

***Egalité, complémentarité et solidarité: the politics of Francophonie and development aid to culture in francophone Africa***

by

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own work and that appropriate credit has been made to the work of others.

## Abstract

**'ÉGALITÉ, COMPLÉMENTARITÉ ET SOLIDARITÉ': THE POLITICS OF FRANCOPHONIE AND DEVELOPMENT AID TO CULTURE IN FRANCOPHONE AFRICA'. (PHD). ANTONY WALSH, DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH, UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS, SEPTEMBER 1999.**

Despite a discourse claiming that French cultural aid (*coopération culturelle*) to former sub-Saharan colonies was an essential part of a largely disinterested project, it was in fact subject to political pressures concerned with maintaining French great power status and African elite access to French education. By exploring both the ambiguities of the discourse of Francophonie, and its institutional forms, I show that the relations it promoted did not for most of the period considered alter those created in the immediate years after independence in France's colonies.

Starting with an overview of French colonial policies (Chapter One) I consider how they reflected the underlying assumptions of assimilation, association and the *mission civilisatrice*, before assessing the importance of educational factors in decolonisation (Chapter Two). Although the debates over colonial theory were of limited significance in application, the provision of colonial education was sufficient to create a French cultural sphere of influence permitting close relations between French and African elites. The most significant sign of this was the ambiguous concept of francophonie defined by Léopold Senghor.

Part Two confronts discourses of *coopération culturelle* with policy implementation. Ministry archives reveal that political priorities were not always compatible with a universalist discourse portraying French to be a language for the masses. The comprehensive sectors of French *coopération culturelle* reveal a dependency relationship that France could, however, never totally control. This is illustrated through the example of French aid to the Ivory Coast.

Part Three studies how the concept of Francophonie developed into an international organisation to unite French-speaking states and communities for cultural and political dialogue. Despite various projects, including one proposed by the post-colonial African grouping OCAM<sup>1</sup>, France made few concessions to established patterns of bilateral relations and suspected Canada of seeking to usurp France in its traditional sphere of influence (*pré-carré*). When the initial organisation was reformed the underlying rivalries and suspicions amongst its main funders made it difficult to establish a clear function for this form of diplomatic interaction.

Part Four considers the wider questions of the role of French and language planning for African languages together with the 'cultural dimension of development'. This section assesses why the inclusion of African culture in development has been rejected. Political and economic reasons have dominated African approaches to this question until recently, when there has been a realisation that states cannot continue to deny their multicultural and multilingual heritage without jeopardising long-term sustainable development.

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<sup>1</sup> *Organisation commune africaine et malgache*

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## Abbreviations

ACCT, *Agence de coopération culturelle et technique.*

ACP, *Africa Carribean Pacific*

AEF, *Afrique équatoriale française.*

AOF, *Afrique occidentale française.*

AUPELF(-UREF), *Association des universités partiellement ou entièrement de langue française (Universités en réseaux d'expression française).*

BIL, *Bureau international des langues*

CAC, *Centre des archives contemporaines (Fontainebleau)*

CAEF, *Conseil audiovisuel extérieure de la France*

CAPES, *Certificat d'aptitude de professoriat à l'enseignement secondaire*

CFA, *Communauté financière africaine*

CFI, *Canal France international.*

CIA, *Central intelligence agency*

CILF, *Conseil international de la langue française.*

CIP, *Conseil international de préparation.*

CIRELFA, *Conseil international de recherche en linguistique fondamentale et appliquée*

CIS, *Comité international de suivi*

CNN, *Cable News Network*

CONFESJES, *Conférence francophone de jeunesse et des sports*

CONFEMEN, *Conférence des ministères de l'éducation nationale*

CPF, *Conseil permanent de la Francophonie*

DITAV, *Délégation interministérielle aux techniques audiovisuelles*

EAM, *Etats africains et malgache.*

EEC, European Economic Community.

FFF, Free French Forces

FICTAD, *Fonds international de coopération technique et d'aide au développement*

FIDELCA, *Fonds international pour le développement des langues et civilisations africaines*

FPI, *Français populaire ivoirien*

GATT, General agreement on tariffs and trade.

GDP, Gross Domestic Product

GNP, Gross National Product

GPRA, *Gouvernement provisoire républicain algérien*

IEDES, *Institut d'études du développement économique social*

ILAA, *Institut de linguistique appliquée d'Abidjan*

INA, *Institut national de l'audiovisuel*

IOM, *Indépendents d'outre-mer*

IRFED, *Institut de recherches et de formation en vue de développement*

OAMCE, *Organisation commune africaine et malgache économique*

OAU, Organisation for African unity.

OCAM, *Organisation commune africaine et malgache.*

OCORA, *Office de coopération radiophonique*

OECD, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

RDA, *Rassemblement démocratique africain*

SEDES, *Société d'études pour le développement*

SFIO, *Section française de l'internationale ouvrière*

SORAFOM, *Société radiophonique de la France outre-mer*

UAM, *Union africaine et malgache.*

UDI, Universal declaration of independence

UEAC, *Union des états d'Afrique centrale*

UN, United Nations

UNESCO, United nations educational, scientific and cultural organisation.

## Introduction

### *Egalité, complémentarité et solidarité: the politics of Francophonie and development aid to culture in francophone Africa*<sup>1</sup>

This introduction is in two sections. In the first section of the introduction, I give a synopsis of the thesis's parts and chapters. In the second, I consider the essential concepts that I will be studying, notably **Francophonie**, development aid which, when discussed in a French context, will refer mostly to policies labelled *coopération* and **culture**. This study will concentrate on the discourse accompanying these relations brought about by these policies and the motivations of the institutions used to pursue them in France's relations with the francophone states of sub-Saharan Africa.

The values of 'Egalité, complémentarité, solidarité' that were employed as the founding principles of the *Agence de coopération culturelle et technique* (the first inter-governmental francophone organisation) in 1969 highlight the latent high ideals that were said to cement the various French-speaking states, countries and communities. 'Egalité' was the principle that all participants were equal in the community. 'Complémentarité' was intended to describe how French should be seen in relation to other cultures. Finally, 'Solidarité' recognised that the new community was a framework for the more economically affluent members to help those requiring assistance.<sup>2</sup> Beyond these values, the three part devise is symbolic of a French Republican cultural reference point ('liberté, égalité, fraternité') which for all its universalist heritage can make scant claims to be any less culturally neutral than any other political slogan. An important issue



in this thesis will be to consider the extent to which Francophonie and *coopération culturelle* have been free of narrow political interests.

The thesis will start by situating French cultural policies in an historical perspective. In Part One, I will consider the attitudes and motivations that successive French governments attached to education policies in the colonies in the period prior to independence in 1960. In Chapter One I will study the notions of 'assimilation' and 'association' in an attempt to ascertain the circumstances in which the French language became an important aspect of the identity of France's African possessions. Historians have characterised French colonialism as being initially dominated by to the principle of 'assimilation' in order to make conquered peoples into copies of Frenchmen. When this failed and France accepted that many cultural differences made this a near-impossible task, the principle of 'association' was adopted that intended to give a greater respect and accommodation to cultural and religious differences. I argue that neither fully explain French colonial policy.

By exploring the practices of assimilation and association and colonial policies we can gain a valuable insight into the conceptual and institutional nature of francophonie. Despite the efforts of missionary workers to inculcate a small number of Africans with a rudimentary knowledge of French, it was in the period of the Third Republic that the idea of francophonie became significant for it was in this period that systematic education policies was first developed for the French colonies. After 1870, although economic and military pressures for colonial conquest remained significant, French

leaders such as Prime Minister Jules Ferry, would place much emphasis on the *mission civilisatrice* as the guiding principle behind colonialism. The *mission civilisatrice* was the term given to the sense of duty that France reputedly fulfilled by pursuing her colonial policies for the general advancement of man-kind. This was the major context within which francophonie becomes a significant colonial tool, and language (in particular) are then seen more clearly as ideological weapons. I will challenge the assumption that France then pursued purely assimilationist policies by the blanket imposition of French cultural norms. In fact, colonial governors exercised a large degree of autonomy in their implementation of policy and their ambitions and achievements varied enormously. The policy of association at the end of the nineteenth century was evidence that the tendency towards an assimilationist approach had not been a success. I will consider the contributions of various French academics whose influential works shaped important shifts in attitudes about non-Western peoples in the nineteenth century.

In Chapter Two, I will look at the change in the attitude of African elites that accelerated after the Second World War. The years immediately after 1945 saw further developments in colonial policies and discourse. Even before the Second World War had ended, French colonial administrators were attempting to give colonial policies a new direction that would stave off a rapid decolonisation. I will consider ideas for a possible 'French Commonwealth' which would allow for close links between the colonies and France to persist within a greater degree of political autonomy. The British Commonwealth provided a model for the French colonies firstly as framework for greater self-government and then later as a form of post-colonial grouping, Although

determined nationalist groups demanding full independence existed, the African political elite's participation in colonial policy making within the French political system left its mark on decolonisation. Some African politicians were even ministers within the French government. This second chapter will examine the theories and beliefs of Léopold Senghor. Senghor saw francophonie as both a cultural and a political ideal. Culturally, he believed in francophonie as a complementary meeting or *métissage* of cultures around French. His conviction in the inherent qualities of French brought him to argue that the resolution of political conflicts with France could be resolved through culture rather than immediate independence. Later, his ambitions for a francophone consultative organisation sought to subtly alter patterns of France's post-colonial relations.

In Part Two, I will consider the patterns of *coopération culturelle et technique* in France's former colonies. This aid has maintained some of the most significant institutional and cultural ties between France and francophone African states in the post-colonial era. These ties were nearly all bilateral, meaning that France made agreements and dealt with them on a one-to-one basis in contrast to a multilateral approach involving shared responsibility and decision making. It will be important here to place these cultural ties in the context of overall aid policies with France's former colonies. In the course of studying *coopération culturelle*, I will consider both publicly available documents on government policy and those found in the *Ministère de la Coopération's* archives covering the period 1959-1980. The section has two parts: the first considering the evolution of policies up until 1970 with the second covering the period 1970-1995.

Many assume that France's perception of her former colonies was simply as potential francophone clients who would be vectors of a French inspired vision of the world once the language had permeated beyond a limited elite. The post-colonial cultural relationship was not merely a lever for establishing economic advantages but also had political and strategic implications. As part of my evidence I show that the departments involved in the administration of *coopération culturelle* at the Rue Monsieur (the address of the *Ministère de la Coopération*) were concerned at the lack of evolution in policies to allow a more effective spread of French in the African masses since it seemed that they only continued to serve the interests of a relatively narrow elite. Furthermore, the attitudes of those working in these services still reflect aspects of an expansive Republican discourse that expresses its disdain at being employed for explicitly political or commercial ends.

I will consider the evolution in France's aid relations within two important periods. The first was in the early 1970s when many African politicians expressed a general disenchantment with the results and patterns of North-South relations in the first decade of development. Furthermore, the pressures of African nationalist movements in many states were influential in questioning many of France's assumptions regarding the implementation of *coopération*. The second important period was the late 1980s until the 1990s when the political effects of the end of the Cold War, and at the same time the change in France's position as a dominant stabilising power in francophone Africa, fundamentally altered the terms of the aid relationship.

Part Two also considers the various sectors of *coopération culturelle*. True to France's enlightenment discourse, education received the largest expenditure. Other aspects of *coopération* such as support to the media, both modern and traditional, French cultural centres and the development of African cultures form a diverse array of activities. These policies reflected a traditional conception of France's role and showed an aversion to a cultural presence perceived as simple propaganda.

Part Three considers the emergence of Francophonie as a system of institutional structures taking the French language as an important starting point for multilateral relations. A fundamental issue will be to ascertain whether political issues have dominated over cultural concerns. My study considers the official documents which have been produced by francophone institutions. This part of the thesis will consider the place of francophone Africa within the institutions of Francophonie and its discourse will concern. Are the cultural issues of Francophonie, ultimately of secondary importance to the politics that dominate the francophone edifice? I consider the institutional history of Francophonie and its policies in two periods. The first is from 1966 until 1986 when there was an intensification of efforts by African leaders to implement francophone structures granted by France (albeit in a limited manner) from 1969. In consequence, Francophonie has always been closely related to the theme of solidarity and development in terms close to those that justify French bilateral development aid. From 1969 until 1986 the *Agence de coopération culturelle et technique* was the main multilateral body concerned with promoting a francophone cultural and linguistic community.

The second significant period is from 1986 until 1995. During this period the heads of state summit was the main framework for representing francophone governments and communities and the formulation of common policies. Some six summits occurred in the period under consideration, of which two were in Africa. Through examining the institutions of Francophonie, I will seek to show the complexity of the issues and strategies which arose from the instigation of a community of French speakers. Often the issues motivating those concerned were not related to the larger cultural questions being defined by France. What discourses emerged from African leaders to define the post-colonial place of French and African cultures? I will consider the extent that the institutions of Francophonie were merely an expansion of the sphere of bilateral relations and involved a conservative vision of the role that culture could play in development and in international relations.

In Part Four (Chapter Seven), I will consider alternative models and principles for cultural development including theories of language planning and the uses of African languages. At independence, many African politicians and economic planners claimed that the use of French, as with other European languages in post-colonial Africa was the only practical means of communication in countries where it was one of the few symbols of national unity that existed. Was it for practical or political reasons that local languages were rejected? Should we see the cultural imbalance present in Francophonie as resulting from the dominant weight of French and political elite interests so that the colonial cultural status quo went unchallenged?

Chapter Eight starts with an examination of how the social sciences have defined culture. I then go on to consider how the idea of culture is reflected in the concept of development. This chapter will consider how the issue of the ‘cultural dimension of development’ has developed in such multilateral organisations as UNESCO and the EEC as well as how other countries such as Holland, with different bilateral agendas, have sought to incorporate the idea of culture into their aid programmes.

I conclude by arguing that both Francophonie and *coopération culturelle* have been influenced by particular ways of seeing the relationship between the former colony and the ex-metropole. These have stressed the heritage of past relations in affective and inclusive terms. For political and strategic interests, maintaining this aspect of relations has helped France to keep a status and advantages unrelated to usual indicators of influence in international relations.

Let us now consider some of the main concepts treated in the thesis. The first is that of the idea of development aid known as ‘**coopération**’. The term ‘coopération’ has two important meanings in the context of international relations. According to the *Robert* dictionary, it is firstly a ‘politique d’entente et d’échange culturels, économiques ou scientifiques entre Etats de niveau de développement comparable’. Yet is also a ‘politique par laquelle un pays apporte sa contribution au développement de nations moins développées.’

In the period 1958 to 1972, France signed over 130 agreements, of which thirty-four were with sub-Saharan African governments.<sup>3</sup> It is these 'accords de coopération' that form the legal foundations for examining the specific form of 'coopération'. These will be explained in Part Two.

A typology offered by the political scientist Maurice Flory, extends the nuances and ambiguities of the term 'coopération'.<sup>4</sup> He notes that politicians and government officials use it indiscriminately. He argues that it can, on the one hand, refer to a contractual intervention in one or many specific areas with the intention of reducing inequalities and providing essential services (alternatively referred to as 'assistance' or 'aide'). This is a relatively neutral sense, used by most states that have aid policies. On the other hand, in a more specific sense, the term refers to the entirety of French government structures and policy initiatives dealing with countries receiving assistance, whether they be for development, strategic or commercial interests. This use of *coopération* has referred to the institutionally complex array of ministries, advisors and state supported organisations that have formed networks in many different sectors.

This lack of distinction found in many official documents describing relations between states with a similar economic status and those of unequally developed 'partners' highlights the special status that France reserves for her former colonies. This is the basis for the most frequent criticisms of France's policy of 'coopération', seeing it as a subtle form of neo-colonialism masked by the belief that France incarnates universalist values that overcome cultural and historical differences. This is the criticism made by the



journalist Tibor Mende and by the pressure group CEDETIM who argue that decolonisation dictated by France's terms has been another form of imperialist domination.<sup>5</sup> France's *coopération* policies reveal that the interests of the developing world are systematically placed second to those of the industrial world's pursuit of economic exploitation.

Paul Cadenat refutes the accusations of those who accuse France of these calculated interests by arguing France's relations are characterised by reciprocity.<sup>6</sup> In other terms, France gains certain advantages that it repays in indirect ways. The criticisms of African specialists de Gorce and Corbett have shifted attention to the highly complex institutional ties existing between France and Africa.<sup>7</sup> They move away from a blanket criticism of this aid that is provided by the former colonial powers to draw attention to the historical context of French aid. De Gorce argues that France's and Africa's political classes gain mutual benefits from this relationship facilitated by the institutions of the French Fifth Republic. For Corbett, the promise of a socio-cultural ascendancy for African elites brought by an access to French educational structures has been the main motivation for such a close association after independence.<sup>8</sup> All three agree that relations can only be fully appreciated by understanding the historical traditions from which they emerged. These traditions are France's colonial past and the Republican conception of the nation's historical role in the world. Although they use historical reasons to avoid accusing France of neo-colonialism, the ties that they depict constitute the factors that Johan Galtung has identified in support of dependency theory.<sup>9</sup>

For Jean Leca, professor at the *Institut d'études politiques* of Paris, the discourse created by *coopération* is evidence of a 'système symbolique'.<sup>10</sup> He argues that the pursuit of an ideological system and the propagation of a value-laden discourse are ends in themselves in parallel with actual aid policies. He gives us an interesting hypothesis that French political leaders and policy makers, promoting *coopération*, have taken the opportunity to pursue a certain historical image of France. The archetypal representation of this image of France is present in the 1964 report by the French diplomat Jean-Marcel Jeanneney, on behalf of the French government. In it he clearly sets out a hierarchy of the motivations underlying 'coopération' where a sense of moral duty to former French colonies and a mission of 'rayonnement' are more important than simple economic interests.<sup>11</sup>

Speaking as Prime Minister of France in 1964, Georges Pompidou was not afraid to justify France's policy of *coopération* as providing a certain continuity with colonial policies rather than a significant rupture: 'en fin de compte, et pour l'essentiel la politique de coopération est la suite de l'expansion de l'Europe au XIXe siècle, qui s'est marquée par la création des empires coloniaux.'<sup>12</sup>

This view suggests that French values are intact after decolonisation. As such, much of the public discourse has featured such terms as 'solidarité', 'complémentarité' and 'réciprocité'.<sup>13</sup> The values that 'coopération' carries show that even if it may superficially be termed 'development aid' by the English-speaking world, in the perspective of France's experience of colonisation and decolonisation, Paris perceives it in a very different

manner. One definition of the term 'development aid' takes it to be 'grants, and net long-term lending, for non-military purposes, by governments and quasi- governmental international organisations.'<sup>14</sup> As defined by the United Nations it is an essentially economic process. In the French perception of the nature of post-colonial relations, the term 'coopération' is an expression of France's historical vocation for generosity and 'rayonnement' in the interests of humanity.

This is in contrast to the trend of *Cartiérisme* that has represented the belief that only if policies represent advantages and returns for France can they be considered as legitimate.<sup>15</sup> Named after the journalist Jacques Cartier who wrote in *Paris-Match* and questioned the value to France of development aid policies. *Cartiérisme* is frequently cited as a discourse that denied France's historical 'responsibilities'. Although never a part of official discourse, the defence of French 'coopération' in terms of facilitating French trade is frequently found after 1960. For Leca, the maintenance of an ideological system by various French interests has been a means to place aid relations in a broad historical context. The stress on the idea of 'coopération' as an equal partnership, taken up by the less developed partner is a vital aspect of the relationship, even if the reality does not reflect it:

En toute hypothèse, en dépit du caractère apparemment calculateur, voire cynique de l'intérêt national, son idéologie est profondément expressive; elle véhicule des valeurs 'consommatoires', plus ou moins sacrées, donc hors du contrôle de l'expérience empirique. En ce cas, l'activité idéologique pour celui qui s'y livre, est une fin en elle-même.<sup>16</sup>

French ‘coopération’ has also taken on very specific forms. It is in its cultural aspects that this is most evident. An emphasis on providing French back-up to post-colonial education has seen large numbers of French teachers, advisors and inspectors making up for the lack of suitably qualified Africans in national education systems. France’s involvement in various forms of the media and publishing as well as providing cultural centres for French and local cultures, has been extensive.

Leca proposes that the various actors at different levels of the French aid administration and policy implementation represent different political and cultural values and attitudes. The research in this thesis shows that in the area of culture, the French ‘coopération’ administration has been very sensitive to accusations that ‘coopération culturelle’ was a directly political form of intervention. To what extent can we suggest that *coopération culturelle* policies enjoyed a relative autonomy from certain political and economic pressures?

The second important term that requires discussion is that of **Francophonie**. The term, is used today with a capital letter to denote institutions that group together French-speaking states and communities acknowledging language and culture as a basis for international co-operation. With a lower case initial letter, it has a general and often uncertain meaning of French language and speakers identifying with a French speaking culture committed to defending its use against English. Neither sense is neutral, implying frequently an approval of the rational values that French language and culture convey. These values relate to the highest ideals of the eighteenth century French Enlightenment

stressing tolerance, freedom and solidarity and forging a unique sense of community amongst French language speakers.

Originally coined by the French geographer Oneisme Reclus in 1883, the term then described the geographical distribution of the language arising from French colonisation. The term 'francophonie' lay dormant until revived by the President of Senegal, Léopold Senghor, writing in the review *Esprit* in 1962. The President's lyrical definition is frequently quoted in accounts of francophonie: 'La *Francophonie*, c'est cet *Humanisme intégral*, qui se tisse autour de la terre: cette *symbiose* des «énergies dormantes» de tous les continents, de toutes les races, qui se réveillent à leur chaleur complémentaire.'<sup>17</sup>

'Francophonie' resembles 'coopération' as a term implying a fraternal state of relations between France and her former colonies. However, the word Francophonie has developed into a term with a considerably wider set of connotations than the mere defence of French, taking up the aspirations of French speakers outside of France for whom cultural identity is a complex issue. My problematic for Francophonie, as it is for 'coopération', is to consider how an elaborate discourse relates to accompanying institutions and policies. What relevance did this have in the context of the priorities and dynamics of the Franco-African relationship?

Beyond statements of affection for the language and culture that he experienced initially as a colonial subject, Léopold Senghor also made attempts to give a political dimension to Francophonie. This thesis will consider the nature of the demands of African post-

independence leaders such as Habib Bourguiba, Hamani Diori and Léopold Senghor to bring about the creation of francophone community institutions in the 1960s. Did they symbolise anything more than an attempt to use a common culture to gain potential political and economic advantages in relations with France? Such ideas as a 'Commonwealth à la française' or a 'communauté organique culturelle' pursued in 1966 and 1980 respectively, were proposals to bring about consultations of francophone heads of state to discuss important world issues. What were to be the objectives and means of action of Francophonie, when in 1986, François Mitterrand convened the first francophone head of state summit in Paris and fully realised the ambitions of Bourguiba, Senghor and Diori?

I propose to consider how the various multilateral francophone institutions have developed policies that address the cultural issues of development using both the French language and African languages and cultures. Has Francophonie failed to address the most relevant issues in development as claimed by the socio-linguist Ntoto Kazadi? Has francophone Africa imposed its cultural specificity?<sup>18</sup> How has the participation of France's former colonies in the 'francophone project' altered the fundamental nature of relations with France?

Although I will centre my study on institutions and policies, as in my study of 'coopération', I will also consider Francophonie as an ideological system. In particular, I will consider how a franco-centric discourse on culture and language has given way to the active promotion of minority languages and cultures in the interests of cultural

pluralism. However, given that the promotion of the French language and culture is at the very heart of Francophonie, it is difficult to separate judgements on the continuing importance of the French language and those policies that strengthen other languages within the francophone project. The Benin academic, Guy Ossito Midiouhan, considers the implications of this by seeing both the French language and francophone institutions as indissociable ideological constructs. In his terms they are no more than the 'la façade culturelle de la néo-colonisation'.<sup>19</sup> As in the study of 'coopération', I will question such a sweeping assessment in the light of the complexity of interests and actors involved in the institutional activities of Francophonie.

The third concept to consider will be the ideas and assumptions about **culture**. The term is a highly problematic since it is difficult to pin down a precise meaning that is valid throughout this study.

According to Denys Cuche in *La Notion de culture dans les sciences sociales*, the term 'culture' came into the French language in the eighteenth century.<sup>20</sup> After uniquely being associated with the action of nurturing in the agricultural sense, the term evolved within the thought of the *Siècle des lumières* to become associated with progress, evolution, education and reason. Significantly it was a singular concept belonging to rational values therefore reflecting the vision of the *philosophes* of the period. As such, it became analogous to 'Civilisation' which also emerged at the time. Throughout the same century, 'culture' also came to be employed to describe a sense of individual self-betterment (contrasted with 'nature') whilst 'civilisation' referred to collective progress

for society through improvements in legislation, institutions and education that counteracted the effects of superstition, ignorance or irrationality.<sup>21</sup>

By the nineteenth century the term 'culture' gained a more collective significance to add to its individual reference point. In so doing it became closer or even interchangeable with the idea of 'civilisation'. Now it became associated with the array of characteristics of a community- hence 'culture de l'humanité' or 'culture française'. Here it took on one of its most enduring and marked characteristics in the French tradition: its alignment with a tradition of universalist thought. Cuche notes that sociologists and ethnologists in France were largely too surrounded in the traditions of Enlightenment Universalism to consider cultural diversity in societies other than by a reference to a single 'Civilisation'.<sup>22</sup> Individual manifestations of 'culture' were minimised to describe a normative and sometimes national culture.

The turning point in this approach came in the development of ethnology in the late nineteenth century. Ethnology brought a scientific approach to the study of culture by attributing a descriptive significance to the term rather than a 'normative' value. In a French context sociologists such as Emile Durkheim and ethnologists such as Lucien Lévy Bruhl and Maurice Delafosse (who influenced Senghor), marked new approaches to studying non-European cultures and went against many thinkers who stressed their inherent inferiority. In their approach they stressed that there were no universal values and observed that there were only different acceptations of what is 'normal' according to the societies in which they are found.



The persistence of the universalist and rationalist discourse and its confrontation with the effects of a growing acceptance of the relativity of non-French language cultures provides us with one of the most significant challenges in this thesis. Official discourse in colonial administration claimed to respect local cultures whilst simultaneously maintaining that only French could fulfil the cultural needs for future modern development. As we will see in Chapter One, efforts to introduce colonial administration that brought a greater respect for different traditions and beliefs did not seem to extend to education. Did *coopération culturelle* or francophonie significantly change this? What have been the characteristics of cultural *complémentarité* that has been promoted by Senghor? The work of the Senegalese historian Papa Ibrahima Seck, *La Stratégie culturelle de la France en Afrique*, argues that beneath France's colonial rhetoric, the practice of government was led by the needs of colonial exploitation.<sup>23</sup> Jean Louis Calvet in *Linguistique et colonialisme* considers that France's cultural and linguistic policies were a systematic *glottophagie* to impose the supremacy of French.<sup>24</sup> For Calvet, this glottophagie involved the systematic negation of all cultures that threatened French. In the opinion of Philip Coombs in *The Fourth Dimension of Foreign Policy* this foreign policy approach that placed culture first, was inspired by Napoleon's attempts to conquer Egypt. Coombs cites Napoleon in arguing that France developed a type of conquest that complemented the military:

'I have been forced to conquer Europe by the sword; he who comes after will conquer it by the spirit. For the spirit is always more powerful than the sword'. For Napoleon, and for French leaders after him, this was not a matter of nostalgia or sentiment but of hard reason (...) Wherever possible, cultural penetration was substituted for force. 'What political operation or armed invasion', a French deputy candidly asked his colleagues in

1900, 'was ever able, with less expense, to produce such important and lasting results?'.<sup>25</sup>

This 'cultural penetration' was going to become increasingly ambiguous as the colonial period passed its zenith since France would hold increasingly out the ideal of an inclusion into a fraternal culture, yet was without the means or the inclination to carry this out. The establishing of a French cultural presence both by language and the propagation of values was therefore yet another mechanism for the coloniser to leave his mark on the peoples in his Empire.

I will also consider the terms in which French was presented as the key to a neutral, universalist culture based on the values of reason, progress and rationalism. Studying these values that have been both latent and explicit in discourses of colonial education, coopération and francophonie sets a framework in which we can consider the policies accompanying them. This belief that French represents these values is present in the study of French civil servant and diplomat Albert Salon entitled, *L'Action culturelle de la France dans le monde*.<sup>26</sup> I will contrast these values with the idea of the 'cultural dimension of development' expounded and developed in multilateral funding bodies from the 1980s onwards that is discussed in Chapter Eight.

In Chapter Three, we will see that the initial *coopération* agreements signed in the early 1960s recognise the existence of the numerous African cultures within each state. However, in the context of economic development and of African nation-building, the values given to African cultures and languages implied that they were unsuitable vehicles

for this purpose and that cultural diversity was a hindrance to economic and political objectives.

In France, domestic cultural and educational policies reflected the forming of a dominant national culture through a single language in a long-term political and historical process. In Africa, the multitude of very different cultures and languages made this a considerably more difficult task. What assumptions did political leaders make about nation-building and the uses of non-maternal languages for expressing national cultural identities? This part of the thesis will consider why African languages received such little consideration in education policies.

Chapter Eight considers how culture might be perceived as a criteria to be taken into account in the process of 'development'. Earlier parts of the thesis consider how French 'culture' was associated with a more restricted definition and notably how the term was employed to describe the symbolic organisation of a group in society. This chapter considers culture in a broad sense signifying the numerous underlying traditions or value systems existing so abundantly in the new African states and that had survived colonial rule. I will consider how an evolution has taken place in many aid institutions accepting that an economic and social development cannot be acceptable without a cultural change rooted in a respect for values that link the traditional with the modern. After an economically based vision of culture dominated until the end of the 1960s, a number of conferences held by UNESCO and the OAU (amongst other institutions) developed these issues recognising the need to change patterns of development.<sup>27</sup> Why did it take

so long for the effects of these ideas to be visible in bilateral aid programmes?

After considering how French officials reacted to certain pressures to acknowledge the place of African cultures within emerging national, independent cultures, I will also examine the attitudes of governments towards giving a status to African languages.

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### Notes to Introduction

<sup>1</sup> The term francophone Africa refers to those states that made up the federations of *Afrique occidentale française* (AOF) and *Afrique équatoriale française* (AEF). AOF was comprised of Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Dahomey (later Benin) and Togo. The AEF was comprised of Congo, Gabon, Sudan, Oubangui-Chari and Cameroon. After the decolonisation of France's colonies in 1960, the ex-Belgian colonies of Burundi, Zaire and Rwanda also became part of this French 'sphere of influence'.

<sup>2</sup> Emile Mworoha, *ACCT 1970-1995: 25 ans au service du développement et de la coopération francophone* (Paris: ACCT, 1995), p 18.

<sup>3</sup> Jacques Basso 'La Politique de française de coopération internationale' *Etudes Internationales*, 5, 2, (1974), 342-354, (p. 347).Ibid., p. 347.

<sup>4</sup> Maurice Flory, 'Essai de typologies de la coopération bilatérale pour le développement', *Annuaire français de droit international* (Paris: CNRS, 1974).

<sup>5</sup> CEDETIM, *L'impérialisme français* (Paris: Maspéro, 1980), p. 147.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Cadenat, *La France et le tiers monde: vingt ans de coopération bilatérale* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1983), p. 35.

<sup>7</sup> Brigitte Nouaille-Degorce, 'Les Structures et les moyens de la politique de coopération avec les Etats africains et malgache au sud du Sahara de 1958 à 1969' in *La Politique africaine du Général de Gaulle*, ed. DG Lavroff (Paris: Ed A. Péronne), 75-99, (p. 75) and Edward M. Corbett, *The French presence in Black Africa* (Washington DC: Black Orpheus Press, 1972).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> Johan Galtung, 'A Structural Theory of Imperialism', *Journal of Peace Research*, 8 (1971), 79-117, (pp. 93-94).

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- <sup>10</sup> Jean Leca, 'Idéologies de la coopération', *Etudes Internationales*, 5, 2 (1974), 226-243, p. 227.
- <sup>11</sup> Jean-Marcel Jeanneney, Rapport de la commission d'étude de la politique de coopération avec les pays en voie de développement (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1983), p. 537.
- <sup>12</sup> Speech by Georges Pompidou on 10 June 1964 cited in Paul Cadenat, *La France et le tiers monde: vingt ans de coopération bilatérale* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1983), p. 31
- <sup>13</sup> Basso, p. 348.
- <sup>14</sup> William Clark, 'What is aid?', *Africa Report*, March 1967, 18-19, (p. 18).
- <sup>15</sup> The term refers to a current of opinion expressed by the French journalist Raymond Cartier writing in *Paris Match* in the 1950s and 1960s. Cartiérisme is often referred to in the terms of the journalist's phrase 'la Corrèze plutôt que le Zambèze'. (Claude Wauthier, *Quatre présidents et l'Afrique* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1995) p. 172. As an example of one of Raymond Cartier's articles see for example 'Attention la France dilapide son argent', *Paris Match*, 14 March 1964, 779, 2-9.
- <sup>16</sup> Leca, p. 234.
- <sup>17</sup> Onésime Reclus, *France, Algérie et les colonies*, 1880, cited in Xavier Deniau, *La Francophonie* (Paris: PUF, 1995), pp. 9-10.
- <sup>18</sup> Ntote Kazadi, *L'Afrique afro-francophone* (Paris: Didier Erudition, 1991), p. 87.
- <sup>19</sup> Guy Ossito Midihouan, 'Portée idéologique et fondements politiques de la Francophonie vue d'Afrique', *Peuples noirs-peuples africains*, 59-62 (1988), 63-84, p. 70.
- <sup>20</sup> Denys Cuche, *La Notion de culture dans les sciences sociales* (Paris: La Découverte, 1996), p. 8.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 9.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 23.
- <sup>23</sup> Papa Ibrahima Seck, *La Stratégie culturelle de la France en Afrique* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1993), p. 65.
- <sup>24</sup> Jean Louis-Calvet, *Linguistique et colonialisme* (Paris: Payot, 1972), p. 129.

<sup>25</sup> Philip H. Coombs, *The Fourth Dimension of Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 79.

<sup>26</sup> Albert Salon, *L'Action culturelle de la France dans le monde* (Paris: Fernand Nathan, 1983), pp. 34-35.

<sup>27</sup> UNESCO: United Nations Organisation for Education, Science and Culture. OAU: Organisation for African Unity.

**PART ONE: The creation of French ('francophone') Africa**



## **Chapter One: Assimilation, association and colonial education**

To situate the nature of the relations between France and French-speaking Africa in the post-colonial period, we need to consider the deep-reaching legacy of French colonialism. How important was the colonial period in reflecting French ideology both culturally and politically? In Chapter One, I will look at the extent and significance of the educational dimension in forming a particular relationship between France and her African colonies. In Chapter Two, I will argue that the term ‘francophone’ applied to Africa does not merely refer to language in the countries that experienced French colonial rule; the term also refers to the large variety of institutional, political, personal and symbolic relations that later became Francophonie as both a cultural phenomenon and as a means of international consultation.

There are two common perceptions of French colonialism. Firstly, that it was dominated by France’s motivation desire to assimilate conquered peoples into a greater France. Secondly, that a deeply held ethnocentric *mission civilisatrice* provided the overall framework for colonial conquest. To consider the first assumption we will consider how France implemented her colonial policy, to consider the second we will examine why France embarked on colonial expansion. I will start by assessing the basis for such beliefs and will consider the extent to which they were significant in the colonial debate and ensuing practice from the 1870s onwards until decolonisation. In this period, I will consider educational and cultural policies. This will give an important background to the nature of franco-African relations after 1960 when France's sub-Saharan African

presence as a colonial power ended. How did the concept of Francophonie emerge in the years following decolonisation? In this chapter and the following chapter, I will consider the principles that governed French colonial policy and their significance when the process of de-colonisation occurred. In Chapter One, I will consider the broad arguments in colonial policy and how they would be reflected in policies to propagate French culture and language. In Chapter Two, I will consider the process of decolonisation and the contribution of Léopold Senghor (poet and President of Senegal from 1960 to 1981) to both the political and cultural concepts of francophonie, particularly from 1962 onwards.

### **1.1 Assimilation and the *mission civilisatrice***

In his study of French colonial theory, Raymond Betts ventures the bold statement that:

In large measure, the history of French colonial theory, particularly in the nineteenth century, might be written as a history of the doctrine of assimilation (...) it found expression as a governing principle, if not in practice, during most periods of colonial history.<sup>1</sup>

What was assimilation? One soon comes to realise the difficulty of defining the term with any certainty. In an article that considers assimilation theory within French colonial policy, the historian Martin Lewis investigates the term's different meanings.<sup>2</sup> He argues that in the numerous studies on the subject the term is given a legal and constitutional meaning (referring to colonial representation in the metropolitan parliament), an administrative meaning (used to refer to French highly centralised rule). It can also be used to indicate a French belief in racial equality or that it was pursued when French language and culture (through education policies) were promoted among non-European

peoples. At its fullest meaning it referred to making subjects French by virtue of citizenship. Each of these meanings reflects different stages of French colonial history and the rich ideological heritage that has accompanied it.

Although, the most significant period to be considered here is that after 1870, it is important to bear in mind the legacy of colonial policies under Louis XIV and the government of Richelieu. As early as the seventeenth century, notes Betts, in his study *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial History*, royal edicts in 1635 and 1642 declared that natives who had converted to Catholicism were to be seen as 'natural Frenchmen and citizens.'<sup>3</sup> Canada aside, France's possessions gained from this period until the fall of the *Ancien Régime* were, for the greater part small islands either in the Pacific or the West Indies, trading counters (such as Pondicherry in India) or small coastal areas in West Africa of which the most significant was the territory that would become Senegal. Given the small numbers of colonised peoples in these areas, later social 'experiments' could be undertaken without prohibitive cost. How accurate would it be to suggest that the momentous French Revolution brought reforms in its colonies entirely consistent with its ideals?

In the turbulent politics of the end of the eighteenth century, revolutionary France declared that there was a fundamental equality between her and her colonies. In the section 'Division du territoire' of the Republican constitution of August 1795, it was declared that ' les colonies françaises sont parties intégrantes de la République, et sont soumises à la même loi constitutionnelle'.<sup>4</sup> In consequence, deputies from the French

*Antilles* and Pondicherry were part of the revolutionary National Assembly and in 1794, the Convention freed all slaves held in French territories. A few years later however, under Napoleon's First Empire, France turned a blind eye to the return of slavery in the French territories and her overseas *départements* lost parliamentary rights of representation and were subject to distinct colonial laws passed by executive decree.<sup>5</sup>

With the exception of the taking of Algeria in 1830, and a limited colonial power under the rule of Louis Napoleon in the middle part of the century, the nineteenth century was a period of sporadic French colonial expansion until the impetus given by the Third Republic governments after 1870. Although the July Monarchy after 1830 started to allow the 'assimilation' of freed slaves to the same status as white inhabitants, any attempts at assimilation into French citizenship resurfaced only briefly during the short-lived Second Republic.<sup>6</sup> Once again, slaves were freed and colonial representation returned in the French parliament in both the *Antilles* and French West Africa where the native residents of the Senegalese *Quatre communes* of Dakar, Gorée, Rufisque and St.Louis were given both full citizenship and electoral rights.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, France had slowly developed her economic interests throughout the nineteenth century in West Africa and in particular in the geographical area now known as Senegal. The *Quatre Communes* represented only a small proportion of this expansion and elsewhere Africans were subject to a colonial legal status with few privileges and rights.

Although the principle of assimilation was, to say the least, inconsistently applied in colonial policy, the presence of a *mission civilisatrice* discourse, in which the idea of assimilation was at least implicitly found, is far less an issue for doubt. The American

historian Alice Conklin maintains that the discourse of the *mission civilisatrice* is essentially one from the French Enlightenment.<sup>8</sup> In general terms, the theory of the French *mission civilisatrice* seems to find its origins in a profound conviction in the superiority of a single French culture that has been formed from a unique historical tradition. This culture is equated with a vision of a superior civilisation that believes in the universal perfectibility of mankind through the triumph of reason and the endless possibilities of rationalism. Another important tenet of the Enlightenment was the essential equality of humankind. This faith in a universalism was explored by such writers as Condorcet:

Comme la vérité, la raison, la justice, les droits des hommes, l'intérêt de la propriété, de la liberté, de la sûreté sont les mêmes partout, on ne voit pas pourquoi toutes les provinces d'un Etat, ou même tous les Etats, n'auraient pas les mêmes lois criminelles, les mêmes lois civiles, les mêmes lois de commerce, etc. Une bonne loi doit être bonne pour tous les hommes, comme une proposition vraie est vraie pour tous.<sup>9</sup>

It was, therefore, the duty of France to spread the benefits of this universalism. Such *philosophes* as D'Alembert, Condorcet and Rousseau believed that the widespread provision of education to the masses, advances in scientific knowledge and the formulation of legislation based on a universal reason would be the key to unprecedented levels of material and intellectual fulfilment to mankind. French language and culture was a particularly privileged gateway to this fulfilment. Rivarol's *Universalité de la langue française* argued that the French language incarnated the most desirable of attributes to make it a 'universal' means of communication. The very term *mission civilisatrice* combines the Enlightenment idea of a single civilisation ('civilisatrice') with the sense of a

disinterested motivation based in the highest principles ('mission') that follow those of Christian evangelism. The appropriation of a term from before the Enlightenment suggests that both the *mission civilisatrice* and assimilation have earlier roots.

In his study of France's cultural policies throughout history, the diplomat Albert Salon calls these instincts to spread higher values and principles France's 'messianisme'.<sup>10</sup> His use of a term with religious implications serves to highlight his belief that this discourse has brought together the convictions of Catholics, monarchists and republicans that France was uniquely suited to colonial conquest, or as Salon terms it 'le développement d'une véritable mystique de la France généreuse et secourable, salvatrice et libératrice'.<sup>11</sup> According to Salon, from the Middle Ages France saw herself as having strong responsibilities in defending the Catholic faith. His study shows that such diverse French political and cultural figures as Barrès, Zola, Jaurès, André Gide and Charles de Gaulle (to name but a few) in more recent times have all made their own contribution to the belief that France's colonial conquests and ensuing cultural 'expansionism' were motivated by a desire to fulfil a destiny in her history. Interestingly, not all of these figures could be placed in the Republican 'mainstream' that has made the greatest capital from the ideas of the French Enlightenment. Salon seems to suggest that the *mission civilisatrice* was no more than the continuation of an established theme in French history albeit based in rationalism rather than Catholicism that celebrated a strong cultural identity. Nevertheless he concedes, that the 1870s signalled the start of a more intense period of cultural expansionism than had been the case before.

The historical debate surrounding the motivation and practice of France's colonial ambitions in the period from 1870 onwards is of particular interest for two reasons. Firstly, it was the start of the most concerted policy of colonial conquest in French history. This took place in the context of the 'Scramble for Africa' undertaken by European powers such as Britain, Belgium, Holland and Germany. Over a hundred years later, France's post-colonial African *pré-carré* still gave evidence of this. Secondly, it was a policy pursued under a re-born republican constitution, which, as Alice Conklin points out, was of particular significance in the formulation of colonial policies.<sup>12</sup> The end of the nineteenth century established many facets of French political and civil administration that are still recognisable today. Many concerns of the time were projected into colonial policies including cultural and educational priorities.

The initial impetus for renewed colonial expansion in the early years of the Third Republic was not universally supported. The historian Raoul Girardet identifies some five broad pressure groups who sought to influence the government in favour of a commitment to colonial expansion.<sup>13</sup> Girardet maintains that traders, the military, missionaries, socialist doctrinaires and geographers (including Onésime Reclus who is widely attributed with bringing the term 'francophonie' to the French language) all advocated a strong colonial policy. In his book *L'Idée coloniale en France*, he notes that overall, no single group held a monopoly of the argument for these projects. Commercial, strategic military and humanitarian reasoning featured heavily in many arguments, as they had done throughout most of the nineteenth century and it seems that they represented an alliance of interests rather than a 'spontaneous' political consensus.

Although the pro-colonial Jules Ferry paid for his commitment to his cause with his resignation from the post of Prime Minister in 1885, his government had overseen the conquest of large areas of West Africa, the Congo, Tunisia, Madagascar and Indochina. Jules Ferry used economic, humanitarian and nationalist arguments to pursue his policies, such that by the mid 1880s a broad pro-colonial opinion was held by the political classes even if it still met resistance from the extreme left and right. Whilst the 'why' of colonial expansion was widely agreed, the 'how' was not as straightforward. The belief that France might turn her colonial subjects into 'Frenchmen' was soon challenged by contemporary thought that qualified the fundamental equality of all men. Contemporary political and social thought had changed the manner in which colonialism was perceived.

The treatise by Paul Leroy-Beaulieu entitled *De la Colonisation chez les Peuples Modernes*, first published in 1874 placed the colonial debate in the context of the issues important to France in the early years of the Third Republic in a manner that acknowledged a rich past heritage:

A quelque point de vue que l'on se place, que l'on se renferme dans la considération de la prospérité et de la puissance matérielle, de l'autorité et de l'influence politique, ou que l'on s'élève à la contemplation de la grandeur intellectuelle, voici un mot d'une incontestable vérité: le peuple qui colonise le plus est le premier peuple; s'il ne l'est pas aujourd'hui, il le sera demain.<sup>14</sup>

Leroy-Beaulieu was also evidently influenced by Darwinism and theories of industrial expansion. He pointed out the differences between the old style 'colonies de peuplement' (such as Algeria) and the newer 'colonies d'exploitation' such as those in West Africa that France was now aiming to create at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup> In stressing the virtue of the latter, Enlightenment conviction was subtly combined with more



contemporary economic arguments in which a colonial policy was presented as mutually beneficial to coloniser and colonised. A clearer idea of why France was involved in colonial conquest emerged because theorists pointed out that it was a matter of competition between industrial nation states. European states required new sources of raw materials and in the long term needed new outlets to sell their goods. Military rivalry had been replaced by commercial rivalry.

It was this combination of reasons that was taken up by Jules Ferry in his promotion of France's colonial conquests. The next major question would be what sort of administrative regime would be most suitable for the newly conquered territories? True to French traditions, the assumption was that it would be essentially assimilationist. The French legal theorist Arthur Girault, who was responsible for framing much of the colonial legislation in the early years of the Third Republic, noted:

La politique d'assimilation apparaît comme étant à la fois très patriotique et très élevée. Elle ne sacrifie ni l'intérêt des colonies, ni celui de la mère-patrie (...) Politique de concorde patriotique et de large fraternité, elle unit les coeurs en les élevant (...) Le parlement unique, composé d'hommes parlant tous la même langue malgré la différence de leur origine, venus de toutes les parties du monde où flotte le même drapeau pour discuter les intérêts généraux de leur patrie commune, en est la manifestation éloquente et sensible.<sup>16</sup>

Featuring in a metropolitan textbook for future colonial administrators, Girault's work portrayed an ideal that was a deeply held conviction. Significantly, however, in the conclusion to his study, although suggesting that assimilation was the form of legislation most suited to French political traditions, he advised that its application required some compromise and flexibility. Assimilation held strong attractions for the French collective psyche but was not practical, in many respects, for France's most recent conquests.

## 1.2 Association

By the late 1880s and early 1890s those who had previous experience of implementing a colonial policy based on assimilatory principles increasingly saw it as ineffective and harmful to establishing the necessary working relations with colonised peoples. Administrators and teachers, confronted with alien cultures with conceptual frameworks beyond their comprehension, had striven hopelessly to impose their principles on reluctant colonial subjects. The Republican principle of *laïcité*, particularly when applied to Islamic cultures (notably in Algeria) caused confrontation, as did efforts to break down century-old aristocratic patterns of tribal local government South of the Sahara. Lessons learnt from Algeria and the demands of administering larger geographical in West and Central Africa area than previously, showed that any successful assimilation (involving common laws or single idea of citizenship) required at the least, expensive investment in education and infrastructure that would outweigh any short-term commercial advantages gained from economic exploitation.

The slow change in direction in colonial policy away from a conviction in assimilation was not only a result of colonial experience and practicalities. Another influence, that seemed to contradict many of the precepts of the French Enlightenment, was what Betts has called 'the scientific attitude' towards race and its consequences on perceptions of non-Europeans. Based on the application of Darwinism (the 'survival of the fittest') to societies, theorists such as Gustave Le Bon and Léopold de Saussure denied the

postulate that all races were inherently equal and attempted to formulate a psychological classification of human races according to their state of development.

In his *Psychologie de la colonisation française* written in 1899, Léopold de Saussure sought to show the error of previous assimilationist approaches that took all men to be equal in the same space and time. Saussure argued that Africans were biologically inferior and therefore incapable of assimilation. France's attempts to apply the same institutions, language and culture universally were condemned as damaging to both the colonised and the coloniser. He even suggested that there was the danger that the coloniser might find himself acquiring some of the characteristics of the peoples that he was educating. A similar argument was found in Gustave Le Bon and his work *Les lois psychologiques de l'évolution des peuples*, written in 1894 in which Le Bon undertakes a psychological classification of races according to their perceived state of development. Le Bon was an explorer who had observed colonial administration at first hand and argued that an assimilationist approach to education by which Africans learnt about the history of French civilisation, might be better replaced with a rudimentary education of simple mathematics and certain manual and trade skills. Le Bon's arguments were particularly in evidence at the International Colonial Congress of Paris held in July 1889 and at the National Colonial Congresses held in December 1889 and February 1890. Amongst heated debate, the pro-assimilationists were marginally more numerous but they could not stem a growing tide against their conviction, however paradoxical it was that France could impose 'universal' values and institutions within the constraints of colonialism. As Lewis remarks about the assimilationists:

they failed to realise the inherent contradiction between the assimilation they favoured and the kind of imperial expansion to which they freely lent their support. Democrats at home they were unable to see (...) that in the nature of things, imperialism could not be democratic.<sup>17</sup>

This change of direction away from assimilation was termed 'association', a designation that most French colonial historians agree was as vague, if not vaguer than the term 'assimilation'. Those who supported this new approach could cite the examples of the colonial Generals Faidherbe, Gallieni and Lyautey who, in conquering between them France's Asian and African colonies, had devised strategies to associate the local populations with France's growing conquests. In West Africa as early as the 1850s, Faidherbe had used the policy of 'la tâche d'huile' to encourage local populations to appreciate the benefits of the French presence. This involved establishing strategic strongholds from which the French authorities could expand. An infrastructure of markets, schools and basic services followed the military presence to gain the co-operation of locals.<sup>18</sup> Twenty years later, General Gallieni employed 'la politique des races' similar to the British principle of 'divide and rule' where local rivalries between ethnic groups were exploited to allow the French to maintain power. The contribution of General Lyautey was to develop the application of the protectorate as used in Tunisia and Morocco. Here, having imposed a French presence to allow trade, access to raw material and the use of ports and harbours, France administered countries at a distance through local rulers.

It was in the work of the political theorist Jules Harmand, that the policy of 'association' was given its most coherent justification. Adopting many of the ideas first evoked by the

St. Simonian socialists in the 1840s, Harmand's *Domination et colonisation* written in 1910, advocated that the empirical approach of association with each colony being treated as a distinct unit. This would end the idea that France and its colonies formed a natural whole where a common patriotism reigned.<sup>19</sup> By 1906, Georges Leyges, French Minister for the colonies made the significant admission that:

L'assimilation est une erreur funeste. Il faut y renoncer pour toujours. Ce serait tenter une oeuvre inutile parce qu'elle ne pourrait pas réussir, et dangereuse parce qu'elle ne pourrait soulever contre nous que défiance et colère (...) le principe fondamental de notre politique colonial doit être le respect scrupuleux des croyances, des moeurs, des traditions des peuples soumis ou protégés.<sup>20</sup>

A second significant reason for the belief that assimilation was not always the policy best suited to colonial administration at the end of the nineteenth century was the need for the colonies to be financially viable as France progressed from a period of colonial conquest to administration. This would come through colonies being able to generate their own funds rather than relying on France. The reorganisation of the French colonial administration saw two large federations created in 1895. *Afrique occidentale française* (AOF) was constituted from West African territories with a capital in Dakar and *Afrique équatoriale française* (AEF) that brought together Central African territories with a capital in Brazzaville. Although France still believed that it should improve the quality of life for colonised peoples by introducing education, health services, roads and communication networks, the need for a 'mise en valeur' was strenuously presented as not being assimilationist and showed the intention that France worked with and not against existing cultures and social distinctions. After the First World War a policy of 'mise en valeur' was instigated. By this policy, France invested in communications

(building railways and ports), education and justice systems.<sup>21</sup> These reflected the Third Republic's optimism in the benefits of technology, learning and legal reform.

The closely related theory of a 'politique indigène' by which France decided colonial policy according to the dictates of the culture found in the colony, inspired many theorists to re-evaluate the future development of the French Empire. One such theorist was Saint Paul de Metz who extolled the virtue of future indigenous nationalisms inspired by a French political approach that could lead to a 'République des peuples' based on the sharing of the French language. In *Vers l'Empire* published in 1913, he described a "groupement des nations" 'lequel relèverait d'un même centre intellectuel. La civilisation française, la langue de culture commune et la volonté de chaque nation ex-coloniale d'aider au développement de l'ensemble ferait de cette communauté française une pièce essentielle du monde du XXe'.<sup>22</sup>

If it seemed that France now recognised officially that an assimilationist approach to colonial government was impractical, one might wonder where this left the *mission civilisatrice*. Alice Conklin's study of the idea of *la mission civilisatrice* from 1895 to 1930, reveals that, under the Third Republic, the weight of the metropolitan discourse that promoted education, science and the application of technology to many areas of human life had a significant bearing on the attitudes of colonial administrators and teachers. Although assimilation as a principle had been officially repudiated by the French authorities, the belief in a *mission civilisatrice* was more widely held than ever. It

is not surprising that the difference between assimilation and association was, in practice, an uncertain one. As Conklin observes:

the French insisted that civilization required that the different West African peoples had to evolve within their own cultures, to the extent that these cultures did not conflict with the republican principles of French civilization. When a conflict arose, the offending African mores were to be suppressed and replaced by French ones. After a prolonged struggle with African leaders in the French Sudan, four African institutions were singled out for eradication: indigenous languages, slavery, barbaric customary law, and “feudal” chieftancies. The republican virtues of a common language, freedom, social equality and liberal justice were to take their place.<sup>23</sup>

This campaign for introducing republican values involved breaking up traditional ethnic chiefdoms or at least minimising their importance to only symbolic roles. This was a deliberate policy introduced by the Governor-General William Ponty in the AOF from 1909 onwards who justified it by expressing his anti-aristocratic convictions.<sup>24</sup> In these circumstances the strength of a crusading Republican *mission civilisatrice* meant that 'natives' perceived colonialism as direct oppression rather than 'liberation'.

Intransigent administrative policies in the period 1909-1914 were followed by strikes and unrest in urban areas and revolt against the conscription of Africans in the French army to fight in the First World War. A growing racist discourse in French politics and the failure to admit developing rights for the *évolués* of Senegal led the colonised population to withhold taxes and riot.<sup>25</sup> France's reaction was to send Governor-Generals with less zeal for breaking-up traditional African ruling structures.

The appointment of François Clozel to the Governorship of the AOF in 1915 was significant in that it brought a reversal of the principle of dismantling 'feudal' structures in

the interests of restoring public order.<sup>26</sup> With his director of political affairs, the ethnologist Maurice Delafosse (who would be influential in advising subsequent governors), he believed in reinstating traditional local authority where advantageous to do so. Although he was ultimately subject to orders from Paris, the application of some of his ideas were a significant reversal of those of Governor Ponty and his successor Joost Van Vollenhoven. In tandem with Delafosse, Clozel assessed France's presence in the colony. Their conclusion was that concluded since 1909 France's indigenous policies had led to a regression in France's 'moral conquest', in particular losing much support from the *évolués* who had been denied opportunities which should have accompanied the status that France had accorded them. Outside the *Quatre Communes* he criticised the failure of administrations to provide the schools, hospitals and infrastructure worthy of the *mission civilisatrice*.<sup>27</sup>

Subsequent governors attempted policies that were the nearest to being given the label 'association' up until now. These included granting limited political responsibilities to both rural and urban elites. In the bush, the administrative designation of *communes* involved an administrator-mayor operating in close consultation with local chiefs and elders on such issues as taxation, public order and local services. This occurred with the proviso that the administrator's decision was final. In the mid 1920s, *évolués* in the *Quatre Communes* were allowed to be employed in administrative posts from which they had previously been excluded. This would be subject to passing the examinations required, an undertaking achieved by very few. The consequences of France's policies of associating elites with administration was to reinforce both traditional authority and the



new privileged educated urban classes. Alice Conklin believes that this signalled an important change:

There remains something significant about the shift in the realm of native policy which civilization through association represented. What disappeared was a certain commitment to the idea of universal man, everywhere equal in potential and deserving of emancipation. (...) Although French was still to be taught, barbaric custom to be banished, and medicine distributed, the era of large gestures was receding. Henceforth an important part of French civilizing efforts would be preoccupied with wooing the elite, traditional and modern.<sup>28</sup>

Association here is portrayed as a strategic 'realism'. It was through the elites that France felt that she could secure her long-term interests. By the 1920s the consolidation of France's colonial presence had been influenced by two main factors. Firstly the realisation that assimilationist policies were impractical. Secondly theories of race showed that man was not everywhere the same. I will now consider specific attitudes to education and resulting policies from the beginning of the nineteenth century until the outbreak of the Second World War.

### **1.3 French colonial cultural and educational policies**

The earliest education of colonised peoples in Africa was provided by missionary groups and the French army. These efforts were joined by those of Republican cultural organisations such as *L'Alliance Française* created in 1868. Only towards the end of the nineteenth century however, were any significant educational policies formulated in Paris for the colonies.

The period after the Restoration monarchy saw the first French efforts at formal schooling in Africa. The limited presence of France on the West African coast from 1815 onwards and, in particular, in the area that would become Senegal, led to the establishment of a school in Saint-Louis directed by Jean Dard. The school was well attended in its initial years, perhaps because Dard was prepared to learn and also teach in the local language, Wolof.<sup>29</sup> Although Dard himself left in 1820, others kept the school open with the same educational principles despite criticism at the use of Wolof. French government funding for such schools (that were mainly religious) in the 1830s was very small. By 1841, in an effort to cut costs, the Orleanist government signed an agreement with the Catholic Frères de Ploermel to provide education in the *Quatre Communes*. From these early educational bases, this area, throughout the nineteenth century, possessed the most developed educational establishments in the whole of the French Empire outside of France.

The earliest efforts at a concerted education policy implemented by a colonial administrator were those undertaken by General Faidherbe in West Africa as part of his policy of 'la tâche d'huile'. During Faidherbe's administration from 1854, in an attempt to improve relations with African Islamic rulers in the interior, he set up the secular *Ecole des Otages*. This school educated the sons of chiefs and notables that had been taken during military campaigns. The curriculum featured not only education in the French language but also the study of local conditions. Thus, as early as the 1850s, Faidherbe saw the value of education in moulding an influential elite. Following Faidherbe's example, General Gallieni also emphasised education in his conquest of the

French Sudan (the future Niger and Burkina Faso).<sup>30</sup> Using junior officers, Gallieni instituted small schools for the sons of villages that were taken by French soldiers. Here pupils were taught basic arithmetic and how to read and write in French. Research carried out by Denise Bouche indicate that between 1884 and 1900 some thirty villages or towns had, at one stage a French school.

Bouche's article which considers various aspects of these schools, traces the assimilation versus association debate in instructions for teachers from officers overseeing their development. These documents seem to show the strength of belief in a *mission civilisatrice*. Colonel Trentinian, the Lieutenant-Governor of Sudan from 1895 to 1899 saw this in the following terms:

Au Soudan, nous sommes en présence d'une population dont, après la conquête militaire, *la conquête intellectuelle et morale* est notre objectif. Il faut donc tenter de la rapprocher de nous, de la modeler successivement, de nous emparer de son esprit, de lui imposer notre marque, notre empreinte particulières. L'instrument obligatoire de transformation est naturellement le langage. Il faut apprendre notre langue aux indigènes.<sup>31</sup>

This intellectual and moral conquest of colonised peoples was one that was to be much evoked in the early years of the twentieth century. The French language was deemed to be the privileged means to carry out this conquest. A ruling of 1899 declared that French was to be the sole language in schools and that 'le langage "petit nègre" est interdit'.<sup>32</sup> The significance of affirming that only 'proper' French should be taught and spoken in schools should not be underestimated. The coloniser's language stood as a benchmark for distinguishing between 'progress' and 'backwardness'. It allowed France to impose

her mark and to set the necessary standard to be reached for those aspiring to the elite.

When, at the turn of the century, assimilation as a colonial policy was called into question, education in Sudan was reviewed. One example of a school textbook intended to reflect France's new approach was *Livre de lecture et d'instruction à l'usage des élèves des écoles du Soudan français* (1899) written by Louis Blanc. Whilst the author's preface states clearly that education no longer sought to create images of Frenchmen, the first chapter of the text-book on the French *tricolore* flag is somewhat surprising and suggests that French assimilationary instincts still persisted:

Ma nouvelle patrie, aujourd'hui, c'est la France. Je suis Français (... ) Quand je serai grand, je placerai tous les dimanches un drapeau tricolore sur le haut de ma case et je dirai à mes sujets: 'Voyez ce beau drapeau ...'<sup>33</sup>

Denise Bouche notes that, as well as educating the sons of local chiefs in village schools, the colonial authorities sent a small number of the sons of the most important rulers for a *lycée* education in France. This was to be a precursor to the significant numbers of young Africans that were to do the same some fifty years later.

Many argue that a proper colonial education policy only started in 1895 with the creation of the AOF and AEF federations. Although credits were increased after 1895, only in 1903 did the French parliament pass a bill to remove the management of schools by church groups in order to fully control colonial education. In November 1903, the first Governor-General of the AOF, Ernest Roume, outlined the four main features of the French educational system in Africa that were to dominate until the end of the Second

World War. Firstly, all education would take place in the French language, secondly, all schools would be free, thirdly, education would be secular and fourthly, there would be an emphasis on training administrative personnel who would assist in colonial administration.<sup>34</sup> The first three features governed the principles of education in France whilst the last was specific to the colonies.

The basic infrastructure of the colonial education system would be rural village and urban primary schools. Village schools were largely adapted to African life, whilst primary schools kept a strong resemblance to French institutions. A smaller number of regional schools, situated in larger towns were created for the very best pupils after their primary education. The most academically gifted children might even attend *lycées* in the biggest towns or administrative cities. Each primary school followed a syllabus devised for Africa. If, however, there were sufficient French or *assimilés* (such as children of families whose parents had gained French nationality by virtue of their education in the *Quatre Communes*) then a school could be set up to follow the French curriculum. Provision was also made for limited commercial and teacher training. Teachers would be sent from France with the intention that they would be gradually be replaced by African teachers, starting with those in rural primary schools.

In Alice Conklin's study of how ideas of the *mission civilisatrice* were applied to education, she notes how they reflected the political and social preoccupations of the Third Republic. As in France, the colonial administration saw primary education as the corner stone to social change. This appeared to aim at reaching the largest number

possible. As one of its principal aims was to spread the use of the French language, there was ample evidence to suggest that France's 'messianic' attitude to her language was still intact. The subsequent governor in the AOF, General Ponty wrote [translated by Conklin]:

Even if we admit that the child who returns to his family after an elementary school education rapidly loses the use of the French language (...) he will not be able to erase from his memory the uplifting notions which, through the intermediary of this language, we will have caused to penetrate. The words may disappear, but the ideas will remain, and the ideas, which are our own and whose use endows us with our moral, social and economic superiority, will little by little transform these barbarians of yesterday into disciples and auxiliaries.<sup>35</sup>

Whilst officially there had been a shift away from assimilation, the strength of the theme of the *mission civilisatrice* remained as strong as ever and was particularly supported amongst teachers from France who had been heavily inculcated with French Metropolitan ideals that would carry more weight than any official 'associationist' principles from the Colonial Ministry. The emphasis on an education system to create administrators also pointed to utilitarian motives implied in the 'mise en valeur' of the colonies that was the over-arching principle behind the creation of the Ministry for the Colonies and that would allow a long-term and progressive colonial development.

In the years preceding the First World War, the replacement of Ernest Roume as governor general by William Ponty saw education increased as a priority as part of a heightened sense of the importance of the *mission civilisatrice* and in particular, the central place of the French language. According to Conklin, Ponty felt that 'instruction

by the French in French, in other words, was the glue that would make all of France's other civilizing measures stick.<sup>36</sup>

In 1912, Ponty appointed the *Ecole normale supérieure* graduate Georges Hardy to oversee reforms of education in the AOF. Two main considerations appear to under-pin his reforms. Firstly, Hardy intended that education be used to reinforce France's moral authority in Africa. Directives and textbooks suggested that certain traits of 'African morality' such as vanity, laziness or lavishness should be replaced by 'Republican virtues' based on a responsibility towards others and a respect for property and authority. Secondly, education should remain adapted from Metropolitan models to ensure that it managed to 'en faire des hommes utiles'.<sup>37</sup> There was a greater emphasis on manual skills and any sense that education might lead to the majority of Africans becoming naturalised into French citizenship was strictly avoided.

Gifford and Weiskel's examination of Hardy's circulars bring out an important characteristic that once again showed that 'assimilation' was highly selective:

With Hardy's explicit emphasis upon curricular adaptation to the African conditions, a de facto two-track educational system became well-established. As events proved, the educational system reserved for Europeans and a few elite métis and Africans was markedly different from that offered to the mass of Africans. This principle was never written into legislation or ordinances, but the loose wording of the educational decrees of 1903 made it possible for European families in the urban centers to assure their children of an education modeled on that available in France.<sup>38</sup>

By establishing a decidedly selective education system that permitted very few Africans to gain a full French education, Hardy's policies reflected a conviction that the native 'mentality' was largely unsuited to learning. There were strong reactions amongst

educated Africans in Dakar that Hardy had reduced educational opportunities and was motivated by racist beliefs. Under pressure from the local population, Hardy left West Africa in 1919. Despite being highly controversial, his principles remained dominant until the Second World War. Essentially, the policies were based on the principle that African education should reject metropolitan norms and aim at creating African educational standards.

One of Hardy's successors was Charles Béart who directed the famous William Ponty school after 1939. This *Ecole normale*, in the AOF capital, Dakar was responsible for training and educating nearly all of French West Africa's political figures, including the 'father' of modern Francophonie and future president of Senegal, Léopold Senghor. According to research carried out by Denise Bouche in an article on the history of the adaptation of education in Senegal from 1817 to 1960, Béart's ambition was to contribute to the emergence of a Franco-African culture that was 'de plus en plus riche, apportant au Noir le plus pur de la culture française, au Blanc tout ce qui de la pensée du Noir mérite l'audience.'<sup>39</sup> The qualities and characteristics of this possible culture will be considered in the next chapter. However, the idea illustrates yet another example of the sense in which an assimilationist cultural theme pervaded much colonial discourse.

In their assessment of Charles Béart, Prosser and Weiskel suggest that behind Béart's apparent similarity with Georges Hardy, his defence of a specific education system for French West Africa and his vision of a franco-african culture was in fact rooted in a great respect for African traditions that Béart felt would be damaged by attempts to introduce



the same curriculum as that existing in France. Béart's motivation in this case, even if very distinct from the belief in racial superiority held by Hardy, finds a common ground in not being able to resolve the logical impasse of believing in a *mission civilisatrice* with its own internal limits that could never be universalist.

The Senegalese academic Papa Ibrahima Seck, in his work *La Stratégie culturelle de la France en Afrique*, considers how France applied the model of her Republican school system to colonise Africa.<sup>40</sup> In his conclusion he reflects upon the three main characteristics of France's policies: administrative centralisation, assimilation and utility ('mise en valeur'). These were modified by the evolution in Republicanism and the different emphasis given to these principles in colonial policies reflected the main preoccupations of France at the time. On the particular issue of assimilation and the creation of a franco-african culture he believes:

Objectivement, l'assimilation, telle que la concevait le pouvoir colonial, contient l'expansion de sa propre limite, de sa propre négation. Dans cette mesure, la 'culture franco-africaine', conçue comme objectif fixé aux populations africaines par l'entremise de leurs intellectuels formés à l'école coloniale apparaissait historiquement comme une expression de la contradiction de la politique française d'assimilation culturelle.<sup>41</sup>

When considering the assimilation-association question it becomes clear that it was very much a theoretical debate. History shows that the most spectacular colonial 'grands gestes' that gave evidence of assimilation such as the freeing of slaves in the French West Indies or the granting of citizenship to the population of the *Quatre Communes*, occurred before the 1870s. The factors dictating colonial policy after the 1870s were the commercial context of European industrialisation and a wider acceptance that

contemporary ideas of race meant that the application of French universalism could not be as 'universal' as the Enlightenment forefathers had imagined it. Despite this, French beliefs in the importance of the French language and culture remained strong. If we look more closely we appreciate that full cultural 'assimilation' was limited to a small elite who could bring stability to France's colonial administration. Ability in the French language and academic success for a very small minority did bring a limited social ascension but until the 1930s this ascension was strictly limited. As we will see in Part Two, this limited social stratification, having served its purpose in the colonial period would also be a feature of elite identity in independence.

France's *mission civilisatrice* and *mise en valeur* reflected strong ideals of a republican 'civilisation' that France wanted to export. The effects of this in education were extremely limited and unequal. In this light, the assumption that France's policies were highly assimilatory can be shown to be wrong since colonial rhetoric was at odds with policy. Martin Lewis ventures that 'What was wrong with 'assimilation' was not that it was illogical, unrealistic or impossible, but rather that no serious effort was ever made to carry it out'.<sup>42</sup> Much the same, however could also be said of association.

In the next chapter we will see that when France was forced to consider her policies after 1945, she veered more to assimilation rather than association. In the next chapter, I will consider how, after 1945, the provision of education played an important role in the process of decolonisation.

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**Notes to Chapter One: Assimilation, association and colonial education**

<sup>1</sup> Raymond Betts, *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory 1890-1914* (London: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Martin Lewis, 'One hundred million Frenchmen: the "assimilation" theory in French colonial policy' in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 4, (1961-1962), 129-153 (p. 131).

<sup>3</sup> Betts, p. 60.

<sup>4</sup> *Présidence de la République*. URL: [http://www.elysee.fr/instit/consant\\_.htm](http://www.elysee.fr/instit/consant_.htm) [26 April 1999]

<sup>5</sup> Lewis, p. 131.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Crowder, *Senegal- A Study of French Assimilation Policy* (London: Methuen, 1967), p. 14.

<sup>8</sup> Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize- The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa 1895-1930*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 14.

<sup>9</sup> Condorcet , *Observations de Condorcet sur le vingt-neuvième livre de L'esprit des lois*, cited in Tvetan Todorov, *Nous et les autres: la réflexion française sur la diversité humaine* (Paris: Seuil, 1989), p. 42.

<sup>10</sup> Albert Salon, *L'Action culturelle de la France dans le monde* (Paris: Fernand Nathan, 1983), pp. 38-39.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>12</sup> Conklin, p. 12.

<sup>13</sup> Raoul Giradet, *L'Idée coloniale en France* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1972 ), pp. 53-59.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 53-57.

<sup>16</sup> Arthur Girault, *Principes de colonisation* (vol. 1) (1894) quoted in Charles-Robert Ageron, *France coloniale ou parti colonial?* (Paris: PUF, 1978), p. 196.

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<sup>17</sup> Lewis, p. 151.

<sup>18</sup> Jean Suret-Canale, *French Colonialism in Tropical Africa 1900-1945* (London: Hurst, 1971), p. 72.

<sup>19</sup> Girardet, p. 131.

<sup>20</sup> Suret-Canale, p. 225.

<sup>21</sup> It is interesting to note that Albert Sarraut's *La mise en valeur des colonies françaises* (Paris: Payot, 1923) takes the concept to be predominantly more of an economic one to facilitate French post-war reconstruction by tapping African resources:

‘La France d’outre-mer nous libérera du tribut écrasant que nous payons à l’étranger. (...) Nos matières coloniales: minerais, denrées de consommations, matières végétales et animales de toutes sortes sont appelées à pleinement alimenter notre industrie qui, ainsi favorisée, pourrait enfin reconquérir sur les grandes places mondiales le rang qui lui revient.’ Cited in Girardet, p. 434.

<sup>22</sup> Ageron, p. 233.

<sup>23</sup> Conklin, p. 6.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 176-180.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 211.

<sup>29</sup> Prosser Gifford and Timothy C. Weiskel, ‘African Education in a Colonial Context: French and British styles’ in, *France and Britain in Africa*, Prosser Gifford and W.M. Roger Louis, eds., (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1971), p. 670.

<sup>30</sup> Denise Bouche, ‘Les écoles françaises au Soudan à l’époque de la conquête 1884-1900’, *Cahiers d’études africaines*, 6, 22 (1966), 228-267, (p. 235).

<sup>31</sup> Bouche, p.246.

<sup>32</sup> Circular 92, 28 January 1899, article 13, Dakar 15 G 15. Cited in Bouche, p. 249.

<sup>33</sup> Cited in Bouche, p. 251.

<sup>34</sup> Gifford and Wieskiel, p. 675

<sup>35</sup> Conklin, p.84.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>38</sup> Gifford and Weiskel, p. 691.

<sup>39</sup> Denise Bouche, 'Autrefois notre pays s'appelait la Gaule...', *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, 8, 29 (1962), 110-122 (p. 119).

<sup>40</sup> Papa Ibrahima Seck, *La Stratégie culturelle de la France en Afrique* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1993), p. 177.

<sup>41</sup> Seck, p. 56.

<sup>42</sup> Lewis, p. 153.

## **Chapter Two: The decolonisation of French Africa and the francophone legacy of Léopold Senghor**

In the first chapter, I considered the significance of the themes of assimilation, association and the *mission civilisatrice* in French colonial policies. In this second chapter, I will consider the processes that led to the decolonisation of France's Empire following attempts to maintain its unity with firstly, the *Union française* of 1946 and, then, the *Communauté française* of 1958. Next, I will consider the contribution of the poet, philosopher and African statesman Léopold Senghor to francophonie as a cultural ideal emerging from the Franco-African relationship. I intend to examine his perceptions of relations between French and African cultures and how his political career has reflected them.

Most historians agree that the decline of the French Empire had already started by the end of the Second World War despite the widely held view amongst the French public that the colonies represented the most resistant example of the French 'grandeur'.<sup>1</sup> The necessities of raising troops to fight for France war and the racist policies of the Vichy regime saw a regression in political concessions granted to African during the Third Republic. Furthermore, the climate of political reform in the British Commonwealth gave encouragement to groups that aimed at independence in French-speaking Africa. At a time when France needed her colonial possessions more than ever, the initial response by France's governing elite after the Second World War seemed to be assimilationist in inspiration.

## 2.1 The Brazzaville conference and the Union Française

Colonial administrators discussed the future of France's colonial Empire before the end of the War at the *Conférence de Brazzaville* (Congo) in early 1944. In the course of the conference they also consulted a number of local African *évolués*. The Brazzaville conference appeared to recognise the need for concessions that France should make in the administration of her colonies. In particular, it recognised that more rapid economic and social development was essential. However, in its final recommendations there was a clear indication that France was not ready to grant autonomy:

Les fins de l'oeuvre de civilisation accomplie par la France dans les colonies écartent toute idée d'autonomie, toute possibilité d'évolution hors du bloc français de l'Empire; la constitution éventuelle, même lointaine, de *self-government* dans les colonies est à écarter.<sup>2</sup>

The use of the English term 'self-government' was significant since the most vocal calls for the departure of the colonial powers had come from Anglophone Africa. It seemed that the French colonial administrators were stressing that political events in neighbouring colonies had not influenced the French authorities. Although the conference gave an indication that France was contemplating the future of her colonies, its tone was essentially conservative. One indicator was that the objectives of future education policies were to spread a basic education amongst the masses. Meanwhile it would also look to achieve a more rapid selection of a wider elite than had existed before 1940. Colonial *mise en valeur* still entailed using a local elite to carry out important

administrative tasks. Other recommendations re-affirmed French as the sole language of education (both in private or state schools) and suggested increasing the number of higher primary schools and specialist educational establishments. This was to educate increasing numbers for the more specialised sectors of administration, commerce and industry. It was constitutionally that the conference showed its most obvious assimilationist characteristics in advocating a wider representation of the colonies in metropolitan institutions and the establishment of a Federal Assembly and territorial assemblies in Africa. The conference also suggested reforming the legal status of non naturalised French citizens as well as abolishing forced labour.

The conference was perhaps most significant for the contribution of the black *antillais* Félix Eboué whom the Free France administration appointed Governor-General for *Afrique équatoriale française* (AEF). The published proceedings of the conference are also interesting for the way that they provided accounts of consultation with the 'Cercle des Evolués de Brazzaville'. The report 'Occidentalisme et Africanisme' discussed possible arguments for reforming education and considered whether they should involve a further extension of western values, or whether African culture should form the basis of future development. Taking an academic approach the report enters into a discussion of definitions of 'civilisation' (restricted to the singular). The conclusion was that the term was synonymous with progress that some peoples (such as the French) had achieved and that others (those in Africa) continued to pursue. The French 'colonial project' was in response to a 'need':

C'est ce besoin qui a amené certains groupes, ceux que nous présumons très avancés, à s'occuper des autres groupes dits 'primitifs', 'arriérés' pour accélérer leur développement.



Nous appelons, ce besoin, colonisation. Ainsi donc la colonisation, au point de vue humain, est l'acte par lequel l'homme cherche à trouver l'équilibre vital entre tous les groupes formant l'humanité.<sup>3</sup>

In this perspective, this seemed to be a vindication of France's *mission civilisatrice* by those Africans who had benefited from it. The report supported France's role as a 'semeuse' of civilisation and concluded that the 'cercle' approved of France's extension of western civilisation to Africa. It did, however, concede that France might have to restrict her investment temporarily whilst re-building the national economy after the War.

A year after the Brazzaville gathering, an education conference in July 1945, took place in Dakar in the presence of the French General Inspector of Education Delage who envisaged universal education provision for French Africa within fifty years. This would require the construction of 50,000 schools (including 200 higher primary schools and seventy-five *écoles normales*). In Delage's opinion, the task was very much one of moral assimilation and reflected a conviction that native cultures needed to be raised from their 'inferior' status: 'le but est moins de sauvegarder l'originalité des races colonisées que de les élever vers nous'.<sup>4</sup> The belief that education should be used as a means for advancing a more widespread social mobility was even less apparent than at the Brazzaville gathering.

When the Fourth Republic constitution was draughted in the immediate post-war years, the French government recognised that important social and political changes in the colonies could not be overlooked. The acceptance of this principle was that for the first time, politicians from the colonies participated in the drafting of a French constitution.

The Monnerville Commission which sat for over three months in 1945 to propose a draught constitution included Souru Migan Apithy of Dahomey and Léopold Senghor of Senegal, who acted as the commission's *rapporteur*.<sup>5</sup> At first glance, the *Union française* that came into being in 1946 was an ambitious Republican construction which aimed to maintain the unity of the indivisible French Republic whilst giving the colonies a political representation that fell short of federalism. Its constitution, in describing the ambitions of the *Union Française* declared ambitiously that: 'La France forme avec les peuples d'outre-mer une Union fondée sur l'égalité des droits et des devoirs, sans distinction de race ni de religion.'<sup>6</sup>

The most significant institutional aspects of the *Union* were the existence of a President (the incumbent of the French executive), an advisory *Haut Conseil* (French government and overseas states' representatives) and a consultative *Assemblée de l'Union française*. Half of its members were from the French lower chamber (delegated by Metropolitan political groups) and the other half were elected representatives from France's overseas territories. However, the French metropolitan assembly would maintain a strong role in colonial affairs. Article sixty-six of the constitution indicated the extent of voting rights for the new territorial assemblies that fell considerably short of universal suffrage.<sup>7</sup>

Even though France increased the numbers of *députés* from overseas in the new French assembly, she also controlled the terms on which Africans would participate in elections. Although the constitution declared an 'indivisible Republic', it was the French parliament that retained the right to determine the terms of composition, competence and powers of

the local assemblies. African *députés* soon made their presence felt however, since two, Félix Houphouët-Boigny (the leader of the Ivory Coast African plantation farmers) and Lamine Guèye (the mayor of Dakar), soon were influential in passing significant legislation. Houphouët-Boigny had the status of *indigénat* (the application of specific colonial laws to Africans, particularly forced labour) abolished whilst Guèye succeeded in widening political participation in elections for the *Assemblée de l'Union française*.<sup>8</sup>

In the first elections a little over a million voters participated in elections out of a population in the AOF and AEF of some eighteen million people.<sup>9</sup> By 1951, this had risen to three million. The new status of citizen of the *Union française* was far from being the full French citizenship that African *députés* had hoped for. Both Léopold Senghor and Lamine Guèye were frustrated at the conservative attitudes of the metropolitan *députés* who had felt pride at such a 'revolutionary' constitution.<sup>10</sup> As the American colonial historian D. Bruce Marshall notes, it represented a dual inequality in the status of member states and of the political rights of its citizens. The French historian Charles-Robert Ageron called the resulting *Union française* a 'fruit de laborieux compromis entre des principes opposés- assimilation et fédération'.<sup>11</sup>

If many African politicians sought a greater political federation with France and more genuine political autonomy, they were also aware of African pressures for an educational assimilation to accelerate political objectives. Under these pressures, African demands were responsible for shaping French educational policies. In the years 1946 to 1949, legislation expanded and improved post-primary education, turning many schools into

*collèges* operating under the same organisation and with the same curricula as their French equivalents. In Dakar, an *Institut des Hautes Etudes* allowed full university education for the first time. There was also an increase in the number of scholarships for students to study in French universities.<sup>12</sup>

The pressures for an education system that would be fully equivalent to that in France are considered by Tony Chafer in his thesis 'Decolonisation: the politics of education in French West Africa'.<sup>13</sup> He considers the pressures that emerged in the period 1944-1960 for the modification of colonial education to allow Africans to enjoy similar educational opportunities to those existing in the Metropole. In particular, he shows the rise of an influential education lobby resulting from the increased prominence of a number of politically influential Africans educated in the French system and in particular the *Ecole Normale William Ponty* in Dakar.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, six African deputies sat in the Paris National Assembly. Amongst those elected in 1946, three of them had been teachers, including Léopold Senghor whom I will consider in the second part of this chapter. Within six months of their election to the national assembly, two deputies, Félix Houphouët-Boigny and Dabo Sissoko (Soudan and Niger) successfully brought an educational reform bill before the *Assemblée Nationale*. The bill sought the foundation of a French-style university in Dakar and an *Ecole Normale* and a *lycée* for every territory. In addition the law introduced grants for ten students per colony to study in France. One of the most symbolically important aspects of the legislation was that it would abolish rural primary schools and replace them with a single primary education for rural and urban areas.

Overall, pressures for an educational assimilation revealed a desire to move away from the inherently unequal official education system that had existed since 1903. Growing pressure for reforming education also came from trade unions, teachers and students who had campaigned for a fully accredited university to be created in Dakar. By 1957, although the provision of education had increased significantly, access to it still remained the preserve of a very small percentage of the population of France's colonies<sup>15</sup>. For political and economic reasons, Chafer argues that education became 'the focus for many French-educated African's rejection of the colonial system and the failure to decolonise education was seen as symptomatic of a broader failure to respond to African aspirations for social, economic and political emancipation.'<sup>16</sup>

In the opinion of Seck the provision of French education could only ultimately expose the glaring contradictions of the assimilationist tone of France's policies:

Si (...) l'indigène prenait le colonialiste à la lettre pour faire prévaloir son droit à l'égalité et à l' justice c'est que la doctrine élaborée par ce dernier et qui représentait ce volet idéologique culturel de sa politique comportait quelque incohérence. Car au nom de quoi proclamer des possibilités historiques qui ne sont pas ouvertes parce qu'on a pas intérêt à les ouvrir?<sup>17</sup>

Once France had embarked on a policy of increasing opportunities that seemed to be reinforced by constitutional changes, pressures for them to be extended further were only likely to bring the ambiguities of colonial policy to be more keenly felt.

Another reason for demands for increased educational provision was the growth in wider political activities in French-speaking Africa after 1944. The process of granting political

rights started in 1945 with France granting a freedom of the press followed by abolition of forced labour, the right of assembly and the extension of criteria allowing French citizenship in 1946.

The accompanying growth in cultural associations in urban areas provided a base for political organisations whether they be French-based parties such as the SFIO and or African parties such as Lamine Guèye's *Le Bloc africain*. Félix Houphouët Boigny's *Rassemblement démocratique africain* (RDA) remained linked to the French Communists from 1946 to 1950 and became the single most powerful African party in the 1950s. Until the late 1950s, members advocating independence either in the long or short term were outnumbered by those arguing the need to gain more significant political autonomy in partnership with France. In addition, trade-unions and civil service groups all provided opportunities for forms of political participation that had not existed under the Third Republic.

After the Second World War, France faced calls for increased political devolution rather than outright independence. By allowing the emergence of a larger African elite, France imagined that she would strengthen her colonial position. In reality there were limits to this policy before France's colonies would grow impatient at the ultimate restrictions that France would have to impose to the process as a colonial power. Under the pressures created by these organisations that amplified criticism of the colonial regime, the period 1946-1956 saw a gradual extension of voting rights.

## 2.2 The *Loi cadre* and the *Communauté française*

By the mid 1950s the cost of the administration of the large French African federations was an increasing burden on the French Treasury. The ensuing reforms made possible by Defferre's *Loi cadre* of 1956 effectively broke up the large centralised AOF and AEF federations in existence since 1894 to form thirteen territories (*Territoires d'outre mer*) with individual representative assemblies consisting of members voted by universal suffrage. The political leader of each *Conseil de gouvernement* in the individual territories was given the status of minister. French governors acted as presidents of these bodies. The law also made provisions for a further extension of the Africanisation of the local civil service. Despite this decentralisation of political representation, Paris took back a number of administrative areas such as monetary affairs, foreign policy, communications, higher education and the media that were designated as *services d'Etat* as opposed to the *services territoriaux* which were the responsibility of the individual territory.<sup>18</sup>

This re-organisation of the administration of the *Union française* had the effect of polarising the opinions of African political leaders for the long-term political future of the French colonies. Although France presented them as an essentially administrative reform, their wider political significance was significant. Even within the political instability of the Fourth Republic, France was receptive to rapid political and social change in its Black African states that demanded increased autonomy. Economically, the reforms seemed to suggest that France was encouraging its colonies to be more self-sufficient. Growing unrest in Algeria and the bitter memories of the events leading to the

independence of Indochina also left France conscious of the need to avoid confrontation in her colonies.

This administrative reform gained the support of the richer states of Gabon and the Ivory Coast who had argued that their resources had for long benefitted poorer nations at the expense of their own populations. Léopold Senghor denounced this reform as a damaging form of 'balkanisation' akin to the policy of 'divide and rule' of British colonial policy.<sup>19</sup> Senghor felt strongly that only a future francophone pan African form of organisation would permit the numerous ethnic groups to fulfil their potential culturally and then politically and economically.

As early as 1953, Lamine Guèye, Senghor and his party the *Indépendants d'outre mer* had argued for a *République fédérale africaine* linked to a *République fédérale française* in which the AOF and AEF federations would be an integral part of the single and indivisible French Republic. Federation was considered a logical progression from the *Union française* allowing administration of large geographical areas to pool common services and expertise.<sup>20</sup> According to a scheme of organisation based on concentric rings francophone Africa would be constitutionally tied to France in an innovative post-colonial alliance. Senghor proposed four levels of consultation and representation. The first was that of individual African *Territoires d'outre-mer*. Secondly, consultation would occur at the level of primary federations such as the AOF and AEF. Thirdly, representation would be made within the Federal French Republic. Finally, the Federal French Republic would form part of a Federal European Community. Senghor himself



appreciated that this plan required a significant evolution in French constitutional thinking, not least of which was the need to overcome the challenge of creating a Federal Republic when the French Republic was traditionally one and indivisible. The fourth level of consultation contained Senghor's ideal of 'Eurafrica' that would represent a third Super power to counteract the US and USSR spheres of influence. Jacques Hymans in *Léopold Sédar Senghor: an intellectual biography* notes that although these ideas stood little chance of serious consideration, Senghor devoted much time to them until France indicated that decolonisation would not involve any form of federation.<sup>21</sup> The principle of over-lapping circles as a form of organisation for francophone states was used again by Senghor in his plan for institutional Francophonie supported by the African inter-regional organisation OCAM in 1966. This will be considered in the next chapter.

Following the 1956 *Loi cadre*, Houphouët-Boigny and the RDA argued for a *Communauté Franco-africaine* (inclusive of France) based on the interdependence of individual territories (a progression from the *Loi cadre*) resting on the principles of democracy, fraternity and equality. This ideal of *la Françafrique* contrasted with Senghor's integrationist federalism and Sékou Touré's (Guinea) pan-Africanism.

The need to resolve the future of the French colonies was brought sharply into focus by the Algeria crisis that led to Charles de Gaulle's accession the French presidency in 1958. Following constitutional discussions with African political figures, the *Communauté française* extended the process of decentralisation and granting of political autonomy started by the *loi cadre*. Under the Fifth Republic Constitution, the individual territories

could democratically choose their future status which included remaining *Territoires d'outre mer*, becoming states within the *Communauté* or adopting full independence. De Gaulle also partially acknowledged the federalist tendency in conceding that the territories could also opt to group together with others to create federations within the *Communauté*.

The terms of the *Communauté* were subject to ratification by a referendum based on universal suffrage. All twelve territories of the former AOF and AEF accepted the invitation to enter into the Franco-African community with the exception of Guinea led by Sékou Touré.<sup>22</sup> As Guinea found out, the cost of taking immediate independence was to lose French development aid and assistance to ease the transition to a fully sovereign state. Meanwhile, the main leaders of the African political parties in the territories continued to argue not for independence but instead for interdependence.<sup>23</sup>

The ensuing but short-lived *Communauté française* maintained a significant centralised control of education, finance, justice, transport communications, foreign relations and defence. At the same time it allowed a much greater autonomy to each territory in other domains. Paris established a specific *Secrétariat d'Etat chargé des Relations avec les Etats de la Communauté*, a *Sénat* and a court of arbitration to consider contentious legal issues. In practice, the presence of six French ministers on the executive council and the maintaining of French high commissioners in each of the states did little to hide the colonial quality of the new institutions.

Was the *Communauté* devised with a long-term evolution in mind or was it meant only to exist as a stop-gap to slow down the process of decolonisation? The *Communauté française* only lasted two years but there is evidence that some French officials harboured ambitions for its future development. An official memorandum to the *Direction de l'Information et des affaires culturelles et sociales* within the above *Sécretariat* noted:

On est amené à considérer que la Communauté n'a rien de figé: c'est une institution réellement originale dont les formes juridiques se préciseront peu à peu.

Cette conception est, en tout cas, celle de l'élite africaine et spécialement de ses éléments jeunes futurs cadres des états.

(...) Il importe également que, par ces structures, on joue le jeu communautaire quelque soit l'évolution de cette institution. Autrement dit, il faut parier sur la Communauté dont les états constitueront toujours un ensemble de langue et de culture françaises, même si se modifie la nature de leurs liens avec la République française.<sup>24</sup>

As well as being a political and administrative organisation, the *Communauté* was a potential framework for developing a cultural ensemble based on exchanges. An 'Office' or 'Fondation' would be created based in Paris and funded by all the members to co-ordinate cultural policies. The archive material available also reveals that a personal initiative by the civil servant Paul Vermorel, proposed a 'projet de liaisons culturelles entre tous les états de la Communauté.' His ambition was a 'mise sur pied d'un organisme de liaisons et de créations culturelles géré par la Communauté et qui resterait à la disposition des pays indépendents de la langue française.'

The motivation behind this was to co-ordinate cultural aid, in particular, that which the French *Ministère des Affaires Etrangères* (who administered cultural policy to former

colonies and protectorates) had no experience in providing, particularly that related to general education, including mass education, the cinema and school exchanges. He claimed to have the support of certain African officials including Félix Houphouët-Boigny. The official note offered the following judgement on the plans. As a precursor of a model for a future 'restricted' francophone organisation, the problems that it saw accurately foretold those of the founders of the *Agence de Coopération culturelle et technique* some ten years later:

La formule proposée par M.VERMOREL (un 'office' ou une 'agence') est encore bien imprécise. Elle est séduisante, parce que souple, mais pose des problèmes difficiles à résoudre: concurrence et blessures d'amour propre des diverses administrations intéressées, compétence et financement d'un tel organisme (...).<sup>25</sup>

Continued strong French political influence in the new states did little to stave off African political pressures for independence. The establishment of numerous African embassies in Paris to represent the different territories by the end of 1959 indicated that for African states the *Communauté* was a transitory structure. Three states, Madagascar, Congo and Upper-Volta appointed presidents and overall, states were more eager to pursue policies that indicated distinct national identities than to consider themselves as members of the *Communauté*. Despite de Gaulle's open criteria for the different constitutional forms open to members of the *Communauté*, African divisions over the most suitable form of relations with France, whether they be federation or confederation were the most significant short-term obstacles to the success of de Gaulle's *Communauté*.

In December 1958, representatives of the territories of Senegal, Soudan, Upper-Volta and Dahomey deliberated to create a new federal constitution amongst themselves in an effort to return to a form of organisation similar to that of the AOF. Despite initial agreements, Upper-Volta and Dahomey withdrew their participation under pressure from France and the Ivory Coast. January 1959 saw the creation of the *Fédération du Mali*. A parallel group of states, the Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Niger and Upper-Volt, formed a *Comité d'entente* for economic and diplomatic co-operation within a commitment to support a community of states rather than a return to federations. The former AEF states of the Congo, Gabon and Chad also formed a semi-formal union.<sup>26</sup> When the *Fédération du Mali* asked for full independence from France (yet remain in the *Communauté*) this proved the catalyst for finally breaking up France's colonial empire. Charles de Gaulle agreed to amend the constitution of the *Communauté*, and conceded the *Fédération du Mali* both its independence and membership of the *Communauté*. Houphouët-Boigny contested this weakening of the principles of the *Communauté* and also demanded that the Ivory Coast be granted its independence.<sup>27</sup> Faced with a weakened grouping, the other states also followed suit. France's conditions that were applied to the dismantling of the former Empire were that the metropole would maintain strategic, economic and political advantages in the form of *coopération* agreements, by modifying the terms of the *Commnauté's* central institutions such as education services, justice and military provision so that states received aid on a contractual basis. In the period January to November 1960, fourteen territories under France's responsibility became independent states.

The process of decolonisation and the emphasis on interdependence and political autonomy rather than total independence show the particular quality of France's relations with her colonial elites. The theoretical debates over federations and political communities reflected upon an elite that had been assimilated into French political culture and saw little political or cultural common ground with states emerging from other colonial Empires. These debates however, reflected genuine concerns that independence would expose the isolation of the great majority of the states in economic, military and political terms given their previous reliance on federation structures for essential services and organisation.

The *Communauté* had broken-up under a combination of the pressure of opposing visions of its future development and growing African political demands. France replaced the potential multilateral *Communauté* body with bilateral ties with its former colonies that theoretically at least treated each states as an individual sovereign entity. These bilateral ties, taking up the domains established as areas for administration by France gave a particularly strong emphasis to culture and education and are considered in the next part of this thesis.

The persistent theme of a francophone cultural (and even 'spiritual') community remained both implicit and explicit in French bilateral aid policies and relations as one of the most enduring legacies of the colonial period. Although the end of the French Empire 'resolved' the inherent contradictions of colonial ideals, the symbolism of French language and culture proved a powerful image for both France and the African elites.

The institutionalisation of this ideal as a unique means of international co-operation both with France and other French-speaking countries, was kept alive for the next twenty years by Léopold Senghor of Senegal. His intellectual contribution to Franco-African cultural relations in terms of *Négritude* and *francophonie* have left a strong mark in perceptions of the links between French and African cultures. In this next section of the chapter, I will consider its various elements to allow us to contextualise ambitions for a francophone community.

### 2.3 Senghor, cultural *métissage*, francophonie and decolonisation

Before considering Francophonie as a political ideal it is important to consider its cultural and philosophical antecedents. After considering colonial educational policies and the process of decolonisation, a study of the political and intellectual career of Léopold Senghor provides a fascinating case-study of a Black intellectual coming to terms with his African and French cultural identities. From a childhood in the future state of Senegal, Senghor pursued a brilliant academic career, becoming the first Black *agrégé* in French grammar and an outstanding philosopher and poet. Caught in the historical circumstances of decolonisation, he turned to politics and became in turn a *député* in the French national assembly, a minister in the French government and then President of Senegal at independence. His political career as President of Senegal then spanned twenty-one years as head of state until he resigned in 1981 and retired to France. His two main contributions to French thought have been his own particular development of the idea of *Négritude* as a far reaching re-appropriation of Black cultural values and his conviction in francophonie as firstly, a linguistic and cultural concept, and secondly, as a

form of post-colonial institutional organisation and means of co-operation between French-speaking states. I intend to consider Senghor's contributions to the philosophical and cultural concepts of Francophonie and *Négritude* and how the latter influenced his political career.

In his much-cited article that defines the cultural essence of francophonie in the review *Esprit* in 1962, Senghor gave what has become the most famous definition of the concept:

Au moment que, par *totalisation* et *socialisation*, se construit la *Civilisation de l'Universel*, il est, d'un mot, question de nous servir de ce merveilleux outil, trouvé dans les décombres du Régime colonial. De cet outil qu'est la langue française.

La *Francophonie*, c'est cet *Humanisme intégral*, qui se tisse autour de la terre: cette *symbiose* des "énergies dormantes" de tous les continents, de tous les races, qui se réveillent à leur chaleur complémentaire.<sup>28</sup>

For those who are unfamiliar with Senghor's philosophy, his vision of francophonie as a general cultural concept and the roles that he assigns the French language appear to be lyrical testimonies to the former coloniser's language. I intend to show that these proposals were entirely consistent with his vision of *Négritude* that must be understood before evaluating the cultural concept of francophonie and eventually its institutional manifestation.

The American Jacques Hymans in his study *Léopold Sédar Senghor: an Intellectual Biography* answers the question 'What is *Négritude*?' by making us aware of the complexity of the idea:



It is impossible to define the term scientifically or philosophically. *Négritude* is the product of an irrational current of thought and neither lends itself to definition, nor permits precise demarcation. It is a preoccupation that must be lived and felt to be apprehended.<sup>29</sup>

This preoccupation was an attempt to define the essence of a Black cultural identity based on his own personal experiences. Once defined, he sought to build a philosophy and a conceptual framework on which he could base future action. Hyman's appraisal of Senghor's thought particularly identifies his frequent attempts to find complementary attributes deliberately in apparently contradictory attributes. Senghor's West African origins and earliest educational experiences seem to go some way to explaining his eagerness to reconcile apparent contradictions and opposites in his intellectual and political career. From an early age these contradictions were religious, ethnic and cultural. In a largely Moslem culture he faced the dual influences of his father's Catholicism (which he adopted) and his influential uncle's paganism. This was compounded by his dual ethnic African identity from his mother's Fulani origins and the Serer background of his father. In an educational perspective, when aged eight, he was sent to be educated at a Catholic Seminary school and faced a cultural *déracinement* when immersed in the French educational tradition. Through assiduity and academic ability he was granted a scholarship from the local authorities to prepare to enter the *Ecole Normale Supérieure*. Whilst in France he felt a strong need to rationalise his seemingly conflicting West African and French cultural identities in the company of other Black intellectuals from other parts of France's Empire who were also present in Paris.

This meeting with French-speaking Antillais, other Africans and also Black Americans

has been seen as part of the cultural movement of *Négritude* that flourished in Paris of the 1930s. Philippe Dewitte in his *Mouvements nègres en France 1919-1939*, notes that the literary activities of a number of Black writers and students occurred at the same time as France was proclaiming the triumph of 'la plus grande France' at the Paris colonial exhibition of 1931.<sup>30</sup>

Its significance was not only that it gave evidence of Black disquiet at a growing racist discourse in political discourse but it was also evidence of an expanding class of intellectuals from the French colonies and overseas territories who would increasingly use their French 'heritage' to extract greater concessions on the road to independence or increased political autonomy less than thirty years later. Furthermore, their work would be significant in exposing the contradictions in the French cultural traditions that surrounded them. Although Senghor's personal experiences account for his own particular interpretation of *Négritude*, Senghor has merely been a contributor to the idea and can make no claim for 'inventing' it.

Although the term *Négritude* was not used until 1939 when it appeared in Aimé Césaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natale*, it is generally identified by the appearance of various journals of which the most significant were *La Revue du Monde Noir* (October 1931- April 1932), *Légitime Défense* (June 1932) and *L'Étudiant Noir* (1935). The first, *La Revue du Monde Noir* was created by the Liberian Léo Sajous together with the antillais sisters Andrée and Paulette Nardant.<sup>31</sup>

The journal which was bilingual (English and French) featured such writers as Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Felix Eboué and Etienne Léro. It was preoccupied with proving the fallacy of theories of inequality between races and the mythical quality of French 'race'. Its writers shared a conviction in the need to give evidence of the variety and wealth of the Black cultural diaspora.

The single issue of the nevertheless significant revue *Légitime Défense* came from the frustrations of a number of *Antillais* students and intellectuals dissatisfied with the moderate approach of writers in *La Revue du Monde Noir* that remained respectful of the French educational and literary traditions that they had emerged from. Led by the antillais students Etienne Léro, René Ménil and Jules-Marcel Monnerot, *Légitime Défense* revealed distinctly Marxist influences as well as an admiration for the surrealists and Freud. Not only did it seek to destroy the ideals of a 'humanitarian colonialism' but it also turned on the 'bourgeoisie de couleur' who were accused of turning their backs on their Black identities by seeking to be assimilated into a white European identity.

In March 1935, *L'Étudiant Noir* was created as the journal of the *Association des étudiants martiniquais*. It was in this journal that Aimé Césaire and Léopold Senghor would make their first steps in their literary careers. In Hymans' intellectual biography of Senghor he reveals that Senghor's theories of *Négritude* initially took shape in this journal from which three main principles emerged. Firstly, there was the need to establish a significant and recognised body of Black literature and to re-appropriate a positive discourse with reference to Black values. Secondly, the contributors felt a desire to

stress the unique and distinctive contribution made by Black people to Western Civilisation. Thirdly, they were motivated by a desire to forge a new Black humanism and to initiate a cross-cultural synthesis or métissage. In contrast to the angry tone of *Légitime Défense*, the review was predominantly cultural rather than explicitly political and adopted the editorial stance that communism was incompatible with Black cultural identity. The French academic Jacques Chevrier notes that, although markedly more moderate, the journal sought to make a break with past approaches that were reluctant to challenge the centrality of French culture: ‘Dès cette période, on peut donc estimer que l’écrivain africain (ou antillais, par lors c’est le même combat) possède la conscience de l’autonomie de son monde culturel’.<sup>32</sup>

Césaire’s poetry is characterised by a sense of anger and defiance at the stereotypical portrayal of black peoples. In this approach to *Négritude*, it is associated with misery, exploitation and the proletariat. It is also a means of defining a cultural identity which is the antithesis of being white, western or colonialist. In particular he was highly critical of Antillais who sought to portray themselves as totally European and in so doing denied their black identity. In this sense he seems to diverge from the more synthetic approach proposed by Senghor. For Césaire this leads to being despised by the coloniser:

Le colonisateur qui a ‘assimilé’ se dégoûte de son oeuvre: les copies n’étant que copies, les modèles ont pour elles le mépris que l’on a pour le singe et pour le perroquet, car si l’homme a la peur de ‘l’autre’, il a le dégoût du semblable.<sup>33</sup>

A vital dimension of Senghor’s particular *Négritude* is the relationship of his black identity with his own experience of French education. Given his own cultural experiences, his pursuit of personal African values was one of discovery. In the

introduction to his first collection of writings, *Négritude et Humanisme*, Senghor describes Négritude as:

*l'ensemble des valeurs culturelles du monde noir*, telles qu'elles s'expriment dans la vie, les institutions et les oeuvres des Noirs. (...) Pour nous, notre souci depuis les années 1932-1934, notre unique souci a été de l'assumer, cette Négritude, en la vivant, et l'ayant vécue, d'en approfondir le sens. Pour la présenter au monde, comme une pierre d'angle dans l'édification de la *Civilisation de l'Universel*, qui sera l'oeuvre commune de toutes les races, de toutes les civilisations différentes- ou ne sera pas.<sup>34</sup>

In this we see the similarity with his definition of francophonie that its final ambition is a spiritual renewal represented by the establishing of an overarching *Civilisation de l'Universel* that accepts all cultures as equal. Starting from the particular identification of general values of a Negro culture, Senghor argues that these values have a very important role in a future 'Universal civilisation' that unites all races and civilisations. These Black cultural values are a heightened instinctive emotional awareness and creativity which contrasted with the cold rationalism of the Western and European tradition. Writing in 1977, Senghor described the unique quality of Black culture as:

Un rare don d'émotion, une ontologie existentielle et unitaire, aboutissant, par un surréalisme mystique, à un art engagé et fonctionnel, collectif et actuel, dont le style se caractérise par l'image analogique et le parallélisme asymétrique.<sup>35</sup>

It is one of the strong ironies of Senghor's philosophy that he relied almost entirely on the influences of French political and Catholic thinkers such as Maritain, Teilhard de Chardin and Delavignette to formulate a personal vision of *Négritude* intended to re-appropriate Black values. In Senghor's desire to rehabilitate African values and characteristics he became aware of the danger of depicting them in a hierarchical manner that could be seen as following the example of such writers as the American Spengler

(*The Decline of the West*) or the French Right-wing politician Maurras (*Un Nationalisme intégrale*) whose ideas led logically to a belief in racial purity and the incompatibility of different cultures. Senghor's response was to pursue theories that showed the complementary nature of human interaction rather than depicting exclusive cultural traits. He would employ thinking from the Catholic faith to do so. The somewhat unorthodox ideas of the Jesuit priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin provided the framework for doing this. Chardin's belief in a 'Civilisation of the Universal' comprising the complementary qualities of different races and civilisations, are the most significant influence in the need for a cultural and human cross-breeding and synthesis. Similarly, the anthropological studies of Robert Delavignette (Director of the *Ecole Coloniale* in Paris) and his efforts to counteract racist studies that saw Black cultures as inferior or backward also left an impression on Senghor. In his work *Soudan-Paris-Bourgogne*, Delavignette argued that Africa could offer its inherent humanism to Europe whilst Europe would help Africa modernise itself.<sup>36</sup>

If Senghor was to exalt the instinctiveness of Black cultural values and also affirm his own identity, he had to reconcile his personal Catholic faith and classically rational education and approach with intuitive African values. This dilemma was largely resolved by the philosophy of the French Catholic intellectual Jacques Maritain. Maritain advocated the 'Primacy of the Spiritual' that firmly bases civic values in religious ones. According to Hymans, 'Maritain advocated a mystical knowledge which, by faith and contemplation, transcended the rational.'<sup>37</sup> This belief in the pre-eminence of spiritualism allowed Senghor to remain true to his Catholic beliefs as well as champion the cause of

African values and society. From this belief in the importance of the spiritual, Senghor also claimed the superiority of the cultural over the political. Until about 1956 he argued that cultural emancipation was more significant than political independence in the future of France's colonies.

The merits of cross-breeding was a theme developed in an article that Senghor wrote for a collective work entitled *La Communauté impériale française* (1945) which considered the future of the French Empire after the Second World War.<sup>38</sup> Senghor's article entitled 'Vues sur l'Afrique Noire ou assimiler, non être assimilés' and dedicated to Robert Delavignette, echoes an opinion that he held from the 1930s onwards. Throughout his intellectual and political career, Senghor was unfailing in his support for France's cultural presence in Africa, convinced, as he was, that France was uniquely suited to her civilising mission, having herself developed a complex culture through a process of cross-breeding in her own history. Senghor felt that the synthesis of different cultures and traditions that had occurred over many centuries provided a model of humanism for Africa.

Il est surtout question, pour la colonie d'assimiler l'esprit de la civilisation française. Il s'agit d'une assimilation active et judicieuse, qui féconde les civilisations autochtones et les fasse sortir de leur stagnation ou renaître de leur décadence. *Il s'agit d'une assimilation qui permette l'association.*<sup>39</sup>

Politically this belief in 'association' manifested itself in Senghor's political preference for federalism. A certain paradox emerged that despite a French colonial discourse that at times had been disparaging and disrespectful of African cultures, Senghor was convinced that the 'Primacy of the Spiritual' over the political remained the key to promoting Black values, literature and philosophy. This would lead to a more complete sense of freedom

and equality over political action. This approach was in marked contrast to such Black intellectuals as the *antillais* Frantz Fanon who felt that only political action and ultimately violence were the keys to freedom from colonial oppression.<sup>40</sup> Judging by his philosophy and beliefs, it might have seemed that Senghor was destined to remain a man of letters rather than a statesman. This changed after 1945 when he embarked upon his political career.

It is important to consider the general criticisms of *Négritude* and Senghor's interpretation of the concept separately. Whilst the assertion of the collective identity of the Negro was a reaction shared with Césaire and Damas, the premise on which Senghor developed his own ideas has met considerable criticism.<sup>41</sup> Much of this centres on the abstract and theoretical nature of the idea. For the vast majority of Africans the concept of a *Civilisation de l'Universel* or the search for an instinctive *authenticité* was meaningless. In the opinion of many African intellectuals, *Négritude* was yet another abstract ideology with no relevance to the continent's most urgent problems.

A more damning criticism comes from those who contest the association that Senghor makes between race and cultural traits. Is this not another example of a dangerous simplification of psychology that pigeonholes races in a similar manner to such sociologists as Léopold de Saussure or Gustave Le Bon? Senghor's stress on the Negro's sense of rhythm, instinct and inherent skills, have brought critics to accuse him of taking the concepts and findings of certain branches of the social sciences at face value. Ntole Kazadi, author of *L'Afrique afro-francophone*, argues that this stems from



Senghor's admiration for progressive anthropologists such as Maurice Delafosse and Leo Frobenius. Delafosse and Frobenius, who celebrated the complexity and richness of differences between African cultures and those of Europe stood in contrast to such thinkers as Louis Marin or Gustave Le Bon who stressed the inferior nature of African cultures and the potential damaging effects on Western cultures if there was an attempt at synthesis.<sup>42</sup>

French general criticisms of *Négritude* included those of the French political scientist Raoul Girardet who condemned it as an anti-Western ideology that sought to deny the contribution of the rationalist heritage to world history. A stronger criticism came from the former Governor of Overseas France, Paul-Henri Siriex who went as far as to call *Négritude* 'an anti-white racism'.

After the Second World War, Senghor, who had been imprisoned in Germany and then fought for the French Resistance, was gradually persuaded to develop a career in politics, a process that started with his appointment to the Monnerville Commission to advise on the constitutional future of the French colonies in the Fourth Republic constitution. Significantly this came about after being recommended to the appointment by the Governor of AOF, Robert Delavignette. His political career proper began when elected as the second *député* to Senegal after Lamine-Guèye who represented the Quatre Communes. Elected by the interior of the territory, Senghor was taking advantage of reforms instituted after the Brazzaville Conference to give greater representation to the colonies. In 1946, he entered French parliament as a member of the French-based SFIO.

How would Senghor adapt his approach of the 'Primacy of the Spiritual' to his new political role? For Senghor, the future of the French Empire lay in a form of federalism involving a fully autonomous local assembly and an Imperial parliament in France. As Hymans points out, these ideas pre-empted plans for the short-lived *Communauté française* of 1958-59 where both French and Africans would be making legislation through both assemblies. Although Senghor was a member of the Overseas Territories Commission that met before the finalising of the 1946 Fourth Republic, the majority of the group did not follow his views. The outcome was a position of compromise where they accepted that the colonies were an integral part of the unitary Republic but also stated that they were freely united to France.

This somewhat contradictory formulation in the final constitution ruled out any chance of a federation of states being created. Although in his frustration he claimed that the colonised peoples were determined to gain their independence, by violence if necessary, he changed this approach shortly after when he returned to a position of strong criticism against those who advocated independence. Senghor wanted a federation where colonial 'Republics' would be on an equal level with France whilst the 'mother' country would have a significant role in maintaining key services, in economic development and in defence.

Did his embarking on a political career mean that he had rejected his conviction in the 'Primacy of the Spiritual'? It would seem that it did not. Throughout the period that led

up to official independence, Senghor continued to argue that the real problems of Africa were social and cultural before being political. In the period after he left the SFIO in 1948 he concentrated his efforts on persuading France to make economic and social reforms. In two articles in *Le Monde* he expressed his opinion on how the *Union française* should develop. In the first in which he argues 'Pour une République fédérale française', he stresses the importance of cultural issues over those of a political nature. He writes of the importance of potential 'métissage fécond' by a consistent policy of cultural decolonisation and autonomy.<sup>43</sup> In a second article in 1957, 'La décolonisation: condition de la Communauté franco-africaine', he calls for 'une décolonisation des esprits' and makes the appeal that:

on considère le colonisé comme un homme: un homme aussi homme que le colonisateur, riche d'une civilisation, aussi valable encore que différente, possédant toutes les vertus de la *condition humaine* bien qu'ils ne les aient pas toutes cultivées, au même degré (...) Il n'y a pas une civilisation mais des civilisations.<sup>44</sup>

Senghor argued that only when the principle of equality between different civilisations was fully conceded would a true community be possible and within it a greater autonomy by closer links with France by concentrating on:

La solidarité verticale, parce que complémentaire, nous est plus nécessaire que la solidarité horizontale (...) la communauté franco-africaine suppose une personnalité africaine et qu'elle s'épanouisse, qu'elle ait la liberté de choisir, parmi les éléments féconds- politiques, culturels, voire économiques- de la civilisation française qu'elle ait la liberté de les adapter à son génie propre.<sup>45</sup>

For his critics, this form of federation emphasised the importance of the continuing role of France rather than looking to other African countries for possible unions in an eventual independence. Senghor continued to see inter-African relations more fruitfully

pursued through a somewhat conservative federalism and he proposed forming a French West African political community comprising two large states with capitals in Abidjan and Dakar. In 1958, Charles de Gaulle's proposal of a *Communauté française* (approved by a referendum across the African states created by the *loi cadre*) appeared to be a vindication of Senghor's plans for a Community where Africans could develop socially, culturally and economically under a French tutelage. For Senghor however this new institutional structure did little to reassure him that this 'Balkanisation' of French West Africa would be in the interests of the economically weak states that had come into being after 1956.

Initially with the support of Dahomey, Upper Volta and the French Soudan, in late 1958 Senghor attempted to lead Senegal into a four state strong *Fédération du Mali* that would maintain certain economic advantages from the days of the AOF whilst staying within the *Communauté*.<sup>46</sup> The strong opposition of Houphouët Boigny's Ivory Coast to these moves that would threaten his state's position of strength played its part in dissuading Upper Volta that trade relations would be affected and Dahomey's leaders (strongly contested by opposition political parties) also decided that Senghor's project would be imprudent. By April 1959 the federation comprised solely Soudan and Senegal. It seems likely that by the time that Senghor and Modibo Keita of Soudan expressed their desire that the *Fédération du Mali* be granted a negotiated independence, Senghor (also under pressure from radicals to take a harder line with France) realised that the *Communauté* had no future effective role. With the start of independence negotiations between Mali and France in April 1960, the Ivory Coast signalled their intention to

withdraw from the *Communauté* and take independence. With the Ivory Coast and Mali heading for independence the other states recognised that the *Communauté* had lost any significant advantages and also requested independence from the summer of 1960 onwards.

If we attempt to summarise and give a unity to Senghor's philosophy and policies we end up with the vision of an unlikely independence leader who prepared to raise his doubts that independence in 1960 was necessarily in Africa's best interests when France opened the doors for this to occur. It was perhaps ironic that the individual who had most consistently argued against the independence of France's African possessions should have forced France to relinquish her colonial role in this part of the world.

The belief in French language being the gateway to a 'universal' civilisation brings also the criticism that it is a reductionist and assimilationist concept. The link between francophonie and French culture is seen as no more than a link of necessity.<sup>47</sup> French (or francophone) culture has been enriched by a contact with exotic cultures essentially in an unequal manner with metropolitan norms weighing on colonised cultures whilst relatively little influence occurred in the other direction. Others question the grounds on which Senghor can affirm the beauty or superiority of French over any other language. Senghor's *Négritude* was never a philosophy that inspired the masses. For this reason, it provides more a response to his own situation and that of people like him than a means for French to surpass its colonial cultural heritage. The African political elites felt this heritage keenly for two reasons. Firstly, it was part of an identity that could justifiably

link states (even if it was only the language of an elite) given that other links- political, economic and military were so weak. Secondly, French culture was the most obvious sign of a Metropolitan education and as such was important for political legitimacy.

As we have already seen, Senghor's definition of the concept of francophonie, by its association with a final 'universal civilisation' has a very close affiliation with *Négritude*. The francophone nature of *Négritude* emerging from the French assimilationist experience and its very distinctive quality from ideas of Black culture in the United States or the anglophone world will always attract criticism that it cannot hold claims to be a pan-African movement. Despite claims to have forged a possible path to a future universalism, it is no less subjective and representative of other cultures than any other philosophy.

Senghorian francophonie and its emphasis on synthesis and complementary values provided an unthreatening framework of values for post-colonial French culture. It fits neatly into a tradition of French 'messianism' that can be employed in the post-colonial period. Using this theme and the ideals of French anthropologists such as Delavignette to show that France's 'messianism' made it more respectful of other cultures, Senghor and other leaders could use the theme of francophonie as the continuation of a generous French tradition that continued after decolonisation. Perhaps more significantly, the political consequences of the *loi cadre* and the *Communauté française* obliged countries to maintain and concentrate links with Paris rather than diversify them. I will consider how these evolved in the next chapter.

French historians tend to portray the process of French decolonisation as one that involved co-operation between France's leaders and African elites. This argument appears tenable when one considers the extent to which France had produced an elite that seemed little concerned with independence until the late 1950s. The creation of this elite might be considered one of the most impressive achievements of French colonialism but also, ironically led to the end of France's colonial Empire because the inherent contradictions of proposing state structures (including education) similar to those in France became too great. This was the case only after 1945 when external factors compounded French constitutional and financial restraints.

The idea of francophone Africa was therefore an expression of a political and geographical unity that shared the French language amongst its political elites. Senghor's ideal of a cultural francophonie for all of its philosophical subtleties seemed to provide a framework (that was much contested) for accepting the continued use of the coloniser's language when France handed over sovereignty.

As Christopher Miller in *Nationalist and Nomads* points out, this relationship of the elites with the French language was not without considerable ambiguity:

Francophone literacy arrived in Colonial Africa like a Trojan horse, bearing an ideology of collaboration and assimilation, a condition of 'original sin' that the francophone literature of Africa has sought to overcome during the last seventy years (...) literature would come to be associated with resistance while continuing to work within the system.<sup>48</sup>

Although literacy in French was made possible by the colonising power, it was later an

ideological lever for decolonisation whilst the elite African class never fully rejected their French-speaking cultural identity. To this extent it might be argued that the French-speaking elite did not stray significantly from the path shown by the *Négritude* movement as symbolised by Senghor in the 1930s:

The history of the French colonies after the Second World War well illustrates the main ambiguities of the French colonial project. The constitutional implications of the *Union française* and the *Communauté française* pointed towards political assimilation within a 'greater France'. When it became obvious that this would not be fulfilled, pressures for independence became ever greater. What was interesting about decolonisation in the colonies under French control was that France had created its own particular political elites from the provision of highly structured school systems. Benedict Anderson observes:

These school-systems, centralized and standardized, created quite new pilgrimages which typically had their Romes in the various colonial capitals, for the nations hidden at the core of the empires would permit no more inward ascension.(...)The interlock between particular educational and administrative pilgrimages provided the territorial base for new 'imagined communities' in which 'natives' could come to see themselves as 'nationals'. The expansion of the colonial state which, so to speak, invited 'natives' into schools and offices, and of colonial capitalism which, as it were, excluded them from board rooms, meant that to an unprecedented extent the key early spokesmen for colonial nationalism were lonely, bilingual intelligentsias unattached to sturdy local bourgeoisies.<sup>49</sup>

These educational policies sowed the seeds of the future post-colonial nations. However, the cultural identities of the elites were vital for their post-colonial legitimacy. Furthermore they were evidence that the French colonial cultural project had been successful. What was left after France's official departure in 1960 was a discourse and a



set of cultural ideals that legitimised future close relations based on a shared cultural heritage.

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**Notes to Chapter Two: The decolonisation of French Africa, and the francophone legacy of Léopold Senghor**

<sup>1</sup> Raoul Girardet, *L'Idée Coloniale en France* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1972) p. 278.

<sup>2</sup> 'Recommandations de la Conférence de Brazzaville', (6 février 1944), in Jacques Dalloz, *Textes sur la décolonisation*, (Paris: PUF, 1989), p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Ministère des Colonies, *La Conférence africaine de Brazzaville- 30 Janvier-8 Février 1944* (Paris: Ministère des Colonies, 1945), pp. 91-92.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Papa Ibrahima Seck, *La Stratégie culturelle de la France* (Paris: l'Harmattan, 1993), p. 90.

<sup>5</sup> Gaston Monerville himself came from the French *Antilles* but had settled in France since the 1920s.

<sup>6</sup> Dalloz, p. 20.

<sup>7</sup> 'Une loi organique déterminera dans quelles conditions pourront être représentées les diverses parties de la population'. Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Charles-Robert Ageron, *La Décolonisation française* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1994), p. 72.

<sup>9</sup> Anthony D. Chafer, 'Decolonisation: the politics of education in French West Africa', (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1993), p. 38.

<sup>10</sup> D. Bruce Marshall, *The French colonial myth and constitution-making in the Fourth Republic* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 299.

<sup>11</sup> Ageron, p. 74.

<sup>12</sup> Prosser Gifford and Timothy C. Weiskel, 'African Education in a Colonial Context: French and British styles' in *France and Britain in Africa*, Prosser Gifford and W.M Roger Louis, eds., (New Haven and London, 1971), p. 694.

<sup>13</sup> Anthony D Chafer, 'Decolonisation: the politics of education in French West Africa', (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1993) p. 76.

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<sup>14</sup> Ruth Morgenthau, *Political parties in French-speaking West Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 12.

<sup>15</sup> The last French administrator responsible for school education in French colonial Africa, Jean Capelle notes that in AOF, the percentage of children in primary schools had risen from under five percent in 1948 to almost twenty percent in 1957. (Jean Capelle, *L'Education en Afrique noire à la veille des Indépendences* (Paris: Karthala- ACCT, 1990), p. 307.

<sup>16</sup> Chafer, p. 124.

<sup>17</sup> Seck, p. 59.

<sup>18</sup> Joseph-Roger de Benoist, *La Balkanisation de l'Afrique occidentale française* (Dakar: Les Nouvelles éditions africaines, 1979), p. 138.

<sup>19</sup> Ageron, pp. 145-146.

<sup>20</sup> Ntole Kazadi, *L'Afrique afro-francophone* (Paris: Didier Erudition, 1991), p. 28.

<sup>21</sup> Jacques Hymans, *Léopold Sédar Senghor- An Intellectual Biography* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971), pp. 164-166.

<sup>22</sup> See Georges Caffard, 'Le choix de l'Afrique noire', *Esprit*, November 1958, 12-31 (p. 17). He notes that there was a 93.5% vote in favour across the territories and a 6.5% vote against.

<sup>23</sup> Keith Panter-Brick, 'Independence, French style' in, *Decolonisation and African Independence: The Transfers of Power 1960-1980*, Prosser Gifford and W.M Roger Louis, eds. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 77

<sup>24</sup> CAC Centre des archives contemporaines, Fontainebleau (Ministère de la coopération-service de coopération culturelle et technique) File 810443/ 12 MC 42, 'La Communauté 1959-60', Document 'Politique culturelle et communauté évolutive', Paris, 26 November 1959.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, Présidence de la communauté 30/11/59.

<sup>26</sup> Ageron, p.151.

<sup>27</sup> De Benoist, p. 260.

<sup>28</sup> Léopold Senghor, 'Le Français langue de culture', *Esprit*, November 1962, 837-844 (p. 844) (*Italics in original text*).

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- <sup>29</sup> Hymans, p. 23.
- <sup>30</sup> Philippe Dewitte, *Les Mouvements négres en France 1919-1939* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1985), pp. 256-275.
- <sup>31</sup> Jacques Chevrier, *Littératures d'Afrique noire de langue française* (Paris: Nathan, 1999) p. 20.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 23.
- <sup>33</sup> Aimé Césaire, *Négreries*. 'Jeunesse noire et assimilation quoted in Dewitte', p. 356.
- <sup>34</sup> Léopold Senghor, '*Liberté I- Négritude et Humanisme* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1964), p. 9.
- <sup>35</sup> Léopold Senghor, *Liberté III*, (Paris: Seuil, 1977), p. 77. Quoted in Kazadi, p. 70.
- <sup>36</sup> Hymans, p. 67.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 51.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 143.
- <sup>39</sup> Léopold Senghor, 'Vues sur l'Afrique noire, ou assimiler, non être assimilés', *La Communauté impériale française* (1945) in *Liberté I*, p. 45.
- <sup>40</sup> Kazadi, p. 69.
- <sup>41</sup> Hymans, p. 24.
- <sup>42</sup> Herman Lebovics, *True France: the Wars over Cultural Identity: 1900-1945* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 13.
- <sup>43</sup> Léopold Senghor, 'Pour une République fédérale française', *Le Monde*, 4 July 1953.
- <sup>44</sup> Léopold Senghor, 'La décolonisation condition de la communauté franco-africaine', *Le Monde*, 4 September 1957.
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>46</sup> Janet G. Vaillant, *Black, French and African: A Life of Léopold Sédar Senghor* (Cambridge, Mass./ London: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 295-296.
- <sup>47</sup> Mantungulu Kaba Lubuka, 'Le discours francophone: pour quelle notion de Développement?', *Francophonie et Géopolitique Africaine*, Institut panafricain de géopolitique (Paris: Editions Okem, 1987), 76-85, (p. 83).

<sup>48</sup> Christopher Miller, *Nationalists and Nomads* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 119.

<sup>49</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983), p. 127.

**PART TWO- *Coopération culturelle*- means of influence or persistence of a special relationship between France and her former colonies?**

### Chapter Three: *Coopération culturelle* 1960-70

In the previous chapter of this thesis I considered how, after 1945, the ideal of an assimilation involving the extension of the French educational system to the colonies shaped political demands from the African elites for the evolution of the French Empire after 1945. The desire of the colonial elites of Franco-African states to maintain a political interdependence with France and the accompanying ideal of profiting from a loose 'greater France' explain why it was that African calls for political independence were in a minority position amongst the political classes until the late 1950s. The demands for colonial educational in Africa to be of the same nature as that found in France, was in contrast to the circumstances surrounding France's colonial policies before the Second World War when the provision of educational policies was inconsistent and highly selective.

The following two chapters consider the evolution of cultural relations between France and her former African colonies in the form of aid relations. These aid relations that replaced colonial ties were known as *coopération*. In this chapter, I will consider French *coopération* policies generally before considering *coopération culturelle* in particular. I will consider *coopération culturelle* through its institutions and will look at its values and motivations. This will be done through a variety of French policy documents from the time. To situate this, I will consider both ambitions for 'nation-building' and education with the wider context of French foreign policy objectives and the theme of Gaullism in the 1960s. My analysis will show that France pursued a vigorous cultural presence not only for prestige but also for political, strategic and commercial reasons.

Before I consider how France maintained the continuation of an important cultural role in the *Etats africains et malgache* (EAM) from the 1960s onwards, I would like to return both to the definition of *coopération* that features in the introduction of this thesis and the complexity of the concept.

Beyond the most common meaning of ‘working with’ or ‘collaborating’, the term *coopération* has two other uses. The first describes official exchanges of a cultural or scientific nature between states of a comparable level of development. The second, which seems to be the more relevant here, describes policies by which a given country brings assistance to the development of a less developed country. An examination of the use of the term by official French documents reveals that the term is used ambiguously with the effect that it encompasses trade and commercial relations when official French government policy facilitates French companies gaining contracts for development projects. To what extent did official discourse attempt to avoid this ambiguity? My examination of this question will commence with a consideration of the French institutional changes that occurred at decolonisation to permit a policy of *coopération*. One of the key features of France’s handing over of sovereignty was the stress on continuity with a past colonial heritage in which culture held a very significant place.

### **3.1 From *Communauté* to *coopération*: The reform of French institutions and the signing of *coopération* Agreements**

When France agreed to concede independence to its African colonies in 1960, it was done in a manner that saw France replace colonial administrative ties with her with close



relations based on providing aid, assistance and human resources in a number of key areas for their future development. These key areas of state functions such as transport, health, the judiciary, defence and education had been designated as areas in which the *Communauté française* would play a decisive role from 1958 onwards. The speed with which independence followed the introduction of the institutions of the *Communauté* meant that many terms of the constitution of the *Communauté* went unfulfilled, yet it was the structures of the *Communauté française* that laid the foundations for France's policy of *coopération*.<sup>1</sup>

France had previously administered her colonies through the *Communauté française*. With independence, bilateral diplomatic agreements (*accords de coopération*) signed between France and the individual sovereign states brought a continuity in essential state functions. Even before granting independence to states, France had created the FAC (*Fonds d'aide et de coopération*) to fund development activities. The agreements that France signed at independence of her former colonies covered a wide array of functions that France categorised in four groups. The first was the political and included agreements covering foreign policy, defence and access to strategic resources such as uranium. The second was the economic and social and covered monetary, economic and financial policy, transport and communications. In these agreements, France maintained the CFA franc currency area (*Communauté financière africaine*) that required that African states maintain reserves with the *Banque de France* in return for a stable exchange rate with the French franc. Commercial agreements were also established to facilitate trade for French companies. The third area was the judicial and covered such

functions as maintaining legal systems and their associated roles (courts, training of lawyers etc). The fourth and final area was the social and cultural and oversaw cultural agreements and various forms of education. It will be this last area that will be considered in this chapter and the next. I will now consider the institutions of *coopération* before examining the terms of *coopération culturelle* agreements.

At the summit of Franco-African policy and according to the terms of the Fifth Republic Constitution, the President defines and oversees French foreign policy.<sup>2</sup> The practical consequence is that, following traditions established by De Gaulle, relations with the former African colonies, have become very much part of the president's 'domaine réservé'.<sup>3</sup> Since the 1960s French presidents have identified themselves closely with African policies by regularly visiting the continent and making sure that African leaders coming to France have received the protocol befitting their status as privileged partners. Given the importance accorded to these relations, the Elysée has also maintained a cell of advisors specialising in Africa and acting in parallel with other diplomatic offices.

In addition to the Elysée, the main diplomatic arms for French foreign policy in Africa have been the *Ministère des Affaires Etrangères* (Quai d'Orsay) and the *Ministère de la Coopération* (rue Monsieur). In general, for aid, the responsibility for overseeing relations has depended on whether the country concerned is French-speaking (le champ) or non French-speaking (hors champ). However, this division of roles and the precise function in the French administrative system of the main institutions has seldom been straightforward.

The main ministry dealing with French foreign policy has historically been the *Ministère des Affaires Etrangères* which, in close association with the head of state, has been central to French foreign policy implementation throughout the world. Geographical *directions* cover French representation across the continents whilst three parallel functional services administer bilateral diplomacy, economic affairs and multilateral affairs. The ministry also has responsibility for French development aid in parts of the world not covered by the rue Monsieur as well as the promotion of French trade and culture. Whilst in policy formulation, the weight of the presidential prerogative limits the impact of the ministry on policy formulation, the sheer size and scope of the Quai d'Orsay makes it a formidable institution for promoting French interests and perpetuating France's great power status through effective representation at formal diplomatic gatherings throughout the world backed by numerous commercial and cultural initiatives.

Set up to succeed French colonial structures, the *Ministère de la Coopération* created on 18 February 1961, to replace the *Secrétariat d'Etat aux relations avec les Etats de la Communauté* was designated the task of overseeing the wide array of *coopération* agreements between France and her former colonies and then later with French-speaking countries. In establishing the ministry France became unique in creating a separate specialist administration to co-ordinate bilateral aid to former colonies on the African continent. In 1960 *the Ministère de la Coopération* was organised into three main sections. The most significant was *the Services des relations culturelles scientifiques et*

*techniques* which dealt with education, cultural policies and the provision of the large numbers of France's technical assistants. A second section, the *Direction de l'aide au développement* was the main office for channelling the government's financial support of development projects. Thirdly, the *Bureau des chargés des missions géographiques* was responsible for programme co-ordination.<sup>4</sup> Diplomatically, the specific agreements that France signed with her former colonies were the documents that legally framed how France would assist her former colonies. The negotiation of agreements of a potentially political or military nature as well as diplomatic relations including the running of embassies, consulates and official visits and negotiations all came under the jurisdiction of the Quai d'Orsay.

Although the rue Monsieur was officially delegated the administrative unit responsible for aid, two factors have restricted its ministerial autonomy. Firstly, it has relied heavily on the financial control of the *Ministère des Finances* who closely oversee funds designated to French aid. Secondly, the majority of its personnel have been civil servants provided by other ministries such as education, foreign affairs or industry who also supply specialist advisors as required.<sup>5</sup> This complex institutional web has meant that co-ordination of policies has often been awkward. Given that aid has involved a significant financial dimension, the ministry officially takes instructions from the Prime Minister. In practice, the overlap between the political and the financial has led to aid being subservient to wider political priorities than mere development assistance and that the Elysée has been highly influential in making sure that these priorities are known when negotiation of aid provision occurs.<sup>6</sup> As Brigitte Nouaille-Degorce has argued, the

specific roles of the *Ministère de la Coopération*, the *Ministère des Affaires Etrangères* and the Elysée lead to potentially sensitive questions on the significance of aid in relation to French foreign policies generally and its political importance for the recipient countries.<sup>7</sup> The very existence of a separate *Ministère de la Coopération*, has been taken as evidence that France wished to maintain strong and privileged relations with her former colonies.<sup>8</sup> Tentative moves to have the functions of the rue Monsieur absorbed into the Quai d'Orsay traditionally brought expressions of concern from African leaders that France was preparing to turn her back on the continent.<sup>9</sup>

A third and slightly less known but significant actor in French aid policies has been the *missions d'aide et de coopération* (MAC) which have been present in aid recipient countries to administer aid, liaise with ex-patriate personnel and to prepare regular consultations.<sup>10</sup> The *Missions* have served to be responsive to the proposals put forward by states as well as ensuring that aid is employed as intended by the French government. Although technical assistants are sent by the *Ministère de la Coopération*, when abroad they have come under the immediate jurisdiction of the local ambassador who takes orders from the Quai d'Orsay. On other occasions, agreements have made technical assistants civil servants of the host government. As we will see later, the views of technical assistants have not had a major impact on policy formulation.

The final layer of policy units consists of a considerable number of associated agencies for research and project evaluation for very specific tasks. One example of this was the BLACT (*Bureau de liaison des agents de coopération technique*) intended to train and

help technical assistants or AUDECAM (*Association universitaire pour le développement de l'enseignement et de la culture en Afrique et à Madagascar*) to pursue educational projects. General educational organisations not specifically working on development issues who also made contributions included the IPN (*Institut pédagogique national*) and the CIEP (*Centre international d'études pédagogiques*).

Beyond the apparently disjointed nature of French *coopération* administration, another significant characteristic that has been noted by both Brigitte Nouaille-Degorce and Danielle Domergue-Cloarec is the scant interest that French aid policy has attracted from the French *Assemblée Nationale* and amongst the general public.<sup>11</sup> For an activity which has involved a number of ministries it is surprising that the only regular occasion on which aid has come under scrutiny has been the annual discussion of the state budget. Periodic reports on *coopération* published by specific commissions have tended to be subject to restricted distribution.<sup>12</sup> Such factors have meant that fundamental changes to policies have been infrequent whilst it would appear that France has been eager to maintain steady relations with her African partners whether political, cultural or economic. Although beyond the ambitions and scope of this study, the nature of policy formulation in *coopération* could be explored by applying 'policy networks theory' which aims to consider the complex interplay between people and organisations at all levels of *coopération*.<sup>13</sup> This approach would explore the influence of a range of factors whose precise role in this context has been little considered in the existing literature.

The bilateral agreements setting out the terms of French cultural aid that were signed with the new sovereign states comprised of two different categories of documents. The most common were general *coopération culturelle* agreements that established the range of cultural services that France would provide. This included assistance to school systems, cultural centres and the media. The use of the former colonial power's language was institutionalised by the near-universal declaration of French as the sole official language within each state with the exception of Madagascar (Malgache) and Mauritania (Arabic) who declared two official languages as constitutional languages.

A second separate category of agreements existed specific to higher education. In this second domain, the declared intention was to provide an education of an international standing that would allow Africans to take advantage of overseas education or training, usually in France. Until the late 1960s and early 1970s, France took near total control of the higher education sector both in management and in teaching. France's educational commitment also entailed loans for building educational infrastructure, the financing of personnel from France and a considerable contribution to the cost of educating Africans in France.

The near identical general cultural agreements signed by Upper Volta, Niger, Ivory Coast and Dahomey provide a sample of documents allowing us a closer examination of the principles of *coopération culturelle*.<sup>14</sup> Guy Feuer, who examined these agreements in the *Annuaire Français de droit international* of 1963, went as far to say that the differences between documents were essentially 'nuances'.<sup>15</sup>

To consider *coopération culturelle* agreements, I wish to examine the template found in the *Services des relations culturelles scientifiques et techniques* archives that was used to create the agreements of the five states mentioned above. After the description of the participating parties, the document states that relations existed on an essentially free basis, reinforced by ‘la solidarité morale et spirituelle des nations d'expression française’. This seems to be an indirect response to accusations that France had forced her terms on the receiving countries in the context of being granted independence. In fact half the states signed *coopération* agreements prior to independence whilst those states who belonged to the *Entente* grouping (set up as a response to the Senegal-Upper Volta alliance to form the *Fédération du Mali*), comprising the Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Niger, Upper Volta and also Cameroon and Mauritania, signed their agreements shortly after the full transfer of sovereignty. The document acknowledged that sharing a common language gave a cultural identity that facilitated relations between the contracting states motivated by the desire to promote a close co-operation in the areas of science, culture and education.

The document comprises seventeen articles divided into three sections or ‘titres’ for firstly primary, secondary and technical education (which is the largest), secondly cultural exchanges and finally scientific and technical research. Most of the document sets out the terms of French involvement in education and the conditions of employment of teachers and educational advisors.



'Titre I- De la coopération en matière d'enseignement primaire, secondaire et technique', outlining arrangements for France's aid to school education, was almost certainly the most important section of the document since it established the conditions under which the African states could maintain equivalent standards of education with Metropolitan France. France undertook to maintain inspections of schools that would allow African students to take part in *Concours* such as the *Agrégation* or the *CAPES* and be able to apply for entry to specialist *Grandes Ecoles* in France. In return for these rights, African states pledged to apply to France in priority when seeking teachers of any sort to fulfil functions within their education systems.

'Titre II' covering cultural exchanges included a declaration that both governments (France and the African country) intended to work in favour of the 'épanouissement' of the sciences, arts and cultures together with the 'connaissance respective' of their cultural heritage.<sup>16</sup> This was reinforced by the setting up of a 'Maison de culture' in the state intended to promote mutual cultural *rayonnement* and exchanges of ideas and personnel. Separate agreements were negotiated to set conditions for the participation of the French government in developing organisations and institutions with the aim of artistic or literary promotion. This section also featured the agreement of the parties to promote cultural exchanges between the two countries, specifying the provision of libraries, cultural centres and institutes as well as the exchange of documents, materials and know-how in the area of publishing, film and broadcasting.

The final section, Titre III, covered *coopération* in scientific and technical research. Here France committed herself to helping in all areas of research by making available specialist institutes in France, and foreseeing an eventual 'Centre national de la recherche scientifique' for each state. As in previous parts of the agreement, France undertook to provide the required training for Africans to fulfil the necessary roles for these establishments to function. The agreement ended with declarations that either side (ie. France or the African state) could negotiate changes at any time.

The inclusiveness of France's involvement in the cultural and educative domain and the concern at maintaining equivalent educational standards is the single most noticeable dimension of these agreements. In justification of these policies the ambiguous use of the term 'solidarité' soon becomes apparent. In the first use at the beginning of the document, the reference to 'la solidarité morale et spirituelle des nations d'expression française' readily reinforces an existing discourse of French 'messianisme'. In such a discourse France expresses her conviction that her language and culture have both evolved from a 'privileged' pattern of history that represent universal values. A second use of the term is found to explain the need for standardisation with French educational institutions 'Pour assurer la solidarité dans le domaine de l'enseignement avec la République Française'.<sup>17</sup> Taken together the two uses of 'solidarité' suggest that within 'coopération' the cultural dimension where France maintains such a dominant role is an entirely natural state of affairs.

The agreements for higher education allowed for separate development of universities according to development plans agreed between France and each state. The ambitions that African states held for the development of university education that were for motivations of prestige are particularly evident. The existence of universities were powerful symbols of development and progress. Following the same logic as school education, that is, the desire that equivalence be maintained with France, and because of the very limited provision left from the colonial administration in each state, France was given a significant control over the future development of higher education.

Initial plans by France centred on regional plans for university provision. In particular, the University of Dakar in Senegal was made open to students in all states of francophone Africa. To ensure the quality of its education, its management and personnel were subject to the same general rules as French universities, with chancellors appointed by agreement from the Senegalese and French governments; this was subject to an agreement signed in 1962 that specifically guaranteed the mutual recognition of university qualifications by the two states.<sup>18</sup>

Before independence, only Dakar had a university in francophone Africa. By 1964, with French funding, embryonic higher education institutions were set up in Tannanarive, Abidjan, Yaounde and Brazzaville. The agreements signed by the states in 1960-61 frequently set up establishments that would become fully-fledged universities under the guidance of France. Indeed throughout most of the 1960s these universities were under the administration of the *Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale* in Paris. Initially France

had favoured developing regional universities to meet the demands of educating the cadres necessary for the needs of the civil service and the teaching profession. Under political pressure and reasons of prestige, states demanded that they be permitted to set up their own universities. In an agreement signed by the eight ex-Republics of the AOF, a 'centre d'études administratives' was opened to be shared by the signatory states. A specific stipulation was that no other higher education establishment be opened in these countries without consultation with France.<sup>19</sup>

The structures of French aid in Paris and in Africa, their administration and the aid to education that France committed herself to, all reveal that there was a high degree of continuity in France's post-colonial *coopération*. Not only was there continuity but France's involvement was widespread and comprehensive. From financial aid to defence and training of African civil servants it seems that the granting of independence did not end a significant transfer of expertise and personnel from Paris to the African continent. I will now consider how France presented the values of her aid through certain official documents pertaining to *coopération*. I will first consider the *Rapport Jeanneney* that sets out the principles of French aid in the early 1960s. Next I will look at the document *France-Afrique-Madagascar: un bilan culturel* that evaluates the values of the French cultural legacy. I will follow this by considering how the French Senator Edouard Bonnefous challenged some of the ideals of French *coopération*.

### 3.2 The values and motivation of French *coopération*

The significance of French *coopération* policies in this part of the thesis will be considered through the values that they espoused. One means to do so will be through various reports or policy statements that reflected broad official thinking in the 1960s.

When considering policy it perhaps prudent to consider what the term means. In the opinion of Hecló writing in the *British Journal of Political Science* in 1972, it is ‘usually considered to apply to something ‘bigger’ than particular decisions, but ‘smaller’ than general social movements (...) at its core, policy is a course of action intended to accomplish some end’.<sup>20</sup>

Similarly the term is to be distinguished from ‘administration’ which is employed to describe the carrying out of political decisions. ‘Policy’ suggests that there is a rationale behind decisions, often, but not necessarily reflecting an ideology of some sort. It is on this basis that we shall consider the values in *coopération culturelle*.

Published in 1963, the government commissioned *Rapport Jeanneney* (officially known as *La Politique de coopération avec les pays en voie de développement*), gives one of the most detailed rationales of French *coopération* in the 1960s.<sup>21</sup> The report is guided by three main questions. The first is that of establishing the reasons for France pursuing an aid policy with developing states. The second question asks how much France should spend on this policy. The third asks which countries should receive this aid. In response

to the first question, at an early stage, the report reveals 'les vraies raisons d'une politique de coopération' which are firstly 'le devoir de solidarité humaine', secondly, 'le besoin de rayonnement' and thirdly 'l'attente d'avantages essentiels, encore qu'aléatoires et lointains'. In the first reason, a moral duty impels France to fulfil her natural vocation which is essentially ethical. In consequence the report considers that: 'Manquer à ce devoir serait renier la civilisation qu'elle incarne, en ruiner l'inspiration, en compromettre l'épanouissement. La politique rejoint ici l'éthique.'<sup>22</sup>

In the second reason, that of 'rayonnement' there was a clear declaration that the cultural dimension of France's aid efforts is an integral part of an essentially altruistic strategy:

Un rayonnement lui [la France] est nécessaire, qui doit être l'oeuvre d'hommes prêts à s'expatrier et d'une culture prétendant à l'universalité (...)

La France désire, plus que toute autre nation, diffuser au loin sa langue et sa culture. Son besoin de rayonnement intellectuel trouve bon emploi auprès des peuples dont la langue convient mal aux idées et aux techniques modernes ou n'est pas admise dans les relations internationales: elle leur apporte un mode d'expression et une méthode de pensée.<sup>23</sup>

Even if this cultural discourse no longer carries explicit ideas of belonging to a 'superior' race, it still features the myth of French culture representing a 'universal' culture that was more adapted to the modern world and to international relations than nearly all others.

In response to the question of why France should pursue a policy of *coopération* the document shows that France did not deny that *coopération* allowed the pursuit of national interests. However, the *Rapport Jeanneney* sought to establish a hierarchy of

motivations for *coopération*. This attempted to show that France's material interests were minimised. The report argued that moral motivations or 'solidarité' were more significant than economic gains that would be reaped at a later stage. Indeed, it is for this reason that France used the term 'coopération' over the term 'aide'. The first term inferred the participation of the partner whereas in the second term, the receiver merely accepts a form of charity without participating in any form of exchange.

Whilst the second main question regarding the percentage of French gross domestic product to be allocated to aid policies is only vaguely answered (it timidly suggests a provisional target of one and a half per cent in ten years time), the answer to the final question broadly supported the idea that there should be a concentration of aid policies towards francophone Africa: 'la conclusion sera que la coopération avec l'Afrique doit rester prioritaire, mais qu'elle ne doit pas plus être aussi exclusive'.<sup>24</sup>

The extent of the questions that were discussed by the committee who compiled the report is revealed in the appendices at the rear of the *Rapport Jeanneney*. The appendices within the report allowed the publication of a number of documents dealing with specific areas of *coopération*. One such appendix is entitled 'Traits particuliers de la coopération culturelle dans les pays francophones d'Afrique noire' and consider the best approach to take to achieve success in its policies. Once again, French cultural and development policies are inextricably linked:

(...) on essaiera de fortifier les positions de la langue et de la culture françaises en utilisant celles-ci comme instruments du développement. Cette politique repose implicitement sur le pari que notre langue et notre culture occuperont en Afrique une

place d'autant plus large et indiscutée qu'elles auront été liées à des actions reconnues utiles par les bénéficiaires de l'aide.<sup>25</sup>

The article proposed that a fully integrated cultural and educational policy was required in order to achieve a 'progrès culturel' necessary to maintain a consistent level of linguistic competence and general level of education in the general population. The accomplishing of this 'progrès culturel' should be pursued by the use of all forms of media such as radio, the press and cinema as well as more traditional means of education such as schools. The determinant role that France maintained in development in many countries and the vast numbers of technical assistants that she sent allowed France a significant influence in forming the overall pattern of development. The report argues that, in these conditions, it was even more important that France be conscious of carrying out an all-inclusive *coopération globale*.

A somewhat more lyrical document was published by the *Ministère de la Coopération* in the same year as the Jeanneney report which sought to depict the rich colonial heritage in France's cultural relations with the EAM. The discourse of the early years of France's post-colonial undertakings found in the French *coopération* document *France-Afrique-Madagascar: un bilan culturel* (1963) is an interesting example of a committed justification of France's cultural policies.

The document appears to represent a very thinly disguised celebration of the *mission civilisatrice*. In a very confident and near triumphalist style it rejoices in the achievements of France's colonial past, presented as a cultural crusade initiated by such



military leaders as General Faidherbe who reinforced the French presence in Senegal in the 1850s.<sup>26</sup>

The author of *France-Afrique-Madagascar: un bilan culturel* seeks to convince the reader of the 'qualité du monde noir', by citing the names of African leaders who received a school education in France or from the famous William-Ponty school in Senegal or by evoking the names of Black African writers to have been recognised by French literary circles. The cultural agreement signed between France and the Central African Republic is also presented in *France-Afrique-Madagascar* and represents an essential 'serment' typical of those signed by France and the newly independent states.

The most significant section to consider the implications of France's continued support of French is that entitled 'l'unité du langage'. Here France's unique cultural heritage is presented as a basis for communication, political unity and co-operation in the same manner as Latin within the Roman Empire. Referring to Africa, the document suggests that:

Il lui manquait cependant l'unité de langage pour proposer son style aux autres civilisations. (...) Peu importe que le français se soit d'abord imposé parce qu'il apportait à tous les ordres du conquérant, d'autres sociétés ont évolué sous l'empire des lois analogues. Pour être entrée dans la civilisation par une voie romaine, la France sait que la contrainte est souvent l'expression de la nécessité.<sup>27</sup>

Moving to the status of the language in the 1960s, the text readily associates French with such terms as 'épanouissement' and 'émancipation' where it is a freely chosen means of communication to accompany and facilitate access to the modern world: 'elle ouvre à la

liberté noire les portes des laboratoires’, the document claims at one point.<sup>28</sup> Yet it is in its reformulation of Senghor’s ideas of complementary cultures (where French has a privileged role) that the document reserves its greatest lyricism:

Depuis que le monde blanc impose ses inventions et ses modes à l'univers, les hommes de couleur doivent saisir et domestiquer les langues européennes pour apprendre et s'approprier l'esprit secret, la palpitation intime de ses déconcertantes trouvailles.<sup>29</sup>

By citing the names of a number of French ethnologists who have written on Africa and those African writers to have succeeded in the medium of the French language, the author of the brochure shows the depth of France's cultural solidarity with Africa. In a final section, the author seeks to answer the question ‘Quel est le sens de ce destin à tout jamais commun par la langue, la technique et l'histoire?’.<sup>30</sup> In an analysis that makes reference to the neo-Senghorian idea of ‘âmes nationales’, the author of the document evokes a meeting of cultures with complementary values through which France can make a very significant contribution:

Ce ‘rendez-vous du donner et du recevoir’ pour reprendre encore les mots de Senghor, apporte la réponse des cinquante dernières années à l'inquiétude de l'enfant ‘au Blanc de Tera’ dans un matin tragique. Oublions de nouveau les bilans, les statistiques et les plans! Nous voici devant l'école, comme au premier jour. Le fils du peuple sonrhâi, livré à l'étranger sans combat, franchit le seuil de la classe. Pendant qu'il tremble, une voix qu'il n'entend pas lui murmure à l'oreille: ‘Ame du continent dont les côtes s'appelèrent pour les Européens les contrées de la joie et dont les terre inconnues s'appelèrent le coeur des ténèbres, Salut, avec ce que tu créas seule avec tes ancêtres et avec tes fantômes. Salut, Afrique, à l'heure où pour la première fois, tu apportes tes présents à l'esprit du Monde.’<sup>31</sup>

This somewhat lyrical presentation of colonial cultural history incorporates certain barely hidden themes and assumptions. It infers that the cultures of Africa need enlightening ('le coeur des ténèbres') using a language that also has religious undertones. This echoes the previous ambiguities of France's cultural projections split between (at least prior to the Third Republic) the church and state.

The reference to French aid's 'superior' values, the perennial belief in 'rayonnement' and the concentration of aid to former colonies are all features that have been strong constants in the period under consideration in this thesis. *Coopération culturelle* therefore plays a significant part in conditioning a specific type of relationship where the aid partners make reference to a common cultural identity that brings mutual interests and solidarity. The values that it represents have been widely accepted and entertained.

In a preface to a study of *coopération* agreements signed between France and the EAM, written in 1964, Jacques Foccart, who was Charles de Gaulle's advisor on African affairs, identified the importance of *coopération culturelle*:

En permettant une diffusion et un rayonnement des productions de notre esprit, la coopération nous apporte des avantages sur lesquels nous n'entendons pas revenir.

Qui plus est, prise dans toute l'acceptation du terme, elle permet de sauvegarder et peut-être d'étendre d'autres échanges, d'autres rapports qui sont les rapports humains, et cet 'art de vivre ensemble' qu'ont créé, au cours d'une histoire qui ne fut pas sans difficultés, les Africains et les Malgache d'une part, les Français de l'autre.<sup>32</sup>

Maurice Ligot's ensuing analysis of *coopération* ventures that the relationship is characterised by:

(...) la permanence des liens d'amitié, la poursuite des relations entre les nouveaux Etats et la France dans un esprit de compréhension mutuelle et de confiance réciproque, l'établissement d'une intime association en vue de normaliser leur rapports, de les rendre mutuellement plus féconds et de renforcer leur solidarité.<sup>33</sup>

Ligot therefore highlights the intangible, historically-based qualities of France's undertaking rooted in an historical mission with a mutual interest. His definition, rich as it is in such ideas as 'confiance', 'compréhension', 'solidarité' and 'association' qualified by such adjectives as 'intime' and 'féconds', appears to reinforce the idea of an inherent spiritual and cultural family that remains after the dismantling of the French colonial empire.

The belief that France pursued a policy of aid for reasons of historical 'mission' or out of solidarity more than narrow self interest is supported in many French analyses of *coopération*. In his study *La France et le tiers monde* published nearly twenty years later in 1983 Paul Cadenat highlights the theme of 'réciprocité'.<sup>34</sup>

C'est, cependant, dans le domaine culturel que la réciprocité est la plus affirmée. Les deux Etats se disent "préoccupés de promouvoir par le moyen d'une étroite coopération les échanges les plus fructueux dans le domaine de la science, de la culture et de l'éducation" et prévoient toutes mesures propres à favoriser "la connaissance respective de leur patrimoine culturel" notamment par l'échange d'informations et de documents ou par l'exécution de missions communes de recherches. En outre, la plupart des conventions culturelles prévoient la liberté de chaque partie d'ouvrir des écoles et de délivrer des diplômes sur le territoire de l'autre.<sup>35</sup>

As a counter-balance to the Jeanneney doctrine of continuity in France's historical 'mission' towards her former colonies, it should not be overlooked that there was also a doctrine, albeit a minority one, that argued that France should withdraw its heavy commitment to the development of its former colonies. A leading exponent of this view

was the French right-wing senator Edouard Bonnefous who wrote *Les Milliards qui s'envolent: l'aide française aux pays sous développés* which was published in 1963.<sup>36</sup>

Bonnefous argues that France had unfavourable rates of economic growth compared with other European countries and could ill afford such extravagant spending. In particular he decries the cost of thousands of technical assistants and the growing trend of teachers opting to teach within the services of *coopération* where they would be paid in French francs and not the local currency.

Bonnefous devotes a chapter in his book to *coopération culturelle* in which he considers that its educational dimension was too literary in approach and too little directed at development. He also criticises the pressures for 'prestige' buildings and infrastructures little adapted to local conditions because of a fear that France be accused of supplying an 'enseignement au rabais'.<sup>37</sup> Bonnefous was little persuaded by the idea of a reciprocity implied in the term *coopération* and he made the following analysis:

Je croyais que la coopération impliquait un certain nombre de partenaires, au moins deux, et que le propre de chacun des partenaires était tout à la fois de donner et de recevoir.

En la circonstance, en ce qui concerne la coopération dans le domaine de l'enseignement, je suis tout de même bien obligé de noter que l'un des partenaires donne tandis que l'autre reçoit sans rien donner, à moins que l'on ne considère que c'est donner que de donner le droit de donner!

Pour ma part, je préfère appeler les choses par leur nom: ce ne sont pas des méthodes d'assistance technique, et je crois qu'on peut parler d'assistance technique sans attacher à ce terme d'assistance le moindre sens péjoratif.<sup>38</sup>

Interestingly, Bonnefous supports France pursuing her historic cultural mission in this instance yet has reservations and concerns at the current pattern of investment that he judges highly inefficient. Furthermore, he considers France's current pattern of bilateral aid to be aggressively nationalist and neo-colonialist in inspiration and that it would be better replaced by involvement in multilateral organisations and initiatives.

The *Rapport Jeanneney* and *France-Afrique-Madagascar: un bilan culturel* both stress the essential altruism of France's *coopération*. Neither document rejects the principle of French *messianisme* that ensures that relations possess a long-lasting intangible quality in which the pursuit of French interests are minimised. It is significant that Edouard Bonnefous' criticisms do not challenge the concept of *coopération culturelle* as an inherently beneficial pursuit in French foreign policy. The criticism of employing large numbers of *assistants techniques* identified an area of French aid that would become highly problematic in the next decade.

In the next section I will consider the ambitions underpinning the expansion of education in the EAM and the contradictions that they carried. This will be followed by considering French *actions culturelles*.

### 3.3 Education

Before considering reasons for the patterns of French educational aid, it is worth examining how it was believed that formal education systems would firstly serve an important function in nation building and secondly, the consequences of education on social stratification from an African perspective.

In considering Benedict Anderson's definition of the nation as 'an imagined political community' it is striking how appropriate this appears in describing the challenges of post-colonial nation building in Africa.<sup>39</sup> Two major factors could not be ignored by the first generation of leaders. Firstly, the position of international frontiers merely reflected the arbitrary nature of European colonialism without regard for ethnic, religious or linguistic geographical distribution. Because of this, one of the initial decisions of the Organisation for African Unity in 1964 was to announce that the international colonial boundaries should not be subject to reform for fear of provoking any number of conflicts between states wishing to unite divided groups. Secondly, for the greater part, the sole unifying previous 'national' experience had been the struggle for independence against colonial rule. National 'consciousness' remained a fragile concept that required much nurturing.

Because of these factors, national leaders presented education systems as being significant levers for fostering national identity and unity. Bray in *Education and Society* notes that the process of social integration involves two important forms of integration.<sup>40</sup> Firstly, horizontal integration, bringing together racial, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups within the state and secondly, vertical integration involving the establishment of an effective set of relations between rulers and 'subjects' such that values and ideas might flow between the two thus bringing greater consensus in policy making and creating a sense of citizenship.

The nature of education available within new states and its inherent values play a major role in the effectiveness of horizontal and vertical integration both in allowing social mobility and facilitating political participation. Experience of post-colonial African education tends to show however, that it has a tendency to reinforce the status quo rather than to change it.<sup>41</sup> The classic study of the role that education plays in society by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron emphasises the extent to which education systems are institutions which tend, by their structures, to restrict social mobility and bring division rather than increasing it.

Bourdieu's opening premise in *La Reproduction* is that all acts of education (*actions pédagogiques*) can be judged to be symbolic violence since they involve the imposition of one arbitrary set of cultural values by an arbitrary power (such as a teacher). Essentially neither the perpetrator nor the content of the education can make any claim to being objective in this process. Perhaps more significantly in Bourdieu's opinion, education systems replicate existing class structures:

Tout système d'enseignement institutionnalisé (SE) doit les caractéristiques spécifiques de sa structure et de son fonctionnement au fait qu'il lui faut produire et reproduire, par les moyens propres de l'institution, les conditions institutionnelles dont l'existence et la persistance (autoreproduction de l'institution) sont nécessaires tant à l'exercice de sa fonction de reproduction d'un arbitraire culturel dont il n'est pas le producteur (reproduction culturelle) et dont la reproduction contribue à la reproduction des rapports entre les groupes ou les classes (reproduction sociale)<sup>42</sup>

Bourdieu's theories on the French education system in particular have a heightened relevance given that this model remained significant for nearly all the former Etats africains et malgache. In states emerging from French colonial rule this maintained the



political dominance of Western-educated elites over traditional ethnic or religious- based hierarchies.

A glance at the patterns of the distribution of education in the populations of the states that gained their independence in 1960 and afterwards shows that the contribution made by education systems to national integration has been of a relatively minor nature. Such indicators as the small numbers of pupils successfully completing primary education and the low pass rate amongst secondary pupils taking end of studies examinations suggest that education plays an extremely important role in defining social stratification- that is to say in determining those members of society that constitute the elite.<sup>43</sup> Although this can be explained in part by the very limited financial resources available to national governments for education, it also points to a cultural and social dislocation when a privileged sector of society becomes distant from those beneath it. Similarly, the greater educational opportunities available in urban areas have been yet another factor in creating an imbalance between cities and rural areas. As Bray remarks, 'In practice, education and economic structures have combined to create stratification which, once created, has frequently been reinforced over time'.<sup>44</sup> Although individuals can emerge from underprivileged classes to become members of the elites, changes in the hierarchy of groups in society occur much more infrequently. Whilst education remains non universal (ie. significant percentages of children neither attend primary nor secondary schools) in many African states, then polarised social stratification is likely to remain.

In the opinion of the American political scientist Edward Corbett, in his study of post-

colonial Francophone Africa, education, rather than having the effect of increasing national unity, became the source of two major forms of alienation.<sup>45</sup>

The first was the lack of relevance of a (barely reformed) colonial education system conceived to form a colonial elite that through its values and structures reflected the concerns of an industrialised country rather than those of developing states. The most absurd examples of the inappropriate nature of education syllabuses included the teaching of history and geography with only a passing reference to Africa or school term dates that led to education occurring when climatic conditions were least favourable to pupils studying. By its very nature, French-inspired education prepared pupils for office-work rather than manual occupations or agriculture that were by far the greatest source of employment in developing countries. The second source of alienation was the choice of an exogenous European language spoken by frequently less than five per cent of the population over an indigenous language that was spoken in non-formal communication. With the language of all formal education being French, elites who could raise their children in a French cultural environment could give their children a significant advantage before commencing education.

As early as 1963 the agronomist René Dumont had made these points in his work *L'Afrique est mal partie*.<sup>46</sup> In one particular chapter, entitled 'Si ta soeur va à l'école tu mangeras ton porte-plume,' he makes a number of serious criticisms of the continued faith in education systems inherited from the colonial era. As an agronomist with a particular concern for agricultural development, Dumont considered that the French-

inspired systems had the effect of encouraging a substantial emigration away from the countryside in pursuit of white-collar careers that remained a minority sector of employment where agriculture was still the dominant field of economic activity.

The Australian academic, William Bostock, who has considered the cultural ties between France and her former colonies from the perspective of a dependency relationship, gives three reasons for the slow reform of education away from the colonial model.<sup>47</sup> Not only does he identify the political reluctance of the elite to lose some of its advantages but he also notes an institutional reason that is to say the difficulty of dismantling such complex structures without internationally recognised educational institutions and qualifications to replace them. Finally he also observes that the pressures of educational aid funders to invest in established forms of education rather than to experiment is an economic reason for the maintenance of such inherited forms of education.

The recognition that there existed a dependency relationship between France and the Franco-African states is a generally accepted analysis. What is less clear is the extent to which the pressures for change in the patterns of cultural aid within the *Ministère de la Coopération* were compatible with the overall political relationship between France and the African states.

To state that there was no reform or innovation in education would be false. Indeed primary education saw certain reforms by the end of the 1960s. By the late 1960s, France invited the EAM to adapt primary education to the needs of rural areas, notably

by experimenting with rural education. The first experiment occurred in Mali as early as 1962. Upper Volta, Madagascar and Chad would follow. This was encouraged not only as a way to make education more relevant but also to cut the costs of a very expensive type of education based on outside models. France sought to delegate this to various research bodies to this task such as IEDES (*Institut d'études du développement économique social*), IRFED (*Institut de recherches et de formation en vue de développement*) or SEDES (*Société d'études pour le développement*). Despite the social and economic benefits of these reforms, many states were wary of the possible political consequences of bringing about these reforms and maintained structures with only the smallest differences from the French model.

Secondary and university education were even harder to reform since the maintaining of standards in these sectors was held to be critical for reproducing an elite that could claim the same educational standards as France and could continue to be educated in its educational establishments. Although somewhat superficial, the earliest reforms in secondary education took place in 1965 to change the teaching of French literature to include Black and African writers and also to reform the syllabuses of geography and history the same year and natural sciences in 1968.<sup>48</sup>

Although France encouraged states to move away from the colonial educational models that they had inherited, the presence of thousands of French technical assistants (*assistants techniques*) as teachers in increasing numbers from the mid-1960s until the mid-1980s made this an even more difficult task. Furthermore, France's willingness to

supply this personnel was a contributory factor to making post-colonial education excessively costly. In the period 1960-1970 it was only in primary education that *assistants techniques* were significantly replaced by local teachers, particularly in the light of a massive expansion in this sector. By 1966, fewer than two per cent of teachers in primary education were from France.<sup>49</sup> This compared to nearly eighty per cent in secondary education. That a growth in the number of African teachers in secondary education did not occur, can be explained, in part, by the higher qualifications required for teachers in secondary education, and a preference by the suitably qualified to pursue more financially rewarding occupations such as the higher levels of the civil service.

An interview carried out in 1964 with Gabriel Beis (Chef du Service 'Enseignement et Formation' at the *Ministère de la Coopération*), gives a greater appreciation of priorities from the perspective of someone seeking to implement French cultural aid policy.<sup>50</sup> He stressed the transitory nature of structures put into place and the need to make short-term and almost arbitrary choices as to which sectors deserved a priority. Nevertheless, he felt that success in educational development could only occur in a 'contexte psychosociologique que seules les autorités des Etats peuvent créer'.<sup>51</sup> What is meant by this 'contexte psycho-sociologique'? Did it refer to the observation frequently made that development (on a western model) was encountering indifference outside of urban areas where the culture of the western world held relatively little relevance? By extension, it could be inferred that local values essentially were seen as an obstruction.

It is possible to see a latent tension between elites refusing an 'éducation au rabais' and French officials considering the practicality of increasing educational provision in a form little different from that delivered in France. In addition, growth of educational establishments could only be realistic if national budgets could support proposed growth. In sum, there existed a fear in the elite that any radical evolution of education would be at the expense of a quality that was guaranteed when French metropolitan educational standards were taken as the 'norm'.

### **3.4 Actions culturelles**

The second main dimension of *coopération culturelle* comes under the title of *actions culturelles* and was presented as complementary to aid to education. Its activities consisted of subsidising cultural centres, assistance to the mass media including newspapers, magazines, radio, television, the promotion of books, cinema and theatre. As in education, the aspects of cultural life and the media that this form of aid covered meant that France had an ability to influence the form and content of a yet to be formed Franco-African culture.

Although a link has been established between France's cultural policies in the rest of the world and those pursued in its former colonies, in the latter France aimed to reach a larger proportion of the population, yet was faced with scarce cultural infrastructures to make inroads into its objectives of turning potential francophones into actual speakers of the language. Whilst the scope for increasing the number of speakers appeared significant given the high expectations of mass education, the lack of a cultural

infrastructure was a major obstacle to this ambition. An article on 'L'action culturelle française' in *Le Mois en Afrique* in 1964, explained that the commitment to infrastructure was essential to avoid the failure of France's education aid policies in which neither schools nor universities alone play a decisive role.<sup>52</sup>

For practical reasons, cultural centres were situated in capital cities, but efforts were made to take cultural services, such as cinema and theatre, into rural areas. Such centres also trained 'animateurs' to set up and maintain various projects. These projects would contribute to a general atmosphere where French would be promoted for its positive attributes: 'créer chez les intéressés un environnement culturel, donc le goût du progrès'.<sup>53</sup> The 1966 document, in explaining the role of 'relais', whether they be cultural 'animateurs', local administrators or teachers, proposes that they serve a similar function to that of 'instituteurs' of the Third Republic in France.

From Paris, the *Ministère de la Coopération* managed the distribution of educational, general and specialised books for cultural centres and 'bibliobus' to be taken outside of towns and cities. Furthermore, direct help was made available for African newspapers as well as training journalists in French establishments. A central press agency was established in 1964 (*la Nouvelle agence de presse*). Further to indirect action, official publishers such as *La Documentation Française* provided specialised reports and manuals for development and institutional use. There is strong evidence that France was strongly committed to both an investment in areas that had an influence on the instruments for promoting the French language directly and the means by which national

cultures might take shape after 1960. It can be argued that this area of aid was one that allowed France to pursue the interests of her own cultural industries and services in an unchallenged position of monopoly.

One such area was that of publishing, which allied to education, saw the ministry making efforts to ensure that French publishers operated in conditions where losses would be minimised and books would be available at affordable prices.<sup>54</sup> To maximise their potential for tapping the Franco-African market, publishers joined together to share warehouses and distribution networks. Companies such as Hachette enjoyed a limited commercial success from a small subsidised sale of books that was supplemented by a significant free distribution for educational purposes by the *Ministère de la Coopération*. Of these free books, forty-two per cent went to public libraries, thirty-seven per cent to French cultural centres and the rest to secondary schools and universities. The content of this huge distribution of books, which France added to her policy of a substantial aid to education, was one that concerned *coopération* officials, worried about the image given to African readers of French books. To ensure that France's image was not compromised, the *Direction de Coopération culturelle et technique* had the titles of all books sent vetted by ministry officials.<sup>55</sup>

France's audio-visual presence in Africa was developed after the impetus of counter-propaganda efforts against German occupying forces. The first studio that France opened was in Brazzaville in the Congo in 1943. After the Second World War, France developed general broadcasting policies in an effort to compete with the Voice of



America, BBC World Service, Radio Moscow and the Voice of Peking who broadcast propaganda to developing countries. France would play an important role in equipping many states with transmitters and the training necessary to maintain them. By the time of independence, radio broadcasts covered the near totality of the states.<sup>56</sup>

France adapted her existing services to complement her aid policies, initially setting up the *Office de coopération radiophonique* (OCORA) to administer transmitters and support fledgling national stations. The content of broadcasts relied to an even greater extent on French assistance, with programmes prepared in Paris being recorded on tapes to be broadcast in Africa. Of this material, a large percentage was of educational content.

In 1966, television broadcasts had started in Ivory Coast, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, Upper Volta and Madagascar. Niger had recently established a closed circuit programme for educational television but television broadcasting remained very minor. In 1966, with *Ministère de la Coopération* funding, France opened the *Maison Internationale du Cinéma* in Paris. This was intended to be a focal point for developing world cinema and African films in particular.

From the mid 1960s onwards, France started to reorganise her overseas broadcasting services to create a more unified administration of her policies in priority areas. Most significantly, the new ORTF (*Office de Radiodiffusion-Télévision*) under the control of the Quai d'Orsay, absorbed OCORA with the result that the *Ministère de la Coopération* was left to concentrate on the more traditional forms of cultural policy.

The conservative nature of many states' policies towards education aided by French *coopération* suggests that it was a politically expedient form of aid in the context of the 1960s. Similarly for France, French aid generally maintained a geographical presence that, by insisting on key themes, allowed President de Gaulle to develop an image of France with a new role in international relations. He also made use of his personal reputation and presidential style that permitted France to maintain a flexible approach to what appeared to be constrictive aid agreements. In the next section I will consider how a certain 'mythology' connected with *coopération* was constructed.

### **3.5 Gaullism and *Coopération***

I will now consider how France used the idea of *coopération* as a spring-board for developing the image of a state that was a 'friend' of the Third World and therefore that France had a role in the world that was greater than its actual military or economic status. I will do this by examining how various aspects of the idea of Gaullism served to renew French 'messianisme' (in the sense used by Albert Salon) when the end of the colonial era and the state of international politics within the Cold War would suggest that it was in decline.

The vision that de Gaulle had for France's place in the world is not only found in his own writings and speeches but also those of such government officials as André Malraux, Michel Debré and Jacques Foccart who have closely reflected the thinking of de Gaulle in their expression of France's place in the world and her interests within it. Ultimately,

they rely on a vision of a France that pursues independent policies of a non-aligned power yet playing a significant role on the world stage. This is encapsulated by de Gaulle's 'certaine idée de la France':

Le côté positif de mon esprit me convainc que la France n'est nullement elle-même qu'au premier rang; que seules, de vastes entreprises sont susceptibles de compenser les ferments de dispersion que son peuple porte en lui-même; que notre pays, tel qu'il est, parmi les autres, tels qu'ils sont, doit, sous peine de danger mortel, viser haut et se tenir droit. Bref, à mon sens, la France ne peut être la France sans la grandeur.<sup>57</sup>

Here, de Gaulle explains that France's fulfilment of a vocation for a 'grandeur' has been the way in which she has fully affirmed herself as a nation. The appeal of this vision was its highly resonant discourse that lent itself to a wide interpretation in French history. The reference to 'grandeur' in a sense that refers to France's role outside of her frontiers, lends itself to a reference to both a Republican heritage (notably the revolutionary wars or the Third Republic) and to those of the 'traditional' Right including Bonapartism, Monarchism (Louis XIV) and even the traditions of the Catholic missionaries. As such it is another form of 'messianisme'. It is the belief in the synthesis of these different influences as a symbol of France that have left an influence on Gaullist foreign policy. According to the American Edward Morse, these have resulted in a tradition of idealising France's national heritage, a tendency to *grandes entreprises* and a link between the French international mission and a sense of geography that gives its areas of action a large domain.<sup>58</sup> The openness of this concept of the French nation and its 'duties' differed from a nationalism associated with race and national boundaries that was evoked by de Gaulle's, Pétain which defined the ideal of French nationality and the nation in a more prescriptive manner. According to the French historian Jean Rainaud,

de Gaulle remained committed to the idea that France had certain duties that were part of the concept of 'grandeur' :

Seul un nationalisme de l'idée rendrait possible cette incroyable, folle, insensée, inconcevable prétention d'incarner la France. Et pourtant, cette pensée seule justifiait la formule selon laquelle cette France n'est jamais aussi grande lorsqu'elle l'est pour tous les hommes.<sup>59</sup>

This 'nationalisme de l'idée' therefore rekindled a broad discourse of a *mission civilisatrice* found in colonialism but now applied to a broader international context. The Gaullist renewal of French nationalism found an outlet in diplomatic positions against the bi-polar division of the world into East and West political blocs. Frequently, de Gaulle's stances on international questions brought him in apparent conflict with the super-powers and the United States in particular. This could be presented as evidence of being a 'champion of the Third World'. In this perspective, France's policies towards the developing world, were a means of affirming an independence from the power-politics of the Cold War appropriate to France's traditions. De Gaulle's 'suspicion' towards the policies of the United Nations also provided evidence of a belief that the nation-state was the most suitable framework for countries such as France to carry out their international responsibilities. De Gaulle's strong support for such post-colonial inter-African groupings as OCAM (*Organisation commune africaine et malgache*) that grouped together the francophone sub-Saharan African states, can be perceived as supporting the necessary collective efforts of small states to avoid manipulation and exploitation by the United States or the USSR.<sup>60</sup>

Once France had signed *coopération* agreements with nearly all her former colonies, future close relations were guaranteed. The signing of agreements of a wide content, whether they be cultural, military or economic, was for the historian Kolodziej, a complex system meeting different needs (essentially those of France):

Out of such a selfish pursuit of interests, a web of interlocking global relations, fundamentally bilateral in nature, though multilateral in appearance, gradually would be woven, ensnaring all the states within a closely-knit pattern of self-generated relations that presumably would be responsive to state needs and aspirations.<sup>61</sup>

The apparent ease with which France changed the nature of her relations from being those of a *Communauté* to *coopération* was no doubt made easier by the central role played by Charles de Gaulle in defining them, particularly since he could convince the new states that he incarnated historical continuity and embodied a sense of reassuring authority in foreign affairs.

The relative informality of the Franco-African relationship seems to best illustrate how de Gaulle used and formed the structures of the Fifth Republic to suit his style of leadership and his political and historical image to give weight to France's policies. Gaullism then became the personalisation of France's policies through the action of one man. In the terms of the Fifth Republic, foreign policy became the *domaine réservé* of the President, thus allowing de Gaulle to exploit to its utmost an image of France's historical duty.

In Africa, De Gaulle built on his image of 'l'homme de Brazzaville' where he commanded both French and African troupes at the head of the FFF movement. Afterwards he became

associated with France's relinquishing sovereignty in the process of decolonisation. Historians have gone as far as claiming that by his manipulation of visits to the continent and by use of the media, he successfully portrayed himself as the incarnation of a historical movement at a particular time in French politics. To a certain extent he blurred the limits of history and its representation, sometimes giving the impression of a very self-conscious sense of his historical role. The personal relations that he maintained with several leaders gave diplomatic gatherings an air of relative informality. This informality was a quality that subsequent Presidents sought to maintain from Pompidou until Mitterrand. The instigation of the Franco-African summit by Georges Pompidou was a device to reinforce this and has been a continued symbol of the grouping in the eyes of the rest of the world.

The political theorist Jean Leca considers the question of France's presentation of her aid in his article on 'Idéologies de la coopération'.<sup>62</sup> He considers the discourse of development aid policy as an expression of national and international ideological political 'systems'.

In his analysis of French ideology for development aid Leca argues the inappropriateness of evoking the dialectic of a 'legitimate pursuit of interests' for the general good on the international stage as one would for the nation-state. Leca argues that the logic of a foreign policy of a nation-state such as France demands that it place its own interests first. Any other approach would undermine the essential symbol of unity incarnated by

the state that demands that it pursue majority interests rather than serving those of a minority.

Leca believes that in the perspective of a state pursuing foreign policy with the motive of national interest, an aid programme (*coopération*) can only be justified, in this logic, as a *but de milieu*. This sees a country attempting to influence relations within a geographic area emphasising the promotion of theoretically unlimited collective values such as peace, order and friendship. The foundation of such relations are presented as being based in sharing values or 'resources' rather than exclusion or exclusivity.

The pursuit of this ideology stands in parallel with a *but de possession*. This will seek to obtain certain material advantages (whether they be raw materials, influence over strategic territory or preferential tariffs) directly. Colonial expansion was the most obvious example of this pursuit of *buts de possession*. In the post-colonial period, states have been obliged to develop *buts de milieu* (through diplomacy of various sorts) to gain the same advantages or commodities formerly gained by more direct means. Leca believes that neither approach is ultimately incompatible in foreign policy. In many cases the first is the initial stage towards pursuing the second. Each discourse can be treated as an end in itself with the one stressed over the other according to the audience or interests being addressed:

(...) en dépit du caractère apparemment calculateur, voire cynique de l'intérêt national, son idéologie est profondément expressive; elle véhicule des valeurs 'consommatrices', plus ou moins sacrées, donc hors du contrôle de l'expérience empirique. En ce cas, l'activité idéologique pour celui qui s'y livre est une fin en elle même.<sup>63</sup>

Leca therefore identifies the importance that a country (such as France) can attach to the conditioning of foreign policy interests in a manner outlined within the arguments of Albert Salon. The ideologies of Gaullist *grandeur* and *solidarité*, can therefore only be seen to incarnate generosity, if it is conceded that this disinterest is subject to a coincidence with France's overall policy ambitions. The 'universalist'-nationalist discourse used by de Gaulle was a means to bring together a wide support for various policies and positions for both material and political ends.

In defining the essence of Gaullism as applied to French aid in her former colonies, the historian Alfred Grosser has claimed that policy makers have succeeded in managing to:

(...)faire admettre aux Français que domination et coopération ne sont que des formes différentes de la même ambition nationale; que le XXe siècle veut qu'on ne soit pas dominateur mais coopératif, domination et coopération s'exerçant toutes deux au nom de l'ambition nationale.<sup>64</sup>

For Stanley Hoffmann, De Gaulle was manipulating a constant in the national consciousness: 'What remains fixed is the command itself: like natural law, *grandeur* is an imperative with a varying content.'<sup>65</sup>

The official values of French *coopération* have been of a universalist nature, suggesting that the cultural and linguistic component of aid was disinterested and motivated by the most honourable motives. Seen through the perspective of Jean Leca, it is possible to argue that *coopération culturelle* was a means to pursue French national interests in a more profound manner.



### 3.6 Towards a new cultural strategy?

There is some evidence that, after only the first four years of cultural aid, France realised that her policies needed to evolve to meet concerns that colonial models of education were increasingly inappropriate to meet the ambitions of the new African states.

The *Programme d'action culturelle en Afrique et à Madagascar 1964-68* begins by stressing that a successful policy of French cultural action was dependent on the urgent need to ensure a widespread extension of education without compromising standards. This was a process that the author considered needed significant progress before the end of the decade, if the earlier optimism was to stand a chance of fulfilment.<sup>66</sup>

The author invited the French authorities to guard against a failure to adapt to local needs and demands. The document advised that France's cultural role should not be associated with grandiose and prestigious interventions. Instead, it should be motivated entirely by the requirements of development: 'la diffusion de la langue et de la culture françaises doivent aller de pair dans l'esprit de nos partenaires avec le progrès économique et social.'<sup>67</sup>

Furthermore, it warned of the fragile nature of the cultural benefits brought about by the contemporary expansion of education lacking an environment to spread its effects beyond the walls of universities and schools. Publishing was identified as an important means to further this ambition.<sup>68</sup>

The *Rapport d'activité 1964-1966* seems sensitive to criticisms of cultural neo-colonialism. The author has the merit of bringing out some contradictions present in the status held by the French language, notably that there is a 'francophonie désirée, mais encore virtuelle et sous-développée'.<sup>69</sup> To achieve this, it expresses with some conviction the use to be made of French cultural activities. This was part of an overall policy to reinforce general efforts to fully establish French-inspired education.

(...) l'emploi de notre langue est à la fois le meilleur moyen et la meilleure raison d'y diffuser la pensée française. Pour la première fois dans l'histoire, quarante millions d'hommes demandent, de leur plein gré, à partager notre patrimoine linguistique et culturel. Il serait criminel de ne pas tout faire pour les satisfaire.<sup>70</sup>

Taken together, both the *Rapport d'activité* and the *Programme d'action culturelle en Afrique et à Madagascar* were more realistic than the Jeanneney Report and *France-Afrique-Madagascar* in realising ambitions for cultural development. In fact the documents were remarkably forward looking since they foresaw the problems of *coopération culturelle* in the next decade arising from the lack of African involvement in their implementation.

Decolonisation seemingly did little to temper France's belief that she could play a significant role in the development of her former colonies, at least in the early years of her efforts. As time progressed, it was increasingly seen that education could not fully develop merely by financial investment in infrastructure or by substituting French teachers for Africans. For education to succeed in the EAM it was necessary that states forge their own educational values that would slowly move away from the French model and reflect local political conditions.

In the absence of innovative approaches French policy had the effect of reinforcing a dependency for cultural aid where, at best, there was a two speed development of education where provision improved in urban areas and remained insufficient, and often very inappropriate in rural areas. Because of this, the hopes that were held by *assistants techniques* that cultural co-operation could play a role in nation-building started to evaporate since French showed few signs of taking hold in the masses and education officials refused to move to curricula and qualifications of local conception.

Despite statements that *actions culturelles* be used to reinforce general development programmes, the priority given to publishing suggests that political pressures would have opposed less prestigious forms of aid that would have challenged the central place given to traditional European education and standards of literacy.

The rise in the numbers of *assistants techniques*, which was criticised in some quarters as being an inefficient means to develop education, reinforces the idea that aid to education was more political than French *coopération* officials might have liked to admit in public. Officially, the choices made in culturally sensitive areas by various states were justified as being the only sensible choice for nation-building. It could be seen that in reality they maintained a status quo that was becoming increasingly a 'norm' all the time that it could meet the various political agendas of French and African decision-makers.

The committed discourse found within the *Rapport Jeanneney* and other documents of the time bear testament to a powerful theme in decolonisation that provide a direct link with the cultural confidence of France in the colonial period. The political dimension behind it would become increasingly obvious as France's privileged relationship evolved.

In Johan Galtung's article 'A structural theory of imperialism', he defines imperialism as: 'one way in which the Centre nation has power over the Periphery nation, so as to bring about a condition of disharmony of interest between them.'<sup>71</sup> As we have seen, the range of sectors that France was able to influence after independence permitted a significant exercising of power over the EAM 'Periphery' states. Galtung's elaboration of his theory describing the creation of a dependency relationship identifies five areas of which two have been discussed in this thesis. The first of these is an imperialism of communication (the supply of news and information by the media) and secondly what he calls 'cultural imperialism' that arises from education or the values imparted by language. Aptly, whilst defining 'cultural imperialism' he argues:

If the centre always provides the teachers and the definition of that worthy of being taught (from the gospels of Christianity to the gospels of technology) and the Periphery always provides the learners then there is a pattern that smacks of imperialism (...) in accepting cultural transmission the Periphery also, implicitly, validates for the Center the culture developed in the Center, whether the culture is intra- or inter- national.<sup>72</sup>

Galtung suggests that the transferring of one cultural model to a developing state cannot be done without carrying strong values with it. Although French *méssianisme* claimed that its culture was universalist, French *coopération* was also a vehicle for commercial

and political interests. In the next chapter I will consider how *coopération culturelle* evolved in the 1970s and 1980s when faced with internal and external pressures.

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**Notes to Chapter Three: *Coopération culturelle 1960-70***

<sup>1</sup> Teresa Hayter, 'French aid to Africa- its scope and achievements', *International Affairs*, 41 (1965), 236-251, (p. 242).

<sup>2</sup> Constitution du 4 octobre 1958, Titre II, article 5 and Titre VI, articles 52 & 53. Cited in Olivier Duhamel, *Le Pouvoir politique en France* (Paris: Seuil, 1993), pp.433 & 443.

<sup>3</sup> Danielle Domergue-Cloarec, *La France et l'Afrique après les indépendances* (Paris: Sedes, 1994), p. 82.

<sup>4</sup> Robarts, p. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Domergue-Cloarec, p. 43.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>7</sup> Brigitte Nouaille-Degorce, 'Les structures et les moyens de la politique de coopération avec les états africains et malgache au sud du Sahara de 1958 à 1969' in D.G. Lavroff, *La Politique africaine du Général de Gaulle (1958-1959)*, 75-99, (p. 87).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>10</sup> Richard Robarts, *French Development Assistance: A Study in Policy and Administration*, (Beverly Hills and London: Sage Professional Papers in Administration Studies, 2, 03-017, 1974), p. 28.

<sup>11</sup> Brigitte Nouaille Degorce, 'La Politique française de coopération avec les Etats africains et malgache au sud du Sahara 195-1978' (Unpublished doctoral thesis, Centre d'études d'Afrique noire/ Institut d'études politiques de Bordeaux, 1980) p. 169, Domergue Cloarec, p. 47.

<sup>12</sup> Domergue-Cloarec, p. 49.

<sup>13</sup> For an introduction to 'Policy networks theory' see Wayne Parsons, *Public Policy* (Aldershot/ Brookfield: Edward Elgar, 1998), p. 185 or David Marsh, *Comparing Policy Networks* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1998), p. 21.

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<sup>14</sup> Documents found at the Centre des archives contemporaines (CAC), Fontainebleau (Ministère de la Coopération, service de coopération technique) show them to be almost identical in nearly all respects and were used as a template for agreements. Ministère de la coopération, 'Accord particulier sur l'aide et la coopération dans le domaine culturel entre la République Française et la République de .... [left blank] .File: 810443/ 12 MC 3'- Folder 'Aide à l'enseignement- 1965).

<sup>15</sup> Guy Feuer, 'Les accords culturels passés par la France avec les nouveaux états d'Afrique noire et Madagascar', *Annuaire Français de droit international*, (Paris:CNRS, 1963), 890-905, (p. 891).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>17</sup> CAC archives, 801443/ 12 MC 42. 'Accord de coopération culturelle entre la République Française et la République de la Côte d'Ivoire'. No page number, no date.

<sup>18</sup> Maurice Ligot, *Les Accords de coopération entre la France et les états Africains et Malgache d'expression française* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1964), pp. 104-107.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>20</sup> Hugh Hecló, 'Political analysis', *British Journal of Political Science*, 2 (1972), 83-108, (p. 84).

<sup>21</sup> Jean Marcel Jeanneney et autres, *La Politique de coopération avec les pays en voie de développement* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1964).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>25</sup> Jeanneney, M. Baillou, Annexe N° 16 'Le rôle de l'action culturelle dans la coopération technique', p. 224.

<sup>26</sup> Ministère de la Coopération. Direction de la coopération culturelle et technique, *France-Afrique-Madagascar: un bilan culturel*, (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1963) p. 33.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* p. 36.

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- <sup>29</sup> Ibid. p. 36.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>32</sup> Ligot, p. v.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 60.
- <sup>34</sup> Paul Cadenat, *La France et le tiers monde, vingt ans de coopération bilatérale* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1983), p. 31.
- <sup>35</sup> Cadenat, p. 67.
- <sup>36</sup> Edouard Bonnefous, *Les Milliards qui s'envolent- l'aide française aux pays sous-développés* (Paris: Fayard, 1963).
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 135.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid., pp. 124-125.
- <sup>39</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London/ New York, Verso, 1983), p. 6.
- <sup>40</sup> Mark Bray, Peter B. Clarke, David Stephens, *Education and Society in Africa* (London: Edward Arnold, 1986), pp. 58-59.
- <sup>41</sup> Francis X. Sutton, 'Education and the making of the modern state' in James S. Coleman, *Education and Political Development*, 51-74, (p. 48).
- <sup>42</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *La Reproduction* (Paris: Eds. de Minuit, 1970), p. 70.
- <sup>43</sup> Isabelle Deblé, 'Différenciations ou uniformisations?', *Afrique contemporaine*, 172, 4 (1994), 9-32, (p. 14).
- <sup>44</sup> Bray, pp. 59-60.
- <sup>45</sup> Edward M. Corbett, *The French Presence in Black Africa* (Washington DC: Black Orpheus Press, 1972), p. 25.
- <sup>46</sup> René Dumont, *L'Afrique Noire est mal partie* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1962).
- <sup>47</sup> William Bosworth 'The rigid embrace of dependency: France and Black African education since 1960', *Contemporary French Civilization*, 5 (1981), 325-351, (p. 334).
- <sup>48</sup> CAC archives 810443/ 12 MC 16. Propositions pour le 6è plan Enseignement et formation. 1972.



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- <sup>49</sup> Notes et études documentaires, La Coopération entre la France, l'Afrique noire *d'expression française et Madagascar*, (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1966), 3330, (p. 25).
- <sup>50</sup> Gabriel Beis in *Connaissance de l'Afrique*, 2, December 1964, 3- 14, (p. 4).
- <sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.
- <sup>53</sup> Notes et études documentaires, p. 30.
- <sup>54</sup> S. van de Werf, 'Francophone publishing in Africa', *Africa Report*, March 1971, 25-27, (p. 25). See also 'Une expérience d'édition et de diffusion du livre en Afrique', *Afrique Contemporaine*, 48, (1970), 2-10.
- <sup>55</sup> CAC archives 810443 12 MC 3 'Aide aux manuels scolaires 1964-1968'.
- <sup>56</sup> Paul Kribes 'Radio-France ondes courtes: est-ce le déclin?'. *Etudes*, December 1975, 700-708, (pp. 698-699).
- <sup>57</sup> Charles De Gaulle, *Mémoires de Guerre*, 3 vols, (Paris: Plon, 1954) ,I (1954), p. 1.
- <sup>58</sup> Edward Morse, *Foreign Policy and Interdependence in Gaullist France*, (New Jersey: Princeton, 1973). p.26 .
- <sup>59</sup> Jean-Marie Rainaud, 'La solidarité avec le Tiers-Monde', *Espoir*, 63, (1988), 27-35, (p. 31).
- <sup>60</sup> Edward Kolodziej, *French International policy under de Gaulle and Pompidou* (New York: Cornell University Press 1974) p. 42.
- <sup>61</sup> Kolodziej, p. 61.
- <sup>62</sup> Jean Leca, 'Idéologies de la coopération', *Etudes Internationales*, 5, 2, (1974),226-243, (p. 227).
- <sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234.
- <sup>64</sup> Alfred Grosser, *French Foreign Policy under de Gaulle*, (Conneticut: Greenwood Press, 1967) p. 60.
- <sup>65</sup> Stanley Hoffman cited in Philip Cerny, *The Politics of Grandeur- Ideological Aspects of de Gaulle's Foreign Policy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) p. 85.

<sup>66</sup> Ministère de la Coopération, Programme d'action culturelle en Afrique et à Madagascar: 1er janvier 1964-31 décembre 1968, (Paris: Ministère de la Coopération, 1964).

<sup>67</sup> Programme d'action culturelle, p. 2.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, p.4.

<sup>69</sup> Direction de la coopération culturelle et technique, Secrétariat d'état aux affaires étrangères chargé de la coopération. *Rapport d'activité 1964-1966*, (Paris: Secrétariat d'état aux affaires étrangères chargé de la coopération, 1966). p. 153.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, p. 153.

<sup>71</sup> Johan Galtung, 'A Structural Theory of Imperialism', *Journal of Peace Research*, 8 (1971), 79-117, (p. 83).

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 93.

#### Chapter Four: *Coopération culturelle* 1970-1995

This chapter considers the main cultural *coopération* activities pursued by France and, in particular, those of the *Ministère de la Coopération* in the period 1970-1995 with the states that had formerly been France's colonies. In the complex range of institutions dealing with the *Etats Africains et Malgaches*, it was this administration that provided cultural aid and technical assistants to teach, advise, train and substitute for local personnel when required according to the terms of the agreements signed by France and marking the end of colonial rule in 1960.

In the previous chapter I considered the fundamental ambiguity of the term 'coopération'. On the one hand, it refers to the values underlying France's policy of aid with her former colonies and is analogous with the term 'solidarité' that infers a partnership. On the other hand, it is closely associated with the ideal of 'French rayonnement' pursued as an integral part of *coopération*. According to this principle, France's leaders and elites have a duty to ensure that a French language culture is present and influential outside the French hexagon. In the Franco-African relationship *coopération* has entailed France maintaining a highly significant post-colonial presence and significance in assuring essential services and political stability whilst also holding on to economic and strategic advantages. Certain observers, such as the French political scientist Patrick Cadenat have talked in terms of a 'réciprocité' to describe this interaction where both sides gained certain benefits even if it was ostensibly an extremely uneven type of exchange.<sup>1</sup>

Of the sectors of *coopération* pursued by France, all levels of education were given a high priority. France also allocated significant sums to ‘actions culturelles’ where she exported her expertise and technology for cultural promotion and to support such areas as broadcasting and publishing. For the political scientist Maurice Flory, writing in 1977,

French *coopération culturelle* was:

la caractéristique la plus marquante du système français d’aide au développement (...) Et c’est là un phénomène durable puisque, quinze ou vingt ans après l’indépendance, le nombre des personnels français en assistance technique n’a pas sensiblement baissé.<sup>2</sup>

In the previous chapter I showed the importance of *coopération culturelle* in the development agreements signed by France with the EAM at the time of independence. Two main themes emerged from the previous chapter showing the importance of French in the Franco-African relationship. Firstly there existed a rich discourse to support the belief that the French language was the key to an historically based solidarity between both France and the EAM states. This idea permitted African leaders to claim that French was a neutral language upon which national unity could be built following the cultural foundations of the colonial era. The initial aid agreements signed by France with each of her former colonies portrayed France as pursuing a moral duty in maintaining this solidarity. Secondly, the widespread acquisition of the French language was also held to be the corner-stone of a model of development resting on the rapid acquisition of a ‘modern’ culture to bridge the gap between the developing and developed world. African ambitions for educational development resulting from this aid stressed the need for both a highly trained elite whilst also declaring the need for mass education

programmes. In practice however, expenditure for French education received the greatest investment. By the end of the 1960s the assertion by economic planners of a close link between heavy educational investment in colonial inspired education systems and economic development was increasingly questioned by educational experts given the poor returns of educational structures that were not well adapted to local conditions and needs.

Although France maintained a privileged and influential role in the cultural policies of developing states, the sending of increasingly large numbers of technical assistants in some countries to advise, act as administrators or to teach became increasingly expensive after the 1960s. This pattern of aid intervention was perceived as potentially politically damaging in the long term if African popular opinion turned against the persistence of the elite to hold French education with such veneration. Why did France maintain such an important role for so long? To answer this, I will consider France's attitudes to certain issues, notably the aims of educational aid and the place of African languages in relation to French. What were the pressures from France's African partners that influenced her policies on these issues? To consider the influences on these ties, I will consider various documents relating to *coopération* from various institutions, including the archives holding papers and records from the services of the *Ministère de la Coopération* ( *rue Monsieur*) for the period 1959-80 and also French government-commissioned aid reports intended to shape future *coopération* policies as well as evaluating past strategies.

I will initially consider these issues in a general political context, notably two significant 'crises' of *coopération* when France examined her policies. The first was the 'crise de coopération' of the early 1970s. The second was that of the late 1980s and early 1990s when with the end of the Cold War and France's internal and European political pressures, there was a greater distancing between France and the EAM.

This first section of the chapter considers the evolution of *coopération* up until the mid 1970s, during the presidency of Georges Pompidou and up until the premiership of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. How did *coopération culturelle* develop in this period and what pressures was it subject to? In the early 1970s, disappointment with the results of the first decade of development and pressures within the newly independent states for their governments to assert full political sovereignty appeared to be a challenge to existing North-South relations. Despite the recently decolonised states' status as independent nations, economic, political and cultural factors brought accusations from nationalist African political groups that governments had not sufficiently broken away from the colonial heritage.

#### **4.1 The *crise de coopération* of the early 1970s**

The *coopération* crisis of the early 1970s provides us with a significant starting point for this section of the chapter. It was in this period that France felt the first significant challenges to her policy of *coopération*. Furthermore, this crisis offers an interesting source of literature on the first ten years of post-colonial *coopération* both from political scientists and from *coopérants* disenchanted and frustrated with French *coopération*

policies that were put in place after independence. Many of these were technical assistants involved in teaching. What does this reveal about the policy of *coopération* and how it operated? What steps did the French government take to minimise any possible political problems that might occur?

One of the most striking accounts of the issues that led to this aid crisis is found in a series of four articles written by the Africa correspondent for *Le Monde*, Gilbert Comte. The series was aptly called 'La coopération en question' and appeared in November 1973.<sup>3</sup> By that time, eight of the francophone African states had asked France to reconsider the terms of *coopération* that had been established in 1960.<sup>4</sup> The overall picture that Comte's articles portray is far from flattering from a French perspective. Among the issues they raised were the resentment at France's increasing pursuit of financial returns on her aid investment and African complaints of a complex and inefficient Paris aid administration. The articles suggested that there was a reluctance on the part of the French government (and in particular, the ministers responsible for *coopération*) to make any significant changes in policies. This occurred whilst African leaders were increasingly impatient with the terms of France's administration of the CFA franc zone that was condemned for keeping a firm grip on post-colonial economic privileges.

With the departure of Charles de Gaulle from the French presidency in 1969, French relations with francophone Africa appeared to have an uncertain future. Georges Pompidou, his successor was faced with the dilemma of whether to maintain the Gaullist

legacy of close institutional, economic and political relations with francophone Africa, or whether to make these relations similar to those of countries whose aid was administered through the *Ministère des Affaires Etrangères*, an institution that normally dealt with France's 'established' foreign affairs. This might well have entailed ending the special relationship between France and her former colonies and introducing more conventional diplomacy. Yvon Bourges, the *Sécretaire d'Etat des Affaires Etrangères* responsible for aid at the beginning of the 1970s, restated the principles of French aid through a speech made in Vienna in 1971, yet he made few concessions to a traditional discourse where France was motivated by an overwhelming sense of duty to fulfil the cultural needs of a potential francophone community. This idea of a sense of duty was reflected in France's continued emphasis on *coopération culturelle*:

Sur le plan culturel, il n'est pas indifférent à la France, en effet, que les Etats francophones représentent hors d'Europe une communauté de quelque 100 millions d'hommes qui seront 160 millions en l'an 2000 et chez qui la langue officielle ou usuelle est la langue française (...) <sup>5</sup>

Bourges' quoting of Charles de Gaulle's *Mémoires d'Espoir* placed his speech firmly in a tradition extolling French *méssianisme*. In such a discourse her narrow national interests were secondary to wider concerns that were to:

(...) contribuer au maintien de la paix et de l'équilibre mondial par l'aide des plus favorisés aux déshérités, devoir qu'exige la solidarité internationale mais générosité qui est aussi, comme l'a rappelé M. Georges Pompidou, un acte de sagesse et une assurance sur l'avenir. <sup>6</sup>

By the late 1970s, however this kind of Gaullist rhetoric was, increasingly ill-perceived by African governments. Many felt vulnerable to criticisms that since independence, full



sovereignty in a number of areas had not yet been gained. Agreements for financial and cultural sovereignty were amongst those domains where many African intellectuals and nationalist politicians felt that France could no longer maintain the same policies without going unchallenged. The first signs of this were in public unrest.

In May 1972 riots in Madagascar provided the first significant indicator of latent African discontent with French policies. An important characteristic of these disturbances was that they were specifically directed against French cultural supremacy and they echoed campaigns for accelerating the application of a cultural 'malgachéité' in state policies. This expression of a cultural discontent was also part of a larger opposition to the nature of franco-Madagascan relations and the system of *coopération* in existence since independence.

A second indicator of a cultural significance was a meeting of the francophone education conference (CONFEMEN) held in Lomé (Togo)<sup>7</sup>. The gathering was significant for the extent of discontent expressed by participants. The criticism by educational experts of the inadequacy of education systems that had largely been maintained by French *coopération* was overwhelming. It suggested that the whole foundation of France's cultural assistance, that of maintaining an equivalence with the Metropolitan system was badly failing to meet the most important challenges of the post-colonial period.

Elsewhere, economic issues sparked discontent. In the course of 1972, Niger and Mauritania both approached France with the intention of reforming financial agreements

relating to the CFA franc zone. Mauritania became one of the first states to seek the formal re-negotiation of aid agreements over this question. An article published in *Le Monde* based on an interview with Ould Daddah, President of Mauritania, in 1973 accused France of deliberately delaying any negotiations to change the terms of the CFA franc zone.<sup>8</sup> President Pompidou's visit to Africa in 1972 saw the French premier facing these issues at first hand as African leaders suggested that France should review the terms of the CFA franc zone and permit states more freedom in the determination of economic, defence and trade policies. The point was made with more force by progressive leaders such as Ould Daddah of Mauritania who was quoted in *Le Monde* as saying : 'Notre obsession c'est celle de l'indépendance. Nous voulons recouvrer notre souveraineté totale et nous sommes prêts à en payer le prix.'<sup>9</sup>

The suggestion here, although it was likely to have been little more than a threat, was that African states were prepared to break off relations with France if France did not make greater concessions to her former colonies to allow them a greater sovereignty in certain policy areas. Despite protests from opposition groups in Madagascar and Mauritania about the lack of opportunities for indigenous cultures to be represented in official functions, it was the issue of economic autonomy and the terms of commercial exchange that ultimately saw a number of agreements re-negotiated between France and her former colonies. Even such moderate leaders as Léopold Senghor of Senegal were prepared to argue that France gained significant rewards from investments, loans and private commercial interests accrued and closely protected since 1960.<sup>10</sup> According to the French political scientist Jean Touscoz, in the period up to 1974, six states,

Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, Madagascar, Mauritania and Senegal, obtained a global re-negotiation of agreements that included changes to *coopération culturelle* and, in particular, the arrangements for technical assistance. The other states (with the exception of Ivory Coast, Dahomey and Togo) obtained new terms in specific areas of agreements. Of these states, Niger, Gabon and the Central African Republic officially sought changes in higher education agreements to end the direct control of the French *Ministère de l'enseignement national*.<sup>11</sup> Of the forms of *coopération*, the cultural domain was the most resistant to change and was only threatened in the short term in states where there was a viable alternative to French. Nevertheless, the *crise de coopération* was evidence that France's aid had to evolve if it wished to maintain the theme of partnership.

#### 4.2 The *Rapport Gorse*

The criticism of France's policies emanating from numerous states and experts was given a greater weight by the submission of the first substantial report on French *coopération* since the *Rapport Jeannney* of 1963. On this occasion, the report was compiled by the former ambassador for Algeria, Georges Gorse. The refusal by the French government (taken at a *conseil des ministres* in October 1971) to publish the *Rapport Gorse* added to a sense of growing criticism against French *coopération* policies and French pursuit of economic and strategic interests ten years after decolonisation. This challenge to French policies was reinforced by certain academics, journalists and *coopérants* who seemed to confirm some of the issues raised by René Dumont as early as 1962. The report considered that although France's aid was considered well meaning, its form was doing

little to resolve the long term problem of the worsening terms of exchange between the North and South, a task that was not made any easier by the effective decrease in French aid since 1964.

The two volume *Rapport Gorse* gave a detailed analysis of the problems of education that it considered should be addressed by French *coopération*. In a special section entitled 'Education et formation' the report was particularly critical of the persistence of imported (ie. French) models of education and the high cost that the growth of such a system entailed for the state adopting it. This rapid educational growth brought an increase in the number of technical assistants in the different sectors of education. In secondary education the *Rapport Gorse* noted that there had been an increase of some ten per cent in technical assistants in secondary education substituting for local teachers. A thorough analysis in the report of the structures of France's educational aid and the evolution of educational trends led to certain striking conclusions. Of these, the lack of adaptation of education systems to economic and social needs was forcefully made: 'l'appareil éducatif est aujourd'hui la source d'un chômage structurel. Le système d'enseignement est, en effet, principalement orienté vers la satisfaction de l'administration et du secteur tertiaire.'<sup>12</sup>

Much of the analysis in the report stressed that France's pattern of expenditure on substitution was expensive and inefficient and prevented any locally-led change in the education systems inherited from before 1960. The report emphasised how only African-influenced change could bring about the essential reforms that would allow a better

return on educational investment. Amongst the report's ten final recommendations for education was that a greater sovereignty for educational management and reform should be handed over to states receiving aid. The report also considered that entirely French-managed and funded schools should not be open to any other children than those from large ex-patriot communities and should certainly not allow them to become privileged parallel education systems within assisted countries. French substitution of teachers should be steadily reduced whilst a high priority should be given to innovative ways of training African teachers supplementing those provided in insufficient numbers through traditional *Ecoles Normales*.

In another section on technical assistance, the Gorse report acknowledged that *coopération culturelle* was extremely important in the French *coopération* system. The report suggested that the growing costs that *coopération culturelle* entailed in the overall budget should not be allowed to increase unless the aid that it provided became considerably more efficient. By way of comparison, expenditure for technical assistance represented half of the aid budget in 1964. This had become two-thirds in 1969. This was seen as wasteful, firstly when there appeared to be no short-term plans to phase out assistants in positions of responsibility and secondly when there was little geographical co-ordination across regions where conditions and problems were shared.

The *Rapport Gorse* was highly outspoken for its time yet reflected the concerns of a growing number of educational experts who were conscious that education was not bringing benefits to the masses. Politically, it advocated accelerating trends of aid

distribution that neither France nor her African partners were eager to countenance. Perhaps most significantly the report attracted attention to the problems posed by the large numbers of French nationals employed in the service of African states.

A mixture of *coopérants* involved in different development tasks across the African continent showed that their presence was increasingly problematic. At the height of their deployment in the mid 1970s and the early 1980s they numbered over 11, 000 and only fell below 10,000 in the mid 1980s.<sup>13</sup> The views and opinions of this ‘army’ of technical assistants were explored in a special issue of the liberal Catholic review *Esprit* in 1970. In a special issue of *Esprit* in July 1970 entitled ‘Les coopérants et la coopération’, *coopérants*, journalists and academics contributed assessments of France’s aid policies after a decade of *coopération*.<sup>14</sup> From the position of a liberal Catholic review, it placed the issue of *coopération* in the context of the division of the world into areas of unequal wealth and development. It was therefore implicitly examining the basis of France’s traditional claims to pursue an inherently moral solidarity with the countries of the developing world.

A variety of articles from specialists in economics and political science considered the issue of France’s post-colonial interactions in the developing world. In an article entitled ‘De la décolonisation à la coopération’, the aid specialist Stéphane Hessel considered France’s nineteenth century colonial legacy in the cultural domain:

L’empire français forgé sans doute par des soldats, n’est il pas devenu au XIXe siècle faute d’avoir réussi à s’incarner dans une domination économique - un empire des idées,

une domination intellectuelle? Pariso-centrique, et assez superbement indifférente (malgré les efforts courageux et frustrés de quelques arabisants, de quelques africanistes, d'une poignée d'ethnologues américanistes et de sinologues) aux civilisations étrangères, l'action culturelle de la France a créé à travers le monde un réseaux d'instituts, de lycées de centres culturels et d'alliances françaises que doit nous envier la CIA.<sup>15</sup>

Hessel's criticism was frank and direct and challenged the illusion of French *coopération* as a form of altruistic *messianisme* that was naturally open and tolerant towards other cultures as French *coopération culturelle* discourse might have us believe. Stéphane Hessel was not alone in questioning the basis of French cultural 'rayonnement'. The proposition of the journalist Robert de Montvalon in his article 'Notes sur une coopération qui n'est pas encore commencée' was that France's idea of *coopération* necessitated a change of cultural attitudes:

Acceptons cet apparent paradoxe: l'établissement d'une relation plus vraie entre des peuples différents passe par la destruction du vieil universalisme fabriqué par l'occident. Nous n'avons d'ailleurs pas à le détruire: il se détruit lui-même, comme un outil rongé se brise entre les mains. (...)

L'universalisme, tel que nous l'avons conçu jusqu'à ce jour, n'était guère autre chose qu'un particularisme devenu tout-puissant- une projection de soi jusqu'aux limites du monde.<sup>16</sup>

The most interesting part of this special issue of *Esprit* was the assessment of a questionnaire completed by *assistants techniques* 'en poste'. Many revealed a disappointment that the term *coopération* was so inappropriate to the reality of their role. Even if the principle of their presence was generally accepted, to be to educate and advise, the consequences of the resulting education brought the greatest concern as to its effects on local cultures.

The question as to whether there existed a feeling that *coopération* is a latent device for French economic exploitation was met with a varying response from those contributing. A number of contributors saw the issue of cultural hegemony exacerbated by the irreconcilable gulf between French and local cultures and the difficulty of adapting French cultural approaches and conceptual schemes within rigid French educational structures. Various *coopérants* believed that a more thorough grounding was required to allow them to understand political and cultural issues before their departure.

The tone of the whole issue suggests a distinct unease with the policy of aid conducted by France. In an article that served as a conclusion to the issue, the editor of the issue and political scientist Yves Goussault highlighted a fundamental ambiguity in the attitudes and opinions of the *coopérants* cited in the issue. He suggested that France's cultural relations were influenced inevitably more by commercial concerns than higher universal motives:

Qu'on le veuille ou non, la France est un régime capitaliste et même quand elle offre à des pays sous-développés l'appui de ses enseignants et techniciens, elle exporte moins ses idées que les lois de ses idées.<sup>17</sup>

The implication was that the language of France's duty and moral responsibility as guarantor of an exported universalism left many *coopérants* uneasy. The various interests that France pursued in different areas of *coopération* could not be separated since, as we have already seen, ultimately the cultural had a significant part to play in conditioning the rest of France's policies. In the light of the *Rapport Gorse* and the



survey in *Esprit*, it is interesting to see how some five years later, when another aid report was produced, the concerns of the Gorse report were dealt with.

### 4.3 The *Rapport Abelin*

The Abelin report (*Rapport sur la politique française de coopération-présenté par Pierre Abelin*) published in 1975 reflected many of the issues broached in the Gorse report.<sup>18</sup> It did so by employing teams of ‘missions de dialogue’ sent to discuss specific issues in different countries many of which had been indicated as seeking significant discussions if the second generation of development agreements signed in the 1970s were to be successful.<sup>19</sup> Among the questions to address were the accusations against France of wishing to maintain a cultural hegemony over the EAM within a strategy of maintaining economic and strategic interests.

Despite a preoccupation that the report present cultural questions in a less arrogant light, it ventured an approach that remained influenced by a French ‘*messianisme*’:

La solidarité qui se manifeste entre les nations qui ont en commun l’usage de la langue française justifie amplement l’effort entrepris et qu’il convient de développer pour adapter partout l’enseignement du français aux exigences culturelles et linguistiques de chaque milieu.<sup>20</sup>

The new found stress on a greater respect for other cultures was expressed in the last of the seven principles intended to define more clearly the objectives of France’s development aid: ‘Provoquer le dialogue des cultures en même temps que le dialogue politique est l’un de nos objectifs essentiels.’<sup>21</sup>

In the report on the findings of the *missions de dialogue* two sections are dedicated to cultural issues. One considers ‘authenticité et (...) l’indépendance’ and the other ‘Transformation du système éducatif’. The use of the imprecise term ‘authenticité’ was an indirect reference to the policies of such African leaders as Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire who urged Africans to ‘re-discover’ their African identity. In other countries the term was used as a rallying call for opposition groups against elites that had held power since independence.<sup>22</sup>

In the first of these sections the difficulties of defining national cultures in the interests of discovering an ‘authenticité’ were linked to wider economic and political questions. The report stressed that it was France’s responsibility to send trained *coopérants* with sufficient training and awareness of cultural issues. The recommendations for changing education systems provided as much a defence of past policies as proposals for future policies. Whilst the limits of imported educational structures were admitted, the accusations that France had been responsible for maintaining a simple transposition of her education system in the EAM were denied. Nevertheless the *Rapport Abelin* explained that African ambitions of creating a stable African francophone elite remained and were no less valid in the context of a long-term development than they were in the 1960s.

The *Rapport Abelin* appears as a recognition that Franco-African aid relations needed to evolve, yet avoided the drastic proposals of the *Rapport Gorse* of 1971. It admitted that

France needed to pay closer attention to respecting cultural differences but gave very few concrete examples of how this could be actively pursued in practice. As we will see this was a reflection of the eminently political role that *coopération culturelle* played and because many countries could not or would not attempt to formulate cultural policies that displaced those emanating from France.

I will now consider how the *Ministère de la Coopération* perceived the issues in cultural relations and the nature of the analysis and advice given to decision makers in this period. In doing so, I will attempt to show that the pursuit of France's interests entailed significant restrictions. In this context, I will seek to prove that the argument of a simple dependency relationship between France and the states that she was aiding requires some qualification. In general terms, the new agreements for *coopération culturelle* introduced a greater emphasis on cultural *authenticité* and at least nominally acknowledged the non-reciprocity of existing relations in this area of *coopération*. I will later consider the extent to which officials at the *Ministère de la Coopération* tried to adapt their attitudes and policies to take this into account.

By the start of the 1970s at the *Ministère de la Coopération*, the services managing French educational policies were increasingly aware of the need to reduce major obstacles to the success of French *coopération*. These obstacles included the excessive reliance on French expertise for the management of education systems and the need for states to devise systems reflecting national values and priorities. Towards the end of the previous decade educational experts considered that prevailing primary education

provision was inadequate for the social, cultural and economic conditions of the continent. Secondary and technical education still remained based on the French model and had not been adapted to the very real needs of the francophone African states. This judgement was expressed not only by many educational experts from France but also those in Africa. Furthermore, the increasing demand for technical assistants was taking up a growing percentage of the falling *coopération* budget that France was unable to sustain at the same rate as in the 1960s.

Two internal reports within the *Ministère de la Coopération* from the early 1970s- the *Rapport Guisset*, entitled 'L'enseignement et la formation'(1975) and *Le Ministère de la Coopération et les activités du ministère* (1973) (giving a statistical analysis of French aid to education)- give an interesting reflection of concerns at the time.

The *Guisset* report was particularly concerned with pedagogical matters and discussed such issues as reforms and the fundamental ambitions of assistance. The document reveals a sense of frustration created by obstacles to meeting the ambitions formulated in the 1960s:

Notre aide répartie en enveloppes rigides ne suit pas la diversité de l'évolution des pays, ni la croissance de leurs effectifs scolaires, ni leurs problèmes particuliers, pas plus qu'elle ne tient compte de l'importance de leur produit intérieur brut ou de la diffusion de la langue française. Il ne semble pas y avoir de politique de ressources humaines en tant que telle, mais simplement des mesures d'accompagnement du développement dans le secteur de l'enseignement.<sup>23</sup>

The report seems therefore to suggest that aid was inflexible and that it was frequently difficult to interpret its motives. This would seem to belie accusations that France placed

the interests of her own *rayonnement* above those of the states that were aided. It was in the period from the late 1960s that France became increasingly aware that her financial contribution to education was no longer as decisive in national budgets as it once was. From the 1970s onwards a growing number of multilateral international aid agencies invested in all forms of education. Nevertheless, the importance of French expertise and the continued reference to the French education system were factors that allowed France to maintain close cultural relations that did not rely on the weight of financial investment in aid to her former colonies alone.

This form of French post-colonial influence would become more significant given that the percentage of France's aid in France's fourteen former African colonies had fallen from representing an average of sixty-eight per cent of state budget expenditure in 1964 to being only thirty-seven per cent in 1972. France's aid also remained concentrated in a small number of states - Senegal, Madagascar, the Ivory Coast and Cameroon- who received some forty-nine per cent of aid for a total of thirty-three per cent of school children receiving education in the EAM.<sup>24</sup>

A document found within the report and seemingly used for consultation before the final version of the *Rapport Guisset* entitled *Rapport du groupe de travail* "besoins des Etats"

(M. Dementhan) explained the political restrictions on aid distribution:

Notre coopération, qui a toujours cherché à tenir le plus grand compte des demandes formulées par les Etats, se trouve quelque peu prisonnière de cette démarche, et dans la mesure où elle est contrainte d'intervenir "pour des raisons politiques" elle est amenée à financer les actions qui lui sont présentées dans l'ordre de priorité fixé par les Etats, même si elles paraissent de peu d'intérêt. Il est, en effet, toujours plus délicat de dire aux

Autorités d'un pays que les priorités données à leurs demandes ne sont pas conformes à leurs besoins.<sup>25</sup>

The contributor to the report expressed his concerns at consequences of the relative decline in France's ability to shape policies and in particular the removal of technical assistants from influential roles as advisors to African ministries. In fact, he doubted whether France could influence necessary reforms without having to pay the cost in political terms.

The general conclusion of the report was that France should reconsider her existing strategies and try to accommodate the ever-escalating demands for French educational assistance which, it was emphasised, could bring particularly useful advantages compared with other types of aid:

A terme, la formation d'hommes, éduqués suivant les mêmes méthodes, adoptant une façon de penser, de raisonner qui est la nôtre, utilisant les mêmes concepts et ayant les mêmes références culturelles, entraînés sur les matériels français, font d'eux à la fois des alliés politiques, des partenaires d'une même culture (dont les variétés peuvent être multiples mais qui utilisent une même langue) et des clients sur un plan strictement commercial.<sup>26</sup>

The conclusion clearly echoes justifications employed in the colonial period. France remained committed to a similar cultural penetration as had been theorised by Napoleon Bonaparte.<sup>27</sup>

In the report, France's influence was deemed to be threatened by a combination of African nationalism, major multilateral aid organisations and the growing tendency of the Third World accessing natural resources that had previously been in the control of the

former colonial powers. The report argued that given the limits of France's financial means, a concentration of efforts in education and training was even more important. The consequences of such intentions need also to be considered with the lack of willingness of African states to reform education policies.

The report entitled *Le Ministère de la Coopération et son activité en 1973* made two telling remarks. The first welcomed the Africanisation of education 'à condition d'être d'abord définie non seulement au niveau de principe, mais surtout au niveau des applications pratiques.' Secondly came the suggestion that despite complaints from African intellectuals there was a satisfaction with France's provision of *assistants techniques* to substitute rather than train their successors:

La vocation du coopérant devrait être de former des homologues africains en leur communiquant sa propre expérience. A quelques exceptions près, les coopérants remplacent les cadres inexistantes. Les Etats africains paraissent se satisfaire de cette formule et ne font rien pour la changer.<sup>28</sup>

Such statements reinforced the sense that for internal political reasons African states were reluctant to reduce France's central role as provider of education to their education systems. The political pressures on France from the EAM not to reduce her aid in education would seem to explain why technical assistants in this sector rose. From the early 1970s they represented a higher percentage of France's provision of *Assistants techniques* than in the late 1960s when the proportion of French personnel in other sectors (such as the judiciary) fell.

#### 4.4 *Coopération with the Ivory Coast*

The Franco-Ivory Coast aid relationship brought France the greatest restrictions in her policy of *coopération*. The education system of the Ivory Coast, provides us with the most striking example of an education system that was slow to reform and reduce its reliance on French technical assistance. The numbers of French educational personnel increased significantly after 1966 when France introduced the policy of 'la globalisation des charges' whereby any additional technical assistants beyond those funded by France would be provided by France only if the host country paid eighty per cent of their wages.

A document prepared by the *Ministère de la Coopération* in 1978 explained the principles of 'L'Assistance technique remboursable' where, in nearly all cases, the receiving country would at least contribute to providing accommodation, give tax exemptions and pay an agreed sum to the French Treasury.<sup>29</sup> Two systems of financing now existed side by side. The first, that of 'remboursement partiel', entailed France maintaining a majority percentage participation towards the costs and therefore a significant say in the future patterns of deployment of French personnel. The second, that of a 'remboursement 'intégral' (previously known as 'la globalisation des charges') entailed states taking on sole financial costs of any additional technical assistants. Such a scheme was employed by Ivory Coast from 1966 and Gabon from 1976. In 1975 France's investment in the costs of technical assistance in the Ivory Coast was 21.5%. In 1977, Senegal also agreed to accept the scheme to finance her future expansion of technical assistants. The document anticipated that this system would cover half of the



technical assistants under the responsibility of the *Ministère de la Coopération*. On the issue of the deployment of technical assistants, the report confirmed that varying economic rates of expansion explained the concentration of technical assistants in Ivory Coast, Senegal and Madagascar.<sup>30</sup> The French changes in the funding of *assistants techniques* had all been attempts to dissuade states from maintaining large numbers of French personnel without ending the ‘tradition’ of sending French teachers to Africa. It would seem that this was a potentially awkward policy in France’s dealings with certain states.

Various correspondence from 1973 through to 1979 suggest that the services of the *Ministère de la Coopération* were under instructions to maintain good political relations with the Ivory Coast. When in 1974, France sought to change the general educational agreements that had been established in 1960, a confidential note observed that:

La pratique, aussi bien celle de la Côte d’Ivoire, que la nôtre, a bouleversé la lettre des accords qui est violée ou ignorée dans ce qu’elle a de non adaptée, de désagréable, de caduque. Il n’en reste que l’essentiel, ce à quoi on tient. La machine fonctionne. Réviser les accords risquerait de la mettre en cause.<sup>31</sup>

The author warned against forcing too rapid a change on the Ivory Coast government, even if certain factions within its education system and groups opposed to the government sought changes that would make education more Ivorian and less French. The ‘Note de Service’ considered that the desire to end a reference to the French educational model was relatively unimportant politically and it reflected no more than ‘les exaspérations d’une poignée d’intellectuels’. Despite this, the need to reduce the

number of French technical assistants was still important, particularly as it was judged that France had lost control of the number of technical assistants sent to the Ivory Coast, a situation that, in the long term, threatened to create both political and financial problems at a later stage.

Another internal document produced in June 1974 with observations about the Ivory Coast education system revealed two contradictions. It was a highly selective system with only 25,000 children of the 100,000 entering primary school progressing to secondary school. Of these, only 2,000 would receive the *baccalauréat*. Against this was a desire for massive democratic education that would allow the majority of children to be educated until the age of sixteen. A second contradiction was its seemingly conflicting ambitions. On the one hand it aimed to maintain an education system with international recognition based on equivalence with the French system. On the other, the education system had vague ambitions to be an 'authentic' Ivorian institution promoting national values.<sup>32</sup> Two years later in a dossier prepared in advance of the Minister for *Coopération*'s visit to the Ivory Coast in December 1976, the cultural dimension and the significance of France's personnel were noted:

C'est enfin une coopération qui donne des résultats équilibrés, et sans doute l'une des rares qui mérite vraiment le nom de coopération et ne soit pas une simple assistance, car chacun des partenaires y trouve son compte(...)<sup>33</sup>

Sur le plan culturel, la Côte d'Ivoire sera peut-être dans quelques années le seul pays où la francophonie sera réellement implantée, devenant ainsi un point d'ancrage essentiel pour l'influence de la langue française en Afrique.

The dossier claimed that overall relations between France and the Ivory Coast provided an exemplary model of *coopération*. It also portrayed the Ivory Coast as a French

cultural strong-hold that could lead to a greatly increased presence of the French language in the future. In a document to prepare the 'Commission mixte' of March 1977, it was conceded that France would have to reduce her expenditure, including a ten percent decrease in *coopérants* not covered by 'la globalisation des charges'.

The high cost of this sort of educational substitution was identified as a negative aspect of Ivory Coast's relative economic prosperity in a World Bank study published in 1978.<sup>34</sup>

More fundamentally, the government has become increasingly aware that the standards set for the educational system may not be appropriate for Ivorian conditions. A system that is of high quality by French standards is not necessarily appropriate for the conditions prevailing in the Ivory Coast.<sup>35</sup>

Two years later, Robert Galley wrote to the Ivorian President Félix Houphouët-Boigny with his concerns for the galloping inflation of *coopérants*:

Elle est susceptible de croître de manière qui pourrait devenir excessive, dans la mesure où il n'existe pas de mécanisme d'auto-limitation au sein des ministères employeurs, cette main d'oeuvre supportée par le budget des charges communes de l'Etat leur coutant moins cher que les fonctionnaires ivoiriens.<sup>36</sup>

The instructions for France's representatives at the *Comité paritaire franco-ivoirien* for higher education showed that French authorities were prepared to expect a difficult meeting such was the determination of Houphouët-Boigny to impose his terms:

La délégation française fera face à une négociation sans aucun doute difficile et différente des précédentes en raison de son contexte politique: La Côte d'Ivoire est un des Etats les plus remarquables, à tous les égards, de l'ensemble francophone. Animée par un des chefs d'Etat les plus prestigieux d'Afrique, et par une équipe gouvernementale de valeur, les aides que la Côte d'Ivoire reçoit d'autres Etats et de grands organismes

internationaux, lui permettent de déterminer ses propres orientations et de manifester ses exigences dans la négociation.<sup>37</sup>

Although Robert Galley's visit was intended to avoid any potential political problems it would seem (no official information is available) that from the French position, few concessions were gained since two years later there had been no slowing down in the growth of the numbers of *assistants techniques*.

By 1979, the instructions for the *Commission mixte franco-ivoirienne* revealed genuine concerns for the safety of French *coopérants* since there had been a number of anti-French leaflets in the street accompanied by attacks on French targets and nationals in Abidjan. Furthermore, the growth in the numbers of ex-patriots had left a shortage of suitable accommodation for any new personnel sent from France.<sup>38</sup>

Whilst internal reports imply that reform of France's *coopération* with the Ivory Coast was restricted to avoid upsetting France's commercial interests, international organisations questioned the pattern of Ivorian educational expansion. One such example of this questioning came in a World Bank report produced by Bastiaan A den Tuinder in 1978. The report praised much that had been achieved in Ivorian education, yet had certain reservations as to the expense that it entailed as a significant percentage of the national budget:

From 1960 to 1973, total recurrent public expenditure on education and training grew at an average annual rate of 17.5%, while total recurrent public expenditure revenues grew at a rate of only about 12.5%. As a result, the share of education and training in the total recurrent budget grew from 22% to 33% during this period.<sup>39</sup>

The report reveals that this massive expenditure meant that, of sixty-nine other countries on which comparable data had been gathered, the Ivory Coast spent more of the budget on education than any other country in the world.<sup>40</sup> Although Den Tuinder identified the possible savings that the state could make by cutting the number of French *assistants techniques* in Ivorian education, he also noted that the shortage of qualified teachers in the local population meant that there would be no short-term solutions to the issue. Nevertheless, he also conceded that the question of ‘Ivoirisation’ was a significant long-term issue that could only be achieved if the government took on the question of reducing reliance on French educational standards:

The objective should not be the achievement of excellence according to French standards, but the construction of a system that will prepare students for conditions prevailing in the Ivory Coast.<sup>41</sup>

In the opinion of an anti-imperialist group such as CEDETIM, the presence of large numbers of *assistants techniques* on the African continent was part of a wide strategy to ensure the lasting presence of French values:

L’outil principal de domination de l’impérialisme français mis en oeuvre par l’Etat est encore le maintien d’une présence permanente qui s’efforce d’assurer et de reproduire une Communauté d’intérêts fondée sur une culture commune. Théorisée politiquement dans la francophonie, même si au sein de la bourgeoisie des oppositions se font jour, dont l’objectif est plus de répartir géographiquement des moyens onéreux, les coopérants, que de changer la nature de la coopération, la France a effectivement réussi à enraciner dans tous les pays ex-colonisés l’usage du français.<sup>42</sup>

The Ivory Coast relationship was a clear example of France’s technical assistants being employed for local political motivations by the Ivorian government whilst France attempted, albeit in a timid manner, to reduce her commitment without harming overall diplomatic and strategic relations that were ultimately more important than longer term

cultural considerations. The pressures that ensured that coopération culturelle did not break away from Metropolitan educational models came from higher diplomatic authorities (either the Elysée or the Ministère des Affaires Etrangères) as well as the local African elites and did not always accord with strategies to permit a larger dissemination of the French language that some officials or education advisors at the Rue Monsieur might have preferred.

#### 4.5 Attempts at reform

It would be wrong to suggest that all Franco-African state education systems remained entirely rooted in models inherited from France. A shift in many states towards a recognition of the benefits of more adapted educational systems by including more vocational innovation was accelerated by increased funding from multilateral sources with less direct political objectives than would be found in bilateral aid funders such as France. By 1978, all the francophone states had brought about some sort of reform to their primary education systems under encouragement from France.

The question of why practical reform of African education was such a slow process is commonly raised in the numerous studies that exist evaluating the systems created from the French model. In a Canadian study of the management of human resources and education in Senegal, the dilemma was placed in another context. Writing in 1981, Roger Bonaventure Coly explained:

Sous prétexte de maintenir des “standards internationaux”, elle n’a pas osé ou n’a pas pu entreprendre la vraie réforme, celle de l’audace, de l’innovation, de l’originalité (...) Il en résulte une profonde crise qui risque dans quelques années si on n’y prend garde de faire

éclater tous les “garde-fous” et de montrer au grand jour sa profonde inadaptation à la société sénégalaise.<sup>43</sup>

In Senegal, where Léopold Senghor, the ‘father’ of African Francophonie, was President from 1960 to 1981, France maintained some of the closest cultural links both before and after decolonisation. Numerous studies on the history of education in Senegal reveal that strong political and social pressures militated strongly against breaking a close equivalence with French educational standards.<sup>44</sup>

Through the 1970s and early 1980s, France’s policies remained relatively conservative with no dramatic change in the way in which aid to education was supplied. The aid remained concentrated in a small number of countries and the greatest costs continued to be the in *assistants techniques*. The coming to power of the Socialist government in 1981, despite its association with a defence of the rights of developing nations, did not entail any significant breaking of the privileged relationship. Proposals to widen France’s presence in Africa beyond those countries with which Giscard d’Estaing had initiated greater relations were soon rejected. A 1982 report entitled *Coopération et développement: La France et l’Afrique- Etudes des relations franco-africaines*, concluded:

Mais tout élargissement du champ de coopération ne saurait se faire au détriment de l’Afrique. La part de l’Afrique francophone ne saurait diminuer en valeur. Lors du sommet de Kinshasa, en octobre 1982, où la forte participation signifie que la France est un des rares pays occidentaux à tenir le langage de la responsabilité, le président français a réaffirmé la priorité à l’Afrique dans les rapports bilatéraux

L’enjeu politique, économique, militaire et culturel est trop important pour diluer l’influence régionale de la France dans une politique mondialiste.<sup>45</sup>

In education, there was a gradual movement away from France's policies of substitution in teaching personnel. It was replaced by an aid for more decentralised and varied projects. Such sectors as rural development and the development of light industry were increasingly given importance over the blanket aid that France maintained in the 1960s and 1970s. The *Ministère de la Coopération*'s report for the period 1983-84 notes that overall, France's priorities in education and training, were in rural development projects, the training of educational specialists at all levels, extending professional training and finally concentrating on meeting the needs for public administration.

Despite France's emphasis on education in such programmes, they have not sheltered their recipients from the general crisis in African education. A combination of galloping demography, chronic debt and stringent structural adjustment programmes designed to reduce state spending have all affected countries on the African continent regardless of whether they are anglophone, lusophone or francophone. A widespread investment in African states in education from 1965 to 1975 saw much innovation yet few accepted 'solutions' to the challenge of replacing imported models with those that reflected African cultural and social structures. The French academic Isabelle Deblé reveals the following paradox:

Ceux qui ont parcouru des pays africains dès 1961, examiné les pratiques scolaires et écouté les aspirations de leurs interlocuteurs, ont senti la volonté de construire une école 'africaine' tout en implantant les techniques occidentales modernes, ont entendu l'écho anti-impérialiste de nombreux leaders politiques, mais aussi le désir d'entrer de plain-pied sur la scène internationale et dans le débat scolaire. Mais les plus acharnés à édifier ou à faire édifier cette école africaine étaient occidentaux.<sup>46</sup>



Deblé therefore proposes that experts outside of Africa had the greatest commitment to reforming education systems inherited from the colonial period. The ambiguity of African leaders proposing that schools promote specifically African values whilst showing reluctance to move away from the colonial model is a consistent theme of the Franco-African cultural relationship that was never resolved.

A brochure published in 1993 by the *Ministère de la Coopération* reviewed France's general role in assisting African education since 1960. It quotes statistics that show that numbers of African pupils educated from 1960 to 1983 multiplied by five and that, in this period, the percentage of budget allocation for education represented in EAM states represented anything from fifteen to forty per cent.<sup>47</sup> The report admits that following decolonisation, states remained committed to expensive education systems based on European models. From 1970, the report claims that France acted more in pedagogical and financial support of education compared with the all-inclusive role played in the 1960s.

Nevertheless, until the early 1980s, French technical assistance (under the practice of *la globalisation des charges*) increased steadily. At this time, French aid to education represented approximately some two fifths of the bilateral aid to education in states South of the Sahara.<sup>48</sup> By the late 1980s the nature of this aid changed to protect education systems from the worst effects of state debt and a pressing need for countries to reduce educational expenditure:

L'aide octroyée par la France intervient de plus en plus en palliatif ou en renfort dans les secteurs précis où les gouvernements sont forcés au désengagement. Cela se traduit

notamment par une multiplication de projets qui sont choisis en fonction d'objectifs jugés prioritaires.<sup>49</sup>

By this time, the rise in the percentage of multilateral aid for education, in particular from such institutions as the World Bank and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, far exceeded bilateral aid and was frequently tied in with strict conditions regarding the sectors of education that should receive investment.

Whilst in the 1970s France was accused of not formulating clear policies for *coopération*, the publication of the series of policy documents entitled *Education et formation en Afrique subsaharienne- chantiers 1992* represents one of the clearest publicly available accounts of France's position on aid to African education.<sup>50</sup> The analysis that emerges from the studies does not contradict a general consensus that educational systems have for too long concentrated investment in sectors with limited economic repercussions. Furthermore, they have often accentuated the economic divide between rural and urban areas and generally the high cost of teachers' salaries were a heavy burden for African states to bear.

France claimed to represent a unique position compared with other aid funders. The document voiced caution against an indiscriminate application of purely economic and technical solutions to educational problems. These, the document claimed, effectively withdrew the ability of states to decide future educational development. French aid was therefore to be directed at improving educational planning and evaluation within a 'politique globale de rénovation et de revitalisation des systèmes éducatifs'.<sup>51</sup> The

document also placed such an approach in a multilateral francophone context and refers to policies pursued by the CONFEMEN (*Conférence des ministres de l'enseignement national*), and the ACCT (*Agence de coopération culturel et technique*) as decided at the third francophone summit held in 1989.

France's policies are also placed in the context of the UNESCO world education conference held in Jomtien (Thailand) in 1990. Taking as a rallying call the theme 'Education for All', the conference developed the importance of 'basic education' policies. This approach stressed mass minimal education programmes to allow the greatest number of people to acquire sufficient elementary literacy and numeracy to profit from development initiatives. In general terms, France supported these principles but also had some reservations as to the consequences for traditional primary education which allow the suitably able to enter the secondary system that is the gateway for children wanting to enter the educational elite.

The position that France adopts is that of arguing her long experience and expertise in assisting education in Africa. Economic, political and educational developments mean that quantitative approaches (such as maintaining heavy investment in mass education) are unrealistic. A qualitative approach (involving strategically used French educational advisors) maintains France's symbolic role in defending the educational interests of her former colonies whilst protecting them from the worst excesses of technocratic economists. Any reference to a *rayonnement* of the language and its central and uncontested position as the language of development makes way for an

acknowledgement that French should not be taught in such a way that might disrupt the learning of maternal African languages. As if to reinforce even further the break with a past discourse it admits:

Une des marques de la baisse des performances est, contrairement à la situation de référence des années 1960, le caractère aujourd’hui largement fictif de la parité des baccalauréats africains et français, longtemps considérée comme la clé de voûte des systèmes éducatifs francophones.<sup>52</sup>

Whilst within the post-colonial states, French education still remained valued, outside, old arguments claiming that it was a guarantee of international standards were now wearing thin.

#### **4.6 The place of French *and* African languages**

A closely related question to the nature of France’s educational aid was the attitude that France should officially give to African languages and their relations with French. This shows an interesting ambiguity and a general lack of direction suggesting that until the early 1980s there was little pressure to define a particularly precise position. In the 1960s, the official position was that French, when it became widespread in the general population through the growth in education, would become an African ‘Latin’ that, by the year 2000, would have gained a status similar to that of Spanish in Southern and Central America. An internal document published in 1967 admitted that African languages would still have a role but it would become increasingly minor once French established itself through education:

L’assimilation des élites avec lesquelles nous sommes en contact, jointe au sentiment spontané que chacun de nous éprouve de la valeur singulière de la langue et de la culture

qui sont les nôtres, nous incite à consolider déjà comme une réalité cette Afrique d'expression française.<sup>53</sup>

The pressures for political and cultural 'authenticité' in the 1970s forced France to reconsider her previous discourse. Significantly, official documents fail to define the term. It seems that it referred to political movements which rejected the basis of dominant post-colonial cultural development that relied on a mainly unquestioning acceptance of Western cultures and languages for the most significant functions of development. Political groups preaching 'authenticité' expressed ideals of rediscovering African values as an integral part of development.

Despite the presence of these ideals, the French ambition of creating a French-based African culture, where significant cultural expression would be through French and not African languages, persisted. In 1975, a conference held by the CILF (*Conférence Internationale de la langue française*) on French and its relations with African languages was assisted by funding from the *Ministère de la Coopération*. A *note de service* to the *chef de cabinet*, Fernand Wibaux suggested that the conference would allow France to establish a less ambiguous position by which she could try to allay fears that there was a 'plot' to restrict the development of African languages.

En fait les langues africaines constitueront dans l'avenir le meilleur barrage contre l'intrusion d'autres langues étrangères: à partir du moment où les élèves auront à apprendre une ou plusieurs langues africaines l'apprentissage du français apparaîtra comme le moyen nécessaire et suffisant d'accéder à la culture universelle sans qu'il soit besoin ou même possible d'apprendre une autre langue européenne sauf pour une élite extrêmement limitée.<sup>54</sup>

It was therefore a pre-requisite that France be perceived as sympathetic towards efforts by states to develop their cultural identity. French would remain central to states as the main language for development. It would also be:

un élément important d'une politique intelligente qui peu à peu assimilerait les rapports entre la France et les intellectuels africains de la nouvelle génération qui commencent à occuper les postes de responsabilité et qui ont tendance à croire que la France s'oppose à la promotion des cultures nationales.<sup>55</sup>

The analysis of various documents reveals that it would be rather presumptive to suggest that this represented an official position. Nevertheless, as a strategy for maintaining the support of African elites it seems plausible and would partly explain the slight shift in emphasis during this period within the multilateral structures of Francophonie. Five years later, a similar note was presented to the *chef de cabinet* ahead of the Kigali CONFEMEN meeting. The first proposal was that France should attempt to

(...) présenter une belle façade en mars 1980 à Kigali et d'abord à Dakar en janvier, tout en évitant croire à un changement brutal de notre politique: l'essentiel est de montrer qu'il n'y a plus depuis longtemps, et encore moins de "verrou français" mis au développement des langues vernaculaires.<sup>56</sup>

The *note de service* suggested that France should support the positions recommended by UNESCO advising support to states wishing to integrate national languages into development plans. Once again, France could not afford to be perceived as blocking these efforts:

L'intérêt de la France est de gagner le coeur des Africains dans la meilleure de nos traditions culturelles nationales, donc d'ouvrir à leur épanouissement autant que les facteurs économiques et sociaux. Nous assurerons d'ailleurs, ce faisant l'enracinement du français comme langue seconde, voire comme langue proprement africaine.<sup>57</sup>

Under the heading ‘Orientations et moyens de notre politique’ the emphasis of the French position was to be on developing ‘conventions de promotion linguistique’ where France’s aid would be presented as ‘une aide en quelque sorte naturelle et banalisée comme les autres aides françaises’ but would also oblige states to define their own policies. To accompany this a FAC project of three to four million francs for the 1980 budget would be allocated. The record of positions that emerge from the *Ministère de la Coopération* that are found in the archives are unclear and hesitant. They reveal that France had recognised that there were was a growing movement seeking the greater recognition of African languages in essential functions yet the proposed responses were highly conservative and fitted within a tendency to place French language and culture at the centre of cultural and linguistic planning with scant consideration for non-official languages.

#### **4.7 French aid to the audio-visual sector, cultural centres and to *actions culturelles***

The next section of this chapter considers France’s policies in the audio-visual domain and in the management of cultural centres considered in the previous chapter. In Chapter Three, we noted that audio-visual policies were seen as extensions of education policies and therefore carried similar assumptions about nation-building and culture. In the period under consideration, France continued to be the most significant provider of news and television programmes either directly via *Agence France presse* or from France’s provision of television and radio news via the policy of ‘monitoring’. By this policy France would send programmes and news reports produced for domestic French television free to states who could broadcast them within their own schedules.

Whilst officially *coopération* was comprised of policies that France developed and administered at the *Ministère de la Coopération*, they were also conceived in the context of a general cultural strategy defined by the DGRCSST in the *Ministère des affaires étrangères* that oversaw all French cultural policies within ‘traditional’ diplomacy.<sup>58</sup> A speech by Pierre Laurent from the DGRCSST and reproduced in *Revue Politique et parlementaire*, outlined France’s cultural strategies in 1970.<sup>59</sup> Significantly, Laurent highlighted France’s use of ‘l’action directe pour les hommes par les hommes’ (technical assistants) and the importance of the commitment to development policies in their many forms.<sup>60</sup> According to this speech, the defence of the French language was to be accompanied by an emphasis on science and technology as much as France’s traditional message of humanism. France’s former colonies were identified as a region in which potential francophones could be turned into actual francophones. Laurent also warned against ‘l’exportation de l’identique’ by which France’s cultural institutions and models would be exported with little consideration for local conditions and needs and was associated with a certain dispersion and wastage of efforts.

The implementation of effective audio-visual policies was not helped by the lack of continuity in French institutions for the task. In France’s audio-visual policies, the French broadcasting authority OCORA (Office de Coopération radiophonique), that had replaced the SORAFOM in 1962, in turn became the ORTF (Office de radio et de télévision française) in 1964.<sup>61</sup> The abolition of the ORTF led to the emergence of Radio France Internationale (RFI) in 1974. Throughout the period under question France’s



principal radio provision, and to a large extent that of television, remained closely linked to the policies of the *Ministère des Affaires Etrangères*. The role of the *Ministère de la Coopération* was to supply technical assistants and train technicians and journalists. From 1974 onwards, RFI concentrated on Africa and the Indian Ocean rather than the more diffuse policy that had existed up until then. This was reinforced by France's construction of a new African radio relay station in Gabon in 1975. Under RFI, monitoring occurred in the form of forty-five minute programmes prepared by Paris-based journalists and might include press reviews, interviews or news reports. These were funded by the *Ministère de la Coopération*. France's provision of broadcasting material for young television stations in the various states followed a similar pattern with five hours a week being distributed by INA and the television station FR3.

One of the most complete histories of French influences on the audio-visual industry in Africa is found in Abdoul Ba's work *Télévisions, paraboles et démocraties en Afrique noire*.<sup>62</sup> He reveals that even if such states as West Germany, Brazil and the United States provided, at some time or other, either technical assistance or financial aid, France was by far the most dominant aid purveyor for the former French colonies. Niger, Senegal, Chad and Togo received entirely French aid and assistance. The first television stations were those in Gabon, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso (Upper Volta) in the early 1960s. From this period until 1975 France's policies remained largely unchanged.

The failure of France to commit herself to the latest technology left her disadvantaged in the face of foreign competition from such major international broadcasters as the United

States, Britain and West Germany, who, by the mid to late 1980s, were making use of satellite technology to provide programmes and news directly while France was still delivering video cassettes by weekly flights to African capitals. France's distribution policies were merely the tip of the iceberg of the dependence for assistance that France's former colonies maintained in nearly every dimension of broadcasting. By developing the little used international SECAM television standard in her former colonies, France was the near sole provider of equipment and expertise in these countries. This meant that France supplied training both in the EAM and in Paris when technicians, journalists and managers from Africa would visit INA's broadcasting school in order to learn the latest techniques.

The archive documents of the period indicate how mass communications were also employed as a means of spreading French in mainly rural areas. This policy was attempted in Ivory Coast, Senegal and in Niger. The effectiveness of the scheme was of dubious success and did not always convince the *Ministère de la Coopération* of the long-term worth of television for mass education. Indeed, in Niger educational television was abandoned when considered too expensive at a per-pupil cost of 140 times that of more conventional primary education. Similar reasons were responsible for it being abandoned in the Ivory Coast. Marcel Amandji's *Côte d'Ivoire- la dépendance et l'épreuve des faits* notes that the *Programme d'enseignement télévisuel* (PETV) was launched in the academic year 1971-72 and was finally abandoned in 1980.<sup>63</sup> He notes that the scheme was heavily reliant on French and Canadian *assistants techniques* (with the consequence that Ivorians played mostly a minor role in its implementation) and that

on average twenty to forty per cent of transmissions were disrupted by technical difficulties. In other states, pressures from parents and the media who perceived this use of technology as a second-rate form of education compared with traditional schooling, brought such schemes to an end.

A report commissioned for the *Ministère de la Coopération* in 1994 entitled- *L'Appui à la télévision en Afrique subsaharienne, évaluation de l'aide française (1975-1991)*- highlighted some of the most significant weaknesses of France's policies in aid to broadcasting.<sup>64</sup> Amongst the report's criticisms was the opinion that France's aid had given insufficient support to the management of assisted radio and television stations and that, for a long time, French audio-visual products had been aimed at far too limited a section of the population. The report evaluates the question of France's future ability to maintain the level of influence that she held:

L'aide française ne pourra continuellement assurer le renouvellement des matériels (qui deviennent obsolètes), la fourniture de programmes, la formation des personnels, si les organismes ne se décident pas à prendre les mesures de survie indispensables.<sup>65</sup>

The most interesting aspect of the report is the insight that it gives into debates that occurred in the 1970s as to the place of audio-visual technology in development aid in general and in France's contribution in particular. Two broad positions were held by educational and development advisers. The first defended the belief that television was a 'besoin essentiel' of development and therefore, should have a role in economic development plans. The second denied this role and saw it more as belonging to leisure pursuits and therefore was to be excluded from aid. The first school of thought stressed

that it was an important extension of a wider form of audio-visual technology, notably radio. It was also perceived as a tool of progress and national sovereignty. Finally and perhaps most significantly, it was, in such states as the Ivory Coast and Niger with its educational television projects, a vital means to bring a form of education to a potentially much wider audience than would be possible otherwise.

The report is remarkably candid about the strategies for France in this undertaking. These were clearly commercial and cultural. By the long-term links involving training and planning of national systems, France found a regular outlet for her SECAM television system in nearly all francophone states. This dimension of aid permitted France to maintain her 'liens privilégiés' and also reinforce a vision of development built on an emphasis on culture and knowledge as decisive factors in developing societies.

The report suggests that the commercial dimension was significantly supported in inter-ministerial *coopération* meetings held by French authorities concerned with the exporting of France's audio-visual technologies more than by reason of cultural concerns. The DITAV (*Délégation interministérielle aux techniques audiovisuelles*) and the ORTF were at times concerned that West Germany's commercial offensive with the PAL system on Ivory Coast and on Cameroon (where it had been chosen as the system ahead of SECAM) threatened France's position. On a cultural level, the promotion of French language and culture was frequently cited. Somewhat laconically the report indicates that through a study of DITAV's minutes and documents there is some evidence that non-

French cultures were occasionally assisted- 'L'objectif de la promotion des cultures nationales est parfois cité également.'<sup>66</sup>

In reality, this investigation into France's audio-visual ambitions gives the impression of a French 'domaine' in which cultural and commercial interests were keenly pursued with France ever wary of possible 'predators'. These interests were also pursued outside of the francophone area in such states as Mauritius, Namibia and the Seychelles when France argued that her policies offered a potential for opportunities of links between francophone and anglophone states and stressed that it would permit regional development and integration. On other occasions, France ventured political reasons for her policies. This was done with reference to Haiti in 1987 and Chad in 1989.

As for the *modus operandi* of the *Ministère de la Coopération* in these policies, the report notes the following:

Le mode d'intervention du ministère de la Coopération en matière d'aide à la télévision n'a guère obéi à une quelconque forme de programmation ou de planification; sans d'ailleurs s'en étonner, puisque le ministère de la Coopération n'intervient qu'à la demande des pays aidés.<sup>67</sup>

Such an observation is similar to those made in reference to aid provided for education.

As we have seen in the examination of education, France's planning was difficult to ascertain. Nevertheless the report notes that Gabon, Niger and Ivory Coast took the largest part of aid allocation for equipment in the 1960s (sixty-three per cent).<sup>68</sup>

Meanwhile Ivory Coast and Niger took two thirds of FAC credits for audio-visual training.

Although adequate for the audio-visual climate of the 1970s, by the 1980s France's policy of monitoring using video cassettes was ineffective against the larger possibilities for cultural dissemination introduced by satellite broadcasting. Abdoul Ba notes that at its height some 5,000 video cassettes travelled by aeroplane to different African countries. This compared poorly with West Germany, who by 1987 via the television company *Deutsche Welle* and the satellite *Transtel* had sent 12,000 hours of programmes. From the perspective of original production for African stations, the 401 hours of programmes specifically made in Paris in 1981 had fallen to 367 in 1987. The threat that new satellite broadcasting systems posed from West Germany, the United States and Britain was noted by Michel Péricard's report to the French government, *La Politique audiovisuelle extérieure de la France* published in 1987. The report alerted the French government to significant failings in the existing audio-visual policies.<sup>69</sup> Amongst these were the high cost of the current policy of *diffusion culturelle* whereby France distributed her programmes free rather than selling them. This was seen as psychologically disadvantageous since it was often seen as devalued through being free. The report also condemned policies as economically ill-advised since, once programmes had been given by France, there was little record of how successfully they had been received by countries that they were sent to. In practice many programmes, once sent, remained unused in cupboards or store-rooms. The report suggested that France was being overtaken in the technological race to take advantage of new technologies:

Les pays du Commonwealth sont, eux, en train de mettre sur pied un vaste service d'échanges gratuits de programmes à base de documentaires et d'émissions éducatives. Une réforme profonde s'impose en France, de ce mode de coopération qui, dans sa forme actuelle, paraît bien poussiéreux.<sup>70</sup>

A report two years later by the *Ministre de la Francophonie* formulated twenty proposals, amongst which was the institution of the *Conseil audiovisuel extérieur de la France* (CAEF) to replace the defunct DITAV.<sup>71</sup> By this time, the satellite francophone channel, TV5 had been launched (broadcasting programmes from the state-owned channels of France, Belgium, Switzerland and Quebec) but had yet to spread to Africa. Significant proposals included ending free *diffusion culturelle* and creating a news image bank that would allow stations to broadcast news using French video stock. The image bank CFI (*Canal France Internationale*) that was in majority funded by the *Ministère de la Coopération*, was created in 1989. This provided a second francophone world presence after the creation of TV5 in 1984. However, TV5 did not reach sub-Saharan Africa until 1991.<sup>72</sup>

Although these two reports encouraged an expansion of French and francophone broadcasting, and, in particular, satellite broadcasting, the resulting array of francophone and French channels created a confusing audio-visual landscape. French-speaking channels offered either the same programmes or appeared to provide a service that was detrimental to domestic African channels which could not compete with the profusion of new stations offering a wider range of programmes. By 1991, nineteen African states were provided with six hours of news daily. One of the most significant accusations from the Third World against the extension of audio-visual technologies in this manner has been that it has deepened the gulf in audio-visual production between developed and developing nations in such a way that, more than ever, it made the creation of original

programmes a less attractive option than buying those that can be imported at a lower price.<sup>73</sup>

Another unresolved policy issue was that of choosing between conflicting francophone and French interests that appeared to illustrate the differing interests of French ministries. The *Ministère de la Coopération* supported the expansion of CFI whilst the *Ministère des Affaires Etrangères* promoted the francophone channel TV5. This contradictory situation was supplemented by the same ministry's launch of *Canal Horizons* in 1991 as a subscription channel to certain African countries.

The third area that I will consider in this section is the development of *centres culturels* that served as libraries and resource centres and were intended to be a space where cultural dialogue could occur between other cultures and French. The *Centres culturels* were essentially frequented by elites, although initially they had also been set up to reinforce French aid to all aspects of education. It was the purely cultural function of *Centres culturels* that caused the greatest concern at the *Ministère de la Coopération* which was concerned that the direct pursuit of narrow French interests be perceived as neo-imperialist.

A report by the *Secrétariat permanent des études, des évaluations et des statistiques* within the *Ministère de la Coopération* in 1991 gives us an insight into the debates and issues found in the decision-making as regards *centres culturels*. The report was compiled following an analysis of questionnaires sent by a research group to directors,



visits to Dakar, Niamey, Abidjan, Bukavu and Bujumbura and from a study of archive documents.<sup>74</sup>

Many internal documents that the compilers of the report had access to belie the idea that France aimed to directly assimilate elites into a unitary French culture. Some proposed that new cultures be created that would synthesise African cultural traits with French particularities. These reflect the ‘recherche de l’authenticité et de l’indépendance’ referred to in the *Rapport Abelin*.

The specific challenge of the 1970s was how this dimension of *coopération* could be one of a genuine cultural exchange. From the early 1970s, the economic pressures of the need to reduce the high costs of a blanket educational aid, and in particular that requiring the sending of numerous *assistants techniques*, meant that many cultural centres encouraged a decentralisation of education by an innovative use of audio-visual materials.

At the end of the 1970s, the *Rapport Rigaud* was a significant influence on the evolution of cultural centres and the official position that France adopted on the issue of languages other than French.<sup>75</sup> The first significant consequence of this report was the government’s decision to bring cultural centres under the jurisdiction of the Quai d’Orsay and the powerful DGRCSST more used to promoting French culture in association with French commercial interests.

The *Rapport Rigaud* considered the form of cultural agreements with different countries and whether they should be bilateral or multilateral. Although bilateral agreements could be seen as contractual and involved a close collaboration between governments, Rigaud's committee formed the impression that the renewing of long-standing agreements frequently occurred without any significant evaluation of needs or possible alternatives. Attention was drawn to the need for future agreements to consider wider economic, commercial and regional strategies. The *Rapport Rigaud* argued that France should recognise the growing importance of multilateral cultural aid since, if well employed, it could offer a number of advantages. These included the positive image associated with an involvement in such an influential organisation as UNESCO, which has been perceived as pursuing policies with far less political motivation than bilateral funders.

The wider aspects of the *Rapport Rigaud* concerned the need for France to formulate clearer cultural objectives, particularly in affirming 'la dimension universelle de la culture'. While not denying that France could or even should fulfil this role, the report argued that France should make greater efforts to make French culture a 'carrefour mondial'.<sup>76</sup> This should be built on a more carefully considered approach to plurilingualism which would entail France adopting an unambiguous position that would instil a greater confidence in her diplomatic and economic partners. In particular, the report stressed that France should ensure that the French language should maintain a very distinct cultural image and status from that held by English:

la sauvegarde et le développement de cette position imposent une attitude d'ouverture, d'attention et d'échanges avec les autres langues, y compris celles dont la diffusion est

limitée et qui doivent avoir le français des relations de réciprocité. Une saine déontologie de l'usage du français dans le monde doit regarder comme une nécessité la diffusion du message de la pensée française dans d'autres langues lorsqu'en dépendent la possibilité, la valeur ou l'étendue de l'échange.<sup>77</sup>

Each organisation in the French administration, including cultural centres, would be expected to define their ambitions and objectives. The intention of this policy would be to aim towards a coherent strategy. One aspect of this strategy would be to consider the relative importance of non-francophone countries and their receipt of cultural aid compared with the aid which the EAM states received.

Were France's *coopération culturelle* policies a form of partnership or merely an example of a dependency relationship of the type identified by Johan Galtung considered in the previous chapter?

In 1988, within the perspective of worsening economic terms of exchange caused by Third World debt, Franck Magnard and Nicolas Tenzer edited a study of the general orientations of France's aid policies nearly thirty years after the independences of the EAM. A chapter entitled 'Les politiques sectorielles au service du développement' considered that the vast cultural sector revealed ambiguities highly characteristic of the undertaking of French *coopération* as a whole:

Plus encore peut-être qu'en matière économique, le lien de dépendance issue des relations culturelles entre pays développés et pays en développement exerce des effets néfastes sur la clarté des choix qui relèvent simultanément de la coopération et de la politique étrangère.<sup>78</sup>

The longevity of France's various aid policies, including *coopération culturelle* is perhaps all the more remarkable in the context of the varying and confusing network of administrations and lines of decision-making that directed it. Similarly, education systems in the EAM were also highly complicated structures that the local political classes felt they could not change without severe consequences. The frequent accusations that French *coopération* policies lacked any evident policy guidelines until the late 1980s would tend to reinforce accusations that it had ultimately political and economic objectives. These could be pursued indirectly, through such an organisation as the *Ministère de la Coopération* as its services could meet the cultural needs of the states in the *pré-carré* and consistently prided themselves on a distinctly uncommercial approach in the pursuit of French *rayonnement*. This was in contrast with the unease of some technical assistants on the ground in Africa that would suggest that a *dialogue des cultures* was very difficult to achieve and that their presence was felt to be more political than pedagogical.

A report commissioned for the *Ministère de la Coopération* in 1991 considers the role of French technical assistants from 1960.<sup>79</sup> Considering the inconsistent archives of statistics or previous histories of this dimension of aid, the author considers this to be a structural trait of the institution of which he remarks:

En réalité, elle vérifie une hypothèse qui ne paraîtra choquante qu'aux idéalistes et aux technocrates: la coopération française n'a pas pour finalité première le développement des pays aidés, ce qui impliquerait évaluation systématique des idées, des hommes et des actions. Sa raison d'être est politique. Il s'agit d'assurer dans les pays du champ une présence française aussi forte que possible, afin que la France dispose d'amitiés solides dans le monde.<sup>80</sup>

What was more, the report could establish no link between numbers of technical assistance and beneficial effects on economic development.<sup>81</sup> This very particular characteristic of French development aid played a vital role in the Franco-African relations that held the greatest priority for France, even if as Labrousse suggests, this distribution coincided mainly with those states identified as having the largest potential for economic growth. Even though officially coopération was subject to legal agreements, the example of relations with the Ivory Coast suggests that these were not necessarily always adhered to. This suited both parties in different ways. It gave France a flexibility in providing aid according to specific budgetary constraints whilst the Ivory Coast could allay the fears of the political and cultural elites that there was an intention to dismantle an education system closely resembling that of France. When this 'flexibility' became unmanagable France introduced 'la globalisation des charges' to reduce costs. The archive material available shows how France realised after this was implemented that this could potentially create more serious political problems later. The manner in which policy-making occurred points to highly complex structures at different levels within government institutions and aid actors which merits further consideration.

The essence of France's privileged relationship has been to balance a discourse of rayonnement with harder-edged political, economic and even military interests that become more evident in aid to audio-visual services and equipment which opened up commercial opportunities for French companies. Behind an apparently generous commitment to educational and cultural aid lay a French concern to maintain a multi-dimensional sphere of influence in which a shared French culture would be an important

'cement' to ensure that general interests and association were maintained. Although the vast majority of cultural 'exchange' was one-way from France to Africa, the particular legacy of French colonialism and the symbolism of the French language both for political power within each state and in relations with France explain why it remained such a vital aspect of the aid relationship. To this extent, this vindicated the effects of a cultural 'colonisation' that remained to be fully decolonised. Instead it could be argued that it has been re-formulated with all the contradictions and ambiguities present in the idea of 'coopération'.

Indeed, the powerful ideal of Francophonie, that will be considered in the next part, gave hopes to some Africans that the strength of cultural ties could play a role in modifying the terms of this relationship to eventually make it less unequal.

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**Notes to Chapter Four: *Coopération culturelle 1970-1995***

<sup>1</sup> Patrick Cadenat, *La France et le Tiers Monde, vingt ans de coopération bilatérale*, (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1983), pp. 36-39.

<sup>2</sup> Maurice Flory, *Droit international du développement* (Paris: PUF, 1977), p. 154.

<sup>3</sup> Gilbert Comte, 'Les ruses du Général', *Le Monde*, 13 November 1973. See also *Le Monde* of 14, 15 and 16 November 1973.

<sup>4</sup> These were Mauritania, Madagascar, Cameroun, Congo, Dahomey, Niger, Tchad and the Ivory Coast. Gilbert Comte, 'Les ruses du Général', *Le Monde*, 13 November 1973. See also *Le Monde* of 14, 15 and 16 November 1973.

<sup>5</sup> Yvon Bourges, 'La politique Française d'aide au développement- Conférence prononcée à l'institut de Vienne pour le développement et la coopération 26 novembre 1971' (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1972), p. 28.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>7</sup> Conférence des ministres de l'éducation nationale.

<sup>8</sup> André Fontaine, 'Le président Moktar Ould- Daddah annonce que les accords de coopération franco-mauritaniens sont désormais caducs', *Le Monde*, 6 February 1973.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Gilbert Comte, 'Le Monstre à trois têtes', *Le Monde*, 14 November 1973.

<sup>11</sup> Jean Touscoz, 'La "Normalisation" de la coopération bilatérale de la France', *Etudes Internationales*, 5, 2 (1974), 208-225, (p. 215).

<sup>12</sup> Rapport au Gouvernement Français, *Rapport Gorse*, Comité d'étude de la politique de coopération de la France avec les Pays en voie de développement, (Unpublished report, 1971), p. 25. For a detailed account of the report see also Richard Robarts, *French Development Policy: A Study in Policy and Administration*, Administrative and Policy review series, 03-017, 1974.

<sup>13</sup> Ministère de la Coopération, *L'Assistance technique française (1960-2000)*, (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1994), p.120.

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- <sup>14</sup> ‘Les coopérants et la coopération’, *Esprit*, 38, 7-8 (1970), 12-60.
- <sup>15</sup> Stéphane Hessel, ‘De la décolonisation à la coopération’, *Esprit*, 38, (1970), 2-11, p. 7.
- <sup>16</sup> Robert de Montvalon, ‘Notes sur une coopération qui n’est pas encore commencée’, *Esprit*, 38, 7-8 (1970), 225-237 (p. 228).
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240.
- <sup>18</sup> Pierre Abelin, *Rapport sur la politique française de coopération* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1975).
- <sup>19</sup> Philippe Decraene, ‘Un esprit nouveau’, *Le Monde*, 5 March 1975.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.
- <sup>22</sup> Zaire, Burundi and Rwanda (former Belgian colonies) came under the jurisdiction of the Rue Monsieur in the period 1976-1977. After signing defence agreements earlier in the decade, they were perceived very much as part of the French *champ* thereafter. Ministère de la Coopération, *L’Assistance technique française (1960-2000)* (Paris: La documentation Française, 1994), p. 98. For an account of France’s involvements in the Rwanda conflict of 1994 see Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis* (London: Hurst, 1995).
- <sup>23</sup> CAC archives (Centre des archives contemporaines, Fontainebleau,) Ministère de la Coopération- service de coopération culturelle et technique. File 810443/ 12 MC 1, *L’enseignement et la formation (1975) (rapport Guisset)* vol. I - Introduction (No page numbers).
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>26</sup> CAC archives, file 810443/ 12 MC 1, ‘L’enseignement et la Formation (1975) (Rapport Guisset)’, (Unpublished report, 1975), p. 4.
- <sup>27</sup> See introduction to this thesis, p. xxxvi.
- <sup>28</sup> Ministère de la Coopération, *Contributions du Ministère de la Coopération au Mémoire de la France (1977) au Comité d’Aide au Développement de l’OCDE*, 31, (Paris: Ministère de la Coopération (Service des études économiques et des questions internationales, 1978), pp. 13-23.



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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>31</sup> CAC archives, file 820311/ 27 MC 37. 'Archives de la direction de la DCT par pays 1959-70, Côte d'Ivoire- Informations généralités', J. Leclerc, 'Note de Service' 511/Confidentiel, 24 January 1974.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., Doc/-25/6/74. Note No. 723/CF (Author not indicated).

<sup>33</sup> CAC archives, file 810532/ 13 MC 2, Dossier 'Voyage de M. le Ministre en Côte d'Ivoire 6-12 décembre 1976', 'Note de synthèse sur la coopération franco-ivoirienne'.

<sup>34</sup> B.A. den Tuinder, *Ivory Coast-The challenge of success* (Baltimore: John Hopkins U.P., 1978).

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 277.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. Commission mixte franco-ivoirienne- enseignement -formation. Paris 1 and 2 March 1979.

<sup>39</sup> Den Tuinder, p. 281.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. p. 282.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. p. 302.

<sup>42</sup> Cedetim, *L'Impérialisme Français* (Paris: PCM, 1980) p. 147.

<sup>43</sup> Roger Bonaventure Coly, 'La formation des ressources humaines au Sénégal-théorie et pratique', *Projet Ouest Africain de formation à la recherche évaluative en éducation*, I, 20 (Laval: Université Laval, Faculté des sciences, 1981), p. 21.

<sup>44</sup> See for example Pascal Bianchini, 'Crises et réformes du système d'enseignement sénégalais (1968-1986) Contribution à une sociologie politique de l'éducation en Afrique noire' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Centre d'études d'Afrique noire/ Institut des Etudes Politiques de Bordeaux, 1989).

<sup>45</sup> Ministère des Relations extérieures, *Coopération et développement: La France et l'Afrique- Etudes des relations franco-africaines* (Paris: Ministère de Relations extérieures, 1982), p. 67.

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<sup>46</sup> Isabelle Deblé, 'Différenciations ou uniformisations?', *Afrique contemporaine*, 172 (1994) 9-32, (p. 13).

<sup>47</sup> Ministère de la Coopération et du développement, *Enseignement et formation en Afrique subsaharienne- orientations de la coopération française* (Paris: Ministère de la Coopération, 1993) p. 4.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>50</sup> Ministère de la Coopération et du développement, *Education et formation en Afrique subsaharienne- chantiers 1992* (Paris: Ministère de la Coopération et du développement. 1992).

<sup>51</sup> Ministère de la Coopération et du développement, *Enseignement et formation en Afrique subsaharienne- orientations de la coopération française* (Paris: Ministère de la Coopération, 1993), p. 18.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>53</sup> CAC archives, file 810443/ 12 MC 2 Ministère de la Coopération, 'Avenir de la langue française dans les pays d'Afrique noire, 1967', Académie des sciences morales et politiques .

<sup>54</sup> CAC archives, file 810443 12 MC 2 Francophonie, Note de Service 1/4/75 (1341).

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> CAC archives, file 801532/ 13 MC 13, Note de Service 11/12/79 à l'attention de M. Van Grevenyghé, s/d de M. Thomas, Objet: Soumission au directeur de Cabinet d'un projet de présentation de notre politique en matière de langues africaines.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> DGRCSST- Direction générale des relations culturelles, scientifiques et techniques.

<sup>59</sup> Pierre Laurent, 'La stratégie culturelle, scientifique et technique de la France', *Revue politique et parlementaire*, 808(1975), 39-53.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>61</sup> François Carayon, 'De l'OCORA à l'ORTF', *Afrique Contemporaine*, 47 (1970), 11-14.

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- <sup>62</sup> Abdoul Ba, *Télévisions, paraboles et démocraties en Afrique noire* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996) and 'Les médias en Afrique- le repositionnement de l'action audiovisuelle française', *Médias-pouvoirs*, 42, (1996), 11-16.
- <sup>63</sup> Marcel Amandji, *Côte d'Ivoire-la dépendance et l'épreuve des faits* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1988), pp. 75-77
- <sup>64</sup> Ministère de la Coopération, A. Plazanet & D. Grenet, *L'appui à la télévision en Afrique subsaharienne- Evaluation de l'aide française (1975-1991)*, (Paris: Ministère de la Coopération, 1994).
- <sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 23.
- <sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 64.
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 65.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>69</sup> Michel Péricard, *La Politique audiovisuelle extérieure de la France*, (rapport établi à la demande du premier ministre) (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1987).
- <sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 23.
- <sup>71</sup> Alain Decaux, *La Politique télévisuelle extérieure de la France* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1989).
- <sup>72</sup> Dossiers de l'audiovisuel, *Francophonie et politique audiovisuelle extérieure*, 39, September-October 1991, (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1991), p. 35.
- <sup>73</sup> Ba, p.15.
- <sup>74</sup> Jacques Bonnamour et al. (Secrétariat permanent des études, des évaluations et des statistiques), *Les Centres culturels français en Afrique- évaluation des CCF dans les pays du Champ* (Paris: Ministère de la Coopération et du développement, 1991).
- <sup>75</sup> Jacques Rigaud, *Les relations culturelles extérieures*, (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1980).
- <sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 213.
- <sup>77</sup> Bonnamour, p. 213.
- <sup>78</sup> Franck Magnard and Nicolas Tenzer, *La Crise africaine: quelle politique de coopération pour la France?* (Paris: PUF, 1988), p. 153.

<sup>79</sup> Ministère de la Coopération, *L'Assistance technique française (1960-2000)* (Paris: La documentation Française, 1994)

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.



**PART THREE: Francophonie: cultural community or extension of the  
privileged relationship?**

## **Chapter Five: The politics of francophone co-operation and the *Agence de coopération culturelle et technique***

In Part Two I considered the dynamics of the Franco-African relationship created by France's policies of *coopération culturelle*. In Part Three I will consider the construction of a multilateral francophone community with a particular reference to the role and significance of France's former colonies in the creation of this community.

I will consider multilateral Francophonie in two periods. The first was the period 1970 until 1986 when the *Agence de coopération culturelle technique* (ACCT) was the most significant multilateral francophone grouping. In the second period 1986 to 1995, I will consider the era of francophone summits.

This section of the chapter will consider the differing ambitions pursued by those looking to institutionalise a French-speaking language community. I will consider the priorities of France's bilateral relations (see Part Two) in the context of the wider politics of the first decade of independence for the francophone African states. I will then look at the forms of co-operation that inter-African OCAM (*Organisation commune africaine et malgache*) proposed and those arising later when France dictated their terms at the end of the 1960s. I will look at motivations for the proposals by OCAM. These included the failure of regional African groupings, the need to redress the balance of aid relations, and the personal ambition of specific heads of state.

In this part, I will analyse French official reactions to these ideas and establish the reasons for the rejection of the OCAM document. I will assess the weight of interests found in the revised project that became the *Agence de coopération culturelle et technique* in 1970. The problems inherent in the participation of Canada and Quebec also influenced the final institution. I will analyse the objectives of the new organisation to consider how they met various ambitions, including those of purely linguistic groups based in France and Quebec. The problems in the creation of the ACCT served to illustrate the complexities of francophone political interests. Amongst these, for Francophone Africa, even if cultural questions formed an important issue in development, the priorities for Francophonie were institutional and economic.

### **5. 1 The battle for an inter-governmental organisation**

This chapter will start by considering the significance of the proposals from the member states of the African intergovernmental grouping, OCAM that institutional structures should be introduced to represent a formalised francophone community. After the proposal of a project in 1966, four years were required before the ACCT was formed in 1970.

From 1965 Léopold Senghor, President of Senegal, after consultation with Habib Bourguiba, President of Tunisia, toured African states to gather opinions for creating a multilateral francophone grouping. This potential 'Commonwealth à la française' was outlined in the OCAM-supported proposal document, 'Comment organiser la francophonie', agreed by the Tananarive (Madagascar) summit of OCAM in June 1966.<sup>1</sup>



It acknowledged the importance of existing inter-ministerial gatherings of francophone states regarding educational policy (in the framework of bilateral aid), which it termed 'la petite Francophonie'. OCAM proposed to extend these to create a larger and more coherent 'super-structure' to allow a multilateral forum for development issues.<sup>2</sup> It specifically claimed that a sentimental attachment to the French language was not the main motivation for the organisation.

'Comment organiser la francophonie' proposed to divide Francophonie into a system of three inter-linking groups centred on Paris to take into account the varying relations of different francophone countries. Francophonie A, the group with the closest ties with France, would contain all ex-French sub-Saharan francophone African states with the possibility of former ex-Belgian African states and Haiti also joining. It envisaged a close consultation on educational and cultural issues as an extension of existing annual CONFEMEN meetings (*Conférence des ministres de l'éducation nationale*). In addition it envisaged that economic matters could also be discussed here. Fixing prices for raw materials and agreeing trade tariffs could be the possible activities of this circle. The document specifically denied that the members of OCAM were seeking an increase in French aid spending through this organisation and claimed: 'Plutôt, il s'agit du développement simultané de l'homme dans tous ses aspects.'<sup>3</sup> Economic benefits would be the consequence of closer commercial exchanges and would be obtained through a more united presence within the UN Conference on Trade and Development.

Francophonie B would feature the Lebanon, the Maghreb and the states of former Indochina. Here, French held an important position in education in parallel to other national languages (such as Arabic or South-East Asian languages). Trade and commercial links between these countries and with France would be less significant than in group A. Nevertheless, the historical weight of the French language and its importance for communication in this group of countries was still significant. The plan envisaged co-operation at a governmental level for educational, cultural and general economic issues for these countries. At an institutional level, it also envisaged an *Association parlementaire des pays de langue française*. Although not explicitly admitted, many saw the possibility of a diplomatic *rapprochement* with Algeria being a potential attraction for France at this level of relations.

Francophonie C was to regroup those developing countries not found in circles A and B and to include those developed states where French was designated as a national language existing with other official languages. This arrangement would find a place for Luxembourg, Switzerland, Belgium and Canada. The document noted the need for tact and diplomacy in francophone matters in countries such as Canada or Belgium where questions of language and cultural identity were central to issues of national identity. Co-operation here would be, above all, cultural. An extension of AUPELF (*Association des universités partiellement ou entièrement de langue française*) was recommended as well as the inclusion of francophones from all member countries into a reformed *Haut comité de la langue française* dealing with specific language questions throughout the francophone world.<sup>4</sup>

As would be expected, the status of Francophonie A was the most developed. Nevertheless, the three-page document as a whole could be criticised as having been somewhat vague and theoretical. It is highly likely that this lack of precision was intended to encourage discussion of possible modifications and re-interpretations that would allow the most significant participants (notably France) more flexibility in their response. By using culture as a starting point for co-operation it could be argued that France's former colonies believed that they had identified a fruitful basis for appealing to a longer-term union that could eventually replace restrictive bilateral co-operation. Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, Guinea and Cameroon treated the OCAM proposal with suspicion. Moktar Ould Daddah, President of Mauritania, followed Ahmadou Ahidjo, President of Cameroon, in citing the official bilingual status of the state as incompatible with any membership of Francophonie.<sup>5</sup> Sekou Touré, leader of Guinea, was particularly critical of Francophonie, condemning it as a 'volonté de maintenir dans l'exploitation des pays qui veulent se libérer'.<sup>6</sup>

The closeness of ties proposed by OCAM for Africa and France could not fail to attract comparisons with the failed 1958 *Communauté française*. How convincing was the claim that Francophonie was not a reference to a reformed *Communauté* or even *Union française* that could easily be a financial burden on France? It was not difficult to make parallels with Houphouët Boigny's *Francafrique* or Senghor's *Eurafrique* that had been proposed in the 1950s. Those who promoted the project needed to convince France of the advantages of bringing together francophones of all sorts whether they took their

linguistic identity from recent independence from France because of other historical factors. Another challenge for OCAM was persuading France that the interests of a French cultural heritage could be more practically pursued by a wider francophone organisation.

Other reasons for the OCAM project were the failure of regional and pan-African post-colonial political groupings and a desire to modify the pattern of Franco-African relations. The ideal of a multilateral French-language community was made even more attractive because of an officially sanctioned francophone cultural militancy, in France and Quebec, in the second half of the 1960s that resisted the growth of American cultural influences. After considering how these factors created pressures resulting in the formation of the *Agence de coopération culturelle et technique* in 1970, I will look at the extent to which the strong African impetus for francophone co-operation might be considered paradoxical.

The difficult challenge for countries wanting to act fully as independent sovereign states in international relations whilst dependent on exterior financial aid, was one that was revealed in various attempts to establish regional and pan-African groupings. Following a large degree of optimism for aspirations of newly independent states arriving on the world stage came the realisation of the harsh economic and political realities facing the Third World.

The belated fragmentation of the large French colonial African administrative regions of the AOF (*Afrique occidentale française*) and the AEF (*Afrique équatoriale française*) in 1956, carried future consequences after independence as governments attempted to develop effective national unity and identity. Many states were left having to develop and fund their own essential infrastructures (or seek outside aid) to maintain those that they had previously shared. This need for effective infrastructures and services applied to defence, health systems, education, communications, and so on, that would otherwise have been under the continued administration of the *Communauté française*, had France's former colonies not achieved independence in 1960. The uneven development of these infrastructures depended often on the extent to which France, for reasons of strategy, trade or natural resources, had seen fit to develop them under colonial rule. The effects of this uneven post-colonial 'balkanisation' of African states were that, politically, economically and militarily, states were highly exposed to the inherent dangers of both extra and inter-continental influences and interests that could impinge on their sovereignty. Internally, persistent border disputes, the poor state of communication links and fundamental ideological differences made significant African co-operation very difficult. In addition, there appeared to be no natural co-operation with English speaking states.

The history of post-colonial regional and political groupings, and those of francophone Africa in particular, reveals that they were numerous and unstable. A number of limited functional groupings, in technical areas such as agriculture and science, existed but suffered the handicap of being poorly funded. Lacking a more significant political co-

operation between states, these organisations would continue to make only a minor contribution to development. Attempts at more significant political integration ranged from the short-lived political union between Senegal and Mali, to larger consultative groups such as the *Union africaine et malgache* (UAM, 1961) or the *Organisation commune africaine et malgache* (OCAM, 1965).

The explanations for this instability of groupings were, in part, found in the tension between the evident need for inter-state co-operation in the interests of development and the perceived and actual threats to political stability of states when groups in opposition to governments exploited cross border ethnic identity to gain support. Another reason was the significant divergence which was found amongst states as to how a closer integration could occur. States taking a federalist approach were prepared to compromise national sovereignty in an effort to bring about integrated economies and community attitudes. States with a functionalist approach believed that political sovereignty was too important to hand over, at least until a slow process of technical and economic co-operation had taken place that would bring participating members to similar levels of economic development.<sup>7</sup>

The first significant inter-African francophone grouping after the granting of independence was the UAM (*Union africaine et malgache*) closely followed by the OAMCE (*Organisation africaine et malgache commune économique*) both set up in 1961, intended as a framework for economic and broad political collaboration regrouping some thirteen states.<sup>8</sup> This had been preceded by the Ivory Coast-led *Conseil*

*de l'Entente* that had been created in 1959. A loose political association of the Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Niger, Upper Volta (joined by Togo in 1966) created a solidarity fund as well as agreeing to manage certain key infrastructures such as ports and railways.

In 1961, a group assembling more politically 'progressive' African states met in Casablanca with Guinea, Mali, Morocco, the Algerian GPRA and the United Arab Republic agreeing to work towards the establishment of an African consultative assembly.<sup>9</sup> These proposals were included in an African Charter in January 1961. Standing committees would be created in the political, economic and cultural spheres. The states also identified a common position on the crises of Algeria and the Congo. In response, the members of the OAMCE with Liberia, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Togo, Ethiopia and Libya met in Monrovia in May 1961 as a counterpoint to the 'progressives' of Casablanca. Although members of the Casablanca group were invited, only Libya attended. The Monrovia group stressed the need to respect the sovereignty of each state and opposed the ideal of African political unity, choosing instead to concentrate on an African unity based on identity and the pursuit of the complete equality of states. The final conference declaration stated:

The unity that is aimed to be achieved at the moment is not political integration of sovereign states, but unity of aspirations and of action considered from the point of view of African social solidarity and political identity.<sup>10</sup>

These groupings broadly organised on regional and historical lines, were brought into question by ambitions for a continental-wide organisation led by Anglophone states. Nearly all existing African political groupings were suspended to achieve this. Although

the 1963 conference leading to the creation of the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) held in Adis Ababa, did bring together the vast majority of independent African states, the movement proved an ineffective compromise between the ambitions and ideologies of moderate and revolutionary Africa. The failure of both the OAU and the Casablanca and Monrovia groups to resolve certain major problems of the time saw French-speaking states returning to a purely francophone grouping led by Félix Houphoët Boigny, President of Ivory Coast, in 1965. Using the argument that the ideology of the OAU signalled an encouragement to the ambitions of opposition groups who wished to destabilise legitimate governments, Houphoët-Boigny succeeded in breaking the long-term aspirations of the OAU and at the same time brought a certain reassurance to Paris who had viewed with some concern the integration of francophone states into a pan-African ensemble. The *Organisation commune africaine et malgache* seemed to represent many of the concerns of the Monrovia group. It was this grouping that was supported most positively by France after the marked failure of the OAU, with Paris offering technical assistance to the organisation's secretariat.

The general failure of African regional unity movements can be attributed to more than one factor. In the case of the French-speaking groupings, Immanuel Wallerstein observes that such organisations as OCAM were defensive organisations intended to contain movements towards more 'revolutionary' politics.<sup>11</sup> It was felt that excessively political unity movements could arouse separatist tendencies in the new sovereign states. The weight of outside interests and long-term sources of development aid are likely to have been another factor, with a fear of instability if the African continent became another



sphere of influence where the super-powers of the USA and the USSR would seek influence in an extension of Cold War rivalry. The specific weight of interests among the members of the CFA franc and their relations with France has been identified as particularly important. In these circumstances, the main unity amongst the Francophone states was against progressive or Marxist English-speaking states.

This conviction that the nation-state was the most significant unit for defining policies or pursuing interests, was, for some critics, yet another example of Gaullist models and ideology being adopted by the new states.<sup>12</sup> The Zairean sociolinguist Ntote Kazadi wonders whether it is possible to label the francophone identity of France's former colonies as a factor of division preventing African unity. Using the example of the Commonwealth, he states his belief that both a francophone and an African identity in the interests of political co-operation should theoretically be possible. His conclusion however, is that an acute sense of awareness of a cultural and political identity inherited from the colonial past led to a form of ritualistic political and diplomatic behaviour that hindered attempts for a wider African unity.<sup>13</sup>

The way in which nearly all French-speaking states returned to former colonial alliances suggests the importance of the francophone identity as a vital aspect of continued close association with France. Even the more 'progressive' states would appreciate that often their interests were better served within a francophone context. The proposal of ties based on francophone identity offered both a potential framework for relations with states of similar historical backgrounds and a means of redefining long term relations

with France. It will be important to consider what lies behind the theme of a shared culture and how the significance of this went beyond mere statistics of French language speakers. In the first instance, we shall consider the dynamics of Franco-African relations.

The previous chapter argued that the *Communauté française* of 1958 was a means for France to prepare her future role when her colonies would be granted independence. A policy of *coopération* (broadly translated as development aid) involved not only financial assistance but also French provision of personnel to act as experts in education, health, law, scientific and technical assistance with Africans coming to France to receive training in similar areas. A specific ministry was designated to this task and other ministries of the French government were also implied whilst the Elysée was equipped with a small 'cell' of specialists on African affairs. This gave African states a privileged place in French overseas policies. From the French perspective, economic interests gained from colonial times were protected, access to significant natural resources was maintained and by virtue of military agreements, France could still play a decisive role in African affairs if certain political boundaries or governments were threatened by hostile external or subversive inside forces. Such extensive assistance from France indicated that France would continue to maintain a keen eye on the plight of her former colonial possessions.

The proposals of the OCAM members reflected their intentions to use a francophone organisation as a means to redefine relations with France. In the case of the francophone states, the significant place held by France as a dominant broker for development

through the terms of their independence agreements came to be seen as an increasing challenge to the realisation of full political sovereignty. The African states who left the *Communauté française* in 1960 accepted the principle that a strong association with France in the immediate post-colonial period was advantageous. However, by the mid 1960s, a growing body of opinion in the states felt that if this relationship did not evolve to allow a more significant African input to decide its direction, then governments would be under increased pressure from opposition groups contesting the extent of outside influence on domestic policies.

The opportunity to develop aid relations with other developed francophone countries was also appealing. The need to do so was felt in the light of tensions between the ex-metropole and states seeking closer integration into various continental African groupings. As in *coopération culturelle*, the area of external relations was one that had been designated as being under the responsibility of the 1958 *Communauté française*. At the granting of independence, many of the aid agreements stated that France should be consulted and informed on questions of relations between assisted states and those outside of the aid 'system'. By the end of the 1960s, France had agreed with the *Etats africains et malgache* to make these consultations less institutionalised and less formal.<sup>14</sup> Certain African critics of Francophonie such as Guy Ossito Midiohouan claim that France had a very direct role in shaping and obstructing efforts to create intercontinental African groupings.<sup>15</sup> The effectiveness of French intelligence in Africa, led by the Elysée African advisor Jacques Foccart, ensured that French tutelage over her former colonies continued in diverse ways without such formal and overt consultations.

The future of France's aid allocation to her former colonies formed another concern for African leaders. In general terms, in the years immediately following independence, France had spent a comparatively large percentage of her GDP on her former colonies. With the political pressure created by the under-current of *Cartiérisme* that had emerged from the 1950s, (a school of thought that questioned the value to France of aid spending that brought little return) French aid as a percentage of gross domestic product fell considerably and was concerned with achieving a greater return on investment.<sup>16</sup> The worries of African leaders were linked to questions about the future character of France's diplomatic relations on the continent after the departure of de Gaulle from the Elysée and his possible replacement by someone who would want to change the nature of links between France and the *Etats africains et malgache*.

The implementation of the aid agreements, where a frequent informality often stretched the conditions of the initial terms, met pressure from opposition nationalist groups within many states for reform. Many of these concerns surfaced in the unpublished Gorse French aid report of 1971. Although the conditions of aid were not overtly questioned until 1972 when student riots took place in Madagascar, Dahomey and Mauritania, an expression of discontent was not uncommon within restricted official circles. Other than restrictions guaranteeing the near-monopoly of French interests in development projects, the conditions of parity of the CFA franc zone with other currencies was also an area for discontent.

By the late 1960s, a growing movement in many states questioned the methods and effectiveness of French aid. Significantly, their *raison d'être* was not challenged to the same extent. It was not without importance that other bilateral and some multilateral aid purveyors were prepared to step in if France decided to end relations with any state. Furthermore, leaders had committed themselves to bringing about ambitious levels of development which would be impossible to achieve if France's aid provision was terminated. In a more general context, by the late 1960s the terms of exchange, whether it be cultural, economic or political between the Third World and the industrialised world, had not fulfilled the expectations held in the euphoria of independence. Levels of debt from development loans were increasing and the profits from foreign investment showed few signs of having any effects on local economies. Given that many African states were developing serious reservations about the pattern of relations that existed, why should a movement develop to reinforce the importance of the French language that in colonial times had been a means to reinforce France's hold on her territories?

With the inherent problems of inter-African co-operation and the dynamics of post-colonial aid relations, one might ask whether Francophonie was not an even more paradoxical ideal given the small number of fluent French-speakers in the EAM. This did not prevent the affirmation of the existence of associated cultural, spiritual and moral ties between France and her former colonies in many of the aid agreements of the early 1960s. As we have already seen in the previous part of the thesis, if we reject these ideas at face value, they can be interpreted as a 'conditioning' factor in relations held by France and African leaders upholding shared 'universal' values as a convenient point of reference

for mutual interests. What was the broad significance of these shared values culturally and politically in post-colonial relations?

In the previous chapter I argued that *coopération culturelle* had a role that was considered central to development and to nation-building by providing a basis for unity that would otherwise be lacking. It proposed a functional basis to access science, technology and methods that African languages were deemed incapable of providing. It did so whilst claiming to offer a politically neutral means of communication and identity within the newly independent states. Furthermore, the international dimension of the language as an aspect of identity shared with many other states with similar economic and political concerns was a strong attribute that political elites evoked when challenged for not championing African cultures. Within the new states, however, as had been the case in colonial times, fluency in the French language remained an essential skill for anyone aspiring to material and social success. This success was intimately linked to having received an orthodox French education. The American journalist Phillip Allen in an article on Francophonie, that considered it to be an inherent cultural grouping, suggested that it was 'a secular state of grace with all the articulations and paradoxes of a latter-day city of God.'<sup>17</sup>

As a 'state of grace', its attainment was seemingly very difficult for the African masses as the results of massive investment in education brought scant rewards. The stark reality of the small number of fluent French speakers existing beyond the elites, brought many to question the role that could be played by the French language and culture as central

components in development. The extent to which francophone-African countries could claim to be by any definition French-speaking should not be overlooked. It was an issue that has consistently posed problems when estimates are made about the number of French speakers in the world as a whole. Calculations have ranged from an optimistic 200 million to seventy-five million.<sup>18</sup> J-P Dannaud of the French *Ministère de la Coopération*, admitted that, according to his ministry's estimations, under ten per cent of the forty million population of the EAM could be considered minimally francophone whilst, at best, only one to two per cent could be called fluent francophones. This small number of francophones was not made any significantly larger despite the massive expansion of education. The determined reference for African elites to the values of France's education system, without necessary reforms to allow it to succeed in Africa, did not bring the huge growth in the number of speakers that governments and the *Ministère de la Coopération* had optimistically claimed at independence.

In the late 1960s there was little to suggest that the African elites were prepared to turn away from seeking educational legitimacy from a persisting cultural reference to the former metropole. Considering why the francophone states appeared so determined to maintain French as the most important state language, the American political scientist Edward Corbett observes somewhat critically:

The inextricable link between language and culture is the key element, and all the top African leaders are poorly qualified to consider it objectively. To the extent that they have mastered the French language, they have absorbed a degree of the French cultural ambience that leaves them at best uncertain of traditional values.<sup>19</sup>

Corbett's judgement reinforces the impression that the newly independent states were essentially governed by leaders whose education and experiences did not allow them to easily identify with the perspectives of the African masses who did not have the benefits of a similar education.

The 'French cultural ambience' referred to by Corbett is one that seems to be typified by the convictions of Léopold Senghor who was very influential in the initial OCAM proposal and has gained a place in francophone mythology for his writings in support of Francophonie as both an abstract idea and as a basis for an institutional framework. It is noteworthy that his most significant contribution to Francophonie is most widely cited as being his article 'Le français langue de culture', in which the word itself was given a new life after its almost forgotten coining by Oneisme Reclus in the late nineteenth century. In contrast, his role in promoting the OCAM project in the mid 1960s is much less recognised. In the article (1962) in which he explains the reasons for his attachment to the French language, there is no mention made of a possible French Commonwealth. The article is most famous for its celebrated definition of Francophonie as: 'Cet humanisme intégral qui se tisse autour de la terre, cette symbiose des 'énergies dormantes' de tous les continents, de toutes les races qui se réveillent à leur chaleur complémentaire.'<sup>20</sup>

In the same article he admits that his knowledge of French exceeds that of his maternal language, Serer. The association of Senghor with Francophonie is not solely due to his tireless campaigning for significant francophone structures; it is also due to his more significant legacy of having given a plausible ideology to the idea of Francophonie that



allowed it to be adopted as a credo for the French language after the colonial era. By stressing the aspect of *complémentarité* (the contested view that French has an enriching symbiotic contact with cultures it has supplanted) that it has brought to *francité* (the sum of inherent positive, humanist values within French culture and language), it could be convincingly argued that the free choice of non-mother tongue French speakers to retain the language of the colonial era was a sign that a new page had been turned. French truly was the language of developing world solidarity that had turned its back on an imperial past. In Xavier Deniau's *La Francophonie* we see how close the idea can be to de Gaulle's 'certaine idée de la France' that espoused various values from France's past: 'cette communauté se situe en dehors de la politique et de la géographie, et (...) les critères sont avant tout philosophiques: grands idéaux de la France de 1789, aspirations de l'humanité ayant pour noms 'liberté, concertation, entraide.'<sup>21</sup>

A significant part of *coopération culturelle et technique*, as we have seen in the previous chapter, was the work of a large number of governmental and non- governmental associations of which EAM states were members. These were taken to be evidence of a latent francophone community sharing common 'spiritual' affiliations and identified as established 'building blocks' for a more significant francophone structure.<sup>22</sup> AUPELF (*Association des universités partiellement et entièrement de langue française*), CONFEMEN (*Conférence des ministres de l'enseignement national*), CONFEJES (*Conférence de la jeunesse et des sports*) and the AIPLF (*Association internationale des parlementaires de la langue française*) were (and still are) all organisations significantly funded by the French *Ministère de la Coopération*. Many organisations of this sort,

however, have origins that can be traced back to the Fourth Republic and the relations formed when France devolved internal powers of government and permitted Africans to sit in the *Assemblée Nationale*. As such, it can be levelled against them that they represented narrow interest groups from the elites with an interest in perpetuating the models of the ex-Metropole.<sup>23</sup> Although such organisations as CONFEMEN discussed such important areas of aid as education, the more significant decisions governing them were political, involving annual negotiations at government level of both France and the relevant independent state. By their scope they can be judged more cultural than political. It is this network of relations, more often resting on ties of friendship rather than of well-defined institutions, that led Phillip Allen in 1967 to judge Francophonie as 'more a pattern of behaviour than an organisation'.<sup>24</sup> It was, however, a set of relations that extended beyond those that had been fostered after the granting of independence in the early 1960s.

The ideas of OCAM for creating an umbrella francophone organisation would have lacked credibility if they had not gained the broad support of North American, European and South-East Asian francophones. This tied in with the expression of a French language militancy in Quebec that had resulted from the improvement in economic conditions and a change in social relations known as 'la révolution tranquille' that had been made possible by Jean Lesage's Federal government in power since 1960.

The sense of resentment at pressures from the Anglophone community for Quebec to adopt a bilingualism that could threaten French culture led to a growing movement from

Quebec francophones in defence of their francophone identity. These claims for the French linguistic and cultural identity to be protected led to close relations between Quebec and the French government, leading to de Gaulle's dramatic 'Vive le Québec libre!' speech in Montreal in 1967.<sup>25</sup> In Paris, a number of influential French politicians formed an unofficial Quebec 'lobby' to ensure that the cause of French-speakers in this part of North America gain a wide hearing.

In Belgium, the zoning of the country into unilingual areas to the detriment of French, particularly in official contexts, had aroused strong feelings of cultural defensiveness, particularly in a context of economic decline. Linguistic legislation introduced in the period 1962-3 had done little to reduce tensions between Flemish and French speakers.<sup>26</sup> Although the presence of French-speaking Belgians was welcome in French language associations, any support that could be construed as political and supporting separatist movements was avoided in the interests of constructing European co-operation.

This growth in francophone activity is frequently linked with the French government's creation of the *Haut comité de la langue française* in 1966 that had the specific aim of protecting the international use of the French language in major organisations. The *Haut comité's* work in itself was not particularly innovative since it fitted into a rich tradition of state linguistic regulation dating back at least to 1635 and the creation of the *Académie française*.<sup>27</sup> By the 1960s, the issue of language protectionism, notably a concern for neologisms arising from the increased use of English, represented a strongly defensive position where international language trends and influences were as much a

reflection of economic factors as an attitude towards cultural norms. A year later, in 1967, the *Conseil international de la langue française* (CILF) was created in Quebec. Its aim was to 'assurer la sauvegarde et l'unité de la langue française dans le monde (...) Le Conseil doit en particulier lutter contre les néologismes de mauvais aloi qui sont introduits dans la langue courante.'<sup>28</sup>

According to Malone, this convergence of interests that would be broadly labelled as francophonie was characterised by a frequent confusion between cultural identity and linguistic identity with many believing them to be one and the same. This confusion tended to simplify for many the reasons behind moves for institutional Francophonie as being merely a concern for linguistic issues (essentially a battle for the French language) when international francophone solidarity was rooted in considerably more complex issues.<sup>29</sup> Whilst in francophone Africa it was both synonymous with creating better conditions for development and post-colonial political legitimacy of elites, in North America and in Europe it was closely allied to cultural resistance and the right to have francophone identity recognised politically. Francophonie in this perspective was a means to wider ends. These ends articulated the interests of those for whom French represented values that gave a greater cultural confidence closely linked to demands for political recognition.

A significant step in the direction of an inter-continental francophone meeting was the decision to invite education specialists, led by Education minister Jean Guy Cardinal from the province of Quebec, to the CONFEMEN meeting held in Libreville (Gabon) in

February 1968, a decision that was not without diplomatic repercussions since Quebec's attendance occurred without consultation with the Canadian government.<sup>30</sup> Coming a year after De Gaulle's famous visit to Quebec a year previously, francophone activists took heart from this gesture which once again rekindled ambitions that Francophonie could have an important role in future French diplomacy. This impetus was considered important in a diplomatic climate in which Paris had previously showed few signs of enthusiasm for OCAM's plans.

Paris's reception of francophone aspirations showed a certain ambiguity. Whilst France gave encouragement to Quebec francophones, the OCAM proposal received no public recognition from Charles de Gaulle. Given that France expressed particular pride at the extent of association which she had created with the African continent, and the interest being shown for francophone militancy in North America, the proposers of the scheme assumed that it would be well received by Paris. Perhaps the most encouraging support for the OCAM proposal was given by Jean de Broglie, former Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, writing in *Le Monde* in response to de Gaulle's Quebec visit:

La Francophonie sera finalement politique ou elle ne le sera pas. N'est-ce pas ainsi qu'il faut interpréter le voyage du général de Gaulle au Canada? Sans doute s'agissait-il dans l'immédiat d'aider une collectivité de langue et de tradition françaises et de prononcer à l'égard d'une nation sous-considérée les paroles qu'elle attendait de son illustre visiteur, mais par-delà, le sens politique de cette affaire a bien été de donner une nouvelle dimension à la diplomatie française: celle de la Francophonie.<sup>31</sup>

Even if support from the highest level was not readily given to a political francophone organisation, it was more forthcoming from non-governmental organisations. The creation of the *Association de solidarité francophone* in January 1967 and the *Conseil*

*international de la langue française* (CILF) in May 1967 with enthusiastic official support, provided good evidence of this.

The exact reasons for de Gaulle's refusal to endorse or reject any form of Francophonie have been grounds for speculation. Some have suggested that any approval could be interpreted as a form of neo-colonialism. Others suggest that de Gaulle was reticent that the African states had suggested new community structures when they had refused those that de Gaulle had proposed in 1958. For Xavier Deniau it was simply that de Gaulle did not want to have his name associated with a project that should be tainted with accusations of French imperialism.

More general appreciations suggest that he was deeply suspicious of any organisation that would challenge the current balance of Franco-African relations. This was a point of view that the first secretary general of the francophone movement, Jean-Marc Léger, would voice later.<sup>32</sup> These relations depended on French interests being pursued unhindered by possible competing influences. Studies of Charles de Gaulle's foreign policies stress that he tended to mistrust multilateral groupings and preferred treating states on an individual bilateral basis. Throughout the 1960s, de Gaulle had shown a noticeable suspicion of multilateral organisations and diplomacy. In particular, the United Nations and the EEC were organisations that the French president treated with mistrust. As an example of a multilateral organisation to deal with issues arising from decolonisation, he would have noted that the Commonwealth had placed Britain under

considerable pressure, from the mid 1960s onwards after the Universal Declaration of Independence (UDI) in Rhodesia.

In January 1968 Hamani Diori, President of Niger, returned from a tour of African states to consult with OCAM members to devise structures that would be more acceptable and would stress the cultural over the political and economic. As Diori himself admitted, only in the cultural sphere could an organisation find an acceptable *raison d'être*:

Notre Coopération doit être strictement culturelle et technique. Sur ce terrain, tout le monde peut s'entendre, malgré les conceptions philosophiques différentes, malgré des choix économiques divers.<sup>33</sup>

After three years of diffuse diplomacy and lobbying from outside the *hexagone*, France tabled proposals that could be discussed by states willing to commit themselves to a francophone grouping. In 1969 a meeting was convened to discuss the basis of an institutional community. Between 17-20 February 1969 at Niamey in Niger, some twenty-nine states were represented with thirty-three delegations present to discuss the revised OCAM proposals; this included five delegations from Canada: the Federal government, New Brunswick, Ontario, Manitoba and Quebec. Notable absentees included Guinea, Mauritania and Switzerland. Algeria attended for the first and only time as an observer.

In the speeches that occurred during the initial stages of the conference, consensus was shared on certain basic principles, notably the potential that existed for using the shared experience of the French language as a starting point of a fruitful co-operation and the

need for it to be made more concrete through fixing suitable structures for exchange both within the francophone space and also outside it.

A colourful speech made by France's minister for culture, André Malraux made striking parallels between the past and future of francophone cultures, and with the destinies of the ancient Chinese and Aztec empires. The speech concentrated on the complementary role of French among other cultures both as an element of historic solidarity and to protect vulnerable cultures from dominant economic forces. Of the African relationship with French he declared:

Nous seuls disons à l'Afrique, dont le génie fut celui de l'émotion, que pour créer son avenir, et entrer avec lui dans la civilisation universelle, l'Afrique doit se réclamer de son passé. Nous attendons tous de la France l'universalité, parce que, depuis deux cents ans, elle seule s'en réclame.<sup>34</sup>

Beyond such an audacious testimony of francophone faith, a divergence was more evident on the question of financing the organisation's activities and the scope that they might be given to form new policies, even in such apparently non-controversial areas as education. It was clear that agreement was only likely between France and the other members if an unthreatening 'horizontal' co-operation between similar states was the main area of innovation in francophone relations. As Malone in his study of the creation of multilateral francophonie observed: 'certaines délégations, dont la France, se méfiaient d'un cadre multi-latéral dynamique. A travers les documents de travail, on relève des phrases comme 'la nécessité d'une strictes non-ingérence dans le domaine bilatéral.'<sup>35</sup>



It was decided that the Quebec university lecturer and organiser of AUPELF, Jean-Marc Léger was to be voted provisional executive secretary of the agency and would undertake a tour of the countries present at the meeting to arrive at a final constitution acceptable to each participant and more importantly France. This constitution would be discussed at a second conference in Niger where a more precise direction would emerge.

In March 1970, a second meeting was held in Niamey from 16-20 March at which the constitution would be created. At this conference there were thirty delegations from twenty-six countries. The Central African Republic and Congo-Kinshasa, through membership of the Union of Central African States (UEAC), had distanced themselves from the francophone states and did not attend. In the words of the preparatory report, the proposed statutes reflected certain concerns to: 'tenir compte des modèles éprouvés qu'offrent les organisations internationales et répondre à l'originalité de l'entreprise.'<sup>36</sup>

Two documents were signed to give an institutional form to the newly created francophone institution. The first was the *Convention de l'Agence*, the second, the *Charte de l'Agence*.<sup>37</sup> The first was intended to define the goals and principles of the organisation and, set out the functions and organs of the ACCT in a more precise manner. A rapid analysis of the definition of the activities and functions of the ACCT allow certain conclusions to be drawn as to the organisation's priorities. Of the twelve functions of the ACCT defined in the *Charte* the most commonly expressed are those of information and communication (five mentions) and education (four). Next comes development and exchange (three each). Finally, the idea of culture is only mentioned

once. The language in which the *Charte* is written is careful to evoke a sharing of cultural resources yet avoids any commitment to ambitions that would necessitate the patterns of existing aid relations being changed, nor any that would commit members to different models of development. Above all, the organisation is intended to be a neutral construction acting in areas not provided for in existing agreements between countries.

The charter established the decision-making procedures for the general running of the ACCT. An annual executive council would assemble representatives of all member states, programme committees, the consultative council, the secretariat and any other body that the ACCT would consider useful. The general council meeting every two years would consider general policy direction and decide budgetary allocation.

Despite twenty-one states signing the convention out of thirty-four states attending the *Agence de coopération culturelle et technique culturelle* (ACCT) conference, newspaper articles suggest that it was dominated by a bitter wrangling over the status of Quebec's membership and participation as well as a restrictive attitude taken by France over the projected budget, a conflict labelled by some African participants as *le tribalisme blanc*.<sup>38</sup> Partly as a consequence of de Gaulle's prior opportunistic policies to make political capital from encouraging Quebec's cultural identity, France's relations with Canada were not conducive to fruitful francophone co-operation.

The conditions of Quebec's participation in decision-making, unresolved at the first Niamey meeting which merely agreed on the principle of a participatory state's

sovereignty, were yet to be fully agreed. The complexity of the question revealed a movement that had been developed, mainly in Quebec universities under the impetus of AUPELF, to use the French language and cultural identity to challenge the authority of the Ottawa government over Quebec's cultural autonomy. Early in its creation, the association, the statutes of which intended to bring co-operation between French speaking universities, had received subsidies from the French *Ministère de la Coopération*, *Ministère de l'éducation* and *Ministère des affaires étrangères*. The North American origins of the organisation and its importance as an early means for the *Québécois* to gain recognition in the francophone community (as opposed to originating in France-Africa relations) explain the particularly high profile that the Association has had in the history of the movement. To the annoyance of states outside the quarrel, several hours were spent reaching a compromise. As a consequence, it was agreed that only sovereign governments could attend with the province of Quebec appearing with the status of a delegation joined to its national government. In recognition of non-governmental associations active in Francophonie for several years, the ACCT charter was signed by both sovereign states and non-governmental associations. Financially, the budget proposed by Canada was more than halved from thirty million francs to nine million francs for 1971 whilst only two million were designated for the period March-December 1970.

Writing afterwards, Jean-Marc Léger claimed that the difficulties during the conference nearly resulted in the plans for Francophonie being abandoned. Describing the conditions of the start of the agency he claimed: 'elle est née dans un climat de morosité qui ne fut

pas étranger à son peu d'autorité politique au départ, et aux difficultés qui marqueraient ses premières années.<sup>139</sup>

The gulf in ambitions and the organisation's final form did not go unnoticed. P-J Franceschini, writing in *Le Monde*, observed, 'C'est une organisation internationale démunie dans ses moyens, freinée dans ses ambitions, et aux ailes quelque peu rognées qui perd son essor de Niamey.'<sup>40</sup>

The Niamey conference had clearly been a compromise forced by France, whose position as the most significant contributor was a reflection of her position as the major purveyor of aid in francophone Africa. The commitment to the ACCT was no more than 0.6% of France's overall aid budget. The distribution of responsibility in funding was one that has seen very little variation in the francophone movement to this day. France funded the organisation to forty-five per cent, Canada thirty-three per cent, Belgium twelve per cent and the remaining ten per cent was from other members with the smallest contribution falling to 0.36%.

A subsequent article by Jacques Amalric in *Le Monde* highlighted the potential consequences of the ill-feeling between Paris and Ottawa for the future of the ACCT.<sup>41</sup> Further to the diplomatic repercussions of France's ambitions to see Quebec represented as an autonomous participant, the article refers to fears in some diplomatic circles that Canada could use the multilateral dimension of the ACCT as a means to gain a greater presence in France's African *pré-carré*. A final point of contention was the appointment

of the General Secretary. After France had ruled out the choice of an African (the fear existed of arousing inter-African rivalries), the choice of Maurice Druon (of the *Académie française*) was discussed in official circles. Finally, the idea was dropped in return for certain concessions from Canada. Jean-Marc Léger was confirmed as Secretary General who would be based in the ACCT's headquarters in Paris.

Although Pompidou recognised pressures for greater francophone co-operation by committing French funding to the ACCT, ambitions for more significant structures were firmly resisted both under de Gaulle's successor and Giscard d'Estaing.

## **5. 2 The ACCT and Francophonie from 1970 to 1986**

In this section I will consider the activities and growth of the organisation. Generally, its modest budget and the restrictions placed on its functions were a source of frustration for members seeking to increase francophone co-operation. In this perspective Francophonie serves only to demonstrate the disparity between a universalist discourse and the realities of specific national interests. I will ultimately argue that the overall pattern of relations between francophone countries went unchanged with the institutional form that Francophonie took in 1970. Nevertheless, a possibility emerged for a potentially more significant co-operation at a future point (see Chapter 6).

The 1970 *Rapport d'activité de l'ACCT* identifies the three main areas allocated for the bulk of the organisation's budget. These were teaching and research, development and 'culture et connaissance mutuelle'. All three showed a clear desire for complementary

policies with those of bilateral aid. This was reflected in the budget which made education and training the largest single area of expenditure. The cultural projects heavily reflected a preoccupation with publishing and also the cinema in addition to a project for cultural centres. Development centred on promoting 'artisanat' and tourism. Finally, education projects were limited to a comparative study of educational systems, creating an inventory of means of funding education outside bilateral structures and the provision of some 200 'mallettes pédagogiques' to areas badly needing a minimum educational provision.<sup>42</sup>

In the early years of its existence, the ACCT remained an organisation with a minimal administrative structure, with no more than about ten staff in 1970. This rose steadily to thirty in 1973 and 108 in 1975. In the same period, the organisation had no permanent headquarters with some six locations being employed before finding a long-term base on the Quai André Citroën by the Seine in 1980. Problems with finding a site in the earliest years delayed its official recognition as an international organisation with appropriate legal status and privileges.

A steady increase in the budget of the ACCT reflected a diversification of activities that the 1973 General Conference of Liège conceded had until then been restricted by inefficient structures and a general lack of dynamism.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, the meeting occurred in the midst of poor Franco-African bilateral relations. Amongst the criticisms levelled against France were that aid relations were motivated by neo-colonialist instincts

that included a latent cultural imperialism. P.-J. Franceschini, writing in *Le Monde* about the issues at stake at the Conference, observed:

il est risqué d'y prêcher la francophonie au moment précis où plusieurs Etats s'interrogent sur leur identité et remettent en cause leurs rapports avec l'ancienne métropole. Pourtant, il n'est pas concevable de laisser la chance historique léguée par la colonisation s'étioler et se perdre.<sup>44</sup>

The same meeting saw the resignation of Jean-Marc Léger, motivated in part by the lack of power attached to his post. He was replaced by the former minister of education of Niger, Dankoulodo Dan Dicko. The budget of the organisation was increased by fifteen per cent and the number of assistant Secretary-Generals was increased from two to four to allow responsibility to be passed to administrators competent in specialist fields. The conference saw the creation of the *Fonds internationaux de coopération technique et d'aide au développement* (FICTAD) that provided extra funds for development projects. The fund would consist of voluntary donations from member states separate from the statutory contributions made to general running costs of the agency payable by all its members. 1973 was also a significant date in Franco-African relations since it saw the instigation of the Franco-African summit, a forum that, although far from signalling ambitions for multilateralism in France's development policies, did allow annual meetings of African states as a group to discuss broad economic and political questions with France.

Further reforms were made in 1975 at the Mauritius General Conference when there was a redefinition of the agency's main priorities with many delegations profoundly dissatisfied with the workings of the agency and the discrepancy with the ideals

presented at Niamey in 1969.<sup>45</sup> The criticisms from the Senegal delegate centred on the wasteful expenditure in administration which took a large part of funds designated for specific projects. The re-defined priorities became social and economic development, education and scientific co-operation and the promotion of national languages. It was this last policy that revealed an innovation from previous activities of the ACCT. The programme in favour of national languages centred on their inclusion within education systems and the codification of vocabulary and grammars of lesser developed languages. The French delegation, led by Pierre Abelin of the *Ministère de la Coopération*, had initially refused to increase France's contribution to the agency. Shortly before the end of the conference however, France admitted that she was prepared to swell the overall budget by twenty per cent.

The restrictions on the agency were not only brought about by concerns for overall French interests but there is some evidence that some officials considered it largely unnecessary. The archives of the *Ministère de la Coopération* suggest that French officials were less than impressed by the first five years of the organisation:

force est de convenir que la réalité n'a pas été à la hauteur de l'ambition. (...) Comme le faisait l'énumération des réalisations, l'Agence s'est laissé entraîner par des tendances que l'on peut reprocher également à d'autres instances internationales: réinventer la coopération, fabriquer ce que d'autres ont déjà entrepris de faire, intervenir un peu partout.<sup>46</sup>

Documents relating to the general conference of the ACCT held in 1971 in Quebec, in particular instructions for French participants, indicate that France was concerned that the recently created francophone organisation should reflect suitable concerns:



L'effort principal de l'Agence devrait être orienté vers l'enseignement du français dans les écoles primaires et secondaires. La francophonie ne deviendra, en effet, une réalité consistante et solide que si tout est mis en oeuvre pour que notre langue soit effectivement pratiquée et correctement enseignée à ce niveau. (...)

D'une façon générale, l'Agence ne devrait agir directement et à son compte que dans les domaines présentant un caractère hautement prioritaire, pour compléter ou suppléer l'aide bilatérale.<sup>47</sup>

Archives of internal documents from the *Ministère de la Coopération* suggest that France was very sceptical towards Canadian motives in the negotiations for the creation of the ACCT in 1969- 70. A memorandum sent on 22 February soon after the meeting suggests a need to defend the French position:

Je crois cependant que nous devons redoubler de vigilance, car Ottawa a de l'argent et ne s'en tiendra pas là. Dans leur majorité les Africains, mêmes proches de nous, souvent importunés ou troublés par cet aspect des choses, et feignent de ne pas voir où est l'enjeu. La manoeuvre devra donc être serrée au moment de la mise en place effective de l'Agence de Coopération.<sup>48</sup>

It seemed that a certain thaw had occurred in Franco-Canadian relations where agreement had been reached over the areas of activity with which the ACCT should concern itself. Canada's acquiescence to Quebec's participation (accompanied by other provinces in which francophones were to be found) was seemingly interpreted in some quarters as an attempt to take advantage of francophone identity as a means to gain influence in sub-Saharan Africa. The acceptance that Francophonie should be used as a weapon against Anglo-Saxon (and in particular, American) cultural hegemony rather than as a challenge to the leadership of the French-speaking world provided a suitable if

essentially delicate basis for a temporary peace. This, however, did not include a total trust in Canada's intentions for Francophonie.

Other than France's concerns for Canada's plans, other members felt that the Agency was yet to fulfil even the limited ambitions that it had been given in 1970. Although the Mauritius summit had increased the funds at the disposal of the Agency for its projects, the question of reforming the structures of the constitution had gone unanswered. At the Conference held in Abidjan (Ivory Coast) in December 1977, delegates mandated the secretariat to consult member states to consider reforming the founding statutes of the *Agence*. These changes were finalised at the Extraordinary Conference in Paris of March 1980. Subsequent conferences were held in Libreville (Gabon) in 1981, Paris in 1983 and Dakar (Senegal) in 1985.

In the period 1975-1981, fourteen new members joined the ACCT. They were the Seychelles, Cameroon, the Comores, Djibouti, Zaire, Vanatu, Saint Lucia, Morocco, Guineau, Guinea Bissau, Dominica, Congo, New Brunswick and Mauritania.<sup>49</sup> Whilst the membership of some countries reflected improved relations with France, it can be assumed that the expectation of improved regional links motivated others. The African tenure of the post of General Secretary was continued by the appointment of François Owono-Nguema in 1982 and Paul Okumba d'Okwatsegue in 1986, both from Gabon.

A more significant reform of Francophonie was envisaged by Léopold Senghor who continued to hope that it could become a forum for heads of state rather than ministers

and civil servants. In the period 1979-1980 Senghor elaborated on his plans for a *Communauté organique* that would give multilateral Francophonie a more significant role. All the time that the most significant funder of the agency was France, her refusal to promote Francophonie to a status close to that imagined by OCAM in 1966 would obstruct any further evolution. With Senghor having no doubt learnt from the failure of the OCAM project of 1966, bilateral policies were not targeted by this plan. Senghor identified the failings of existing Francophonie with the insufficiencies of its funding and insufficient powers of policy making to tackle cultural issues. The main emphasis of the plan seemed to have moved away from development towards broader cultural themes. He used President Giscard d'Estaing's theme of a *Nouvel ordre économique* as a framework for his ambitions:

La Communauté francophone a vocation de devenir un 'forum' d'idées nouvelles sur les grands problèmes de l'heure, et, en premier lieu sur les relations Nord-Sud. (...) les regroupements qui se fondent sur des affinités culturelles apparaissent, désormais, comme le suprême recours contre les fortes tendances de notre époque de l'uniformisation à la dépersonnalisation. Il est de plus en plus évident, en effet qu'un nouvel ordre économique, porteur de rationalité, mais surtout de justice, dans les rapports internationaux, ne peut surgir que d'un nouvel ordre culturel reconnaissant à chaque nation, voire à chaque peuple, le droit à la différence.<sup>50</sup>

A restricted meeting of diplomats in October 1980 failed to resolve the problem of Canada's reluctance to permit Quebec's autonomous participation. Despite this set-back, the election of François Mitterrand as President in 1981 was to revive optimism of a fundamental change in France's policies towards the Third World and with the *Etats africains et malgache* in general. Another positive factor was the more compromising attitude towards Quebec's cultural identity that emerged when Brian Mulroney replaced

Pierre Trudeau as Prime Minister of Canada. Senghor would have to wait until 1986 to see Francophonie become an institution bringing together heads of state after the initiatives of François Mitterrand.

The creation of the ACCT in 1970 revealed that the different motivations for institutional Francophonie were highly complex. Two dominated. The first was the pursuit of an international solidarity that would assist development and, at the same time, vindicate models inherited from pre-independence administration. The other was a defensive attitude to face up to the decline of French culture, a trend that had become greater since the Second World War. The English historian Keith Panter-Brick argues that in this perspective, projects and pressures for institutional Francophonie were representative of a far less homogeneous phenomenon than some claimed: 'It was relatively easy, in these circumstances, to suggest that all these groups of people, and others making extensive use of the French language, were united by it. This may be questioned, but it was a projection that could be made with some assurance of acceptability'.<sup>51</sup>

As the Canadian Malone observes in his thesis *La Francophonie- un cadre institutionnel- reflet des réalités francophones*, Francophonie as a potential institutional movement revealed a division between essentially narrow, nationalistic francophone ambitions and concerns that development aid be secured through a solidarity of French-speakers offering a greater possibility of a more varied co-operation than existing bilateral ties.<sup>52</sup>

Just as France historically and culturally was at the centre of francophonie in cultural terms, this was also the case in political and economic terms where France managed to dominate the basis on which future inter-francophone co-operation would occur. In an analysis of co-operation between francophone countries in 1974, the French political scientist Louis Sabourin considers the nature of relations between countries within Francophonie. He observes the paradoxical nature of aid between francophone countries notably France and her former colonies, that can be seen to benefit more the donors than those receiving. In the words of Tibor Mende, it has frequently become 'une forme de recolonisation'.<sup>53</sup> Sabourin makes an important observation when he notes:

La Francophonie, prise comme un tout, demeure un phénomène essentiellement culturel et accidentellement économique alors que la coopération bilatérale entre les pays francophones se matérialise souvent sous des formes culturelles mais presque toujours avec des résonances économiques.<sup>54</sup>

Whether it is seen as an abstract concept of culture or as a reference to institutional structures, Francophonie is a deliberately vague concept. Like the term '*coopération*', it contains the twin ideas of *francité* and *francophonie*, either of which can be stressed over the other according to the audience being addressed. The organisation that was created in 1969 was restricted financially and by the policies that it could undertake. On the other hand its discourse was ambitious, universalist and expansive. It was inter-governmental and therefore implied the sending of ministers rather than heads of state. It was clear that it was no more than a minor aspect of foreign relations rather than one that could call into question the direction of states' foreign affairs. For many, its existence alone was its main merit, even if, in financial terms, it did not prevent a reduction in aid flow from France to the EAM.

If we return to the proposals of OCAM in 1966 that appeared to have been inspired by some of the ambitions for the *Communauté française*, we discover that the ACCT was a shadow of the type of organisation that a number of African leaders had hoped for. Likewise for francophones committed to heading-off ‘Anglo-Saxon’ cultural and linguistic imperialism, the *Agence* failed to offer any effective means of doing so. Given its increasing operational difficulties and a frequent mistrust between the dominant funders, for anyone other than those with a close involvement with the ACCT, it seemed that effective francophone co-operation was a difficult goal to attain. Despite these two characteristics the ACCT can be attributed with some positive contributions to the French-speaking community. For the first time, states, countries and communities sharing the usage of French sent official representatives to discuss common interests in a context that was unrelated to colonial rule. Furthermore, as we shall see in Chapter Seven, the ACCT instigated small-scale cultural and linguistic projects that would have been difficult through bilateral policies.

Can it be argued that Francophonie had any significant effect on the bilateral aid relationship and in particular how *coopération culturelle* was administered? The budget of the ACCT was cut to a third of what had been proposed in 1969 and that France had made known her particular request that the organisation should avoid any duplication of policies with those of her own aid programmes. Therefore it would appear to be unlikely that institutional Francophonie made any significant influence on the patterns of bilateral *coopération*. It is interesting to note that the institutionalisation of Francophonie occurred at a time when important questions were being asked about the effectiveness of

bilateral *coopération culturelle* and the values and institutional models being carried by it. There is a danger of considering that Francophonie was a response to these demands. In reality, if we consider the total amount of aid involved, the significance of the grouping is more symbolic than actual. Indeed, a frequent criticism is that France has used Francophonie and its projects as another means to package bilateral programmes and that the administration of certain projects has passed from the *Ministère de la Coopération* to the ACCT from where they have been implemented with French interests in mind. From 1975, under pressure from African states, the restrictions on the ACCT operating in the domain of development started to lessen. Similarly, from 1973, the ACCT Secretary generals were all African. By the early 1980s however, attendance at conferences was given a lower priority by many states with some no longer even sending ministers and others not even sending any delegation at all. It might be argued that the low budget assigned to the organisation, had deliberately suffocated the original ambitions of the francophone idealists.

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**Notes to Chapter Five: The politics of francophone co-operation and *the Agence de coopération culturelle et technique***

<sup>1</sup> OCAM, 'Comment organiser la Francophonie', *Africa Report*, 6 (1968), 6-13.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.1 5.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Edward Corbett, *The French Presence in Black Africa* (Washington DC: Black Orpheus Press 1972), p.81.

<sup>6</sup> Ntole Kazadi, *L'Afrique Afro-francophone* (Paris: Didier Erudition, 1991), p. 50.

<sup>7</sup> Domenico Mazzeo, ed., *African Regional Organisations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 6.

<sup>8</sup> Dahomey, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Niger, Upper Volta, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Togo, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Gabon.

<sup>9</sup> The United Arab Republic was an attempt to create a federation consisting of Egypt, Syria and Irak. Created in 1963, the UAR lasted less than a year. Guy de Bosschères, *Le Tiers Monde- 1. L'Afrique* (Paris: Seghers, 1987), p. 253.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted by K.Mathews 'The Organisation of African Unity', in *African Regional Organisations*, Domenico Mazzeo, ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 48- 74, (p. 54).

<sup>11</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, *Africa the Politics of Unity* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1967), p. 122.

<sup>12</sup> Mark Malone, 'La Francophonie- un cadre institutionnel- reflet des réalités francophones' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Paris, 1971), p.285.

<sup>13</sup> Kazadi, p.118.

<sup>14</sup> Malone, p. 248.



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- <sup>15</sup> Guy Ossito Midiohouan, 'Portée idéologique et fondements politiques de la Francophonie vue d'Afrique), *Peuples noirs-peuples africains*, 59-62 (1988), 63-84.
- <sup>16</sup> Kazadi, p 44.
- <sup>17</sup> Philip Allen, 'Francophonie considered', *Africa Report*, 6 (1968), 6-13, (p. 6).
- <sup>18</sup> The first figure is given in Hyacinthe de Montera, *La Francophonie en marche* (Paris: Sedimo, 1966), p.123. The second is given by Marc Blancpain, *Les Lumières de la France* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1967), p 82.
- <sup>19</sup> Corbett, p. 12.
- <sup>20</sup> Léopold Senghor quoted in Xavier Deniau, *La Francophonie* (Paris: PUF, 1995), p. 23.
- <sup>21</sup> Xavier Deniau, *La Francophonie*, (Paris: PUF, 1995), p. 19.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., p.51.
- <sup>23</sup> Corbett , p.78.
- <sup>24</sup> Allen., p 6.
- <sup>25</sup> Jean Lacouture, *De Gaulle*, 3 vols (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1986), III, p. 520.
- <sup>26</sup> Kaye Whiteman, 'Francophonie', culture and development: the experience of the ACCT', in Akinrinade, O & Barling, J., *Economic Development in Africa* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1987), 174-198, (p.179).
- <sup>27</sup> Peter Rickard, *A History of the French Language* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), p. 102.
- <sup>28</sup> Malone, p.121.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 131-132.
- <sup>30</sup> Philippe Decraene, 'Les Chances de la Francophonie', *Le Monde* , 18 February 1969.
- <sup>31</sup> Quoted in Michel Tetu, *La Francophonie, histoire, problématique, perspectives* (Quebec: Guérin, 1987) p. 59.
- <sup>32</sup> Pierre-François Chatton and Joanna Mazuryk Bapst, *Le Défi francophone* (Brussels: Bruylant-LGDJ, 1991), p. 29.
- <sup>33</sup> Kazadi, p. 53.

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<sup>34</sup> André Malraux quoted in Emile Mworoha, *ACCT 1970-1995, 25 ans au service du développement et de la coopération francophone* (Paris: Agence de coopération culturelle et technique, 1995), p. 34.

<sup>35</sup> Malone, pp. 60-61.

<sup>36</sup> Philippe Decraene, 'Trente-trois Etats de la langue française mettent au point une 'agence de coopération culturelle', *Le Monde*, 15-16 March 1970.

<sup>37</sup> Mworoha, pp. 34-38.

<sup>38</sup> P.-J. Franceschini, 'Vingt et un pays ont adhéré à l'Agence francophone', *Le Monde*, 22-23 March 1970. The twenty-one signatories were: Belgium, Cameroon, Canada (countersigned by Quebec), Chad, Dahomey, France, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, Monaco, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo, Tunisia, South Vietnam and Upper Volta. Two countries opted for associate membership: Laos and Congo Kinshasa. The Lebanon and Morocco opted to withhold decisions until the statutes had been considered by their governments. The delegate from Cambodia left the conference before any proposals were made.

<sup>39</sup> Jean-Marc Léger, *La Francophonie: grand dessein, grande ambiguïté*, (Quebec: Hurtubise HMH, 1987), p. 117.

<sup>40</sup> Franceschini, 22-23 March 1970.

<sup>41</sup> Jacques Amalric, 'La rencontre francophone de Niamey', *Le Monde*, 19 March 1970.

<sup>42</sup> Mworoha, p. 87.

<sup>43</sup> P-J Franceschini, 'La francophonie en quête d'une politique', *Le Monde*, 16-17 October 1973.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Philippe Decraene, 'La conférence générale de l'Agence de coopération s'est réunie à l'île Maurice', *Le Monde* 18 November 1975, p. 7.

<sup>46</sup> Centre des archives contemporaines (CAC), Fontainebleau (Ministère de la coopération), Article 810532/ 13 MC 14.

<sup>47</sup> CAC archives, Article 810443/ 12 MC 7, Ministère des affaires étrangères, 'Instructions pour le chef de la délégation française à la conférence générale de l'agence de coopération culturelle et technique, Ottawa', 1971 p. 10.

<sup>48</sup> CAC archives, Article 810443/ 12 MC 2, Internal memo from de M. Lipkowski 22/2/69.

<sup>49</sup> Mworoha, pp. 52-53.

<sup>50</sup> CAC archives, Article 810532/ 13 MC 7, 'Projet de rapport sur la conférence des chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement francophones (CGEGF) ou sur l'organisation commune des pays partiellement ou entièrement de langue française(OPPELF)', p 13.

<sup>51</sup> P.K. Panter-Brick, 'Francophonie with special reference to educational links and language problems', in, *Decolonisation and After*, W.H. Morris-Jones & D. Austin (London: Frank Cass, 1980),330-348, (p. 333).

<sup>52</sup> Mark Malone, p. 289.

<sup>53</sup> Louis Sabourin, 'La Coopération entre pays francophones dans une perspective globale', *Etudes Internationales*, 5, 2 (1974), 195-207, (p. 199).

<sup>54</sup> Sabourin, p. 200.

## Chapter Six: The era of the francophone summit 1986-1995

In the preceding chapter, I discussed the events and the arguments leading up to the creation and then the policies of the sole multilateral inter-governmental francophone organisation existing in the period 1969-1986. This organisation, the *Agence de coopération culturelle et technique* (ACCT), was an organisation with only a minor role in political and cultural relations between France and her former colonies despite the ambitions entertained by such African leaders as Hamani Diori of Niger and Léopold Senghor of Senegal for a more significant form of consultation. The ACCT was very much a compromise between the ambitions of the former French colonies to establish a substantial multilateral forum for discussing cultural, economic and political issues and France's intentions to limit any activities of a francophone grouping to the strictly cultural. The discussion of international political relations, notably those of concern to African participants, was not on the agenda of the meetings and activities of the Agence. These were left to France's bilateral diplomacy.

Since 1986, the holding of francophone summits has brought a significant reflection on francophone identity and the political uses of consultation amongst French-speaking countries. In particular this consultation is seen as a means of raising issues affecting developing countries on an international stage. This chapter considers how the political and cultural agenda of francophonie has evolved since the instigation of francophone summits. What has been the role of the francophone African states in this new institutional construction? This chapter also looks at the francophone discourse that

resulted from these francophone summit meetings and associated conferences and considers whether there has been any significant evolution in how francophone African leaders have perceived the political uses and the significance of their francophone identity.

### **6.1 The francophone summit: a renewed basis for constructing a francophone community?**

#### **The Francophone summits 1986-1995**

- I. Paris (France), 17-19 February 1986**
- II. Quebec (Canada), 2-4 September 1987**
- III. Dakar (Senegal), 24-26 May 1989**
- IV. Chaillot, Paris (France), 19-21 November 1991**
- V. Grand-Baie (Mauritius), 16-18 October 1993**
- VI. Cotonou (Benin), 2-4 September 1995**

Fig 1: Dates of francophone summits 1986-1995.

What is a summit and how has it pursued its objectives to bring a closer francophone co-operation and formulate common policies? Bringing together about fifty countries, summits occur every two years. Between summits there are more specialised inter-ministerial conferences on such themes as the environment, education or communication technology. Whilst the bi-annual francophone summit is the body that decides the overall direction of francophone policies, the *Conseil permanent de la Francophonie* (CPF) comprises personal representatives of governments and heads of state that meets on a

regular basis to shape francophone policies, to prepare summits and ensure that previous summit decisions are implemented. The ACCT (re-named the *Agence de la Francophonie* in 1997) has retained a place in Francophonie as one of five 'opérateurs' specialising in implementing summit programmes. As the secretariat of summits it plays a vital role in co-ordinating policies as well as continuing to administer projects in training, small-scale development projects and linguistic projects. An annual *Conférence ministérielle de la Francophonie* composed of ministers of foreign affairs and representatives to the ACCT oversees the work of the CPF and defines the wider issues for discussion at francophone summits.

The four other specialised 'opérateurs' working with the ACCT are AUPELF-UREF (*Association des universités partiellement et entièrement de langue française-universités en réseaux d'études françaises*) that work in the domain of education, the AIMF (*Assemblée internationale des maires francophones*), the *Université Senghor* in Alexandria Egypt and the francophone television channel TV5. To complete the larger picture of institutional francophonie there are three 'partenaires institutionnels' that represent long-established francophone organisations from the immediate post-colonial period: the CONFEMEN (*Conférence des ministres de l'éducation*), CONFEJES (*Conférence des ministres de la jeunesse et des sports*) and the AIPLF (*Assemblée internationale des parlementaires de langue française*).

The summits themselves are divided into three sessions. The first considers international relations and political issues. The second looks at a specifically decided theme of

significance to the community. The third session is designated to multilateral francophone issues and reinforcing co-operation between members to maintain a French cultural presence in the world. In this last session participants decide the location of the following summit. The host nation acts as the chair of the summit and has a significant role in setting at least part of the agenda for the summit that takes place in its country.

From these three sessions emerge two forms of policies. Firstly, summits issue resolutions on issues of common agreement that set out political positions or general objectives agreed by the francophone movement. Secondly, policy programmes are established accompanied by specific budgets carried out by the appropriate 'opérateurs' to bring about initiatives in a wide variety of areas; many of which supplement existing actions from bilateral or multilateral aid providers both francophone and non-francophone. What was the nature of the policies formulated and agreed at the summits in the period under question?

The published proceedings of the first summit held in Paris in 1986 explain that the objectives of the gathering were four-fold:

- i) To provide an original forum for North-South dialogue in a spirit of 'solidarité' and the exchange of expertise in relevant issues.
- ii) To offer solidarity to 'les pays les plus démunis' and in particular to support widespread education.

- iii) To meet the challenges of ensuring the continued international use of the French language, notably by investing in new technologies and applying them to different languages and cultures other than French (*industries linguistiques et culturelles*).
- iv) To consider the future of multilateral francophone institutions and fora for co-operation.<sup>1</sup>

The first summit in 1986 led to twenty-eight resolutions being adopted out of the ninety-six that had been proposed by the preparatory meeting. Amongst these resolutions were condemnations of apartheid in South Africa, statements on the Israel-Palestine question and a call to the super-powers to enter into a dialogue over nuclear disarmament. On the technical side, the '*décisions pratiques*' included projects for investment in the francophone media, education and scientific research.

From the outset it was clear that developing and industrialised members would use the opportunity to voice their concerns and priorities. It was noticeable that the industrialised members did so more cautiously. For Wilfred Martins, Prime Minister of Belgium, the significance of the francophone gathering was to be found in developing policies to ensure security and to promote economic development. For Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister of Canada, the challenges were economic development and adapting French for the uses of new technologies. Significantly however, African leaders saw the summit as an opportunity to discuss specific issues rather than dealing in generalities. In the opinion of Abdou Diouf, President of Senegal, the summit was the place to discuss action to be taken against the apartheid regime in South Africa, improving



communication networks in Africa and meeting the challenge of development by allowing easier terms of repayment of debt.

However, by the second francophone summit in Quebec City in September 1987 it seemed that Canada was willing to lead the way in setting a more audacious political agenda. In contrast to the Paris summit, the Quebec summit was accompanied by a significant act from one of Francophonie's developing countries to illustrate a commitment to 'francophone solidarity'. In the opening session of the summit Canada used the occasion to cancel the development aid debts by the African countries present at the summit in receipt of aid funding from the host country. The total debt relief amounted to some 325 million Canadian dollars.<sup>2</sup> This followed Canada's commitment made at the summit's prior Foreign Affairs Ministers preparatory meeting in Bujumbura (Burundi) in July 1987, to double the contribution to the *Agence de coopération culturelle et technique* so that Canada became the largest financial contributor to the organisation.

The state of tension between the French and Canadian representations at this meeting brought concerns that the arguments that had raged over the ACCT prior to the first summit in 1986 would appear once again in Francophonie. Canada had hinted that she would be prepared to cancel development debts at previous international conferences. In contrast, France's prior position on this issue was to contest the benefits of any such diplomatic gestures. The French minister for coopération, Michel Aurillac, had previously, in a United Nations conference on Third World debt, called it a 'fausse bonne

solution'.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps even more significantly still in this battle for influence was the attempt by the Prime Minister of Canada, Brian Mulroney, to have a summit resolution passed on human rights.<sup>4</sup> His 'Appel (...) au respect des droits de la personne' made a link between the right to development and essential human rights. This was in addition to resolutions and statements made on political issues similar to those at the Paris summit. In a short text, he explained that Canada had included the pursuit of a respect for human rights in its own foreign policies and he invited other states to heed this example: 'La dignité et la liberté commandent une morale dans la vie politique d'un pays. L'espace francophone doit avoir pour ambition de servir de guide moral pour les nations du monde.'<sup>5</sup>

This more political turn was not one that France appeared to be happy to follow. Whilst François Mitterrand remained officially committed to the twin themes of development and francophone cultural identity, his Prime Minister in co-habitation, Jacques Chirac, in an interview with *Le Figaro*, seemed more prepared to discuss the cultural and linguistic issues of the gathering and seemed, by implication, opposed to summits becoming politicised in a manner similar to the British Commonwealth, of which he stated:

le Commonwealth répond à des préoccupations plus politiques; en cela, il est moins original, et d'ailleurs moins solidaire. Il faut donc se garder de la multiplication de débats politiques qui pourraient, à terme, d'une part amoindrir l'originalité francophone, d'autre part rompre notre consensus sur quelques principes et quelques inquiétudes, suffisants pour travailler concrètement et utilement dans le long terme.<sup>6</sup>

Writing in *Le Figaro*, Jacques Soustelle, in an editorial entitled 'Le risque de la politisation', was scathing that francophonie was being diverted from its true vocation:

il est à redouter que le poids des pays du tiers monde, marxistes avoués ou 'non alignés' en Afrique surtout, ne menace de déstabiliser le projet francophone, de le faire dévier, le transformer insensiblement en une sorte d'OUA bis, caisse de résonance par toutes les prises de position démagogiques. (...) Le but essentiel: la diffusion de notre langage, de notre culture, et la même d'un humanisme soustrait aux rivalités et aux intrigues de la politique.<sup>7</sup>

The holding of the Dakar summit in Senegal two years later in 1989 was overshadowed by an ethnic and territorial dispute between Senegal and its francophone neighbour Mauritania. The dispute was a telling example of the fragility of South-South relations within Francophonie and the sensitive nature of inter-ethnic relations arising from the somewhat arbitrary nature of state borders left from the colonial period. Furthermore, diplomatic relations had been uneasy between Belgium and her former colony Zaire whilst strife in the civil war in the Lebanon had been particularly violent. These problems were a stark reminder that rather abstract discussions of world economics and development were ineffective responses to more delicate and immediate problems facing francophone member states. Throughout the summit, the silence maintained by participants on the Senegal-Mauritania conflict was a clear sign that Francophonie was as yet uneasy with any possible role in mediating between warring factions.

Politically, France used the summit to reaffirm her leadership of the francophone community in development issues by asserting a willingness to take action to reduce Third World debt. On the opening day of the summit François Mitterrand revealed that France was cancelling some sixteen billion francs worth of development aid debt with thirty-five developing states in receipt of France's assistance.<sup>8</sup>

In the summit's political resolutions a number of familiar subjects emerged such as South Africa, the Middle East and the Iran-Iraq conflict. More significantly for the future development of Francophonie was the resolution 'sur les droits fondamentaux' that linked 'le respect des Droits de la personne' with the proclaimed right to development. Through this resolution, Francophonie expressed its commitment to two inextricably linked values to be pursued both within and outside the francophone community.<sup>9</sup>

By the fourth conference, that of Chaillot in 1991, there was evidence of a more adventurous agenda for summits with the inclusion of human rights and democratic reform in the final 'Déclaration de Chaillot'.<sup>10</sup> The holding of the summit in Paris rather than Kinshasa in Zaire occurred after a combination of criticism from Human Rights groups and political unrest. The terms in which the final resolution addresses the question leaves us in no doubt that the francophone discourse on Human Rights is to be seen as related to development: 'il n'existe pas de développement sans liberté, ni de véritable liberté sans développement.'<sup>11</sup> This bolder statement of a commitment to political values was particularly pertinent, following as it did the tone of the Franco-African summit held at La Baule in 1991, at which the French president stated that future French assistance aid would be subject to conditions that would take into account the respect of human rights and the efforts made by African governments to bring democratic reform. That the francophone summit should also reflect these issues was evidence that francophone affairs were not impervious to the pressures of the wider Post-Cold War political agenda.

Mauritius was the location for the fifth summit. As a step in the construction in the francophone community, its holding in this part of the world was a means of highlighting the presence of francophones outside of the European-Canadian-African triangle. The linguistic situation in Mauritius, where English and French form a delicate functional counter-weight to languages associated with ethnic identity, had provided the unique circumstances where the French language was in a state of steady expansion, accompanying successful economic growth and a process of stable democratisation.

The summit was dominated by France's resolution to challenge the United States' refusal to accept a cultural exception clause to the General agreement on tariffs and trade (GATT), due to be signed in late 1993. According to the 'résolution sur l'exception culturelle au GATT', the members of Francophonie expressed a desire to see adopted: 'la même exception culturelle pour toutes les industries culturelles, cette disposition constituant un moyen efficace pour maintenir une forte production culturelle francophone.'<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, a second statement 'Résolution sur l'unité dans la diversité' stated that the community had agreed to:

prendre toute disposition pouvant permettre aux personnes appartenant aux diverses composantes de la société, qu'elles soient minoritaires ou non, de participer à tous les aspects de la vie économique, culturelle et sociale de la société dans laquelle elles vivent.<sup>13</sup>

For some of the Parisian press, the summit showed how members of Francophonie could rally around a uniting cause. The GATT issue had presented a basis for showing the importance of culture in relation to international relations and economics. For Stephen Smith in *Libération*, whilst it ostensibly represented 'La famille francophone contre

l'impérialisme anglo-saxon', Smith showed that this was somewhat misleading. Anonymously quoting an African minister, Smith claimed that the issue did not gain the general support that it might be assumed: 'Ce n'est pas notre affaire. C'est une bagarre de Blancs. Nous que ce soit CNN ou Canal France internationale, on est censés voir le monde à leur façon.'<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, the President of the Congo, Pascal Lissouba, was sufficiently honest to qualify the support that African participants had given at the summit as being distant from African preoccupations: 'Il y a beaucoup d'hypocrisie dans l'exception culturelle' (...), l'idée est absurde car, en Afrique nous le savons bien, toute culture ne peut être que le métissage.'<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, the proceedings of the summit show that it was the belief that culture was not a mere commercial product that dominated. In the words of François Mitterrand: 'Il serait désastreux d'aider à la généralisation d'un modèle culturel unique (...) Les créations de l'esprit ne peuvent être assimilés à de simples marchandises.'<sup>16</sup>

However, if this issue dominated the press coverage, the summit was also concerned with a certain number of general political and economic issues for which the GATT issue, in the words of François Mitterrand, offered an 'entente francophone' upon which further close co-operation within the francophone community could emerge. As part of this 'entente', the official title of the summit changed from that of *Conférence des chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement des pays ayant le français en commun* to become *Conférence des chefs d'Etat et de gouvernements ayant le français en partage*. No doubt this was to

show that organised Francophonie appreciated the need to acknowledge a greater sharing of a common culture inherent in francophone project. For *Libération*, this change was ‘à la mesure du non-événement qu’a été le sommet à Maurice.’<sup>17</sup>

The sixth summit held in Cotonou in Benin showed a will to reinforce the political dimension of Francophonie by participants agreeing that at the following summit a secretary general would be elected. The ‘Déclaration de Cotonou’, expressed:

notre foi dans les valeurs démocratiques fondées sur le respect des droits de l’Homme et des libertés fondamentales, dans le processus de développement, soulignons une fois de plus qu’Etat de droit, démocratie, développement, sécurité et paix sont nécessairement liés.<sup>18</sup>

Despite this declaration, the report on the ‘Examen et adoption du texte général sur la politique internationale’ records that it was difficult to arrive at a consensus on the issues of the unrest in Algeria, Nigeria and Rwanda. In the case of Algeria and Nigeria the francophone community failed to issue a common resolution during the designated session. On the question of the civil war in Rwanda, a guarded resolution respecting the reservations of the ruling government of the country in question was made, calling for a joint diplomatic conference to be held under the auspices of the United Nations and the Organisation for African Unity. Towards the end of the summit, a highly cautious resolution was passed calling on democratic reforms in Nigeria, an earlier draft having been rejected by neighbouring francophone states.<sup>19</sup>

What have been the latent areas of disagreement for the francophone community since 1986? Whilst there has been some hesitation over the realisation of a community with

consistent political ambitions, policies and mechanisms, institutional issues have also been the subject of disagreement and rivalry. In 1986, François Mitterrand, in welcoming states present at the opening session of the first francophone summit, declared that this new form of diplomacy was to be:

une communauté informelle, c'est-à-dire sans lien organique de caractère administratif (...) Notre communauté, c'est une sorte de structure, essentiellement une structure de la langue, et au-delà des affinités qui sont là, c'est une communauté du regard que représentent les quelque quarante nations qui participent à ce premier sommet francophone, et d'autres encore, quelques-uns, qui souhaitent nous rejoindre.<sup>20</sup>

This vision of Francophonie perceives the organisation to be an essentially non-bureaucratic structure that relies on existing bilateral relations to carry out most of its work. The institutions attached to the francophone summit have been subject to the greatest controversy in the Francophone community. Attempts to change them have led to a renewal of Franco-Canadian rivalry that has flared up when any question of modifying the balance of relations affecting France and states in receipt of French development aid have been broached.

One of the intentions behind the creation of the francophone summit in 1986 was to create a forum that would give a direction and a co-ordination to various small scale francophone institutions in existence since the 1960s. These included such inter-ministerial post-colonial groupings such as the CONFEMEN (*Conférence des ministres de l'enseignement national*), the CONFESJES (*Conférence de la jeunesse et des sports*) or AUPELF-UREF (*Association des universités partiellement et entièrement de langue française- universités en réseaux d'études françaises*) that, with the support of French



and Canadian funding had for long carried out policies and projects in support of education throughout the francophone world. The CONFEMEN and the CONFEJES had initially been created by the *Ministère de la Coopération* as forums to discuss bilateral education policies. AUPELF-UREF originated in the efforts of Quebec universities to use their francophone status to gain further investment from outside of Canada and as a political statement within the province.

At the Paris summit in 1986, it was accepted as a matter of principle that Francophonie was not to create any new institutions until designated committees had examined the functions of those already existing (such as the ACCT). The exceptions to this were the instigation of two additional bodies. The first was the *Comité international de suivi* to ensure the execution of summit decisions (CIS). The second was the *Comité international de préparation* (CIP) given the task of preparing future summits. To reduce creating layers of bureaucracy the projects decided by summits would be given to specifically created *réseaux*. These semi-formal structures would consist of experts already within individual government administrations, given the tasks of developing and researching projects proposed at summits. The first summit designated four 'réseaux' namely, development, culture and communication, scientific and technical information and 'industries de la langue' (applied linguistic management).<sup>21</sup>

The origins of many existing francophone organisations, either heavily subsidised by France or even extended tools of bilateral policies, led to a French-Canadian conflict over the balance of power in Francophonie. Franco-Canadian arguments over institutions

surfaced at several meetings, the most infamous being at the Mauritius summit in 1993 when the then French Minister for Culture Jacques Toubon accused Canada of using the ACCT as an instrument for pursuing her own bilateral interests: 'L'Agence a été en-dessous des ambitions normales de la francophonie, elle n'a pas rempli sa mission, préférant souvent être le relais de la coopération bilatérale canadienne.'<sup>22</sup>

The ACCT was already a focus for rivalry in 1987 when, prior to the Québec summit, the Ministerial meeting of foreign ministers held in Bujumbura (Burundi) saw Canada pledge a greater contribution to the running costs of the ACCT than France.<sup>23</sup> This echoed Canada's desire for a greater multilateralisation of francophone policies when France has preferred to maintain predominantly bilateral policies. A widely expressed view in France was that the realisation of a Canadian-Quebec view of francophone activism would lead to a reinforcement of Anglophone interests in Africa.<sup>24</sup>

The heritage of post-colonial educational aid as the origin of institutional Francophonie in developing members has left an indelible mark. For this reason comparisons with such multilateral organisations as the European Union or the United Nations are likely to remain unsatisfactory. For France, Francophonie has been inseparable from the extensive *coopération culturelle* that has maintained the ambition of upholding a vast cultural network across the world and specially in Africa. For this reason alone, it would seem that successive French governments have felt duty bound to lead Francophonie and, in so doing, keep in check the ambitions of Canada who might use its institutions to further its own political and economic ends. The rivalry of French and Canadian interests has even

led to competing projects. The Canadian-proposed extension to Africa of the francophone television station TV5 as agreed at the Quebec conference in 1987 was obstructed by the French *Ministère de la Coopération*, preparing to launch the French bilateral channel CFI (*Canal France internationale*).<sup>25</sup> TV5 resolved the issue after the 1989 Dakar summit by proposing that both channels share the same broadcasting satellite to transmit to same the geographical area .

The extent to which African states have been able to fully participate in the multilateral activities of Francophonie is open to some doubt. This has been the consequence of Franco-Canadian rivalry and of a French conservatism towards the existing institutions in the earliest years of extended Francophonie. The French journalist Jean-Pierre B  jot remarked when considering the place of African states in Francophonie after 1986, that faced with the resurgence of Francophone rivalry between France and Canada, 'l'Afrique n'est que le spectateur   tonn   de cette querelle entre Grands Blancs'.<sup>26</sup> Although in 1987 and in 1989 the African states benefited from Canada and then France respectively cancelling aid debts with their African partners, on other occasions the rivalry had less positive outcomes.

Despite the limited functions of the *Agence de coop  ration culturelle et technique*, as an institution, its structures permitted the active participation of Africans both as administrators (including the post of General secretary on a number of occasions) and as members involved in small-scale projects. Under French pressure from 1986, there have been deliberate restrictions on the evolution of the ACCT to the detriment of

francophone African countries. As Jean-Pierre B  jot observes, 'l'ACCT demeure, en francophonie, le fief des francophones de l'Afrique.'<sup>27</sup>

The increase in the importance of 'r  seaux' used to define and elaborate francophone policies has been to the detriment of African members. Numerous indicators suggest that France has been highly reluctant to shake off ideas of a 'pr  -carr  ' that needs to be 'preserved' in the face of hostile intentions from Canada or even Belgium who may seek to benefit commercially and politically from opportunities opened up by increased francophone co-operation. As B  jot points out, the significance of the ACCT and institutional reform is that the institution is symbolic of wider concerns since it is 'le lieu d'expression des enjeux contradictoires du monde francophone.'<sup>28</sup>

The principal criticism of the decisions taken at summits is that they have not been followed-up and implemented in other programmes. Furthermore, by being bi-annual the criticism was made that frequently, in the interim, there was a lack of co-ordination between member states. Up until 1991, two main consultation bodies existed after summits. The first was the Comit   international de suivi to ensure the execution of summit decisions. The second was the Comit   international de pr  paration given the task of preparing future summits. The ACCT (accused of excessive administrative costs) continued its role as operator of policies decided before 1986, particularly in small scale educational and cultural projects in the field of development.

From 1991 two significant institutions were added to francophone structures. The annual *Conférence Ministérielle de la Francophonie* (CMF) brought together Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Francophonie on an annual basis so as to maintain a high-level francophone consultation irrespective of summits. The *Conseil Permanent de la Francophonie* (CPF), comprising of fifteen members appointed on a rota basis by Heads of State would meet at least twice a year providing follow-up to summits and assigning specialists to work on specific projects. The CPF, who would report to the *Conférence Ministérielle*, was also given the task of liaising with non governmental francophone organisations and identifying those that could be associated with summit policies.<sup>29</sup>

Throughout the period in question, the criteria for admitting states to francophone summits was also an issue of latent disagreement. It is often stated that one of the most significant indicators of success for Francophonie has been the steady growth in the number of states and communities attending summits. Yet the francophone credentials of many of these participants, some of whom had not joined the ACCT, had not always been evident. For the francophone African states there was an increasing concern that their priorities for the francophone summit agenda would be competing with those of such members as Eastern European states Bulgaria and Roumania. A more general accusation against this expansion is that the cultural criteria for francophone participation that French would be an official language (recognised in the constitution) when ignored, weakens the basis of francophone solidarity. On the other hand, the admission of certain African states that did not fulfil this criteria would be seen as in the interests of those that are constitutionally francophone. Such states as Cap Verde or

Equatorial Guinea have joined Francophonie so as to represent the significant number of French-speaking immigrants from neighbouring states and to advance the cause of regional integration with their francophone partners.<sup>30</sup>

The membership of Francophonie gave rise to a reflection on the necessary criteria for states wishing to join the movement at the Cotonu summit. Whilst the resulting report did not suggest that membership should depend on the constitutional recognition of the language, other criteria were outlined. It was proposed that attention be paid to the number of regular users of the language, the place of French in the media and participation in international francophone associations. Only after a determined period as an *Etat Associé* would states be allowed to become full members with full participation in summits and associated meetings. The acceptance of the report's recommendations reflected a concern for a clear future direction for the organisation.<sup>31</sup>

## **6.2 The discourse of Africa's participation in Francophonie: rethinking cultures and languages other than French?**

Moving from examining political and institutional issues in the previous sections of this chapter, I will consider Africa's cultural involvement in Francophonie. I will analyse the discourse that summits adhere to on the questions of cultural development, French identity and the national languages of participants. The general challenge regarding the questions of cultural development and identity has been that of combining the essential 'message' of French culture and civilisation as the epitome of 'universalist' values rooted

in specific attitudes towards the state, the nation, religion and the place of official languages, with promoting cultural and linguistic pluralism and diversity.

On two occasions, summits have considered the status of national languages in relation to French (Paris in 1986 and Senegal in 1989). I will consider how African participants of summits have spoken on these issues. On other occasions the concepts of 'industries culturelles' and 'industries de la langue' (Quebec in 1987 and Mauritius in 1993) have been discussed. The emergence of the concept of industries culturelles has led to policies in such diverse domains as museums, international theatre and film festivals and francophone satellite television. The concept of 'industries de la langue' has been a response to the need to adapt both French and other languages for their use in applied information technology. I will also consider the *Conférence ministérielle sectorielle* held in Belgium in 1990 that brought together francophone ministers of culture. Although there has been an evolving discourse on culture, this has not been entirely reflected in policies that have, by their limited nature, circumvented the factors that might lead to the realisation of the cultural equilibrium to which they aspire. These factors include the end of a reliance on French publishing and broadcasting for any cultural production and a re-evaluation of the dominance of French language in state activities. The attempted application of principles designed to bring a greater importance to African national cultures and languages shows that, despite good intentions, policies are essentially conservative and avoid considering issues that are deemed politically sensitive.

To evaluate how leaders of francophone member states perceived their participation at summits in a cultural sense I intend to consider the contributions of some leaders at the Conference. At the first summit in 1986, four sub-Saharan African Presidents made speeches. They were Abdou Diouf of Senegal, Félix Houphouët-Boigny of the Ivory Coast, Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire and Habyiramana Juvénal of Rwanda, whilst Thomas Sankara of Burkina Faso sent a declaration *in absentia*.

For Abdou Diouf, Senegal's participation at the summit was a vital expression of commitment to the use of French as a language of development and solidarity. He expressed a concern that African cultures find a means of expression through modern technologies based on a spirit of reciprocity: 'Les pays du sud doivent, en effet, émettre vers les pays du Nord: sans cette condition en forme d'exigence, ni coopération nouvelle, ni communication moderne.'<sup>32</sup>

In outlining the linguistic situation within Senegal, he described the role of the six African languages as 'langues de culture' with French as a language giving 'accès à l'information scientifique et technique ainsi qu'à la culture universelle'. In the role attributed to French in contrast with his country's national African languages, it seems that the essential discourse has not evolved since the 1960s. The implication is clearly that the higher functions of development and technology cannot be accessed through African languages.



It was in the speeches made by Thomas Sankara of Burkina Faso and Habyiramaana Juvénal of Rwanda that the most distinctive interpretations of their national francophone identities were expressed. Juvénal, made a speech outlining the specific cultural significance to his country of a francophone identity where there is a sole African national language Kinyarawanda, whilst French is used as an official language. For Rwanda, 'Etat francophone, oui, mais pas nation francophone!', the summit represented an opportunity to participate in a 'co-développement' in the areas of science, technology and culture and within an international francophone community that allowed relations to be carried out on a more equal basis. Juvénal also promoted the importance of national languages: 'nous croyons fermement que l'on ne peut jamais assez mettre en relief l'importance vitale de nos langues nationales ou des langues vernaculaires, de ce patrimoine fondamental qu'elles représentent .' Nevertheless, the use of French was deemed a privilege, chosen to permit full participation in a prestigious cultural community.

The contribution sent by Thomas Sankara used the occasion to voice a message of solidarity as part of the revolutionary Marxist message of the Burkina Faso revolution. In an audacious form of reasoning he claimed that his revolution had appropriated the language of the former coloniser to communicate with other countries and to appropriate the ideals of 1789: 'pour la lutte qui nous permettra de conquérir ce qui est le plus cher aux hommes de toutes les contrées de la planète: la liberté.'<sup>133</sup>

It is clear from these speeches that Francophonie has differing significance for each participant. Although it takes its existence from a consensus of some common cultural assumptions, politically members have very different uses of these cultural ambitions.

In comparing the way in which the 'traditional' francophone images of 'civilisation de l'universel' or 'dialogue des cultures' is employed, it seems that they form part of a ritual by participants rather than serving as statements in the same spirit and with the same conviction as those made in the coopération culturelle agreements of the early 1960s. In the opinion of the political scientist Françoise Massart, the frequent expression of these ideals hides a fundamental ambiguity:

les discours de l'universalité tenus tant par les représentants des pays du Sud que par celui de la France, mère fondatrice, permettent de conclure à une unité de vue de façade au sein de la Francophonie. Celle-ci provient de la confluence de deux idéologies dont la terminologie est la même et dont les valeurs se rassemblent sans nécessairement signifier la même chose. Toutes deux s'appuient sur la liberté, l'égalité et l'universalité. Mais l'idéologie du Sud est émancipatrice, celle de la France est messianique.<sup>34</sup>

Massart brings to our attention the elasticity of ideological concepts that are of sufficiently broad resonance to permit a wide understanding. Like 'coopération', when used skillfully, it effectively masks the underlying relations of power and influence involved.

Abdou Diouf, of those leaders analysed, makes the most use of imagery evoking the idea of the 'universal'. On two occasions he speaks of 'l'universel': the first when defining French-speaking members of Francophonie as 'la cité francophone' united in certain values that are defined by 'l'universel'- 'c'est-à-dire à la fois de la Déclaration des droits

de l'homme et du citoyen, de nos cultures et de nos civilisations respectives.' The second occurs when he speaks of French as being a means to access modern scientific information and access to communication 'ainsi qu'à la culture universelle.' If we consider the first definition we see that it is inclusive of all cultures that share the francophone space but is based in a specific reference to France's history associated with the colonial 'mission civilisatrice'.

In the speech by Thomas Sankara, it is clear that his use of these values is more abstract when he speaks of 'Notre credo en une civilisation de l'universel' as being the logical consequence of a revolutionary faith in a struggle for freedom shared with men of all races. There are perhaps multiple levels of irony in this re-appropriation of French rationalist philosophy being turned against the former colonial oppressor who had in turn used very similar reasoning for imperialist expansion.

For Félix Houphouët-Boigny, in his speech in defence of the interests of the 'pays nantis' of the Third World, a concrete discourse emerges in which Francophonie is 'la langue de la paix, du développement, de la solidarité effective et de la coopération confiante et durable'.<sup>35</sup> Elsewhere the link created by the French language is 'notre lien impérissable' that is justified for Africa all the time that it signifies a concern for development and a unity to face its issues.

How did these African leaders perceive the association between culture and development? For Abdou Diouf, the link was very practical. It was essentially a means to

regroup certain services and share expertise. He cited the need to invest in rural Africa as well as giving a voice to African media and cultural products such as television and cinema. In line with this practical tone he claims that the place of French is one of co-existence (where each of the six African languages referred to as ‘*langues de cultures*’ is considered to be in a state of bilingualism with French). He claims that ‘*les Sénégalais acceptent l’ordre naturel des choses*’ whereby French maintains its central position as the language of international communication, vector for science and technology and guarantor of ‘*la culture universelle*’. By Abdou Diouf’s own admission, French has a highly significant role to play in future development. He expresses the concern that French language has reached a level of use and acceptance from which it would no longer be challenged. Nevertheless, a partnership needs to be maintained with national languages as a means to preserve their use and preserve cultural ‘*racines*’. In Abdou Diouf’s conclusion, his measured statements seek to persuade his listeners that his support for Francophonie is based on considered reasons in the interests of a wider development and a confidence that the Francophone organisation represents a position of non-alignment between the still existant Cold War blocks:

Vu sous l’angle de la communication, le scénario francophone nous paraît crédible parce qu’il induit et génère le progrès. Entre deux systèmes qui s’affrontent au triple plan idéologique, culturel et militaire, l’aire francophone constitue un espace logique en devenir, porteur de paix par le développement. Ce n’est pas un combat d’arrière-garde. C’est l’avenir. L’avenir de nos peuples concernés parce qu’informés par la communication de masse.<sup>36</sup>

This can be contrasted with the approaches of Habyarimana Juvénal and Thomas Sankara who were prepared to distance themselves from discourse and reasoning that attribute French with functions and values used by other heads of state. For the president

of Rwanda, French culture and language are tools that have their use as ‘une grande fenêtre sur le monde, en vue d’entretenir ce courant vivifiant permettant de nous définir et de nous affirmer.’ The instrumental nature of the language is no more than a means to gain access to another cultural world whilst admitting at the same time that the nation will not renounce its fundamental cultural identity.

Thomas Sankara makes no direct reference to the concept of development yet suggests that French language be appropriated by his country for positive ends. Evoking what he believes to be an essential solidarity between francophone countries he also argues in favour of linguistic pluralism within a revolutionary discourse: ‘refuser les autres langues, c’est avoir une attitude figée contraire au progrès et cela relève d’une idéologie d’inspiration réactionnaire. (...) Pour le progrès véritable de l’humanité. La patrie ou la mort, nous vaincrons!’<sup>37</sup> Whilst his language was a striking contrast to that of other leaders its rhetorical qualities overshadowed the existence of the same broad linguistic dilemmas facing Burkina Faso as other francophone African states.

Although we can recognise that there is a cultural significance for heads of state acknowledging certain values, it is the political uses and significance of the values of Francophonie that African leaders have consistently seen as most important. The most pertinent contribution to the cultural debate within Francophonie is found in a discussion document issued by the Burundi delegation that resulted from numerous contributions submitted in the six months before the Paris conference had been in preparation. The document, entitled ‘Rencontres interculturelles: langues’ is in four parts. It considers,

firstly, the obstacles to the meeting of cultures, secondly, the teaching of French and national languages, thirdly, the existing policies of communication and cultural exchange and fourthly, a proposition of future projects to be undertaken in the francophone movement. The specific issue of national languages is addressed in appendix number thirteen of the final conference proceedings.

The first section, 'L'origine de certains obstacles actuels à la rencontre des cultures' starts with the bold assertion that the high ideals of Francophonie have historically been found wanting in practice: 'Sur le plan historique, le contact entre les peuples du Nord et du Sud ne s'est pas fait dans le sens de la dialectique du donner et du recevoir, et de l'interaction dynamisante des langues et cultures.'<sup>38</sup>

Two main reasons for the failure of a Senghorian 'dialectique du donner et du recevoir' are given: the first is the weight of a historical legacy, the second is taken to be the methodology of teaching French and its implied relations with national languages. The report traces the origins of this failure for cultures to achieve a state of 'complémentarité' and the dominance of conventional French education imposing itself as the sole language of teaching. This has the consequence of divorcing those who succeeded within it from the cultures and values of their families and their ancestors. According to the document this monopoly of French has had the effect of creating 'une passivité culturelle quelque peu inquiétante'<sup>39</sup>.

The document considers the issue of the teaching of French and its existence with other languages as important. French is said to allow an access to scientific information and the undefined 'culture universelle'. The 'langues de culture nationales' are said to benefit from existing in a state of bilingualism. Not only should the most recently established methods of teaching languages be employed, but it was considered important that they reflect issues representative of all of Francophonie. To achieve this it is considered important that a greater effort be made to ensure that French be taught in a context of greater understanding of the languages around it and by reinforcing a positive environment outside the classroom.

The report could not hide certain obvious trends in the area of communication and cultural exchange within the francophone space. In particular it identified the dominance of the Northern hemisphere in controlling the means of production of cultural products such as publishing, film production and the press. The document considers that this process be reversed by such means as audio-visual technologies (such as satellite technologies) and their application to facilitate education together with cultural festivals in dance, song and theatre to allow a greater awareness of cultural diversity.

To ensure the respect of cultural identities, the teaching of national languages should commence in primary school 'pour installer l'enfant dans sa langue maternelle afin d'accéder progressivement par les voies les plus directes à la connaissance de sa propre culture.' This is to be taken as a basis for ensuring basic skills of literacy. Nevertheless, decisions regarding the precise details of the place of French in each country's education

system can only be decided in the context of each country and not according to general principles. The report urges that each country should create an 'institut de langues' to 'faire progresser la synergie 'langues nationales, langue française''.

In an attempt to bridge the technological gap between developing states and those of the North, the report considered the means by which the states of the South might appropriate information technology within their own cultures. The report proposed that the ACCT be the institution to be charged with projects facilitating the exchange of technical information and data on francophone countries that could be used by a wide francophone public such as politicians, scientists, businesses, lawyers, doctors and researchers requiring significant quantities of data and information.

In the specific area of research, the report urges francophone states to increase multilateral research policies where efforts have previously been limited to the bilateral. Where English has become increasingly the international language for scientific research, the need is felt for French to regain territory in its now contested image as 'langue de développement'. In the report's conclusion, it stressed that French needed to find new ways to associate itself with national languages to engage with cultural identities in the Francophone cultural space.

Emerging from specialists in language planning and cultural policies, the document presented a significant contrast with the usual platitudes from politicians about the universality of the French language and the ties of solidarity that it has brought about. It



appeared that the summits were prepared to confront certain issues even if the means to effectively do anything about them would continue to be lacking.

The most significant summit considering the role of national and local languages was the third held in Dakar in 1989. A discussion document distributed before the summit, 'Le français, les langues et les cultures nationales', and issued by the 'sous-comité sur les langues et les cultures nationales', discussed the relations between French and other languages and the ambitions to arrive at a 'complémentarité' of languages.<sup>40</sup> The question of the uses of local languages that are spoken by the vast majority of people yet are not sanctioned by an official status, is a major challenge for Francophonie. Above all, the organisation needs to convince sceptics that its respect for other cultures and languages is genuine.

The report placed the summit in the context of François Mitterrand's address to the advisory Haut Conseil de la Francophonie in February 1989 when he pleaded for a greater acceptance of multilingualism within Francophonie. As the report comments, this was a significant speech:

C'est un événement considérable. La France rompt avec la tradition jacobine qui, même hors de l'hexagone, faisait du français le centre de tout. Elle admet que le français peut se trouver en concurrence avec d'autres langues de l'espace francophone.<sup>41</sup>

The document argued that this declaration by France's president was a significant step in Francophonie's search for a common francophone culture based on a respect for other languages. In contrast to the document issued at the Paris summit in 1986, the report

outlined the implications of the existence of a large number of national and local languages alongside French and how they should be perceived as positive forces rather than possibly threatening to French. 'Le français, les langues et les cultures nationales' argued that defending minority languages against the effects of economic and cultural globalisation it was also looking after the interests of French.

By advocating a non-hierarchical approach to languages, the report considered that different relations between languages could overcome a damaging dualism where national languages tended to emerge second best. The relationship should be viewed in terms of a flexible partnership suitable to the circumstances in which French and other languages were found. The document considered that this should be seen as a 'complémentarité fonctionnelle'.

Nevertheless, the document stressed the absolute sovereignty of states in the area of language planning. The role of Francophonie was simply to support and reinforce decisions made by governments in what was a potentially politically sensitive area. This support was to take the form of a ten-year plan in the period 1990-2000 comprising research into the use of other languages, their codification and classification and finally a process of assessing their possible use in official contexts such as education and communication. The principle that the plan was to uphold was the need to pursue a complementary cultural space that would result from a greater understanding of local linguistic factors.

In the context of summits, the document urged that the concept of ‘industries culturelles’ should be employed to develop music, television programmes, publishing, theatre and cultural festivals that develop a common cultural identity. The report concludes by reiterating the historical values of French:

Alors la langue française deviendra progressivement ce ‘continent logique’ reliant entre elles les parties dispersées de la communauté. Langue de rigueur et de finesse, d’analyse et de synthèse, de mesure et d’équilibre, le français véhicule en effet des valeurs de justice, de liberté et de solidarité, rejoignant ses partenaires dans l’universel. Ces valeurs orientent **le projet francophone**: il sera au service du développement ou ne le sera pas. Elles lui donnent aussi son allure, son style, son rythme; c’est à dire, au sens africain du mot, son architecture.<sup>42</sup>

For the Zairean socio-linguist Ntole Kazadi, the debate over the linguistic and cultural issues of Francophonie is indistinguishable from geopolitical matters. The official weight of French means that many states described as ‘francophone’ have yet to meet the rhetoric of a cultural ‘complémentarité’. Kazadi condemns the various documents produced by summits as superficial and theoretical without any originality or political conviction on the part of those who produce them. Only a willingness to create conditions in which languages (whether French or African) will be respected as fully complementary, will bring this about:

Seule cette complémentarité peut mieux expliquer l’appellation d’Afrique francophone, en rendant compréhensible l’hiatus entre l’existence dans un Etat d’une minorité seulement ayant la compétence du français et l’appropriation par le même Etat de la qualité de francophone, par un choix politique et une pratique.<sup>43</sup>

Another issue important for its African members is that of ‘industries de la langue’. Kazadi cites this concept as an example of the selective attitudes that sometimes

prevailed within summits. The term refers to research and projects designed to adapt information technology to languages and cultures other than English. For the first two summits, the 'réseau' assigned to 'les industries de la langue' (led by Belgium and Quebec) did not feature any African researchers, nor did it make any more than the briefest of mentions to languages other than French.

The concept of 'industries culturelles' that has also been a significant concept to emerge from the francophone summit suffers from similar ambiguities. In 1991, a sectorial conference of ministers of culture was held in Liège, Belgium, to develop policies to be pursued at summit meetings.<sup>44</sup> Three main areas were discussed. These were the conditions of movement of cultural goods, the state of museums in developing states and linguistic management. The resulting plan of action called for a co-ordination with other interested parties such as UNESCO (United Nations organisation for education, science and culture) and the United Nations with the ambition of bringing about agreements in international exchanges to protect cultural products such as television, books and cinema. In particular, the final document called for a total respect of other cultures and languages in the francophone space.

Ntole Kazadi's criticism of such gatherings is that such meetings fail to address the essential issues of Francophone Africa's cultural participation in Francophonie.<sup>45</sup> He maintains that despite the multilateral diplomacy that such gatherings represent, Africa has yet to develop its own cultural projects as opposed to those that are effectively imposed from outside. This becomes evident when the disparity between summit

spending for audio-visual projects (essentially funded by France and Canada) is shown against the small sums designated to cultural development in the developing states.

In the opinion of the African sociologist Matungulu Kaba Lukuba, francophone discourse does not reveal a utopic 'universalism'. Francophonie as a concept is no different from *la mission civilisatrice*:

Le discours socio-politique et économique de la 'francophonie' assume totalement une telle transposition ethnologique. Il véhicule dès lors l'opposition des prétendus 'Civilisés' et des 'Barbares'. Cette dichotomie caractérise la totalité de la pensée africaniste. C'est le spectre qui hante l'Afrique de la 'francophonie'.<sup>46</sup>

The same point is echoed by the sociologist Fidèle Nze Nguema who voices the opinion that :

De la même façon que le concept de barbare est remplacé par celui de sous-développé, dans la sémantique classificatoire du discours sur le progrès et le développement, sans que soit jamais remise en cause l'idéologie qui en structure les fondements, nous avons ici la justification de l'indispensable rôle de la langue française.<sup>47</sup>

Once again, cultural attitudes and precepts hide practices that have very significant political consequences. From this perspective the legitimacy of the dominance of one language whether it be for expediency or because the language contains 'inherent' values, has the effect of implying that other forms of cultural identity are inferior to one that is international and carries the values of progress.

What has been the role of the francophone states in Francophonie after 1986? Has there been any significance in the way that francophone leaders have perceived their francophone identity? In the period considered, although the summits offer an alternative

approach to international relations, the realisation of its high ambitions has seemed unlikely. Politically, the organisation has been more content with issuing resolutions on questions outside of the francophone community rather than bringing more concrete strategies and responses to important questions within it. Since the optimism of the 1960s, expectations for economic development have evolved. Although France has maintained a deliberately positive approach to relations with her former colonies, world economic trends have affected these countries as much as any other. The attendance of states that are not 'traditionally' francophone at summits show that the need for an approach which considers the cultural before the economic are perceived as highly attractive. Away from more specific issues of international relations, French interests and patterns of international relations weigh very heavily on Francophonie. As a consequence of this, the only state able to offer a significant counter-balance to France, Canada, is viewed with some suspicion.

Culturally, despite admitting that economics, politics and the general climate of development are not unrelated to questions of identity in Francophonie, 'un rendez-vous de donner et de recevoir' still stands as a distant ambition. The developing member states still depend very heavily on France and Canada for publishing, the media and computer technology. Similarly although there have been some changes to school systems and curricula in African countries, the numbers of students visiting France, and to a lesser extent Canada, have still remained significant and suggest that francophone educational 'exchange' between North and South remains a distant possibility.

Institutional Francophonie with its diverse ambitions and motivations has taken up the relay of many of the ideas of 'solidarité' for its African members that were present in French *coopération*. It thus becomes a reassuring concept that serves to mask, albeit in a limited manner, the marginal role of African states in the international community. It also allows French-educated elites to renew their legitimacy as part of a francophone 'family'.

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**Notes to Chapter Six: The era of the francophone summit 1986-1995**

<sup>1</sup> Actes de la Conférence des Chefs d'Etat de de gouvernement ayant en commun le français, Paris (15-17 February) (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1986). Consulted on CD Rom: Agence de la Francophonie (ACCT), *Actes des sommets et autres instances francophones 1969-1997* (ACCT:Paris, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> Pierre-François Chatton and Joanna Mazuruk Bapst, *Le Défi francophone* (Brussels: Bruylant, 1991), p.44.

<sup>3</sup> F Lepeltier, 'Le Canada efface les dettes de l'Afrique francophone', *Le Figaro*, 4 September 1987

<sup>4</sup> ACCT CD Rom, Quebec summit (1987), Annexe 25.

<sup>5</sup> ACCT CD Rom, Quebec summit (1987), Annexe 25.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Jacques Dhaussy, 'Le sommet des grands espérances', *Le Figaro*, 12-13 September 1987.

<sup>7</sup> Jacques Soustelle, 'Le risque de politisation', *Le Figaro*, 12-13 September 1987.

<sup>8</sup> Jean Grondin, 'M.François Mitterrand annonce l'annulation de la dette publique de trente-cinq Etats les plus pauvres', *Le Monde*, 26 May 1989.

<sup>9</sup> ACCT CD Rom, Dakar summit (1989), Cinquième partie, Annexe 6.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, Chaillot summit (1991), 'Déclaration de Chaillot'.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., Mauritius summit, (1993), Deuxième partie, Document de réflexion sur la politique internationale, No. 4, Résolution sur l'exception culturelle au GATT.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., No.10, Résolution sur l'unité dans la diversité.

<sup>14</sup> Stephen Smith, 'La famille francophone contre l'impérialisme anglo-saxon', *Libération*, 16 October 1993.

<sup>15</sup> Stephen Smith, 'La 'plus grande France' à la rescousse', *Libération*, 18 October 1993.

<sup>16</sup> J-P Péroncel-Hugoz, "'Les créations de l'esprit ne peuvent être assimilées à des simples marchandises"', réaffirme François Mitterrand', *Le Monde*, 15 October 1993.



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- <sup>17</sup> Stephen Smith, 'Adieux francophones', *Libération*, 19 October 1993.
- <sup>18</sup> ACCT CD Rom, Cotonou (1995), 'Déclaration de Cotonou'.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, Deuxième partie, Documents et résolutions adoptés par la conférence, Résolutions sur la situation politique internationale.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, Paris (1986), Troisième partie, Annexe 1.
- <sup>21</sup> Chatton and Bapst, p.39.
- <sup>22</sup> J.-P. Péroncel-Hugoz, 'La France priée de défendre ... le français', *Le Monde*, 15 October 1993.
- <sup>23</sup> J.-P. Péroncel-Hugoz, 'Ottawa devient, avant Paris, le premier contributeur de l'Agence francophone', *Le Monde*, 12-13 July 1987.
- <sup>24</sup> Jean-Pierre Béjot, 'Sommet de la Francophonie: les enjeux africains', *Marchés tropicaux*, 4 September, 1987, 2307-2313, (p. 2309)
- <sup>25</sup> Christine Kederllant, 'France-Canada: la hache de guerre est-elle enterrée?', *Jeune Afrique*, 1489, 24 May 1989.
- <sup>26</sup> Béjot, p. 2308.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>29</sup> Dennis Ager, *Francophonie in the 1990s* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1996), p.120.
- <sup>30</sup> CD Rom, Cotonou (1995), Deuxième partie, Documents et résolutions adoptés par la conférence, Décisions et résolutions sur l'institutionnel francophone.
- <sup>31</sup> CD Rom, Paris summit, (1986), Annexe 1: 'Discours d'ouverture'.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>34</sup> Françoise Massart, 'La Francophonie des sommets, consensus et déchirures', *Revue internationale de politique comparée*, 1, 2, (1994), 240-265 (p. 261).
- <sup>35</sup> ACCT CD Rom, Paris summit (1986), Annexe.
- <sup>36</sup> ACCT CD Rom, Paris summit (1986), Annexe 1.
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

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<sup>38</sup> Paris summit (1986), Deuxième partie, Rapports de synthèse, Rencontres interculturelles: langues.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> CD Rom, Dakar (1989), Quatrième partie: documents de Conférence, Le Projet francophone: enjeux et défis'.

<sup>41</sup> Ntoto Kazadi, *L'Afrique afro-francophone* (Paris: Didier Erudition, 1991), p.84.

<sup>42</sup> ACCT CD Rom, Dakar (1989), Quatrième partie: documents de Conférence, Le Projet francophone: enjeux et défis'.

<sup>43</sup> Kazadi, p.84.

<sup>44</sup> CD Rom, Actes des conférences ministérielles sectorielles, Actes de la Conférence des Ministres de la Culture- II<sup>e</sup> session, Liège, Belgium, 5-6 November 1990.

<sup>45</sup> Kazadi, p. 100.

<sup>46</sup> Mutuguli Kaba Lubuka, 'Le discours francophone: pour quelle notion de Développement?' in Institut Panafricain de Géopolitique, *Français et Géopolitique* (Paris: Editions OKEM, 1987), 76-85 (p. 79).

<sup>47</sup> Fidèle Nze-Nguema, 'La francophonie comme discours et pratique totalisants en Afrique noire', *Anthropologie et sociétés*, 6, 2 (1982), 27-36, (p. 35).

**PART FOUR: African cultures, languages and development**

## **Chapter Seven: French, African languages and language planning**

This final part of the thesis considers the specifically cultural and linguistic policies of EAM states after 1960. First I will consider the complex issues of language planning and then in Chapter Eight I will treat the different conceptions of 'culture' that differ from the specifically francophone idea of *Coopération culturelle* that is part of a large web of relations between France and African states.

From Chapter One of this thesis we learn that early in the French colonial project, when education was taken away from Church and Missionary groups, African languages were banned as languages of instruction in formal education and were replaced by French. As subsequent chapters show, the stress on the coloniser's language as the only legitimate means of communication for official purposes had significant cultural effects, not least of which was the creation of a class of elites who looked to Paris for constitutional solutions to colonial impasses long before seeking independence.

In this chapter I intend to consider Francophonie from a linguistic perspective. In the first instance I will look at the issues of language planning that African states faced when deciding which language to make the official state language and to determine the most appropriate vehicles for education. What were the main arguments in favour of the use of African languages and those used to maintain the central place of European languages such as French? Secondly, I will consider the initiatives undertaken by individual states and within multilateral francophone organisations to encourage the greater use of local

languages in important areas of national life. Finally, I will evaluate the motivations and interests behind the decisions involved in these policies.

What is meant by the term 'language planning'? According to the sociolinguist Robert Cooper it refers to 'deliberate efforts to influence the behaviour of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes'.<sup>1</sup> This is a lengthy process which requires a thorough knowledge of existing language usage and to apply this knowledge to the domains of education, the media and other areas of government action involving widespread communication. This chapter considers how official Francophonie has approached the status and officially designated use of French with other languages.

### **7.1 Language choices of independent states**

One of the most striking characteristics of France's former colonies was the large variety of linguistic situations within different states. In states such as the Ivory Coast there are as many as sixty to seventy languages spoken whilst in others such as Senegal there are only three or four. Frequently these correspond to ethnic groups but in some instances some languages may cross different ethnic identities. At the beginning of the 1960s there were only three languages of any significant use on the continent that could claim to have the status of language of international standing. These were French, English and Arabic. Of the first two languages, neither had gained a dominant position in the countries that had introduced them as colonial languages. They had become neither accepted maternal first languages nor widely appropriated vehicular languages spoken by

the majority of a single population as a means of national communication. However, it was these languages that were to be adopted as official languages from independence onwards. The third language, with its religious connotations was frequently avoided and in Francophone Africa only Mauritania adopted it as an official language in conjunction with French. According to the 'Senghorian' view of francophonie as a geographical and cultural concept, French and other languages are found with complementary functions with the language of the former colonial power providing access to modernity and the 'universal' whilst African languages allow the expression of cultural identity and African values.<sup>2</sup>

As the French sociolinguist Pierre Alexandre points out in his article 'Problèmes linguistiques des Etats négro-africains à l'heure de l'Indépendance', the issue of selecting the appropriate languages for essential state functions such as education, administration and broadcasting was far from simple.<sup>3</sup> The prevailing concerns of development and nation-building meant that the choice of language or languages was vital in the process of bringing education and basic literacy, the pursuit of national unity, regional integration and international co-operation. These choices were to be made in the light of the pre-colonial legacy of both multiple ethnic identity and the existence of a plethora of overlapping languages and dialects. Some African languages permitted a significant degree of inter-comprehension with other languages whilst others did not offer such relative advantages. Because of the linguistic complexities of the continent, monolingualism is rare and most peoples by necessity of communication for trade or interaction with others need to learn vehicular languages to some degree to complement their maternal

languages. The effects of colonial policies were that a small number of languages for political or historical reasons were given recognition in parallel to colonial languages.

Alexandre reports that broadly speaking, there were two main choices for colonial leaders. Either the near exclusive use of local languages or the near exclusive use of European languages. France tended to opt for the second option, only missionaries and the earliest colonial administrators tended to use local languages. On the other hand, Britain, Belgium, Germany and Holland tended to use regional local languages in administration and brought about their use in the early years of colonial education systems. The Belgian sociolinguist Willy Bal suggests that because France made French the language of education and administration, once France had established a presence, the cultural dimension was considerably more profound and influential. France's 'cultural project', despite its inconsistencies in application, gave very little attention to African languages. On the other hand, Britain's use of local languages for administrative purposes relied upon linguistic research and even saw the emergence of a 'Standard Swahili' after some linguistic 'engineering'.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, at independence there were only a small number of states that could claim that the near totality of the nation spoke a single maternal language. In French-speaking Africa these were restricted to the ex-Belgian colonies of Burundi and Rwanda and the island of Madagascar. Nevertheless the presence of African *lingua franca* remained common-place in a second category of countries for demographic or sociological reasons. These formed a group of countries where dominant languages served as

possible vehicular languages that could be used for certain important functions. States in this group included Senegal and Gabon in francophone Africa and Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, Sudan, and Rhodesia in anglophone Africa.

Finally, there was a third group comprising heterogeneous states where no single language existed that could be identified as generally vehicular or the maternal language of the majority. This featured such states as the Central African Republic, Chad, Togo, Dahomey, the Ivory Coast, Guinea and Niger. The need for small states to gain continental and intercontinental means of communication to compensate for the arbitrary nature of the colonial division of Africa, and the pressures to bring about economic development, meant that cultural and linguistic diversity were seen as most problematic in these countries.

Willy Bal considers the processes in deciding between European, vehicular and maternal languages. Proponents of maternal languages cited the need for social cohesion, effective education programmes and the psychological advantages of using languages that reflected African cultural and social identity.<sup>5</sup> The use of vehicular languages, where possible, was judged as possessing similar advantages to maternal ones since they would be languages with an African cultural association.

In the event, the arguments in favour of European languages such as French proved too strong to permit maternal languages to gain a place as post-colonial official languages. Not only did they permit international, intercontinental and inter-regional communication



but they also promised an access to education, information and the technologically-advanced world in general. In contrast, statesmen pointed to the lack of development of African languages to permit such access and expressed their fears of conflicts arising from favouring specific African languages at the expense of others.

This was a point of view endorsed by Willy Bal who felt that even the choice of a vehicular language was ill advised considering the pressures of time, money and the lack of appropriate personnel to carry out the necessary work :

Elle [the vehicular language] n'apporte certainement pas de solution efficace au problème urgent des langues en Afrique: si on prenait la voie du dirigisme, non seulement les difficultés seraient considérables, voire insurmontables, mais il y faudrait de toute façon beaucoup de temps, beaucoup de personnel hautement qualifié que l'on n'a pas et beaucoup de moyens financiers, que l'on préférera certainement et même que l'on devra réserver au développement.<sup>6</sup>

Pierre Alexandre argues that the choice of European languages as official languages were far from ideal since they accentuated the gulf in cultures deemed 'suitable' for development and those that allowed the expression of African identity. They also involved high costs including the need to rely on foreign technical assistants until sufficient numbers of local teachers were trained to fulfil this role. Furthermore, the use of European languages rooted in a foreign culture brought social and psychological problems. Whilst the arguments employed in favour of European languages were so convincing, it meant that very few African languages were given an official status alongside those inherited from the colonial period. Alexandre was prepared to state that this was a difficult situation and that there existed no easy choices:

Or les gouvernements nouvellement indépendants sont pressés par le temps, pris dans le nouveau cercle de l'oeuf et de la poule: instruire les masses pour assurer le développement économique qui seul permet de trouver les ressources pour instruire les masses.<sup>7</sup>

The history of innovative language planning policies until the mid 1970s is negligible. In 1980, the *Bureau international des langues* (BIL) funded by the Organisation of African unity published a small collection of articles to consider the organisation's work since 1973. At its creation, signatories of the Charter on African languages stipulated that 'the official use of foreign languages will only be provisionally tolerated'.<sup>8</sup> The author noted with disappointment that in the seven years since being in existence, BIL had only two staff to research and advise on over a thousand languages on behalf of governments throughout the continent.

At the time of the publication of the study only Tanzania had decided to reject former colonial languages as the official means of communication. Writing on behalf of the BIL, Kahombo Mateene regretted that the near-exclusive use of European languages led him to conclude: 'We are forced to admit that all African countries are today linguistically dependent on Western Europe from which they declare themselves to be politically independent.'<sup>9</sup>

Mateene also decides to challenge a number of arguments used to avoid the officially sanctioned use of African languages either on a bilingual or multilingual basis. He maintains that 'the poverty or underdevelopment of African languages is quite voluntary. These languages are poor because we do not want to enrich them by not wanting to use

them in certain fields such as education and translation, which are all factors of language enrichment and development.<sup>10</sup>

The last of the articles in the report by Eyamba G. Bokamba and Josiah S. Tlou, also from BIL considers the effects of language policies on education. Consistent with opinions expressed elsewhere, the decision to maintain the near totality of education in European languages is judged restricting to the vast majority of Africans and would continue to 'lead to a considerable waste of potential human resources'.<sup>11</sup>

## **7.2 Language planning and Francophonie**

The *Agence de coopération culturelle et technique* took five years before undertaking language planning as part of its work in francophone countries. In 1975 at the General Conference in Mauritius the ACCT created a *Direction de la promotion des cultures et des langues* which was the first significant structure to oversee projects in these areas.<sup>12</sup>

At the same time it also set up the CIRELFA and the FIDELCA. The CIRELFA, *Conseil international de recherche en linguistique fondamentale et appliquée*, was intended to act as a focus point for linguistic research in the francophone world operating in addition to the activities of existing projects carried out by national governments. The FIDELCA, *Fonds international pour le développement des études des langues et civilisations africaines* was initiated to permit the funding of a small number of projects, in particular studies of language distribution and change. At the ACCT's General Conference the following year in Yaoundé (Cameroon), a project was

initiated to create a sociolinguistic atlas and dictionary of Central Africa (*Lexiques thématiques de l'Afrique centrale* (Letac) and *Atlas sociolinguistique* (Asol)) as well as to promote the Manding and Peul languages (*Projet des langues manding et peul* (Mape)). In 1979 a project was instigated to expand the research for the *Atlas sociolinguistique* into the Ivory Coast, Guinea, Upper-Volta, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal. In the years 1983 to 1988, the ACCT created five major projects to further the integration of national languages into education, to pursue the development of vehicular languages and to standardise terms in certain languages to allow them to be included in specialist activities.<sup>13</sup> Between 1977 and 1983 some thirty-nine books were published.

The study *Les Langues et l'espace de français* published by the CIRELFA and the ACCT in 1985 identifies the period 1975-76 as the time when institutional Francophonie made the significant step to support the promotion of national languages as a means of social and educational progress.<sup>14</sup> Ten years later, however, linguists working at CIRELFA felt frustrated at the continued lack of appreciation of the importance of undertaking linguistic management within other complementary fields:

Il semble que l'existence d'un programme spécialisé de coopération linguistique au sein de l'Agence, serve presque d'alibi au refoulement des incidences linguistiques des autres programmes (...) il est évident que l'importance de l'aménagement linguistique pour le développement des pays membres n'est pas universellement reconnue, et que les programmes de l'Agence à potentiel linguistique non réalisés sont plus nombreux que ceux d'une application linguistique directe.<sup>15</sup>

The author also argues for a linguistic dimension to be considered for all policies undertaken by the ACCT. The essential question in each case should be 'A quelle(s) langue(s) faut-il faire appel pour atteindre les objectifs d'un projet de développement?'<sup>16</sup>

The use of languages in development was the subject of a survey by the francophone *Conférence des ministres de l'éducation nationale* (CONFEMEN) that considered the extent of the inclusion of African languages in education. A synthesis of conclusions reveals that although there was a gradual increase in the use of local languages, particularly in literacy projects, the regional dimension of language management across frontiers remained extremely limited. The most significant factor was judged to be political will despite the influence of other factors such as recent history or even high levels of monolingualism: 'Dans les cas favorables comme défavorables, la décision politique apparaît véritablement comme la clé de l'avenir social des langues nationales.'<sup>17</sup>

To put this into a more precise context, I will consider the status of African languages in the Ivory Coast and Senegal from the findings of the CONFEMEN report and other surveys.

Senegal is one of the few francophone African states to have a language, Wolof which can act as a truly widespread lingua franca. Nevertheless, as a maternal language it is only spoken by thirty-seven per cent of the population. Other languages spoken are Poular-Fulfuldé (twenty-one per cent), Serere (thirteen per cent), Diola (6.9 per cent), Malinké (6.1 per cent) and Soninké (two per cent). Research undertaken by International African Institute has discovered that eighty per cent of the Senegalese population were

speakers of Wolof. In 1971 all six main ethnic languages were given the status of national languages.

In the Senegalese media all six languages were recorded as being used on national television although only for a total of three hours a week and for literacy programmes. On the radio, on the other hand, forty per cent of programmes were in national languages that translated as fifty-three hours a week in Wolof, Manding, Diola and Poular on two national stations. The third major radio station, *Radio France internationale* featured national languages for only ten per cent of its schedules whilst only forty-five minutes a day was allocated for literacy teaching.

In education, in 1986, French was still the main language of education at all levels. This was despite the 1972 government declaration that the six national languages would be slowly introduced within a major reform of education. By 1986 advances had only been made in the application of transcription, codification and the preparation of teaching materials in the six national languages.

In the Ivory Coast, on the other hand, the linguistic issues are considerably more complex with some sixty-five ethnic groups and no single dominant vehicular African language existing in the same way as Wolof. Only four languages might have been given the status of 'national' languages notably Baoulé, Bété, Sénoufo and Dioula. Twelve local languages were employed in radio broadcasting. On television and radio only thirty minutes a day were left to news in local languages. In 1986 the press was entirely in

French. Research into the use of languages in the general population found that *Dioula* was the most used language with about sixty per cent of the population being able to communicate to some degree in the language. Furthermore, a survey of over 4,500 Ivorian school children discovered that nearly sixty per cent spoke two Ivorian languages.<sup>18</sup> The other important phenomenon was the existence of what the report termed 'un sabir franco-ivorien', referring to a local appropriation of French that is more generally known as *le français populaire ivoirien* (FPI) and is particularly strong in urban areas and notably the capital Abidjan.

Within the education system, however, as in Senegal, French remained the main language of education despite the passing of an education law in 1977 declaring that 'l'introduction des langues nationales dans l'enseignement officiel constitue un facteur d'unité nationale en même temps qu'elle permet de revaloriser le patrimoine culturel'.<sup>19</sup> In 1986, however, the only experimentation had been limited to pre-school education. Much research into the possibility of language management was carried out in the 1970s by the *Institut de linguistique appliqué d'Abidjan* created in 1966. In common with other research institutes of the time however until the mid to late 1980s the ILAA was dominated by French researchers. In 1976, of the fourteen members working in its team, only three were Ivorians. The French sociolinguist, Denis Turcotte in his study of Ivory Coast linguistic policies notes that the first post-colonial president, Houphouët-Boigny and other major political figures have all been very discrete in revealing their views on linguistic reform such is the reluctance to carry out policies that seem to encourage some ethnic identities over others.<sup>20</sup>

According to the Zairean Ntole Kazadi, the challenge was to gain an acceptance that African languages would not only be vectors of national cultures but would also play a very full role in development. At the heart of this problem lies the issue of the 'universalist' ideology of French as the privileged gateway to modernity that does not fully recognise the implications of an institutional Francophonie committed to language planning and improving the status of African languages: 'L'objectif de la francophonie, qui curieusement n'a pas encore pénétré l'esprit et le discours des dirigeants africains, semble être donc de créer un partenariat entre les langues, dans le respect de la souveraineté des Etats.'<sup>21</sup>

This partnership does not aim to reduce the practical importance of the use of French that remains essential in many cases. It merely pursues a more equitable balance. This would occur by surpassing the firmly established exclusive roles of French as the language of modern western culture and education and African languages serving only to express African culture and identity.

The challenge of language planning in the last fifteen years has been therefore to show that a more equal 'partnership' between languages needs to be established. A conference held by the francophone *Conseil international de la langue française* (CILF) in 1987 considered the issue of 'La solidarité entre le français et les langues du Tiers Monde pour le développement'. In his paper at the conference entitled 'Langues de grande communication et français' the French sociolinguist Gabriel Mannesny, identified another



factor which seemed to prevent French from becoming a vehicle for expressing a truly African authenticity, notably the sheer weight of a Metropolitan norm that frowns on transgression from a standard language.<sup>22</sup>

The most significant reflection on the complementary roles of French and African languages is to be found in the three volume study of *Langues et développement* started in 1989. Thierry Arnold, writing on the subject of 'Le multilinguisme: facteur de développement ou le paradoxe francophone en Afrique', considers the colonial heritage of French to assess how Francophonie can re-define the relations between French and African languages. The effects of the heavy dependence left from the colonial period are both cultural and economic:

La dépendance économique vis-à-vis de l'ancienne métropole n'y a d'égale que celle vis-à-vis de la langue française qui va se maintenir dans le rôle de ciment artificiel de l'unité nationale: la survalorisation de la langue française permet d'évacuer les revendications multiples, et le système scolaire qui soutient les privilèges de ceux qui ont remplacé, grâce à la même arme linguistique, la classe dirigeante étrangère.<sup>23</sup>

Despite these activities, sociolinguists faced a larger challenge of changing widespread opinion which remained sceptical that African languages could and should have a decisive effect in many development projects. The major challenge for the linguists working for the ACCT within Francophonie was to convince national leaders that African languages needed to take up a place in development. The existing division of roles was that French was the vehicle for education and modernity and that local languages played no more than a narrow cultural role. This was at best counter-productive and at worst profoundly inappropriate given the difficulties of development and national unity in many countries.

The Zairean sociolinguist Ntole Kazadi gives five reasons for the slow evolution in the discourse of African politicians to admit that the former positions of 'tout en français' was no longer tenable.<sup>24</sup> The first was the mediocrity of the results of a large investment in education. The obstacle of gaining fluency in French in order to succeed in the later years of primary education or for the chance of going to secondary school meant that the majority of pupils entering education systems gained very little benefit from their years in school. Secondly, he notes that there has been a certain disillusion in the high hopes placed in the French language as the language of mass education and progress. Thirdly, there has also been a disappointment in the value of French as a language to cut through inter-ethnic identities. In states such as Senegal, Wolof has maintained its position as a prestige lingua franca in parallel with French. Fourthly, little has been done to address the vast disparity in the legal status of French compared with actual language usage. Finally, in a wider context he feels that there has been a slow process of dismantling the ideals of western 'universalism' that played such an important part in colonialism.

If there has been a slow process of redefining the role and utility of French in parallel with the status of African languages then we must trace the change in assumptions that lie behind it and consider the implications for French. How accurate would it be to say that part of the concern for African languages comes from worries about the future role of French and the fear that it might become increasingly marginalised to the extent that its very place, as an official language in many states, might come into serious question?

The literature of the different organisations funded by the ACCT allows us to consider the evolution of perceptions of linguists on the question of languages other than French and how French itself should adapt. Later I will consider the extent to which an African French that differs from the metropolitan French norm is possible.

With the creation of francophone summits language planning took an increased significance and led to the conception of a ten year plan to encourage a re-examination of the role of African languages and French in the period 1990 to 2000. This *Projet d'aménagement linguistique de l'espace francophone* was designed to encourage a major review of existing policies and a significant reflection as to possible directions for future uses of languages. The plan was designed to take place in three stages. In the first, research was to be carried out to assess patterns of language usage and identify languages to be managed. In the second, the principles of language planning were to be defined. In the final stage there would be internal language management undertaken by individual governments on the basis of the findings of the first stage.

The francophone summit held in Dakar in May 1989 was the location for the outlining of a major project to encourage the reassessment of African languages in the francophone world and Africa in particular. The proposals for this reassessment were outlined in a four part document that was the result of consultation by the five *réseaux* appointed at the Paris and Quebec summits. Four main areas were considered in the discussion document 'Le projet francophone: Enjeux et Défis', prepared by the *sous-comité sur les langues et les cultures nationales*. These were education and training, scientific research,

communication and finally the relations between French and other languages in the francophone community.

It seems that the document attempts to step a careful path through a vision of francophone cultural identity that respects the views both of unconditional supporters of local languages and those with slightly more conservative approaches. From an early stage, the report makes its position clear: 'Le français n'appartient donc plus au seul hexagone. Un processus d'appropriation réciproque se développe. Propriété indivise, la langue française doit maintenant prendre en charge les besoins communicatifs et expressifs variés et s'adapter à des situations sociolinguistiques diverses.'<sup>25</sup>

The report outlines the somewhat contradictory nature of the francophone space in which French is the sole language only in France and elsewhere it is found either with one other official language (such as English in Quebec) or as many as hundreds of local languages such as in the Ivory Coast.

Interestingly, the ideas of 'universalité' and 'complémentarité' are employed when the document attempts to argue the case for multilingualism. In the first case, the Secretary General of the ACCT, Jean-Marc Léger is cited claiming that 'c'est par la défense du singulier que l'on sert l'universel, car la diversité fonde la liberté'. In the second instance, mention is made for the pursuit of a 'complémentarité fonctionnelle' to be pursued through education, communications, culture and economic policies.

At the same time, the document is at pains to stress the sovereign nature of states' policies in the domain of language planning. Nevertheless, the document stresses the need for consultation and co-operation in a wide variety of policies that have been pursued by Francophonie. These include education, cultural industries and the media.

The report concludes by arguing that a reformed position on African languages within institutional Francophonie will benefit both French and the languages with which it is in contact :

Il est de l'intérêt des langues et des cultures nationales que le français atteigne ce seuil au delà duquel il ne peut plus être menacé. Puisque le pluralisme des langues en Francophonie donne son véritable sens à ce mouvement de solidarité pour le développement, le français ne saurait élargir son aire démographique au détriment des langues de l'espace francophone, mais au contraire à leur profit et à celui des cultures qu'elles véhiculent.<sup>26</sup>

To what extent does this represent evidence of a totally reformed attitude for official French authorities? Gabrielle Parker, who has written on both sociolinguistics and the institutions of Francophonie, argues that the weight of French bilateral policies dwarf the projects of Francophonie. She notes the three conditions set out within institutional Francophonie's proposals for linguistic management. These are the reassurance of states' sovereignty in policies, the guarantee that the organisation will not supplant nation-states from devising policies and that 'il n'est pas interdit- c'est la dernière condition- d'en discuter ensemble et ensemble de mettre à exécution un plan d'action.' Parker judges that 'the irony of these "conditions" is none too subtle, with the play on the dual meaning of the word- conditions/ circumstances and conditions/ terms of the contract- although

dialogue is "permissible" it contrives to imply that one of the speakers might well voice *'la raison du plus fort.'*<sup>27</sup>

Behind this evaluation is the recognition that institutional Francophonie also continues to promote a policy of expansion of the French language on the African continent and the fact that France still values its trade, military and development relations with the continent. In these circumstances the ideologically-based values of French are likely to remain important. Whether Africa is as receptive to these values and enticements to speak French is highly debatable. The Ivorian Paulin G. Djité is prepared to argue that it is time for France to maintain her distance and accept that France's linguistic objectives and the needs of her former African colonies have led to the pursuit of conflicting ambitions.

France as a world power has the right to defend and promote her language when she realizes it is no longer perceived and used as a universal language. However, that task, as Léger suggests, should be left to those nations who use French as a native language. African nations should be allowed to develop their own indigenous languages and introduce them into their education system and their administration.<sup>28</sup>

It is very clear that linguistic management is potentially a very political issue that requires African solutions if it is to succeed.

The second major question to be considered in this chapter is the extent to which the place of French as vehicular language as well as official language could be enhanced by a greater acceptance of Africanisms so that the language be accepted as an 'African' language amongst the other local languages in each state. This was a question considered

by Pierre Dumont in his book *Le Français langue africaine* published in 1990. Dumont gives a nuanced judgement on the question:

Pour accéder véritablement au rang d'une langue de développement, le français doit permettre à ses locuteurs africains de préserver l'originalité de leur visée sur le monde et leur donner ainsi le pouvoir de maintenir et de traduire leur sens de la différence et de la diversité. (...) Il ne s'agit donc pas d'une assimilation du milieu étranger par la langue française, mais d'une traduction de la différence. Le français en Afrique ne doit pas se folkloriser mais devenir le véhicule d'une autre perception du monde et même d'une autre conception de l'univers.<sup>29</sup>

In the opinion of Dumont the promotion of both African languages and African-French is inseparable from restoring a confidence in local cultures and languages. At the same time there is a need to reduce the sense of linguistic insecurity by those struggling to master a strongly standardised French that has little or no social foundation in the post-colonial period.<sup>30</sup> This therefore refutes the position adopted by a minority of African intellectuals that an African appropriation of French would be sufficient to minimise the importance of vernacular languages.<sup>31</sup>

One of the widely accepted conditions of this African French is that it should continue to be fully understood outside Africa and maintain a form on the continent that would not pose problems of understanding for other francophones. Dumont cites the author J. Tabi Manga who has criticised the efforts of such francophone organisations as AUPELF which have attempted to compile pedagogical dictionaries of French in Africa. Manga feels that these attempts to publish such dictionaries show 'La volonté de l'AUPELF et des autres organismes de la francophonie de concevoir et de répandre (en Afrique noire francophone) un français médiocre'. Dumont himself concludes that 'L'unanimité se

dessine clairement pour le maintien et le renforcement d'un français universel, normatif et exclusif de particularités. La perspective d'un dictionnaire pédagogique à destination africaine n'est pas acceptée officiellement.<sup>32</sup> Given that this is the case, the challenge to bring an acceptance that popular forms of French can have a positive role in the long-term future of French still remains. Even in the opinion of someone such as Dumont however, there is some uncertainty as to how this might be achieved.

An example of a form of French that has been appropriated by African speakers is *Français populaire ivoirien* (FPI) that has been studied by the French sociolinguist Suzanne Lapage. In an article in the series *Le Français dans l'espace francophone* she considers the extent to which there has been an appropriation of FPI by the population.<sup>33</sup> Lapage judges FPI to be a 'sociolect' that allows communication between different classes that other languages would not facilitate in the same manner. Frequently FPI is very unstable, arising from a constant improvisation and Lapage notes that FPI's dynamism comes from its use by immigrants from other African countries, the lower classes and the young of very divergent backgrounds who use FPI in parallel to the standard official language or 'le gros français'. Her conclusion is somewhat uncertain as to the long-term uses of the language given its status as a counter to the linguistic norm that permits communication without the restrictions of a highly complex grammatical code: 'C'est sans doute ce qu' exprime cette revendication des jeunes en direction d'un (...) parler franco-ivoirien national, à la fois porteur d'une certaine critique sociale et emblème contestataire d'une contre-norme'.<sup>34</sup>



The sociolinguists Ayo Bamgbose and Ntole Kadazdi both argue convincingly that despite the fears of politicians in the Ivory Coast and elsewhere, language use and management, on their own are not sufficient to create conflict. Bamgbose suggests that is more likely to arise from elite exploitation or the problems of sharing. He argues that multilingualism does not always bring national disunity, nor does it inevitably equate with economic underdevelopment. When economic development occurs at a different rate to social and cultural change with a heavy dependence on imported expertise then inequalities will be perpetuated. Bamgbose concludes:

The conclusion which seems inevitable in the situation of most developing countries is that a multilingual policy is the only viable avenue for development. African languages will have well-defined roles in education, culture and mass communication without prejudice to the complementary roles of LWCs [languages of wider communication]. But what this means is that monolingualism is not sufficient.<sup>35</sup>

From our examination of how linguistic issues were perceived shortly after the independence of African states, the conservatism of certain states to avoid changing the status of French and the ambitions of sociolinguists working on specific projects within official francophone organisations, there emerges the sense that progress in francophone linguistic management is and has been slow. Whilst the application of linguistic principles that encourage official multilingualism occurs with some reluctance, the research that might render this possible has made significant progress in describing the complexity of ever-changing linguistic situations. Strong migratory tendencies play a significant role in this as do trade and religious factors. In his *Sociolinguistique du français en Afrique francophone*, Pierre Dumont proposes that political forces are some of the most

significant in deciding the status and uses of languages.<sup>36</sup> Ultimately, only political will can bring about a gradual change in language policies so that African languages can be selected and given a status which reflects their importance both for the needs of development and for national cultural identity.

Gabrielle Parker rightly highlights the difficulties of official Francophonie in fully bringing about the policies and principles that it espouses in the domain of language planning.. Much of the urgency to redefine the place of African languages and French comes from the need to reform education systems seen as increasingly irrelevant to the needs of Africans who will not find employment in the modern sector and therefore are less likely to require French in their daily lives. Faced with this alarming situation, the failure of the French language to take advantage of galloping demography is a major blow to a strand of Francophonie that sees community language policies as a means to pursue France's world *rayonnement* and profit from the economic and political benefits that this brings. When the budgets for francophone television projects such as CFI or TV5 far exceed those for linguistic management it is perhaps difficult to argue that Francophonie has buried its instincts to ensure that French become an uncontested means of communication on the continent.

The aims and objectives of official Francophonie and the discourse that it espouses are interesting indicators in this respect. In view of the complexity of linguistic situations, in this area of the francophone world, the very terms 'francophone' and 'francophonie' deny the cultural complexity of language use. Senghor's ideal of 'complémentarité' of

languages and cultures needs to be treated with a great deal of caution since it suggests a cultural balance that has still to be achieved. Pierre Dumont proposes that the theme of 'complémentarité' should be replaced by 'convivialité' that implies a greater mutual respect and acceptance for the different roles that the languages can play according to their cultural context. This includes the emergence of culturally-appropriated versions of French with sufficient standardisation to offer large inter-comprehension but also reflecting the socio-linguistic characteristics of those who use it.<sup>37</sup>

This requires that French be allowed to reflect the influences of non-francophone cultures and languages more fully without being held back by fears that it will cease to play a role as a 'universal' language if standard French becomes less important. English enjoys a wide variety of registers that are broadly acknowledged as giving evidence of linguistic vitality. Francophonie must not be afraid to lead the way in ensuring that the same happens in French.

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**Notes to Chapter Seven: French, African languages and language planning**

- <sup>1</sup> Robert Cooper, *Language Planning and Social Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 183.
- <sup>2</sup> Léopold Senghor, 'Le français langue de culture', *Esprit*, 11,2 (1962), 837-844 (p. 843).
- <sup>3</sup> Pierre Alexandre, 'Problèmes linguistiques des Etats négro-africains à l'heure de l'Indépendance', *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, 2,6 (1962), 177-195, (p. 178).
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.
- <sup>5</sup> Willy Bal, 'Politique linguistique en Afrique noire', Colloque No. 2, May 1966, Institut pédagogique national, Léopoldville (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1966), p. 13.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p. 17.
- <sup>7</sup> Alexandre, p. 189.
- <sup>8</sup> OAU/ BIL (Bureau of International Languages) *Reconsideration of African Linguistic policies* (Kampala: OAU/BIL: 1980), p. vi.
- <sup>9</sup> Kahombo Mateene, 'Failure in the obligatory use of European languages in Africa and the advantages of a policy of linguistic independence' in OAU/BIL, *Reconsideration of African linguistic policies* (Kampala: OAU, 1980), p. 11.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- <sup>11</sup> Eyamba G. Bokamba and Josiah S. Thou, 'The consequences of the language policies of African states vis-à-vis education' in OAU/BIL, *Reconsideration of African linguistic policies* (Kampala: OAU, 1980), p. 45.
- <sup>12</sup> Emile Mworoha, *ACCT 1970-1995: 25 ans au service du développement et de la coopération économique* (Paris: ACCT, 1995), p. 102.
- <sup>13</sup> These were *Dynamiques des langues et des sociétés (Dylan)*, *Description systématique des langues (Delan)*, *Esquisses linguistiques (Esli)*, *Dictionnaires monolingues (Dimo)* and *Lexiques spécialisés (Lexis)*, Mworoha, p. 102.

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- <sup>14</sup> Dominique Dalby, Jean-Christophe Corbeil and Thierry Arnold, *Les langues et l'espace du français*, I (Paris: ACCT/ CIRELFA, 1985), p. 14.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 20.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 36.
- <sup>17</sup> CONFEMEN, *Promotion et intégration des langues nationales dans les systèmes éducatifs* (Paris:Honoré Champion, 1986), p. 22.
- <sup>18</sup> Jean Derive and Marie-José Derive, 'Francophonie et pratique linguistique en Côte d'Ivoire', *Politique Africaine*, 23, 1986, pp. 42-56.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>20</sup> Denis Turcotte, *La Politique linguistique en Afrique francophone: une étude comparative de la Côte d'Ivoire et de Madagascar*, (Quebec: Presses de l'Université de Laval, 1981), p. 83.
- <sup>21</sup> Ntole Kazadi *L'Afrique afro-francophone* (Paris: Didier Erudition, 1994) p. 152.
- <sup>22</sup> Gabriel Manessy, 'Langues de grande communication et français' in *La solidarité entre le français et les langues du Tiers Monde pour le développement*, Gabriel Manessy, ed., (Paris: CILF, 1987), p. 36.
- <sup>23</sup> Thierry Arnold, 'Le multilinguisme: facteur de développement ou le paradoxe francophone en Afrique' in, *Langues et développement, langues, économie et développement*, I, Robert Chaudenson and Didier de Robillard, eds., (Paris: Didier Erudition, 1989), p. 118.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 138.
- <sup>25</sup> CD Rom Agence de la Francophonie, *Actes des Sommets et autres instances francophones 1969-1997* (Paris: ACCT, 1997), Actes de la Conférence des Chefs d'Etat, Sommet de Dakar (Sénégal) 24-26 mai 1989, Quatrième partie, volet II.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>27</sup> Gabrielle Parker, 'French language policy in sub-Saharan Africa', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 4, 4 (1996), 471-481.
- <sup>28</sup> Paulin G. Djité, 'The place of African languages in the revival of the Francophonie movement', *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 86 (1990), 87-102.
- <sup>29</sup> Pierre Dumont, *Le Français langue africaine* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1990).

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- <sup>30</sup> Pierre Dumont, 'Politique linguistique en Afrique: où va le Sénégal?' *Etudes de linguistique appliquée*, 65, (1987), 89-101.
- <sup>31</sup> Jean Derive and Marie-José Derive, 'Francophonie et pratique linguistique en Côte d'Ivoire', *Politique Africaine*, 23, (1986), p. 53.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.
- <sup>33</sup> Suzanne Lafage, 'La Côte d'Ivoire: une appropriation nationale du français?' in *Le Français dans l'espace francophone*, Didier de Robillard, ed., (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1996), 160-185.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 177.
- <sup>35</sup> Ayo Bamgbose, 'Pride and prejudice in multilingualism and development' in *African Languages, Development and the State*, Richard Fardon and Graham Furniss, ed, (London: Routledge, 1994) 33-43, (p. 42).
- <sup>36</sup> Pierre Dumont and Bruno Maurer, *Sociolinguistique du français en Afrique francophone* (Paris: EDICEF, 1995), p. 92.
- <sup>37</sup> Pierre Dumont, *La Francophonie par les textes* (Paris: EDICEF, 1992), pp. 174-178.

## Chapter Eight: Non-francophone approaches to culture within development

The preceding chapters of this thesis examined the institutional structures that maintain French language and culture in francophone African states (notably education systems, cultural centres and the media) and those that have been intended to promote other cultures and languages that exist as well as French. The policies that have concerned us previously have reflected the priorities in bilateral and multilateral relations existing between France and her former colonies.

Already in this thesis we have considered the debates present in French colonial policies as to the attitudes that the colonial administration should adopt towards cultural diversity. The assimilation-association debate reflected French intellectual traditions meeting both 'scientific' conceptions of race and the practicalities of governing large areas of the African continent. The weight of French universalism (from the Enlightenment) together with the Republican ideal of the *mission civilisatrice* brought significant challenges to governors looking to administer the colonies in a humanitarian manner. In these circumstances, as Cuche notes, the term 'culture' was for long placed as an antithesis to such ideas as 'barbarism' or 'savagery'.<sup>1</sup> Chapter Two shows us that the 1930s *Négritude* movement in Paris was in part motivated by the profound ambiguities of French colonial cultural policies. Although French colonial discourse tended to be inclusive rather than exclusive, the inherent values of French culture and thought of the time failed to refer to Black literature in anything other than mild

condescension. These attitudes only started to change with the political assimilation of such men as Senghor into Paris-based institutions.

The chapter will start with considering the discourses of 'culture' in the social sciences that informed (albeit slowly) the movement away from a Franco-ethnocentric approach to the term 'culture' towards one that accepted non-judgmental and relativistic approaches to differences in mentalities, traditions and beliefs. It considers how these definitions have stood alongside the ideal of 'development' that was assumed to be the means for the new African states to turn their backs on the lasting effects of the colonial period by bringing social, economic and political change.

This chapter looks at the perception of culture as a factor in economic development away from specifically francophone conferences and documents and instead considers principles proposed within the policies of such multilateral aid purveyors such as UNESCO and the EEC. I will also consider a bilateral aid funder such as Holland that has formulated a distinctive aid policy on this question. Initially I will look at the earliest approaches to the promotion of culture as a positive factor in post-colonial African development. Next, I will consider the ways in which these have changed from the 1960s through to the 1990s as a means to evaluate changing ambitions of development after successive failures to realise aspirations held at independence.

I will start by attempting to define the term 'culture' from the perspective of the social sciences. I will also review the idea of 'development'. I will seek to show that the place



of the 'cultural' in the process known as 'development' has been an uncertain and changing one. For a long time opinion in development circles on the issue of cultural diversity has seen culture as a threat to introducing Western industrial models. After uncertainty as to how cultural promotion might be incorporated through the 1970s the 'cultural' dimension of development of the 1980s and afterwards has been very different from the approaches of the early 1960s. Today the concept stresses the importance of a cultural emphasis in projects that require a compatibility with local attitudes, practices, customs and expectations if they are to succeed.

Before considering various documents discussing the importance of culture as a concept for development, I will consider how the social sciences treat the idea in broad terms. In 1871, the sociologist Tylor defined it as follows: 'Culture or civilisation, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.'<sup>2</sup> This inclusive definition, which equates culture with 'civilisation', associates the creative aspects of man's existence with organisational and intellectual dimensions. It recognises that they are inter-linked and are significant with identifying and being identified with the grouping that we know as 'society'.

According to the social scientist Milton Singer, this definition, quoted in *The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, was formulated in the latter part of the nineteenth century and reveals a progression from previous social science approaches that stressed unity in the traits and ambitions of different peoples to aim at a model of

society found in industrial countries.<sup>3</sup> Such disciplines as psychology, anthropology and history studied peoples through this perspective and strongly influenced attitudes in the process of colonisation that took place in an intensive manner carried out by European states throughout the same century. 'Culture' was therefore not merely a single value but was multiple and varied. An important principle in France's colonial expansion was the implicit and explicit ideal of other cultures being assimilated into French culture within a discourse of a *mission civilisatrice*'. This enabled colonial expansion to be justified in the Republican tradition of *liberté, égalité* and *fraternité*.

After Tylor's definition of culture, there have been two convergent theories of culture. One, the 'pattern theory' of culture, identifies a creative order shaped by interacting individuals and groups within society and with the environment. The form and structure that culture takes by its organisation and transmission is a basis for studying different societies. The second, that of social theory as a theory of culture, takes the concept in a slightly different sense: here the multifaceted aspects of social phenomena, including morals, law, etiquette, religion, government, economics, education and language and its technological consequences, are studied as implicit and explicit rules to see their direct and indirect effects on relations between individuals and groups.

Both theories agree upon the essential nature of the subject for study, yet they differ as to how it should be conceptualised. The 'cultural patterns' theory has attracted historical and literary studies, whilst the second has attracted more specifically scientific approaches. Significantly, neither seek to explain their subjects in terms of linear

causality and both admit a wide variety of influences such as the environment, the human creative dimension and the historical. Similarly, both see culture as dynamic and not fixed. The pattern theory seeks to find coherence in societies through culture whilst stressing the relative values present within these traits. In contrast, the social theory approach looks at culture in terms of dominant and dominated cultures based on relationships of power and control.<sup>4</sup>

The concepts of 'development' and 'under development' can be traced to principles originating in United States foreign policy in the years immediately after the Second World War and inspired the term 'developing countries' as used by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in their report for 1957-58. The concept of development centred on economic rates of growth revealed by such indicators as gross domestic product (GDP) or gross national product (GNP).<sup>5</sup> The earliest discourses on the idea express it in terms of 'catching-up' in a manner that would suggest a linear view of history from a centralised industrialised perspective. These are to be contrasted with the emergence of human development criteria in the late 1970s and early 1980s that stress the importance of personal freedom and opportunity of choice in defining priorities of development that may not be immediately or directly economic.

What relevance does this have to our study of the role of culture in development? These approaches reveal that academic studies stress the complexity of the idea of 'culture' and portray it as a vital feature in the coherence of a given society. In the context of the states south of the Sahara, the task of nation-building to incorporate varying ethnic

groupings into relatively arbitrary frontiers posed a major challenge and even an obstacle to those leading a process of change required for development.<sup>6</sup> From a loyalty and identification with different clans or tribes, there was now a need to create a sense of belonging to the nation whose identity would be sufficiently unifying to permit political and social consensus seen as necessary for social, economic and political stability.

However, the practical significance of culture in relation to development has been the subject of seemingly little consensus between sociologists and development planners. This lack of agreement has been compounded by remarkably uneven achievements despite heavy investment in many areas. Many projects have failed to bring the transformation of living conditions that leaders assumed would occur by adopting models of development from the industrialised world. Often the effect has been to exacerbate disharmony and increase disparities in living conditions such as those found in urban and rural areas.

The process of acknowledging and encouraging the expression of cultural differences had its most significant challenge in education, where countries like France, as has already been shown, maintained a significant role as both a provider (through funds and *assistants techniques*) and as a pedagogical model on the African continent.

### **8.1 Culture and education**

In 1961, the majority of independent African states sent representatives to the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organisation (UNESCO) *Conference of African*

*states on the development of education in Africa* held in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia).<sup>7</sup> Historically, in the recent context of independence for many of the states present, the conference report illustrates well the early concerns and ambitions of the post-colonial period. Through the principles expressed at the conference a judgement can be formed on how cultural diversity was to be accommodated in this process. By the attitudes revealed at the conference, culture is presented as both a potential problem and a possible strength.

In its final recommendations the conference made the ambitious target of achieving universal, compulsory free primary education for all states by 1981. The content of the education is to be 'a synthesis of their own [i.e. of African countries] and of universal values'.<sup>8</sup> The conference expressed this ambition as follows:

Stress must be laid on the cultural and social features common to the African countries, thus strengthening African unity and helping the countries to get to know each other better. An understanding of African customs, languages, psychology and sociology cannot but facilitate the work of medical personnel, demographic experts, statisticians and other specialists.<sup>9</sup>

There was therefore a desire that culture unify rather than bring any separation, at both a national and continental level to avoid the destabilising effects of tribalism. Papers presented in the report expressed the desire for a synthesis between asserting an African culture and participating in a modern and technological world that use of a *lingua franca* such as English and French would offer. The nature of this future synthesis and the

contrasting values given to its constitutive parts suggested that this would not be a balanced process. In fact there was little to suggest that there were any clear ideas of how a cultural synthesis might occur.

The conference brought together a large number of educational advisors, administrators and academics who developed both long-term and short-term ambitions. It is clear that short-term ambitions reflect the type of evolution deemed essential. These were bringing science, technology and modern (i.e. developed-world) education to a large number of people. To do this, it was agreed that rapid investment was necessary that would bring tangible short-term results. Strong argument was made in support of the 'human capital theory of education'. This was the belief that investment in education particularly in formal school systems, was justified by its potential to create a work force suited to the creation of economic growth. This was a priority that a number of delegates stated clearly:

The fundamental problem is no longer considered to be the creation of wealth, but rather the creation of the capacity to create wealth. Once a society has acquired this capacity to create wealth, the creation of wealth becomes almost incidental; it follows quasi-automatically.<sup>10</sup>

Taken to its furthest extent, the belief that education had a role to fulfil in helping countries 'catch-up' both economically and in attitudes to work finds one participant issuing the following assessment:

Everybody knows that one of the reasons why countries are poor is that their people bring to industrial processes habits of indiscipline, irresponsibility and patronage which are a hangover from life on the farm (...). It is a phase that all countries, even the most advanced, have had to pass in the course of their industrial revolutions.<sup>11</sup>

Such an assessment appears to echo a view of societies held in the early nineteenth century social-science tradition where the belief of a linear evolution of societies was transposed into judgements of evolved or un-evolved societies. It reveals a confidence in the values of Western industrialised nations and is scornful towards rural life.

Where most contributions are written looking forward to how to plan education systems, only in a paper by the French educational researcher Paul Mercier, who calls education 'the handing on of an entire cultural system from one generation to another', is education given a broader meaning.<sup>12</sup> His paper attempts to persuade participants of the need to bring the fruits of anthropology to education planning. He emphasises the human and social costs of planning a rapid growth in formal education and urges that the fruits of an 'original cultural heritage' be used alongside those of imported knowledge. He stresses a belief that importance be accorded to creating circumstances in which autonomous locally-led change could occur and around which a group allegiance could be created as a factor for creating national unity. As such, he offers a reversal of predominating views of the time that valued centralism and saw policies that might 'encourage' separatism as dangerous.

It is significant that Mercier observes that a specifically cultural approach was not favoured by African leaders, who believed that it would have the consequence of deliberately slowing down modern development programmes and could be perceived as a form of cultural conservatism. No doubt the political discourse of independence movements gained much support for outlining ambitious plans for economic and material

transformation of the conditions that they would eventually take over. Frequently in the former French colonies and in the Ivory Coast in particular, the cry of 'Non à l'éducation au rabais!' met attempts to divert education policies away from those existing in France. The paper recommends that cultural development plans should take an important place in national development with the ambition of forging a national cultural identity. The question of allegiance to ethnic groups and the nation is singled out as a problem that requires significant consideration.

Leaving aside some views that were firmly committed to a strictly economic approach, the need to give attention to African cultures gains a passing recognition but it is generally not seen as a possible source of values to meet immediate needs. These are considered best answered outside economic and material solutions. In these conditions, adapting development to cultures was a secondary consideration rather than the basis for planning appropriate education systems. In practice, it was shown that an economic approach to planning such a complex institutional structure intensified the reliance on western cultural models leading to an acculturation of pupils learning in conceptual frameworks far from local realities. This was to the detriment of African cultures and languages frequently assumed to be lacking in the capacity to carry non-traditional concepts. The documents from this conference reveal that the idea of a rapid 'development' with tangible results is a dominant ambition, and that promoting traditional cultures risked being denounced as a means of slowing down the technological change that interventionist planning would facilitate. The conference appeared to suggest that cultural traditions would be required to adapt under the weight



of inherently 'superior' modern attitudes that Western-style formal education would bring. We can deduce that the importance of using existing cultural frameworks for bringing change was largely overlooked.

## 8.2 Cultural policy and development

The years 1975-76 saw a further reflection on the role of culture in Africa, with the question debated at a conference held in Accra (Ghana) organised by the Organisation for African Unity and UNESCO in April 1975. This was followed by the production of a Cultural Charter by the OAU in 1976.<sup>13</sup> The charter affirms the right of all citizens to education and culture: 'tous les peuples ont droit au développement économique social et culturel dans le respect strict de leur liberté et de leur identité.'<sup>14</sup>

Both documents can only be understood in the light of a questioning of previous positions held on culture. The 1970 World Conference on Cultural policies held in Venice can be seen as developing the idea of cultural development as a part of general development. Not only did it stress that culture was an inalienable and indivisible human right inseparable from all aspects of life, but the conference makes the recommendation that more substantial spending be allocated to cultural services and that the collection of data showing their results be made a priority. Whilst it raised an awareness of the insufficiencies of many existing policies, it is difficult to see the emergence of priorities to compensate for their failings, with an equal importance given to education, heritage (preserving historic sites and artefacts), the arts and the needs of development.<sup>15</sup>

The 1975 Conference presents a different attitude to the acceptance of assumed models of development compared with the prevailing attitudes in the 1960s. The resulting conference report reveals the insufficiencies of past educational development projects and the failure to take cultural differences into account. The conference report suggests that participants acknowledged that economic visions of development could not ignore cultural factors simply by affirming that it was inherently more 'essential'. The holding of a conference on the question surely reveals the importance accorded to the problem: 'pour assurer la réussite de ces programmes et plans de développement, il faudrait les concevoir dès le départ dans la perspective du développement culturel des sociétés africaines.'<sup>16</sup>

The response to the deterioration in the conditions of exchange between Africa and the West can be seen in various movements to rediscover African 'authenticity'. Here the influence of the philosophy of the OAU is evident in documents arising from the conference that take the opportunity to identify the former colonial powers as responsible for deliberately preventing the natural expression of the plenitude of African cultures.

Obstacles to the effective pursuit of this approach were insufficient budgets to finance cultural action and research, the maintaining of colonial models well into independence (through frequent opposition to abandoning school models that have an international 'currency') and the ambiguity of foreign intervention in the cultural domain, where a refusal of aid (particularly in education and technology) was perceived as severely

compromising the overall ambitions that governments pursued. Even if participants showed a consensus to bring change about, in practice, it seems that this conviction was not shared by decision-makers responsible for economic planning within governments.

Preparatory documents for the conference included a survey of cultural policies in different African countries. From it we see that a priority was given to cultural expenditure in the form of theatre, dance and general folklore in a manner that shows no evidence of its association with any form of development. Although provision existed for research into traditions and languages, these efforts were not given any significant budget allocation and existed for no more than a cursory advisory role in the planning process. Frequently, research took place in isolated institutions such as universities where co-ordination with government services and their agents is difficult. On an international level, the survey noted that the funding for the majority of cultural activities occurred through bilateral agreements that existed for the most part with industrialised countries. These can be seen as significant obstacles to creating closer ties between African countries through cultural policy.

Although the conference called for a rediscovery of an 'authenticity' and agreed that the inherently popular nature of African culture could be an important mobilising factor in social and economic change, a confusion still remained as to the extent of the implementation of change required so that cultural diversity could be fully harnessed within a process of 'development'. 'Culture' then, continued to carry an essentially

normative significance as a term denoting ‘the arts’ or else a heritage of practices and attitudes with little relevance to the modern world.

It was the call for ‘authenticity’ that was the most striking aspect of the conference. Starting from the premise that Africa had been the victim of cultural negation and manipulation, a call was made that strength be found from a common shared experience of the fight for independence. The ambition for an authenticity that might only be fruitful if it stressed shared features that reinforce unity, whether they were at a national, regional or continental level, was judged to be the path towards a genuine independence that could allow the continent to participate fully on the world stage. Despite the expression of the need to incorporate certain values, the realisation of these intentions appeared to be at odds with political priorities.

The 1975 intergovernmental Conference for African cultural policies organised by UNESCO and the OAU reflects a shift in the nature of the relations of Africa with the industrialised world. After the initial optimism of the early 1960s, the first oil crisis of the mid 1970s confirmed the difficulties of meeting the economic development objectives set some ten years previously. Overall average GDP growth rates fell from 1.3% in 1963 to 0.6% in 1974.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless financial contributions from multilateral organisations for education increased significantly in this period and confirmed a general belief in the importance of different forms of learning at all levels of society to include adult education and literacy projects.<sup>18</sup>

The 1980s showed an increasingly complex interpretation of the concept of culture, one that is reflected by the 1982 UNESCO *Mexico City Conference on cultural policies*.

This interpretation takes on a greater importance with an implicitly political and ethical significance in the context of rising Third World debts and to compensate for the alienating consequences of new technologies. The final document stressed the importance of a particularly broad idea of culture defining it as follows:

In its widest sense, culture may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, values systems, traditions and beliefs; (...) It is through culture that man expresses himself, becomes aware of himself, recognises his incompleteness, questions his own achievements, seeks untiringly for new meanings and creates works through which he transcends his limitations.<sup>19</sup>

Compared with earlier definitions, this definition distinguishes itself by its inclusion of 'rights' and the importance of man's self-expression and creation in a process of personal development and fulfilment. It therefore includes an 'elevated' (or creative) definition of culture within a general conception of 'development'. Furthermore, it tries to reduce the ambiguity of the concept by trying to avoid any separation of 'creativity' from human development. This is also achieved by reversing the assumption that cultural renewal has significance only for the so-called developing world, but is in fact important as a universal process for man in society faced with a changing world. Stringent efforts seem to have been made to ensure that the absolute relativity of cultures is conveyed, where each is portrayed as having as much to gain from or give to others.

This view of culture would seem to be widened to bring it closer to the plenitude of meanings depicted in the social sciences by stressing its complexity. This definition does so by not only repeating and strengthening criticisms of a technological scientific economic model for development but also developing alternatives. As part of a general reflection on the process of development it stresses the adjusting objectives for a more modest and successful qualitative change in contrast to superficially spectacular quantitative actions. Significantly the concept of 'authenticity' is to be treated with some caution, since practice showed that although intending to reinforce cultural identity, in reality it tended to defend the *status quo* rather than fully acknowledge that traditional cultures could play an active role in development.

The 1985 UNESCO document also goes further by concentrating attention on relations created by political domination of powerless groups and the importance of cultural factors in this process. A section entitled 'Culture and democracy' urges a decentralisation of state-funded cultural infrastructure to reach cultural minorities just as geographically or socially disadvantaged populations should be given equal cultural rights: 'Culture springs from the community as a whole and should return to it; neither the production of culture nor the enjoyment of its benefits should be the privilege of elites.'<sup>20</sup>

Generally, this view of culture seems to reveal a greater recognition of the work of anthropologists and sociologists that culture can only be a positively mobilised force in policy planning if approached from the perspective of its incorporation (as a factor) in an

all-inclusive vision of development. The failure of economic planners to use traditional cultures as a starting point for development was therefore identified as a major error in existing approaches to ambitions for development. Building on a criticism of the technical-scientific-technological model, this approach goes further by concentrating attention on the consequences arising from political domination of cultures when the expression of cultural pluralism is suppressed. It also raises the alarm of the dangers from a uniformisation of cultures from an expansion of the media and new technologies and the possible consequences for human relations. From being a 'plus', culture is identified as being an unavoidable necessity in the process of development. Development as a concept can be therefore blamed for its failure to consider human factors such as religion, traditions and beliefs. In a culturally-led vision of development, local values, customs and ethics are considered to be the corner-stones to a positive innovation that could break the cycles of poverty, illiteracy and alienation that technological-economic models cannot. By the end of the late 1980s, a report by the World Bank stated that culturally incompatible aid projects were considerably less productive than those that had been the result of appropriate research.<sup>21</sup>

A fully culturalist approach is suggested by a background paper to a UNESCO workshop held in 1983.<sup>22</sup> It begins by considering the importance of culture and showing that although the cultural and the economic sphere are closely associated, the cultural has a more significant role in forming values, attitudes and meaning, but has the disadvantage of being beyond the reach of statistics. In considering the idea that had emerged of culture in development, the author analyses how neo-liberal and Marxist-

inspired models for national development have approached the inclusion of strong cultural identities.

In neo-liberal models, culture becomes the victim of market forces in which culture develops according to the priorities that these forces dictate. Frequently in this model, traditional cultures are considered a brake on development when they obstruct economic competitiveness and efficiency. 'Traditional' cultural values are only accepted when they coincide with those compatible with capitalist aims.

In Marxist approaches, within the context of a critique of capitalism that identifies the reasons for under-development, there is the ambition to remove exploitation by classes or forces controlling the means of production. Here, the pursuit of an autonomous 'culture' is solely instrumental to political ends namely the transferring of ownership of the means of production to a wider number of people within a closed economy. The most significant criticism that can be made of it is that since the Marxist dialectic takes its initial premise from the belief that economic production is the dominant factor in all relations, it leads to a reductionist and simplistic attitude to cultural diversity. In both of these visions, 'culture' is, at best, merely instrumental.

A culturalist approach to development, on the other hand, would promote diversity, autonomy and participation. By using existing cultures as a reference point, change in society could be built on mass participation and by using adapted local technologies and approaches to education. This approach would significantly challenge usual bilateral



cultural programmes that pursue the objectives of the donor and receiving government. The development of the informal sector in agriculture is used to illustrate the possibilities of such methods. Despite the appeal of a culturalist policy, the author of the paper recognises the essential limits of its application. In a world led by market forces and the pursuit of technological advancement, such a policy cannot avoid their influence in the setting up of local micro-systems based on culturalist principles.

### **8.3 European Community and bilateral approaches to cultural development**

Other than UNESCO, the EEC, within the EEC-ACP Lomé agreements, have also reconsidered the cultural dimension of development.<sup>23</sup> In policy statements, it claims to have introduced a policy to consider cultural factors at all levels and stages of co-operation. In the terms of the Lomé III accords, Culture is defined as ‘value systems, way of life, modes of thought and know-how, materials and styles, methods of information acquisition and transmission and interaction between man and his environment.’<sup>24</sup>

In acknowledgement of this the Lomé III accords include procedures for the systematic use of relevant expertise and research in all aid projects to alleviate potential problems occurring through cultural incompatibility between indigenous values and EEC policies. This is to apply to even those with seemingly no direct cultural significance such as the prevention of soil erosion or desertification. Nevertheless, the EEC make a distinction between aid projects involved in specifically cultural activities to promote the expression of cultural identity and those that incorporate a cultural analysis to facilitate the

application of various projects. It is the former that has traditionally dominated and still maintains an important place. By virtue of being multilateral projects, activities promoting cultural identity concentrate on support to infrastructures (audio-visual capacities and publishing) and transfers of skills and funds to preserve significant cultural heritage. It is this distinction that is made between bilateral and multilateral cultural co-operation, particularly in that the latter that rejects a specifically linguistic dimension that the EEC emphasises. To reinforce the EEC's commitment to promoting the cultural dimension of development, 1986 saw the creation of a foundation that was intended to encourage exchanges between ACP states.

The approach to which the EEC has committed itself is one that gives priority to local participation but does not go as far as calling into doubt the validity of projects that are conceived by outside organisations:

What is asked of Community aid is therefore not to contribute towards maintaining local cultures as they stand, but to avoid sudden drastic upheavals and, where changes must occur, to try and prevent people from being uprooted and to impinge as little as possible upon their beliefs.<sup>25</sup>

A document produced by an advisory group for the Dutch bilateral aid organisation makes the point that the implications of a culturally-led policy are potentially controversial: 'The outcome of a people-centred approach may not always be in line with national political priorities. It shows that the cultural dimension of development can, in practice, never be politically neutral.'<sup>26</sup>

In common with other documents, the Dutch approach considers the dominance of the technological-economic model, the confusion as to the connection between culture and development and the reluctance of social science to work for governments and bring feasible recommendations. Dutch policy becomes distinctive by its explicit linking of cultural objectives with a human rights agenda that includes the promotion of cultural pluralism, a resistance to enforced assimilation and the support of civil rights for minorities. By being committed to such an approach, it is noted that it can only be satisfactorily pursued in a multilateral context where the potential political implications of this position can be minimised:

The point the Netherlands want to make is to lay down the rights and their consequences in government decisions as a result of which room is created for the development of individual freedom. A multilateral policy may increase the freedom of cultural minorities to maintain and improve themselves.<sup>27</sup>

Another article from the Amsterdam Royal Tropical Institute considers whether the western ideal of the 'project' with a fixed time-span and statistical projections, is ultimately compatible with a culturally-led approach to development. To this end, the Dutch ministry of Co-operation has suggested the creation of 'open-ended' programmes where objectives and methods are continually re-assessed and it is accepted that achievements can only be gradual.<sup>28</sup>

The Dutch approach to the cultural dimension to development, in being linked to a preoccupation for human rights, places the focus on the opportunities that exist for autonomous development. It identifies that, at both national and international levels aid

projects, power relations and influences need to be considered if autonomous development is to progress and it is not to be over-run by a 'global culture'.

The preceding examination of different documents relating to the question of culture within development has allowed us to see the important effect that an economic-inspired model has had. Given that the ambition of countries that gained independence in the early 1960s was to be integrated into the world economic system, this can hardly be surprising. The creation of national identities to be formed from a synthesis of culture from the developed world and mutually compatible aspects of the nation's component cultures met, and continue to meet, considerable obstacles in Africa.

Anchoring education systems, national media and cultural centres in languages and cultures such as English and French may be explained by political expediency but they also left local languages and cultures alienated with minor roles in development. This political expediency was also initially economic expediency as imported models and structures were applied with minimal adaptation as 'bridges' to economic and material transformation. By the mid 1970s, the failings of this approach were being acknowledged but its implications were to be fully developed. It was in the early to mid eighties that a discourse was developed that gave a political and social importance to the cultural dimension of development. It can be argued that their growing emergence was the result as much of the continued failures of successive general economic policies that have produced severe debt, as the inherent nature of the pro-culturalist argument. Meanwhile, the gap in the transfer of modern technologies has become ever greater.

Although French bilateral and francophone multilateral policies on the place of culture have espoused the general policy guidelines issued by UNESCO, the emphasis that funding reveals is one that reflects foreign policy objectives of the dominant participants. Furthermore, a tradition of political and diplomatic relations forms the framework for the most influential decisions pertaining to the overall dynamics of co-operation. It can be argued that the dynamics of Francophonie reinforce this framework by stressing the importance of the French language as a ‘tool’ of development and as an aspect of identity that takes its major influences from economically-developed nations.

In the context of this thesis, the different attempts to define the place of traditional values show that the problems of culture are not limited to francophone Africa. The issue brings into question exporting models of development from western-inspired principles and the accompanying ideal of a nation-state with a shared national culture to countries where the basis of a national culture is an extremely fragile and uncertain concept. In the Francophone African states, policies related to culture have been influenced by predominantly political and economic priorities. Official francophone institutions have not managed to change this even though institutional Francophonie acknowledges that both African cultural and linguistic factors are an integral part of economic and social development.

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**Notes for Chapter Eight: Non specific francophone approaches to culture within development**

- <sup>1</sup> Denys Cuche, *La Notion de culture dans les sciences sociales* (Paris: La Découverte, 1996), p. 10.
- <sup>2</sup> Milton Singer, 'Culture' in *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, III (New York: MacMillan and Free Press, 1968), p. 527.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 527.
- <sup>4</sup> J-P Martinon, 'Culture (sociologie de la)', *Encyclopédie Universalis*, V (Paris: *Encyclopédie Universalis*, 1985). p. 875.
- <sup>5</sup> Lionel Fernandez, *Des Tiers mondes* (Paris: Hatier, 1993), p. 12.
- <sup>6</sup> UNESCO, Conference of African states on the development of education in Africa, Addis Ababa, 15-25 May 1961.
- <sup>7</sup> UNESCO, Conference of African states on the development of education in Africa, Addis Ababa, 15-25 May 1961.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, H.W. Singer, 'Education and economic development', Annexe IV, p. 107.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, W.A. Lewis, 'Education and economic development' Annexe III., p 71.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, Paul Mercier, 'Socio-cultural factors and programmes for educational development, Annexe III, p. 81.
- <sup>13</sup> The original charter issued at the formation of the Organisation for African unity recommends that the member states should aim at a harmonisation of policies in the areas of education, science, culture and health that could arise from regular meetings of ministers in these areas. A Secretariat was created in 1965 with the intention of facilitating this.
- <sup>14</sup> Cited by Pierre-François Gonidec, *Relations internationales africaines* (Paris: LGDJ, 1996), p. 128.

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- <sup>15</sup> UNESCO Conférence intergouvernementale sur les aspects institutionnels, administratifs et financiers des politiques culturelles, Venice, 24 August- 2 September 1970 (Paris: UNESCO, 1970).
- <sup>16</sup> UNESCO, Conférence intergouvernementale sur les politiques culturelles en Afrique organisée par l'UNESCO avec la coopération de l'OUA, Accra 27 Octobre-6 Novembre 1975, UNESCO, Paris, 1975, p .20.
- <sup>17</sup> Fernandez, p. 25.
- <sup>18</sup> Luc Lehay, 'Le rôle et les effets de l'éducation sur le développement', *Le Mois en Afrique*, 223-224 (1984), 109-117.
- <sup>19</sup> UNESCO, Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies (Paris: UNESCO, 1982).
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid., point 18, p. 5.
- <sup>21</sup> Cited in ENA, Promotion 'Condorcet', Groupe 9, 'La culture, parent pauvre du développement?', ENA, July 1991, p. 12.
- <sup>22</sup> Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies (Paris: UNESCO, 1982).
- <sup>23</sup> P. Alloa, 'La coopération culturelle ACP-CEE sous Lomé III', *Le Courrier*, 115, (1989), 7-10.
- <sup>24</sup> M.-H. Birindelli, 'ACP-EEC cultural co-operation', *The Courier ACP-EEC*, 100, (1986). 71-73.
- <sup>25</sup> Commission of the European Communities: docVIII/527/79 Rev. 2, 'Taking account of socio-cultural factors in projects and programmes'.(1985) cited in Birindelli.
- <sup>26</sup> A. Niehof, 'The cultural dimension of development', *The Courier ACP-EEC*, No. 100, November-December 1986.p. 76.
- <sup>27</sup> L. Box, 'Development co-operation and cultural minorities in poor countries', in Box et al., *Culture and Communication- the forgotten dimension in development co-operation*, Royal Tropical Institute, The Netherlands, 1993, 2-15.
- <sup>28</sup> E. Sizoo, 'Culture and Dutch development policy' in *Culture and Communication- the forgotten dimension in development co-operation*, Royal Tropical Institute , Amsterdam, 1993, 16-36.

## Conclusion

In the course of this thesis I have examined four main areas linked to the idea of French cultural relations with the area known as francophone Africa that explore the political significance of relations based on the French language and culture. The first was colonial cultural policies firstly from 1870 to 1945 and then after the Second World War until the independences of the EAM in 1960. Secondly I considered the post-colonial policy of French *coopération culturelle*. Thirdly I considered how institutional Francophonie has changed the relationship created by these policies both with a political and a cultural function. Fourthly, I considered those policies that take African cultures and languages as their starting point.

It becomes evident that French colonial policy was more complex than some historians would have us believe. Although assimilation that is to say the belief that colonial policies should be governed by the ambition to create citizens of a 'greater France'- was officially rejected, the Republican *mission civilisatrice* meant that French colonialism continued to be heavily influenced by values prevalent in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Even before the Second World War, as Seck has pointed out, France had successfully used her policies to achieve three objectives. Firstly, an association had been made so that French culture and language was identified by a number of Africans as representing



a positive and desirable modernity. Secondly the spreading of culture would assist the sale of French goods. Thirdly it had allowed France to create a sufficiently large elite to assist with the administration of the colonies. By 1945 argues Seck and to the present day, the strategy has still proved effective in maintaining strong ties. In colonial terms, the identification of many African pre-independence politicians with their francophone cultural identity meant that France could not satisfy their longer-term ambitions for further economic development at France's expense whilst enjoying a greater political autonomy that fell short of independence.

This feature of French colonial policy, including as it did, African representatives in the metropolitan *Assemblée nationale* led to a pattern of relations and an attitude amongst influential African politicians that delayed independence. In consequence, France dictated the terms of independence through *coopération* policies. It was the political and cultural links between France and her colonies forged in the period after 1945 that fully justified the term 'francophone' Africa rather than any mass appropriation of the language. Indeed franco-African elites have often culturally and politically been closer to France than their own people.

The manner in which *coopération culturelle* emerged and evolved was the second main area for consideration. This policy that represented, when the costs of French teaching and specialist personnel are taken into account, as much as a third of France's development aid spending. The theme of cultural and institutional 'solidarité' served more than one purpose for both the post-independence leaders and for France. On the one

hand it reinforced the political legitimacy of the elites in 'partnership' with France, on the other it allowed France to maintain that her maintaining of continued close interests was for primarily moral reasons. *Coopération* became the *mission civilisatrice* of the post-colonial period. Not only did it motivate many French nationals to work as 'coopérants' with the initial belief of 'making a difference', but in its cultural form, it maintained its utilitarian functions to maintain commercial exchange.

Overall, the cultural emphasis in French aid programmes was one pillar of a distinctive sphere of influence approach for France in the Cold War. The stress on maintaining a geographical influence based on intangible values has been one way in which France has claimed an importance in the world greater than her economic influence.

The rich cultural discourse that argued that France was showing a commitment and a duty to her former colonies was in harsh contrast to the experiences and opinions of *coopérants* who were responsible for delivering French cultural policies and felt that they were part of wider French political and economic ends. Furthermore, criteria for assessing dependency of African states on France in nearly all domains of cultural life decreased very slowly over a period of thirty years. *Coopération* as a whole and *coopération culturelle* in particular remained very ambiguous forms of aid.

These characteristics show how politics and culture have been intrinsically linked. Ties maintaining French language education and the supply of French education have

maintained persistent francophone elites who reinforce their membership of this elite by being educated in French educational establishments.

The idea of Francophonie as an institutional concept were initially an attempt to commit France to long-term ties with Africa and to diversify the 'partners' involved in the continent's development. In their earliest forms they seemed to be inspired by schemes for federalism or confederation that France had rejected prior to decolonisation.

One reason that France was not inclined to give any substantial concessions to these attempts to modify post-colonial relations has been the persistence of a Gaullist legacy that has maintained the ambiguous discourse of *coopération* whilst preserving a certain political stability for the EAM states. The preference for bilateral relations in these circumstances reinforces the evidence that French aid policies were not only cultural but also political, economic and strategic.

When Francophonie became a forum for heads of state by the mid 1980s, the pattern of bilateral relations was firmly established. Summits and the discourse that they espouse on various issues mask a variety of highly contrasting objectives that are no closer to being realised than would be the case if francophone summits had not been convened.

One objective of French *coopération culturelle* was that French should become the language of the African masses. It seems that this is less likely than was the case in 1960. French language and culture has remained the language of the African elites for both

political and economic reasons. Three reasons can be attributed for this. Firstly, it seems that development planners underestimated the strength of local cultures that are used as the *lingua franca* despite giving French the status of official language. These languages and the values that they maintain could not be consigned to a minor role merely because French was the language of 'modernity'. Secondly, the failure to create culturally compatible education systems has been part of the wider failure to transpose industrial-world institutions when economic planning has predominated. Thirdly, general linguistic and also world economic trends have not been favorable to French. A growing global anglophone cultural dominance has made English rather than French the main language of 'modernity'. Faced with her own changing economic priorities, France has been less prepared to concentrate her efforts on *rayonnement* in francophone Africa. In real terms, France's spending in this area has declined generally as France has diversified her commercial interests even to the extent of investing somewhat ironically, in Anglophone Africa (Nigeria and South Africa).

Francophonie and French bilateral *coopération* remained heavily influenced by colonial legacies and the resulting distribution of power. Cultural policies and relations, despite the convictions of the immediate post-independence period cannot avoid having political consequences and significance. The choice of language and membership of a cultural sphere in the case of sovereign states for less than forty years remains indissociable from political choices. Although these have relied on a very particular type of relationship between the ex-metropole and African political elites, they have been made more convincing by an adaptable discourse based on key concepts such as

‘complémentarité’, ‘universalisme’ or ‘solidarité’. Interestingly, ‘égalité’, although one of the concepts of the *devise* of the ACCT, is seldom if ever employed as a concept in francophonie or *coopération culturelle*. Is this because it would echo an assimilationist discourse that was never, and could never be fulfilled by France?

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**13 MC 6: Rwanda 1975-1979, Sénégal 1975-1980.**

**13 MC 13: Club du Sahel**

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Deconcentration

Coordination education/ coopération

**13 MC 14: Activités de la direction de la coopération culturelle, scientifique et technique en 1976- réponses aux questions parlementaires**

Conférence des conseillers culturels

**13 MC 15:Bureau de liaison des agents de coopération technique (BLACT)**

AUDECAM

CEAO

OECD

Edition

**13 MC 16: Organismes d'intervention**

PV commissions

Radio-Télévision

**13 MC 17: Transfer enseignement supérieure**

**13 MC 18: Service national**

Caisse centrale de coopération économique

Budgets 1978-80

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(27 MC 37-42: Côte d'Ivoire)

**27 MC 37: Informations générales**

**27 MC 39: Assistance pédagogique, enseignement, santé, assistance technique**

**27 MC 42: Divers 1970-1974**

(27 MC 54-61: Haute Volta)

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