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Present Day Effects of French Colonization on Former French Colonies

Lori Liane Long

University of Tennessee - Knoxville

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SENIOR PROJECT - APPROVAL

Name: Lori Long

College: Arts + Sciences Department: political science

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Peterson

PROJECT TITLE: Present-Day effects of French
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I have reviewed this completed senior honors thesis with this student and certify that it is a project commensurate with honors level undergraduate research in this field.

Signed:  Faculty Mentor

Date: 11/17/1998

Comments (Optional):

The Present-Day Effects of French Colonization
on Former French Colonies

Lori Liane Long
Senior Project
May 13, 1998

In the world today, it is indisputable fact that some states have much higher standards of living than others. For humanitarians, concerned with the general state of mankind, this is a troublesome problem. These scholars ask themselves questions such as, "How can society bring all states to a level where their people are no longer subsisting, but living?" and "What can we do to perpetuate this change?". As a matter of fact, these very issues are a vital component of the endeavors of international organizations. The United Nations and innumerable others strive to help struggling states bring themselves to a level commensurate with the rest of the developed world, donating an immeasurable amount of time, expertise, and money to these secondary states. However, as many scholars so aptly argue, it is without utility to attempt to solve a problem on the surface, by simply offering financial help for example. The only way that true and lasting change is going to be achieved for these underdeveloped states is by identifying the underlying causes for their present-day situations; knowing the root of the problem is a prerequisite to being able to effectively solve it. In the particular case of identifying the essential reasons for the difficulties that third world states are experiencing, it is necessary to go back only as far as each states' colonial history. Although a few exceptions exist, the majority of states which are today underdeveloped have one factor in common, the importance of which is difficult to overstate; they all experienced extensive periods during which they were ruled as colonies. Thus, in order to go forward in finding real and lasting solutions to their development impediments, the international community must focus on the nature of colonialism and its present-day manifestations in

these states.

Beginning five and six hundred years ago, European states began to get ambitious; suddenly the world appeared to be a much bigger place. In their search for grandeur, prestige, and power these great European powers began to send adventurers sailing into the unknown to claim new places for the motherland. Although many states became extensive empire-builders, in an attempt to narrow this inquiry into a more manageable task, it is useful to choose just one of the European states active in imperialism, in this instance France. In studying this question, a methodology seems apparent. First, one must understand why European states, France in particular, chose to become imperialistic. Secondly, it is appropriate to ask what legacy French colonization left in general for its former possession. And lastly, specific cases will be examined; that is to say, several former French colonies will be dissected to discern the lasting effects of French imperialism on their contemporary situations.

Imperialist theory is the subject of innumerable books and scholarly pieces of literature; an attempt will be made here to summarize the most significant reasons European powers had for embarking upon colonizing efforts. It is difficult to rank the factors in order of importance, so having said such the emotional facet to imperialist theory will be the first to merit attention. Essentially, European powers wished to have colonies to make themselves appear grander. Economic considerations notwithstanding, it was colonies' status as possessions which was important in this sense. The race was to see who could have the most; that state must be the best. It became a matter of national pride; European states were

competing to see who could obtain the most colonies, convert the most people to its enlightened, cosmopolitan culture, and thus have “one up” on the other states trying to colonize. As J. Bebin succinctly observes, secretary general of a Valeniciennes geography society, “In order to remain a great nation or to become one, a people should colonize.” Moreover, as Europeans thought of themselves as the apex of enlightened civilization, it was simply beyond comprehension that the rest of the world might not desire to be European. They were so nationalistic and proud that they could not fathom the notion that they were not doing the conquered people a great favor. As they saw it, who would not welcome the chance to be introduced to and to belong to a great European power? (Murphy 12-40).

In addition, it is easy to see the economic theory which propelled colonization. The colonies provided two things for the colonizing states; a ready-made market for European goods and a source of raw materials for the motherland. Indeed, a quote from a French geographical society sums up the pro-imperialist stance with brevity and poignancy, beginning with a rebuttal to an argument that when colonies are attained, Frenchmen will take themselves and their wealth out of France and to the new colony,

Everyone agrees in recognizing that the emigration of capital and of population, far from diminishing the wealth of a country, on the contrary, increases it: that colonies offer markets for raw materials, the means of production, the products lacking to the mother-country; that they open markets to all the commerce and all the industry of an old country, by the wants, by the new needs of the people with whom they are in relation, and that the emigrants not

only remain consumers but that they become more important consumers, emigration procuring for them a well-being, saving things which they never possessed before (Murphy 29).

Essentially, this is quite sound economic philosophy. The colonizer prohibits the colonies from producing or procuring from others certain goods. The motherland then has an assured market for its products. Moreover, the motherland is able to rape the colonies of their natural resources and raw materials, without anything approaching just compensation. Finally, as the French society aptly elevates to consciousness, when Frenchmen move from Europe to inhabit the colonies, they will bring with them their French tastes and consumer habits, which will produce a market for French goods in the faraway colonies. Moreover, these new settlers will play a vital role in introducing the natives to a European way of life (Murphy 29).

Thus, the theory of imperialism in general rests of two basic principles, imbuing the notion of colonization with both emotional and economic notions. Based on these foundations, most of the powerful European nations colonized competitively and with zeal. The French, however, always distinct, did not approach imperialism in the same manner at all, especially as France traveled through the nineteenth century.

First and foremost, the French were not interested in widespread colonization due to more prominent concerns at home. Throughout the history of Europe, two provinces that France considers vital to its sense of nationality, Alsace and Lorraine, have been the cause of much turmoil for the nation. Changing hands several times between France and Germany, Alsace-Lorraine was the cause of much emotion and intense feelings for Frenchmen. Thus,

they were appalled at the notion suggested by some that France use her resources for any other purpose than regaining the lost provinces so essential to the French state. Moreover, due to the general French disposition, they were simply not inclined to be terribly militaristic. Burned several times already, the Frenchmen were quite content to be self-contained, worrying only about France and leaving the rest of the world to its own vices.

Following along the same line of logic, it is argued that France simply turned inward, concentrating too much on herself to even realize that the rest of the world exists. Finally, in the eighteenth century, several questions were posed by a gentleman which are quoted by Murphy, questions which were being asked by all of those trying to assess France's position on colonialism. He says,

What has become of her preponderance on the sea and in colonies which seemed assured two centuries ago? Has she explored the polar regions? Has she taken a sufficient part in the important voyages to Africa during this epoch in which we are living? No. Does she emigrate? Little. Has she a merchant marine? The sixth only in rank of importance. Why?...She has forgotten the ocean routes and distant countries; she tends inward in an ignorance too often foolishly vain, in a peurile fear of the unknown (Murphy 37).

Now that general imperialistic theory has been set forth, and the French perspective specifically, the point to make is the implications colonization by France has for its former colonies; a look at the legacies left behind even after France has officially withdrawn her presence. Perhaps most significantly, France's colonization has left an ongoing and quite

basic block to the ability of her former colonies to develop their economies to keep pace with the rest of the world. To examine basic economic fact for a moment, it is obvious that the rule in the world is “ceaseless capital accumulation” (Taylor 14). To compete as a state in the world economy, a nation must have an economy which stresses private economic transactions for private economic gain. In order to achieve such a structure however, a state must be possessed of three “classes” of people. First there are those who actually control the capital, known as “capital owners,” then come those the “cadres” who organize the business transactions, and then one finds the wage laborers, who perform the duties dictated by those who own the capital and those who manage it. As an economic system becomes more complex, it is this “middle class” of organizers that increases inproportionately in importance. This middle class “organizes, educates, manages, polices, plans, heals, supervises, counsels, and controls the direct producers in their relations with the controller of capital” (Taylor 14).

On the other hand, in African states which recently became liberated from French rule, this middle class hardly exists. Class structures in these states are extremely polarized, with a few elite who control all of the capital and thousands of wage workers who barely subsist. This societal setup encourages “relative social and political instability,” in addition to erecting significant barriers to establishing a prosperous, capitalist economy (Taylor 15).

Another institution produced by colonization and often overlooked is a problem with personal identity. Normally, a people have a nationality, a history, a background, which defines who they are essentially, both on a collective and individual basis. As Taylor elaborates, a people is a “solidarity grouping, through which individuals and their households

express their basic identities” (Taylor 15). However, when a people become colonized, their concept of themselves is changed forever. Taylor again sums up the point succinctly with this, “people are the result of general political strategies that exploit personal cultural identities” (Taylor 15).

Thus, the longer they are colonized, the more that these “peoples” begin to lose sight of any sense of belonging, of any national identity. It follows therefore that when they gain the liberation that they seemingly so desire, they really are not sure of where to go with it, so to speak. They have no coherent sense of collectively. This is a major difficulty in keeping pace with the rest of the world because, as Taylor states, “peoples are the major means by which individuals and households are socially integrated into the capitalist world-economy (Taylor 16).

Finally, colonization has left a legacy of political instability, for the above-stated reasons and also because of the actual length of time that the natives were not involved in their own destiny. For lack of a better phrase, as a group they are simply out of practice of ruling themselves. It is a well-established theory that stable political systems are the product of tradition, and colonized states have no tradition of peaceful and successful self-rule. As Taylor aptly states,

The legacy of imperialism is various forms of authoritarian states to be sure, but the coercive order that is achieved covers a very wide spectrum. At one end are the various ‘national security states’ epitomized by the Latin American political experience of the 1970s where order is maintained by a relatively

sophisticated coercive state apparatus. At the other extreme are what are almost 'fictitious states' run by 'warlords' or armed groups with the 'state apparatus' reduced to a matter of personal power. Sandbrook (1985, p 35) suggests that the African states of Chad, Uganda, Equatorial Guinea, and Zaire fit into this category. Even in less authoritarian periphery states such as India, elective office is primarily viewed as a resource for personal aggrandizement. Hence order, where it is achieved, is invariably bought at a very heavy price (Taylor 17).

Finally, a few unrelated, miscellaneous problems warrant mention, although not substantial enough to command more than a sentence or so by way of explanation. For one, it should be noted that the colonial powers, France included, did little by way of building any sort of infrastructure. Although zealous in quickly extracting resources, the colonizing countries did little by way of assuring the colonized states a structure which would sustain them after gaining independence. Finally, one can see that race and ethnicity have been barriers to forming comprehensive states. The white European elite still feels an innate superiority and right to rule, whereas the black majority is increasingly demanding power and self-rule. In addition, ethnic differences result in intense rivalries, resulting in chaos and violence, as opposed to comprehensive systems of government (Taylor 15-18).

Case Study 1: Algeria

During the early 1800s, the political situation in France was troublesome, with the unsteady reign of Charles X. Thus, when a dispute erupted with Algeria over an unpaid wheat bill, he saw the perfect opportunity to create a situation to divert attention from his regime. He made payment of the debt contingent upon a promise from Algeria to stop pirating, an order which so insulted the Algerian dey as to prompt him to make hasty and nasty declarations against Charles X. Charles X responded with a blockade of Algerian ports, and then on June 14, 1830 launched a full-scale invasion of Algeria. By July 5, 1830 the French claimed Algeria as a possession, beginning a period of colonialism lasting more than 130 years (Brill 31).

Soon after, Charles X was dethroned, and when Louis Phillipe stepped up he was actually a bit unsure as to what to do with this new possession. Finally, four years after the initial conquest, he declared Algeria a French territory and set up a colonial government to run the daily affairs of the country. The next step, the French thought, was to expand throughout Algeria to strengthen its hold on the country. The French were however, much to their surprise, met with extremely fierce resistance. In their zeal to convert the Algerians to Christianity, they gave the Muslims the catalyst to organize themselves to fight what became essentially a holy war. Finally, in 1847 the French were successful in breaking the last bit of Algerian resistance and began to finally make the transition to a French way of life (Brill 30-34).

After realizing a full conquest of Algeria, the French began in earnest attempts to settle

Algeria and make it French. First and foremost, France began enticing her own citizens to relocate and settle in Algeria. As a matter of fact, by the 1880s there were over 150,000 Frenchmen living in Algeria, compared to only about 5,000 at the time of the initial engagement with Algeria. In encouraging emigration of her own people, France was hoping that the Arabs would learn to be French by example. They would see the culture, language, habits, and mannerisms of true French people, and they would realize that they should adapt to this superior and civilized culture. This of course was not an accurate reading of local mentality; they never saw the utility in becoming French (Brill 34).

Secondly, the French tried to make the Arabs more European by attempting to convert them to Christianity. Algerians in fact were only eligible to be French citizens if they renounced their Muslim faith in favor of Christianity. As one French missionary, Father Charles Foucauld, explains, "If we cannot succeed in making Frenchmen of these people, they will drive us out. The only way to make them into Frenchmen is to make them Christians" (Brill 34). However, most Arabs stoutly refused anything to do with the new European religion, preferring to fight valiantly to preserve their former way of life (Brill 34-5).

Essentially, the French were active in every aspect of Algerian life. They began to take control of the culture, the land, the business, and the culture of this African country. As Brill states, "Algerians became despised second-class citizens in their own country" (Brill 35). Moreover, the French began to sell the land of Algeria, land that had belonged to the natives and was seized and consequently sold almost exclusively to Europeans without any sort of just compensation for the original Algerian owners. As their land was seized, the Algerians began

to have to look elsewhere for a way to earn a living, with most finding nothing better than toiling on land owned by Europeans for a wage not much above a low level of subsistence. Thus, as Brill explains, “Deprived of work, language, and cultural heritage, many Algerians retreated to the protection of Islam and a dream of independent Algeria” (Brill 35). This translated into another mass movement for independence, which resulted much the same way as the preceding one. The native Algerians were “politically, socially, and economically silenced” (Brill 36).

After varied attempts at gaining freedom during and in-between the two world wars, the Arabs were at last able to gain their long sought-after independence. For almost a decade, fierce fighting ensued in Algeria, as the African guerrillas fought violently and ruthlessly with the French colons. Soon, word of the French’s ferocious tactics for eliminating members of the Algerians freedom fighters reached the international community, with disapproval radiating from observers such as the United Nations and the Kennedy administration in the United States. Complicated by the fact that France fiercely wished to retain oil and natural gas reserves in the Sahara, negotiations proceeded to the point where De Gualle finally decreed that Algeria should be a free nation. The new leaders of Algeria set their official independence day for July 5, 1962, exactly 132 after France captured Algiers.

However, for Algerians, gaining independence was actually the beginning of a long and difficult process. Now that the Algerians had their own country free from outside intervention, they had to figure out how to pick up the pieces left behind by the French and begin to build a new country from them. Essentially, the revolutionary government was

facing a country with no economy, since the existing one collapsed basically when the colons left, and one with no political system to speak of, with the only facsimile of a government being the exiled National Liberation Front (FLN). Moreover, soon into Algeria's first period of self-rule in over a century, different FLN factions began developing and executing rivalries for power, which combined with worsening conditions for the people made civil war a possibility (Brill 44-45).

In September of 1962, elections were held, ones which were to facilitate the cession of power from the FLN to the new Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria. Ahmed Ben Bella, backed militarily by Colonel Houari Boumediene, managed to gain enough of an edge to be elected premier. Boumediene was then rewarded with a prominent position as defense minister. Together, the two began the difficult task of piecing their broken country together once more (Brill 44-46).

First and foremost, the new leaders began to set up parameters for the new government, boundaries which are directly reflective of the colonial period from which Algeria had just emerged. Ben Bella essentially began setting up an authoritative regime, with no notion that governments could be run any other way. He became the supreme commander of the army, head of the Supreme Court, and head of the FLN, the country's lone political party (Brill 45-46).

Next, Ben Bella found that over 70% of his people were unemployed. Basically, the only educated members of society had been the colons, and with their absence the Algerians were left with only uneducated laborers. However, without the colons to run the farms and other industries, there was nowhere for the unskilled laborers to labor. A year after winning

independence, in 1963, Ben Bella passed a set of laws referred to as the March Decrees. The main thrust of this legislation was that property abandoned by colons could be occupied by Algerians now. In this manner, the state actually took for itself some of the best farmland in the country. Moreover, as it took over this property, it began to institute socialist policies through which to administer it. The state in fact came to own “the richest farmland, factories, mines, banks, transportation systems, and retail stores” (Brill 46).

The Algerian nationals however, were not content with either the pace nor the content of Ben Bella’s reforms. To begin, they were suffering immensely and felt that relief was needed imminently. Secondly, they believed that Ben Bella had become more concerned with advancing his international image than with the plight of his people at home. Thus, in June of 1965, a mere two years into his rule, the army staged a ruthless coup, overthrowing Ben Bella and putting in his place his comrade Boumediene. The instability which precipitates violent overthrows such as this one is directly related to the very nature of the societal boundaries installed by colonialism. Because the people have not been socialized to know what effective, democratic stable government is, they have no expectations to meet, no way of knowing how to establish an effective government (Brill 46).

Under Boumediene, the authoritarian nature of Algeria was relaxed somewhat, with several changes being instituted which made the government more representative and less centered on one individual. Boumediene was concerned with giving the people more power on a local level and with allowing the citizens to be more involved in general. He even began holding elections, and was himself chosen as President through a true election.

On the other hand, Boumediene had a much more difficult time in reorganizing the people economically. In the late sixties and early seventies he decided that Algeria's oil and gas resources should be rapidly developed, with the profits then being used to develop other industries and to generate some form of infrastructure. Indeed, he used a full 70% of the profits from these two enterprises to reinvest in other industries. Moreover, Boumediene felt a great need for nationalization, particularly of French-owned oil refineries. In contrast to his predecessor, he also felt it wise to engage economically with France, regardless of the bad feelings which may still have existed. France was looking to buy oil, a commodity for which Algeria was seeking markets. Finally, in an attempt to at the very least feed his people, Boumediene gave land that formally had belonged to the state to peasants, a departure from Ben Bella's strict socialism. However, none of these changes was able to help Algeria overcome her colonial legacy. Although they all appeared on the surface to be useful, it is more difficult than most can imagine to accomplish a complete restructuring of an entire society, which is the only true way the colonial yoke can be shed, allowing the country to move on and become prosperous (Brill 47-48).

In 1978, Boumediene died and new elections were held, elections which heralded the rise to power of a progressive reformer, Colonel Chadli Benjedid. The two main differences between Benjedid and his predecessor were their approaches to the economy and to agriculture. In an attempt to eliminate, or at least reduce, corruption and mismanagement, Benjedid separated the large state-operated businesses and farms into smaller and more manageable sizes. Moreover and most importantly, he finally made the Algerian economy

accessible to foreign investment. Finally, although setbacks and obstacles have occurred since Benjedid assumed control and will most likely persist in being a problem, the government of Algeria is at least actively attempting to resocialize its people into a cohesive and relatively successful country. As Brill aptly states,

Algeria has come a long way since independence. But the maturing country continues to grapple with its identity in the modern industrialized world. Algeria's leaders accept the challenge of reform. Only time will tell whether they can quiet the unrest and lead Algeria into full adulthood (Brill 53).

Case Study #2: Ivory Coast

The French influence in the Ivory Coast goes back as far the 1600s, when 5 French missionaries established a mission in Assini. The missionaries were, however, unprepared for the severe heat and the unrelenting tropical diseases, with 3 of the 5 dying in the first year. The remaining two returned to their native France. Half a century later, a French navy ship docked in Assini, taking two Assini youths with them for the return voyage to France. One of the young men, a prince, was given a French education and was converted to Christianity. He felt it his calling to return to Assini with missionaries and soldiers to establish a military outpost. However, once again unprepared for the climate and the tropical afflictions, the attempt at settlement failed (Kummer 31).

It was not until the 1800s that France decided once more to try her lot with what became the Ivory Coast. From the 1840s to the 1860s, France sailed around the Gulf of Guinea, interested in opening relations with the Ivory Coast. Finally, French navy men were successful in convincing chiefs from both Assini and Sassandra to enter into agreements with France. These treaties provided that the Ivory Coast was to trade with France and France alone. Moreover, the French were to have the right to build outposts and military forts, compensating the chiefs fairly for use of their land (Kummer 32). By the 1860s, a Frenchman called Arthur Verdier was running several successful French trading posts. Essentially, the French government had given Verdier full reign with the

posts, so to speak, because of their relatively weak position in the world at that time, having just suffered defeat at the hands of Prussia. Verdier was active in exporting palm oil, and he was instrumental in precipitating the production of cocoa and coffee plantations (Kummer 32).

In Europe during this era however, the atmosphere became ripe for colonization. The race for power between European powers became contingent on who had the most colonies. A manifestation of this mentality is seen at the Berlin Conference, where the issue was addressed and it was ultimately decided that any European country could claim sovereignty over any African one, so long as government representatives from the colonizing nation are present in the country being colonized (Kummer 33).

Thus, swept up in the tide equating colonies with national grandeur, France decides that she will retake her trading posts in the Ivory Coast. Thus, two representatives were sent, Louis-Gustave Binger and Marcel Theich-Laplène, who worked their way through the Ivory Coast, making agreements and treaties with the local chiefs. The chiefs signed the treaties under the illusion that the French would help settle internal splits and fragmentation. However, what the chiefs really did was sign away most of their country, as the treaties became the basis for most of France's later claim to the land comprising the Ivory Coast (Kummer 33).

In 1893, France declared the Ivory Coast a true colony, installed Louis-Gustave Binger as governor, and established a capital at Grand-Bassam. Only a few, short years later however, disease once again afflicted the French, killing nearly 2/3 of the Europeans who had located within the Ivory Coast, prompting the relocation of the capital to the healthier Bingerville.

At this point, essentially the French had control of only narrow pieces of the Ivory Coast which ran along the coast, in addition to a bit of land near the two main rivers. Regrettably in their opinion, they had failed to negotiate treaties with the people of the interior. Thus, because France had not peaceably made agreements with all Ivoirians, some resistance was met by the French troops attempting takeover. A particularly notable leader of resistance to French rule was Samory Toure, who was committed to the Islamic state. By 1898 however, the resisters' main voice was silenced, with the French exiling Samory to Gabon. After his death in 1900, the other rain forest people began to organize revolts against the French administration of the Ivory Coast. The French however held on amazingly unflinchingly and steadfastly. By 1916 the French had effectively secured control of the Ivory Coast (Kummer 37-38).

After solidifying its control, the French began in earnest to set up a colonial government for the Ivory Coast. Before its era of French domination, the Ivory Coast had never known any form of centralized government. Instead, the country was split up, with a different faction having local power in small areas. The French however undertook an endeavor to break the country up into districts, with each controlled by French commanders. It should be noted that the Ivoirians did in fact become subjects of the French government; they were denied citizenship however. This meant that without any rights, the Ivoirians had to pay taxes, were forced to do public labor, were drafted into the French military, and were given prison sentences without the benefit of a trial (Kummer 38).

The French colonizers also changed the economy of the Ivory Coast. Before the French took power, the Ivorian economy was one based on subsistence. Each village grew enough to sustain itself. However, with the addition of the French influence, the Ivorians began to grow huge cash crops, including cocoa, pineapples, bananas, and coffee. Most of the plantations on which these crops were produced were owned by the French. A few Ivorians could also own plantations, but they were not allowed to use the free labor to which the French were privy (Kummer 38-42).

Finally, one should examine the cultural transformation the African nation underwent at the hands of the French. France declared French the official language, decreed that all business should use the refined language of French and should be conducted according to its superior customs. Moreover, the French set about reforming the pagan Ivorians to Christianity, setting up both Protestant and Catholic missionaries. The missionaries then established schools, where the Ivorians could learn the French language and customs, and then find a place in the colonial government. Eventually, two new classes of Ivorians emerged, Ivorian planters and Ivorian civil servants. Both of these classes had enough money to afford education's for their children, who were thus able themselves to advance to decent positions in the new economy. As this happened on a larger and larger basis, the gap between these two, new classes of Ivorians and between the rural, poor citizens widened, with colonialism being a direct cause of this widening social gap (Kummer 39-41).

There is obviously no way to be sure how long this path would have been left unruffled were it not for the two world wars, which stirred emotions and loyalties in the Ivory Coast. During World War II, at first, the colonial government joined forces with the Vichy government which had taken over France. When Charles de Gaulle came to prominence however, he was backed vehemently by the Ivorians. As a reward of sorts for their support, de Gaulle approved the commencement of the *Syndicat Agricole Africain*. The leader of the SAA was the popular and powerful Felix Houphouet-Boigny. He wished to end the free labor source used by the French planters, in addition demanding that Ivorian farmers receive the same prices for goods and the French (Kummer 41-43).

In addition to allowing the union, the French government found itself making all manner of concessions to this new Ivorian Coast group. Because it was beaten down from a costly war, both morally and economically, France began to consider different methods for administering her colonies. In 1945, she even agreed to allow the Ivory Coast the right to hold elections. The elections were for delegates to the Constituent Assembly in Paris; one was chosen by the settlers, and the other was Houphouet-Boigny. Houphouet-Boigny was able to achieve sweeping reforms, making him a hero to the Ivorians. He abolished the system which compelled Ivorians to work for free and saw that all Ivorians were granted French citizenship. With their newfound citizenship, Ivorians enjoyed a freedom of speech and assembly, the right to a trial, and even a limited right to vote. However, the Ivorians would

not be truly content until they were in complete charge of their own nation (Kummer 44).

Interestingly enough and on a much different tone from that seen in Algeria, France continued in giving the Ivory Coast more and more opportunity for self-government. Due to the new rules, all Ivoirians were permitting to vote, they were able to choose representatives for local and district positions, and the Territorial Assembly could actually pass binding laws for Ivory Coast. Moreover, after Charles de Gaulle assumed the presidency, the French Community was developed. Under this plan, each French territory was allowed to choose whether to become a member. If they chose to join, they were then permitted to decide upon their own government and to develop their own constitution. In 1958, Ivory Coast chose to rule herself, within the confines of the Community. In their first elections, the Ivoirians elected Houphouet-Boigny to the position of prime minister. Under his leadership, the Ivory Coast continued their quest for independence. Finally, in 1960 France developed a policy which allowed all members of the French Community to become independent if they wished, an opportunity of which the Ivory Coast took advantage (Kummer 48-49). Ivory Coast had become the most prosperous territory in French Africa, and for that she was rewarded with some decent attempts by France at building an infrastructure to facilitate the ongoing project of developing Ivory Coast's economy. Moreover, after declaring her independence, the Ivory Coast decided to keep her ties to the French, giving them a decent base for foreign trade (Kummer 48-50).

Basically, the Ivory Coast became an example of what can be accomplished with one charismatic leader, in this case Houphouet-Boigny. Single-handedly, Houphouet Boigny managed to keep his regime in power and more than a mere facade of order. He was firm in dealing with any dissenters, but “justified his actions on the grounds that political stability was required to achieve economic prosperity” (Kummer 49). During his many terms as president, Houphouet authorized numerous opposition parties, appointed Alassane Ouattara, a man who had worked previously with the International Monetary Fund, to work for real economic reform, and allowed true multiparty elections to be held. Thus, it is clear that through leadership, Ivory Coast had a much different colonial experience than the before-discussed Algeria. Although being colonized has of course erected barriers for her, it seems as though she is proof that the colonial legacy can be effectively overcome (Kummer 50).

Conclusion:

Thus, after examining the two case studies presented above, it seems without question that the period of colonization by France had a significant impact upon present-day events. Their colonial legacies make it difficult for these countries to establish stable political regimes, stable economies, sturdy infrastructures, and peaceful power transfers. However, as has also been seen, colonized countries are not necessarily doomed to always be part of the third world. By addressing the basic structures instituted by colonialism, countries can begin to truly overcome their imperialist legacies. The first case study, Algeria, presents a situation in which the essential problems were not addressed, and the country still struggles today to establish a normal regime for itself. In the second country examined however, Ivory Coast, the leaders were able to hit right at the heart of her problems due to colonialism, thus making it possible for her to rise above the lot left to her by France. Therefore, the premise under which this paper was written, that the essential problems caused by colonialism must be addressed before the country can move forward, are substantiated by the case studies presented.

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