made assumptions about African immigration without knowing or understanding the realities of this migratory pattern. They assumed, for example, that all African immigrants were incapable of speaking French. Officials observing this migration pattern rarely acknowledged that these were former residents of the French Empire, where the French language was spoken at the very least by colonial officials and African elites. Third, the assumption of illiteracy points to the static ways in which officials interpreted African immigrants. They believed that they were rural, naive, impoverished, incapable of working in an industrial economy, unfamiliar with urban life, and illiterate in the French language, which is reflective of broader racial constructions that shaped French colonialism and the postcolonial era. One official argued that these were men who were “transplanted from the calm of their native bush and the sun of their country into the frantic pace and the mists of the great metropolitan cities.”⁴⁵ Many of these migrants lived for years in urban areas, spoke at least some French, were familiar with city rhythms, and originated from the relatively prosperous Soninké homeland where wealth and status motivated migration over the course of two centuries. Thus, colonially influenced assumptions about race affected how French officials interpreted and received postcolonial African immigrants in complex and challenging ways.

Despite these challenges, the early postcolonial immigration of black African workers to France was the continuation of a long-standing tendency of the Soninké to migrate not only to France but also to urban and coastal areas throughout West Africa. The migratory patterns undertaken by this ethnic group defied precolonial and colonial logic, confounded Marxist historians, and puzzled postcolonial French officials struggling to come to terms with a “black” presence in France. What they did not acknowledge after 1960, however, was that France’s black community had a long-standing and varied twentieth-century history.

The African diaspora in France was already well developed by the interwar period and included former colonial soldiers who decided to stay in France, pan-African nationalists from West Africa, African intellectuals and poets, and African-American jazz musicians and writers. Yet it also included an important group of Soninké workers attracted to the port city of Marseille for its economic opportunities. These workers moved from Dakar to Marseille and then, during the height of the Great Depression, to Le Havre. They overlapped with African members of the PCF and pan-African nationalists eager to win their support.

Most importantly, however, these immigrants established a foundation for African immigration to France that had important consequences for the postwar economic expansion and the postcolonial labor migration. African workers who arrived in France after 1960 created a template for residency in France, involving themselves in political

45 Original in Trillat, “L’immigration”: “transplantés du calme de leur brousse natale et du soleil de leur pays dans le rythme effréné et les brumes des grands cités métropolitaines.”

organizations, creating *foyers* that served as a model for community development and assistance, and helping to facilitate the largest migration of African workers ever seen in France after the mid-1950s. Labor recruiters quickly recognized the utility of this immigrant group, whereas French officials had difficulty accepting their presence by the early 1960s. Without official policies and procedures to effectively receive this migratory group, the Soninké and African immigrants did what they had done all along. They continued a long-standing migration pattern; maintained their own kinship networks and networks of sociability; assisted one another with housing, health care, and language barriers; and dealt with and addressed colonially and racially influenced assumptions about their capabilities, strengths, and weaknesses.

Immigrant Political Activism

How, then, did African immigrants deal with the crisis they confronted once they arrived in the Paris? In moving to Paris, they expected to benefit from increased wealth and status. In fact, political activism and advocacy provided tools essential in addressing these challenges. In confronting a “mirage of fortune,” these immigrants used several strategies to cope with the realities of their new lives in France. Building on a long-standing tradition of political activism dating back to the interwar period, Africa, immigrants involved themselves in French political culture. They borrowed from colonial forms of political activism while challenging ideas about postcolonial immigrant civic participation. To protest the conditions in which they found themselves, postcolonial African immigrants in France appropriated colonial forms of civic participation while adapting them to the postcolonial era. What were once “black” and “African” political unions, dating back to the 1930s with organizations such as the Union of Negro Workers (Union des Travailleurs nègres, UTN), were now “Senegalese” and “Mauritanian” unions, modeled on those of the interwar period in France and West Africa. Not all African workers, though, embraced this formal and in some ways traditional form of activism. The type of approach to civic participation undertaken depended, in large part, on their legal status. Some immigrants, such as N’Dongo, retained French citizenship even after the decolonization of and independence for former colonies such as Senegal and could found officially recognized organizations, while others considered to be foreign nationals turned to more informal means of political activism and protest. And not all embraced political activism to protest their circumstances. Some returned to Senegal and other West African countries, frustrated that they did not fare better in a place that had promised so much.

The experiences of West African immigrants in France after independence proved multifaceted and dynamic, offering some immigrants such as N’Dongo many opportunities for prominence while relegating others to a life of marginalization and oppression. Often, official surveillance records captured the diverse ways in which African immi-

grants participated and protested within the public sphere while also making note of citizenship and nationality. African political activism in France after decolonization is largely the story of how African immigrants dealt with the crisis they confronted once they arrived in the Paris. They expected increased wealth and status stemming from moving to Paris. In confronting a “mirage of fortune,” these immigrants used several strategies to cope with the realities of their new lives in France.

Across the 1960s, African workers utilized a varied number of political tactics, thereby drawing attention to their status while utilizing new forms of political protest. From riots to rent strikes, the politicization of the African immigrant community occurred in a variety of ways in large part due to the discrepancies in immigration status. For those who could not create their own associations, as N'Dongo did with the UGTSF, alternatives such as rent strikes became attractive. Needing no official recognition or sanctioning, a rent strike in a dormitory could garner media attention while highlighting the challenges that African immigrants faced in Paris and its suburbs. While attracting the attention of the authorities was always a risk, those who participated knew that there was no requirement to register officially through the Police Prefecture because, in most instances, there were no official associations directing the strike. Instead, it was the residents themselves who organized the protests. With hundreds of rent strikes staged in dormitories inhabited by African immigrants throughout the Paris region in the last years of the 1960s and the early 1970s, rent strikes themselves became an important means of civic engagement and political protest for an immigrant population with few other options through which to engage politically.

Because of restrictions on their ability to formally organize, undocumented immigrants sought alternative forms of civic engagement beyond state-recognized associations. Due to his visibility and political activism, authorities monitored and tracked N'Dongo's whereabouts and activities. This surveillance reflected an important shift, as by the mid-1960s, officials surveyed populations of Africans residing in France with the citizenship of their new nation-states, tracking nationalities by categories and by the total number who arrived and departed each year.⁴⁶ As fewer and fewer African workers arrived with French citizenship and more came with the citizenship of their newly independent countries of origin, surveillance became more pervasive and, in some ways, more paranoid about the political orientation of African workers. This change in citizenship status from French to foreign meant that police saw a population of “foreign nationals” where they had once been seen as, perhaps, less dangerous “colonial citizens,” which were viewed as somehow manageable, while a growing population of black foreign nationals were interpreted as not. This concern, paired with the racialized lens through which authorities viewed African immigrants and the growing concern over the relationship between African workers and community leaders and the political

46 Trillat.

left in France, prompted authorities to resort to all sorts of tactics with which to monitor and survey the African immigrant community. The surveillance of African immigrants in France mirrored the global emphasis within the Cold War context of monitoring suspicious groups while also connecting to the colonial tendency toward tracking those deemed threatening.

The citizenship and immigration status of African immigrants was reflected in official surveillance of this community. One key change monitored by authorities, to varying degrees of success in the postwar and postcolonial eras, was citizenship status. Following World War II, colonial citizenship laws changed drastically throughout the French Empire. The Fourth Republic's 1946 constitution established a version of French citizenship through the French Union, the new term used to describe the empire. As Alexis Spire argues, three categories of colonial citizenship emerged: "French protected persons who are Moroccan and Tunisian; nationals of associated states or territories who are from Indochina, Cameroon, and Togo; and final nationals of overseas departments and territories who have the status of French citizens."⁴⁷ Authorities tracked and monitored colonial subjects and then colonial citizens. Yet another transition occurred with decolonization. While some African workers already living in France, including N'Dongo, retained French citizenship, those arriving from West Africa after 1960 often came with only the citizenship of their new nation-states, having lost the French citizenship conferred upon them after World War II while still part of the French Empire.⁴⁸

Conclusion

Postwar and postcolonial African and specifically Soninké labor migration to France was established upon a foundation created by previous generations of immigrants dating back to the nineteenth century. Immigrants from West Africa historically worked in a variety of industries and occupations, from dock workers during the 1930s to automobile manufacturing in the 1960s. A smaller immigrant group in total number, the number of African workers arriving in France continued to increase following decolonization in West Africa in 1960 until the end of labor migration in 1974. At that point, family reunification reshaped the migration pattern, becoming increasingly one of women and children rejoining their husbands who had previously migrated to France. And over the many decades that African workers resided in France, they participated in various forms of political activism modeled on those used to challenge the colonial

47 Original in Alexis Spire, *Etrangers à la carte* [Foreigners à la carte] (Paris: Grasset, 2005), 192: "les protégés français qui sont marocains et tunisiens, les ressortissants d'Etats ou de territoires associés qui sont originaires d'Indochine, du Cameroun et du Togo, et enfin les ressortissants des départements et territoires d'outre-mer qui ont la qualité de citoyen français."

48 Trillat, "L'immigration."

state in West Africa and those used in France to protest a wide range of issues. Thus, African immigration to France after World War II is rooted in important and historical migration patterns dating back decades while contributing to the important history of protest and political organization in France and its colonial empire.

The French globalization project cannot be understood without an exploration of immigration to France. As a country of immigration dating back to at least the early modern era, France has come to be called home for generations of immigrants, from refugees escaping religious persecution in Eastern Europe and Russia in the nineteenth century to Italian and Polish workers in search of employment opportunities and members of Germany's Jewish community fleeing persecution during the interwar period. An important component of France's history of immigration, which is in turn a critical aspect of its globalization project, is the story of immigration from France's colonies, including those in sub-Saharan Africa. Since the dawn of early modern colonialism in the Caribbean to the end of empire in the AOF, colonial subjects and citizens have circulated to France for a variety of reasons, from employment and educational opportunities to political endeavors. The French economy dating back to the earliest years of the slave trade and early modern colonialism not only was deeply intertwined with the exploitive labor practices of these eras but also came to rely on unfree, forced labor. While French participation in the slave trade ended in the nineteenth century, the use of forced labor in the colonies continued into the twentieth century, reflecting the global nature of the slave trade, colonialism, and France's participation in both systems.

Thus, the story of West African immigrants and their arrival in France before and after decolonization is part of that story and one that, in the diversity of immigrant groups in France historically, gets told enough. African workers, like other immigrant communities, brought with their cultural norms, their language, their religious practices, and their expectations of a better life. When those expectations were not met and when they experienced the structural racism that emerged from slavery and colonialism, they organized themselves politically, just as their counterparts had done in the AOF and the AEF to protest the French colonial government. Not only did these workers influence political discourse in the public sphere while attracting the interest of French authorities bent on understanding them, their motivations, and their affiliations, but they also influenced the structure of the French economy as well as social struggles within France, exhibited, most notably, by the upheaval of May of 1968, in which, as Daniel Gordon highlights, immigrants participated.

The circulation of African immigrants to countries such as France after decolonization reflects the ways in which newly independent African countries participated extensively in the global economy. Through remittances provided to their communities of origin at home, African immigrants also participated in a global exchange of resources seen as critical to development projects in the early years of the postcolonial period, the likes of which community leaders such as Sally N'Dongo remained committed to throughout his career as an activist. Thus, no discussion of the French globalization project is complete

without a multifaceted look at the story of immigration to France, told here through the lens of twentieth-century and, more specifically, postcolonial African immigration to that long-standing country of immigration.

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The Paths of Decolonization in French Black Africa (1945–1960)

Throughout the Second World War, the empire was a major strategic issue for Vichy France and the Axis forces as well as for the Free French forces and the Allies. The massive commitment of colonial troops during the conflict on the side of the Allies from November 1942 and the beginning of the reconquest of French North Africa, the nationalist unrest in the French mandates of Syria and Lebanon from 1943 onward, the rise of anticolonial movements in the Maghreb and Indochina, and the “anticolonialism” of the American allies prompted the authorities of the Provisional Government of the French Republic (PGFR) to organize the Brazzaville conference, held in January 1944.¹ With the support of Charles de Gaulle, the three pillars, so to say, of the PGFR—René Pleven, Félix Éboué, and Henri Laurentie—were convinced that the empire could only endure on the condition that major political, social, and economic reforms were decided upon in order to satisfy the long-standing demands of the main political parties and indigenous elites of the empire and to counter the rise of anticolonial nationalism.

The organization of the conference, however, still reflected the highly centralized conceptions of the exercise of colonial power, with the participation of about 40 senior colonial officials—themselves divided between “reformists” and “conservatives”—and the exclusion of any representative from the “indigenous” parties. Although the conference rejected any prospect of independence, it did issue a series of recommendations that set the tone for the reforms that France would agree to two years later: the gradual abolition of forced labor over a period of five years and the abolition of the Code de l’indigénat, as well as the development of economies, schooling, and social welfare, particularly through the extension of healthcare systems. Politically, the conference suggested to significantly increase the representation of the colonized in parliament.

At the end of the war, the imperial situation in France was complex. In May 1945, riots erupted in Algeria, in the Constantine region, which were brutally repressed by the French army, while in Indochina the situation was convoluted; after the Japanese had surrendered, the Viet Minh called for the recognition of Vietnamese independence. The Indochina War was about to begin.

1 Raymond-Marin Lemesle, *La Conférence de Brazzaville de 1944, contexte et repères* [The 1944 Brazzaville Conference, Context, and Benchmarks] (Paris: Centre des hautes études sur l’Afrique et l’Asie modernes, 1994).

It is in this context that major colonial reforms were enacted in 1946. First of all, the “old colonies” (Réunion, Martinique, Guyana, and Guadeloupe) became departments, theoretically obtaining the same political and social rights as metropolitan France. In April 1946, the Houphouët-Boigny Law abolished forced labor in sub-Saharan Africa,² whereas a few months earlier the penalty system of the Code de l’indigénat had been banned.³ On the political level, after many reversals, the double electoral college was preserved—a system of political representation separating two colleges, one representing Europeans and the other “natives,” and guaranteeing the maintenance of power of the former over the latter, although enlarging the representation of the colonies in parliament. The Lamine-Guèye Law, adopted in January 1946, completely abolished the Code de l’indigénat and generalized the status of “citizen” to all imperial subjects; however, this new status did not change anything in terms of political rights and therefore was essentially symbolic. Finally, on May 5, 1946, the referendum on the second constitution created the French Union (Union française), which included all the colonies of France.

Even though the changes are notable, the political domination of the colonial administration allied to the European colonial system was still preserved. But it was above all in the economic and social spheres that the innovations were most striking. In April 1946, the Investment Fund for Economic and Social Development (Fonds d’investissement pour le développement économique et social, FIDES) was created for the economic development of French West Africa (Afrique Occidentale Française, AOF), French Equatorial Africa (Afrique Équatoriale Française, AEF), Togo, Cameroon, and Madagascar. It is important to understand that until then the colonies were governed by the principle of self-financing, as provided for in Article 33 of the Finance Act (1900); that is to say, the development of the colonies should not burden the public finances of metropolitan France. This principle had previously been undermined because the state had intervened to guarantee colonial loans; for instance, during the economic crisis of 1929 (which did not affect France and its empire until 1931), the law from February 22, 1931 allowed local households to take out repayable loans for the purchase of capital goods. In the context of this crisis, the state had intervened selectively in the 1930s to support the main colonial productive sectors, which had been severely affected by the market collapse. In total, thanks to these grants, the colonized territories had been able to borrow 139 billion francs between 1900 and 1945.

2 Babacar Fall, “Le travail forcé en Afrique-Occidentale française (1900–1946)” [Forced Labor in French West Africa (1900–1946)], *Civilisations*, no. 41 (1993): 329–336.

3 Sylvie Thénault, “Le ‘Code de l’indigénat’” [The “Code de l’indigénat”], in *Histoire de l’Algérie à la période coloniale, 1830–1962*, eds. Abderrahmane Bouchène, Jean-Pierre Peyroulou, Ouanassa Siari Tengour, and Sylvie Thénault (Paris: La Découverte, 2014), 200–206; Claude Collot, *Les Institutions de l’Algérie pendant la période coloniale (1830–1962)* [Algeria’s Institutions during the Colonial Period (1830–1962)] (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1987).

However, these discrepancies are marginal when one considers the rupture that the creation of FIDES entails. FIDES, through the Central Fund of Overseas France (Caisse Centrale de la France d’Outre-mer),⁴ planned massive investments totaling 740 billion CFA franc over a ten-year period, with 70 to 80 percent of the costs to be borne directly by the mother country and the remaining 20 to 30 percent to be borne by the territories themselves.⁵ This break with the basic principle of colonial self-financing is an important step and requires a long-term perspective. Initially, efforts were aimed at production: strengthening the agricultural production capacity of each territory—naturally focusing on export crops (mainly coffee, cocoa, bananas, and peanuts) and increasing the specialization of each territory (coffee and cocoa for Côte d’Ivoire, peanuts for Senegal, etc.)—and strengthening the production of raw materials that are economically strategic for the metropole (manganese, nickel, and copper). The ten-year plan was finally divided into two five-year plans. The first plan foresaw 12 percent of investments for agriculture and 18 percent for mining and energy production (industrial production remained and would remain residual); these percentages increased during the realization of the second plan to 18 percent for agricultural production and 48 percent for mining and energy production. In a state of extreme underdevelopment and in a Saint-Simonian perspective, it is the infrastructures that were targeted by the first five-year plan, since 50 percent of the investments were granted to them in the first plan and 22 percent in the second plan. Finally, FIDES dedicated 20 percent of the investments to social equipment in the first plan and 12 percent in the second plan, including the development of health care systems and education in particular.

Two elements must be kept in mind here because they will have fundamental consequences for the decolonization processes in sub-Saharan Africa. First, there were economic programs of FIDES, financed mainly by the metropole but nevertheless still with contributions by the colonized territories. These contributions had two effects. Firstly, the territories could only contribute through borrowing, with the extension of their areas of intervention⁶ causing a significant increase in both their debt and public administration and therefore in personnel costs. Secondly, the “social equipment” component included major efforts to bolster school enrollment not only in primary education but also in secondary and higher education. In fact, the overall schooling rate for a given age group in France’s sub-Saharan African colonies can be estimated to be 4 percent in 1946, rising to about 11 percent in 1959, on the eve of independence. In this

4 Anonymous, “Le fonds d’investissement pour le développement économique et social des territoires d’outre-mer” [The Investment Fund for the Economic and Social Development of the French Overseas Territories], *Présence Africaine*, no. 6 (1956): 47–56.

5 Martin-René Atangana, *French Investment in Colonial Cameroon: The FIDES Era (1946–1957)* (Berne: Peter Lang, 2009).

6 Jacques Marseille, *Empire colonial et capitalisme français. Histoire d’un divorce* [Colonial Empire and French Capitalism: The Story of a Divorce] (Paris: Albin Michel, 1986).

context, a liberal scholarship system was implemented in 1946 to send young Africans to study in the higher education system in France, a system of scholarships that was soon doubled by the initiative of “rich” territories such as Côte d’Ivoire and Senegal, which created their own scholarship system. From a few dozen students from French Black Africa during the interwar period, there were more than 10,000 scholarship students (and probably as many nonscholarship students) in French universities in 1959, and this from the AOF alone. These new elites were to play an essential role in the decolonization process in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Emergence of a Political Generation

In the AOF, the AEF, Togo, and Cameroon, the enlargement of the representation of the colonies in parliament and representation in the second electoral college in 1946 allowed a new political generation to emerge, despite major election fraud organized by the local colonial authorities. In Black Africa, they were Amadou Lamine-Guèye, Léopold Sédar Senghor (future president of the Republic of Senegal), Yacine Diallo, Félix Houphouët-Boigny (future president of the Republic of Côte d’Ivoire), Félix Tchicaya, Sourou Migan Apithy (future president of the Republic of Dahomey), Hamani Diori (future president of the Republic of Niger), Barthélemy Boganda (president of the Grand Council of French Equatorial Africa in 1957 and president of the Central African government from 1958 to 1959), and Joseph Raseta and Joseph Ravoahangy (two veterans of Malagasy nationalism, who became deputies).

It is precisely in this context that the situation in Madagascar would suddenly turn into a nightmare. In January 1946, the nationalist Democratic Movement for Malagasy Renovation (Mouvement Démocratique de la Renovation Malgache, MDRM) became the leading party on the island, gaining a majority in provincial elections. The colonial authorities supported the Party of the Disinherited of Madagascar (Parti des Déshérités de Madagascar, PADESM), a loyalist party, to counter the progression of the MDRM. At the end of March 1947, a revolt broke out and French people were massacred in several towns of the country, together with an attack on the military base of Moramanga, where the insurgents proclaimed their desire to make Madagascar independent. However, the MDRM had been calling for independence for several months, and the insurrection was immediately attributed to it. In Tananarive, deputies Ravoahangy and Jacques Rabemananjara were arrested, in spite of their parliamentary immunity, under the pretext of “continuous flagrante delicto”; the MDRM was dissolved. It is still unclear where the call for insurrection came from, and it is still unclear where the call for the uprising came from. The fact is that there is no evidence of the initial involvement of

the MDRM, as secret societies such as Jina and Panama had played an important role.⁷ In any case, the supporters of the MDRM became the targets of the repression and unprecedented violence: troops were sent in—paratroopers, the French Foreign Legion, Senegalese riflemen, and colonial troops from Morocco and Algeria—while armed militias of colonists were formed.⁸ Massacres of insurgents—and of civilian populations—increased. Insurgents and their families found precarious shelters in the forests, where they sometimes hid for several months, suffering from hunger and disease.⁹ After 16 months of combing the forests, the aftermath is frightening, with the French army itself giving the figure of 90,000 Madagascans killed, while historians' estimates vary between 35,000 and 90,000 dead.

This operation, linked to the 1946 reforms, outlined France's colonial strategy between 1945 and 1955. On the one hand, there was the agreement to reforms in order to counteract the upsurge of nationalism while hoping to build a colonial society in Black Africa that would involve the elites on a larger scale (those already in place in 1946 and, soon, the new ones being trained in French universities). On the other hand, there was the suppression of any insurrection as extremely as possible in order to send a message to all the "indigenous" populations tempted by revolt.

The French Union at the Time of the Cold War

Since the first postwar elections, a new African federal party, the African Democratic Rally (Rassemblement Démocratique Africain, RDA), led by Houphouët-Boigny, whose main base was in Côte d'Ivoire, continued to make progress in the French West Indies and the AEF. This movement, active in 11 territories, did not yet demand independence but "African emancipation." The RDA was also affiliated with the French Communist Party and, since the departure of the communist ministers from the government in 1947, it called in 1949 for "peace in Indochina" and an end to "colonial oppression,"¹⁰ organizing several demonstrations and strikes in Côte d'Ivoire. Repression hit Côte d'Ivoire hard; Houphouët-Boigny was arrested, despite his status as a member of parliament; demonstrations were violently repressed, resulting in dozens of deaths; and the

7 Jean Fremigacci, "La vérité sur la grande révolte de Madagascar" [The Truth about Madagascar's Great Uprising], *L'Histoire*, no. 318 (2007): 36–43.

8 Jean-Luc Raharimanana, *Portraits d'insurgés, Madagascar 1947* [Portraits of the Insurgents, Madagascar 1947] (La Roche d'Anthéron: Vents d'ailleurs, 2011).

9 François Arzalier and Jean Suret-Canale, *Madagascar 1947, la tragédie oubliée* [Madagascar 1947: The Forgotten Tragedy] (Montreuil: Le Temps des Cerises, 2018).

10 Marcel Amondji, "Masses et dirigeants pendant la guerre contre le RDA (1949–1950)" [Masses and Leaders during the War against the RDA (1949–1950)], *Félix Houphouët et la Côte-d'Ivoire. L'envers d'une légende* (Paris: Karthala, 1984), 91–147.

RDA was threatened to be dissolved. In the late summer of 1950, in order to “normalize” the RDA, negotiations began between the RDA and the leader of the Democratic and Socialist Union of the Resistance (Union Démocratique et Socialiste de la Résistance, UDSR), which at the time included a large number of deputies from the colonies. Houphouët-Boigny finally agreed to disassociate himself from the Communist Party¹¹ to put an end to the demonstrations and strikes and to negotiate with the French authorities. Although the RDA was put in its place, some sections such as in Mali and Guinea, as well as the Gathering of African Democratic Youth (Rassemblement de la Jeunesse Démocratique Africaine, RJDA), remained clearly anticolonialist. However, the prospect of a new revolutionary front in Black Africa after Indochina was ruled out. In 1952, order gradually prevailed in the AOF and the AEF,¹² except in Guinea, where the opposition remained active, and in Cameroon, where the Union of the Populations of Cameroon (Union des Populations Camerounaises, UPC), established in 1946, had decided to engage in arm wrestling with the French and had submitted a text to the United Nations (UN) on December 17, 1952.¹³ It was in Guinea and Cameroon in 1955 and 1958 respectively that the following crises would occur. But in the immediate future, the French could concentrate their forces on other territories of the French Union.

Political and Public Service Crisis in Black Africa

The colonies of Black Africa experience little anticolonialist agitation as such between 1951 and 1955, with the exception of Cameroon (as noted above). In Chad, however, in April 1952, supporters of Gabriel Lisette demonstrated against election rigging. Two companies of riflemen were sent into the city and fired on the crowd, killing between 70 and 300 people. The repression continued, particularly in Mondou, where the protests continued, this time killing about 20 people. Though on the political level the African parties (except for the RDA of Guinea and the UPC of Cameroon) did not oppose the colonial authorities head on during this period, preferring constant negotiations, it was on the trade union front that events were precipitated. After the end of the Second World War, the African trade unionism movement had grown significantly, following the extension of the liberal French Law of Associations (1901) to the colonies. This

11 Alpha Oumar Konaré, “Le RDA, l’Union soudanaise et le désapparement” [The RDA, the Sudanese Union, and the Dissociation], in *Rassemblement démocratique africain. Actes du colloque international sur l’histoire du RDA, Yamoussoukro, 18–25 octobre 1985*, eds. Yves Benot et al. (Abidjan: CEDA Hatier, 1987).

12 Tony Chafer, *The End of Empire in French West Africa: France’s Successful Decolonization?* (Oxford: Berg, 2002).

13 Thomas Deltombe, Manuel Domergue, and Jacob Tastita, *Kamerun! Une guerre cachée aux origines de la Françafrique (1948–1971)* [Cameroon! A Hidden War at the Origins of Françafrique (1948–1971)] (Paris: La Découverte, 2011).

development also benefited from the vote of the Lamine-Guèye Law in 1946, which yielded a new Labor Code (Code du travail) establishing equality between French and African civil servants, and from the numerical growth of African civil servants. The vote of this new Labor Code in 1952, which formalized equal pay for European and African civil servants but was only imperfectly applied, got the ball rolling. Trade union actions demanding the full application of the reform of the Labor Code multiplied: in 1952, a general strike spread to the whole AOF and part of the AEF, and demonstrations and strikes reached a worrying level in 1955.¹⁴ These actions, followed by bitter negotiations and inevitable concessions, led to a considerable increase in the cost of labor, which, combined with the growth of the bureaucracy, posed an insoluble budgetary problem for the federations of the AOF and the AEF. However, the economic prospects remained bleak.

In 1952, a report painted a worrying picture of five years of economic planning: labor productivity is very low; production costs are already high (with high wages compared to British colonies in Africa), as are infrastructure costs; exports barely reach prewar levels; and the foreign trade balance remains in dramatic deficit.¹⁵ Once again, the accelerated bureaucratization and its exorbitant costs were highlighted, while, for the first time, attention was called to the inefficiency of FIDES services and the operating costs they generate. Most worrisome, however, was the uncontrolled growth of the public service in all the combined systems. The overall situation did not improve in 1955, quite the contrary.

The problem of the African public service, which may seem anecdotal in the march toward independence, was capital. It is important to understand that the administrative organization of the AOF, the AEF, Togo, Cameroon, and Madagascar was based on a complex distribution of agents: there were the “general cadres” (civil servants), representing the highest echelons of the colonial bureaucracy, 77 percent of which were monopolized by Europeans in 1955; the “senior cadres,” which were largely Africanized at that time, since African civil servants made up 70 percent of the workforce; and finally, the “local cadres,” all of which are occupied by Africans.

14 Frederick Cooper, *Décolonisation et travail en Afrique. L'Afrique britannique et française, 1935–1960* [Decolonization and Labor in Africa: British and French Africa, 1935–1960] (Paris: Karthala, 2004).

15 Cooper, *Décolonisation et travail*.

Table 1. Distribution of the public service workforce in the French West Indies, 1955¹⁶

	Metropolitan French	Africans	Total
General Cadres	3,396 (77%)	990 (23%)	4,386 (10%)
Senior Cadres	2,254 (30%)	6,219 (70%)	8,773 (20%)
Local Cadres	2 (0%)	29,497 (100%)	29,499 (70%)
Total	5,952 (14%)	36,706 (86%)	42,658 (100%)

The Fervor of the Unions

At the time, modernization through the implementation of the second Five-Year Plan and the voluntary expansion of local administrations, emblematic of the Africanization of cadres,¹⁷ produced a monster, so to say, directly resulting from the hybridization of an administration conceived from the outset to be directed by whites—and therefore paid at the European rate—with the associative project of progressive inclusion of African elites in positions of responsibility. While this had the goal of temporarily attenuating the disjunction between Africans and Europeans in the administrations, it also led to the creation of an indigenous bureaucratic class *ex nihilo*, which was an ultra-minority (less than 0.3 percent of the total population of the AOF-AEF in 1950) and almost as totally cut off from the real conditions facing the immense peasant majority as were the Europeans stationed in the sub-Saharan African colonies. In 1955, the first variable of the colonial associationist equation—the rapprochement of African and European elites—also failed.

Indeed, the trade unions—and at forefront of them, the powerful General Confederation of Labour (Confédération Générale du Travail, CGT) bringing together more than 85 percent of unionized civil servants in 1952—strongly denounced the segregation between Africans and Europeans because of the first amendments to the Lamine-Guèye Law: equal wages as well as family and social benefits. The upsurge and virulence of these demands plunged the administrative affairs of the confederation into great acrimony in 1954:

16 Anonymous, “Note confidentielle concernant la répartition des services administratifs entre l’état et la fédération” [Confidential Note Concerning the Distribution of Administrative Services between the State and the Federation], Grand Conseil de l’A.O.F., Dakar, July 26, 1955, Archives nationales du Sénégal (ANS), 18 G 265 (165) 8.

17 On “Africanization des cadres,” Cooper refers to Michelle Pinto. See Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945–1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 185; Michelle Pinto, “Employment, Education and the Reconfiguration of Empire: Africanization in Postwar French Africa” (PhD thesis, New York University, 2013).

Benefiting from an already substantial system of family benefits, which countries as rich and evolved as Germany still lack, they [the unions] ask to benefit from metropolitan rates that would multiply their current allowances by two or three. [...] To all the arguments that can be put against them, the unions respond with cheap accusations such as “racism” or “colonialism.”¹⁸

The situation called for structural reforms of the public service, as emphasized in the reports on administrative and political affairs.

The first projections of budgetary developments in the territories, drawn up by the Teitgen Report in 1955, clearly showed, in the event of a literal application of the Labor Code, a vertiginous increase in the territories’ expenditures. The solutions were not numerous: several reform projects were formulated between 1954 and 1956, and it emerged that the only economically viable—but politically uncertain—solution was to reduce the number of public service executives to two: on the one hand, a cadre comprising general civil servants, who would continue to benefit from the status and advantages of French civil servants, and, on the other hand, a second cadre comprising senior and local civil servants, who would be paid at the level of the territory and seconded from the metropolitan public service.

However, this “solution” is politically unacceptable to the unions because it clearly bypassed the new Labor Code. The draft reforms thus followed one another between 1954 and 1956 without being implemented until the promulgation of the Framework Law Defferre (Loi Cadre Defferre, named after its initiator, Gaston Defferre),¹⁹ which represents a real turning point since it solved at once the problem of the public service and the demands of the African reformist parties for more autonomy.

The Framework Law as a Turning Point

The Guy Mollet government was formed on February 1, 1956. On February 29, a bill “authorizing the government to implement reforms and take measures to ensure the development of the territories under the Ministry for Overseas France” is submitted to the National Assembly. Defferre, minister for overseas France, then began to work on the Framework Law.²⁰

18 Anonymous, “Note sur l’évolution de la fonction publique” [Note on the Development of the Civil Service], haut-commissariat de l’AOF, ANS, July 1955, 21 G 221 (178) 9.

19 See especially chapter 5, “Reframing France: The Loi-Cadre and African Federalism, 1956–1957,” in Cooper, *Citizenship*, 214–278.

20 Alexander Keese, “‘Quelques satisfactions d’amour-propre’: African Elite Integration, the Loi-cadre, and Involuntary Decolonization of French Tropical Africa,” *Itinerario*, no. 26 (2003): 33–57.

Did the African parties pose a serious political threat in the face of this reform project? In truth, the positions of the main African politicians did not pose any threat, and they certainly did not pursue the prospect of independence won by force, which was vigorously opposed by most in 1956, except of course for the UPC (to which we will return later).²¹ This observation can only be captured in nuances. The nationalist traditions of Guinea and Mali distinguish the tone of the speeches of Modibo Keita from those of Houphouët-Boigny, as well as the diatribes of Sékou Touré from the positions of Senghor. But beyond the use of a vocabulary that was more willing to make demands by the first and third, the dissensus is marginal, and no political party or political leader in the French West Indies and the AOF region called for a break with France. Only Guinea took the plunge in 1958, on the occasion of the referendum organized by de Gaulle's France, which allowed the colonized to join a new version of the French Union, the French Community (to which we shall return later).

Thus, the variations in political positions covered the desired type of association with the metropole, either on a federal or a territorial basis. There was a general consensus in favor of, first, the granting of broader responsibilities to indigenous elected representatives in the territorial assemblies (which in each colony of sub-Saharan Africa had a legislative function limited to regional affairs) and in the French representative assemblies (the National Assembly and the Council of the Republic) and, second, the abolition of the double electoral college.²² At the time of the UPC's insurgency in Cameroon, the expansion of the conflict in Algeria, the rapid development in Ghana after the promulgation of an institutional reform in 1954 granting extensive autonomy to the British territory, the vote on the autonomy regime in Morocco and Tunisia, and after the loss of Indochina, these wishes seemed particularly "reasonable," even timid.

Two of the most significant positions on the Framework Law—those of Houphouët-Boigny, then the undisputed leader of the RDA, and Senghor, leader of the Senegalese Democratic Bloc (Bloc Démocratique Sénégalais, BDS) and central figure of the Overseas Independents party (Indépendants d'Outre-mer, IOM, the second-largest federal party after the RDA)—show the absurdity of the idea of a political danger emanating from African political parties led by the first generation of the African elite. Senghor's position was very moderate, as he proposed to establish parity between the Europeans and the colonized within the Council of the Republic—which would become a "federal parliament" with a *consultative* function and take over the (limited and deliberative) powers of the Assembly of the French Union—and to grant wider management responsibilities to the territorial assemblies, without any mention of dissolving the double electoral college. Based on these principles, Senghor submitted a bill to the National

21 This desire for a reformist transformation of the empire carried by the African elected representatives is also noted by Cooper. See Frederick Cooper, "Possibility and Constraint: African Independence in Historical Perspective," *The Journal of African History* 49, no. 2 (2008): 167–196.

22 Cooper, "Possibility and Constraint."

Assembly that even the representatives of the political affairs of the general government described as timid.²³ Similarly, Houphouët-Boigny—who resisted until the last minute to seize the independence of Côte d’Ivoire and accepted it only under the constraint of the general tendency to reach agreements on the transfer of power between the metropole and the seven other territories of the federation at the end of 1959—also took a clear stance on association.²⁴

Among the many testimonies is that of Louis Sanmarco, which he wrote about in his book *Le colonisateur colonisé* (The Colonized Colonizer) and which explains the state of mind of many African elected officials on the eve of independence:

The Council of Government of Gabon chose departmentalization [at the time of the erection of the [French] Community, in 1958], and Léon Mba entrusted me with the task of negotiating the matter with Paris. I considered it a triumph, the triumph of 130 years of French colonization that led to this request for integration, the posthumous triumph of the sailors, missionaries, doctors, foresters, colonists, administrators, who with all their faults, all their mistakes, had not worked so badly in this country to make France love it so. [...] I thought I would be received as a triumph that would add one more pearl to the crown. I was received like a dog in a game of skittles. The minister, Bernard Cornut-Gentile, was even unpleasant: “Sanmarco, you have fallen on your head! Haven’t we had enough of the West Indies? Come on, independence like everyone else!”²⁵

It has been wrongly said²⁶ that Senghor and Houphouët-Boigny were opposed to each other on the issue of reform, Senghor being the champion of the federal system and Houphouët-Boigny of territorialization. In fact, both preached metropolitan-led federalism until 1955 for shared reasons.²⁷ In fact, both led the two largest interterritorial political formations in the AOF-AEF. The political solidarity of the structures of the RDA and the IOM presupposed a solid federal center, territorialization considered to

23 M. Delteil, “Observations sur la proposition de [...] M. Senghor” [Comments on the Proposal by [...] M. Senghor], Direction des Affaires politiques, 6 February 1953, 18 pages, ANS, 18 G 281 (171), 17; Léopold Sédar Senghor, “Le fédéralisme est la vérité du XX^e siècle et l’avenir de l’Union française” [Federalism Is the Truth of the Twentieth Century and the Future of the French Union], *Marchés Coloniaux du monde*, no. 514 (1955): 2513–2514.

24 Anonymous, “M. Houphouët-Boigny veut faire de l’ensemble métropole-Afrique noire l’assise de l’Union française” [Houphouët-Boigny Wants to Make the Metropole–Black Africa Ensemble the Basis of the French Union], *Bilans Hebdomadaires*, no. 512 (1956): D3–D4.

25 Louis Sanmarco, *Le colonisateur colonisé* [The Colonized Colonizer] (Lausanne: Éditions Pierre-Marcel Favre, 1983).

26 See, e. g., the seminal work of Joseph Roger de Benoist, *La balkanisation de l’Afrique occidentale française* [The Balkanization of French West Africa] (Dakar: Nouvelles éditions africaines, 1979).

27 Félix Houphouët-Boigny, “Ce que nous voulons, c’est une orientation fédérale” [What We Want Is a Federal Orientation], *Marchés Coloniaux du monde*, no. 540 (1956): 705–706.

be able to generate a centrifugal dynamic that would not fail to affect the coherence of the two formations.

This perspective placed them in direct competition for political leadership in French sub-Saharan Africa, hence a federal intransigence that would only be challenged by Houphouët-Boigny at the time of the elaboration of the Framework Law, during which he played a determined role. In this respect, it is necessary to underline the political skill—or double language—of the leader of the RDA, who relied on an executive committee whose most prominent members (particularly Touré and Keita, who at the same time established the hegemony of the RDA in Guinea and the Sudan) were convinced federalists. During the debates on the Framework Law in the National Assembly, the divided moderation of these positions is clearly visible. Given the proposals listed in the records of the Framework Law, the Defferre proposals even went beyond the demands of the African deputies. The only political threats at that time came from the trade union movement, the ultranationalist student movements, and the radicalization of school youth.

The Disintegration of the New Elites

The political problem posed by the African elites educated in France gradually emerged in the 1950s. They gradually radicalized around the Federation of African Students in France (Fédération des étudiants d'Afrique noire en France, FEANF), which in 1955 united all the student associations of Black Africa (the AOF, the AEF, Togo, Cameroon, and Madagascar). Under the influence of the most anticolonial associations—student associations from not only Senegal, Guinea, and Mali but also the RJDA—the FEANF became the undisputed voice of this new generation of elites who now supported the Algerian National Liberation Front (Front de libération nationale, FLN) and the Cameroonian UPC.²⁸ The political rupture here was twofold: on the one hand, African students were in the forefront of opposition to the colonial authorities—the FEANF's main demand since 1954 had been “immediate independence”—but, on the other hand, they also opposed the first elite generation that was leading all African political parties' negotiations with the colonial authorities, which was considered compromised and now at the gates of power. The virulent anticolonialism of this new elite generation posed a fundamental problem for the colonial authorities, since the whole program of FIDES worked in the direction of the students to create a “black bourgeoisie.” These new elites would be integrated into the colonial bureaucracy (and next into the monetarized economy) and thus be able to participate, in an associative perspective, in the exercise of

28 Nicolas Bancel, *Décolonisations? Élite, jeunesse et pouvoir en Afrique occidentale française (1945–1960)* [Decolonizations? Elite, Youth, and Power in French West Africa (1945–1960)] (Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2022).

administrative and political responsibilities alongside the colonial authorities in all the colonies of sub-Saharan Africa. In view of their radicalization, the colonial authorities raised the questions, what to do with these new elites, and how to integrate them into the colonial bureaucratic apparatus without risking their implosion?

The answer provided by the Framework Law was clear: for this problem, as posed by the egalitarian demands of the trade unions, it was a matter of transferring the responsibility for their governance from the colonial authorities to the elected African officials. By instituting universal suffrage, by conferring enlarged legislative powers on the territorial assemblies (composed, as of 1957, overwhelmingly of African elected officials because of the abolition of the double electoral college and the introduction of universal suffrage), and by increasing the executive powers of the councils of government (only key state matters—army, diplomacy, and directing the economy—would be left to the general government and by delegation to the governors of each territory), the Framework Law put the African elected officials in a position to face the public service crisis, animated by the unions and the student revolt, and therefore removing the power hold of the colonial authorities.

The debates in the National Assembly reflect this sleight of hand, to the great satisfaction of Pierre-Henri Teitgen, who saw his project on the public service being concretely realized. He thus asserted that “the problem of the overseas public service would be partly solved, because the agents of these territorial services dependent on the territorial assemblies and councils of government would be recruited according to the rules fixed by these local authorities.”²⁹ However, African elected officials seemed to have discovered the extent of the sociopolitical problem posed by public service reform. To appreciate the importance of what is at stake, it is necessary to follow carefully the worried intervention of Touré, who was particularly well informed about the problem since he was himself both president of the Guinean section of the RDA and a trade union leader in the CGT and therefore at the front line to understand what it meant for the councils of governments to take charge of the territorial public service and therefore of the conflicts with the trade unions:

What would happen if the wording of paragraph 3 of Article 3, which provides for the institution of “an autonomous regulation of the overseas public service, both for the state and territorial cadres,” were maintained? First of all, the civil servants in the general cadre [composed mostly of Europeans, as we have seen], to whom the law of October 1946 is applied, would no longer be governed by that law. Secondly, the civil servants in the territorial cadre [Africans], who have been demanding since 1948 the application of the [metropolitan] public service statute,

29 Pierre-Henri Teitgen, “Évolution des territoires relevant du ministre de la France d’Outre-mer. Discussion d’un projet de loi” [Evolution of Territories under the Authority of the Minister for Overseas France: Discussion of a Draft Law], *Journal officiel de la République française*, no. 32 (parliamentary debates of the National Assembly, March 21, 1956), ANS, 17 G 643 (165).

which they consider to be more progressive than the local statute, would be handicapped in the realization of their very legitimate demands. It would then be necessary to specify to us whether all the civil servants serving overseas, both those who currently belong to the general cadre and those who depend on the territorial cadre, will have the same status, so that, at the very least, there will be absolute identity of the conditions of recruitment, promotion, retirement, and discipline for all the civil servants, [...] otherwise there is a risk of legalizing what all the trade union organizations have been protesting against since 1948.³⁰

The Guinean leader therefore denounced the spirit and the letter of the law, the disjunction of the territorial and metropolitan public service, which effectively totally ignored the general provisions of the 1946 law on equality of treatment and status between metropolitans and Africans, like the 1950 Lamine-Guèye Law, which tried to impose these principles. In this respect, the reform signaled the end of the last avatars of the colonial assimilationist utopia.

Entrusting the Management of Sociopolitical Problems to Elected African Representatives

Touré understood very well that the granting of “territorial autonomy” had as its counterpart the introduction of the principle of segregation. In so doing, he proposed an alignment of the territorial public service with the general cadre. However, Defferre knew that the proposal was totally unrealistic because it could not be financed by the territories without massive metropolitan aid, which the minister for overseas France wanted to avoid. He referred, logically, to the responsibility of the territorial assemblies on this question:

If you ask me to declare today that the same rules apply to territorial civil servants as to general civil servants, that is, the rules of the 1946 law, I cannot do so because, in particular, the territorial assemblies could not be consulted on this point. The only serious answer that I can give you today—because I do not want to make commitments that I cannot keep or that could be refuted by the decisions of the territorial assemblies—is to repeat to you that for the state executives the public service rules will apply, while for the territorial executives an

30 Sékou Touré, “Évolution des territoires relevant du ministre de la France d’Outre-mer. Discussion d’un projet de loi” [Evolution of Territories under the Authority of the Minister for Overseas France: Discussion of a Draft Law], *Journal officiel de la République française*, no. 34 (parliamentary debates of the National Assembly, March 23, 1956), ANS, 17 G 643 (165) 3.

investigation will be required both in the drafting of the decrees and in the deliberations of the territorial assemblies.³¹

It is precisely at this moment that Touré, who was not supported by other overseas deputies, became overly aware of the importance and scope of the reforms: “Giving the territorial assemblies the task of defining the rules of the public service means putting them in a very difficult situation, because the demands of the public service employees, overseas, have already assumed a certain sharpness.”

One could not say it better. The price to be paid by first-generation elites for territorial autonomy, which would seal their association with colonial power, was the confrontation with discontent of the unions. Although African elected officials had not yet gauged the budgetary impasse in which the territories found themselves, they were beginning to realize the sociopolitical difficulties they would have to face once the territorial assemblies and councils of government would be set up. In this respect, the strikes decreased significantly after 1956—when the councils of government were in place, under pressure from African politicians, some of whom had previously belonged to the trade union confederations—before resuming in the second half of 1957. In that year, Touré also “theorized” that it was impossible for the unions to get the councils of government into trouble and that they thus threatened to block the “road to freedom.” This rhetoric was taken up by most of the presidents of the councils of government before 1960 and had the effect of dividing the unions as early as 1957. Frederick Cooper clearly shows how, during 1957 and especially 1958, strikes were mercilessly fought by the councils of government, sometimes taking a violent turn, as in Dahomey.³² The authoritarian temptation and the will to put the unions in their place were thus a largely initiated process even before independence was achieved.

Public service reform was also inseparable from administrative decentralization and, above all, from the Africanization of the cadres. Indeed, the new powers granted to territorial assemblies and councils of government involved not only the management of territorial services but also the recruitment of civil servants, their advancement, their salary scales, and so on.³³ At the same time, the territorial authorities also inherited the problem of the Africanization of the cadres³⁴ and the related troubling task of dealing

31 Gaston Defferre, “Évolution des territoires relevant du ministre de la France d’Outre-mer. Discussion d’un projet de loi” [Evolution of Territories under the Authority of the Minister for Overseas France: Discussion of a Draft Law], *Journal officiel de la République française*, no. 34 (parliamentary debates of the National Assembly, March 23, 1956), ANS, 17 G 643 (165) 3.

32 Cooper, *Décolonisation et travail en Afrique*.

33 Defferre, “Évolution des territoires”; Anonymous, “La décentralisation administrative en Afrique occidentale française” [Administrative Decentralization in French West Africa], *Bilans politiques, économiques et sociaux hebdomadaires*, no. 436 (October 7, 1957): D2–D4.

34 Defferre, “Évolution des territoires.”

with the radicalization of student movements and the expansion of school revolts to the AOF.

Integration of the Anticolonial Elites

In this area, the protesting but still corporatist positions of the unions seemed comparatively more negotiable than those of the student movements, which at this point were on a line to rupture. At this point (as shown above), the colonial authorities looked forward with some trepidation to the integration of these radical students into the colonial bureaucracy. The Framework Law solved this problem: de facto, the territorial authorities faced it instead of the colonial authorities. The transfer of powers to African politicians thus led to a reversal of sociopolitical perspectives. For the student movement and the movements emancipated from colonial tutelage, colonization remained the symbol of a now hated domination, and the elected Africans, who took over the functioning and continuation of the colonial work, were raised up as the main obstacle to the liberation of the continent.

In this context, the problem of integrating students and schoolchildren into the apparatus of the colonial bureaucracy appeared to be a fundamental issue in the sociopolitical balance of the federation.³⁵ This dimension did not escape the attention of the National Assembly's Overseas Territories Committee. In its introductory remarks, it clearly stated that "on its [the Framework Law's] success or failure depends the confidence in France or the disaffection of overseas youth."³⁶ The sociopolitical problem of second-generation elites was therefore a major focus of the Framework Law.

Long debates were held on the subject, revealing a clearly palpable concern on the part of the elected representatives of the AOF, the AEF, Togo, and Cameroon, as well as Africans and Europeans, in the face of the radicalization of second-generation elites. Lisette, already on the first day of the debates, emphasized the social discontent and the new verbal virulence that characterized the political evolution of the students. He immediately made the claim for appeasement:

Overseas elites rightly objected the absence of any youth policy. The modest elite educated in metropolitan France found employment more easily in France than in their homeland, and

35 Nicolas Bancel, "La voie étroite: la sélection des dirigeants africains lors de la transition vers la décolonisation" [The Narrow Path: The Selection of African Leaders during the Transition to Decolonization], *Mouvements*, no. 21/22 (2002): 28–41.

36 "Évolution des territoires relevant du ministre de la France d'Outre-mer. Discussion d'un projet de loi" [Evolution of Territories under the Authority of the Minister for Overseas France: Discussion of a Draft Law], *Journal officiel de la République française*, no. 32 (parliamentary debates of the National Assembly, March 21, 1956), 1042–1092, ANS, 17 G 643 (165).

when powerful interventions helped their demands to succeed with the local authorities or private companies, the material and moral conditions of existence were not always enviable. This state of affairs has created a mood of skepticism and bitterness among the entire overseas elite, which must be eliminated by public service reform.³⁷

Paul Devinat, then a radical deputy for the department of Saône-et-Loire, also held a long speech on the subject of the radicalization of African students in the metropole, claiming that

those who have come to sit on the benches of our schools and be inspired by the teachings of their teachers have formed an image of France that is too much like these promises not to demand their full implementation. [...] Nor can we ignore or disparage the interest of our African elites in the development of neighboring Liberia, Gold Coast, and Nigeria. It is not surprising that this attention leads to comparisons with the situation in our territories and to demands.³⁸

Faced with the political malaise that is developing among the school youth and that threatens the sociopolitical cohesion of the federation in the long term, all the African speakers propose an identical solution: the Africanization of the cadres, the only measure then capable of reintegrating the second-generation elites. Mamadou Dia, for example, particularly stressed this point:

For the rest, the painful experience we have had with missed opportunities and reforms that have been postponed again and again, the unease that hovers over areas whose tranquility may be only apparent, [and] the rise of an elite that rightly aspires to rise to the level of responsibility of its time, all ultimately speak to the solution of a Framework Law.³⁹

37 Gabriel Lisette, “Évolution des territoires relevant du ministre de la France d’Outre-mer. Discussion d’un projet de loi” [Evolution of Territories under the Authority of the Minister for Overseas France: Discussion of a Draft Law], *Journal officiel de la République française*, no. 32 (parliamentary debates of the National Assembly, March 21, 1956), 1042–1092, ANS, 17 G 643 (165).

38 Paul Devinat, “Évolution des territoires relevant du ministre de la France d’Outre-mer. Discussion d’un projet de loi” [Evolution of Territories under the Authority of the Minister for Overseas France: Discussion of a Draft Law], *Journal officiel de la République française*, no. 32 (parliamentary debates of the National Assembly, March 21, 1956), 1042–1092, ANS, 17 G 643 (165).

39 Mamadou Dia, “Évolution des territoires relevant du ministre de la France d’Outre-mer. Discussion d’un projet de loi” [Evolution of Territories under the Authority of the Minister for Overseas France: Discussion of a Draft Law], *Journal officiel de la République française*, no. 32 (parliamentary debates of the National Assembly, March 21, 1956), 1042–1092, ANS, 17 G 643 (165).

This is why the territorialization of the public service was at the heart of the mechanism by which the metropole not only delegated the sensitive issue of the Africanization of cadres to the territories but also attempted to solve part of the political problem that the new authorities would face by breaking with federal alignment. Indeed, the territorial public services would henceforth be autonomous not only with respect to the metropole but also among themselves. Henceforth, recruitment into the public service would have to be carried out among the natives of each territory.

From a political point of view, this provision had the advantage of dissolving the federal solidarity of which the FEANF (like the unions) was a symbol. Each territory would therefore have to take care of its own students, freely making whatever arrangements it deemed desirable. In this area, Houphouët-Boigny would set an example of how to proceed, by canceling the scholarships of several protesting students as soon as the government council was formed. As for the trade union problem, the configuration was identical. The most powerful union in the AOF-AEF, the CGT, recruited on a federal basis, and its demands therefore concerned the entire federation. Thus, every concession granted to one category of employee was applicable, on the basis of equality among the territories, in all the others. Unions that won an advance in one territory obliged the federal government to bring all other territories into line. The difficulties of managing such a system—and, as we have seen, the budgetary headlong rush it implied—were considerable. Tony Chafer notes, for example, that in 1956 the unions (the General Confederation of African Workers and the AOF branches of the CGT in particular) obtained the granting of family allowances for 350,000 adopted children and then the extension of these allowances to all private sector employees.⁴⁰ The autonomization of the public service “solved” this problem by breaking up the federal framework. This autonomization had such an immense advantage for the colonizer (but also, of course, for the new African authorities of the councils of government and the elected representatives of the territorial assemblies) that it made a federal trade union movement virtually impossible. Finally, the fate of federal or even pan-African political parties was now sealed: they would disappear.

Faced with the protest dynamics of the student movements⁴¹ and the African youth in school, the Africanization of the cadres was a political necessity. What the Framework Law instituted was quite simply the transfer to the territories of the problem of their integration, since the territorial public services would henceforth recruit from the pool

40 Tony Chafer, *La fin de l'Empire colonial français en Afrique de l'Ouest. Entre utopie et désillusion* [The End of the French Colonial Empire in West Africa: Between Utopia and Disillusionment] (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2019).

41 Barry Diawadou, “Évolution des territoires relevant du ministre de la France d’Outre-mer. Discussion d’un projet de loi” [Evolution of Territories under the Authority of the Minister for Overseas France: Discussion of a Draft Law], *Journal officiel de la République française*, no. 32 (parliamentary debates of the National Assembly, March 21, 1956), 1042–1092, ANS, 17 G 643 (165).

of students and schoolchildren of their respective territories. This necessarily implied that the majority of the general cadre would continue to be metropolitan. Despite the preoccupations of Barry Diawadou—then a deputy from Guinea and a member of Senghor’s IOM group—who called for the Africanization of the general cadres, only the metropole could decide on the recruitment processes of senior overseas officials. In fact, despite efforts to recruit a greater number of Africans to the National School of Overseas France (École nationale de la France d’outre-mer, ENFOM), which trained senior colonial civil servants, the majority of general cadres remained French until independence.

It was thus in 1956, when the Framework Law was passed, that what was soon to become the Ministry of Cooperation, made up of former general cadres, took shape. We can thus affirm that from this point of view there was no break between the 1956–1960 period and the postcolonial period. These are the same men who a few years earlier held the highest administrative and political responsibilities in the French West Indies and who would largely direct the economic, social, and cultural policies of the newly independent countries.⁴² The process was perfectly logical, since they were the ones who advised the new African-led territorial executive bodies during the period 1956–1960.

The Cases of Guinea and Cameroon

The flip side of the association policy implemented by the Framework Law was the rejection and suppression of any independence aspirations. Two examples of this other side of French colonial policy in sub-Saharan Africa can be briefly mentioned: Guinea and Cameroon. In 1958, after de Gaulle came to power, a referendum was held in all African territories to choose between joining a Community of Associated States—a new form of the French Union that essentially adopted the expectations of the Framework Law while expanding the powers of the councils of government—independence, or francization (the latter option, which no one believed in). All territories voted overwhelmingly in favor of accession except Guinea, a majority of which chose “no” and thus independence, which was formally granted in September 1958. The reasons for this vote are many. Touré was the leader of the Democratic Party of Guinea (Parti Démocratique de Guinée, PDG), which was affiliated with the RDA, whose radical wing he represented, and largely won the 1957 elections with a discourse of rupture. He

42 So much so, e. g., that in Côte d’Ivoire, in 1970, the 30,000 French *coopérants* still occupied 80 percent of the senior positions in the country’s administration. See Claire Nicolas, “Sport, citoyenneté et genre en Afrique de l’Ouest: histoire sociale et politique comparée de la jeunesse au Ghana et en Côte d’Ivoire au XX^e siècle” [Sport, Citizenship, and Gender in West Africa: A Comparative Social and Political History of Youth in Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire in the Twentieth Century] (PhD thesis in Sciences politiques/Sciences du sport, Université de Lausanne/Sciences Po Paris, 2019).

was also influenced by the activism of Kwame Nkrumah, president of Ghana, who sent emissaries throughout the country. However, the rejection took place under very special circumstances that are worth mentioning. Elizabeth Schmidt, in her book *Cold War and Decolonization in Guinea, 1946–1958*,⁴³ shows well that the Guinean leader, often portrayed as a “radical,” was hesitant about his behavior toward the 1958 referendum. In reality, it was the internal forces of the RDA-Guinea—in particular, a fraction of the trade union movement and, above all, the RJDA and the student movements—that pushed Touré to call for a “no” vote in the referendum, without any intention of breaking with France⁴⁴ but rather imagining laying the foundations of a federation of independent states, referring to the concrete realization of a form of pan-Africanism, and establishing new relations with the former metropole.⁴⁵ Schmidt also analyzes the unique strength of the RDA-Guinea’s organization—a broad social base including all ethnic groups and women, together with strong regional leaders who could mobilize a large number of people in the countryside while allowing peasants to participate in party life—which gave the RDA-Guinea considerable room for maneuver with regard to the administration and, according to many of the party’s leaders, a strong position vis-à-vis France.⁴⁶ The “no” vote in Guinea was therefore the product of a very particular situation, both international and internal, in which the political forces that emerged from the student movement played a prominent role. But, contrary to the “heroic” history of Guinea, its meaning should not be misunderstood. It was not a desired break with the metropole, but rather a desire to change Guinea’s relations with the metropole (ideally as part of a federation of African states).

But this prospect was not acceptable to France. The meeting between de Gaulle and Touré in Conakry during de Gaulle’s trip to Africa did not go well. On this occasion, Touré made a statement that has since become famous, with the crowd chanting anti-French slogans: “We prefer poverty in freedom to wealth in slavery.” The outraged de Gaulle responded that “Guinea has independence at its disposal.” Over 90 percent of

43 Elizabeth Schmidt, *Cold War and Decolonization in Guinea, 1946–1958* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007); Elizabeth Schmidt, “Anticolonial Nationalism in French West Africa: What Made Guinea Unique?,” *African Studies Review*, no. 52 (2009): 1–34; see also Odile Goerg, Céline Pauthier, and Abdoulaye Diallo, *Le NON de la Guinée (1958). Entre mythes, relecture historique et résonnances contemporaines* [The No of Guinea (1958): Between Myth, Historical Rereading, and Contemporary Resonance] (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2010), more oriented on historiographical and memorial questions.

44 Schmidt, *Cold War and Decolonization*.

45 This is also noted by Cooper. See Frederick Cooper, “Alternatives to Empire: France and Africa after World War II,” in *The State of Sovereignty: Territories, Laws Populations*, eds. Douglas Howland and Luise White (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 110–139. Schmidt points out that after the RDA congress adopted a territorialist position in 1957, Guinea maintained its objective of creating a confederation (or federation) of African states, sovereign but integrated into the Franco-African Community (Schmidt, “Anticolonial Nationalism”).

46 Schmidt, *Cold War and Decolonization*, 3–4; see also Cooper, “Possibility and Constraint.”

Guinea's voters voted "no." The consequences were severe: all aid to Guinea was cut off, and all French officials left the country and took their documents with them. An example had to be made. The day after the election, Touré tried to propose a compromise to the French and asked that Guinea remain in the franc zone. But France reacted with destabilization attempts (despite the signing of a bilateral agreement in January 1959), which contributed to Guinea falling into the Soviet and Chinese camps.

The second example is the case of Cameroon. In 1955, faced with the political threat of the UPC, the governor of Cameroon, Roland Pré, supported the rise of Louis-Paul Aujoulat's Cameroonian Democratic Bloc (Bloc démocratique Camerounais, BDC), who was favorable to France, to develop a large-scale repressive policy while maintaining a democratic façade in this mandate entrusted to France and over which the United Nations had a right of supervision. On May 15, 1955, three weeks after the end of the Bandung conference, a UPC demonstration in Douala turned into a riot. The next day, the police broke up another UPC demonstration, but on May 22, 1955, the UPC supporters struck back and clashes broke out. The unrest increased and claimed dozens of lives. Ruben Um Nyobè (1913–1958) symbolized nationalism, the break with France, and the desire for independence within the framework of communism. The riots spread to Yaoundé on May 26, 1955, with several deaths here as well. UPC activists carried one of the bodies to the gates of the Territorial Assembly and, the next day, to the central hospital, where security forces fired on the crowd. Repression destroyed UPC offices everywhere, and the party's leaders had to go into hiding, taking refuge in the Sanaga-Maritime region or fleeing to British Cameroon. The decree officially banning the UPC and its allies was signed by the president of the council Edgar Faure on July 13, 1955. During this period, the UPC was excluded from the RDA, which explains why very few socialist countries supported it. The party was out of the game and could not prepare the January 1956 elections; its political opponents won the day. In 1956, Pierre Messmer was sent to Cameroon to continue the repression against the UPC, to manipulate the December 1956 elections (without UPC candidates), to set up "friendly parties," and to coordinate the December 1956 French military offensive against the maquis.⁴⁷ In 1958, Nyobè was assassinated, and from 1956 to 1960, the strategy implemented by the French armies at the cost of numerous incursions was bearing fruit. The transitional government of Ahmadou Ahidjo rejected all proposals for mediation with the UPC initiated by Touré and Nkrumah. Total war against the new armed movement created in May 1959 by the UPC, the Cameroon National Liberation Army, was the option chosen. Michel Debré recalls that even though Algeria was a political and military failure, the war in Cameroon "ended in success."⁴⁸ Ahidjo, Senghor, Keita, and Golda Meir traveled

47 Deltombe, Domergue, and Tatsitsa, *Kamerun!*

48 Michel Debré, in collaboration with Odile Rudelle, *Trois Républiques pour une France. Mémoires* [Three Republics for One France: Memoirs] (Paris: Albin Michel, 1984–1994).

with some 60 delegations to Cameroon's independence celebrations. The Cameroonian state enjoyed broad international recognition, while the UPC, which carried out attacks two days before the independence celebration, lost most of its supporters.

The way was clear for a more massive postcolonial intervention by France in the Bamileke region of Cameroon. Prime Minister Debré; his right-hand man Constantin Melnik (coordinating the secret services); Messmer, former high commissioner in Yaoundé and now minister of the army; and, of course Jacques Foccart,⁴⁹ the shadowy man of the dirty work and future pivot of *Françafrique* directed operations inspired by the “counter-revolutionary” war successfully experimented in Algeria.⁵⁰ The UPC had to be eradicated, and the supposed “ethnic” support of the Bamilekes had to be broken by all means. In this context, the leader of the UPC, Félix Moumié, was assassinated by the French secret service (Service de documentation extérieure et de contre-espionnage, SDECE) in Switzerland on October 15, 1960, as well as his successors Osendé Afana (former leader of the FEANF), again by the SDECE in 1966, and Ernest Ouandié, by the Cameroonian authorities in 1971.⁵¹ By massively rigging the elections, the power in Cameroon, under the guidance of France (all the ministers had a French advisor), asserted itself as a bloody dictatorship.

Thus, using Guinea and Cameroon as examples, it is clear that French colonial policy during decolonization was guided by two strategies that were employed depending on the circumstances: an attempt to use the Framework Law to achieve a major renewal of the colonial political cadre and a relentless suppression of any movements or territories that sought independence before 1960.

Conclusion

The Framework Law thus aimed to preserve the Black African colonies and mandates from independence by largely involving the first-generation elites with the political administration of the territories. The Community of Associated States, sought after by the new government after de Gaulle came to power in 1958, essentially adopted the provisions of the Framework Law, with some expansion of the powers of the councils

49 Pierre Péan, *L'Homme de l'ombre* [The Shadow Man] (Paris: Fayard, 1990).

50 Mathieu Rigouste, *L'Ennemi intérieur. La généalogie coloniale et militaire de l'ordre sécuritaire dans la France contemporaine* [The Enemy Within: The Colonial and Military Genealogy of the Security Order in Contemporary France] (Paris: La Découverte, 2011); Paul Villatoux and Marie-Catherine Villatoux, *La République et son armée face au “péril subversif”. Guerre et action psychologique, 1945–1960* [The Republic and Its Army Faced with the “Subversive Peril”: War and Psychological Action, 1945–1960] (Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2005).

51 Roger Faligot and Pascal Krop, *La Piscine. Les services secrets français, 1944–1984* [La Piscine: The French Secret Service since 1944] (Paris: Seuil, 1985).

of government, while the allegiance of the Black African colonies was “guaranteed” by a referendum that allowed for a choice to be made between joining the French Community, independence, or francization (the latter option, which no one believed in). As we know, the Community of Associated States was an ephemeral construct, since all of the colonies of Black Africa finally gained their independence during 1960. But this decolonization highly ambivalent, as almost all newly independent states were de facto firmly tied to France (except for Mali after the failure of the Senegal-Mali federation, established in 1959).

What kind of independence are we talking about in Black Africa and Madagascar? One can distinguish at least two types of independence. Some established a project that broke with France, as in the case of Guinea since the “no” vote in the 1958 referendum and, temporarily, in the Mali of Keita. For others, to varying degrees (France controlled the transfer of power in many territories, such as Niger and Chad), the myth of hard-won independence collapsed. Gabon, for example, did not want independence, instead hoping to become a French department;⁵² as for Houphouët-Boigny’s Côte d’Ivoire, it was reluctant for a long time before accepting this outcome. All of the abovementioned territories therefore remained in a zone of strong French influence, thanks to the bilateral cooperation agreements signed during the 1960s.⁵³ These agreements facilitated the perpetuation of the CFA franc zone indexed to the French franc, the maintenance or the erection of strategic French military bases, the realization of specific defense agreements that allowed France to intervene in case of “external threat” (but in fact mostly internal), and the establishment of French cultural institutions.

Economically, France had left the new states in a situation of objective dependence: dependence on loans granted by France, made necessary by resource-hungry and constantly growing public administrations, triggering the vicious cycle of indebtedness; dependence on the inclusion of the new states into the zone of a CFA franc indexed to the French franc and guaranteed by the French treasury; and dependence on world markets, as FIDES’s programs had largely accentuated the mono- or bicultures of exports of each of the territories.⁵⁴ Dependence was also rooted in the continued presence of French advisors in the vast majority of the new governments.

52 Nicolas Bancel, “Entre acculturation et révolution. Mouvements de jeunesse et sports dans l’évolution institutionnelle et politique de l’AOF (1945–1960)” [Between Acculturation and Revolution: Youth Movements and Sports in the Institutional and Political Development of the French West Indies (1945–1960)] (PhD thesis, Université Paris 1, 1999).

53 Franck Petiteville, “Quatre décennies de ‘coopération franco-africaine’: usages et usure d’un clientélisme” [Four Decades of “Franco-African Cooperation”: The Use and Wear of Clientelism], *Études internationales* 27, no. 3 (1996): 571–601.

54 Nicolas Bancel, “Un cadeau empoisonné? Le Fonds d’investissement pour le développement économique et social des Territoires d’outre-mer (FIDES), 1946–1958” [A Poisoned Gift? The Investment Fund for the Economic and Social Development of the French Overseas Territories (FIDES), 1946–1958], in *Encyclopédie de la colonisation française. D–F*, ed. Alain Ruscio (Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2019), 112–122.

The specific case of Cameroon is exemplary of the flip side of the colonial reform strategy in sub-Saharan Africa, with France becoming militarily involved in agreement with the new dictatorship *during* and *after* the country's independence until 1964. It is an example of France's almost seamless support for the new, mostly authoritarian states even if it meant taking military action in the event of destabilization, as in Chad in 1963 or Gabon in 1964.

Finally, a lesser-known but equally fundamental dependence developed during these postwar years: the first- and second-generation elites (the latter, with some exceptions, would integrate the apparatuses of the new states, abandoning their revolutionary idealism) were almost all trained in France. In fact, their intellectual tools came from the metropole, and, in fact, all the development programs undertaken during the 1960s—and their largely catastrophic consequences—prolonged the colonial projects implemented in particular by FIDES. This mimicry of the former colonized for their former masters, still insufficiently analyzed, also sheds light on the profoundly ambiguous and limited character of the “decolonization” of the French territories of sub-Saharan Africa.

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Higher Education and Research: An Integral Part of the French Globalization Project

Introduction

This chapter sheds light on the French globalization project from the perspective of higher education and research. These topics are rarely part of the discussion when we talk about the history of globalization processes, even though both not only have a long history of internationalization and interconnectedness but also, and above all, have been crucial to reigning leaders for exploring the world to be conquered and for enlarging their political influence beyond national borders.

The first part of the chapter analyzes the profound crisis of French academia in the beginning of the 2000s, which was triggered to a large part by international competition. It then investigates the different roles research and higher education had in French history, which sheds light on the development of structural characteristics of research and higher education while considering their part in the French imperial conquests of the nineteenth century—especially in regard to spreading French language and culture. In the twentieth century, France became increasingly interconnected in supranational and regional processes, not only diminishing the national freedom to act but also opening up new opportunities to implement ideas beyond national territory.

The 2000s: Knowledge-based Economies and France in Crisis

In the year 2023, the importance of a nation-state having or seeking to obtain excellent, internationally attractive universities and excellent researchers seems quite natural and is often directly linked to the idea of a prosperous future for a nation. Supporting this idea is the narrative of knowledge-based economies (KBE). It has mainly been developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) since the 1970s to find a solution to the economic struggles its member states faced in the aftermath of the first oil crisis. It became influential in the 1990s when the OECD experts became interested in the economic success of the USA through the development of new technologies. The KBE narrative suggests that investing heavily in research and development (R&D) is key for sustained prosperity, especially for industrialized countries with limited raw material resources. As such, there is a growing emphasis on universities and other places where this wealth-generating knowledge can be “produced.”

Accordingly, having excellent, internationally attractive universities and researchers become essential elements for a nation's future prosperity.¹

Providing an optimistic outlook on the future of industrialized nations in an intensifying global economic competition, the KBE narrative has been embraced by the heads of state of the European Union (EU), declaring in 2000 their goal to become “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion” by 2010 (Lisbon Strategy).² This included, among other goals, that each member state should invest 3 percent of its national gross domestic product (GDP) into R&D by that year. The French president Jacques Chirac (1995–2007) incorporated the Lisbon Strategy into his re-election campaign in 2001–02, emphasizing the importance of research for the nation's wealth, despite facing a high national debt that required budget cuts also from public sector bodies such as universities and research organizations. A set of key indicators from the European Commission (Directorate-General for Research and Innovation), published for the first time in 2003, then statistically proved that French scientific output was poor in comparison to its European neighbor states (overall spending on R&D, number of researchers per inhabitant, number of scientific papers, etc.) and that it would be difficult for France to reach the self-set goals by 2010. These factors provoked the mobilization of a growing number of researchers in public research bodies who started to protest loudly against the announced cuts. Their arguments were well-founded, since it was not only scientific output itself that was threatened but also the leading role of France as a competitive society within an increasingly globalized world.

The following public disputes between researchers and politicians in 2003 and 2004 about the shape the necessary reforms should take as well as funding shortages led researchers to protest in public, gaining considerable international attention. While a research reform law, together with multiannual financial commitments, was being prepared (which would take two years to be finished), it became clear that the conservative government wanted to mainly foster project funding and applied research by companies, whereas the majority of the protesting researchers pleaded for an increase

1 The original OECD definition of “knowledge-based economies” from 1996, finalized by the economic experts Bengt-Åke Lundvall and Dominique Foray was, “OECD science, technology and industry policies should be formulated to maximise performance and well-being in ‘knowledge-based economies’—economies which are directly based on the production, distribution and use of knowledge and information,” Bengt-Åke Lundvall and Dominique Foray, “The Knowledge-based Economy: From the Economics of Knowledge to the Learning Economy,” *Employment and Growth in The Knowledge Based Economy*, OECD documents (1996): 7. The concept was not empirically tested, see Benoît Godin, “The Knowledge-Based Economy: Conceptual Framework or Buzzword?” *The Journal of Technology Transfer* 31, no. 1 (2006): 17–30.

2 European Council, “Lisbon European Council 23–24.03.2000: Conclusions of the Presidency,” accessed February 1, 2023, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm.

in the budget for fundamental research and more permanent positions, being skeptical of more contractual flexibility, further structural changes, and project-based funding.

Around the same time, in 2003, researchers from the Chinese Shanghai Jiao Tong University developed a university ranking seeking to identify the best universities worldwide by considering factors such as the number of Nobel prize winners or the number of highly cited articles within databases like the Science Citation Index (SCI). This relatively simplistic approach to measure “excellence” relied on publicly and therefore data easily accessible. It was based on the model of research-based comprehensive universities such as the US Ivy League institutions or Oxbridge in the UK, which at the beginning of the twenty-first century had the reputation of having the most successfully organized higher education and research, earning them the label of “world-class universities.”³ The reference model of this ranking differed substantially from the French organizational model, which was based on a rather firm structural differentiation of universities, *Écoles supérieures* (colleges for professional training, whose most prestigious ones are known as *Grandes Écoles* [specialized colleges]), and research bodies. The soon-to-be-called Shanghai Ranking (Academic Ranking of World Universities, ARWU) was the first to circulate at a time when a large number of people had access to the internet and when performance indicators beyond economic issues became an accepted tool of policy-making.⁴ It became a reference for higher education institutions around the world, although it continued to be highly criticized by a large number of academics for its methodological shortcomings.⁵

Only two French universities made it in the top 100 universities of the first edition of the Shanghai Ranking.⁶ French university presidents tried to use this opportunity to petition for better funding of their institutions and more freedom of action. High-ranking politicians like François Fillon (minister responsible for higher education and research, 1993–1995 and 2004–05) and Jean-Pierre Raffarin (prime minister, 2003–2005) already seemed to be convinced of the narrative of world-class universities and the need to empower universities at that time. But initially no broader public or political attention was received. The reason was the ongoing public debate on reforming research bodies as well as a more general protest against “state anti-intellectualism” (anti-intellectualisme d’Etat).⁷ More importantly, however, was that the performance of France’s national

3 Philip G. Altbach, “The Costs and Benefits of World-Class Universities,” *Academe* 90, no. 1 (2004): 20–23.

4 Ngai-Ling Sum and Bob Jessop, “Competitiveness, the Knowledge-Based Economy and Higher Education,” *Journal of the Knowledge Economy* 4, no. 1 (2013): 24–44.

5 This is summarized well in Marijk van der Wende and Don Westerheijden, “Rankings and Classifications: The Need for a Multidimensional Approach,” in *Mapping the Higher Education Landscape: Towards a European Classification of Higher Education*, ed. Frans v. Vught (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009), 71–86.

6 Université Pierre et Marie Curie (65) and Université Paris Sud (72).

7 Sylvain Bourmeau, “L’écho d’un appel” [The Echo of a Call], accessed February 19, 2021, <https://blogs.mediapart.fr/sylvain-bourmeau/blog/180209/l-echo-d-un-appel>.

universities was just not of great interest to the public or more so to politicians, since the place where excellence was expected was not the underfunded and overcrowded universities but the *Écoles supérieures*—not included in the ranking.

Around 2005–06, the general interpretation was that French academia was in decline. This two-pronged idea of decline and delay was nothing new. However, it was now linked even more directly to the future of the nation, with France being in competition not only with “traditional” competitors such as the United Kingdom, the USA, or Germany but also, on a more global level, with rising nations such as China or India. And so, the low ranking of French universities would ultimately develop into perceived national humiliation, which French politicians could no longer ignore for several reasons. First, in an age of index factors and an increased statistical comparison of national performances, “rankings matter[ed].”⁸ Second, a strongly contested labor market reform in 2005–06 drew public attention to the desperate situation of many university graduates in finding suitable jobs. Third, several reports insisted on the instrumental role of universities within KBE and on the need of being attractive to international students. Fourth, and above all, the presidential candidate of the country’s conservative party in 2007, Nicolas Sarkozy, had embraced the idea of world-class universities and was convinced that the role of universities in France had to change. Elected president, he initiated a large restoration program for run-down university infrastructure (Plan Campus, 2007); a university law conceived to give French public universities more freedom to act and therefore transform, at least partly, to excellent institutions capable of competing internationally (the Law on the Freedoms and Responsibilities of Universities [Loi relative aux libertés et responsabilités des universités, LRU], 2007); and an excellence initiative (Initiative d’excellence [Idex], since 2010). However, the implementation of the LRU proved to be difficult and would mobilize in 2009 up to 80,000 university academics and students on the streets in an altogether-agitated year full of social protests, including national strikes with up to three million protesters.

In a long-lasting, painful reform process, pushed both by politicians and academics but often in opposite directions, both groups negotiated reforms deemed necessary to make research bodies and universities internationally competitive. After nearly ten years of public and parliamentary debates on structures and funding, of uncounted protests by academics and students and two laws, a number of structural changes took shape, such as the research project funding agency National Agency for Research (Agence nationale de la recherche, ANR, 2005), an evaluation agency (Agence d’évaluation de la recherche et de l’enseignement supérieur, Aeres, 2006), the implementation of the

8 Ellen Hazelkorn, “Introduction: The Geopolitics of Rankings,” in *Global Rankings and the Geopolitics of Higher Education: Understanding the Influence and Impact of Rankings on Higher Education, Policy and Society*, ed. Ellen Hazelkorn, International studies in higher education (New York: Routledge, 2017), 1. Other international rankings that followed the Shanghai Ranking (such as the Times Higher Education Ranking or the QS Ranking) confirmed the comparatively weak performance of French universities.

Idex program, a National Strategy for Research and Innovation (Stratégie nationale de recherche et d'innovation, SNRI, 2009), excellence programs for international researchers, the creation of an agency for the promotion of French higher education (Campus France, 2009), and a larger responsibility of universities to manage their own budgets and staff. Also, a collective model comprising associated institutions made it possible for universities, Écoles supérieures, and research bodies to present themselves on an international level together as “universities” in order to be more readable to a non-French public and so that the scientific output of research bodies could eventually be taken in account and counted by international university rankings.⁹ Additional financial resources for research bodies and universities were also an outcome of the reforms and funding programs but only relatively, since the money was mostly tied to specific targets, had to cover additional costs (such as a rise in the pension payment of university staff), or was not sufficient to catch up in terms of investment. The part of the national GDP invested in R&D rose from 2.17 percent in 2002 to only 2.23 percent in 2012. Overall, the changes seemed to follow supposedly international standards but in fact were the adaption to global competition while adhering to French traditions.¹⁰

In terms of the French globalization project, the broad public visibility of debates within the last 20 years on the national “future” and the role of research and talent within suggest that the strategic importance of higher education and research for national policy-making is something contemporary. But while the competition and challenges in the second half of the twentieth century indeed became global and more intense, the importance of higher education and research for French national sovereignty in a narrow sense and for how to impact the world in a broader sense was already observable in the sixteenth century. Nowadays, existing structures and *manière de faire* (way of doing things) have their historicity, which made it hard to adapt to contemporary challenges. With regard to competitors, French actors observed their doing throughout different moments in French history, and along with this, French debates on decline and delay are nothing contemporary either.

9 Under the presidency of the conservatives Chirac and Sarkozy, these groups were created as research and teaching centers (Pôles de recherche et d'enseignement, PRES). In 2013, under the socialist presidency of François Hollande, it changed to Communities of Universities and Institutions (Communautés d'universités et établissements, COMUE) with a larger spectrum of cooperation possibilities, including fusion. The hope that university rankings would take these structures into account failed.

10 Kathleen Schlütter, *Exzellenz und Égalité. Die französische Hochschul- und Forschungspolitik zwischen globalem Anspruch und nationaler Umsetzung (2002–2012)* [Excellence and Egalité: French Higher Education and Research Policy between Global Aspirations and National Implementation (2002–2012)] (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2024).

The Historical Strategic Interest of Higher Education and Research for the French Globalization Project

The history of higher education in Western Europe is closely linked to the Catholic Church since knowledge was traditionally imparted by clergymen. The beginning of the first European university communities at the end of the twelfth century was substantially marked by the “intellectual wars between church and state,” where university members used their position as the “third force” to implement the independence of their institutions.¹¹ Different from institutional pathways in other European countries, this resulted in France in a mistrust of state officials in universities as institutions, which proved to be formative for the organization of higher education and research: the sovereigns of France would prefer creating their own institutions than depending on or cooperating with universities. This led to mainly three different types of institutions that still prevail until present day and nowadays impact France’s position in the global competition in higher education and science: universities, Écoles supérieures, and nonuniversity research bodies.

Francis I of France was the first French king to closely link emerging scientific knowledge to political power, in turn strengthening such knowledge by establishing at the beginning of the sixteenth century a kind of personal lecturing institute to educate interested men, naming it Collège Royal (officially founded in 1530, called Collège de France today). Roughly 100 years later, Louis XIV and his state minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert perceived scientific activities as “a basic factor in national power,” being important not only for military purposes such as warfare or navigation but also for engineering and technological inventions.¹² Consequently, they undertook measures that gave shape to this conviction: they created the Academy of Sciences (Académie des sciences, 1666), which made France the first monarchy where studying and publishing texts as well as granting patents for new technological developments were no longer private endeavors but instead professional ones, as was still the case in France’s rival, the United Kingdom.¹³ The Jardin du Roi (created already in 1626 under Louis XIII) became famous

11 Harold Perkin, “History of Universities,” in *International Handbook of Higher Education: Part One: Global Themes and Contemporary Challenges, Part Two: Regions and Countries*, eds. James J. Forest and Philip G. Altbach (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 169. As Lulat notes, the very first inspiration for what would later become “the university” probably came from the Islamic world, since the founder of the Collège des Dix-Huit, the first college in Paris, had just come back in 1180 from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Y. G. M. Lulat, “The Development of Higher Education in Africa: A Historical Survey,” in *African Higher Education: An International Reference Handbook*, eds. Damtew Teferra and Philip G. Altbach (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 16–17.

12 Robert Gilpin, *France in the Age of the Scientific State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 95.

13 Wolfram Fischer and Peter Lundgreen, “The Recruitment and Training of Administrative and Technical Personnel,” in *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, Studies in Political Development 8, ed. Charles Tilly (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 574.

for its collection of objects of scientific interest. Colbert also supported expeditions to unknown parts of the world and the creation of a journal that reported, among others, on scientific discoveries and experiments and is considered to be the first scientific journal worldwide, the *Journal des sçavans*.¹⁴

The question of how to measure the world sheds exemplary light on the national scientific competition in terms of impacting the world: the setting of the meridian was central for all questions of cartography and ultimately for measuring time. The Paris meridian was defined in 1666 by French astronomers for this exact purpose, and the world's largest astronomical observatory was built on it the following year. Even though other European nations also defined their own meridian (always crossing their respective capital), the Paris meridian was regarded until mid-nineteenth century as the most accurate and as being the closest to a "prime meridian."¹⁵ But it was particularly challenged by British astronomers with the Greenwich meridian, defined in 1851, which would finally triumph over the French one: in 1884, the Greenwich meridian was chosen by an international conference on a US initiative in order to end the multitude of standards for maritime navigation and to establish an international standard railway time. In reverse, the French system would win over the Anglo-American one in a related measurement competition: based on the Paris meridian, the French astronomers Pierre Méchain and Jean-Baptiste Delambre started in 1792 on a seven-year expedition to calculate the first prototype meter following a request of the National Convention of the First Republic.¹⁶ The goal of this adventure was to establish, in the spirit of the French Revolution, a universal metric system based on the decimal system that would be replicable everywhere in the world. This was ultimately achieved since the meter became widely accepted at the beginning of the nineteenth century and is the most common measurement unit today.

In the 200 years from the ancien régime to the French Revolution to Napoleon Bonaparte and the Third Republic, the social prestige of knowledge and more specifically of theoretical knowledge continued to be highly admired by French intellectuals and political leaders. This strengthened the firm conviction among these actors that science had the power to improve the living conditions of humanity and that it was France's task to disseminate this knowledge and, if possible, implement it worldwide. French being the most dominant European language of power, art, and thought at that time, this dissemination worked well until the nineteenth century.

14 Cédric Grimoult, *Sciences et politique en France: De Descartes à la révolte des chercheurs* [Science and Politics in France: From Descartes to the Revolt of the Researchers] (Paris: Ellipses, 2008), 19–26.

15 Paul Murdin, *Full Meridian of Glory: Perilous Adventures in the Competition to Measure the Earth* (New York: Springer New York, 2009).

16 Ken Alder, *The Measure of All Things: The Seven-Year Odyssey that Transformed the World* (London: Abacus, 2004).

The framework in which knowledge production was organized over the centuries was shaped by the aforementioned distrust of universities and the strong intention of rulers to mold knowledge and its dissemination. The reigning forces in France chose to create their own institutions to educate the most talented and to train them up as engineers, administrators, or military officers for the state. The first of these *Écoles supérieures*, such as the *École des Ponts et Chaussées* or the *École du Génie*, were created well before the French Revolution (1748 and 1749, respectively). During the French Revolution, universities were completely abolished in 1793 by the National Convention, which instead opted for the further creation of new *Écoles supérieures*: the *École polytechnique* (1794, engineering) and the *École normale supérieure* (1794, teaching), both famous and prestigious until today.

When Bonaparte declared himself emperor in 1804, he not only was firmly convinced that Paris was the center of international scholarship but also presented himself as its protector in an encompassing way by granting international awards and inviting foreign scholars to Paris.¹⁷ He also had a very clear idea of how higher education should be organized to serve the purposes of the empire and restructured the higher education system accordingly from scratch in 1808 by creating an “imperial university.” By definition, it comprised all education institutions from elementary schools to universities (except for the *Écoles supérieures*). And they were supposed to deliver the same quality and content of education everywhere in the French Empire. One of the most significant consequences of this restructuration was the nonexistence of universities in an institutional sense. Instead, the deans and professors in the faculties “took over,” and the attachment to a discipline became for academics more important than institutional attachment.¹⁸ This would impact the French higher education system long until into the twenty-first century. At around the same time, Wilhelm von Humboldt in Prussia began to develop his ideas for a new university model, which was quite opposite to the French way: he brought research and teaching conceptually together, which would develop into an international reference model in the nineteenth century and inspire the creation of research-based universities in the USA that would be called world-class universities in the twenty-first century.¹⁹

17 Grimoult, *Sciences et politique*, 31–32.

18 Christine Musselin, *La longue marche des universités françaises* [The Long March of French Universities] (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2001); Emmanuelle Picard, “La Profession Introuvable? Les Universitaires français de l’Université impériale aux Universités contemporaines” [The Untraceable Profession? French Academics from the Imperial University to Contemporary Universities] (Paris: Université Paris 1–Panthéon Sorbonne, 2020).

19 Marc Schalenberg, *Humboldt auf Reisen? Die Rezeption des ‘deutschen Universitätsmodells’ in den französischen und britischen Reformdiskursen (1810–1870)* [Humboldt Traveling? The Reception of the “German University Model” in French and British Reform Discourses (1810–1870)], *Veröffentlichungen der Gesellschaft für Universitäts- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte* 4, (Basel: Schwabe, 2002).

Bonaparte's successors shared the conviction of French excellence and, like him, kept track of what was happening outside of France, especially in antagonistic German lands by ordering "scientific and literary missions" to study the scientific successes of its neighbors.²⁰ At the same time, the July monarchy was characterized by a competitive openness to international cooperation on the archaeological excavations in Italy and Greece, which resulted on the French side in the creation of the French School at Athens (École française d'Athènes) in 1846. Nevertheless, the overall scientific interest of French political leaders of the nineteenth century was rather limited compared to the times of Louis XIV and Napoleon I. Related to that, the institutional adaption of the faculties and the Écoles supérieures to the rising importance of disciplines like chemistry for industrial innovations or physiology for medical treatment proved to be insufficient. This became extremely obvious when Prussia won against the French Republic in 1871 in the Franco-German War.²¹ Most national and international observers identified the scientific and educational predominance of Prussia as the main reason for the defeat. The general assumption of French superior scientific excellence was proven wrong, and the few exceptional and therefore visible talents such as Claude Bernard, Louis Pasteur, or Pierre Curie and Marie Skłodowska-Curie firmly demanded structural changes and financial support. In a struggle between holding on to pure science and integrating the progress in applied sciences—which translated to a certain degree as a struggle between Paris and the regional universities as well as between different social backgrounds of the academics—the faculties fought about structural changes.²² The result of this crisis at the end of the nineteenth century was a national higher education reform that was discussed at length and that tried to transfer the successful characteristics of the German system, but finally only formally reunited the faculties within the structures of universities (Loi Liard, 1896).²³ But since the power of the disciplines prevailed as much as the elitist role of the Écoles supérieures, the problems persisted. The already-mentioned Pasteur and Curies as well as others had to rely on donations by US foundations to finance their research.²⁴ But the progress-oriented part of the scientific community learned from this experience and would prove to be very successful when lobbying politicians for their causes beginning in the 1930s. And as Christophe Charle writes, the weakness of existing institutions also at least opened up an opportunity for a private higher education institution that wanted to do things differently and provide excellent education without being selective: the École libre des sciences politiques, which later

20 Schalenberg, *Humboldt auf Reisen?*, 106–109.

21 Grimoult, *Sciences et politique*, 32–37.

22 Christophe Charle, *La république des universitaires: 1870–1940* [The Republic of Academics: 1870–1940], Collection l'univers historique (Paris: Éd. du Seuil, 1994), 137–188.

23 On the French interest in German academia, see Charle, 21–60.

24 Grimoult, *Sciences et politique*, 41–42.

would become the renowned Sciences Po (founded in 1871), proved to be a motor for pedagogical and scientific innovation in Parisian institutions.²⁵

The Role of Higher Education for French Colonial Endeavors and Implications for Internationalization

The discussion about the miserable state of French research went on for the duration of the Third Republic, which was also the period of intense colonial expansion by France. This expansion was to a great part supported by researchers and shows the close interaction between science and politics. Not only were the colonial conquests enabled by technological, medical, and military improvements, but the promoters of the “colonial sciences” also played a fundamental part in scientifically justifying in the metropole the French mission to civilize, the idea of French mastery, and the subsequent racism.²⁶ Scientists acted in favor of the dissemination of the French language, the French culture, and more general the French influence in the world (see Thomas Höpel’s contribution in his chapter “French Cultural Policy and Its Global Ambitions”). For many, it was also a professional opportunity to use this emerging knowledge field for their careers.²⁷

In line with Bonaparte’s envisioning of the Université impériale, universities in the nineteenth century continued to be regarded as the highest level of *school* education and were conceptually linked. Therefore, some French higher education programs in the colonies, built up by missionaries, can already be found at the beginning of the nineteenth century. They mainly addressed an elite public and were only punctually supported by French rulers. If there were research activities or administrative positions to be filled, it was executed by French people from the metropole.²⁸

For the local people, basic education was judged to be sufficient, with the only exception being Algeria, where a university was founded in 1879. It was mainly due to the fact that Algeria had become an integral part of France in 1848 and that the Napoleonic Université impériale foresaw university teaching in every region of France. Additionally, a large number of French had migrated from the metropole to settle in Algeria (*pieds-noirs*) and demanded higher education opportunities. The idea that some practical

25 Even so, the high ambitions of the founder Émile Boutmy would quickly be adapted to the students’ demand for professionalizing education, and the school would ultimately be overtaken by the state in 1945. Charle, *La république*, 435–460.

26 Pierre Singaravélou, *Professer l’Empire: Les “sciences coloniales” en France sous la IIIe République* [Professing the Empire: The “Colonial Sciences” in France under the Third Republic] (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2011); Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895–1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

27 Singaravélou, *Professer l’Empire*.

28 Harold Perkin, “Histories of Universities,” in *International Higher Education Volume 1: An Encyclopedia*, Routledge Library Editions, ed. Philip Altbach (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 1991), 190.

higher learning in fields like teaching, trade, and agriculture might also be useful for a broader local public in the colonies only slowly emerged in the following years. And it depended on the respective colonial administration and the local circumstances if and when the first more extensive higher education institution in territories under French domination emerged, as the following examples from French colonial territories in Africa and Asia will demonstrate.

The first colleges in French West Africa as well as in Indochina were created around 1900 as medical institutes (Madagascar in 1896 and Hanoi in 1902).²⁹ For the emergence of universities in a more comprehensive sense, the pathways differed remarkably: in the case of Indochina, the Japanese universities around 1900 were already attracting Vietnamese students, which was noticed by French colonial authorities. When a governor general for Indochina was nominated in 1906, who was convinced of the advantages of university education in spreading French influence, he successfully argued for the creation of a university by referring to the Japanese example. The University of Indochina was officially inaugurated in Hanoi in 1907. Even though it was not structured like a classical university but was based on professionalized schools, offered only local degrees (not equivalent to the ones from the metropole), and had to close within a year due to a lack of political and financial support only to reopen 10 years later, it was a remarkable first attempt to establish a university in a French colonial territory already at the beginning of the twentieth century.³⁰

In contrast to that, the people in French West Africa had to wait until 1941 to see the establishment of a first higher education institution, which would gain the status of university only in 1957: the university of Dakar.³¹ This university was officially declared the eighteenth university of France by the authorities. British colonial authorities, on the other side, had supported the creation of universities in their African colonies earlier and in a larger scope. Y. G. M. Lulat points out that this difference can be explained not only owing to the lack of demand of local staff by the French colonial administration but also owing to the importance of universal values for the Third Republic, which made systematic cooperation with missionaries—on which the British education expansion

29 Ancient universities existed in Africa before the colonial period; in West Africa, the University of Timbuktu is the most prominent example. Juma Shabani, "Higher Education in French-speaking Sub-Saharan Africa," in *International Handbook of Higher Education*, eds. James J. Forest and Philip G. Altbach (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), 484. For Indochina, see Sara Legrandjacques, "Une mission universitaire? L'enseignement supérieur colonial en Inde britannique et en Indochine française (années 1850–1940)" [A University Mission? Colonial Higher Education in British India and French Indochina (1850s–1940s)], in *Repenser la "mission civilisatrice": L'éducation dans le monde colonial et postcolonial au XXe siècle*, eds. Damiano Matasci, Miguel B. Jerónimo, and Hugo G. Dores (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2020), 40.

30 Legrandjacques, *Mission universitaire*, 42–43.

31 Chika Trevor Schoole, "Issues, Policies and Developments of Internationalization in Africa: Comparative Analysis," in *Higher Education in Africa: The International Dimension*, ed. Damtew Teferra (Chestnut Hill: Center for International Higher Education, 2008), 517.

relied to a large part—unwanted. Furthermore, no formal education system had existed in West Africa that would have needed to be replaced by the colonizers.³² Eric Ashby and Mary Andersson also mention that the African elites themselves preferred to study in the metropole and were not very interested in local, and therefore possibly inferior, higher education.³³

This leads to student mobility on a more individual level and there a different picture emerges: students from the colonized territories had already begun throughout the nineteenth century to seize opportunities to study in the metropole or, in the case of Indochina, in neighboring countries like Japan or China, sometimes supported by associations or state stipends.³⁴ France was in that respect an attractive destination as the country of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution—regardless of colonization.³⁵ France counted 1,800 foreign students around 1900, and when Paris became an “anti-imperial metropolis” in the interwar period, they were already over 16,000.³⁶ The Cité internationale universitaire de Paris was created as one of the first large housing projects worldwide dedicated to foreign students in 1925.³⁷ The xenophobia of the Vichy regime put a temporary end to this expansion, but after World War II, France again became an attractive destination, notably for the elites of former colonies.³⁸ The number of foreign students multiplied by 22 between 1950 and 2006 and made France the country with most foreign students after the USA until the 1990s.³⁹

In terms of the French globalization project, this can be interpreted as an opportunity for France to keep its cultural, linguistic, and economic influence in these territories.

32 Lulat, *Development of Higher Education in Africa*, 20–21.

33 Eric Ashby and Mary Andersson, *Universities: British, Indian, African: A Study in the Ecology of Higher Education* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966), 368.

34 Legrandjacques, *Mission universitaire*.

35 Brice Le Gall and Charles Soulié, “Voyage en terre d’asile académique: éléments pour une histoire sociale des étudiants étrangers de Paris VIII et d’ailleurs” [Journey to the Land of Academic Asylum: Elements for a Social History of Foreign Students in Paris VIII and Elsewhere], in *Un mythe à détruire? Origines et destin du Centre universitaire expérimental de Vincennes*, ed. Charles Soulié (Saint-Denis: Presses universitaires de Vincennes, 2012), 396.

36 Michael Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

37 Founded due to pacifist motives and through a large donation by the industrial Émile Deutsch de la Meurthe, the Cité internationale universitaire de Paris originally aimed to bring together French and foreign students (the latter including those coming from the Union française) in a 50-50 ratio, but the percentage of French students decreased with growing housing alternatives in Paris. Dzovinar Kévonian and Guillaume Tronchet, “Introduction: Pour une histoire multisituée de la Cité internationale universitaire de Paris” [Introduction: For a Multi-Sited History of the Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris], in *Le Campus-monde: La Cité internationale universitaire de Paris de 1945 aux années 2000*, eds. Dzovinar Kévonian and Guillaume Tronchet (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2022), 20–21.

38 Le Gall, *Voyage*, 398.

39 Le Gall, 397.

When the state started to create dedicated structures for international cooperation at the beginning of the twentieth century, higher education was conceptionally still thought of in connection to school education. It became an integral part of French foreign cultural policy over the course of the century, linked to the goal of primarily supporting the French language and culture abroad. Whereas the first *Instituts français*, founded in the years before World War I, were academic structures under the leadership of universities, with the aim of promoting French students and scientists in their studies of the respective country, they transformed after the war into promoters of French culture and language.⁴⁰

After World War II, both the French and the British governments were equally interested in promoting higher education in their colonial territories since the costs for educating colonial students in the metropole, in this case African students, were rising together with the “preparation of some form of political autonomy” for the colonial territories.⁴¹ The French authorities encouraged the creation of branch institutes of French universities in the African colonies. This process followed the French system so closely that until the 1970s the concerned higher education institutions were actually “virtually certified copies of their French counterparts” (notably name, structure, and degrees).⁴² The close administrative ties and the financial support by French authorities started to loosen after that, but many of the newly emerging nation-states, for example like Algeria, Niger, or Gabon, still have until today an *École nationale d’administration* and an *École normale supérieure*. Furthermore, these countries have adapted their degree structures to the European Bologna process in order to stay comparable to European university degrees.⁴³ This shows the heritage of the “*empire linguistique et culturel débordant leurs frontières politiques*” (linguistic and cultural empires beyond

40 Victoria Znined-Brand, *Deutsche und französische auswärtige Kulturpolitik: Eine vergleichende Analyse; das Beispiel der Goethe-Institute in Frankreich sowie der Instituts und Centres Culturels Français in Deutschland seit 1945* [German and French Foreign Cultural Policy: A Comparative Analysis; the Example of the Goethe Institutes in France and the Instituts and Centres Culturels Français in Germany Since 1945], *Europäische Hochschulschriften* 240 (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 1999), 29–31.

41 Lulat, *Development of Higher Education in Africa*, 21.

42 Shabani, *Higher Education*, 484.

43 Lulat, *Development of Higher Education in Africa*, 21; Abdoulaye N. Souley, “Niger,” in *African Higher Education: An International Reference Handbook*, eds. Damtew Teferra and Philip G. Altbach (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 487–491; Vincent Mintsu Mi-Eya, “Gabon,” in *Higher Education in Africa: The International Dimension*, in *African Higher Education: An International Reference Handbook*, eds. Damtew Teferra and Philip G. Altbach (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 326–329; Aman Attieh, “Algeria,” in *African Higher Education: An International Reference Handbook*, eds. Damtew Teferra and Philip G. Altbach (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 151–161.

political borders) that France had—like the United Kingdom and Germany—built up via its colonial endeavors.⁴⁴

This heritage also shaped the relationship to the francophone universities for French politics after decolonization: all cooperation with former colonies in terms of research, teaching, or mobility kept being organized under the guiding principle of how to ensure the perseverance of the French language and French values in the world. This specifically included the conviction that the further expansion of English as a language of the world and of science needed to be challenged and that it was France's task to offer an alternative to the perceived hegemonic uniformizing Anglo-American way.

Consequently, these circumstances also translated into strong support for the Francophonie and into a unidirectional exchange relationship of the “North” helping the “South.” The development of the higher education branch of the Francophonie illustrates this well: the Association of Partially or Entirely French-Speaking Universities (Association des universités partiellement ou entièrement de langue française, AUPELF) was created in 1961 by 150 francophone universities in Montréal to foster international scientific cooperation and cultural plurality. In 1994, it merged with another association into the Francophonie University Agency (Agence universitaire de la Francophonie, AUF), which today brings together more than 1,000 institutions across 119 countries. The members are mostly higher education institutions, in which the French language plays a prominent role. Not all of the institutions share a colonial heritage with France, as their relationship can also be based on cultural or geopolitical interests.⁴⁵ While neither the AUF nor its predecessor, the AUPELF, were French in a national sense, France played, and continues to play, a prominent role in the organization: it continues to be the biggest funder and until 2019 held the important position of rector (the head of the AUF), exclusively occupied by academics with administrative careers and a French passport.⁴⁶ Within French politics, the AUF continues to belong to French foreign and cultural policy, with a focus on development aid. The Ministry of Higher Education and Research today is only marginally concerned with it and mainly responsible for international cooperation with the other European countries or the more prominently emerging research nation-states such as China or India.⁴⁷ This different ministerial

44 Christophe Charle, *La crise des sociétés impériales: Allemagne, France, Grande-Bretagne (1900–1940); essai d'histoire sociale comparée* [The Crisis of Imperial Societies: Germany, France, Great Britain (1900–1940): Comparative Social History Essay] (Paris: Éd. du Seuil, 2001), 23.

45 Agence universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF), *Annuaire de la Francophonie universitaire* [Directory of Francophone Universities], Édition 2020–2021, 2020.

46 The Tunisian minister of higher education and research Slim Khelboussi gave up his governmental position in December 2019 to take the position of rector of the AUF.

47 Another illustration for that: In 2021, the Cité internationale universitaire de Paris inaugurated a new building dedicated to students from the Francophonie. For the official inauguration, a representative from the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs represented the French state, with emphasis on strengthening the French language via scientific cooperation. Cité internationale universitaire de Paris, “Cité 2025: the

responsibilities create a gap in terms of international scientific cooperation and translate into a restricted attitude toward the countries of the Francophonie and more broadly of the Global South. The first National Research and Innovation Strategy (*Stratégie nationale de Recherche et d'innovation*), published by the French government in 2009, differentiates very clearly between “intensifier nos partenariats internationaux” (intensifying our international partnerships)—meaning European partners, China, India or Russia—and “la recherche française au service du développement” (French research for development)—meaning countries of the South that need support.⁴⁸

A similar attitude also prevailed among the French academics in the twenty-first century, as shown in the following example: in 2004, the mentioned year of intensive protests, when the scientific community of the French public research bodies came together to discuss possible ways of how to reform the French *États généraux de la recherche* (science system), they briefly addressed the question of international relations. Though they requested a *modèle de partenariat bilatéral* (bilateral partnership model) instead of the old *modèle de recherche paternaliste* (paternalistic research model), they stated in the very same phrase that it was the duty of the *recherche pour le développement* (research for development) to take care of this, meaning that only those research bodies already cooperating with the *pays du Sud* (countries of the South) on “useful” topics such as agriculture or health were concerned by this mission.⁴⁹

These examples serve as an illustration of a somewhat paternalistic perspective held by French actors toward former colonized territories, a perspective shaped over more than 400 years through different expansion undertakings (if one starts counting with the settlement of Port Royal in North America in 1604). For the higher education French globalization project, it can be concluded that former colonial territories have most importantly been considered partners in spreading French values and supporting language policy against the widespread of English. To this end, student mobility and scientific (development) cooperation are one of several tools for achieving these goals. This is the responsibility of the ministries of foreign affairs, culture, and school education, whereas the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research is far less concerned.

The next part takes a look back at the years following World War II, when science in France became a priority of the state in order to support rebuilding a defeated nation that was about to lose its colonial territories, leading to a new institutional landscape

Maison des étudiants de la francophonie” [Cité 2025: The House of French-Speaking Students] accessed January 23, 2023, <https://www.ciup.fr/en/cite-2025-the-maison-des-etudiants-de-la-francophonie/>.

48 France/Ministère de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche, “Stratégie nationale de Recherche et d'innovation: Rapport général” [National Research and Innovation Strategy: General Report] (2009): 20–21.

49 États généraux de la recherche, ed., “Rapport des États généraux de la recherche: 9 mars–9 novembre 2004” [Report of the États généraux de la recherche: March 9–November 9, 2004] (Paris: Tallandier, 2004): 130–131.

that would prove to be increasingly challenged by the growing importance of measuring and comparing scientific production on a global scale.

Golden Times for Research, Institutional Battle of Universities

With beginning of World War II and to a large part thanks to the successful awareness raising of some eminent scientists led by physicist and 1926 Nobel prize winner Jean Perrin, the French National Centre for Scientific Research (Centre national de la recherche scientifique, CNRS) was created in 1939, becoming *the* institution for fundamental research and the organization of research in France.⁵⁰ It would be followed by the creation by the French government of other research bodies such as for atomic research (Commissariat à l'énergie atomique, CEA, 1945) and agriculture (Institut national de la recherche agronomique, INRA, 1946). President Charles de Gaulle recognized the considerable potential of scientific development: France might have been defeated and internationally declassified, and its empire might have been crumbling, but it had scientists and engineers to rebuild the nation-state.⁵¹ This was additionally triggered by the growing technological lead taken by the USA, which, by the mid-1960s, led to serious concern of France—quite comparable to that of the early 2000s—of becoming an “underdeveloped nation in a world dominated by scientific superpowers” and the need to transform it in a “scientific state.”⁵² During the *Trente Glorieuses* (the postwar period of economic growth in France), those challenges were successfully met, and the years of 1953–1969 are often hailed as a golden period for research: funding was quadrupled; science was included in the national economic development plan (1952); the first researchers obtained the civil servant status; and a research coordination office under the responsibility of the prime minister (General Delegation for Scientific and Technical Research [Délégation générale à la Recherche scientifique et technique, DGRST]) made science a governmental top priority.⁵³ Also, more new research bodies were funded, such as for spatial research (Centre national d'études spatiales, CNES,

50 Jean-François Picard, *La république des savants: La recherche française et le CNRS* [The Republic of Scholars: French Research and the CNRS], Collection Champs (Paris: Flammarion, 1990).

51 Gabrielle Hecht, *The Radiance of France: Nuclear Power and National Identity After World War II* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1998).

52 Gilpin, *Scientific State*, 3–4.

53 Picard, *La république des savants*, 143–165. The overall national budget for research and innovation grew from 2.46 percent in 1958 to 6.2 percent in 1968; Grimoult, *Sciences et politique*, 54–55. For the context of the DGRST, see Alain Chatriot and Vincent Duclert, eds., *Le gouvernement de la recherche: Histoire d'un engagement politique, de Pierre Mendès France au Général de Gaulle 1953–1969* [The Government of Research: History of a Political Commitment, from Pierre Mendès France to General De Gaulle 1953–1969] (Paris: Éditions la Découverte, 2006).

1961) and informatics (Institut national de recherche en sciences et technologies du numérique, INRIA, 1967).

The 1960s were also the beginning of “big science,” which fostered bi- and multilateral cooperation for large research facilities, such as the Institut Laue-Langevin (ILL) for neutron research, founded in 1967 as a result of Franco-German cooperation.⁵⁴ In terms of applied research, large companies like Saint-Gobain successfully established industry laboratories (mostly filled with engineers from the Écoles supérieures and not with university graduates or scientists with a doctorate) and made significant contributions to French economic growth.

Altogether, the creation of separate research bodies worked very well for France in the second half of the twentieth century, and institutions like the CNRS or the CEA became known worldwide for their excellence in fundamental and applied research and strengthened France’s reputation as a scientific world power. The only other president after de Gaulle remembered to have remarkedly fostered scientific research was François Mitterrand (1981–1995, Socialist Party). Notwithstanding, the political priority for research policy as well as the corresponding funding declined after de Gaulle’s resignation, which proved to be a challenge when the KBE narrative put R&D at the center of economic activities for a prosperous national future.

The creation of new research bodies solidified the role of university academics primarily as lecturers, with their main responsibility being to teach the rapidly growing number of students. Propositions by reform-oriented French university members in 1956 and 1966, who were inspired by the success of US universities and who wanted to reunify teaching and research into more independent universities, remained unheard by the powerful faculty deans as well as by the directors of the newly funded research bodies.⁵⁵ For the international reputation of French science, this proved to be largely unproblematic. The historical distinction between smaller elite institutions and larger faculties was subject to intellectual criticism but was never seriously questioned. The former included the Écoles supérieures, which had the right to select their students, were generously financed, and offered quasi-guaranteed job prospects for their graduates; the latter, which had to accept everyone with a high school degree, were poorly financed,

54 Great Britain joined the ILL in 1974. Denis Guthleben, “L’ouverture internationale du CNRS: 80 ans de construction” [CNRS’s International Reach: 80 Years in the Making], in *Universités et grandes écoles: Circulations internationales étudiantes et scientifiques d’hier à aujourd’hui*, ed. Yamina Bettahar (Nancy: PUN-Éditions universitaires de Lorraine, 2020), 35.

55 Christine Musselin, “Brève histoire des universités, de leur suppression sous la Révolution, à leur renaissance en 1968, jusqu’à leurs reconfigurations actuelles” [Brief History of Universities, from Their Suppression during the Revolution, to Their Rebirth in 1968, to Their Current Reconfigurations], in *Les universités en France*, ed. Frédéric Forest (Mont-Saint-Aignan: Presses universitaires de Rouen et du Havre, 2021), 19–41.

had high dropout rates, and their graduates often had difficulties to enter the labor market.

From the 1950s onward, universities all over the world experienced a phase of “massification.” In France, this trend was particularly noteworthy, both in terms of total numbers as well as expansion rate, ranking one of the highest in Europe. The number of students rose from 129,000 in 1950 to 694,800 in 1970.⁵⁶ But French faculties had less capacities to respond to the new challenges than their European neighbors. When university students around the world protested in 1968 against their respective societies, their living conditions, and their lacking job prospects, this crisis was in France comprehensibly “plus grave que partout ailleurs” (more severe than anywhere else).⁵⁷ These “events of May 1968,” as they are often called, initiated a partial adaption of the higher education principles established by Napoleon I to the needs of the present times. The minister of education Edgar Faure successfully dissolved faculties in 1968 and reinstalled universities in an institutional sense (with, among other things, a president and an elected representative council). But budgets, career trajectories, and the decision taking within the Ministry of Education stayed as before, structured according to disciplines.⁵⁸ So even if 55 universities emerged after the Faure Law (Loi Faure) and would grow to a total number of 85 by 2006, this was by no means comparable to the institutional freedom of German, US, or British universities and their role within their respective education system. The institutional identity of French universities in fact only started to grow at the end of the 1980s.⁵⁹

Within all these decades of reform debates on universities, the conviction established at the end of the eighteenth century that every university had to be treated “equal” in order to guarantee every high school graduate a place in higher education and to guarantee territorial equality remained unchanged. Even though the lived reality included an obvious unequal treatment with the *Écoles supérieures* as well as different reputations of the universities, depending, for example, on their study programs, resources, or location, the idea of equality was (and is) shared by most academics and politicians.⁶⁰ Public acknowledgement of some kind of differentiation between universities only appeared when the international scientific competition stimulated new funding schemes through large-scale competitive procedures: with the establishment of the project funding agency ANR in 2005—which received an overwhelming 5,400 applications for a budget of 800

56 Charle and Verger, *Histoire des universités*, 145–146.

57 Charle and Verger, 195.

58 Musselin, *La longue marche*, 53–79; Picard, *Profession*.

59 Christine Musselin, “The Role of Ideas in the Emergence of Convergent Higher Education Policies in Europe: The Case of France,” 2000, accessed February 13, 2010, <http://aei.pitt.edu/9148/>.

60 Schlütter, *Exzellenz und Égalité*.

million euros in its first year and with the aforementioned Plan Campus and Idex.⁶¹ Notably, the last two programs were directly controlled by the ministries, aiming to maintain treatment among French departments as equal as possible.

The Challenges and Opportunities of Internationalization in Higher Education

Even though the developments described in the previous part were mostly Franco-French, international competition in higher education and research was already remarkable in the 1970s, and English was on its way to becoming the most frequently used language in science and beyond. But French politicians remained proud and convinced of French as the sacrosanct world language of science. This self-image and sense of mission clashed with the dynamics of international science cooperation, as the following incident from 1976 illustrates: the inventor of the SCI, US-American chemist and linguist Eugene Garfield, predicted that French science would be “provincialized” if French researchers would not start to publish more in English (Garfield Affair). French researchers in the natural sciences reacted to this perceived affront by first engaging in a large debate; attempting (unsuccessfully) to draw political attention to the issue; and ultimately, in the course of the following 15 years, adapting pragmatically and publishing already in the early 1980s nearly two-thirds of their scientific articles in English.⁶² It was only when the directorate of the Institut Pasteur decided in 1989 to replace its renowned journal *Annales*, established in 1887, with three journals exclusively in English that public outrage was provoked. The debate around this decision became so emotional that the directorate decided in the end to reinstall a French journal as a kind of synthesis of the English ones.⁶³

Accordingly, the political sphere in France at the beginning of the 1990s still was far away from accepting the changing rules of global competition in science and education and was very much attached to global importance of French language and values. The Toubon Law (Loi Toubon) of 1994, which protected the French language and forbid lecturing in any other language than French, is one prominent example for that. Several factors came together in the 1990s that put the French higher education and research system under pressure: cross-border mobility of scientists and students

61 Hervé Morin, “Premier Bilan de l’agence de la Recherche” [First Assessment of the Research Agency], *Le Monde*, November 17, 2005. For an overview of the excellence initiative, see Jérôme Aust, Harold Mazoyer, and Christine Musselin, “Se mettre à l’IDEX ou être mis à l’index” [Join the IDEX or Be Blacklisted], *Gouvernement & action publique* 7, no. 4 (2018): 9–37.

62 David Northrup, *How English Became the Global Language* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 116.

63 Yves Gingras, “Les formes spécifiques de l’internationalité du champ scientifique” [The Specific Forms of the Internationality of the Scientific Field], *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, no. 141 (2002): 39–41.

gained importance from the 1980s on; the internationalization of scientific cooperation was significantly intensified by new communication technologies; the number of international scientific co-publications increased; and English continued to spread as the global science language.⁶⁴ At the same time, policy concepts around the KBE gained influence at the national level within the EU without being called as such.⁶⁵ So the intensity of the crisis described at the beginning of this chapter has to be evaluated in relation to that.

Although French politicians mostly reacted to these factors rather than address them, it is important to note that a more internationalized and globally connected “market” for higher education and research also offers opportunities for different groups of actors. One promising strategy to support the realization of national goals for a government can be to implement them at the level of supra- or international cooperation. While this has not been researched systematically, the following examples from French higher education policy indicate that such implementation can happen according to clear strategies or in a more coincidental way, where favorable circumstances can spark unintended developments.

The latter most strikingly happened when, in 1997, the French minister of education and research, Claude Allègre, decided to strengthen the position of universities in order to make French higher education more visible on an international level and to fight the high dropout rate of university students. He asked Jacques Attali, an expert/consultant who had worked for several high-ranking French politicians such as Mitterrand, to put forward propositions. In his report called “Pour un modèle européen d’enseignement supérieur” (For a European Model of Higher Education), he recommended to use Europeanization as a tool to notably overcome the social separation between the universities and the *Écoles supérieures*.⁶⁶ The ordering of expert propositions to search for solutions is one common strategy of how politicians in France deal with any kind of crisis. The large majority of these reports have disappeared “in a drawer.” But not Attali’s one: the year 1998 also was the very year of the 800th birthday of Sorbonne

64 However, international exchange did not yet play a strategic role for higher education institutions (universities as well as *Écoles supérieures*). Gingras, *Les formes spécifiques*.

65 Nobody in France talked of *économie de la connaissance* yet, but several reports commissioned by the government from the late 1990s onward stated that France was in danger of being left behind internationally in “strategic” areas such as ICT or biotechnology and that reforms were needed at all levels of the higher education and research system in order to remain competitive and to keep pace with international competition. See, e. g., Pierre Cohen and Jean-Yves Le Déaut, “Priorité à la Recherche. Quelle Recherche pour demain? 60 Propositions pour améliorer la Synergie entre Recherche et Enseignement Supérieur, l’Autonomie des Jeunes, l’Évaluation, la Mobilité et les Échanges” [Priority to Research: What Research for Tomorrow? 60 Proposals to Improve Synergy Between Research and Higher Education, Youth Autonomy, Evaluation, Mobility and Exchange] (1999).

66 Jacques Attali, “Pour un modèle européen d’enseignement supérieur” [For a European Model of Higher Education], *Ministre de l’Éducation nationale, de la Recherche et de la technologie* (1998).

University, and Allègre's ministry took the report as an inspiration for the ceremonial act. It worked out a nonbinding declaration on the harmonization of European higher education.⁶⁷ The proposition was to structure degrees on two levels: undergraduate and graduate studies. Such a format would be perfectly compatible with the French diploma structure and at the same time with the bachelor and master structure of anglophone countries, which were referred to as being a kind of "international standard."

As Pauline Ravinet reconstructs, the invited ministers from Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom, just as Allègre, were concerned with the need to reform their study programs in order to raise the employability of graduates, among other issues. Therefore, they could use the public success of such a joint European declaration, although none of them intended to seriously coordinate this on a European level.⁶⁸ But since time was convenient for such a declaration, it became a success, and the follow-up event in Bologna in 1999 finished with already 29 European countries joining it. This was followed by a kind of "ping pong" where the European Commission—who had the financial means to support the process—and the Bologna Follow-Up Group—who had the legitimation of the member states—ended up in an increasingly binding study reform today known as the Bologna process, leading to structure comprising bachelor's (*Licence*), master's, and doctoral degrees in most European countries (as well as in numerous African countries, as mentioned, and elsewhere).⁶⁹

Two further examples from the very beginning of the European research cooperation and from recent times illustrate how propositions of French actors deliberately shaped Europe: The European Council for Nuclear Research (Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire, CERN) in Geneva, which nowadays is famous for its Large Hadron Collider (LHC), was created in 1951 through the determined efforts of the French scientist Henri Laugier and a small network of French experts influential at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the

67 Higher education was a "hot topic" within the EU because the European Commission had the competencies but the member states had firmly insisted on keeping education as a part of their national responsibility since the foundation of the European Community in 1951. So Allègre saw such a declaration signed by the representatives of the EU member states as a strong statement for the national autonomy on education issues. Pauline Ravinet, "Comment le Processus de Bologne a-t-il commencé? La formulation de la vision de l'Espace européen d'enseignement supérieur en 1998" [How Did the Bologna Process Start? The Formulation of the Vision of the European Higher Education Area in 1998], *Education et sociétés* 2, no. 24 (2009): 29–44.

68 Among others, the German minister Jürgen Rüttgers wanted students to finish earlier and had elections coming; the Italian minister Luigi Berlinguer wanted to reform the study program in order to have less dropouts; and the British minister Tessa Blackstone needed at the same time to raise fees and to motivate more high school graduates for university. Ravinet, *Processus de Bologne*.

69 Anne Corbett, "Ping Pong: Competing Leadership for Reform in EU Higher Education 1998–2006," *European Journal of Education* 46, no. 1 (2011): 36–53.

United Nations (UN).⁷⁰ And the European ranking U-Multirank, which went online in 2014, goes back to an idea of a French commission on French economic growth under (again) the leadership of Attali (Commission for the Liberation of French Growth [Commission pour la libération de la croissance française]), who proposed in 2008 to develop a European alternative to the Shanghai Ranking in the context of the French presidency of the Council of the European Union during the second half of the same year.⁷¹ These kinds of national initiatives do, of course, also fail regularly, such as de Gaulle's attempt in the 1960s to implement the French SECAM as a European color television standard or Chirac's proposition in 2004 to cut out national R&D spending from the European stability and growth pact (which would have meant less deficit for the member states).⁷²

The French Model

Throughout French history, higher education and research have been used by regents, kings, and presidents to secure and enlarge France's worldwide impact in a territorial as well as in a figurative sense. King Francis I, King Louis XIV, Emperor Napoleon I, and President de Gaulle are certainly the most prominent leaders of France to have shaped the French higher education and research system in order to use it for their respective globalization projects. International competition and comparison with concurring kingdoms or nation-states were an impetus and a catalyst for national reforms in this respect.

It remains fascinating to consider how the contemporary higher education and research system in France can be understood by this past: the *Écoles supérieures* as largely autonomous elite education institutions, the institutionalization of public research in

⁷⁰ Grimoult, *Sciences et politiques*, 61–62.

⁷¹ This was taken up by Valérie Pécresse, the French minister of higher education and research (2006–2011), who announced a project on such a topic together with Odile Quintin, director general for education and culture at the European Commission, in November 2008. Commission pour la libération de la croissance française, “Rapport de la Commission pour la Libération de la Croissance française” [Report of the Commission for the Liberation of French Growth] (January 21, 2008), accessed April 3, 2012, <http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/var/storage/rapports-publics/084000041/0000.pdf>; Luc Cédelle, “Vers un classement européen des universités” [Towards a European University Ranking] (14 November 2008), accessed February 15, 2021, http://lemonde.fr/societe/article/2008/11/14/vers-un-classement-europeen-des-universites_1118448_3224.html.

⁷² Andreas Fickers, “Politique de la grandeur” versus “Made in Germany”: *Politische Kulturgeschichte der Technik am Beispiel der PAL-SECAM-Kontroverse* [“Policy of Greatness” versus “Made in Germany”: Political Cultural History of Technology Using the Example of the PAL-SECAM Controversy] (Pariser Historische Studien, 78) (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2007); Schlütter, *Exzellenz und Egalité*; Grimoult, *Sciences et politiques*, 74.

bodies outside of universities, and the perception of universities as the weakest and less attractive institutions. But also, how to cooperate with universities in former colonized African and Asian countries, how to organize scientific career paths, or how to organize project funding very much relates to the traditions of *manière de faire*. This was also reflected in French academia's treatment of their own institutions, where contemporary universities did not become serious objects of scientific inquiry until the end of 1980s.⁷³

The escalating international competition in the context of the KBE narrative, described at the beginning of this chapter, subjected the French actors to a serious stress test, leading to unprecedented protests by scientists and university academics, marking a pivotal moment in French history. But even so, considering that the funding for R&D—to take the most known parameter—has not grown substantially since the beginning of the 2000s (2.19 per cent in 2019), consistently behind that of the United Kingdom or Germany; that the tension between excellence and territorial equality persists and notably produced an excellence initiative that tried to achieve both; and that the reforms of the last 20 years bring more precarious working conditions for especially younger scholars, it is still quite impressive, at least in the opinion of the author, how “France” (as an ensemble of all the actors) has processed this challenge by developing its own model and continues to be one of the scientific world powers. This does not always guarantee success, as the failure of a national vaccine against Covid-19 illustrated (despite good structural and personnel prerequisites as well as the self-claim by French politicians to be among the first in the development race).⁷⁴ But it can, as shows the success story of the University of Saclay, which seemed impossible for many years. It took twelve years of negotiations and 5 billion euros of investment of public funds to create the university in 2020 out of a merger of three universities and four Écoles supérieures, located on a campus in southwest Paris that includes several other prestigious institutions. When, in the year of its official inauguration, the University of Saclay directly ranked fourteenth (the best position of a French university ever in the Shanghai Ranking, making France the third-highest-ranked nation in the ranking), the French minister of higher education, research, and innovation, Frédérique Vidal, was full of pride, considering such an endeavor and validation to be a “percée historique”

73 To be considered as the first scientific study on contemporary universities issues: Erhard Friedberg and Christine Musselin, *En quête d'universités: Étude comparée des universités en France et en RFA* [In Search of Universities: A Comparative Study of Universities in France and West Germany] (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1989).

74 Kathleen Schlütter, “Die Covid-19-Pandemie und das französische Innovationssystem: Ist nach der Krise vor der Krise?” [The Covid-19 Pandemic and the French Innovation System: Is after the Crisis before the Crisis?], accessed December 14, 2021, <https://www.recentglobe.uni-leipzig.de/zentrum/detailansicht/artikel/blog-die-covid-19-pandemie-und-das-franzoesische-innovationssystem-ist-nach-der-krise-vor-der-kris/>.

(historic breakthrough).⁷⁵ So finally French academia had successfully fulfilled its self-set goal to be competitive in a game based on Anglo-American rules by staying truthful to the French way of doing research and teaching.

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⁷⁵ Ministère de l’enseignement supérieur, de la recherche et de l’innovation, “La France en 3ème position mondiale du classement de Shanghai 2020: Une percée historique saluée par la ministre Frédérique Vidal” [France Ranks 3rd Worldwide in the Shanghai 2020 Ranking: Minister Frédérique Vidal Hails Historic Breakthrough] (15 August 2020), accessed December 9, 2021, <https://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/fr/la-france-en-3eme-position-mondiale-du-classement-de-shanghai-2020-une-percee-historique-saluee-par-46898>.

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Contesting the Future of the French Globalization Project: The Emergence of a Far-Right Populist Challenge?

Our political opponents based their actions on a historical misunderstanding. They decreed, as prisoners of their “globalist” ideology, that history was leading us toward a stateless, globalized world in which the “American Western model” would be universally imposed. They were wrong, and their error is the very source of our decline. From Asia to Latin America and across the Muslim world, a new world is emerging, founded on the affirmation of identities and national sovereignties.¹

As earlier chapters in this volume have made clear, the role that France plays in an interconnected world has long been a matter of utmost importance for the nation’s leadership. Recent decades, however, have seen the question of *globalization* become a heavily discussed and contested matter for more than those in power. While growing economic, political, and cultural interconnectedness has been marketed as “a tide that lifts all boats,”² a majority of French citizens have on the contrary expressed distrust toward globalization amid an era of perceived national decline.³ For this reason, twenty-first-century France has served as the laboratory par excellence for alternative approaches to global interconnectedness as well as alternative means of dealing with globalizing processes—indeed, as the heart of numerous (often overlapping) alternative *globalization projects*.

In today’s political environment, the promoters of one such globalization project have been gaining national momentum as well as international attention: namely, the French populist far right, best embodied by the National Rally (Rassemblement National, RN;

1 From “Notre projet” (Our Project), the extended 2012 political platform of the National Front. See “Notre projet: programme politique du Front National,” 2012, 50, CEVIPOF. Note: Foreign-language quotations and expressions included in this chapter have been translated by the author.

2 Rodrigo de Rato, “A Rising Tide Lifts All Boats: How Europe, by Promoting Growth, Can Help Itself and Help the World, Speech by Rodrigo de Rato, Managing Director, IMF,” International Monetary Fund, May 22, 2006, <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2015/09/28/04/53/sp052206>.

3 Brice Teinturier, Mathieu Gallard, and Salomé Quetier-Parent, “Fractures françaises: 2022, 10ème Édition” [French Fractures: 2022, 10th Edition], survey results (Ipsos/Sopra Steria for Le Monde, La Fondation Jean Jaurès, and Le CEVIPOF, September 2022), 7, 43, https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2022-10/Ipsos%20-%20Fractures%20Franc%CC%A7aises%20-%20septembre_2022.pdf.

formerly known as the National Front [Front National, FN]) and its de facto leader, Marine Le Pen. Such a suggestion may seem counterintuitive, bringing to mind several assumptions. The first is that a far-right, national-populist party—with its focus on promoting the will of the sensible “people” and its denunciation of global “elites”—could not have a design for a globalization to which it seems staunchly opposed. The second is that, *should* such a globalization project exist, it must be purely oppositional, a set of policy proposals simply meant to upset the status quo. Other possible assumptions might be that a right-wing populist globalization project would be incoherent, involve total national withdrawal, or mark a radical departure from French politics and history.

A closer look at the RN’s platform and actions over the years, however, challenges such assumptions. Indeed, in this chapter, we will demonstrate that the RN has sought to articulate a rational globalization project, one that is rooted in more than a purely oppositional or inward-looking perspective. Under the party’s current leadership, its global agenda mainly adheres to a series of principles that draw heavily from a variety of French political influences and heritages. While largely constant, the party’s globalization project nonetheless displays evolution over time; while largely coherent, it is also filled with paradoxes, tensions, and vague proposals.

This populist globalization project stands as a critique of the approach to globalization processes maintained by France’s mainstream political establishment, which for the sake of comparison will be outlined here. While late twentieth- and twenty-first-century French governments have pursued various and differing policies depending on leadership, they have also shared common goals. These include increased European Union (EU) integration and interdependency (favored over the past few decades by mainstream left- and right-wing leaders, as well as by the current center-right president Emmanuel Macron); a closer relationship with the United States (a renewed Atlanticism dating back to the 1990s) and with Germany (the Franco-German couple at the heart of the EU); an understanding that France’s best chances for increasing clout on the world stage lie in its role within a strong EU; and a panoply of economic liberalization measures meant to make the French market more flexible, “business friendly,” and attractive to foreign investors. Meanwhile, often in response to these pursuits, a number of popular outbursts have punctuated French politics since the 1980s. One could cite, for example, the surprisingly strong opposition to the Maastricht Treaty and European Constitution referendums in 1992 and 2005, respectively; the demonstrations staged by Yellow Vest protesters in 2018 and 2019; and the rise of anti-establishment parties such as Le Pen’s RN, Jean-Luc Mélenchon’s hard-left France Unbowed (La France Insoumise), Éric Zemmour’s extreme-right Reconquest! (Reconquête!), and numerous other challengers from across the political spectrum.⁴

4 Two other far-right challengers with a marginal electoral impact include Nicolas Dupont-Aignan of France Arise (Debout La France) and Florian Philippot of The Patriots (Les Patriotes).

This sets the scene for exploring the RN's far-right populist globalization project. In this analysis, the aim is by no means to endorse, or increase the influence of, the RN's political offering; rather, this chapter seeks to shed light on important themes within the party's policy and approach, allowing us to better understand the wave of populist contestation sweeping across much of the world.

A Populist Globalization Project?

Since the 2010s, scholars in the field of global studies have lent ever more attention to turmoil within supranational institutions and constellations, as well as within what is broadly known as the liberal world order. No longer understood as a natural, uni-directional process, globalization has become the plural *globalizations*, with various stakeholders throughout the world seeking to “control, channel, redirect, regulate, tame, and stop” global flows and processes (the nature of which might be material, human, financial, or values-based).⁵ Since the 2010s, right-wing populist resistance to a one-size-fits-all understanding of globalization processes has become especially pronounced; this might include, for example, the United Kingdom's EU membership (Brexit) referendum of 2016 or former United States president Donald Trump's disruptive approach to foreign policy and trade relations. In media coverage and scholarly literature alike, a surge in populism has undoubtedly come to the fore; the reason, according to globalization scholars Manfred Steger and Paul James, is “intricately connected to shifting perceptions of the role of globalization in the world.”⁶ Right-wing populist stakeholders' approaches to globalization, they note, replicate the strategies of justice globalization movements⁷ by positioning themselves against common claims of neoliberal market globalization (i. e., the Washington Consensus) while also engaging in transnational communication: indeed, even nationalist populist movements have a history of exchange and practice-sharing across borders.⁸

Within this countermovement, the RN has a special role to play. Established in 1972, the RN is one of the oldest right-wing populist parties in Europe; it also has the distinction of being one of the first to achieve an electoral breakthrough (during the 1984 European Parliament elections). Compared to parties with a similar agenda, the

5 Matthias Middell, “Narratives about Globalization: International Studies and Global Studies,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Transregional Studies*, ed. Matthias Middell (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 663.

6 Manfred Steger and Paul James, “Making Sense of the Populist Challenge to Globalization,” in *Globalization Matters: Engaging the Global in Unsettled Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 189.

7 The Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions and for Citizens' Action (Association pour la taxation des transactions financières et pour l'action citoyenne, ATTAC) is a well-known example of a justice globalization organization.

8 Steger and James, “Making Sense of the Populist Challenge,” 188.

RN has enjoyed unusual continuity thanks to its dynastic nature. Led from its early days until 2011 by the bombastic Jean-Marie Le Pen, it has since been taken over by his more presentable youngest daughter, who has sought to normalize or *dédiaboliser* (de-demonize) the party. With its vertical leadership, the party has been subject to much contestation but has always remained, in essence, a Lepenist⁹ project; this is especially true for its approach to flows and processes that transcend French borders. Perhaps most importantly, the increasingly powerful RN (recently upgraded through its 2022 legislative election results to a major force in the French National Assembly¹⁰) is jockeying for power within one of the most politically, culturally, and militarily influential countries in Europe, and even the world.

Correspondingly, a global vision has always been at the top of the RN's agenda. Known until 2018 as the National Front, the party first emerged amid "the shock of decolonization and the trauma of the end of French Algeria,"¹¹ one of the contemporary French far right's defining moments. In its first years, the FN pursued cooperation with, and found inspiration in, the neofascist Italian Social Movement (Movimento Sociale Italiano, or MSI, forerunner to Georgia Meloni's Brothers of Italy [Fratelli d'Italia]), which had rallied together far-right extremists of different stripes following the collapse of the Mussolini regime.¹² Similarly, the FN regrouped a wide variety of reactionaries (Catholic traditionalists, nationalist activists, former members of the Waffen-SS, Pétain apologists, members of the pro-French Algeria terrorist group Secret Army Organization [Organisation de l'armée secrète], and more) who were bitterly disappointed by what they viewed as a France in decline.¹³ From the very beginning, therefore, the party and its principal stakeholders understood their mission as embedded in global dynamics and shifts, and they sought support and inspiration from outside of France.

9 The term "*Lepeniste*" (Lepenist) is commonly featured in literature on the National Rally/National Front, referring of course to the party's leaders' last name.

10 Ivonne Trippenbach, "Législatives 2022: Le Rassemblement National remporte un succès historique, avec 89 Députés" [Legislative 2022: The National Rally Achieves a Historic Success, with 89 Deputies], *Le Monde*, June 19, 2022, https://www.lemonde.fr/elections-legislatives-2022/article/2022/06/19/legislatives-2022-le-rassemblement-national-obtient-une-vague-historique-d-au-moins-80-deputes_6131115_6104324.html.

11 Erwan Lecœur, "1. 1972–1982: la 'traversée du désert'" [1. 1972–1982: Crossing the Desert] in *Un néo-populisme à la française. Trente ans de Front national*, ed. Erwan Lecœur (Paris: La Découverte, 2003), 30, <https://www.cairn.info/un-neo-populisme-a-la-francaise-9782707139313-page-29.htm>.

12 Nicolas Lebourg, "Les dimensions internationales du Front national" [The International Dimensions of the National Front], *Pouvoirs* 157, no. 2 (2016): 108–109.

13 Lecœur, "1. 1972–1982: la 'traversée du désert,'" 33–35.

A Project Responsive to Global Developments

Throughout its 50 years of existence, the FN-turned-RN platform has boasted an array of globally facing policies, displaying coherence and yet shifting in accordance with global events. Operating under the bipolar Cold War logic, for example, the Jean-Marie Le Pen of the 1980s called for defense cooperation in Europe and feared the communist threat above all;¹⁴ the collapse of the Eastern bloc, however, saw the FN redirect its distrust amid what it saw as a problematically unipolar world dominated by the United States. The party's anti-American turn was complemented by suspicion toward an increasingly integrated Europe, especially following the 1992 French referendum on the Maastricht Treaty.¹⁵ Over time, these perceived threats practically became one and the same in the Lepenist discourse: the EU was cast as a "Trojan horse" for American political and economic hegemony,¹⁶ the means by which France would become a mere American satellite.

In the last decade, the party's globalization project has experienced another turning point under Marine Le Pen's leadership. Espousing her father's distrust of the United States and a more fully integrated EU but rejecting his preference for "traditional" values and minimal state interference in economic matters, Le Pen *filles*¹⁷ has taken the anti-American logic a step further by denouncing "American-style" market fundamentalism and calling for a heavily regulated, protectionist approach to numerous economic and social policies. Her 2012 personal manifesto, *Pour que vive la France* (So That France May Live), points to the processes of financial and economic interconnectedness she opposes and suggests that such trends could have been managed differently: "The 'globalist' revolution also includes a financial component [...] which we must analyze not as the inevitable result of a natural economic evolution, but as *the result of deliberate choices*."¹⁸ This "social turn," widely remarked upon in France with regard to Marine Le

14 Front National, *Pour la France: Programme du Front National* [For France: Platform of the National Front] (Paris: Éditions Albatros, 1985), 180–184.

15 The Maastricht Treaty formally established the European Union and laid out provisions for a currency union. When consulted via referendum on whether to adopt the treaty in 1992, the French populace agreed, but barely; with 51% voting to adopt the treaty, the results of the vote were broadly termed "*le petit oui*" (the little yes). See "Il y a 25 Ans, Le Traité de Maastricht préparait l'euro" [25 Years Ago, the Maastricht Treaty Paved the Way for the Euro], *Le Monde*, February 6, 2017, https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2017/02/06/il-y-a-25-ans-le-traite-de-maastricht-preparait-l-euro_5075277_3232.html.

16 Front National, *Pour un avenir français: Le programme de gouvernement du Front National* [For a French Future: The Government Platform of the National Front] (Paris: Editions Godefroy de Bouillon, 2001), 147.

17 In the interest of avoiding redundancy, this chapter occasionally uses the terms "Le Pen *filles*" (French for "daughter," meaning Marine Le Pen) and "Le Pen *père*" (meaning "father," or Jean-Marie Le Pen).

18 Marine Le Pen, *Pour que vive la France* [So That France May Live] (Escalquens: Éditions Grancher, 2012), 61–62 (emphasis added).

Pen's approach to welfare provision and pocketbook issues, also concerns a duty for the state to intervene in processes beyond the domestic level.

Most interestingly for this chapter, Le Pen *filles* has made explicit her opposition not to “mondialisation” (globalization), but to what she terms “mondialisme” (globalism), a distinction that was less obvious in her father's discourse. She spells this out, again, in her 2012 manifesto:

I do not confuse globalism with globalization. Globalization is a technical phenomenon which is characterized by an intensification of exchanges between regions and nations. Our human community has prospered for 50,000 years thanks in part to this development of exchanges that has multiplied wealth, bringing humans together and calming relations between peoples. [...] *Globalization must not be fought, but it must be mastered by nations* [...] [On the other hand,] *globalism* is aimed precisely at preventing nations from maintaining control over their place within globalization.¹⁹

Globalism, as per her dualistic description, is imagined as an antiregulatory, anti-nation-state, and antiborder ideology,²⁰ which she claims has been promoted by her mainstream opponents. Le Pen makes this position clear in various ways—for example, by referring in speeches and tracts to “mondialisation sauvage” (unbridled globalization) or “mondialisation dérégulée” (deregulated globalization) rather than identifying globalization writ large as the problem. This plainly points to a globalization project, one in which control is exercised over globalizing flows by nation-states, and it reflects extreme-right discourses from political and cultural stakeholders around the world.

Now that we have touched on the evolution of the RN's globalization project, we will take a look at the main principles behind it, based on analysis of the party's platforms and official documents as well as its actions in the National Assembly and European Parliament. As the RN has never been a governing party on the national level,²¹ this globalization project is primarily a *normative* one, based on the values, proposals, and expectations expressed by the party's leadership. The analysis for this chapter mainly concerns the French populist globalization project as defined between 2012 and 2022, under Marine Le Pen's increasingly successful leadership.

19 Le Pen, 26–27 (emphasis added).

20 Front National, “144 Engagements présidentielles: Marine 2017” [144 Presidential Engagements: Marine 2017], 2017, 2.

21 This chapter was written between late 2022 and mid-2023. Final revisions were carried out in June 2024.

The RN's Globalization Project: Key Principles

(Selective) Sovereignty: The Primacy of the French Nation-State

A common thread in innumerable RN government interventions, speeches, and platform documents, national sovereignty is at the top of the party's global agenda. From an inward-facing perspective, it implies the primacy of the will of the French people in deciding domestic policy and serves as a rhetorical leitmotif to which the populist Le Pens have continually returned. From an outward-facing perspective, it implies the primacy of the nation-state—as representative of its sovereign “people”—with regard to international and supranational authorities. As an organizing principle for the Lepenist globalization project, it implies that France must be able to act in its own best interests, in selective defiance of international norms and laws and as French leadership sees fit.

First and foremost, the principle of sovereignty stands as a response to the RN's perennial obsession—that of immigration. Indeed, despite the party's efforts to soften its image and to emphasize a more republican, all-encompassing understanding of the French nation, a xenophobic undercurrent remains in its core policies and rhetoric. When it comes to managing migration flows, the RN's primary concern is total control over French territory and borders, including in *France d'outre-mer* (overseas France); practical measures include a severely reduced immigration quota, an end to the French *jus soli* approach to citizenship, and a partial reestablishment of border checks and customs within the EU (jeopardizing France's commitment to the Schengen Area).²² In Marine Le Pen's 2022 presidential platform, she writes, “It is up to the French, and them alone, to determine the migration policy that our country must follow; foreigners' residency in France is not a right, but must be subordinated to the sole satisfaction of France's own interests.”²³ To this end, the RN proposes to modify various articles in France's constitution via referendum (a favorite Lepenist promise) and prevent supranational court interference when it comes to migration. This points to the party's interest in changing national law and manipulating international law to suit its worldview.

Of nearly equal importance to the question of immigration—and heavily interconnected with it—is that of French participation in the EU. Since the 1990s, the RN has rejected increased European integration on the grounds that a supranational body cannot supersede nation-states on matters impacting their populations. Instead, it has consistently demanded a loose confederation of sovereign European nations. The nature of this “Europe of Free Nations” remains ill-defined and would probably see a much-reduced role for the European Commission as well as a rejection of some common policies and numerous directives. Throughout the years, the RN's policy regarding

²² Front National, 6.

²³ Rassemblement National, “M La France: Mon projet présidentiel” [“Love” France: My Presidential Project] 2022, 8, <https://rassemblementnational.fr/>.

France's role in the EU has fluctuated between more rigid and softer options; the possibility of a "Frexit" via popular referendum has given way to demands that EU treaties be renegotiated, as the wide-reaching consequences of Brexit have continued to play out and the clout of right-wing populists across the EU has grown.²⁴ Meanwhile, the RN has eagerly accepted (and possibly misappropriated²⁵) EU funds and salaries afforded by its elected detachment in the European Parliament, which until June 2022 was much larger than its presence in the National Assembly.

From a foreign policy perspective beyond the EU, sovereignty is the principle by which the Le Pens want to see France distanced from a variety of multilateral commitments. Starting in the early 1990s (and later echoed in the policies of former US president Trump), the FN's platform called for bilateral cooperation when it came to political, economic, and development-related agreements, all with an aim to guarantee French control over terms impacting France. The RN's most recent policy proposals tout the importance of a "free hand" for French leadership abroad, picking and choosing preferred nations for issues like defense and industrial cooperation. The party has also expressed suspicion toward the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for fear of falling under US domination and being dragged into foreign wars. The party's approach suggests another French exit from the integrated command (copying Charles de Gaulle's 1966 partial withdrawal, which remained in effect until 2009), meant to prevent the commitment of French troops to non-French-led operations, while still maintaining a degree of NATO membership and cooperation. Marine Le Pen claims a continued commitment to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty (the "attack against one is an attack against all" rule),²⁶ which belies her supposed aversion to far-off wars.

This populist commitment to political sovereignty—which, the RN regularly declares, concerns all nations—falters when not in the RN's best interest, unsurprisingly. The party's transnational allegiances lead to ambiguities, notably with regard to the sovereignty of Ukraine (as well as Georgia in 2008). In line with her party's connection to Russian stakeholders, Marine Le Pen has advocated a federal political system in Ukraine, which would allow for more regional autonomy (and hence facilitate defections to Russia);²⁷ she also recognized the Russian annexation of Crimea shortly

24 Duncan McDonnell and Annika Werner, *International Populism: The Radical Right in the European Parliament* (Oxford: Oxford Academic, 2020), 220.

25 Marine Turchi, "Assistants Du RN: L'affaire qui embarrasse Marine Le Pen" [RN Assistants: The Case That Embarrasses Marine Le Pen], *Mediapart*, May 16, 2021, <https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/france/160521/assistants-du-rn-l-affaire-qui-embarrasse-marine-le-pen>.

26 "Diplomatie et Politique Étrangère: Conférence de Presse de Marine Le Pen" [Diplomacy and Foreign Policy: Press Conference by Marine Le Pen], Press conference, 2022, accessed July 27, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQE7ytvf-2s>.

27 "En Russie, Marine Le Pen défend une Ukraine fédérale" [In Russia, Marine Le Pen Defends a Federal Ukraine] *Le Parisien*, April 12, 2014, <https://www.leparisien.fr/international/russie-marine-le-pen-recue-la-la-douma-pour-parler-de-l-ukraine-12-04-2014-3763181.php>.

after it occurred in 2014 while denying that any military invasion had taken place.²⁸ Meanwhile, when it comes to developing countries deemed “beholden” to France as places of origin for migrants, the Le Pens have long advocated a policy of power plays: political cooperation with, and development aid for, such countries must be contingent upon their compliance with French demands to accept return migration or prevent departures.²⁹

Clearly, national sovereignty is a recurring theme in the RN’s platform, however opportunistic the party’s commitment to it may be. Closely linked to the supremacy of the nation-state is the second principle in this analysis—that of national prestige on the global stage.

Grandeur: France as an Influential Global Power

Less frequently cited in speeches and communiqués than the notion of sovereignty, yet of primary importance, the principle of *grandeur*—in the sense of greatness or glory—lies at the heart of the RN’s globalization project, as shown by the party’s approach to foreign policy. As historian Magali Balent suggests, the RN embraces the “double heritage” of French nationalism: on the one hand, an inward-facing aversion to all things “foreign” (apparent in its approach to immigration), and on the other hand, an outward-facing, fervent belief in the exceptionalism of the French model.³⁰ This core belief in French exceptionalism, present throughout French politics but particularly strong on the far right, implies a role for France as a global leader and even an evangelizing presence. As presidential candidates and aspiring heads of state, the Le Pens have therefore devoted considerable attention to an international agenda in their various candidate platforms; moreover, as a deputy within the National Assembly, Marine Le Pen has chosen to serve on the Commission of Foreign Affairs (indicating her desire to weigh in on foreign policy) since entering the parliamentary body in 2017.³¹

In order to exalt France’s position in a twenty-first-century world system, the Lepenist approach chiefly concerns disputing the global influence enjoyed by the United States (as well as China, to a lesser degree). This implies, first of all, a call for France to assume

28 Marie Thimonnier, “Débat Présidentiel: Quelle était la position de Marine Le Pen sur l’Ukraine en 2014 ?” [Presidential Debate: What Was Marine Le Pen’s Position on Ukraine in 2014?], *Libération*, April 20, 2022, https://www.liberation.fr/checknews/debat-presidentiel-quelle-etait-la-position-de-marine-le-pen-sur-lukraine-en-2014-20220420_Q4XOTD67JFASXJ7GZJQVEGTJF4/.

29 Front National, “Mon projet pour la France et les Français” [My Project for France and the French], 2012, 6, CEVIPOF, <https://www.sciencespo.fr/cevipofo/fr/content/archives-electorales.html>.

30 Magali Balent, *Le monde selon Marine: La politique internationale du Front National, entre rupture et continuité* [The World according to Marine: The International Politics of the National Front, between Rupture and Continuity] (Paris: IRIS éditions, 2012), 7.

31 “Commission des Affaires Étrangères: Composition” [Foreign Affairs Committee: Composition], government website, Assemblée nationale, February 10, 2023, accessed July 27, 2023, <https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/16/organes/commissions-permanentes/affaires-etrangeres/composition>.

a special role as a nonaligned, third-party peacekeeper by maintaining a degree of independence from the EU and NATO. Secondly, it involves a significantly larger defense budget and military force, with a particular fixation on naval and maritime influence. As outlined earlier, the RN advocates defense cooperation with other countries, but mainly on a state-to-state basis and not in a multilateral configuration. On the other hand, the RN fully embraces France's privileged position as one of five permanent members of the UN Security Council, calling for French leadership to jealously guard its seat as well as its role as a nuclear power vis-à-vis the rest of the EU. While successive French governments have supported the campaign for Germany, Japan, India, and Brazil to each have a permanent seat, Marine Le Pen remains squarely opposed to a German accession but favorable to a seat for India, as well as for "a representative of Africa" and (possibly) South America.³² This points to an openness to power-sharing, or rather the appearance of it, insofar as France remains regionally dominant and other global players see their power diluted.

The RN's desire to challenge American influence also involves a territorial component; in her 2022 presidential platform, Marine Le Pen noted that French defense and foreign policy had to "open up new areas of influence for our country. This implies, first of all, that all means be deployed to mitigate the consequences of the extraterritoriality of American law."³³ This interest in territorial authority relies heavily on overseas France, thanks to which, as the Le Pens never tire of repeating, "France is the world's second-largest maritime power" (behind the United States).³⁴ Motivated by a neoimperial logic of prestige through the claiming of space, the RN has paid particular attention to overseas France over the years; contrary to what one might expect, the party has little interest in allowing French overseas departments and territories to sue for independence. For the RN, France can aspire to be a global force *because* it has far-flung islands and substantial maritime territory, unlike its European neighbors.³⁵ This perspective sits uncomfortably with the RN's historical racism and its underlying hostility toward Islam, as the majority populations of overseas French locations are nonwhite (and, in the case of the department of Mayotte, Muslim). Nevertheless, the RN's active interest in challenges facing overseas France such as high living costs and undocumented immigration has recently earned it a degree of electoral success throughout these remote territories.³⁶

32 "Diplomatie et Politique Étrangère."

33 Rassemblement National, "M La France: Mon projet présidentiel," 7.

34 Front National, "Mon projet pour la France et les Français," 15.

35 Balent, *Le monde selon Marine*, 25–26.

36 Patrick Roger, "Election Présidentielle 2022: Pourquoi les Outre-Mer ont largement voté en faveur de Marine Le Pen" [Presidential Election 2022: Why the Overseas Territories Voted Largely in Favor of Marine Le Pen], *Le Monde*, April 26, 2022, https://www.lemonde.fr/election-presidentielle-2022/article/2022/04/26/election-presidentielle-2022-dans-les-outre-mer-le-choc-du-vote-le-pen_6123741_6059010.html.

Culturally, the RN wishes to mount a challenge to American soft power and the predominance of English by promoting the French language worldwide. Since the 2010s, Marine Le Pen has placed particular emphasis on the International Organisation of La Francophonie—which she accuses recent French governments of neglecting—as a “lever” by which France might spread its influence in the world. The RN’s newest policy proposals favor a “Francophone Union” for cultural, political, and even economic alignment among francophone countries, but the structure and terms for such a union remain unclear.³⁷ One cannot help but wonder, however, how a far-right party like the RN would spearhead improved cooperation within the Francophonie, nearly half of whose member states are in Africa. With its storied history of (at best) paternalistic rhetoric toward the French postcolony, its hardline approach to relations with Algeria, and its proposed policy of strong-arming countries of origin over migration, the RN can hardly pretend to aspire to a francophone community of equals. This leads to the conclusion that no community of equals is in fact *desired*. Despite its protestations and displays to the contrary, the RN clearly understands much of the francophone world similarly to how it considers overseas France: in a neocolonial light, and as instruments in service of France’s “evangelizing” mission.³⁸

From a political perspective, the RN has for decades upheld a global ideal of multipolarity with the aim of ensuring a place of prominence for the French. On the one hand, this again involves efforts to oppose American influence and contain Chinese authority; on the other hand, it implies the promotion of varying associations of countries to serve as counterweights to powerful nations. For example, while Marine Le Pen has expressed her disapproval of much of Germany’s foreign policy, she simultaneously supports the use of the German language in international bodies, such as the various organs of the EU—alongside the use of French, of course. This offer to combine forces is primarily about reducing the widespread use of English in supranational organizations, which the RN has systematically denounced as a vehicle for spreading “Anglo-Saxon neoliberalism.” Moreover, the RN has thrown its weight behind Vladimir Putin’s Russia, with an apparent design to support a Russian challenge to American hegemony and to prevent a Russian-Chinese alliance.³⁹ (This inclination toward Russia will be further developed below.)

Such proposals for a great and glorious France within a multipolar world may come across as curiously old-fashioned, and the RN itself as out of its depth. This is perhaps part-and-parcel of a far-right affinity for power politics. It also reflects the fact that this particular pillar of the RN’s globalization project has changed little since Jean-Marie Le

37 Rassemblement National, “M La France: Mon projet présidentiel,” 33.

38 Balent, *Le monde selon Marine*, 25.

39 “Diplomatie et Politique Étrangère.”

Pen held party leadership. The next aspect, however, represents more of a departure from Le Pen *père's* approach.

A Strong Hand: French State Control of Global Processes

As suggested above, Marine Le Pen has proposed to build a more interventionist state than her father did, leading to observations in the French political landscape that she has steered her party through a “social turn”—and even that the RN has espoused a left-wing social and economic policy.⁴⁰ To be clear, the RN’s core policies on immigration, its neofascist heritage, and its promotion of various forms of social stigmatization and xenophobic exclusion set it squarely apart from the French left wing. Nonetheless, the RN’s current platform also calls for a degree of *dirigisme* (state planning) and intervention not seen in France since the mid-1980s, when the socialist-led government under President François Mitterrand embraced economic liberalization measures in spite of itself. Indeed, for Le Pen *fille*, state intervention is necessary to protect French citizens from the ravages of *unbridled* globalization. As she recently noted in a National Assembly debate, “In a world in which globalization is a fact, economic patriotism and localism are political choices, choices that in effect require borders, norms, and protections—in short, regulations.”⁴¹ She and her surrogates claim such regulations would guarantee an economy in service of “the people” rather than “globalist” profiteers and faceless corporations (in a word, “the elite”).

Overlapping strongly with the notion of sovereignty, the *dirigiste* principle within the RN’s economic policy entails a heavy state presence in numerous domains caught up in international markets. In order to maintain the energy sovereignty desired by the RN, for example, the party’s platform opposes the Macron government’s planned privatization of various energy sources (such as hydraulic dams)⁴² and advocates greater state control over energy-related flows, as well as decreased dependency on European neighbors. As for international business and finance, the RN wishes to see France instate numerous protectionist measures; these include rules barring publicly subsidized companies from being sold to foreign buyers within a certain time frame, the creation of a state agency to oversee foreign investment in France, and a concerted effort to undermine European tax havens.⁴³ Regarding this last point, however, the party’s members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have shown only tepid support for intra-EU cooperation on fiscal

40 Gilles Frigoli and Gilles Ivaldi, “Still a Radical Right Movement Party? Political Opportunities, Party Strategy and the Cultural Context of the Front National in France,” in *Radical Right Movement Parties in Europe*, eds. Manuela Caiani and Ondřej Císar (New York: Routledge, 2019), 67.

41 “Marine Le Pen défend la souveraineté française à l’Assemblée nationale” [Marine Le Pen Defends French Sovereignty in the National Assembly], parliamentary speech, 2020, accessed July 27, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=os26todJhso>.

42 Rassemblement National, “M La France: Mon projet présidentiel,” 25.

43 Front National, “144 Engagements Présidentielles: Marine 2017,” 7, 12.

reporting, and several prominent RN members have themselves been accused of tax evasion in the last few years.⁴⁴

Suspicious of multilateral free trade agreements, the RN favors further protectionist action in matters of trade. An outspoken critic of the failed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP, which concerned free trade between the United States and the EU), the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA, involving Canada and the EU), and the Schengen Area, the RN's leadership has also called for protecting the French farming sector by forbidding the importation of any agricultural products that do not meet French norms. Until recently, it also wished to see France's agricultural sector (the largest in the EU) removed from the EU's Common Agricultural Policy to allow for national sovereignty over its development and production. This would involve public investment in and protection of family farming businesses, along with price controls; it also implies the promotion of local production and consumption, incidentally touted as the backbone of the RN's ecological policy.⁴⁵

The RN calls its economic approach "intelligent protectionism" and "economic patriotism," but the party's plans are more sweeping than the use of the word "intelligent" might imply. Simultaneously, to protect France's citizens from the shocks inherent in a globally interconnected economy, the RN proposes an expanded social safety net and, in particular, promises infrastructural investment and improved access to public services in rural France. When it comes to financing such a costly state-centered approach, the RN combines its far-right logic with seemingly left-of-center economics. On the one hand, it demands the exclusion of foreign nationals from various allocations and opportunities via its signature welfare chauvinist principle, "national priority"; on the other hand, it presses to make tax policy somewhat more progressive, by relieving tax burdens on younger citizens while cracking down on financial fortunes and "speculation."⁴⁶

In short, the RN's globalization project calls for a resurgence in state interference—as per the postwar, Gaullist French style—after nearly 40 years of policies in the opposite direction. This approach is likely key to the RN's growing electoral success, as we will discuss below; first, however, we will briefly explore the final pillar of this right-wing populist globalization project—that of concrete alliances.

44 Maxime Vaudano, "Elections européennes 2019: Comment le Rassemblement National vote au parlement Européen" [European Elections 2019: How the National Rally Votes in the European Parliament], *Le Monde*, May 10, 2019, https://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2019/05/10/comment-le-rassemblement-national-vote-au-parlement-europeen_5460545_4355770.html#ancre_femmes.

45 Front National, "Mon projet pour la France et les Français," 21, 14. The RN has relaxed its stance toward the EU's Common Agricultural Policy since the policy was reformed to allow member states to devise their own "national strategic plans," effective starting in 2023.

46 Front National, "Notre projet: programme politique du Front National," 7.

A National-Populist Front: France First, but Not France Alone

While the principles outlined above can be presented with relative straightforwardness, the final pillar of the RN's globalization project—that of a transnational populist front made up of like-minded stakeholders—requires more detective work to reconstruct. The RN, as noted above, has sought transnational cooperation from its earliest days, when it found inspiration in the neofascist MSI. From its origins as the weakest of fringe parties to its current status as a solid party of opposition, the RN has sought cross-border alliances. These serve, first of all, as an important means of transferring knowledge and practices, as in the case of the 1970s FN-MSI connection. Secondly, they offer mutual opportunities for asserting policy via strength in numbers and, however ironically, in diversity. Finally, they contribute to the RN's legitimacy as a party of government as well as the Le Pens' stature as potential heads of state. For these reasons and more, transnational alliances have been a consistent goal for the RN.⁴⁷

Since the FN's breakthrough in the 1984 European elections, the party has maintained a constant presence, however small, in the European Parliament; throughout this time, its leaders have been at the forefront of building cooperation with allies from other countries, particularly with the aim of forming a parliamentary group (which brings substantial financial benefits and training opportunities). Jean-Marie Le Pen stated this explicitly in 1984, even calling for a transnational movement: "We have expressed the wish to go beyond patriotism, beyond our respective feelings of national patriotism, to achieve a European patriotism."⁴⁸ To date, the RN has managed to be part of several parliamentary groups with a common interest in national sovereignty, anti-immigration policy, and (implicitly) ethnocultural identity. These attempts to band together are nonetheless characterized by fits and starts. For one thing, the RN and its allies have often lacked the necessary numbers to constitute an official group. Amusingly, these far-right politicians are also driven by a common quest for legitimacy that leads them to frequently reject one another on account of not wanting to appear too nationalistic, xenophobic, or extreme.⁴⁹

Thanks to a surge in electoral support in 2014 as well as Marine Le Pen's efforts to normalize her party (including the expulsion of her father), the FN had the MEPs and the sway to form a more lasting group, named Europe of Nations and Freedom, in 2015;⁵⁰ this group was replaced, with some continuity, by the current Identity and Democracy (ID) group following the 2019 European elections. Originally composed of nine far-right contingents from just as many member states, the ID group features a particularly strong presence from the Italian League party (Lega), followed by the RN, then (until May 2024) the German Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland); it also

47 Balent, *Le monde selon Marine*, 46, 109–110.

48 McDonnell and Werner, *International Populism*, 157.

49 McDonnell and Werner, 127.

50 Lebourg, "Les dimensions internationales du Front national," 112.

includes MEPs from the Freedom Party of Austria (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs) and the Flemish-nationalist party Flemish Interest (Vlaams Belang), among others. Interestingly, the group's shared agenda is more overtly identitarian (or concerned with promoting a particular ethnonational identity) than the RN's current national platform: key issues include an emphasis on Europe's "civilizational" (in this case, "Greco-Roman and Christian") heritage, a call for limited migration, and vehement opposition to Turkey's potential accession to the EU (an old far-right standby).⁵¹ True to its dogma, the ID group resembles a loose confederation of parties more than a cohesive oppositional force. Nonetheless, it offers its member parties legitimacy, a stronger role within the European Parliament, considerable funding and personnel, and myriad opportunities to appear as a united front representing a growing transnational movement—even a "global political wave."⁵² This last point in particular is of primary importance to the RN and other members of the ID group, several of which have toned down their Euroscepticism in favor of changing the EU from within to fit their agenda.⁵³

Beyond the European Parliament, the RN consciously promotes numerous (often superficial) shows of unity with constellations of high-level illiberal figureheads who might not work together in a more institutionalized capacity. For example, Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orbán and prominent Polish politician Jarosław Kaczyński have begun in the last few years to stage international conferences and sign mutual declarations alongside Marine Le Pen,⁵⁴ while their respective parties have not collaborated with hers in the European Parliament due to the RN's hard Euroscepticism and (in the case of Kaczyński) its long-time friendliness toward the Russian government.⁵⁵ Meanwhile, Le Pen's eager association with authoritarian politicians known to curtail individual freedoms (such as LGBTQ+ rights and access to abortion) belies the normalization strategy she has pursued in France, which has largely revolved around trumpeting her

51 Identity and Democracy, "Identity and Democracy Homepage," accessed July 27, 2023, <https://www.idgroup.eu/>.

52 McDonnell and Werner, *International Populism*, 219–220.

53 Unlike the RN, the Alternative for Germany (AfD) has pursued radicalization rather than normalization over the past decade, including the issue of EU membership. While the RN has countenanced increasingly extreme statements and policy proposals from the AfD for years, it announced the end of its association with its German partner in May 2024 amid repeated scandals surrounding AfD European election candidate Maximilian Krah. As of the last revision of this article, the future of the RN's EU alliances is unclear; however, the RN remains allied with the Freedom Party of Austria, which is very close to the AfD and similarly radical in its policy proposals and communication.

54 Jean-Baptiste Chastand et al., "L'extrême droite européenne signe une déclaration commune autour d'Orban, Salvini et Le Pen, mais sans s'unir au parlement" [The European Far Right Signs a Joint Declaration Including Orban, Salvini, and Le Pen, but Without Uniting in the Parliament], *Le Monde*, July 3, 2021, https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2021/07/03/l-extreme-droite-europeenne-signe-une-declaration-commune-autour-d-orban-salvini-et-le-pen-mais-sans-s-unir-au-parlement_6086815_3210.html.

55 McDonnell and Werner, *International Populism*, 215–217.

party's adherence to democracy and the softening of its stance on "traditional" family values.

Perhaps most notoriously, the RN has pursued a network of connections with Russian stakeholders and leadership since the 1990s, culminating in Marine Le Pen's visit to the Kremlin in 2017.⁵⁶ Much speculation has swirled around the nature of this RN-Russia network, the initial impetus for which was probably ideological. Inspired by geostrategic (anti-globalist, anti-American) and "civilizational" (white European, Christian) affinities, the FN quickly took to identitarian notions of an idealized, pan-European confederation of sovereign nations, "from the Atlantic to the Urals."⁵⁷ This vague rhetorical association eventually evolved into more concrete cooperation, namely in the form of a Russian bank loan worth 9.4 million euros to the FN in 2014, a deal orchestrated by a Kremlin-affiliated advisor. Along with initial information about the loan, the investigative journal *Mediapart* revealed documents hinting at a possible quid pro quo through which the FN would defend the Kremlin's interests in the European Parliament and in media interviews.⁵⁸ Definitive proof of such a trade-off has not been unearthed, but the RN and its leadership have defended Putin and his foreign policy with remarkable constancy (though the backlash following the Russian invasion of Ukraine has forced them to adjust their rhetoric). This has included interventions by Le Pen and her associates in the National Assembly; for example, she has used her position in the Commission of Foreign Affairs to argue against anti-Russian sanctions on behalf of targeted lawmakers, while her deputy Louis Aliot, in the Commission of Defense, has championed the Russian intervention in Syria.⁵⁹ In the European Parliament, meanwhile, the RN's detachment of MEPs has the voting record to reflect its reputation as

56 Isabelle Mandraud, "Vladimir Poutine adoube Marine Le Pen au Kremlin" [Vladimir Putin Honors Marine Le Pen in the Kremlin], *Le Monde*, March 25, 2017, https://www.lemonde.fr/election-presidentielle-2017/article/2017/03/25/vladimir-poutine-adoube-marine-le-pen-au-kremlin_5100725_4854003.html.

57 Le Pen, *Pour que vive la France*, 225.

58 Agathe Duparc, Antton Rouget, and Marine Turchi, "La vraie histoire du financement russe de Le Pen" [The True Story of Le Pen's Russian Funding], *Mediapart*, May 2, 2017, <https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/france/020517/la-vraie-histoire-du-financement-russe-de-le-pen>.

59 "Commission Des Affaires Étrangères: La Russie et sa politique extérieure: Mme Hélène Carrère d'Encausse de l'Académie Française" [Foreign Affairs Committee: Russia and Its Foreign Policy: Ms. Hélène Carrère d'Encausse of the French Academy], parliamentary commission session, 2018, accessed July 27, 2023, https://videos.assemblee-nationale.fr/video.5591954_5a8d32f8779df.commission-des-affaires-etrangees-la-russie-et-sa-politique-exterieure-mme-helene-carrere-denc-21-fevrier-2018; *Commission de La Défense: "La Russie: ennemie, rivale, ou partenaire?"* [Defense Commission: "Russia: Enemy, Rival, or Partner?"], parliamentary commission session, 2019, accessed July 27, 2023, https://videos.assemblee-nationale.fr/video.8507407_5de68b31a4865.commission-de-la-defense-la-russie-ennemie-rivale-ou-partenaire--3-decembre-2019.

one of the body's most accommodating contingents when it comes to matters involving Russia.⁶⁰

Finally, key members of the RN have, in an uneven fashion, maintained ties with far-right movements outside of the realm of electoral politics, such as the French New Right (Nouvelle Droite), the American Alt-Right, and the pan-European Identitarian Movement, indicating their receptiveness to transnational identitarianism. While the Le Pens themselves have largely avoided direct connections with such groups, they have nonetheless espoused ideas associated with them, such as the notion of pan-European nationalism or the white nationalist "great replacement" theory.⁶¹ The RN's current president, Jordan Bardella, is demonstrably partial to this stream of sanitized white supremacist thought.⁶² Speaking at a Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC, run by the American Conservative Union) in Budapest in 2022, Bardella touched on numerous identitarian talking points, warning of "a prolonged deficit in [European] births counterbalanced by a flood of migrants" and insisting on the importance of keeping "peoples" separate and distinct.⁶³ In this same vein, the RN applied to former Trump strategist and Alt-Right figurehead Steve Bannon for counsel in 2018, during Bannon's tour across Europe to build a "nationalist international." Invited to speak at an RN congress, Bannon called on party members to wear accusations of racism and xenophobia "as a badge of honor" and was enthusiastically received by Marine Le Pen and the congress participants.⁶⁴ Insinuations of Bannon's interference in the RN's

60 Benjamin Fox, "Far-Right and Left Most pro-Kremlin in EU Parliament, Data Finds," *Euractiv*, June 24, 2022, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/far-right-and-left-most-pro-kremlin-in-eu-parliament-data-finds/>.

61 The "great replacement" conspiracy theory holds that elite stakeholders are actively seeking to "replace" white European and American populations by encouraging high levels of (nonwhite) immigration. More so than within the RN, the notion of a "great replacement" features heavily in the discourse of extreme-right agitator and 2022 presidential candidate Éric Zemmour. See Steve Rose, "A Deadly Ideology: How the 'Great Replacement Theory' Went Mainstream," *The Guardian*, June 8, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/08/a-deadly-ideology-how-the-great-replacement-theory-went-mainstream>.

62 Ivonne Trippenbach, "Jordan Bardella, l'héritier de Marine Le Pen qui cherche à imprimer sa marque identitaire" [Jordan Bardella, the Heir of Marine Le Pen Who Is Trying to Make His Identitarian Mark], *Le Monde*, June 7, 2022, https://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2022/06/07/jordan-bardella-l-heritier-de-marine-le-pen-qui-cherche-a-imprimer-sa-marque-identitaire_6129158_823448.html.

63 Jordan Bardella, "Discours de Jordan Bardella lors de La CPAC de Budapest" [Speech by Jordan Bardella at the CPAC in Budapest], speech (Conservative Political Action Conference, Budapest, May 20, 2022), accessed July 27, 2023, <https://rassemblementnational.fr/discours/discours-de-jordan-bardella-lors-de-la-cpac-de-budapest>.

64 Steve Bannon, "Discours de Stephen Bannon" [Speech by Stephen Bannon], speech (16th Congress of FN, Lille, March 10, 2018), accessed July 27, 2023, <https://rassemblementnational.fr/discours/16eme-congres-du-fn-discours-de-stephen-bannon>.

European election campaign, however, caused RN leadership to quickly distance itself from him.⁶⁵

Now that we have briefly explored the many ways that the RN seeks to shape, harness, and influence global processes, including its obvious interest in developing transnational networks, we will end this chapter by discussing common points between this French right-wing populist globalization project and other globalization projects.

Overlapping Globalization Projects

The analysis above highlights a far-right populist agenda regarding globalization, which (selectively) exalts sovereign peoples and nations over supranational entities; offers France a privileged place in a multipolar world, particularly in defiance of American hegemony; subjects various economic flows to state control; and seeks to build alliances between like-minded stakeholders. While standing as a critique of the “liberal” globalization project pursued by the mainstream government (and outlined in the introduction to this chapter), this far-right, populist agenda undoubtedly samples from and shares features with other globalization projects.

Beginning on the far-right end of the spectrum, we can clearly find in this globalization project the influence of the French New Right and various identitarian movements, though such an association would not be publicly touted by the RN’s leadership. (Indeed, it also would not be publicized by New Right *maître-penseur* and philosopher Alain de Benoist, who has always looked upon the RN with disdain.⁶⁶) While the New Right is in essence an elitist intellectual movement that experienced its heyday in the late 1970s, many of its tenets with regard to the “global” clearly hold weight with the populist RN: the value of a pan-European nationalism, driven by a sense of continental ethnocultural belonging in the face of the invading “other”; deep-seated suspicion toward the United States as the “chief purveyor” of economic liberalism, modernism, and multiculturalism; admiration for Russia as a like-minded, antiglobalist ally and counterweight to the United States; and the right to preserve all cultures from the “harmful” effects of “hybridization” through immigration (called the “right to difference” or “ethnopluralism”). Numerous scholars have accused the New Right of disguising neofascist ideas to make them more “respectable,” and these ideas have indeed found new salience with reemerging far-right groups.⁶⁷ Since the 2010s, the New Right has been a key

65 Nicole Winfield, “France’s Le Pen Distances Herself from Bannon’s Movement,” *AP News*, October 8, 2018, <https://apnews.com/article/73d0834b538448a3892ea7e89698b94d>.

66 Simon Blin, “Alain de Benoist, faiseur de droites” [Alain de Benoist, Maker of the Rights], *Libération*, November 28, 2019, https://www.liberation.fr/debats/2019/11/28/alain-de-benoist-faiseur-de-droites_1766127/.

67 Razmig Keucheyan, “Alain de Benoist, du néofascisme à l’extrême droite ‘respectable.’ Enquête sur une success story intellectuelle” [Alain De Benoist, from Neofascism to the “Respectable” Far Right: An Investigation into an Intellectual Success Story], *Revue Du Crieur* 6, no. 1 (2017): 132, 134, 136.

influence for the American Alt-Right, the French extremist organization Generation Identity (Génération Identitaire, banned in 2021⁶⁸), and the German Identitarian Movement (Identitäre Bewegung), just as its principles are reflected in much of the RN's global-facing policy.

Beyond these far-right associations and as part of its normalization strategy, the RN has broadly declared itself the defender of the agenda espoused by former French president Charles de Gaulle, contemporary France's defining leader. Readers may note a fundamental contradiction in this comparison, as the FN and related far-right militant groups emerged precisely *in opposition* to de Gaulle and his foreign policy; Jean-Marie Le Pen and the FN's early rank-and-file ferociously resented the general for what they viewed as an "abandonment" of French Algeria. Today, however, Marine Le Pen constantly lays claim to the Gaullist heritage. Though this appropriation points to her opportunism and suggests yet another confusing paradox, the RN has likely found some inspiration in the Gaullist agenda, a fact that has been noted by several scholars of the French far right.⁶⁹ This impact is manifested, for example, in the RN's proposal to partially withdraw from NATO (an exact copy of de Gaulle's 1966 actions⁷⁰), in its approach to multipolarity and *grandeur*, and in its interest in an interventionist, Gaullist-style economy. Nonetheless, the RN's reactionary agenda and cult of the nation clash with de Gaulle's pragmatism and embrace of modernity.⁷¹

Beyond Marine Le Pen's "pivot" to seemingly occupy left-wing socioeconomic territory, she and her father have also proven perfectly willing to appropriate left-wing talking points and draw comparisons when politically expedient, claiming their party to be "neither right- nor left-wing."⁷² Indeed, despite crucial differences, the RN's globalization project shares a number of common features with the global agenda of the French left wing. Opposition to increased EU integration (for various reasons) has inadvertently united the interests of the far right and far left against the mainstream for decades, beginning with the 1992 Maastricht Treaty referendum (which was barely

68 Franck Johannès, "La dissolution de Génération Identitaire confirmée par le Conseil d'Etat" [The Dissolution of Génération Identitaire Confirmed by the Council of State], *Le Monde*, May 4, 2021, https://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2021/05/04/le-conseil-d-etat-confirme-la-dissolution-de-generation-identitaire_6079089_823448.html.

69 Franck Orban, "Le Lepéno-Gaullisme: nouvel avatar du Front National?" [Lepéno-Gaullisme: New Avatar of the National Front?], in *Language and Nation: Crossroads and Connections*, eds. Guri Ellen Barstad et al. (Münster: Waxmann Verlag, 2016), 78–79, <http://www.absp.be/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Offprint-Orban.pdf>; Balent, *Le monde selon Marine*, 117–118.

70 Orban, "Le Lepéno-Gaullisme," 78.

71 Sylvano Aromatorio, "Gaullisme et Extrême Droite: L'impossible amalgame" [Gaullism and the Far Right: The Impossible Amalgamation], *Revue Française d'histoire Des Idées Politiques* 51 (2020): 239.

72 Dominique Albertini, "Au Front National, Le 'ni Droite, Ni Gauche,' Jusqu'à quand ?" [How Long Will the National Front Be "Neither Right Nor Left"?], *Libération*, May 8, 2017, https://www.liberation.fr/politiques/2017/05/08/au-front-national-le-ni-droite-ni-gauche-jusqu-a-quand_1568032/.

approved by French voters) and continuing through the 2005 referendum for a European Constitution (which was rejected). This has given rise to a common academic and journalistic observation that the French political landscape is divided not only into left- and right-wing camps but also into globalist and sovereigntist camps.⁷³ With regard to EU integration, the notion of *souverainisme* (sovereigntism) has enjoyed tremendous success in France, well beyond the RN; since the 1990s, numerous high-profile figures from across the spectrum have emerged touting a *souverainiste* (sovereigntist) perspective vis-à-vis the EU, from the former Socialist Party minister Jean-Pierre Chevènement⁷⁴ to far-right ideologues like Nicolas Dupont-Aignan and Éric Zemmour⁷⁵ (all of them presidential candidates at various points in time). Beyond a common interest in sovereignty on the national level, left-wing stakeholders like Jean-Luc Mélenchon's France Unbowed (considered by numerous scholars to be a populist movement in its own right⁷⁶) share the RN's antagonism toward austerity measures or economically liberalizing policies handed down by EU bodies; on the other hand, France Unbowed diverges completely from the RN when it comes to migration, energy policy, and the prospect of EU enlargement, among numerous other issues.⁷⁷

Furthermore, the RN shares a number of ideas and policies in common with both far-right and far-left politicians when it comes to foreign alliances, with a general distrust of the United States as an allegedly neoliberal, imperialist, and overbearing partner chief among them. Highly critical of the more Atlanticist attitude embraced by presidents Nicolas Sarkozy, François Hollande, and (to a lesser degree) Emmanuel Macron, figures

73 Sophie Meunier, "France's Double-Talk on Globalization," *French Politics, Culture & Society* 21, no. 1 (2003): 27.

74 Gérard Grunberg, "Présidentielle 2022: Tous souverainistes!" [Presidential 2022: All Sovereigntists!], online review, *telos*, February 8, 2021, <https://www.telos-eu.com/fr/politique-francaise-et-internationale/presidentielle-2022-tous-souverainistes.html>.

75 "Présidentielle. Dupont-Aignan veut une 'primaire' souverainiste avec Marine Le Pen et Eric Zemmour" [Presidential: Dupont-Aignan Wants a Sovereigntist "Primary" with Marine Le Pen and Eric Zemmour], *Ouest-France*, January 20, 2020, <https://www.ouest-france.fr/politique/nicolas-dupont-aignan/presidentielle-dupont-aignan-veut-une-primaire-souverainiste-avec-marine-le-pen-et-eric-zemmour-6698297>.

76 Paolo Chiochetti, "'Make Way for the People!' Left-Wing Populism in the Rhetoric of Jean-Luc Mélenchon's 2012 and 2017 Presidential Campaigns," in *Left Radicalism and Populism in Europe* (London: Routledge, 2019), 106–128; Jacob Hamburger, "Whose Populism? The Mixed Messages of La France Insoumise," *Dissent* 65, no. 3 (2018): 101–110.

77 See, e. g., La France Insoumise, "L'avenir en commun, en Europe aussi ! Programme de La France Insoumise pour les élections européennes 2019" [A Shared Future, in Europe Too! Platform of La France Insoumise for the 2019 European Elections], 10, 33, <https://lafranceinsoumise.fr/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/ProgrammeEurope-A5.pdf>. Since 2023, support for Israel has also come to the fore as a stark difference in the foreign policy espoused by Le Pen and Mélenchon. Seeking to whitewash its antisemitic past, the RN has portrayed itself as an advocate for the Israeli government's wartime policy and actions, while Mélenchon's France Unbowed has doubled down on its position in the pro-Palestinian camp.

like Mélenchon, Zemmour, and Dupont-Aignan have joined Le Pen *filles* in leaning in the direction of closer ties with Russia. Whether motivated by a desire to befriend a powerful, authoritarian regime with a Christian heritage to counterbalance the United States (as in the case of certain far-right politicians) or by a post-Soviet sympathy for Russia and its people (as displayed on the left), these politicians have steadfastly pressed for better economic and political ties with Russia.⁷⁸ (This position has been rendered ambiguous for these politicians by the Russian invasion of Ukraine in early 2022; in the case of Le Pen, she has strongly condemned the invasion, yet she has also opposed sanctions against Russia and denounced what she calls the “dangerous bellicose stances” assumed by the EU.⁷⁹)

The comparisons to French globalization projects do not stop with politicians of the past or out of the mainstream. Indeed, the global agenda promoted by the RN shares some commonalities with those of many contemporary French leaders. For example, Jacques Chirac and Dominique de Villepin’s outspoken opposition to the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 was commended by Marine Le Pen;⁸⁰ numerous French governments have gone to extraordinary lengths to protect and promote the French language, from laws to limit English usage in the public and private sectors to Macron’s recent call for the post-Brexit EU to cease using English as its main working language;⁸¹ and several recent presidents—such as Mitterrand, Chirac, and Hollande—have promised to increase or maintain economic regulations and protections in the face of global markets. However, these leaders have also found that their politics are embedded in a broader context that prevents unilateral French action. In recent decades, French governments have increasingly embraced the importance of a strong EU to allow for a strong France. They have sought to modernize the French economy and welfare state to maintain a competitive edge and have endeavored (unevenly) to contend with France’s colonial history. They have also, for the most part, recognized and promoted the liberal international order.

In response to what they claim is complacency at best and sabotage at worst, the Le Pens and their surrogates have promised to disrupt this relative political continuity by placing a particular understanding of French identity and the French nation-state above all else. The globalization project they are offering is, in many ways, reactionary—an

78 Guillaume Lagane, “Présidentielle Française : ces candidats qui conduiraient une politique ‘pro-Russe’” [French Presidential: These Candidates Who Would Conduct a “Pro-Russian” Policy], *The Conversation*, October 19, 2021, <https://theconversation.com/presidentielle-francaise-ces-candidats-qui-conduiraient-une-politique-pro-russe-169333>.

79 Clément Guillou, “Sur la guerre en Ukraine, le RN critique toujours l’Europe” [On the War in Ukraine: The RN Still Criticizes Europe], *Le Monde*, October 2, 2022, https://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2022/10/02/sur-la-guerre-en-ukraine-le-rn-critique-toujours-l-europe_6144058_823448.html.

80 Le Pen, *Pour que vive la France*, 37.

81 Jeremy Ahearne, “Emmanuel Macron and the Reprojection of the French Language,” *Modern & Contemporary France* 30, no. 3 (2022): 263.

attempt to return to “the good old days” of France’s postwar period of growth, the Trente Glorieuses—and fanciful, as the RN undoubtedly lacks both the means and the personnel to bring it to fruition. It is nonetheless a powerful critique in the national imaginary, especially amid a widespread sense of national decline, and thus holds appeal for voters from across the political spectrum.

Conclusion

As we have seen, the French populist far right, best embodied by the RN, has its own plan for navigating an interconnected world; in the words of Marine Le Pen, “The nation is the only credible response to globalization.”⁸² Although one might assume that a national-populist party like the RN is simply opposed to globalization or bent on complete national withdrawal, it is in fact committed to engaging with globalizing processes of all kinds. Indeed, this has been the case since the FN’s inception, which was directly linked to the postwar collapse of the French colonial empire. Historian Nicolas Lebourg even goes so far as to posit that a global-facing agenda is at the very heart of the far-right’s existence: “The extreme right is, above all, a vision of the world.”⁸³

This brief chapter can only offer a limited overview of the RN’s globalization project and its evolution, especially with regard to the party’s numerous and multilayered transnational connections. A deeper analysis, one that would also take into account the party’s combative approach toward postcolonial memory politics as well as transnational debates on ethnic and religious discrimination, would help to further flesh out the French far-right populist agenda vis-à-vis global processes. Research in this vein can improve scholars’ understanding and anticipation of the growing challenge to “globalization” as we know it, both in France and beyond.

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⁸² Le Pen, *Pour que vive la France*, 174.

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