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The Future of Francophone Africa Without the Aid and Influence of its Former Colonial Power, France

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THE FUTURE OF FRANCOPHONE AFRICA
WITHOUT THE AID AND INFLUENCE
OF ITS FORMER COLONIAL
POWER, FRANCE

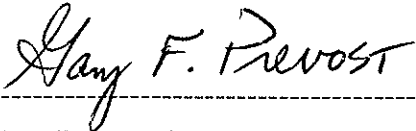
A THESIS
The Honors Program
St. John's University

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Distinction "All College Honors"
and the Degree Bachelor of Arts
In the Department of Government

by:
Ryan Patrick McGovern
May, 1996

THE FUTURE OF FRANCOPHONE AFRICA
WITHOUT THE AID AND INFLUENCE OF ITS FORMER
COLONIAL POWER, FRANCE

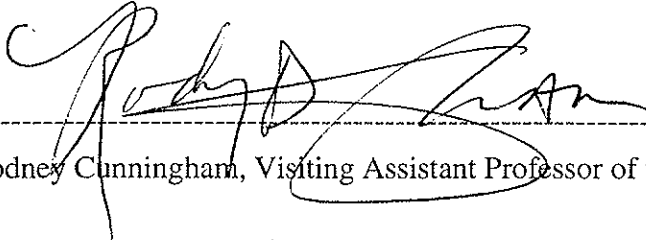
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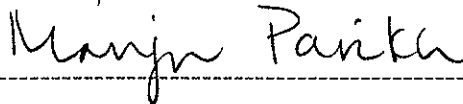
Dr. Gary Prevost, Professor of the Government Department



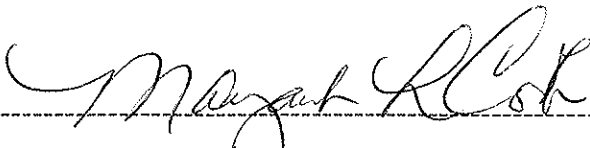
Dr. Nathaniel Dubin, Professor of the Modern and Classical Languages Department



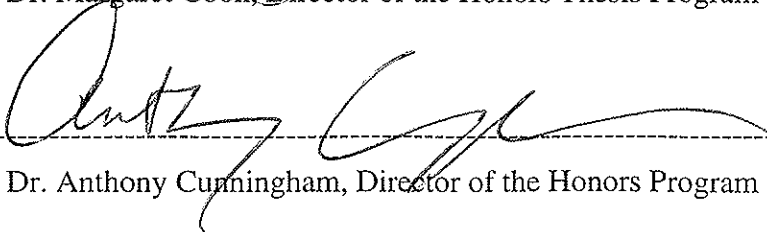
Rodney Cunningham, Visiting Assistant Professor of the Department of Government



Dr. Manju Parikh, Chair, the Department of Government



Dr. Margaret Cook, Director of the Honors Thesis Program



Dr. Anthony Cunningham, Director of the Honors Program

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	8
Chapter 1	
French Colonization in West Africa.....	11
Chapter 2	
1960, Full Independence for the Francophone Countries, or was it?.....	30
Chapter 3	
What Went Wrong?.....	40
Chapter 4	
The Current Reforms and Changes in Franco-African Relations.....	55
Chapter 5	
What Does The Future Hold? What Should it Hold?.....	61
Conclusion.....	74
Bibliography.....	79

Maps, Tables, Appendixes:

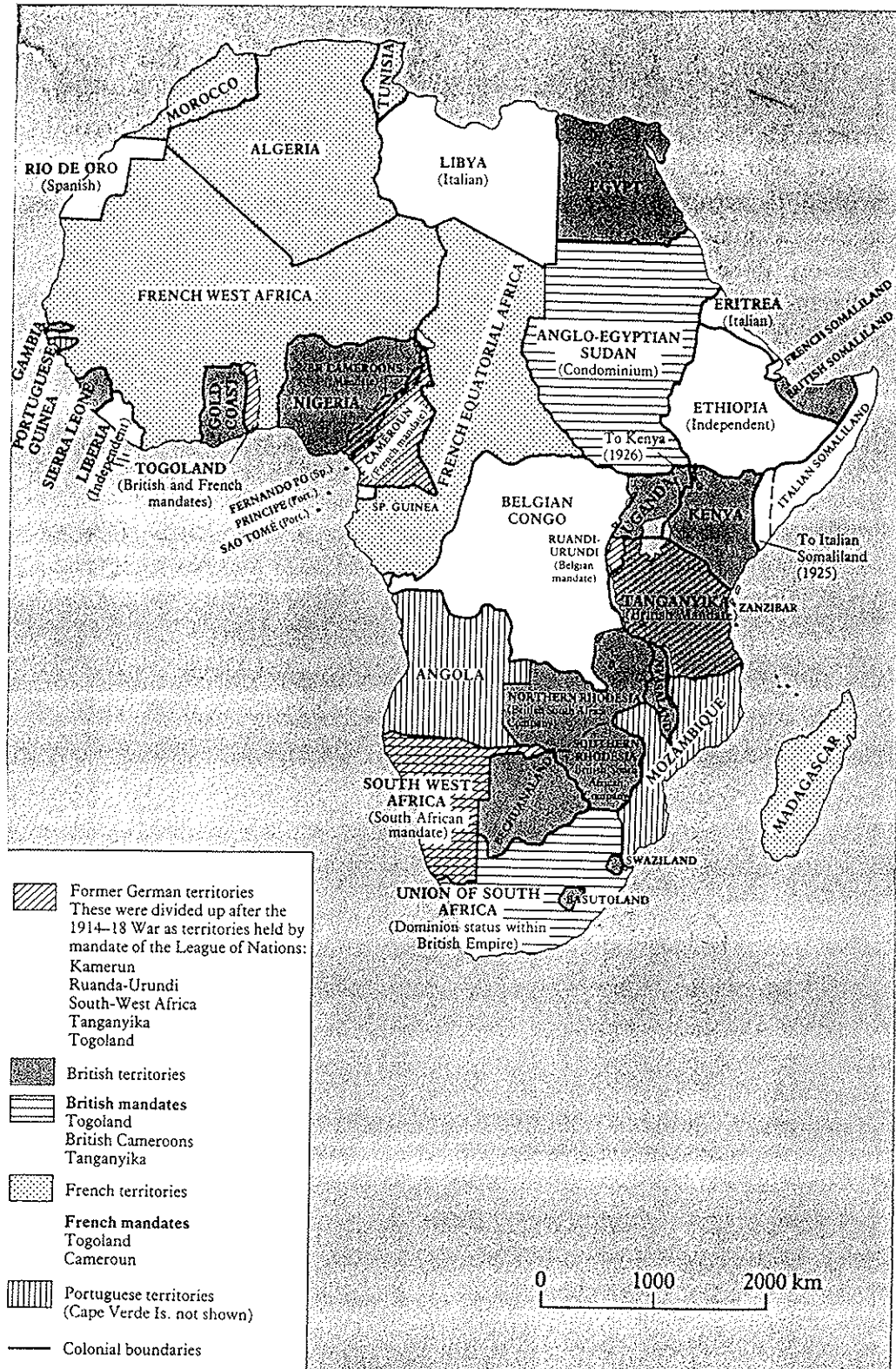
Map 1, African Colonial Boundaries in 1919.....	7
Map 2, Francophone Africa in 1940.....	10
Map 3, Francophone Africa in 1985	29
Table 1, Imports/Exports of the 14 Afro-Malagasy States Associated with France	35
Table 2, Major African Regional Organizations	64
Appendix 1, Changes in Country Names.....	76
Appendix 2, List of Acronyms.....	77
Appendix 3, percentage of Children Enrolled in Primary School.....	78

Research Design

- Primary Question: Can francophone Africa prosper without the aid and influence of its former colonial power, France?
- Secondary Questions:
- How did French influence first change francophone Africa?
 - What was the past relationship between the African colonies and France?
 - To what degree does France affect francophone development?
 - What are the current problems facing the francophone states?
 - What are the current internal reforms in francophone Africa?
 - What steps need to be taken for stability, self-sufficiency, and prosperity in francophone Africa

African Colonial Boundaries in 1919

From: Basil Davidson *Modern Africa: A Social and Political History*



Introduction

“The purposes of the civilizing efforts by
France in the colonies rules out any idea
of autonomy, and any possibility of evolution
outside the framework of the French empire”

-Charles De Gaulle (Betts, 60)

Since the French first came in the late eighteen hundreds to “civilize” them, one can see a definite divergence in the cultures of francophone Africa. From politics and economics to education and culture, the French impact was everywhere. Almost a century later, France decolonized the francophone countries, but the French did not retreat. Independence in 1960 curbed France’s direct influence in the francophone countries, thus calling for a neo-colonial indirect influence. Even today the francophone countries rely heavily upon French aid and influence for development at all levels. It would be naive to assume all of the francophone countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Comoros, Côte D’Ivoire, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Togo, Zaire) have the same relationship with France, though there are several issues common to all, so I have formulated three divisions to better illustrate their affiliation with France since independence: the “Clones” which hold

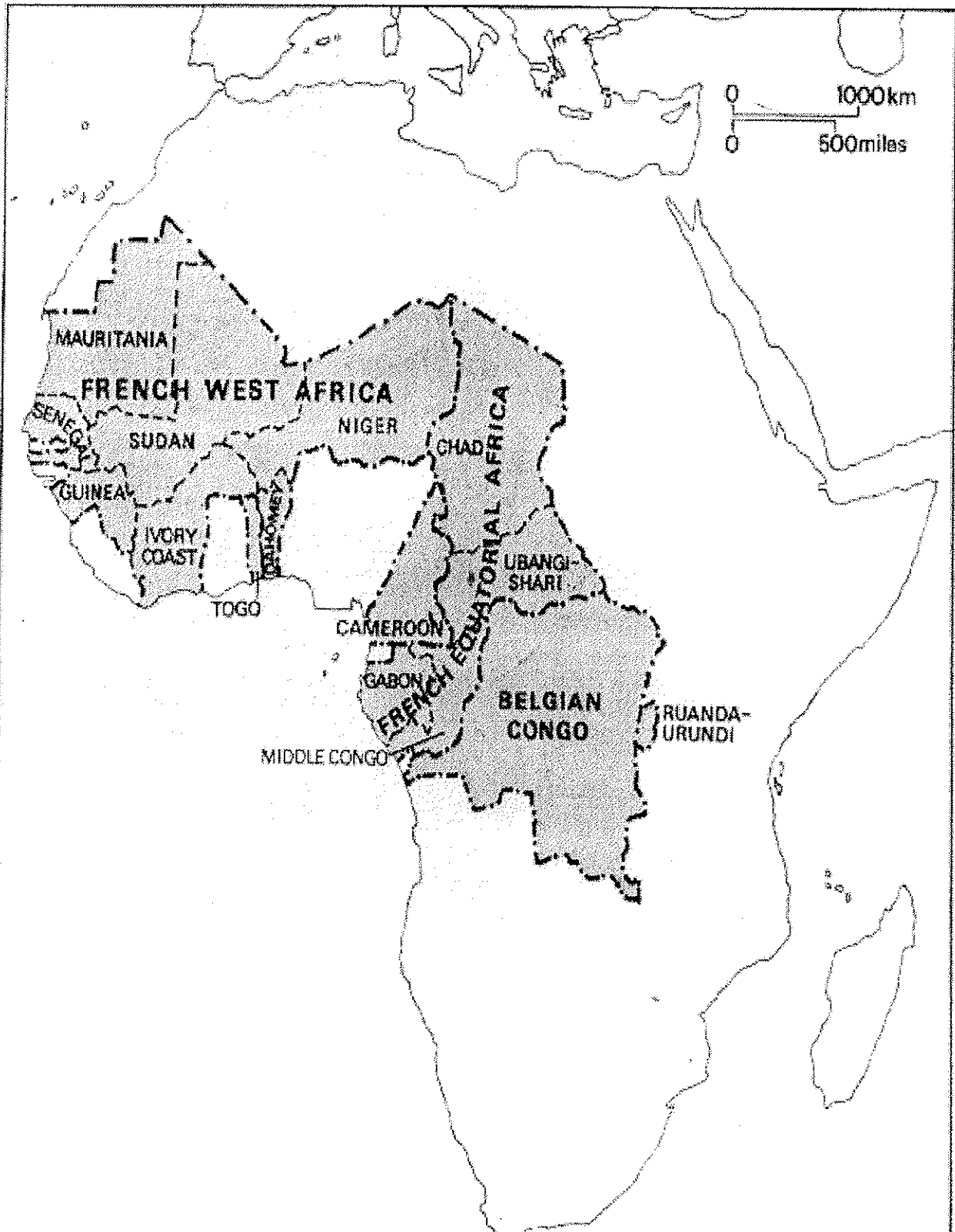
a very close relationship with France, the “Radicals,” which could almost be considered anti-French, and a third group, the “Medials,” which occupy the position between the first two categories.

It is impossible to say what Africa might look like today had these countries not deviated from their original cultures; however, we can look at how the francophone countries might continue without further influence from France. When looking at present day francophone countries, one must consider that today’s culture is already francophone, neither African, nor French. Recent times have shown a slight breakdown in the bilateral relations in all three of the groups. This is what has prompted the question: can francophone Africa prosper without the aid and influence of its former colonizer, France?

To answer this question and to speculate on the future of the francophone countries, it is necessary to look at the history of Franco-African relations. We start with exploration and colonization, to see how the relationship was first established and at what level it existed. We move on to France’s neo-colonial role in francophone African economic, political and social development. Next, it is essential to present the problems that haunt the francophone countries and the role of French in the African struggle. With this background, we can look at the present relationship between the two. We conclude with a proposal for the necessary changes if the African countries are to achieve full autonomy, and prosper on both internally and on international scale.

Francophone Africa in 1940

From: Edward Corbett *The French Presence in West Africa*



Chapter 1,

French Colonization in West Africa

“Assimilate, do not be assimilated”

-Léopold Senghor, former president of Senegal.

Traditional Africa

Before the French arrived, Africa was a very different place, a society untouched by the European nations, nothing like it is today. There were no imposed borders, no western-style political or economic structures, and no French. With the French arrival came French influence, with influence dependency, and with dependency conflict. The French made their presence known and forced French culture into the African minds. The colonization period was radical for the Africans it is even radical when compared with English colonization in Africa. This colonial relationship will help us to understand the roots of today's problems, and show us how and why these problems exist.

It is difficult to categorize and explain the pre-colonial structure of Africa because of its utter diversity. To assume that all Africans had similar heritages would be an oversimplification; to group them into one culture would be like grouping together all of Europe. “Before colonization, the Africans had evolved political systems on their own that worked” (Mazrui). In what is now francophone Africa, these political systems took many

different forms. The largest, best known were the great empires of Ghana, Mali, Dahomey and Songhai, which flourished during the medieval period, and controlled trade routes for many centuries. There were also indigenous states, away from the shores and foreign influence, which interacted with each other and with their more elaborately structured neighbors (Chazan, 24-25). For the most part, the basic political unit was the village, and the economic basis was agriculture. The slave trade provided high profits for many African kingdoms and communities (Shillington, 186). The number of different languages which studies have estimated at around seven hundred is a legacy of the variety of cultures in current francophone Africa (Manning, 43).

Closer to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, but also seen in other areas of Africa are the monarchies. These giant tribes had often gained their riches and power during the early eighteenth century's slave trade with Europe and the Americas. Thus, the French were not the first to bring trade to Africa, but early trade had remained at a small localized basis.

French Imperialism

It is always debatable and nearly impossible to find out if the Africans would have been better off without colonial rule. However, we can study its effects since the French arrived. We now must turn to the point when colonization first began. The exact date is unclear, but a common agreement is that the French explorers first began their trek into West Africa in the late eighteenth century. Then they began conquering the area in the eighteenth century. The motivation for imperialism may vary from colonizer to colonizer and colony to colony. French pride, cultural imperialism, and a core-periphery economic relationship contributed to the early French presence in Africa.

Pride is a strong driving force in France. Colonial acquisition established pride in a struggling French community. The newly formed third republic (1871) of France sought to compensate a humiliating loss to Germany of Alsace and Lorraine. "The French saw imperial conquest as a way to counter German economic and military supremacy" (Manning, 11). Late nineteenth century was a period of imperial rivalry between France and its nemesis, England. England's colonies accounted for about 23.9% of the world's real estate, while France trailed with 9.3%, after the acquisition of Africa (Betts, 5). Having holdings in Africa made the French Empire look strong.

As a core country (a global economic power), France needed to expand its markets abroad into the periphery (lesser developed nations) to prosper economically at a new height. Many argue the original French interest was economic, that they wanted the rich resources of the Gold Coast. If such were their intentions, early explorations of Africa quickly dispelled that myth. L. Canard, commander of the area of Dakar, Senegal, stated in his 1877 report of the area that Senegal had "no commerce, no industry, and no new inhabitants" (Betts, 1). Large areas that are now Mauritania, Mali, Niger and Chad lay in the Sahara Desert in which little-to-no resources were available. The initial economic outlook was bleak, but soon the French found the resources and began to find ways to profit from their African colonies.

Exploitation

France exploited the Africans in many ways for economic profit. First and most evident were the natural resources of the region. Some areas, such as present day Côte D'Ivoire, held very fertile lands that already produced many agricultural goods for

subsistence use. The French saw the land and the labor as an opportunity to produce high demand crops in France. The new French administration allowed and even encouraged the French colonists to buy and even take land. African farmers were then forced, by physical or indirect coercion, to produce cash crops for export. The farmers soon grew cash crops such as coffee and cocoa for small wages for the colonists, who then sold it in France receiving large profits.

Military service was yet another of the many exploitations imposed by the French. Early on, French hired Africans to aid in their colonizing efforts, which included serving in the military. African recruits helped put down revolts and opposition to keep order. As the French influence became more prevalent, military service became another duty and obligation of the indigenous people. France recruited and forced about 211,000 Africans into military service during World War I (Davidson, 7). Africans in the military were perceived, and therefore treated, as inferior, and faced mistreatment by the French.

Forced labor was the most malevolent of all forms of colonial exploitation of the Africans. The French administration in the colonies called for a system of forced labor that required them to work a set amount of time for France as a tax for protection and citizenship. The laborers were sent to work in both the public and private sectors in the French colonies. In the public sector, forced labor was used to help build roads, buildings and the like. More oppressive was the private sector, where the laborers were sent to work in mines or in the fields under inhumane conditions. Workers were fed minimal rations and water, they were forced to work excessive hours, and little-to-no regard was given to their health or well being. The colonial system of forced labor was worse than slavery

because it involved no investment by the owners. If slaves died, the owner needed to buy new ones at high personal costs. However, if forced laborers died, the administration just sent more. Between 1921 and 1932 nearly 127,250 “fit African males” were forced to build a French railroad from Pointe Noire to Brazzaville in equatorial Africa. Of those forced laborers, at least 10,000 died from hunger or disease (Davidson, 16).

French Colonial Impact Upon Africa

French Assimilation

Assimilation, the major goal of French colonialism, finds its roots in French culture. “French overseas empire was formed more by the agencies and stimulation of the state, church, and armed forces than by the initiation of the business community” (Harvey, 1). *Mission civilisatrice* was the term coined to describe the implantation of Roman Catholic and French culture into the francophone colonies. The greater force lay predominantly with the Catholic population in France. Catholicism in the 19th century pursued an active policy of teaching and converting nonbelievers. Africa was seen as a continent of lost souls and Catholicism could help lead the Africans to salvation. This ideal also is in accord of the French empire’s foreign policy, the goal of which was to “conquer and assimilate” (Manning, 8).

French colonial missionaries played a much more active role in the colonies than the British missions did, perhaps because the power of the Catholic church in France was decreasing, but also because the Catholics in France were more organized through Rome

than the British were. The missionaries saw colonial Africa as a perfect opportunity to strengthen and preserve their religion.

Religion was not the only area in which the French saw themselves as the saviors. Economic and social change was also considered a means of redeeming the perceived “inferior” Africans. Western-style education and capitalist enterprise were thought to be the social salvation for the Africans. J.L. Gheerbrandt expressed another reason for French imperialism in his 1943 book *Notre Empire: un univers, un idéal*, when he asked “why ‘Empire’, why ‘Our Empire’?”

Empire because what strikes one in considering these worlds in the World is that they unite nearly everything that one knows of the living Universe, of its natural and spiritual forces, so as to create a whole, one and indivisible (Betts, 11)

“To create a whole,” that is, to become a part of France. These words are the very core of France’s colonial practice of assimilation. This common imperialistic ideology played a less noted, but no less influential, role in the French decision to colonize Africa. Many French shared Gheerbrandt’s vision during that time. They wanted to unite everything, to create a whole, and to create the best one possible, which for them meant making it France.

Félix Eboué, the former governor general of French Equatorial Africa, describes during early colonization the French desire to assimilate the Africans, and the benefits to both sides.

“As a first coalition for this indispensable success, we must have at our disposal a native population that will not only be healthy, stable and

peaceful but that will increase in number and will progress materially, intellectually, and morally so that we will have the collaboration of the leadership that is the contribution of the masses and without which the development would never be more than just a word” (Collins, 114)

Eboué, as did many French and Africans, believed that assimilation through the above means and ends would work. It was never imagined that French assimilation would take such a wrong turn.

Slowly throughout the colonial period the French moved away from assimilation and turned toward conversion, forcing themselves, and more importantly their culture, upon the Africans. The most radical of these influences are seen on economic, political, and social levels. Political economics was the first area to see the new French policies in action. Western capitalism, the first “reform” that the French set up, was a completely new system that the Africans needed to adapt to. Africa had had first contact with European capitalism with the slave traders, but the Africans had no dependency upon it. When the French moved in, capitalism was put in place by the colonial governments, and later took root there through the growth of both African and French private enterprise (Manning, 54).

Capitalism came, but did not necessarily mean an increase in wealth or improvement in social welfare. This is demonstrated by looking at the wealth of the richest of the francophone countries, Senegal. While being the richest of the francophone countries, its wealth and growth rate fell well behind the other French North African colonies, as well as all of the British colonies (Manning, 56)

Western economics applied to the values and resources which the Africans were not suited. Similar to their colonial experience, the current francophone nations have not yet found how to adapt capitalism to fit their needs and values.

The fiscal policy of the colonial government presented other innovations for the native African culture. A system of taxation first appeared under the new French regime. Beside forced labor and military service, taxes were placed on nearly everything and everyone to pay the salaries of the French officials. Because of the colonialists relatively cheap cost of living in Africa, excess wages were often sent back home, thus taking preciously needed capital from the newly formed capitalist region.

Throughout the period of colonization, there was a struggle between the levels of French influence and African sovereignty. Neither was an actual winner; instead, a blend of the two arose, forming an entirely new culture. "Both European and African traditions have bent and accommodated to the pressures of the other" (Manning, 18). This new culture, called francophone African culture, is the resulting blend between African and French cultures.

When French laws and values were imposed upon the Africans, a split in the African cultures formed. The split arose from the elements of their culture that were compatible with French culture and what elements were not. Obviously, the French suppressed components of African culture that did not mesh with French ideals. Therefore, the African cultures could no longer exist in their previous form; instead they were molded to conform to the restrictions of the French colonial regime.

Colonial Borders

When the French colonists arrived they established new boundaries, new laws, new systems, all of which disrupted the equilibrium that the Africans had spent centuries developing. Sub-Saharan colonies were European creations, the colonial powers determined African boundaries without researching preexisting ethnic considerations or earlier established political systems (Betts, 116). The borders that the Europeans forced upon the Africans did nothing but cause havoc. The new borders united different tribes under one flag, many of which were rivals, and many tribes and even families, were completely separated by the new boundaries. This caused conflict when the French enforced borders, because the tribes and families were no longer granted free travel within their tribal regions. For example, the Akan societies, which comprise fifteen percent of Cote D'Ivoire's population, and extend into Ghana and Togo, are now divided by not just political boundaries, but also by a different language and culture (French in Togo and Côte D'Ivoire and English in Ghana) (Handloff, 49). A similar example is the Hausa group, Africa's second largest spoken language which was bifurcated when France and England set up a border between Nigeria and Niger (Westley, 355). Today, ethnic conflict plays a role in many of the francophone dilemmas.

Education

Education was a decisive means of implanting French culture in the francophone countries. The French set up the schools directly, teaching French language, art, poetry, philosophy, all the courses French children took, of little or no practical use in Africa. French colonial education ignored African languages and culture completely (Westley, 356)

in the interest of assimilation into French culture. To further one's education, or to simply get the best education possible, children were shipped off to French schools. Any qualified or rich student was welcome to study at the finest French educational institutions. This was an invaluable opportunity for many because French higher education was, and still is, quite impressive. Most Africans would then return home to prosper with the new found knowledge from across the sea.

The problems that face this practice are twofold. First, the African youth brought back a western ideology, of the French stamp. This helped the French maintain control by gaining support among those groups that would soon become the francophone leaders. Western education opened the doors for France's neo-colonial indirect rule by setting up a close relationship with the influential educated leaders in Africa.

The other problem lies in the fact that the African youth never got the chance to be African youth. Children of the elite and highly educated African boys, and a few girls, were mostly shipped off at a young age to France and grew up in a French, not African, culture. Returning, they secured many high status public and private sector jobs, mostly because of a government policy to hire qualified indigenous people. These people were qualified; unfortunately their outlook was no more typical of the indigenous population than was that of the Frenchmen whose jobs they took. This new breed of educated Africans became the educated elite.

One of the greatest impacts of education on francophone Africa was the formation of an educated elite. This elite was educated under the French or western system and therefore able to enter and profit from the French system. The French made it very

attractive to join this group because the educated elite were granted citizenship, which accorded them voting rights and exempted them from forced labor and military service. Many Africans saw education as a way of achieving prestige and a better standard of living. The advantage for the French was that the educated elite gained economic and political power, thus giving the French strong indigenous support in the colonies. Unfortunately for the Africans, French colonial education ignored African languages and culture completely (Westley, 356), causing an immediate cultural break between the educated and traditional Africans. I will discuss these problems in greater detail in Chapter 3.

Resistance

One may ask why the Africans allowed the French presence, especially since it was so disastrous for the traditional African way of life. The simple fact is that the Africans did not just let the French and other colonizers take over. We need to see how the Africans reacted to their realization that they were being exploited and taken advantage of when they began to notice the dishonesty and persistence of the French colonizers. As the French continued to break treaties and penetrate deeper into Africa many natives began to protest. The region now called Côte D'Ivoire was the site of one of the larger resistance to the French incursions. Samori Touré was the leader of one of the larger kingdoms in that area, and he decided to put a stop to the growing French colonization. Starting around 1880 Touré rallied his kingdom, and others, against the French. The conflict was long and bloody and it took eighteen years of war before the French killed Touré and defeated the rebellion.

The French were not the only enemy faced by the African tribes. There were many differences and even rivalries between the tribes themselves. That caused disagreement on such issues as who should lead, and how they should carry out the revolt; it caused further dissension because many tribes still benefitted more than others under French control.

Further, the defeat of the revolt showed that the French were willing to use extensive military force to secure their colonial holdings, which helps us see the high level of interest in that area. To keep stronger order in its West African colonies, France set up an administrative system to insure its interests and those of the colonists.

Political Structures

Colonial Administration

With the administrators came new rules and laws imposed on the Africans. This continued to affect African culture since the French suppressed African practices that violated French law. Only cultural practices that the French approved of were allowed. This led to many uprisings, but the inability of the tribes to unite, and the military superiority of the French, put down rebellions like Touré's. By the end of World War I the French had placed many troops in West Africa to solidify their conquest of the region. The French then disarmed the tribes, regrouped the villages and recentralized the administration to ensure future order.

The key element the colonial administration brought to Africa was a western political structure. As Naomi Chazan states in her book Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa, "colonial states created an administrative hierarchy through the

concentration of political and administrative functions in the hands of the colonial civil service,” (42) such centralization was a new political form for the Africans. France assembled a large police force to secure its holding in Africa. The model that the French had given to francophone Africa “was essentially a military administrative unit. The political culture bequeathed by colonialism contained the notions that authoritarianism was an appropriate mode of rule and that political activity was merely a disguised form of self-interest, subversive of the public welfare” (42-43).

In 1906 France named Gabriel Angoulvant the governor of Cote D’Ivoire. He proceeded with a vision of forceful conquest, or “pacification” of the colony. He was very oppressive and discriminatory against the Africans. The French soon realized that they could no longer insure their interests in Africa through repressive governors. They then decided to appoint less harsh leaders, but these were still quite hard on the Africans (Handloff, 11). Through colonial politics, France taught Africa by example how to run the kind of oppressive military regime that is now a hallmark of African politics.

French Colonies Vs. British Colonies

To see if French neo-colonial existence is problematic we can compare it to a similar neo-colonial relationship between the English and the anglophone African colonies. Unlike the British in their neighboring African colonies, who had established civilian rule by the early twentieth century, the French introduced little that prepared the indigenous populations for representative government, except in the “Four Old Communes” of Senegal (St. Louis, Dakar, Rufisque, and the island of Gorée) which were heavily French populated trade cities (Betts, 117). At the time of independence the Africans only knew

their indigenous structures while the French handled the colonial leadership. At independence, the francophone countries were suddenly put in a situation where they had to fill leadership positions and they simply did not know how; so they appealed to the only group they knew who could help, the French. Thus the French influence continued, this time trying to help the Africans rule themselves.

Nationalism and Decolonization

France decided to begin decolonization for many reasons. The first and perhaps most pressing issue was France's failure to unite the francophone countries. They were structurally unsound and unstable and France opted to bypass deeper measures to ensure the unity of its empire. As a result, France voted to allow the francophone states to secede (Betts, 13). Not all of the francophone citizens wanted to secede from French rule, granted, but the independence lobby was too strong. The French had established a distinct system in Africa, and someone was needed to run it if the French would leave.

World War II

One factor that the French, or any of the colonial powers could not stop, was the compelling feelings of nationalism after World War II. The war had increased the hardship on the African farmers and laborers. To increase wartime production, the French Vichy regime (which had sided with Nazi Germany) forced the Africans into higher production to help the war effort. The production of exports for the war not only worked the Africans to the bone, but it reinforced the export dependency and wealth transfer within the colonies (Davidson, 63). Increased hardship upon the Africans stirred the resentment toward the

colonists and stimulated the will for freedom. The French and other colonial powers recruited many Africans to aid in the war effort. The Europeans could have never imagined how much opposition the war would foster in Africa.

A Zimbabwean writer told the following story about a British officer trying to enlist people to help fight in the war, and the same ideas hold true for France as well:

‘Away with Hitler! Down with him!’ said the British officer.

‘What’s wrong with Hitler?’ asked the African.

‘He wants to rule the whole world,’ said the British officer.

‘What’s wrong with that?’

‘He’s a German you see,’ said the British officer, trying to appeal subtly to the African’s tribal consciousness.

‘What’s wrong with being German?’

‘You see, said the officer, it’s not good for one tribe to rule another.

Each tribe must rule itself. That’s only fair. A German must rule Germans, and Italian Italians’ (Davidson, 64)

The irony in that passage was all too obvious. The British, and our case the French, were sending off the people they rule to fight for freedom. France and England’s cause became the African's cause.

Naturally, when the African soldiers returned from the war, they brought with them all the feelings and desires of the Allies’ campaign, those of freedom. In the war, the Africans fought as equals side-by-side with the Europeans. The soldiers had seen that they

were not inferior to the French, and that they deserved to be free from France just as France from Germany.

France, under the leadership of Charles De Gaulle, decided if they wanted to keep their African advantages, they needed to make the switch away from direct rule, and that is when the long period of indirect rule began. Sentiments for independence were strong, and France needed to retreat a bit or risk losing the many social, political and economic advantages that the colonies had provided. This was attempted at the Brazzaville conference.

Brazzaville Conference

The Brazzaville conference of 1944 was an effort initiated by De Gaulle to quiet the pleas for independence, and move to an indirect method of rule. The conference drew up a series of recommendations for the colonies which included representative governments including local and regional consultative assemblies. The only binding element of the conference was an invitation for colonial participation in the French Community through a colonial parliament or federal assembly (Betts, 60). France made it clear that independence was not an option for the colonies. As De Gaulle stated at the conference, "The purposes of the civilizing efforts by France in the colonies rule out any idea of autonomy, any possibility of evolution outside the framework of the French empire" (Betts, 60). Thus the trend of assimilation and association continued.

The conference had little effect in taming the hunger for freedom, so in 1945-46 the French passed referendums to reform the colonies. The referendums provided: greater human rights, free speech, association and assembly, but not full citizenship or

independence because the Africans were perceived as “not ready for it” (Handloff, 18). France put an end to forced labor and forced military service. The conference, and the later reforms, took many positive steps for the Africans, but the Africans made it clear that the French would need to do more.

Loss of Indochina

Another factor that weakened the hold the colonial powers had on the colonies was news of the French loss of its colonies in Indochina. In 1949, after years of bloody struggle, the French government granted full independence to Vietnam, and in 1954 Indochina was freed from French control. Word of the inability of France to keep control in Indochina soon spread to the African colonies. This news had two different impacts upon the Africans. First, it helped fuel the nationalist movement and struggle for freedom in Africa (Betts, 119); It told the Africans that if Asian colonies can become free, so should the African ones. Second it showed that the colonial powers were beatable. It was clear to France that independence in sub-Saharan Africa was inevitable, and its new focus was on indirect rule.

Loi Cadre

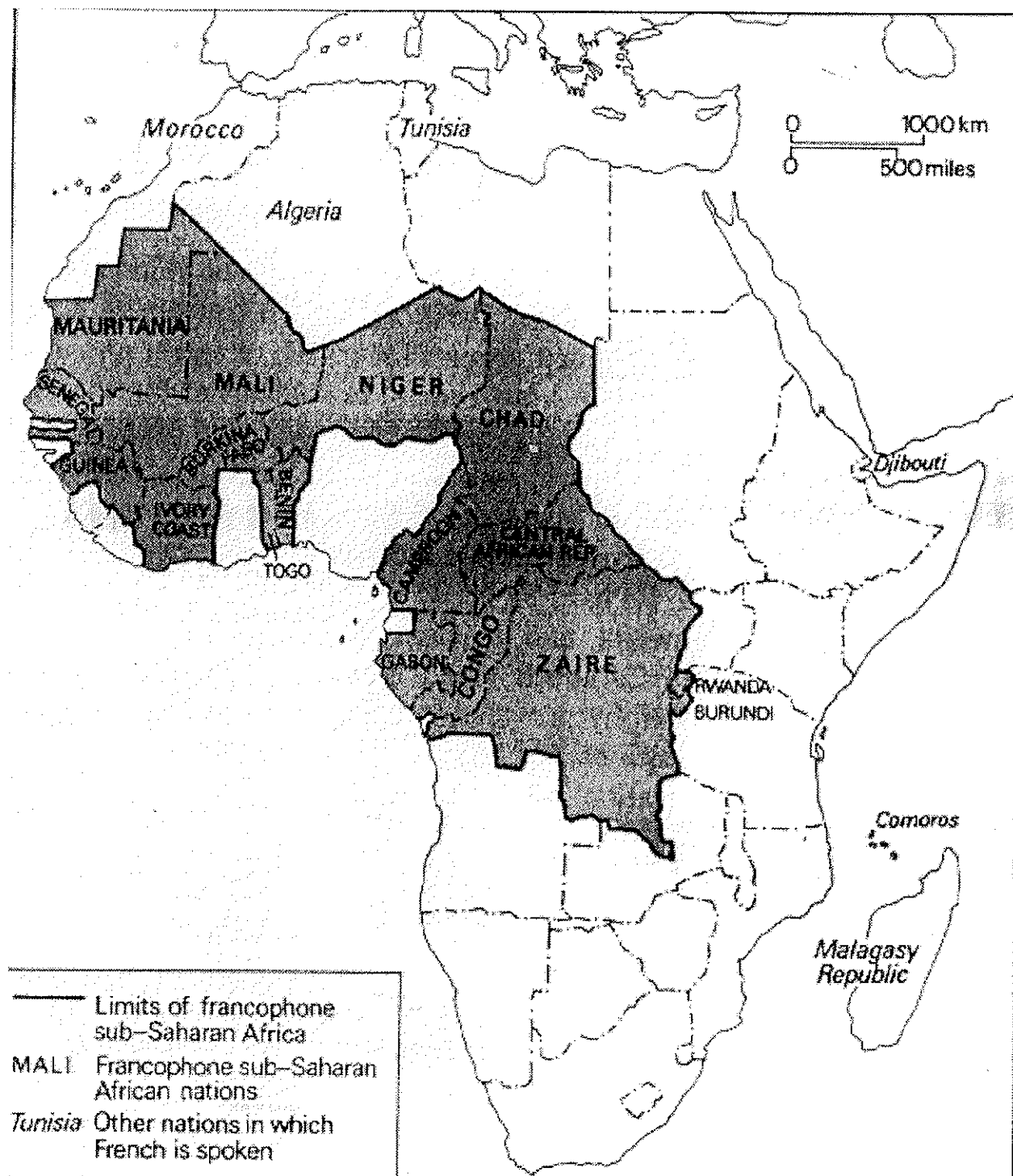
The *Loi Cadre*, or the enabling act, of 1957 established further reforms and freedoms in the French colonies. Direct rule was severely threatened by the growing sense of nationalism, and the Brazzaville Conference did not have the desired results for France. The law constitutionally reformed the colonies without the need for constitutional amendment. It gave universal suffrage, extended the powers and responsibilities of the territorial assemblies and provided each with a council of ministers, or cabinet. It was seen

as the “means by which to prepare the African colonies for self-government, if not independence” (Betts, 122-3).

Colonial times had been a radical change for the Africans, and most areas of Africa fought vigorously, both politically and militarily, for independence. The neocolonial relationship between France and francophone Africa give us another page in the history of the present situation in the francophone countries.

Francophone Africa in 1985

From: Edward Corbett *The French Presence in West Africa*



Chapter 2
1960,
Full Independence for the Francophone Countries,
or Was it?

“To win and proclaim a nation’s independence
but keep its old structures is to plow a field
but not sow it with grain for harvest”

-Sékou Touré (Shaw, 122)

When Charles De Gaulle declared in 1960 that all the French colonies were now independent, it did not mark an end to the French presence. France pursued a neo-colonial relationship that remained much closer than that of their English counterparts. France, under De Gaulle, decided that the francophone countries needed guidance, and that France was the country to lead the charge in African development. France originally had nearly as much to gain as the Africans from the relationship. Therefore we must now determine, the extent of French presence in neo-colonial Africa.

France gave the francophone nations independence, but the French business elite and the African educated elite still held the financial and political power. When the

francophone countries voted for independence in 1960, they had obviously renounced the French leadership in their country but did not abandon the French the French model.

New Political Structures

The French left roads, buildings, language and political and economic institutions (Betts, 4), which all served as building blocks for today's structure. Many African states knew that if they wanted to develop they would need to reorganize and restructure starting with their government. The French colonial regime has been the basis for most francophone neo-colonial decisions, so the French influence has continued. First, there had been a wholesale adoption of the French legal system throughout the francophone countries, but sometimes traditional practice and ideals prevailed. Senegal, for example, made a radical change in the area of land claims. The government passed the law that gave land ownership to the people cultivate it, a traditional African practice far different from the European norm of full ownership (Corbett, 54). Guinea denounced the French model by instating a Marxist-Leninist government, but these are two isolated examples.

The majority of the francophone Africans had lived under the French umbrella for nearly a century. They had grown accustomed to that type of living and for many it was the only way they knew. The French system was there, but there were no longer any French to run it. Therefore the Africans invited the French right back in. Corbett tells how African leaders repeatedly called for French personnel (51). He further writes that the government structures of France's former colonies south of the Sahara were all built on the

French model. Except Guinea, most of them continued to mirror French constitutional developments almost as faithfully as if they were still officially governed by Paris (49).

The French colonial model consisted of regional governors and puppet governments backed up by the military. After independence a new level of leadership produced a new type of political elite. This group consisted of influential elite Africans from the independence movement like Sékou Touré in Guinea, and heads of unions and political parties like Félix Houphouët-Boigny in Côte D'Ivoire. This political elite varied from country to country, and many made genuine efforts to help the country, but most shared one goal, to remain in power. To do that the political elite had two options: first, to use their positions and influence to fortify themselves politically, or second, to maintain the existing arrangement and risk losing many of their supporters. Most of the political elite chose the first, and because of the weak position of most of the francophone countries, the political elite could easily maintain their power.

The newly democratic states became anything but democratic. As I stated in Chapter 1, the French administration had the Africans oppression and authoritarianism. After independence authoritarianism prevailed, leaving the leadership with no accountability to the poor majority. The new regimes carried on the colonial practice of making and implementing key decisions that granted them discretionary power over the country (Seidman & Anang, 249). Colonial administration started the francophone Africans off on a harsh political ideology that Africa is still attempting to overcome.

There were many ways in which the political elite strengthened and solidified their positions. The first and most common of these was the creation of a single-party system, outlawing competition and military coups (Chazan, 47-9). The single-party system is attractive to African leaders because “it may be used to rouse, exhort and encourage people toward desired ends but more important, it limits participation by ordinary citizens. It is designed both in its actual structure and by its philosophy to affect control and limit democratic participation” (Nyong’o, 33). Such a system aids the governing elite, but it destroys the power and influence of the people, severely limiting the scope of government potential. They are disengaged from the entire process of governing are usually the losers and victims of the relationship.

New Economic Structures

A major miscalculation of the French was not immediately ensuring a strong presence of indigenous workers in both political office and high positions in the private sector, most striking was in the business world. Edward Corbett told of the immediate problems with the French presence in the first ten years after independence. Many dilemmas he points out are still very true today.

In the late sixties . . . practically no Africans could be found in other than humble capacities in industry and commerce . . . private employment attitude pointed up a tiny number of business concerns in African hands and the reluctance of foreign firms to advocate its indigenous employees (Corbett, 90)

Because of this discrimination by French entrepreneurs, it took much longer for the Africans to begin becoming self-sufficient, a goal they still have not attained. How can the Africans be expected to prosper when they do not own the wealth of their own country?

Corbett continues:

Commercial and industrial life has been dominated since the last century by a few big French companies. In the first decade of independence the number of French owned firms has continued to increase (Corbett, 92)

These French industries flocked to reap the benefits of foreign labor and resources. Just as the United States currently does in Latin America and other developing countries, France took advantage of the cheap labor and resources that the francophone countries had to offer. With France guaranteeing the Communauté Financière Africaine (CFA) franc, African labor was an indispensable commodity for large corporations interested in decreasing production costs. African labor and ownership were never a priority, nor seen as necessary for development. Therefore, the Africans were the obvious losers in the neo-colonial relationship.

The most evident structure the French used to control the francophone economy was the creation of the franc zone. The franc zone is the group of francophone nations that use the CFA franc, currently Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Côte D'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo. The strong French franc guarantees members of the franc zone a stable and convertible currency. Zone members are also considered part of the French community receiving special trade and aid benefits from France, similar to a most favored nation status.

Trade with France

Foreign trade between the francophone countries and France remained at surprisingly high levels after independence. As Table 1 shows, the vast majority of the trade from the former colonies was directly with France.

Table 1

Exports of the 14 Afro-Malagasy States Associated with France (in \$ millions).											
1968	Totals	To France	To Other Afr.	% to France	Imports:	Total	From France	From Other Afr.	% from France	With France 87-88	
Cameroon	189	64	18	34		187	99	18	53	28.2	
C. A. R.	29	12	.2	34		40	22	3	55	42.3	
Chad	28	18	3	64		38	16	5	42	12	
Congo-Braz	44	5	2	12		83	48	5	58	24	
Dahomey	17	9	2	50		38	19	4	50	na	
Gabon	125	43	9	34		64	37	3	58	36	
Ivory Coast	425	147	38	34		314	156	34	50	15.2	
Malagasy R	116	39	24	34		170	107	10	63	na	
Mali	10	2	6	18		34	11	6	32	12	
Mauritania	79	13	2	16		35	16	2	43	na	
Niger	31	23	2	74		33	22	4	66	80.1	
Senegal	151	100	16	66		181	79	24	43	30.6	
Togo	39	15	2	38		47	15	4	32	12.2	
Upper Volta	21	3	15	14		41	18	14	44	34.4	

-(Corbett, & Book of Vital Statistics)

Although the African nations benefitted financially from France importing francophone goods, the higher advantage was for the French. French goods accounted for an average of about 50% of francophone imports, much higher than the level of trade with their African neighbors.

French Continued Interest in Africa

Some argue that the French influence in Africa was a moral obligation, however, France had much to gain economically and politically from a strong neo-colonial relationship. Perhaps the most obvious interest is in the cheap African labor for French entrepreneurs. The economic relationship between France and francophone Africa was very similar to the relationship that NAFTA provides in Mexican-U.S. relations. By stabilizing the CFA franc, and allowing free capital flow between the CFA and French franc, the French ensure themselves access to a new world of cheap labor, broad consumer base, and many natural resources in the francophone countries.

The Sahara has not yet fully encompassed West Africa despite its southward spread. Most of the francophone countries have a solid resource base which is currently under the pressure of exploitation. France receives many raw materials at a special price, but more importantly are the priority rights involved for the materials. Cameroon, Mali, and Togo each have rich uranium deposits. Thanks to the special relationship France has maintained, the three countries agreed to give priority rights to France to develop the mines for their nuclear programs (Corbett, 85). France now receives 87-100% of its uranium from Africa and France's long-term commitment to nuclear power brings a degree of French reliance upon the francophone resources (Martin, 106). Other trade benefits include

Cote D'Ivoire's coffee and cocoa, and various other countries that export agricultural goods for France.

Concerning foreign policy in the United Nations (UN) and other international organizations, France had much to gain with a group like the francophone countries backing its international policy. It was becoming more difficult for the large developed nations to receive support from developing countries in the General Assembly of the United Nations. France always saw the francophone countries as ambassadors to the third world to gain support for French supported UN Resolutions (Corbett, 85). In the heat of the Cold War, all major world powers were looking for strategical allies. Africa is a vast continent considered an essential area to keep free of the Soviet Union and communism. Chad was in a perfect location to place a marshaling point from which French military forces can be relayed by air to the other parts of West and Equatorial Africa (Corbett, 58). Economic prosperity, international influence, and Cold War strategy formed the bulk of French neo-colonial interest in Africa.

Clones, Medials, and Radicals

Since independence, nearly all 14 of the francophone countries have had their own ideas and agendas for their own development. There were three different paths the former colonies could take. Some francophone countries decided that the French structure was an excellent model, so they followed it by inviting in the French influence to its greatest extent. This group I have called the "Clones." The second avenue was a more liberal approach in which the states strived for full independence, but kept a few crucial ties to Paris. This group I have simply named the "Medials." The third, anti-French route, which

often went directly against whatever the French did or recommended, I called the “Radicals.”

The first group, the Clones, consists of the countries that followed most closely the French model. Obvious members of this group consist of Senegal and Côte D’Ivoire; others include Niger and Cameroon. The most noticeable characteristic of these countries in this category is the degree of direct trade with France. Table 1 shows how these countries had the highest amounts of trade with France. Other characteristics of the Clones include an adoption of the French system including both political and economic structures, including membership in the franc zone.

The Radical groups are the francophone countries that strayed from the French model. Mali entered this group by exiting the franc zone to pursue a socialist model, and Congo, held a Marxist-Leninist economy for over thirty years. However, Guinea is the prominent example of the radical group. Guinea was the first country granted independence in 1958, and it later turned down entry into the franc zone in 1960. Therefore, many of Guinea’s current economic problems differ from those facing the other francophone countries. Guinea’s situation is not better, but certainly different. Guinea adopted a socialist economy which immediately severed relations with French private enterprise. They did, however, establish external trade with the former Soviet Union, China and Cuba.

The largest of the three, the medials, are unique because they tried not to side too closely with the French, but established enough ties to benefit from the help France had been handing out to the African nations. These countries are also members of the franc

zone, and benefitted early on from its stability and convertibility. They are also making strides against bipolar dependency and toward regionalism and self-reliance. These countries currently include Central African Republic, Gabon, Benin, Togo and Burkina Faso.

Countries have often moved from one group to the other.. With the instability in Africa, regimes and governments are often overthrown or radically changed. The new policies and structures cause countries to move from group to group, as Congo has done. As democracy and decentralization grow in francophone Africa, the trend is toward the medial group. Countries are now trying to move away from close involvement and dependency with France, and move toward self-sufficiency.

Now that the historical relationship has been presented, we should continue by looking at the problems the relationship has caused. Francophone Africa is a region of the world haunted by problems relating both to their colonial relationship and difficulties facing most developing countries.

Chapter 3,

What Went Wrong?

You can't have a strong currency
based on weak economies

-(Whiteman, 2).

In the last ten years, the francophone countries have seen a serious decline in their development. Some issues may seem to have little to do with France, such as mismanagement, debts, corruption, unskilled workers and inexperienced officials, but others are directly related to the level of French influence. The largest examples of French influence gone bad include the overvaluing of the CFA franc, French influence on the francophone elite, and as problems arose, the French belief that they could handle it all alone. Some issues, however, are the responsibility of the Africans themselves, these include corruption, coups, and the inability to unite.

Africa and The Prime Directive

Whenever a country tries to dictate policy to another country, especially when their cultures differ, problems arise. No matter what one's intentions, good or bad, if one interferes with the normal evolution and development of another culture, it will always end

in disaster. When France began to assimilate the African colonies they violated a rule called the prime directive. The prime directive is the philosophy of the United Federation of Planets in the television series *Star Trek*. The philosophy, simply put, is non-interference. France's attempt to interfere caused a major disruption in the ability of the Africans to rule themselves. Marshal Louis H.G. Lyautey, a critic of French rule in colonial Africa, quoted the famous colonial author Jean-Louis de Lanessan by saying

In all countries there is leadership. For the European people who come there as conquerors, the great error is in destroying this leadership. Then the country, deprived of its framework falls into anarchy . . . Therefore, break no traditions, change no customs . . . it must be in our interests.
(Collins, 115)

This clearly states where the French went wrong. They destroyed the leadership, they broke traditions and they broke customs. The French thought they could assimilate the Africans into French culture and create a France of the south. Their attempt to turn the Africans into Frenchmen did nothing but separate their cultures even more. It offended the Africans by calling their culture inferior, and further alienated the Africans from their traditional cultures. A group that contributed to the cumbersome relationship was the African educated elite.

The Educated and Political Elite

Before independence, the educated elite generally supported the French system and their policies. Independence came, and with it an opportunity to change, but the African educated elite held the money and the power. When it came time to select a system for their

countries, the educated elite acted in their self interest and reinstated the French model. The elite, who held the power, were benefiting from the French model, and wanted to continue to profit. I will elaborate on how and why in my sections *corruption* and *mismanagement*.

The political elite did the same thing. They too were benefiting from the French model, and after independence they went beyond French-style politics to keep control. They suppressed and sometimes even outlawed opposing parties. The single-party system that so many of the francophone countries instated was a simple means of solidifying their leadership role.

The French brought many things to Africa, although most of them had an effect opposite to what they intended. This quotation by Ali A. Mazrui helps illustrate where many of the imperialist nations went wrong.

You can teach them English (or French), you can teach them Christianity,
but you cannot teach them to govern themselves, that they must learn
themselves (Mazrui)

What Mazrui means is that the French language helped unite many African nations, as did Christianity and Islam, but the current political structures have had the opposite effect. The Africans must create a governance system to fit African needs. They can learn from other nations, but the government must be molded to fit African culture, needs, and priorities.

Supporting Poor Regimes

Every nation has struggled at one point or another with deficient governments, but a government without the support of the people will inevitably fail unless it is supported by another government. That is exactly how so many oppressive and military francophone

governments were able to maintain long term control. In Gabon, French troops reversed a coup d'état against Leon M'Ba in 1964. France has since then supported M'Ba's autocratic successor Omar Bongo despite "violations of democratic rights and dubious expenditures of oil revenues" (Chazan, 381). France's support of the precarious regime is due to the desire for the oil and uranium deposits in Gabon. In 1984 Bongo "blackmailed" France into making Gabon the third largest recipient of development assistance by threatening to turn to America in return for access to the deposits. France agreed despite Gabon's highest per capita income in francophone Africa (Martin, 3). Development and reformation in the francophone nations becomes very difficult when France sides with the oppressors. This type of inconsistency on the part of the French impairs the francophone effort for peace, stability and justice.

France attempted to abandon its capricious policies in francophone Africa in 1990 at the *La Baule* Franco-African Summit, where French President François Mitterand declared that there would be "no development without democracy", and further, that France would begin to link its aid to democratic reform (Cumming, 5-6). Since Mitterand made that promise French policy has been anything but consistent. France did postpone aid to Zaire in 1991 and Togo in 1993 for their refusal to undertake democratic reforms. Similarly it suspended thirty million francs to Benin until it showed movement toward democracy (Cumming, 5). At the same time, France neglected Cameroon's shady 1992 election as well as the transitional Malian government's threat to peace. More recently, France supported Cote D'Ivoire's 1995 presidential election that was tainted with incumbent Bédié's disqualification of his leading opposition. The French minister of aid even went so

far as to tell Bédié before the election that “France would stand by him” (Economist, 20). Clearly France is trying to protect its interests, even at the cost of democracy and equality. France carries a high degree of political and economic clout in Africa. Unfortunately France is still ignoring its responsibility to work for stability and democratization in the area instead of French supported corruption and chaos.

Lack of Unity

That brings me to the next problem that the Africans have struggled with--the inability to unite. For centuries Africa has consisted of hundreds of different tribes. When the Europeans drew the new borders they did not take into account the tribal lands, and as I pointed out in Chapter 1, many different tribes now lie within the same borders. The problem that faces them now is the need to unite. In each of the francophone countries many of the tribes are still in disagreement, so much that the disunity makes it nearly impossible to formulate statewide goals and programs.

Much of traditional Africa was based on the community. Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart shows how the needs of the community were paramount for many of the societies. Under colonialism, Europe introduced the idea and practice of the importance of the individual, thus breaking the strong ties that bound traditional Africa (Chazan). Capitalism, for example, was a radically new idea for most of the subsistence farmers of Africa. Suddenly it is no longer their role to provide for the needs of their family or of the community; instead they begin seeking economic profit.

Not only does disunity hurt the ability to take on and complete governmental tasks, it also weakens the structure as a whole, thus opening the doors for military coups.

Military coups are not a practice introduced by France; they are a consequence of the problems in Africa today. The military holds a definite advantage over many other groups because of its specific and strict organization. The military simply rallies and takes over while all of the smaller groups continue to bicker and lose. One may then ask why not have the military rule? The answer is simple, with most of the African militaries, the leaders are not educated enough to run a state. Within the military, promotions often are politically based, rather than on merit and qualifications. Basically, military regimes promise quick solutions to complex problems and often end up compounding the problem. They cannot stimulate the interests of the people, nor stop corruption. Their principal weakness is that they do not provide ample political legitimacy for good government; they are non-democratic and have voluntary participation unaccountable to the people (Nyong'o, 33). Legitimacy can only come from the people, not from the military or oppressive leaders.

The failure of regional attempts at unity have doomed African countries to the bilateral dependency they suffer from today. In the book 21st Century Africa: Towards a New Vision of Self-Sustainable Development by Ann Seidman and Frederick Anang, they point out the four major problems with regional organizations: first, an uneven distribution of benefits and cost of integration for which it remains difficult to compensate, second, institutional deficiencies including proliferation, over-centralization and politicization, third, the politico-ideological differences aggravated by militarization and destabilization, and finally, external dependence. Africa conducts over one half of its trade with the EEC

and only 5-6% in intra-regional trade (Seidman & Anang, 88). These problems must be combatted at the core, with the contribution of each individual member. Just like any organization, regional organizations are only as good as their members. There must be stability and participation in each country for the unification and prospering of Africa .

Economic Aspects

The most recent pressing problems for the francophone nations have been with the economy. Capital flights, trade deficits, political instability, large foreign debt, and an overvalued currency all top their list of crises. These problems find nearly all their roots in the colonial days with France. Members of all three groups (Clones, Medials, Radicals) have had to face these problems, but some more than others, due to the relationship each group holds with France. Any country that is a member of the franc zone has had to deal with these problems, primarily because they arise from the currency itself.

The first of these problems lies within the capital flights to France from francophone Africa. This problem has damaged African economies since French investors first arrived at the end of the 19th century. The cost of living in Africa is far below that of France, nonetheless, many French work and live in the francophone countries while their friends and families still live in France. Since most entrepreneurs in Africa make high wages, they end up sending the excess funds back home to France where it adds to the level of consumption in France, not in the francophone country that produced the wealth. When money is earned but not spent in Africa, it causes a large slip in the economy.

Trade deficits are another burning issue for the francophone economies, above all with their largest partner, France. As Table 1 shows, the French are exporting at a much higher level to the francophone countries than they are importing from them. France's share in French-African total imports and exports is 40%, while Africa represents only 8% of France's total trade (Martin, 108). The francophone countries must strive to eliminate the unequal levels of trade. The African producers are being outsold by French imports, causing the African economies to suffer.

The two problems particularly hurt the Clone group because of the high degree of French investment allowed in their country. Although the Medials do not hold the same relationship with France as the Clones do, the Medials still suffered in their attempts to allow inside investment. The Radicals, however, have not lost much in capital flights and trade deficits due to the small amounts of foreign investment.

Another cause of the trade deficits stems from African dependence on a small number of primary commodities, such as copper, phosphates, cotton, cocoa, and coffee. This dependence makes the economy vulnerable to the world market fluctuations and demands since the nineteen seventies (Van de Walle, 393). These fluctuations have a serious impact on development planning and government budgeting (Chazan, 276). Africans need to diversify production to avoid dependency and economic shock when world market prices fall.

Borrowing money is one the best ways for a country to initiate large investments. The high-priced market in the nineteen seventies for cocoa and coffee, along with the two oil booms in Congo and Gabon, caused confident borrowing by the francophone countries,

which led to debt problems in the nineteen eighties (Whitman, 2) and a debt crisis today. The francophone countries had little trouble finding lenders because France agreed to back most of the loans. The interest alone is at an enormous level, while full payment of the debt seems to be an impossibility. Because of the mismanagement of the original funds, the francophone countries have minute assets to show for the heavy investment. France has helped in covering some of the costs, but it is getting far too expensive for both sides. In 1987, Cote D'Ivoire paid 15.6% of its GDP toward long term payments, and Congo paid 10.3% (Gadzay, 108). Julius Nyerere, former president of Tanzania pleaded with bankers concerning the overwhelming African debt asking "must we starve our children to pay our debts?" (Vallely, 65). Without bilateral compromise to this problem, starvation is the future that many francophone countries might face.

One of the practices that has since proven most detrimental is France's "bailing out" the Africans when economic problems arose. For example, in 1988, Côte D'Ivoire was facing a major budget crises, so France agreed to buy 400,000 tons of Ivorian cocoa well above the world market price (Van de Walle, 401). The French aid may have saved a disaster in Côte D'Ivoire, but it was only a band aid. The French aid kept treating the symptoms but not the disease. In 1988 France handed out twenty billion French francs (4 billion dollars, based on 5:1 exchange rate) to support the CFA franc's parity alone (Van de Walle, 393). The French never attacked the real problems of mismanagement, corruption, and overvalued currency, thus allowing, and supporting deficient African economic practices. While the French have stepped back from helping the Africans, primarily

because of the expense, the Africans are still infected with the same economic and political diseases that have hurt them since independence.

Realizing these problem, the Bretton Woods Institutions, primarily the International Monetary Fund (IMF), has made many structural recommendations to African nations. While other countries followed the IMF fiscal and monetary discipline to adjust change, the franc zone “avoided adjustment and continued to live beyond their means and accumulate debt” (Van De Walle, 392). In the nineteen eighties, the socialist French government did not agree with the economic conditions the IMF attached to loans. France decided not to require francophone African nations to follow any of the IMF or World Bank requirements to receive French bilateral aid (Cumming, 4). This French action allowed for the continuation of the same deficient economic policies by sidestepping the necessity to restructure and reform. In addition to being an economic failure, avoiding adjustment is also a political failure. Francophone leaders “have used and abused the franc zone rules and mechanisms to avoid reform” (Van De Walle, 396-7). Application of the reforms is the only way that francophone Africa can move from dependency to prosperity.

Overvaluing of the CFA Franc

Chapter 2 states how the French guaranteed the value of the CFA franc for the francophone countries. This was beneficial in gaining foreign investment. Unfortunately, in an attempt to keep Africa investment attractive, the French refused to devalue the CFA franc when it needed to do so. Their non-francophone African neighbors all devalued during the nineteen eighties to try to promote internal production and trade. The French left

the CFA at the higher level. The international community questioned why the French made such a bold stance on this issue, but France wasn't without her reasons.

One of the largest reasons for the overvaluing was a interference from the French-African business lobby. The overvalued currency made Africa more attractive to French entrepreneurs, who would go to Africa in order to make money (*faire le CFA*), but devaluation also would hurt the French who had already invested in Africa. They benefitted from the high valued CFA and risked major losses in the event of a devaluation (Whiteman, 2-3). The third group that kept the high value alive were the elites and bourgeois residing in Africa. With a highly valued currency, imported goods are very cheap, and the elite were not too excited about having to pay more for French wine and other imported luxury goods. This irresponsibility is revealed in the 500,000 bottles of French champagne that Cameroon imported annually in the early nineteen eighties (Van de Walle, 401). Former Cote D'Ivoire president Félix Houphouët-Boigny lobbied against the devaluation because he feared the psychological and political consequences of the move (Whiteman, 2). His concern was for the economic and political stability of the francophone countries, for which Houphouët-Boigny felt a strong French role was vital. However, there is some doubt whether or not he was concerned for the entire country or for himself and the elite.

There were many negative externalities of the overvalued currency. Above all is the inability of domestic products to compete with inexpensive imports. The farmers were really feeling the pinch because they simply couldn't compete with cheaper imported foods. The Radical group was not affected at all by the CFA value. Mauritania and Guinea, who

were not in the franc zone during this time, were able to keep a handle on their own currencies and not leave it up to French bankers.

Although the economy is an easily recognized problem it is far from the only one. The problems lie much deeper than simple aid and trade, and keep popping up all over for the francophone countries. Mismanagement and poor leadership in their own countries, complemented by corruption and smuggling make the francophone countries a near disaster among developing countries.

Corruption

Another indirect problem lay with smuggling. Merchants from neighboring countries like Ghana and Nigeria, which both have a much lower valued currency, benefit greatly by smuggling goods into the country and selling them at a much higher rate than in their home country. "Fraud at the border is simply too profitable for the state agents in charge of implementing controls and tariffs" (Van de Walle, 404). This corruption is seen throughout the francophone countries. Whenever a currency is valued lower, illegal markets prosper through smuggling. In 1989, reports from several franc zone countries suggested that as much as 90% of relevant imports escaped taxation in one form or another (Van De Walle, 395).

Corruption is not confined to the border guards. It is seen at the top as well. Nicolas Van de Walle tells how some of the French aid given to Gabon and Côte D'Ivoire made its way back to party slush funds, via networks of personal relations that date back to independence, (403) which makes reform very difficult. Capital is a needed commodity in stimulating a developing economy, however it does not do much good when placed in kick

backs and slush funds for political officials. This is a problem that confronts countries of all three types in francophone Africa, as well as developing nations around the world. Franc zone or not, corruption is a problem that exists and haunts developed and developing countries alike. Many people call political corruption a part of human nature, but I see it as an issue of discipline and priorities. If the leader has a guiding vision, driving toward the good of the nation as a whole, his personal desires for financial advancement should remain secondary.

In Chapter 2, I told of the educated indigenous people who were hired or elected to influential positions. This type of patronage is still quite evident today. Beside the monies that went into slush funds, other capital was poorly invested by the African governments. Trade deficits, large foreign debts, and too much confidence in their future role in the global economy came together to overwhelm the economy of francophone Africa.

Mismanagement

One asset the French gave the Africans was a quality infrastructure. In colonial times the French brought technology, roads, and railroads to the francophone countries. The problem is that most infrastructure was built to aid French trade. The roads and railroads all connected the major cities with the nearest ports to support trade with France. No system of transport linked the former colonies with each other (Manning, 31). The Africans did make modest improvements on their own, but were continually plagued by a lack of capital. With the economies of the francophone countries struggling, as the list of other needs for public expenditures has been increasing, the infrastructure has been put on the back burner and left to deteriorate. Improving infrastructure is a key element to

improving trade and commerce as well as investment for the advancement of technology. The investment must be a regional effort, because railroads that stop at country borders cannot be used for external trade. Infrastructure is one of the best ways to curtail capital flight from any country. Since many francophone countries have neglected this resource, their trade and commerce now feel the pinch, especially now that France can't afford to fix all the problems.

Another dilemma involved in mismanagement is overconsumption. Capital in the francophone countries is going toward dead end investments like monuments, palaces and personal Swiss bank accounts. For example, Houphouët-Boigny of Cote D'Ivoire squandered his country's finances when he initiated the construction of the Yamassoukro cathedral, the largest in the world for a country whose Christian population is only twelve percent. This clearly displays the extravagance of many of the African leaders (Chabal, 216). A stronger example is with Ahmadu Ahidjo diverted nearly 70% of Cameroon's oil revenues into Swiss bank accounts, then to be "spent however he saw fit outside normal budgetary procedures" (Van De Walle, 399). Africa is not a financially rich continent, and the elite must stop indulging themselves as if their country could afford it. Finances must be put toward improving the state itself, not particular individuals.

One of the largest causes of francophone mismanagement is the lack of skilled managers. Under colonialism, the French and the minority educated elite literally ran the economy. They were the managers in a western-style system that the Africans soon became dependent upon. When the French left, the Africans suddenly needed to run a system they had not invented, nor could fully comprehend. This shortage of indigenous

people with management skills caused a crisis (Chabal, 237). The francophone countries are still struggling with the lack of skilled labor, and the best solution is to educate their population and adapt their system to meet the skills and needs of the Africans.

Without exception, the Clones, Medials, and Radicals all fell victim to mismanagement and corruption. From clone country Côte D'Ivoire's extravagance and overconsumption, to the military rule of radical Guinea, the problems with the lesser developed francophone Africa must be combated from within.

Now that we have established the historical relationship between France and francophone Africa as well as the problems that it brought we can now move on to see what steps have been made to remedy these problems. I will address that by showing how the relationship stands today.

Chapter 4,
The Current Reforms and Changes in
Franco-African Relations
1990-Present

Today, the relationship between France and francophone Africa is undergoing monumental changes with regard to the French presence in Africa. The death of Félix Houphouët-Boigny marked the end of a period of close relations. The devaluation of the CFA franc signals that the French have taken a considerable step back. This has forced the Africans to concentrate on fixing their own problems as well as expanding their markets beyond France itself.

Democratic Triumphs

The post cold war era has seen many positive strides toward multi-party democracies in West Africa. In 1991, Benin became the first African country to oust an incumbent African president in democratic elections, while Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania and Sierra Leone either adopted a new constitution or legalized opposition parties. Mali expelled its autocratic regime and Congo abandoned Marxist-Leninism (Chege, 148). Even Guinea from the Radical group moved from a military regime to its first multi-party election on December 19, 1993.

These leaps toward democratization restore faith in the future of African prosperity and sets the pace for their African neighbors. Although the degree of actual democratization varies from country to country, the trend is overwhelmingly toward the same multi-party democracy and capitalism which many francophone countries have been pursuing for over 35 years. Little reason remains to divide the francophone countries into Clones, Medials and Radicals. With the French stepping back and a streamlining of the francophone structures, there is no longer the need to evaluate each relationship separately.

Devaluation of the CFA Franc

In January 1995, France finally devalued the CFA, that had been considered overvalued for nearly five years. This event marked a significant break in the relationship between France and francophone Africa. Why did the French take so long to make the decision? Why did they do it? And most importantly, what effects has it had and will it have on further relations?

If there was one African who worked to keep the tight francophone Franco-African relationship, it was Félix Houphouët-Boigny. His death in December 1993 marked a significant change in the present and future of their bilateral relationship.

He was the principal machine under of the "special relationship," a key player in the system set up by General Charles de Gaulle after independence. For the French, he is irreplaceable. There is no one who can speak for the francophone Africans the way he did, or carry the same weight in Paris (Whiteman, 1)

It is hard to imagine that one person could play such a crucial role for both sides. Just as Whiteman stated, Houphouët-Boigny is irreplaceable as a spokes' person for Africa in France, even if Houphouët-Boigny did not represent every everyone, many francophone countries followed his lead. His death contributed to the new French policy in francophone Africa.

One of the first actions taken after Houphouët-Boigny's death was the devaluation of the CFA franc by 50%. Many developing countries have benefitted from a devaluation. In West Africa in 1986, the Nigerians devalued their currency by 60%, and the devaluation made their exports competitive for the first time in a decade (Van de Walle, 383). A lower valued currency should stimulate internal trade between the francophone nations, revamping the local products of each country. Because of the devaluation, the price of imported goods will double, but imported goods will not be effected. African agriculture is one of the major benefactors of this change. Francophone crops are now in higher demand in Africa since the price of foreign foodstuffs has doubled. The devaluation is a clear step toward self-sufficiency for the franc zone, loosening one of the largest holds France had on the African economy.

Foreign Interest in Africa

Another factor in the shrinking of French influence is the fact that other world powers would like to expand in Africa. In the past, France's close relationship has ensured them priority access to resources, labor and other various investments. With those ties now breaking, the United States for example, could benefit greatly by expanding their big business or transnational corporations to yet another foreign market. Francophone nations

must be cautious not to let other western powers in or they will fall back into the same economic dependency and exploitation as under French influence.

Nearly all of the members in all three groups are making a significant move toward greater independence. This movement cannot be attributed to either the French or the Africans alone; the actions of both are pushing each other further and further apart. France is now following the advice of the United Nations to halt its neo-colonial relationship with francophone Africa. The United States and other world powers like francophone countries having greater control over their own destinies so other western powers can exploit Africa. The francophone countries, on the other hand, are realizing that it is primarily the elite class who benefits from close western ties. The trend now should be to better meet the needs of the civilian majority on a regional, and not bi-polar level.

Structural Adjustment Aid and Programs

The United Nations (UN) has initiated many programs to help developing countries grow. UN programs range from technical cooperation to surveys and studies to the convening of international conferences, and from comprehensive development planning to special projects in individual fields such as trade, industry and agriculture. The UN supports development projects as well as helping to mobilize funds to pay for them (UN Fact Book, 97-98). It helped organize and now facilitates the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which is a catalyst for joint African development. The UN can also help in conflict resolution, as in the current border dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria.

The biggest problem with UN aid and programs is that participation is voluntary, and many rules are involved. No government is obliged to allow any UN action unless

they agree to it, the UN can take actions in the form of sanctions or peacekeeping, but they will not forcibly infringe upon the sovereignty of any nation. Further, there are many rules, or guidelines, for countries that wish to seek the help of the UN. Many African countries have denied or limited UN help for two reasons. Many states reject the aid because the ruling body sees it as a threat to the state's hegemony, but only because France helped cover the financial needs of the francophone countries (Van De Walle, 398). The French aid allowed the francophone states to use the aid as they wanted, bypassing the UN and its regulations.

The francophone nations, Africa as a whole, and all developing countries have the opportunity to change and reform UN policies to meet the growing needs of developing nations. By 1994, 28% of the total UN membership consisted of African nations (53 countries) including Egyptian Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali (Muyumba, 444). Africa must use the UN to their advantage to address international issues of social welfare. The UN is not the only source of finances for francophone Africa. As stated in Chapter 3, the majority of foreign aid has come directly from developed nations, mainly France. The problem with these programs is that they are often politically motivated. Chad, for example, in the late nineteen eighties received a great deal of economic aid from the U.S. and France, not because Chad had a stable government, not because Chad was in dire need, but simply because of its anti-Khaddafi stance with Lybia (Chabal, 243). Aid of this sort does nothing but monopolize western interests in Africa and support weak regimes.

Some steps have been made in recent years to revamp the failing economies of the francophone countries. These efforts need to be built upon in order for this region to truly develop to its full potential. Now with the radical changes taking place in the bilateral relationship, there is an excellent opportunity for the francophone countries to take matters into their own hands and work toward a prosperous nationhood.

Chapter 5,
What Does the Future Hold?
What Should it Hold?

Economic freedom is an indispensable means toward the achievement of
political freedom

-Milton Friedman (Friedman, 8)

Nobel Prize Winner in Economics

“In our republican doctrine colonial possession does not reach its final goal
and its true justification until the day that it comes to an end, and that is to
say, the day on which the colonial people has been rendered fully capable as
an emancipated people of governing itself”

-Léon Blum, 1946 (Betts, 26).

This quotation by the former leader of the French Socialist Party beautifully sums up the idea that the francophone countries are still in a sense colonial possessions of France because they cannot yet fully govern themselves. Francophone Africa has much potential, a potential that lies in good resources, a large work force, and people who want to succeed.

Proposed Solutions

Two proposed solutions to the African plight do not fit the needs of the francophone nations. The first of these is a proposal to redraw the national borders of Africa. This idea hopes to tackle the issue of disunity, brought on primarily by the imposed colonial borders (Chapter 1). This proposition fails to recognize how far the tribes have diverged since then. Many tribes have migrated to different regions and to urban areas. West Africa became a melting pot, an area where it would be impossible to draw new tribal borders, and if one tried one would create many more nations all starting from scratch. Beyond that, this idea does not tackle many real problems; the creation of a homogeneous society does not solve corruption, mismanagement, and rural poverty.

Another unsuccessful attempt at reform has been a system of power sharing. The system introduced formal rules to promote power sharing. Mauritius attempted such a policy, allowing eight of the most successful ethnic candidates to sit in parliament. Unfortunately, the inability of the opposing elites to agree or compromise caused the death of the system at the first serious conflict (Rothchild, Foley, 239). Here, the idea was right, but the legitimacy and power of the minority leaders was not solid, and therefore not effective. As with new borders, power-sharing methods are not hitting target areas. Reforms from within are needed.

Stability

Once Africa finds unity and nationalism within individual countries, these can turn to the question of stability. A strong governance system provides an internal stability under which the officials are accountable to the people, and not pursuing their own monetary or

tribal desires. Francophone Africa needs leaders who can realize the need for cohesion, not strife, within the country and can work to achieve that cohesion through communication and compromise, not by corruption and coup.

Constitutional innovations are a good start to making leadership more accountable for their actions. As Michael Chege states, Africa needs to “come to constitutional terms with ethnic diversity without derogation from the principle of territorial integrity and freedom” (195). Mauritius is off to a good start with power sharing, but the shared power has not fostered compromise. Michael Bratton and Nicolas Van De Walle propose three specific governmental reforms:

- (1) party reforms, permitting greater political competition, through amendments in party structures and procedures;
- (2) administrative reforms, involving changes in bureaucratic practice implementable within the existing framework of law; and
- (3) constitutional reforms, to check the powers of the party or state (36)

These reforms would directly attack authoritarianism through competition, bureaucratic reforms to increase efficiency, and checks and balances to curb corruption. It is essential that the francophone countries adopt such reforms to provide the essential base for development, stability.

Major African Regional Organizations

Organization	Founding date	Member states	Aims	Organization	Founding date	Member states	Aims
CPCM-Maghreb Permanent Consultative Committee	October 1964	[4] Algeria, Lybia, Morocco, Tunisia	Common market	UDEAC-Union douaniere & economique de l'Afrique centrale	December 1964	[6] Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Congo, Equat. Guinea, Gabon	Common market
UAM-Union of the Arab Maghreb	February 1989	[5] Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia	Economic, social & cultural	ECCAS-Economic Community of Central African States	October 1983	[10] Burundi, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Congo, Eq. Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, Sao Tome & P., Zaïre	Common market
Entente Council	May 1959	[5] Benin, Burkina, CI, Niger, Togo	Economic & Technical cooperation	CEPGL-Communaute economique des Pays des Grands Lacs	September 1976	[3] Burundi, Rwanda, Zaïre	Common market
OCAM-Organisation commune africaine et mauricienne	February 1965	[9] Benin, Burkina, CAR, CI, Mauritius, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal Togo	Economic & Technical cooperation	EAC-East African Community	December 1967 to 1977	[3] Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda	Common market
CEAO-Communaute economique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest	April 1973	[7] Benin, Burkina, CI, Mali, Mauritania, Niger Senegal	Common market	PTA-Preferential Trade Area for Eastern & Southern Africa	December 1981	[16] Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Rwanda, Somalia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe	Common market
ECOWAS-Economic Community of West African States	May 1975	[16] Benin, Burkina, CI, CV, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra-Leone, Togo	Common market & Economic Community	SADCC-Southern African Development Coordination Conference	April 1980	[9] Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Maawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe	Project-oriented Econom cooperative
MRU-Mano River Union	October 1973	[3] Guinea, Liberia Sierra Leone	Customs union				
Senegambia Confederation	December 1981	[2] Senegal, Gambia	Political union				

Note: CAR=Central African Republic; CI=Côte d'Ivoire; CV=Cape Verde

Unity

The first obstacle that each of the francophone countries must face is the necessity to unite. Unite as a region, a country, and a community. A true identity has not been established for any of the tribes and groups within each of the francophone states. If there is to be any hope for stability and unity in francophone Africa, the groups must agree to each give a little of themselves and unite for the good of their country and of Africa as a whole. "Despite the undeniable attachment to ethnic loyalty, voters recognize leaders who transcend narrow provincial ambitions" (Chege, 194). This reaffirms the notion that success cannot be attained until the people and the government work together for the good of the whole, not of the few.

After stability is achieved internally, African movement toward self-reliance is crucial to the establishment of a stable political and economic community. This would allow Africa to develop by its own means and abilities, making the growth benefit Africa, not France and the African elite.

Regionalism

Regionalism, or trading and sharing resources between a set group of countries, is a key method for breaking francophone dependency upon France. Regional cooperation allows for the mutual development of member states with similar economies. Bi-polar development, namely Franco-African, will always favor the stronger economy while causing dependency and exploitation as I explained in Chapter 3.

Organizations such as the ECA and OAU can play a significant role in helping the francophone Africans to work together to help themselves. Regional trading pacts have

bonded francophone economies together for mutual profits. Examples include the Conseil d'Entente with Côte D'Ivoire, Niger, Burkina Faso and Benin, which has a loan guarantee fund to help its members in times of need. The Union Douanière Equatoriale is a customs union with free trade between Central African Republic, Chad, Congo and Gabon.

The creation of the Economic Community of West African States or ECOWAS, was a positive shift toward pan-Africanism and self-reliance. The signing of the Treaty of Lagos in May 1975 established ECOWAS, which enacted the construction set up a common market for the sixteen West African members (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Cote D'Ivoire, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo). A free trade agreement abolishes all obstacles to trade between these countries, primarily tariffs. This significant trade organization is marked by the joining of the anglophone and francophone countries, displaying the first substantial joining of the two groups of former colonies (Chazan, 282).

Why has regionalism not worked thus far? The main problem with regional organizations like ECOWAS is that "nobody uses it" to its potential. Lack of participation, lack of commitment and lack of stability within the member countries have rendered the groups ineffective (Seidman & Anang, 88, 9). It is the members' responsibility to make the association work. Former president of Tanzania Julius Nyerere, spoke of the need to make African unity a priority.

"We (Africans) have to get ourselves organized, both nationally and at regional and at all African levels, to strengthen the reality of our commitment and action for intra-African cooperation . . . We need to learn

from the experience of past efforts at regional and subregional organizations, and we need to look again at how we support them by our own actions internally and by the stands we take in other international organizations or meetings” (Seidman & Anang, 43)

This statement by Nyerere in 1988 shows their awareness of the need for regional unity as a catalyst for African prosperity. These types of organization promote African growth with the help of other African nations. This avoids bi-polar dependency and coercion from the developed countries.

A Base in the Community

As I have now pointed out, many instruments of change lie within the government. However, the democracies of francophone Africa require community and citizen leadership and support for the changes to be effective. With this new wave of changes I am proposing, the citizens must play a major role in the design and implementation of the new policies, or they are doomed to fall victim to the same problems that keep today’s policies from working (Phillips, 33). Much of the African development has failed because it only involved a small portion of the population, i.e., only one tribe, only the rich, only the French, etc. The key to stopping that trend is to have all sides play a significant role in the decision making. Then and only then can compromise and cohesion make the francophone African nations prosper as they should.

Many groups can promote unity in francophone Africa: community organizations, volunteer organizations, unions, etc. all can help in organizing citizens at grass roots levels. Social groupings, especially well-organized ethnic, regional or professional organizations,

can resist or steer many government actions (Chazan, 175). These groups help restore the strength and good opinion of the citizens, and can often help overwhelmed political agendas and demands, or at least ensure that policies “mirror some degree of social interest” (Tripp, 237-8). Community based grass roots developments are the key to empowering the people who have been neglected under authoritarian systems. The uniformity created by communal action can resolve the strife and conflict within the francophone countries and initiate self-reliance.

Self-Reliance

Self-reliance is not a new idea for development. Since independence, citizens, scholars and even government officials have been calling for the same thing as Félix Eboué--development through the native population. In 1977, Dr. Abebayo Adedeji, the former Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) warned:

“It is imperative that African states should reformat their policies and economic strategies and instruments with a view of promoting national and collective self-reliance” (Shaw, 11)

Neo-colonial Africa, with its many problems related to outside influence, has now proven that Africa must put self-reliance into effect. The key goals of self-reliance, as stated by Naomi Chazan, are to

reduce the dependence of economies on international linkages but through such domestic policy measures as increasing food self-sufficiency, the generation of a larger proportion of investment funds domestically, and

local production of a higher percentage of essential manufactured goods

(276)

The French and the Africans have avoided such actions for too long. The first must be to move away from many imports that they depend upon. The devaluation of the CFA franc (Chapter 3) helped address this issue. The Africans are now more prone to buy their own products because they have become much cheaper than the imports, which simultaneously encourages people to produce more goods for internal consumption.

The African condition provides the opportunity for restructuring and reform, on both political and economic levels. The achievement of both types of reform are essential in the drive for self-reliance. Economic prosperity with political instability causes corruption, while political stability with a poor economy will soon destabilize the government through coups or chaos.

Education

Education is the cornerstone to any developing nation in today's technological world. If a country hopes to grow and develop it must have an educated work force. Appendix 3 (page 77) shows that Africa lags behind developing nations in percentage of children enrolled in primary school. "The positive externalities of primary education are almost twice that of higher education" (Phillips, 31). Primary schools are essential to educate people and produce a society of informed citizens. Currently, Burkina Faso, Benin, Central African Republic, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal all have literacy rates below 50% with Burkina Faso at an alarming 18.2% (World Mark Encyclopedia of Nations). Africa cannot afford to have an illiterate majority if it hopes to develop on a

pluralistic level. Unfortunately, as I pointed out in Chapter 4, schools are not adequate due to lack of funds.

The level of African education currently lags far behind that of other developing nations. Appendix 3 shows how African primary education is not adequately reaching the rural majorities. While the educated elite has successfully prospered, many of the ordinary citizens do not benefit, mainly because of their lack of education. Lack of funds is the primary cause of the inadequate educational programs in Africa. Limited funds and the population boom has led to an absence of good resource centers like libraries, newspapers, and magazines for educational purposes. Most educational publications are not translated into African languages (Muyumba, 445), making quality education in Africa more expensive and less accessible.

As one of the original forces of assimilation, education has now developed its own separate identity. No longer a French curriculum and books passed on to the Africans, it now stresses teaching francophone African culture. For example, in a typical francophone history course today one studies French history, such as Charlemagne, François I, and Louis XIV, along with the epic stories of Sundiata, which tell of the conquering founder of the empire of Mali, and of Mwindo, an ancient hero in northern Zaire (Manning, 9). This blended education favors neither the French nor the African heritage, but it does suit the current culture. Since independence the francophone nations have been living their own history, so students can learn about their own country's development rather than being taught all growth came from Europe (Davidson, 186). The opportunity now exists to

educate francophone youth about themselves and their country instead of simply the French perspective.

Money and finances is also a problem in higher education. "African governments have to function under such stringent economic conditions that they can only minimally finance their universities" (Morna, A43). The need for higher education is imperative for solving the dilemma of mismanagement and poor governance. David Court of the Nairobi office of the Ford Foundation said:

"emphasis on vocational and post-secondary education is particularly important for the poorest continent of the world. In an era of pluralistic politics. . . universities are important centers of original thought to help reduce Africa's dependency on the West" (Morna, A43)

Higher education is essential in breaking dependency, and primary education enables the citizens to play a better role in improving the country, so why doesn't francophone Africa improve their educational institutions?

Education and other human development projects have often been among the first budget cuts when finances run low. If francophone Africa hopes to prosper, it must take serious measures to finance the education of its populous and promote investment and growth to their failing schools. Many of the problems I pointed out in Chapter 3 are a direct result of an education insufficient or inappropriate for the needs of francophone Africa itself. The ailing economies of Africa need further capital and the financial help of international aid organizations that contribute directly to education like the UN, as I will show under *Foreign Aid*.

Economic Solutions

Eliminate Trade Deficits

Foreign trade was not the undoing of francophone Africa, but when trade levels are balanced to the detriment of the African nations it severely impedes development. A change in foreign trade is needed within the francophone nations themselves. If the francophone countries can establish a higher amount of trade within the continent, then all the African states will prosper. This type of trade keeps the capital inside Africa, instead of letting it benefit western economies. It further gives each country a higher degree of control over its market, so francophone policy will not be dictated by the larger western businesses. Unity through regionalism is an excellent way to ensure francophone development.

Foreign Aid

Even as we speak, francophone debts are growing and becoming more and more impossible for the Africans to pay off. Organizations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization, can play an active role in resolving the problem by helping the francophone countries and lender nations carry out a mutually beneficial agreement for francophone African debt.

The other aspect of aid is development assistance from the UN or other donors. This aid can go directly into human development programs like education, health care, and rejuvenation of the infrastructure. In Chad, aid accounts for 53% of the total expenditures on health and education (Philips, 38). Aid provides for social welfare, which is not a primary budgetary concern for most developing nations. It must be clear that money

cannot be given with no strings attached; the aid must be for the sole reason of development. The government in that country must take on the responsibility of using the money properly, not to buy a new palace or fill Swiss bank accounts for the elite.

Once the French presence moves out, the Africans must address internal problems, namely corruption and mismanagement. There must be a sincere desire inside each country to place development at the top of their priority list. Foreign aid must go toward development projects and not into slush funds. Public policy must satisfy the interests of the majority, not the rich elite. Internal political structures must reform, and constitutional solutions must be found for the many loopholes leaders exploit. Countries as a whole cannot develop or prosper without quality leadership meeting the people's needs. Those needs must be a top priority in the francophone countries, and in any nation that wishes to prosper.

If the francophone Africans continue to take on the challenge to develop on their own initiative, that alone should begin their upward trend. The French presence has left many obstacles for the Africans to overcome, economic, political, and social, but the obstacles are not unsurmountable. With an internal focus that turns away from French influence and a true battle for equality, the francophone countries can and will become developing nations, not declining ones.

Conclusion

Colonialism and French influence disrupted traditional Africa in many ways. It installed new political, economic and social programs that tore francophone Africa from its normal evolution and development. The French influence was deep, but now francophone Africa must focus on solving their own problems of instability, mismanagement, corruption, and western exploitation. The devaluation of the CFA franc and the recent trends toward empowering the citizens within each country allow francophone Africa to develop by their own means. Starting with reform, compromise and internal unification, a stable government can be established to benefit the many, not the few. Second, the francophone states must unite regionally and develop together both socially and economically. Finally, through education and UN help, francophone Africa can equip themselves with the tools they need to succeed and begin eliminating the French dependency they have suffered from for over a century.

The Africans have recognized the problems, and they have the solutions within their grasp. The remaining variable is the strength and will to carry through the reforms. If the leadership, the citizens, and the francophone countries themselves sacrifice a little in the name of compromise, francophone Africa will gain much through long term stability and growth.

There is an old West African proverb that simply states “no condition is permanent.” With francophone commitment from all levels of the state, the current condition of decline will soon be replaced by one of prosperity.

Appendix 1,**Changes in Country Names**PresentPrevious

Benin

Dahomey

Burkina Faso

Upper Volta

Cameroon

French Cameroons and British Southern
Cameroons

Central African Republic

Oubangui Chari

Congo

French Congo; Congo-Brazaville

Cote D'Ivoire

Ivory Coast

Ghana

Gold Coast and British Togoland

Mali

French Soudan

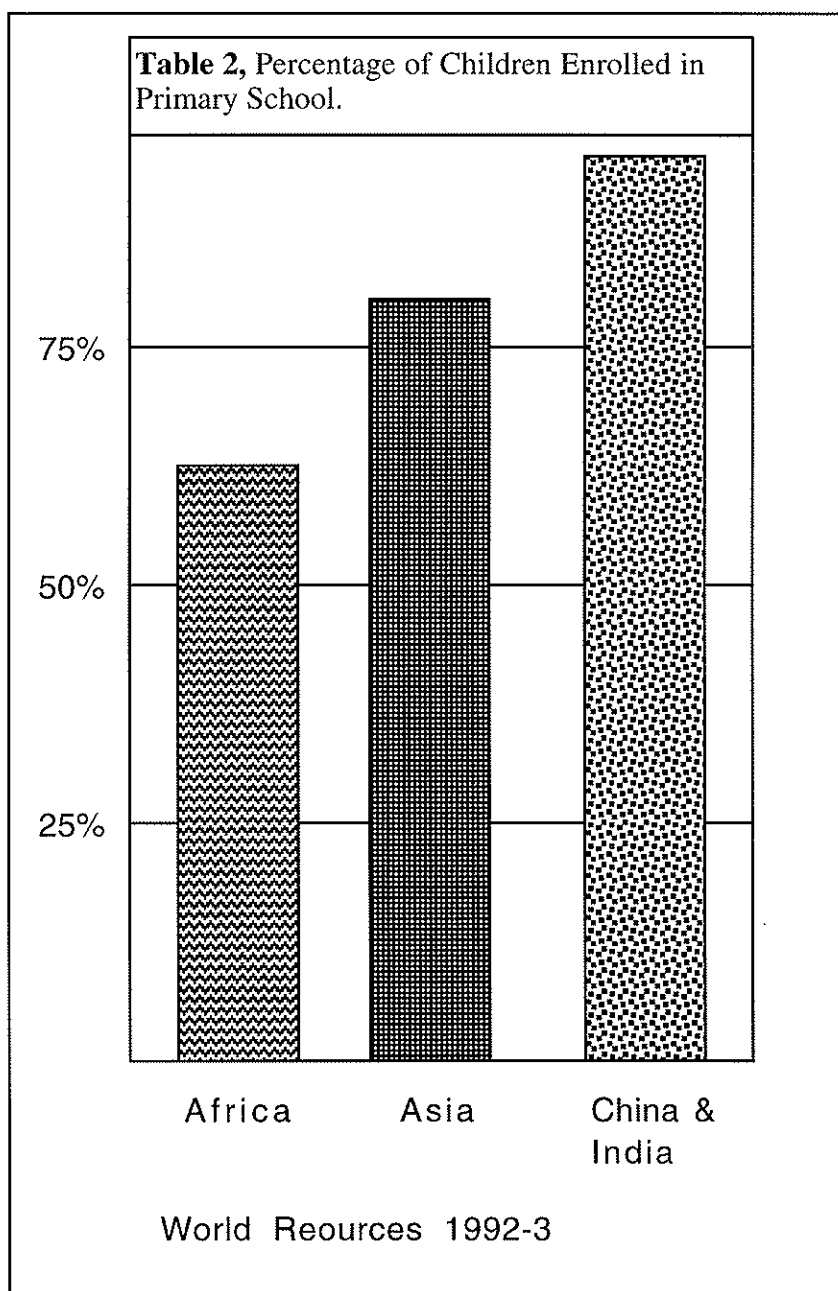
Togo

French Togoland

*Source: Adapted from Naomi Chazan**Politics and Society in Contemporary
Africa*

Appendix 2, List of Acronyms

CFA	Communauté Financière Africaine
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
IMF	International Monetary Fund
OAU	Organization of African Unity
UN	United Nations

Appendix 3

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