

CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE

Faculty of Humanities



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Modernization theory and the case of France's Overseas Territories

Master's Diploma Thesis

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I hereby declare that I have written this diploma thesis solely by myself and I agree with its eventual publication in print or electronic form. All sources and literature have been properly cited. The work has not been used to obtain a different or the same degree.

Prague, June 28th, 2023

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Abstract

Modernization theory, despite its critiques and limited predictive capacities, continues to exert a lasting influence on contemporary societies and developmental policies. This is evident in France's historical efforts to modernize its Overseas Territories, which serve as a fruitful area of research for modernization theory. With direct executive power over the territories and their distinct historical and cultural backgrounds, France's relationship with its Overseas Territories highlights the dichotomy between the "modernizer" and the "modernized." This dynamic is shaped by the legacy of colonialism, as these territories were formally colonized by France less than a century ago. The historical culpability of France is reflected in policies of "reparation," the persistence of a "colonial frame," and the conceptualization of the territories as "laboratories of modernity." This paper explores the geopolitical, economic, and social dependencies of the Overseas Territories on France, and the complexities of power dynamics and historical legacies that shape their development policies. The case of France and its Overseas Territories underscores the enduring impact of modernization theory and its relevance in understanding contemporary developmental challenges and strategies.

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1. Introduction

Despite the numerous critiques and evidence against its predictive capacities, modernization theory's impact and influence is perennial; its worldview of perpetual economic growth and eternal progress pervades today's societies, and its prescriptive aspects are still perceivable today especially in contemporary developmental policies. France and its historical efforts to modernize its Overseas Territories has been a fruitful area of research in modernization theory for good reason. France has direct executive power over its Overseas Territories, and because of their geographical remoteness, they have a very different historical and cultural background when compared to France emphasizing the dichotomy between the "modernizer" and the "modernized". This is connected to the historical legacy of colonialism—indeed those territories were still officially colonized by France less than a hundred years ago. This colonial past determines the shape of the relations and balance of power between France and its Overseas Territories especially through geopolitical policy as illustrated in the relations of economic and social dependence of Overseas Territories to France, the "historical culpability"¹ of France which manifests itself through politics of "reparation"², in the subsistence of a "colonial frame"³ and to another extent in the way Overseas territories are sometimes conceived as "laboratories of modernity".

1 [¶]Wolton, Dominique. « Les Outre-mers, une chance pour la France et l'Europe », *Hermès, La Revue*, vol. 32-33, no. 1-2, 2002, pp. 11-25, 23

2 [¶]Idem

3 [¶]Bernardot, Marc, Bruneteaux, Patrick, "Quel colonialisme dans les DOM-TOM ? - Une introduction", *REVUE Asylon(s)*, N°11, mai 2013.

1.1 Research questions

The aim of this paper is thus to answer the following research questions; how is Modernization theory still influential in the shaping of contemporary developmental policies especially as illustrated by the example of French State policies designed for its Overseas Territories? Furthermore, what elements of Modernization theory are present in the political relations between France and its Overseas Territories? And finally, how does the French model of development applied to the French Overseas Territories constitute an example of intentional development and trusteeship?

By addressing the research questions outlined above, this paper aims to contribute to the understanding of Modernization theory's impact on contemporary developmental policies and to provide a nuanced perspective on the French model of development in its Overseas Territories.

1.2 Structure of the thesis

The following two chapters provide the theoretical framework for the thesis and first presents an overview of classical Modernization theory; the historical context of its emergence, how it presents itself as a scientific theory, how it constitutes an ideology and finally the criticisms it has faced. Secondly, the chapter presents the concept of intentional and immanent development as formulated by Michael Cowen and Robert W. Shenton in their book *Doctrines of Development*.

The third chapter addresses the historical context of the relations between France and its Overseas Territories and presents their peculiar legal status, how they embody the notion of “empire confetti”, the disparity in social and economic inequalities between mainland France and

the Overseas Territories and finally the hinderances to development faced by French Overseas Territories.

The fourth chapter concerns the modern developmental policies in the French Overseas Territories and analyze the May 27, 2009 Law; “For the economic development of the Overseas Territories” and the Law of February 28, 2017; “For the planning relating to real equality Overseas” and their connections with modernization theory and the notion of intentional development.

The fifth and last chapter presents concluding remarks pertaining to the case of France and its Overseas Territories as an example of modernizer/modernized relationship and the challenges that emanate from this dichotomy i.e. the transition from the traditional societies of the Overseas Territories to the emulation of the modern society of mainland France.

1.3 Methodology

The theoretical framework of the thesis relies on secondary sources pertaining to modernization theory and the concept of intentional/immanent development. The third chapter of the thesis pertaining to the historical context of the relations between France and its Overseas Territories relies on a mix of literary secondary sources and primary sources as statistics provided by the national statistics bureau of France; INSEE (National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies), and finally the fourth chapter relies on the critical analysis of primary sources as the texts of developmental laws designed for the French Overseas Territories provided by the official website of the French government as well as other documents such as Senate reports and other legal documents.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Overview of classical modernization theory

2.1.1. Emergence of modernization theory

Modernization theory inscribes itself in the social theory of development as a product of postwar social thought marked by romantic liberalism.⁴ As Alexander Jeffrey C describes it; “In order to explain the new and often unnerving experiences of their changing societies, intellectuals develop binary oppositions whose constructions of sacrality and profanity allow them to place the present in relation to a simplified past and future, thus creating ‘history.’”⁵ Modernisation theory exemplifies that but its roots goes deeper in time as he recalls the term modernity emerged in the fifth century—“when newly Christianized Romans wished to distinguish their religiosity from two forms of barbarians, the heathens of antiquity and the unregenerate Jews.”⁶ Later on in the Middle ages, Modernity became associated with knowledge and was used as a distinction between the classical learning of Greek and Romans and contemporary knowledge. But it’s with the Enlightenment that modernity gained its association which it retains today with science, progress and rationality which Alexander defines as a “semantically arbitrary relationship”.⁷

4 [□]Alexander, Jeffrey C.. "Modern, Anti, Post, and Neo: How Social Theories Have Tried to Understand the “New World” of “Our Time”" *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, vol. 23, no. 3, 1994, pp. 165-197,168

5 [□]Ibid, 165

6 [□]Ibid, 167

7 [□]Ibid, 167

Brewing for centuries it is from this enlightenment heritage coupled with evolutionary inspired theories that modernisation theory as a scientific theory and ideology came into fruition with the pioneer work of Marian levy on Chinese family structure in 1949.⁸

The historical context leading to the emergence of modernization theory is linked to the aftermath of the second World War: the rise of the United States as a superpower helping a weakened Western Europe with the implementation of the Marshall plan, the spread of communism through eastern Europe and Asia and the disintegration of European colonial empires through the world leading to the creation of new nation-states in the Third World.⁹ These new Third World nations-states were at the beginning of their societal development and the United States political elites fearing the threat of communism taking hold on them decided to encourage its social scientists to focus on researching a model of development for Third World countries to follow guaranteeing economic development and political stability¹⁰. A new intellectual collective interest for Third World countries was thus sparked and the modernization school was in the making.

2.1.2. Modernization theory as a scientific theory

As a theory modernization draws upon different classical concepts of sociology such as Ferdinand Tönnies's dichotomous notion of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft¹¹, Emile Durkheim's

8 [¶]Ibid, 168

9 [¶]So, Alvin Y.. Social Change and Development: Modernization, Dependency and World-System Theories. India, SAGE Publications, 1990, 17

10 [¶]Idem

11 [¶]Tönnies, Ferdinand. Community and Society. United Kingdom, Dover Publications, 2002

distinction between societies based on *solidarité organique* and *solidarité mécanique*¹² or Max Weber's process of rationalization.¹³

Modernization can be defined as the process of attaining modernity; this regroups processes such as “industrialization, urbanization, rationalization, bureaucratisation, democratization, the ascendancy of capitalism, the spread of individualism and achievement motivation, the affirmation of reason and science.”¹⁴ Generally speaking modernization is; “a type of social change which is both transformational in its impact and progressive in its effects.”¹⁵

As a scientific theory it focuses on how underdeveloped societies viewed as backward achieve this process to catch up with the most developed, modern and western countries in a globalized world. After the Second World War a new world division was implemented which distinguished First World countries as developed industrial societies regrouping the United States and Western Europe, Second World countries characterized by authoritarian socialism, dominated by the Soviet Union and moving towards industrialization and Third World countries defined as southern and eastern post-colonial societies not yet industrialized. Modernization theories thus focus on the process through which Third World countries need to go through in order to attain the same development as First World countries in order to become modern. Additionally the unit of analysis of modernization theories is generally the nation-state and thus

12 [¶]Durkheim, Emile. *De la division du travail social*. France, Presses Électroniques de France, 2013

13 [¶]Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. United Kingdom, Taylor & Francis, 2013.

14 [¶]Sztompka, Piotr. *The sociology of social change*. Cambridge, Blackwell, 1994, 129

15 [¶]Tipps, Dean C. “Modernization Theory and the Comparative Study of Societies: A Critical Perspective.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 15, no. 2 (1973): 199–226, 202

as Dean C. Tipps points out; “theories of modernization are fundamentally theories of the transformation of national state”.¹⁶

In his book *The Sociology of Social Change*, Sztompka defines modernization theories as being “historical, relativistic and analytical”¹⁷. It is historical in the sense that it is spatially and temporary related to the West and thus is akin to westernization. To avoid being associated with ethnocentrism it provides a relativistic definition of modernity as not being spatially and temporally bound to the West but as a process occurring globally. The analytical aspect of modernization theories stresses the multidimensional aspects of modernity as it pervades in economical, political, social and cultural spheres as exemplified by Neil Smelser six areas of transition of modernization.¹⁸ According to Smelser modern transition is economically translated by scientific knowledge as the motor for new technologies, the transition from subsistence farming to commercial agriculture, the development of machine production, the increase of urbanization and spatial densification of the labour force.¹⁹ Politically it’s illustrated by the transition to a democratic system. In the area of education it’s characterized by the effort to suppress illiteracy and develop knowledge, skills and competences. As for the religious sphere it’s the transition to secularization. Regarding the family’s sphere it’s the transition from the strong role of kinship ties to the emphasis on the functional specialization of the family. And finally in the area of stratification it means the transition from ascription to the increase focus on mobility and individual merit.

16 [¶]Idem

17 [¶]Sztompka, Piotr. *The sociology of social change*. Cambridge, Blackwell, 1994,131

18 [¶]Ibid, 132

19 [¶]Idem

Stzompka states that the pull towards modernity is interpreted in several ways, in the evolutionist perspective growth is inevitable and it will naturally occur and whatever obstacles slow it down will eventually disappear as it is an endogenous and spontaneous process. In a Darwinian understanding it also suggests that modernity is the key to the survival of the fittest, in a globalized world where societies are in closer contacts competition and comparison arise and modern societies are dominating the race. This is heightened through the “demonstration effect”²⁰ of modern societies in which less modern societies are exposed to the modern standards of living whether it be through traveling or in a less direct way through the soft power of modernity e.g. mass media, tv or movies.

Another way to interpret the pull towards modernity is through convergence theory. As Stzompka suggests it resembles technological determinism, it proposes that the development of technology in a given society determines the development of other societal realms such as social, political, cultural or economical. This implies that the growth of modern technologies results in a homogenous process of modernization, every modern societies thus display the same organizational structure and local differences are erased to give place to uniformity and homogenization amongst modern societies resulting in convergence.

Modernization theory takes its roots both in evolutionary theory and in functional theory.

Evolutionary theory emerged in the nineteenth century as a way to make sense of the new social order created by the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution which pushed the transition from traditional to modern society in Western Europe and thus was highly influential in developing a modernization theory of Third World countries²¹. On the one hand the Industrial

²⁰ Ibid, 134

²¹ So, Alvin Y.. Social Change and Development: Modernization, Dependency and World-System Theories. India, SAGE Publications, 1990, 18

Revolution meant the emergence of a new economic order with the development of science and technology and the rise of the factory system leading to increased productivity and the development of the world market²². On the other hand the French Revolution paved the way for a new political and social order characterized by parliamentary democracy, freedom and equality.²³ The main assumptions drawn upon evolutionary theory are the unilinear character of the path to development; less developed societies must go through the same steps already taken by developed countries, the irreversible character of change; it can go only in the direction of modernity, the gradual and incremental nature of change; it progresses peacefully, it follows a sequence of stages ,none of which is skippable, and finally it assumes progressivism as a positive universal force beneficial to social life and human condition.²⁴

Additionally modernization theory is greatly influenced by the functionalist theory developed by Talcott Parsons during the first half of the 20th century. Similarly to Herbert Spencer's theory of the social organism Parsons too conceives society as a biological organism; like the body society is made of different parts that interact with each other and serve a function to ensure optimal balance. Parsons develops this idea by assimilating society to a social system in which each components performs a function necessary to maintain the ensemble. He identifies four basic functions which he estimates as imperative for the survival of the social system and each is performed by a different subsystem ; 1) adaptation to its environment which is performed by the economy, 2) goal attainment which is performed by the political sphere, 3) Integration performed by the societal community through the legal system and 4) latency or "pattern

22 [¶]Ibid, 19

23 [¶]Idem

24 [¶]Sztompka, Piotr. The sociology of social change. Cambridge, Blackwell, 1994,131

maintenance”²⁵ parsons performed by the educational system (school, family...). It’s the interactions between those four subsystems and the functions they performed that make up the whole mechanism of the system and its ability remain stable.

Parsons exploits further the organism”’s analogy with his use of the concept of “homeostasis”²⁶, which pertains to the capacity of the system to restore equilibrium after changes and disturbances occur in some of its parts. This implies that the internal parts of the system are interconnected and cooperate in a dynamic way in maintaining equilibrium and thus the social system is ever changing and ever growing.

Another concept central to Parson’s functionalist theory is the “pattern variables”²⁷ which he regards as structuring “the system of relational institutions”²⁸ and the “core of the social structure.”²⁹ Pattern variables defines the roles and actions that shape social relations as being structured by those variables as opposed to being random.³⁰ He distinguishes five dichotomous oppositions of pattern variables which each illustrate how traditional societies differ from modern societies.³¹

1) Affectivity vs affective neutrality; traditional societies tend to be centered around promiscuity even in a working environment the relationship employer/employee is determined by affectivity whereas in modern societies an affective-neutral approach to social relationships

25 ¶Parsons, Talcott. Structure of Social Action, United Kingdom, Free Press, 1966, 29

26 ¶Parsons, Talcott. The Social System. United Kingdom, Routledge, 1991, xvii

27 ¶Ibid, 43

28 ¶Idem

29 ¶Idem

30 ¶Ibid, xxi

31 ¶Ibid, 43

prevails, and social contact tend to be impersonal and distant, as in the example of working environment the relationship employer/employee is determined by economic productivity not affective ties.

2) Self-orientation vs collective-orientation, in traditional societies the stress is put on collective interest, the individual must act according to the community's interest in order to preserve social order, in modern society private interest is encouraged, the individual must develop himself, his skills, his career again in order to boost economic productivity.

3) Universalism vs particularism, in traditional societies people's interactions tend to be limited within their community this implies that the relationships are more personal and rely on trust and social obligations and thus are particularistic, in modern societies however people are brought to interact with strangers on a regular basis as the concentration of individuals living together is higher and so their relationships are governed by common rules and contracts and thus they apply universalistic norms.

4) Ascription vs achievement, in traditional societies status is ascribed to the individual according to his inborn qualities and determine his opportunities and life's path, in modern societies however the individual's status is dependent on his own achievements, it implies that the individual has the possibility to improve its status through what he achieves and his life's path is no pre-determined.

5) Diffuseness vs specificity refers to the degree of role obligation involved in social relationships, in traditional societies social relationships tend to be governed by diffused role obligations this means that one individual's role entails a wide range of social obligations towards another individual while in modern societies the obligations attached to one individual's

role are more specific as people are exposed to more people than in traditional societies their obligations towards other must be reduced for efficiency.

These functional patterns are both imposed on the individual and reproduced by the individual, imposed because the patterns are already present in the social system and dictate social actions independently of the individual's choice but when the individual makes the choice to enforce them he receives validation from the system encouraging him toward conformity and thus participating in maintaining social order.³²

One example of classical theory of modernization that shows the prevalence of functionalist theory in modernization theory is that of Neil Smelser which he develops in his essay "Toward a theory of modernization".³³ Smelser produces a theory of modernization based on ideal-type structural changes that he lists as;

a) Structural differentiation which he defines as the process of social units becoming more specialized and autonomous, this means that one social role or organization differentiate into several roles or organizations. He observes this process in the spheres of economy, family, religion and stratification. In the economic realm structural differentiation occurs in the production system; in underdeveloped countries production is handled inside the kinship units and consist mostly of subsistence farming same goes for consumption and exchange which occur in the family and village. This changes as economy develops and differentiation is made between production and consumption as observed in agriculture with the introduction of cash crops, economic activities become no longer confined to the "family-community complex".³⁴ This affects the exchange system where several differentiations takes place; "goods and services,

³² *ibid*, xxi

³³ Smelser, Neil J.. *Essays in Sociological Explanation*. United States, Quid Pro, LLC, 2013.

³⁴ Smelser, Neil J.. *Essays in Sociological Explanation*. United States, Quid Pro, LLC, 2013, 128

previously exchanged on a non-economic basis, are pulled progressively more into the market”.³⁵ The influence of religious, political and family sphere over economic activity is progressively reduced and money become the main regulator of the movement of goods and services which results in the emergence of new institutionalized and autonomous economic systems. Thus the degree of differentiation of the economic structure of a given society is an essential indicator of its position on the path to modernization. In the family realm differentiation takes place as a result of the separation from economic activities, as economical structure distance itself from the family realm their functions are not interconnected anymore and family start to fill in more specialized roles. This shift has several consequences; learning a job within the family sphere become less and less common, nepotism become less acceptable although it does occur in particular cases, the nuclear family differentiates from the extended family and elders lose their influence over it, marriage is no longer determined by the family but rather by personal choice, this finally results in the development of woman’s status from dependent and submitted to their husband to generally more liberated. The new role of the family also disrupts the integration system in place which he further explain later on. In the religious realm differentiation takes place through the secularization of society and particularly through the growing role of secular nationalism which he defines as “the very instrument designed to smash the traditional religious systems”.³⁶ But in the early stages of modernization nationalism can hinder economic development as well by imposing traditional ways of acting and thinking and thus it both constitutes a stimulating but also a dragging force of economic development. But as differentiation progresses society is characterized by a more complex social organization with the multiplication of autonomous systems nationalistic ties weaken and economic rationality

35 ¶ Idem

36 ¶ Ibid, 130

prevails as the commanding force. Finally Smelser observes the process of differentiation in the systems of stratification. He focuses on two elements; the degree of ranking in the ascription of status and the degree to which it affects one's position in society. In the process of modernization the ascriptive standards on which ranking is based become more differentiated from economic and political standards than from inborn characteristics such as ethnicity and kinship on which traditional societies rely. Same goes for the ascriptive standards of position of the individual in the society, through the modernization process the structural differentiation increases and one's position is differentiated from his "point of origin"³⁷, which produces greater social mobility. Additionally social mobility becomes an individualized process; "individuals and no longer whole casts or tribes, compete for higher standing in society."³⁸

b) The second type of ideal-type of structural change evoked by Smelser is Integration which refers to the functions that the different social units perform and how they interconnect. With the development of structural differentiation one complex institution that used to ensure a multitude of functions is differentiated into several simpler institutions, this dismantlement produces problems of integration. In traditional societies the kinship structure regroups both the family role and the economy role and there is little differentiation between the both, production and consumption remain in the same sphere. But with structural differentiation the two become differentiated into different institutions and organizations and the problem of integration arises. Smelser argues that to ensure integration between the new structures, new institutions need to be created to coordinate them such as; trade unions, associations, labor recruitment agencies,

37 Ibid, 133

38 Idem

savings institutions and so on.³⁹ However this process of integration can lead to social disturbances if it is uneven.

c) Indeed social disturbances such as “mass hysteria, outbursts of violence, religious and political movements”⁴⁰, occur when the degree of integration is lagging behind the degree of differentiation. He lists three main discontinuities responsible for the emergence of social disturbances as; the threat of traditional standards being replaced by new standards is often met by dissatisfaction and opposition, the uneven pace of structural changes provokes disharmony and anomie in the society as the different structures can’t be properly integrated if uneven, the resistance to the new forces of integration are seen as competing against “the older undifferentiated systems of solidarity”.⁴¹ He characterizes the three typical response to these discontinuities as “anxiety, hostility and fantasy”⁴², when combined together they give rise to various kinds of social movements such as “peaceful agitation, political violence, millenarianism, nationalism, revolution, underground subversion, etc.”⁴³ He continues by adding that those who are displaced by the new structural changes and those who haven’t been integrated into the new social order are more likely to join such social movements. However he specifies that the transition to modernity doesn’t necessarily lead to protestations and resistance and there are factors that favors the emergence of social disturbances. 1) It depends on how fast structural changes took place, the faster their implementation the broader and more intense the resulting social dislocations. 2) How complex is the society’s structure also affects the form of

39 Ibid, 134

40 Ibid, 126

41 Ibid, 140

42 Idem

43 Idem

protestation taking place, in the least developed societies politics and religion are less differentiated and thus social unrest is more likely to take the form of religious movements, this changes when the society's structure become more differentiated as a result the social disturbances take more secularized forms. 3) It's also influenced by the degree of access that protesters have to those in charge of changing social policy, Smelser believes that the less access the protesters have the more violent and utopian the demands for reforms will be, he continues on adding; " this is the reason that fantasy and unorganized violence are likely to cluster among the dis-inherited, the colonized, and the socially isolated migrants."⁴⁴ 4) The gravity of social disturbances is greater when there is an overlap of interests and lines of cleavage. He uses the example of colonial societies to illustrate this factor as they tend to have a structure in which economic, political and racial-ethnic memberships coincide with each other and thus conflicts become more intense as each groups' s loyalties and prejudices are exacerbated. However when the cleavage lines are not in correspondence with a particular groups and they intersect then it results in more peaceful forms of protest. 5) Finally he adds that the degree of foreign participation is also determinant in the molding of social disturbances.

These ideal-types of structural changes are the products of transitions in the development of modern societies as mentioned earlier. Smelser adds that those structural changes vary from society to society and he distinguishes five types of variations ⁴⁵; 1) Variations in pre-modern conditions which pertains to how close the society is from being modern. 2) Variations in the pressure for change, how ready and open to change is the society. 3) Variations in the speed of development and change of the society. 4) Variations in the advanced stages of modernization such as national particularities of a society. 5) Variations in the obstacles that occur during

44 Ibid, 141

45 Ibid, 126-127

modernization of a society such as wars, revolutions or natural catastrophes. It's due to these variations making it difficult to establish hard empirical generalizations that Smelser chooses to opt for ideal-types in order to describes the different structural changes that a society go through during the process of modernization.

Additionally to accompany a rapid transition to modernity Smelser advocates for a strong centralized government. He stresses three points of arguments; first it's the role of the government to apply political pressure on the individuals so they comply with the transition of the differentiation of institutional structures, as there might be some resistance to let go of the traditional way of running things. Second, the process of differentiation itself calls for a more complex type of political administration, one that is strong enough and more apt to handle a vast reorganization of the social order. Finally Smelser proposes a Machiavellian perspective on tackling modernization; an effective type of government in transitioning to modernity is one that is willing to commit itself to "Utopian and xenophobic nationalism".⁴⁶ He envisions this commitment as a powerful tool to enhance their claim to legitimacy with the fabricated goal of developing the nation-state, to push the people to make sacrifices for the nation that are actually necessary for modernization and to repress the diverging currents and their spreading such as communism. He specifies that political leaders should not rely too much on the omni-power of nationalism and neglect those who are disadvantaged but instead practice a flexible approach to politics and arrange space to let them participate in the political discussion and by doing so maintain political stability which resides in "the practice of flexible politics behind the facade of an inflexible commitment to a national mission".⁴⁷

46 [¶]Ibid, 144

47 [¶]Idem

All in all Smelser sketches a condensed reflection of how social structure is shaped by economic and social development and focus on the path itself of development towards modernity rather than the determinants that spark its launch. As for the order in which he presents its ideal-types in his essay, he states that it doesn't imply any causal relations as they together operate in an "interactive system"⁴⁸ that is to say they each influence each others through the process of development. And finally he emphasizes that the transition to modernity is a gradual and irregular process.

Smelser's theory of modernization summed up above concentrates on the transformation of the social structure of a society going through the transition from traditional to modern but another essential feature of modernization is economic growth.

One classical work of modernization theory focusing on economic growth is that of Walt Rostow with his book *The Stages of Economic Growth: A non-communist Manifesto*. In this book Rostow classifies societies's economic dimensions into five categories: "the traditional society, the preconditions for take-off, the take-off, the drive to maturity, and the age of high mass-consumption."⁴⁹

The traditional societies are mainly characterized by their limited capacity to produce which Rostow connects to the fact that they are pre-Newtonian meaning they don't have the capability to manipulate their environment for productivity efficiency with the knowledge of certain laws on which the external world is based. However he specifies that it doesn't' exclude their ability for technical innovations, mainly in trade, agriculture and industry leading to some

48 ¶ Idem

49 ¶ Rostow, Walt Whitman. *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-communist Manifesto*. United Kingdom, Cambridge University Press, 1960, 4

productivity increase but this is limited by a ceiling resulting from the lack of possibilities that modern science and technology provide. As a result of limited productivity these societies mainly allocate their resources to agriculture which is connected to a social structure based on hierarchy that only allows for restricted social mobility. Social organization revolving around kinship ties create a value system which Rostow describes as “long-run fatalism”⁵⁰ meaning the realm of opportunities accessible to an individual would remain the same across generations.

Politically traditional societies tends to concentrate power in the landowners located in the regions although forms of central power can be observed landowners have a significant influence on it. By traditional societies then Rostow mainly refers to “the pre-Newtonian world”⁵¹ which encompasses; “the dynasties in China, the civilization of the Middle East and the Mediterranean and the world of medieval Europe”.⁵²

The second stage of growth refers to the beginning of the process of transition of societies from traditional to modern and is the phase when the preconditions for take-off arise. The model for these preconditions first emerged in Western Europe in the seventeenth century where the development of modern science engendered productivity innovations in the sectors of agriculture and industry and the expansion of world-markets economy. Later this model permeated in other traditional societies through the external influence more of less forceful of western societies which presented themselves as more advanced. For these societies being more advanced meant thriving for economic progress and seeing it as the necessity for a better future shaped by notions such as: “national dignity, private profit, the general welfare, or a better life

50 Ibid, 5

51 Idem

52 Idem

for the children”.⁵³ The repercussions on traditional societies are thus translated by a wave of changes directed at adapting the structure of the society to modern economy activity; education helps instigating the spirit of entrepreneurship in young people, mobilization of capital increases through banks and other institutions, investment in profitable sectors increases and commerce expands both internally and externally. But the decisive feature for the transition to modernity according to Rostow is the establishment of an “effective centralized national state”⁵⁴ which effectively pushes against the traditional interests of the regions.

These elements lead to the third stage in the transition of traditional society to modern society which is the take-off stage; the traditional obstacles to economic growth are then overcome. The take-off stage is translated by a boost in investment and savings which Rostow delimits as 10% of the national income, this nurtures the rapid expansion of new industries causing a growing demand for factory workers and increasing urbanization. This also provokes a steep rise in exploitation of natural resources and methods of production which manifest in agriculture as well through increased productivity which Rostow stresses as indispensable for the process of modernization which imply a radical increase in the demand for agricultural products. The take-off stage takes place over one or two decades and the transformation of the social, political and economic structure of the society allows for a state of perpetual growth. Once attained the take-off stage make place for the next stage of economic growth; the drive to maturity; “some sixty years after take-off begins”.⁵⁵ In the stage of maturity society exploits to its full potential the products of modern technology and its economy is not tied to the industries which powered its take-off but rather is able to produce a wide range of products without

53 Ibid, 6

54 Ibid, 7

55 Ibid, 9

necessarily depending on another country's industries. The drive to maturity leads to the fifth and final stage; the age of high mass-consumption triggered by two elements; first the rise of income per head which opens the range of consumption and second the shift from rural and agricultural workers to urban and offices or skilled factory workers, rising consumer demands.

In this "post-maturity stage"⁵⁶ the focus strays away from developing modern technology and is directed more at developing a welfare state. It's also the stage of the development of durable goods and their diffusion to the masses as exemplified with the emergence of the cheap mass automobile. The stage of high mass consumption is for Rostow the universal desirable outcome for societies and it's the duty of the advanced societies to help other societies attain this stage as according to him; "there may not be much civilization left to save unless we of the democratic north face and deal with the challenge implicit in the stages-of-growth, as they now stand in the world, at the full stretch of our moral commitment, our energy, and our resources".⁵⁷ With this argument Rostow justifies the need of the modernized countries to intervene in Third World countries to help them achieve the transition to modernity.

As evoked by Smelser and Rostow modernization is also a transformation of the political landscape of a society, James Samuel Coleman explores this aspect of modernization with his approach to political modernization. Coleman distinguishes three perspectives of political modernization, first its historical perspective which allude to transformations in the political structure and culture connected with the transition to modernity whose roots can be traced back to sixteenth century Western Europe such as; "secularization; commercialization; industrialization; accelerated social mobility; restratification; increased material standards of living; diffusion of literacy; educational and mass media; national unification; and the expansion

⁵⁶ Ibid, 11

⁵⁷ Ibid, 167

of popular involvement and participation”.⁵⁸ Second the typological perspective of political modernization alludes to the shift of polity from traditional to modern. Finally the third perspective of political modernization is evolutionary and assume the capacity for the political structure to change and adapt itself to achieve continuous progress. The evolutionary perspective allows political modernization to not be restricted spatially and temporally and thus to continually evolve. According to Coleman the process of political modernization revolves around three notions; first the process of differentiation which in the political realm is translated by the “separation of an integrated system of universalistic legal norms from religion, the separation of religion and ideology, and differentiation between administrative structure and public political competition”.⁵⁹ The second essential notion is equality which Coleman identifies as the “ethos of modernity”⁶⁰, equality pervades in all aspects of political modernization as a goal to strive toward he isolates three main manifestations of it: universal adult citizenship which ensures the equal distribution of rights and duties, universal legal norms which ensure equality of treatment in relation to the law and the equality of opportunity to access political roles which is ensured by applying the achievement criteria in the process of recruitment for those roles. The third notion essential to political modernization is the capacity of the political systems to grow through adaptation, creativity and integration. This is manifested by an increase in multiple political functions such as; “the scale of political community, in the efficacy of the implementation of political and administrative decisions, in the penetrative power of central governmental institutions and in the comprehensiveness of the aggregation of interests by political associations, institutionalization of political organization and procedures, the

58 [□]International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. V 10. United States, Macmillan, 1968, 395

59 [□]Ibid, 397

60 [□]Idem

development of problem-solving capabilities, centralization, and the ability to sustain continuously new types of political demands and organizations”.⁶¹ Furthermore the political capacity is both fueled and challenged by the two other central notions of political modernization namely differentiation and equality and so the three processes are intertwined and influence each others in a dynamic way ranging from positive to negative.

Additionally Coleman evokes the importance of the notions of democracy and nation-state that are recurring in the definition of a modern polity. He stresses the need to distinguish the concepts of democracy from the Western model as it has a restrictive effect on the capacity to use it as a cross-cultural analytical tool, by doing so the focus is brought on how the general traits of democracy are the most efficient and beneficial to the functioning of a modern society and thus shall be applied universally. As for the element of nation-state Coleman recognizes that it’s the primary empirical unit of modernization and unlike democracy it has become universalized and legitimized by international legal norms. However he doesn’t identify the nation-state as a prerequisite for political modernization but rather as the main outcome of political transition to modernity. Indeed political modernization does not follow a universal and uniform process and the path taken by each country is *sui generis*, Coleman singles out four crucial variables affecting modernization; first how compatible is the political structure and culture of a traditional society to the modernization process, the less compatible its political infrastructures and its value system to the universal modern characteristics the more it will resist the transition to modernity. Second the historical timing of the launch of the modernization process, the “take-off” to use Rostow’s term, influences its trajectory. Indeed timing determines a wide scope of parameters that can influence modernization such as the international

⁶¹ Ibid, 398

environment or the number of modern societies' s models that can be used as referent. Third the nature of the leadership in place is also a determining factor as it can harness tradition's power in a way to support modernization or it can also tame it down if it resists it. It's a decisive factor in ensuring the transition toward modernity as Coleman states; "Individual political leaders and political elites have been the prime movers in political modernization".⁶² Finally the fourth variable affecting political modernization is the crises or system-development problems encountered by a society during the process. He identifies six major crises shaping the path of political modernization; 1) the problem of national identity which arise with the transfer of authority from a traditional organization to a national political system, 2) The challenge of legitimizing this new political system, 3) the establishment of a central political power, 4) the creation of institutions to ensure the fair participation in the new established political organization, 5) the creation of an efficient process of integration ensuring the interrelationships between political institutions securing the achievement of societal goals, 6) the problem of distribution of resources and services resulting from mass demand accompanying economic growth. The capability of a political system to tackle down those challenges defines how modernized it is.

As a scientific theory modernization is thus a multidimensional process studied through various lenses but several points of convergence can be found. First modernization is presented as a linear process characterizing the shift of the traditional society to the modern society and this shift is considered progressive in that it is a desirable. This is based on the dichotomous nature of society which modernization theories encapsulate in the concepts of tradition and modernity, tradition is usually defined by modernization theorists as what is not modern and is perceived as

⁶² Ibid, 400

something negative that needs to disappear and be replaced. Therefore modernization is a transformative process that illustrates how the traditional society seen as primitive and unadvanced evolves into a new, advanced and more complex modern society and this process pervades in every aspect of society. Moreover once it “takes-off” as Rostow puts it, it spreads out through society in a domino like effect as Smelser demonstrates when he depicts how differentiation occurring in one sphere of society results in the differentiation of other spheres; differentiation produces more differentiation. This slow and long process is usually described as happening in phases as Rostow’s stages of economic growth exemplifies and takes time, it is not a revolutionary type of change but rather a long evolutionary one because it is a systemic change and can be slowed down by resistance to change such as social disturbances evoked by Smelser, and thus does not happen overnight. Finally at the root of modernization theory is the model of Western society as the transition to modernity was first observed in Western Europe and then in the United States, this implies that modernization is the attempt to reproduce the Western experience of development and to apply it to other societies and thus is synonymous with the process of westernization. This demonstrates that it is a process of homogenization as the Western model is presented as the one to follow worldwide and its characteristics are deprived of their element of specificity when it’s converted as being “modern”. Therefore elements of the Western experience of development such as industrialization and liberal democracy are presented as part of the modern package and need to be emulated in order for a society to become advanced, that is modern. This aspect of modernization reveals its ideological dimension and is in fact connected to the origins of the theory which first emerged in the United States after World War II at a period in history where the United States forged its role as a World leader and modernization theory provided a justification for authority as it would appear logical that its

advanced modern society should serve as a model to the unadvanced, backward and traditional societies of the Third World countries.

2.1.3. Modernization theory as an ideology

Indeed modernization theory is also an ideology as Jeffrey C. Alexander formulates it in his essay *Modern, Anti, Post, and Neo: How Social Theories Have Tried to Understand the “New World” of “Our Time”*: “It functioned as a metalanguage that instructed people how to live.”⁶³

It means intellectuals used it as a way to interpret and explain the world and its changes. To understand the present intellectuals turn themselves to the past and define it in opposition with the present and then speculate about the implications it has on the future and in doing so produces historical narratives.⁶⁴ In the case of modernization theory this historical narrative function can be understood through a semiotic lens ; “because the existential unit of reference is one’s own time, the empirical unit of reference must be totalized as one’s own society.”⁶⁵ This implies that modernity poses both as a historical period and a type of society. This Alexander states allowed American intellectuals to use modernity to create a spatial and temporal identity for postwar society and furthermore in a linguistic logic the modern can be both used as a signifier and an excluder making it an efficient concept. He then suggests that modernity is built upon a binary code whose function is to divide the world between what is sacred and what is

63 □Alexander, Jeffrey C.. "Modern, Anti, Post, and Neo: How Social Theories Have Tried to Understand the “New World” of “Our Time”" *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, vol. 23, no. 3, 1994, pp. 165-197,170

64 □Idem

65 □Idem

profane, in other words what is modern and what is traditional. This binary code was built as a response to a period of transition in American society namely to the postwar world. He points out that as the modernization theory was mainly developed by American scholar, its focus is primarily on the Western society and is thus shaped by its historical development. The post war societal transition was marked by new social circumstances which he lists as; 1) a massive suburbanization and the decline of culturally-bounded urban communities, 2) a dramatic reduction in the ethnicity of American life, 5) an extraordinary lessening of labor-capital conflict and 6) an unprecedented long term prosperity.⁶⁶ This rapid transition into a new societal paradigm called for an interpretation of history and a theory to appease the contemporary qualms regarding the fast changing present and the future possibilities. The theory was built upon a narrative frame that Alexander characterized as romantic as it gave an optimistic and positive attitude toward the future promoting progress, universalization and a general sense of improvement as opposed to the narrative frame of realism also present at the time that offered a more deflated perspective of the future. As opposed to heroic narratives used in the past where the focus was on actors and events and aimed to create collective representations to federate the people romantic narrative focuses on the individual, the self and private life.

The ideology of modernism also drawn upon existentialism with its stress on authenticity, it favors sparseness over artifice with the intention of “drawing attention away from the surface and providing pathways into the inner self”.⁶⁷ However Alexander maintains that modernization theory’ s ideology didn’t hold up over time and died “sometimes in the later 1960s”⁶⁸ when societal developments ruffled its main assumptions. Main reasons were the persistence of

66 Ibid, 171

67 Ibid, 174

68 Ibid, 175

poverty domestically and even more abroad especially in third world countries, the eruption of revolutions and wars outside the West continued, the notable spread of dictatorship over democracy abroad and new religious movements were gaining ground over secularization even in the West.⁶⁹ Despite of the efforts of the theory's partisans to revise certain components to adapt it to the changing times it could not stand the challenge of the shifting existential environment which was characterized by the rise of new social movements translating collective emancipation such as; "peasant revolutions on a world-wide scale, black and Chicano national movements, indigenous people's rebellions, youth culture, hippies, rock music, and women's liberation."⁷⁰ This resulted in what Alexander refers to as "anti modernization theory" in which the codes of modernization theory were redefined and a new narrative was shaped. The binary code of modernity was reversed and modernity assumed the characteristics of the profane, it became associated with bureaucracy and repression rather than democracy and individualization, its free market symbol of a contractual society was then perceived as "backward, greedy, anarchic, and impoverishing"⁷¹ capitalism. First proclaimed as liberative modernity was now perceived as repressive; liberalism was seen as decaying and denounced as "a camouflage for extending corporate control"⁷², capitalism was seen as the source of all evil and now associated with "underdevelopment and backwardness"⁷³ capable only of producing "great poverty and great wealth"⁷⁴ and the manufacturer of ethnic conflicts. In contrast socialism was seen as the

69 ¶Idem

70 ¶Ibid, 176

71 ¶Idem

72 ¶Idem

73 ¶Ibid, 177

74 ¶Idem

“ultimate symbol of the good”⁷⁵ and the bearer of solutions to the poverty, inequality and damaged community. The new narrative developed to accompany this recoding was a return to the heroic myth which centered around actors banding together to achieve collective transformation for a better future. But the revival of the heroic narrative didn’t last long and by the end of the 1970s the social movements’ effervescency had died and with it the hopes of the collective and heroic narrative of socialism.⁷⁶ In a continuous effort to assign meaning to changing time and to cope with the disappointment of the failure of the 1960s radicalism, intellectuals came up with the theory of postmodernism. Like anti modernization theory postmodernism also identify modernism as the problem; “modernity remains on the polluted side, representing “the other” in postmodernism’s narrative tales”.⁷⁷ But it operates with a different narrative, one that both reject heroic and romantic narratives of modernity, one that does not believe in grand narrative of progress and utopia. Instead postmodernism strays away from universalism and propose a return to localism, a deconstructivist approach of reality with the “rise of the empty symbol”⁷⁸ and a relativist approach with the “emphasis on plurality and difference”.⁷⁹ All in all postmodernism adopts a skeptical look on the possibility of change for the future which resulted from the combined failure of romantic modernism and heroic anti modernism.

But the defeat of utopias of radical social movements paved the way for the triumph of the right with the victory of neo-liberalism over communism. A new capitalist order was in the

75 ¶Idem

76 ¶Ibid, 168

77 ¶Ibid, 180

78 ¶Idem

79 ¶Idem

making, Asian economies once referred to as the third world and qualified as backward economies became capitalist states and met thriving economic development. Alexander designates the revivals of market and democracy as responsible for making universalism relevant again for formulating social theory and led the way for a fourth period of postwar social theory which he refers to as “neo-modernism”.⁸⁰ This theory is fueled by a new positive look on market-oriented system opening the door again to optimism and utopia way of thinking. As earlier social theories of modernism have demonstrated, there is a set of binary code present at its base which distinguishes the sacred from the profane, for neo-modernism the sacred, the good is embodied by democracy, universalism, free market, individualism and human rights.⁸¹ But when it comes to defining the profane it appears to be more challenging than for precedent theories of modernity as Alexander points out the temporal and spatial symbolism have shifted and thus it cannot longer be associated with a precedent period of traditionalism nor can it be associated with the non West. This is exemplified by the economical and cultural rise of eastern countries such as Japan which had gained power as “a civilized commercial society”.⁸² What it entailed is that modernity needed to be recoded as it became such a globalized process it wasn’t exclusive to the Western experience anymore. This also implied the disconnect between neo-modernism and modernization as their identification of the profane diverged. What seemed then to become the oppositary force of universalism was nationalism which intellectuals portrayed as backward and possible successor to communism in posing a threat to international democratic order.⁸³

80 Ibid, 185

81 Ibid, 187

82 Idem

83 Ibid, 189

Alexander formulates a warning concerning the success of neo-modernism as the rekindled appreciation for some of its elements belonging to earlier postwar social science may lead to “the revival of convergence and modernization theories in their earlier forms”.⁸⁴ To avoid taking the same path as modernization theory which commits the fault of assuming historical linearity he calls for “decentered, self-conscious reflexivity”⁸⁵ when developing new theories, meaning they need to stay aware of their own codes and narratives as being historically bound.

2.1.4. Criticisms of the notion of modernization

After reviewing how modernization theory functions as a scientific theory and as an ideology it is time to shed light on its criticisms. By the end of the 1960s modernization theory faced a surge of critics of various nature. Methodologically modernization studies were criticized for making general assumptions with no spatial or temporal limits, they didn't specify enough which country or which historical period they were referring to. By overlooking the particularism of different countries' situation they ended up formulating generalizations lacking empirical grounds. Even the definition of modernization itself has been criticized for encompassing too many elements without providing enough specification as Tipps suggests; “rather than specifying the minimum conditions necessary for the appropriate application of the term, modernization theorists have attempted to encompass within a single concept virtually every 'progressive' social change since the seventeenth century”.⁸⁶

Furthermore those generalizations were based on the Western experience of development, this is exemplified with the assumption that modernization emerges from

84 [¶]Ibid, 191

85 [¶]Ibid, 192

86 [¶]Tipps, Dean C. “Modernization Theory and the Comparative Study of Societies: A Critical Perspective.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 15, no. 2 (1973): 199–226, 218

immanent processes of changes which critics such as Reinhard Bendix refutes; “the modernization of societies is not to be understood primarily as a result of internal changes”⁸⁷, by identifying the roots of this assumption as being found in the historical context of Europe; “both the intellectual tradition of Europe and the specific historical constellation at the end of the eighteenth century encouraged explanations of social change which emphasize the continuity and interconnectedness of changes *within* society”.⁸⁸

Additionally the functionalist assumption that tradition and modernity stand in sharp opposition was criticized as being reductionist; tradition being reduced to particularism and modernity to universalism as Bendix points out; “the use of one or several abstract terms to characterize either tradition or modernity tends to mistake labelling for analysis, since apparently societies vary not only in the degree but also in the kind of their universalism or particularism”.⁸⁹ He also stresses that the concepts of tradition and modernity are not mutually exclusive, modern elements were already present before the modern era and traditional elements still persisted after the transition to modernity.⁹⁰ Another criticism of the dichotomy tradition/modernity present in modernization is the fact that tradition seems to always be defined in contrast to modernity and not as a concept on its own as Tipps argues it’s as if; “the notion of 'tradition' was formulated not upon the basis of observation but rather as a hypothetical antithesis to ‘modernity’”.⁹¹ This failure to properly define tradition leads to the fallacy of assuming that traditional societies are

87 [¶]Bendix, Reinhard. “Tradition and Modernity Reconsidered.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 9, no. 3, 1967, pp. 292–346, 327

88 [¶]Ibid, 325

89 [¶]Ibi, 314

90 [¶]Ibid, 326

91 [¶]Tipps, Dean C. “Modernization Theory and the Comparative Study of Societies: A Critical Perspective.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 15, no. 2 (1973): 199–226, 212

static and singular in form and thus; “it fails to allow for a multiplicity of traditions in a spatial as well as a temporal sense”⁹² which Tipps contests as traditional societies didn’t start to evolve and change just because of the contact with Western societies. This conception of traditional societies is thus criticized as being not only ethnocentric but “tempocentric”⁹³ as well. Moreover the claim that tradition is an hindrance to development is refuted by some critics such as Gail Omvedt who argues that if tradition is incompatible with one kind of development that is liberal and industrial capitalism it doesn’t mean it’s incompatible with other possible kind of development such as socialist industrialism.⁹⁴ This lack of proper definition is also visible in the way modernization theorists refers to the concept of society, when alluding to modern societies typically it is the nation-state that is used as the referent while when alluding to traditional societies a variety of referents are used such as ; “civilizations, culture areas, empires, kingdoms, and tribes”⁹⁵ thus weakening the efficacy of the comparative analysis between modern and traditional societies.

Furthermore modernization theory tends to assume that modernization is the same as modernity and this is criticized by scholars such as Samuel Huntington who states that the process of modernization itself cannot be equated with the state of modernity this is illustrated with his analysis of political order as he claims; “modernity breeds stability, but modernization breeds instability”.⁹⁶ He contests the claim that poverty and backwardness are linked to instability and violence and maintains that the process of modernization itself is triggering those

92 [¶]Ibid, 213

93 [¶]Ibid, 216

94 [¶]Eisenstadt, S. N. “Studies of Modernization and Sociological Theory.” *History and Theory*, vol. 13, no. 3, 1974, pp. 225–252. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2504778>. Accessed 2 January 2023, 248

95 [¶]Tipps, Dean C. “Modernization Theory and the Comparative Study of Societies: A Critical Perspective.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 15, no. 2 (1973): 199–226, 219

96 [¶]Huntington, Samuel P. *Political order in changing societies*. Yale university press, 2006, 41

phenomena; “It is not the absence of modernity but the efforts to achieve it which produce political disorder”⁹⁷ and that; “the degree of instability is related to the rate of modernization”⁹⁸.

Additionally the fact that modernization theory emerged in the United States and was mostly developed by American and European thinkers is reflected in the idea that there is one single path to modernity and it’s presented as the Western one can be perceived as ethnocentrism. This evolutionary claim is contested by the argument that the modernization process is foremost a European experience as Eisenstadt points out ; “the modernization process is not a universal one in which all societies tend naturally to participate or which is inherent in the nature of the development of every society, but that, in fact, it represents a unique historical situation connected with the various aspects of European expansion”⁹⁹ Furthermore ethnocentrism implies a categorization of countries as backward or advanced and a prescription to close the gap; this create tensions as “backward” societies must adopt the codes of modernity regardless of their own native specificities; “In their endeavor to bridge this "gap" leading strata of follower societies typically search for substitutes to the factors which were conditions of development in the advanced countries”¹⁰⁰ This represents a challenge for those societies as those substitutes are no guarantee of a successful transition to modernity. Moreover other critics claim that this is perceivable in the way modernization prescriptive aspects align with American foreign policy as Tipps argues modernization theory is permeated with; “a subtle form of

97 [¶]Idem

98 [¶]Ibid, 45

99 [¶]Eisenstadt, S. N. “Studies of Modernization and Sociological Theory.” *History and Theory*, vol. 13, no. 3, 1974, pp. 225–252. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2504778>. Accessed 2 January 2023, 241

100 [¶]T, Reinhard. “Tradition and Modernity Reconsidered.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 9, no. 3, 1967, pp. 292–346, 334

'cultural imperialism', an imperialism of values which superimposes American or, more broadly, Western cultural choices upon other societies, as in the tendency to subordinate all other considerations (save political stability perhaps) to the technical requirements of economic development".¹⁰¹ He continues on calling into question the objectivity of the theory by stating that; "the fact that some modernization theorists have applied their theories under the guise of scientific objectivity in the service of American national interests cannot be ignored".¹⁰²

Another important trend of critics is the marxist viewpoint which deplores the lack of historical context in modernization theories and particularly the failure to contextualize it in relation to the capitalist expansion as Anthony Giddens argues modernization theory was formulated as; "an ideological defence of the dominance of Western capitalism over the rest of the world".¹⁰³ This point of view is shared by Suzanne Bodenheimer who maintains that the modernization discourse is shaped by the dominant power of the West over the underdeveloped countries whose relations are characterized by imperialism, colonialism and dependency and therefore the path for development should not be having to emulate the West as the Western model does not constitute a panacea for the lack of development of Third World countries. As an alternative she supports the paradigm of the dependency model which views the relationships between developed countries (core) and underdeveloped countries (peripheral) as unequal; the core countries hindering the development of the peripheral countries through exploitation and

101¹Tipps, Dean C. "Modernization Theory and the Comparative Study of Societies: A Critical Perspective." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 15, no. 2 (1973): 199–226, 210

102¹Idem

103¹Giddens, Anthony. *Sociology: A Brief But Critical Introduction*. United Kingdom, Macmillan, 1982, 144

dependence. She uses the expression “paradigm-surrogate”¹⁰⁴ to describe the ideology of modernization theory, according to her it is influenced by the political economy of the mid 20th century United States and it reflects the dominant interests within the American social order. She summarizes the ideology of paradigm-surrogate as being a mean to justify and perpetuate relationships between developed countries and underdeveloped countries based on the dichotomy of domination and dependency and to disguise that reality by presenting particular interests as universal and thus she concludes; “the specific content of this ideology is not, therefore, an accidental convergence of ideas; it performs essential functions in preserving a given international order.”¹⁰⁵

Another partisan of the dependency theory is Andre G.Frank who participated in its development and defends the idea that underdeveloped countries are exploited by developed countries as a source of cheap raw materials or labour and thus have an interest in keeping them as underdeveloped and dependent “satellites”. While studying the development of Latin America he formulated this idea of exploitative relation through the image of metropolises and satellites, metropolises taking advantages and dominating the satellites creating relation of exploitation and subordination. Furthermore he believes unequal development to be related not to a lack of economic development as modernization theory maintains but to the rise of capitalism; “underdevelopment is not due to the survival of archaic institutions and the existence of capital shortage in regions that have remained isolated from the stream of world history. On the contrary, underdevelopment was and still is generated by the very same historical process which

104 Bodenheimer, Susanne J. “THE IDEOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENTALISM: AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE’S PARADIGM-SURROGATE FOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES.” *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, vol. 15, 1970, pp. 95–137, 122

105 Idem

also generated economic development: the development of capitalism itself.”¹⁰⁶ Frank thus contests the idea central to modernization theory that the hindrances to modernity are internally rooted instead he claims that external historical factors such as colonialism and imperialism have to be accounted for when studying the development of Third World countries. He also refutes the idea that the values that acts as pillars of progress can be diffused from the modern countries to the underdeveloped country. To counter the Eurocentric perspective of modernization he proposes a “humanocentric”¹⁰⁷ perspective instead that look at the history of development on a wider scale as; “Western dominance has only been very recent (and led to the Eurocentric rewriting of history as part of 19th-century colonialism) and is likely to be short-lived”.¹⁰⁸ This led him to the conclusion that this Eurocentric view of development is detrimental to underdeveloped countries’s path to development which he sums up in this paragraph;

“ What is a realistic prospect, however, is the growing threat to countries, regions, and peoples to be marginalized; that is, they may be involuntarily delinked from the world process of evolution or development. They are then delinked, however, on terms that are not of their own choosing. The most obvious case in point is much of sub-Saharan Africa. There is a decreasing world market in the international division of labor for Africa’s natural and human resources. Having been squeezed dry like a lemon in the course of world capitalist “development,” much of Africa may now be abandoned to its fate. The same fate, however, increasingly also threatens other regions and peoples elsewhere.”¹⁰⁹

106 Frank Gunder Andre, “The Development of Underdevelopment,” *Monthly Review* 18, 4 (September, 1966) 17-31, 31

107 Frank, Gunder, Andre. *The Underdevelopment of Development: Essays in Honor of Andre Gunder Frank*. India, SAGE Publications, 1996, 41

108 Ibid, 43

109 Ibid, 46

Those critics highlight the central issue of modernization theory which is the failure to address the problem of foreign dominance and instead framing the issues of underdeveloped countries as being generated internally i.e. by traditional values or lack of economic growth while disregarding the significance of external factors such as the historical impact of imperialism and colonialism or the nature of the World market. In opposition to the modernization perspective which promotes the increase of connections with Western countries (such as foreign aid and cultural exchange) to palliate the hindrances of development experienced by Third World countries the dependency perspective advocates for the opposite that is the reduction of connections with Western countries in order to strive for autonomy and independence in their path to development.

Despite the criticisms faced by modernization theory this thesis argues that its influence over contemporary politics is perennial and it can be used as a prism to analyze modern developmental policies. The example chosen to be studied here is the developmental policies of France regarding its overseas territories; the “*outrre-mer*” during the twenty-first century. To analyze the policies in question the theoretical distinction of immanent and intentional development developed by M.P. Cowen and R.W. Shenton in their book *Doctrines of Development* is used alongside with the argument that trusteeship is still prevailing in contemporary policies of development as in the example of France and its overseas territories.

2.2. The concept of immanent and intentional development

Cowen and Shenton connects the idea of immanent and intentional development to the notion of “development doctrine” which they trace back to early nineteenth century France as formulated

by Saint-Simonians and Auguste Comte in reaction to what they considered the shortcomings of the notion of progress, development doctrine was thus formulated to describe; “the intent to develop through the exercise of trusteeship over society”.¹¹⁰ Thus the notion of intentional development as a product of state policy was a response to the problem of a surplus population in nineteenth century Europe created by the immanent process of development.¹¹¹ The authors thus describe this doctrine of development as positivist as they state: “it was what entered into state practice of the mid-nineteenth century as the positive means to confront the urban destitution and unemployment of labour which the development of capitalism had left in its wake.”¹¹²

In contrast with intentional development which results from a deliberate set of actions willingly manifested and which embodies “the desire to develop”¹¹³, immanent development is a process that occurs naturally and; “which happens in history”¹¹⁴, it is therefore unplanned and spontaneous. Indeed immanent development happens organically without deliberate interventions from external actors contrary to intentional development which calls for explicit strategies to achieve a determined set of developmental goals.

The formulation of intentional development thus breaks away from the classical origin of understanding development which the authors recall as being; “a natural process in which phases of renewal, expansion, contraction and decomposition followed each other sequentially according to a perpetually recurrent cycle.”¹¹⁵ In the modern world however development is

110 Cowen, M. P., Shenton, R.W. *Doctrines Of Development*. United Kingdom, Taylor & Francis, 2003, ix

111 *Ibid*, 163

112 *Ibid*, x

113 *Ibid*, 163

114 *Ibid*, 162

115 *Ibid*, viii

understood differently; “it is artifice rather than nature that provides the analogue for the understanding of movement, development has increasingly come to refer to a discontinuous process in which destruction and renewal are simultaneous, as much as sequential.”¹¹⁶ Furthermore they convey the idea that intention was first introduced in the realm of development as directed at a specific process of development; “the development of capitalism, which, it was believed, embodied no developmental purpose and whose destructive dimension was poverty and the unemployment of the potential of productive power.”¹¹⁷ Indeed intentional development is a response to the consequences of immanent change and is invoked in order to; “compensate for the destructive propensities of immanent change.”¹¹⁸

Modernization theory therefore exemplifies this vision of development as it presents the achievement of modernity as possible through the application of an ensemble of measures to modernize and thus assume the existence of a; “subjective source of action that can be undertaken in the name of development.”¹¹⁹ Furthermore modernization theory also follow the assumption that; “To will the means of development in the name of a purposive end of development is to presuppose that it is possible for development to happen as the result of decision and choice.”¹²⁰ Moreover when the authors states that; “development thus comes to be defined in a multiplicity of ways because there are a multitude of ‘developers’ who are entrusted with the task of development”¹²¹, the developers in question can be identified in modernization

116[¶]Idem

117[¶]Ibid, ix

118[¶]Ibid, 147

119[¶]Ibid, 3

120[¶]Idem

121[¶]Idem

theory as the Western societies which are said to embody the example of development to emulate.

2.2.1. the concept of Trusteeship

Additionally the authors argues that intentional development is propelled by the exercise of trusteeship over a society, they define it as follow; “trusteeship is the intent which is expressed, by one source of agency, to develop the capacities of another. It is what binds the process of development to the intent of development.”¹²²

A concrete example of trusteeship thus is the way France intent to develop its overseas regions through the implementation of state policies that demonstrate purposeful and explicit intentions to develop and which are discussed in this thesis. The example of France and its overseas territories also exemplifies how modernization theory is perennial and its influence can still be perceived in the way developmental policies are conceived. The next chapter provides an overview of the historical context of the relations between France and its overseas territories to better contextualize the policies that are later discussed.

3. Historical context of the relations between France and its overseas territories

3.1. A peculiar legal status

Today France’s overseas territories are usually referred to as “outre-mer” (oversea) while continental France in relation to them is referred to as “metropole” which is defined by the

¹²²Ibid, ix

CNTRL (National Center of Textual and Lexical Resources) as the “mother city, considered in relation to the colonies it founded and which depend on it”¹²³ or as “State, territory of a State, considered in relation to its colonies (or its mandated countries, its protectorates), or its overseas territories.”¹²⁴ This however is a point of contention as the term “metropole” is seen by some as derogatory vis a vis french overseas territory because of its colonial connotations and thus in 2021 a constitutional bill was proposed to alter the article 74-1 of the French constitution which used the word “metropole” and to replace it by “France Hexagonale”¹²⁵, a more neutral term as it alludes only to the geometrical shape of France. Although after being submitted to a debate the bill was not passed it marked a clear desire of the overseas territories to steer away from the term “metropole”. Additionally it is argued that the term “outre-mer” highlights the geographical distance from continental France and thus constitutes an ethnocentric geography.¹²⁶

Nowadays French overseas territories refers to the territories that officially opted to remain under French sovereignty as opposed to decolonized territories. The March 19,1946 law of “départementalisation” is decisive in the history of French overseas territories as it offered the then colonized territories the option to either become a “département” which designates a territorial administrative unit in France that is under the authority of a prefect and administrated by a general council¹²⁷, or to join “l’Union française” which meant participants would acquire the French nationality but without the right to vote and have their own assembly, with only a

123 <https://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/metropole>

124 *Idem*

125 https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/15/textes/l15b4155_proposition-loi

126 Lemercier, Élise, Valelia Muni Toke, et Élise Palomares. « Les Outre-mer français. Regards ethnographiques sur une catégorie politique », *Terrains & travaux*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2014, pp. 5-38, 6

127 <https://dictionnaire.lerobert.com/definition/departement>

consultative role, which was constituted by half of representatives from continental France and half of representatives from the French overseas territories.¹²⁸ It is therefore the four “vieilles colonies”; Guadeloupe, Guyana, Martinique and Réunion which chose the “départementalisation”. In 1958 the revision of the constitution offered new possibilities for French overseas territories; to join the “communauté française” a French confederation which ensured quasi political autonomy to its participants or to become completely independant.¹²⁹

On one hand the “départementalisation” evoked political and cultural assimilation, belonging to one indivisible and uniform republic under which each citizens possessed the same rights and duties, on the other hand “communauté française” meant the preservation of cultural particularities and local autonomy.¹³⁰ These two contrasting perspectives illustrates contradictions pertaining to the ideas connected to the French Republic and French nation which are on one side a shared political project and human rights proclaimed to be universal and thus an inclusive vision while on the other side the imposition of a language and a culture to all its citizens constituting an exclusive vision.¹³¹

Since the constitutional law of the 28th of March 2003 French overseas territories are divided into four categories; the overseas “départements” and regions administered by the article 73 and which include; Martinique, Guyana, Réunion, Mayotte and Guadeloupe, the overseas collectivities and countries administered by the article 74 and which include SaintMartin, Saint-Barthelemy, French Polynesia, Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon and Wallis and Futuna, New Caledonia

128 Dimier, Véronique. « De la France coloniale à l'outre-mer », *Pouvoirs*, vol. 113, no. 2, 2005, pp. 37-57

129 Idem

130 Idem

131 Idem

administrated by the articles 76 and 77 and finally the Southern and Antarctic Lands (TAAF) and Clipperton which are all uninhabited and are subject to the law of August 6, 1955.¹³² Additionally the 28th of March 2011 Mayotte becomes the fifth French overseas “département”.¹³³

3.2. Empire confetti

As J.C. Guillebaud’s expression “empire confetti”¹³⁴ suggests French overseas territories are scattered and unevenly populated. Of the 12 million square kilometers of the French colonial inter-wars empire, only one hundredth remains, scattered across the oceans.¹³⁵ Indeed at the time of the Colonial Exhibition of 1931, the French colonial empire gathered nearly 70 million inhabitants, against 41 million inhabitants in Metropolitan France, in comparison with other European nations France however is the country which conserved the biggest proportion of its colonial empire with the exception of Denmark with Groenland.¹³⁶ Often presented as small satellites territories the French overseas territories nevertheless accumulate almost three millions inhabitants; the three French departments located in America; Martinique, Guyana and Guadeloupe as well as the small collectivities of Saint-Martin, Saint-Barthélemy and Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon count together, at the end of the 2010s, 1.1 million inhabitants located over 86,609 square kilometres¹³⁷. In the Indian Ocean, Réunion and Mayotte have an equivalent

132 https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/article_lc/LEGIARTI000019241095/

133 <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/LEGIARTI000023785300/2011-03-31/>

134 J.C. Guillebaud, *Les confettis de l’Empire*, Seuil, L’histoire immédiate, 1976

135 <https://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/outre-mer-france-d/>

136 Gay, Jean-Christophe. *La France d’Outre-mer: Terres éparées, sociétés vivantes*. N.p., Armand Colin, 2021.

137 <https://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/outre-mer-france-d/>

demographic weight, but a much smaller area of only 2,886 square kilometers.¹³⁸ The French Southern and Antarctic Lands (TAAF) have no permanent population, only occupied by a few scientists and soldiers. As for the French collectivities of the Pacific; French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Wallis-and-Futuna, they are populated today by just over half a million people.¹³⁹. Thus the repartition of the overseas population follow a "law of fifths": one-fifth in the Pacific, two-fifths in the Indian Ocean and two-fifths in the Atlantic Ocean.¹⁴⁰

Resulting from centuries of explorations and naval expeditions carried out since the sixteenth century the now defunct French empire retained a part of its oceanic conquest which allow France to have the second biggest Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) behind the United States. In accordance with the law of the sea this zone represents the maritime space over which a State possesses sovereign rights to exploit the natural resources found within the seabed and subsoil such as oil, gas, minerals, metals, diverse biological resources and other valuable underwater reserves.¹⁴¹ The overseas maritime domain amount to 96.6% of the national maritime space (i.e. 9.6 million km² out of the 10.1 million in total), primarily situated in the southern hemisphere; French Polynesia, the TAAF and New Caledonia collectively account for 83% of the French maritime area.¹⁴² This coveted maritime space is the subject of tensions; Mauritius claims the island of Tromelin which even though it's uninhabited, except for three agents of the TAAF who tend to the weather station, constitutes 274000 km² of Exclusive Economic zone, the

138 Idem

139 Idem

140 Idem

141 Joxe, Pierre. « Les confettis de l'Empire ? », *Après-demain*, vol. 47,nf, no. 3, 2018, pp. 3-5.

142 Gay, Jean-Christophe. *La France d'Outre-mer: Terres éparées, sociétés vivantes*. N.p., Armand Colin, 2021.

Comoros claims the island of Mayotte, and Madagascar claims the scattered islands of the Mozambique Channel.¹⁴³

Two periods can be distinguished in the conquest of overseas territories; from 1536 to 1664 France seized Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guyana and Réunion hence the expression “quatre vieilles colonies” along with the smaller islands of Saint Pierre and Miquelon, Saint Barthélemy and Saint Martin and then from the 1840s until early twentieth century; the rest of today’s overseas French territories is annexed.

For the first period of conquests the commerce of sugar cane and its exportation had a tremendous impact on the society, landscape and economy of the overseas territories. Its production required a large workforce and the European immigration and indigenous people, which were increasingly disappearing due to the diseases introduced by Europeans, did not suffice. As a result slave trade is used to palliate for the production needs and in 1685 the “code noir” is introduced by Louis XIV in the Antilles, in 1704 for Guyana and 1723 for Réunion to provide a legal status to the condition of slave.¹⁴⁴ The increase in the workforce in the Antilles is accompanied by an increase in the production of the sugarcane which is illustrated by the apparition of “habitations” which are vast agricultural manufacturing complexes, in other words cane plantations paired with sugar factories.¹⁴⁵ To give an idea of the size of this type of structure; in Guadeloupe on average 112 slaves worked on a plantation of 180 hectares, in Guyana the Jesuits possessed the largest “habitation” in 1737 with a total of 350 slaves working

143 Idem

144 Gay, Jean-Christophe. *La France d'Outre-mer: Terres éparées, sociétés vivantes*. N.p., Armand Colin, 2021.

145 Idem

on it.¹⁴⁶ The abolition of slavery was a lengthy process; in 1794 the Convention voted the abolition of slavery which was rejected by the settlers and then revoked by Napoleon in 1802 and finally in 1848 under the second French republic the abolition was effectively applied. Nowadays this is commemorated as a public holiday in the overseas departments but on different dates as the application of the decree took several months to be effective depending on the territory.¹⁴⁷

The second period of conquests taking place during the nineteenth century is mainly centered on the territories located in the Pacific, it was met with hefty resistance and resulted in several wars such as; the Franco-Tahitian war which took place from 1844 to 1847 followed by the war between France and Leeward Islands, also located in Polynesia, which after being ensured independence through the Jarnac convention signed in 1847 at the end of the Franco-Tahitian war, was annexed by France in 1887 sparking a conflict that lasted until 1897 or the Kanak revolt in New-Caledonia from 1878-1879.¹⁴⁸ For France those lands represented strategical stopover in the Pacific Ocean and in the case of New Caledonia an opportunity to build a penal colony in 1863 as the one built in Guiana in 1852.¹⁴⁹ These penal colonies were built in response to the rise in crime in the first half of the nineteenth century in France that was connected to the rapid increasing urbanization; in the nineteenth century the urban portion of French population almost tripled and sending convicts far away in prisons that were also labor

146[]]Idem

147[]]Idem

148[]]<https://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/outre-mer-france-d/2-la-conquete-et-l-exploitation-de-l-outre-mer/>

149[]]Toth, Stephen A.. *Beyond Papillon: The French Overseas Penal Colonies, 1854-1952*. United Kingdom, University of Nebraska Press, 2006.

camps represented an opportunity to neutralize the threat for safety they represented and to make them contribute to the wealth of their country through labor.¹⁵⁰

The main purpose of the exploitation of these overseas territories was not to contribute to their development but was to ensure the prosperity of continental France which prohibited overseas colonies to pursue commercial relationship with other countries by imposing exclusive trade with France creating a “greenhouse economy”¹⁵¹, to use Bernard Poirine’s expression. As France required those overseas colonies to produce only what is exportable this weakened their sustainability as they do not cultivate for themselves and thus it increased their dependence to France.¹⁵² This dependence still persist today as those territories are importing their food from continental France which considering the great distance separating them render the cost of imported products very high, the lack of competition also play a role in the high cost of products.¹⁵³ Price differences on consumer goods ranged from 30% to 50% on certain articles when comparing the overseas territories and mainland France, this was the result of excessive margins of importers most of whom enjoyed historical monopoly positions.¹⁵⁴ This sparked social movements, reminiscent of the social disturbances described by Smelser earlier in this paper, across the overseas territories; “movements against expensive life”¹⁵⁵ which first started

150 Idem

151 Poirine, Bernard. *Tahiti : une économie sous serre*. N.p., Editions L'Harmattan, 2011.

152 Marion, Gérard Gabriel. « L'outre-mer français : de la domination à la reconnaissance », *Pouvoirs*, vol. 113, no. 2, 2005, pp. 21-35.

153 Gay, Jean-Christophe. *La France d'Outre-mer: Terres éparses, sociétés vivantes*. N.p., Armand Colin, 2021.

154 Dahan, Thierry. « La lutte contre la vie chère dans les Outre-mer », *Après-demain*, vol. 47, nf, no. 3, 2018, pp. 25-27.

155 Lemerrier, Élise, Valelia Muni Toke, et Élise Palomares. « Les Outre-mer français. Regards ethnographiques sur une catégorie politique », *Terrains & travaux*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2014, pp. 5-38, 21

in 2009 in Guadeloupe with a general strike protesting the higher prices on consumer goods and the lower salaries compared to the Hexagon. These movements testify of the tensions and inequalities created by the multi-dimensional dependence to the Hexagon. In Guadeloupe the LKP, an umbrella group of social movements and trade unions which name “Liyannaj Kont Pwofitasyon” in Antillean Creole translates to “struggle against profit”¹⁵⁶, through its demands pointed out the unequal social, economic and political system in which some benefit from the State protection to abuse their position of monopole to the detriment of an impoverished and despoiled “black” majority.¹⁵⁷ Those accused of unfairly cumulating lands, power, privileges and influence are the “Métros”, those who come from the “Métropole”, but more importantly the “Békés” a term which designates the descendants of white plantation’s owners in the Antilles. In Martinique for example the békés owns half of the agricultural lands, 40% of retail shops located on the island, control the networks of importations/exportations and of consumer goods distribution while making up only 1% of the population.¹⁵⁸ This echoes the description of traditional societies by Rostow as discussed earlier; power is concentrated in the landowners.

This shows how despite undergoing a process of decolonization those territories are still affected by a persisting but more subtle “colonial frame.”¹⁵⁹ Although in the case of New Caledonia it is still considered a colonized and non-self governing territory by the

156[□]Dahan, Thierry. « La lutte contre la vie chère dans les Outre-mer », *Après-demain*, vol. 47,nf, no. 3, 2018, pp. 25-27.

157[□]Lemercier, Élise, Valelia Muni Toke, et Élise Palomares. « Les Outre-mer français. Regards ethnographiques sur une catégorie politique », *Terrains & travaux*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2014, pp. 5-38, 21

158[□]Audebert,Cédric. “Les Antilles françaises à la croisée des chemins: de nouveaux enjeux de développement pour des sociétés en crise”, *Les Cahiers d’Outre-Mer*, 256 | 2011, 523-549, 537

159[□]Bernardot,Marc, Bruneteaux,Patrick, "Quel colonialisme dans les DOM-TOM ? - Une introduction ", *REVUE Asylon(s)*, N°11, mai 2013.

UN¹⁶⁰ which is contested by the French Polynesia Assembly who in 2013 passed a resolution to reaffirm the absence of will of the population of New Caledonia to gain independence.¹⁶¹ Nevertheless New Caledonia represents a unique case as it doesn't fit in any of the category of legal status for the overseas territories and is therefore "sui generis". Indeed New Caledonia's status is a result of the 1998 Noumea Accord that proposed a process of decolonization, which was seen as a transition to independence for New Caledonia and aimed at a future independence.¹⁶² This was obtained through the pressure of the indigenous people of New Caledonia; the Kanaks, "the autochtones of the Republic".¹⁶³ The Noumea accord ensured the recognition of the Kanak identity by creating several institutions and structures such as a "customary senate" to recognize the administrative powers of the different chiefdoms, "customary rights" which allows for particular civil rights for Kanak people and "customary lands" which allowed former indigenous reserves and other lands to be returned to the Kanak.¹⁶⁴ The Noumea Accord thus was an attempt to promote a "common destiny" as stated in its fourth preamble and illustrates a paradox for the the Nation-State dogma inherited from the French Revolution; the existence of a State with two peoples.¹⁶⁵

160 <https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/nsgt/new-caledonia>

161 Lemerrier, Élise, Valelia Muni Toke, et Élise Palomares. « Les Outre-mer français. Regards ethnographiques sur une catégorie politique », *Terrains & travaux*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2014, pp. 5-38, 14

162 MacLellan, Nic. "The Noumea Accord and Decolonisation in New Caledonia." *The Journal of Pacific History*, vol. 34, no. 3, 1999, pp. 245–52.

163 Guyon S., Trépied B., 2013. Les autochtones de la République. Amérindiens, Tahitiens et Kanak face au legs colonial français. In: Bellier I. (ed.), *Peuples autochtones dans le monde: les enjeux de la reconnaissance*, Paris: l'Harmattan, 93-112, 99

164 *Ibid*, 110

165 Lafargue, Régis. « L'histoire kanak et la Nouvelle-Calédonie : le droit comme enjeu de civilisation », *Les Cahiers de la Justice*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2013, pp. 119-139, 124

The French overseas territories thus in all their heterogeneity form a political and administrative category which is a construct of colonization, this implies a dependence to the Hexagon which generates a myriad of inequalities.

3.3. Social and economic inequalities between the overseas territories and the Hexagon

Indeed this dependence is translated economically by unbalanced foreign exchange; 50% to 60% of foreign exchange takes place with the Hexagon¹⁶⁶, a legacy of the exclusive colonial economic system: the overseas territories being subjected to an obligation of exclusive trade with the Hexagon serving as outlets for its industrial products while providing agricultural and mining raw materials. Another indicator of economic disadvantage suffered by the overseas territories are that on average they have a 50% lower GDP per capita compared to that of the European Union.¹⁶⁷ On a national level the average of GDP per capita is 34500 euros in 2020 while in the overseas it's significantly lower; 24700 euros in Martinique, 23200 in Guadeloupe , 22000 euros in Réunion, 15100 euros in Guiana and 9700 euros in Mayotte.¹⁶⁸ This is accompanied by a steep disparity in prices between the Hexagon and the overseas territories; concerning food products the gap is estimated at 37% in Réunion, 42% in Guadeloupe, 45% in Guyana and goes up to 48% in Martinique, in 2015.¹⁶⁹ Additionally unemployment is notably higher in overseas territories; in

¹⁶⁶ Doligé E., Les DOM, défi pour la République, chance pour la France, 100 propositions pour fonder l'avenir, Rapport de la mission commune d'information outre-mer du Sénat, déposé le 7 juillet 2009.

¹⁶⁷ Virapoullé J.-P., Les Départements d'Outre-mer, Région Ultra-périphériques et traits-d'union de l'Europe, Rapport du Sénat au premier ministre, 12 mars 2003.

¹⁶⁸ <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/6440639#titre-bloc-6>

¹⁶⁹ <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/1908163>

2018 it was 9% for the Hexagon while in comparison it was 24% for Réunion and even up to 38% for Mayotte.¹⁷⁰ This is reflected on the “Revenu de solidarité Active” (solidarity labor income) number of beneficiaries; in 2018 the beneficiaries represented 5,8 % of the population in the Hexagon while they represented 15,6% of the population of the five overseas departments.¹⁷¹ Furthermore poverty is more extreme in the overseas territories than in the Hexagon, this is observable when comparing the monthly income threshold of the 20% poorest in 2011; 413 euros for Martinique and 242 euros for Réunion while for the poorest of the departments located in mainland France which is Seine-saint-Denis it was 585 euros.¹⁷² The Gini coefficient also reveal greater economic inequalities in the overseas territories than in the Hexagon; in 2011 it was 0,53 for Réunion and 0,47 for Mayotte while in the Hexagon it was inferior to 0,38 in 90% of the departments.¹⁷³

Moreover the overseas departments suffer from other type of inequalities as well such as infant mortality; between 2014 and 2016 the rate of infant mortality in the Hexagon was 3,6 per thousand on average while overseas it was twice as high varying from 7,26 in Martinique to 8,14 in Guadeloupe and 9,19 in Mayotte.¹⁷⁴

Inequalities in term of education are also perceivable; the school dropout rate is twice as high in the overseas territories as compared to the Hexagon, according to a study carried by the ministry of education in 2016 the proportion of 18 years olds in the overseas departments with

170 <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/4175314>

171 Data.drees.solidarites-sante.gouv.fr

172 https://www.inegalites.fr/Des-departements-d-oultre-mer-marques-par-les-difficultes-sociales-et-les?id_groupe=18&id_mot=109

173 *Idem*

174 <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/3560308>

reading difficulties were significantly higher than that of the Hexagon; 27.6% in Réunion, 30.4% in Martinique, 33% in Guadeloupe, 48.4% in Guyana and even reached 74.9% in Mayotte against only 10% for the whole of the Hexagon.¹⁷⁵ In 2012 in Mayotte 35% of the population aged 15 or older had never even been schooled while for those who had more than half didn't have any qualifying diploma.¹⁷⁶ This is connected in part to the language barrier experienced by an important number of people in the overseas territories, while education takes place mainly in French there are over fifty different languages spoken in the overseas territories.¹⁷⁷

Indeed numerous creole languages developed in the context of slavery in the plantation societies and indigenous languages that were spoken before colonization still exist today such as the Kanak languages in New Caledonia (there are 28 different Kanak languages still spoken today), Wallisian, Futunian, the seven languages of French Polynesia, the Shimaore et the Kibushi in Mayotte and the Amerindian languages of Guiana.¹⁷⁸ One overseas territory constitutes an exception insofar as only the French language is spoken there; Saint Pierre and Miquelon where the populations of the Native Americans of Newfoundland were entirely decimated. The presence of the dichotomy of a local language and French official language also exists in mainland France but the difference is that people who speak Breton in Brittany for

175 <https://www.vie-publique.fr/eclairage/19624-outre-mer-inegalites-et-retards-de-developpement#maintien-d%E2%80%99une-d%C3%A9pendance-vis-%C3%A0-vis-de-la-m%C3%A9tropole>

176 Marie, Claude-Valentin. « Contrepoint - Le défi de l'illettrisme et de l'échec scolaire dans les départements d'outre-mer », *Informations sociales*, vol. 186, no. 6, 2014, pp. 125-125.

177 Cerquiglini B., 1999. *Les Langues de France*. Rapport public, Paris: Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de la recherche et de la technologie et Ministère de la Culture et de la communication, <http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/rapports-publics/994000719/index.shtml>.

178 Lemerrier, Élise, Valelia Muni Toke, et Élise Palomares. « Les Outre-mer français. Regards ethnographiques sur une catégorie politique », *Terrains & travaux*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2014, pp. 5-38, 16-17

example also speak French while in the overseas territories those who speak a local language don't necessarily speak French as for example in Wallis and Futuna according to the 2008 census a quarter of the population didn't speak French.¹⁷⁹ This contrast is partly due to the different dates of the implementation of French public education system; in mainland France primary school education became mandatory with the Jules Ferry's law in 1882 while in Wallis and Futuna it became mandatory only in 1961 which corresponds to the date at which it gained the status of French overseas territory after having the status of protectorate since 1887.¹⁸⁰ This contrast still persists despite the pressures of the French Government, signs of the "colonial francization policy"¹⁸¹ to suppress indigenous languages; Kanak languages for example were banned from teaching and publishing until 1984.¹⁸² French language as the unique official language plays an important role in building a collective identity and it integrates indigenous languages as belonging to French patrimony as written in the article 75 of the French Constitution; "the regional languages belong to the patrimony of France".¹⁸³ Even though today there are lessons taught in local languages it's rather a minority and it's experimental and more importantly they are conceived as a way to achieve the necessary transition to French.¹⁸⁴ This demonstrates that the French national unity is built upon a hierarchy of languages; the French

179 Ibid, 17

180 Idem

181 Vernaudeau, Jacques. « L'enseignement des langues kanak en Nouvelle-Calédonie », *Hermès, La Revue*, vol. 65, no. 1, 2013, pp. 112-118, 114

182 Idem

183 <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/LEGISCTA000006095833>

184 Lemerrier, Élise, Valelia Muni Toke, et Élise Palomares. « Les Outre-mer français. Regards ethnographiques sur une catégorie politique », *Terrains & travaux*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2014, pp. 5-38, 19

language while being at the top allows some legitimacy to the Creole and indigenous languages.¹⁸⁵

Thus considering the French State monolingualism the fact that French language is spoken unevenly is a major source of inequalities in the overseas territories as it creates a language barrier; this induces a handicap for people to find a job and to integrate in the society where the official language determine the administrative frame.

This coexistence between the “multilingualism of territories, plurilingualism of citizens and monolingualism of institutions”¹⁸⁶ creates tensions in overseas territories. This echoes to the tensions between traditions and modernity as evoked in modernization theory, in this case the existence of local languages, the persistence of a traditional element, infringes on the efficacy of the official french language in the administrative system which is a tool of modernization. The idea of the French language as being the main language above all the others is indicative of the abstract dichotomy between the “universality” that is represented by mainland France and the “particularities” that are the overseas territories which are in the process of universalization.¹⁸⁷

This reflects the heritage of colonialism which rests on the conception of the process of civilization as rooted in the imaginary of civilization ,which needs in order to be intelligible, its counterpart the imaginary of ‘barbarism’ which implies an alterity to civilize.¹⁸⁸ Additionally this

185 Ibid, 21

186 LÉglise, Isabelle « Multilinguisme des territoires, plurilinguisme des citoyens, monolinguisme des institutions ? », *Langues et cité*, 31 | 2022, 2-5.

187 Lemercier, Élise, Valelia Muni Toke, et Élise Palomares. « Les Outre-mer français. Regards ethnographiques sur une catégorie politique », *Terrains & travaux*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2014, pp. 5-38, 14

188 Gomez Fernando. “Ethics is the Original Philosophy; or, The Barbarian Words Coming from the Third World: An Interview with Enrique Dussel”. *Boundary 2*, vol. 28, n° 1, 2001 as cited by; Sanna, Maria Eleonora, et Eleni Varikas. « Genre, modernité et ‘colonialité’ du pouvoir : penser ensemble des subalternités dissonantes. Introduction », *Cahiers du Genre*, vol. 50, no. 1, 2011, pp. 5-15.

reflects the concept of “coloniality”¹⁸⁹, as explained by Anibal Quijano, which aims to produce a universal knowledge as expressed from a single place: a place presented as being in perpetual cultural and social evolution, where the change emerge and diffuse towards the rest of the world; ideas, commodities, technologies and modes of production, political institutions; and thus a ‘diffusionist’ vision of the world.

Therefore the French overseas territories can thus only achieve formal equality by gradually adopting this model of civilization which presents itself as universal.¹⁹⁰ As Jacques Dumont remarks; there resides the perversion of the colonial system which seems to offer even the solutions to overcome it.¹⁹¹

3.4. Hinderances to development in the overseas territories

The “orientation” law for the overseas territories of the 13th December 2000 proposing an ensemble of measures to further their development invokes their peculiar situation as already stated in the article 73 of the French Constitution which recognizes the; “specific characteristics and constraints of these communities”.¹⁹² These constraints have been identified by the Treaty establishing the European Community in the article 299 which recognizes the structural economic and social situation of these territories as hindered by; “their remoteness, insularity,

189 Quijano, Anibal. COLONIALITY AND MODERNITY/RATIONALITY, *Cultural Studies*, 21:2-3, 2007, 168-178.

190 Lemerrier, Élise, Valelia Muni Toke, et Élise Palomares. « Les Outre-mer français. Regards ethnographiques sur une catégorie politique », *Terrains & travaux*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2014, pp. 5-38, 14

191 Dumont J., *L’amère patrie: Histoire des Antilles françaises au XXe siècle*. Paris, Fayard, 2010 as cited in; Lemerrier, Élise, Valelia Muni Toke, et Élise Palomares. « Les Outre-mer français. Regards ethnographiques sur une catégorie politique », *Terrains & travaux*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2014, pp. 5-38, 15

192 https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/article_lc/LEGIARTI000019241099#:~:text=Dans%20les%20d%C3%A9partements%20et%20les,contraintes%20particuli%C3%A8res%20de%20ces%20collectivit%C3%A9s.

small surface area, difficult relief and climate, their economic dependence on a small number of products, factors whose permanence and combination seriously harm their development”¹⁹³

But the peculiar situation of the overseas territories is not limited to their geographical characteristics it is also connected to cultural elements. As Thierry Michalon points out what pertains to the cultural peculiarities of the overseas territories is a delicate area where the dominant assumption is that culture understood as the vision of the world of the overseas populations predispose them equally as the populations from continental Europe to economic and social development.¹⁹⁴ However such an assumption overlooks the historical particularities shaping the unique identities of the overseas populations which constitutes a cultural model quite different from the one that accompanied the development of industrial Europe and more precisely of mainland France.¹⁹⁵ Michalon deplors the failure to address the cultural particularities of the overseas territories in the formulation of policies directed at them and blame a reductionist approach that focus rather on simple natural elements such as their remoteness or their insularity which overshadows the importance of cultural specificities that are primordial in understanding their incompatibility with the rules of common law.¹⁹⁶ He thus emits the hypothesis that cultural specificities of the French overseas territories are located in the “nodes of modern societies”¹⁹⁷ that is the relations with the market economy and with public institutions

193 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:12002E299:FR:HTML>

194 Michalon, Thierry. *L'outre-mer français: Evolution institutionnelle et affirmations identitaires*. N.p., Editions L'Harmattan, 2009, 130

195 *Idem*

196 *Idem*

197 *Ibid*, 131

and more precisely are defined by the fear of the market and a certain form of diversion of the relationship to the State.¹⁹⁸

Indeed he states that the French overseas territories remain reluctant to the market's logic as a result of their world vision, inherited from their history, which still persist because of their geographical remoteness and that is quite different from the one which allowed and accompanied the development of the capitalist market economy in Europe and the United States. This is connected first to the fact that the plantation society model spawned a particular culture of economics, different from the one shaped by the industrialization. Michalon defines it as being characterized by resourcefulness reflexes which allow the possibility to remain on the margins of official economic circuits and by the recurrence of habits of mutual aid between family and friends and exchanges of unpaid services generating a parallel economy.¹⁹⁹ And secondly the different world vision of the overseas territories is connected to the fact that the ascetic ideology of the capitalist bourgeoisie which permeated the European and American bourgeoisie remains quasi absent from the overseas territories.²⁰⁰ Indeed Michalon observes that the spirit of capitalism seems to remain exterior to these societies; the inclination for individual competition and thriftiness being absent over there. He adds that instead they are characterized by a communitarian conception of life, an aversion for institutional constraints such as the market's mechanisms, by a negative conception of labor inherited from slavery, by an appetite for immediate consumption resulting from the humiliation of a relatively recent misery and thus

198[¶]Idem

199[¶]Ibid, 132

200[¶]Ibid, 133

concludes that these cultures remain remote from the one that set off the emergence of the modern world.²⁰¹

The second cultural particularity that Michalon analyzes is the reluctance of the overseas territories towards the mechanisms of modern institutions. The implementation of institutions in the overseas territories was hindered by the fact that these societies remained on the fringes of the industrial revolution and the urbanization that accompanied and fostered the development of institutions based on the notion of rationality.²⁰² In contrast overseas societies rest on the principle of affectivity and thus the individual's identity is based more on his relationships than his functions which is translated by a difficulty to perceive institutions beyond the persons that make them function. This also impact the legitimacy of the State apparatus which relies on abstract concepts such as the importance of citizenship ensuring the same rights and duties for all. This creates a diversion from the democratic mechanisms of the State; the public institutions don't necessarily represent the place where decisions for the general interest are taken but instead represent an opportunity to gain power and money to be distributed through relational networks. And thus local polity turns out to be depoliticised; what is at stake is not the future of the Polis but it's the dispute for the acquisition of assets.²⁰³

This also creates a diversion from the administrative mechanisms; French overseas territories remain less in tune with the Republican values that are based on equality in the face of the rule.²⁰⁴ This is explained by the fact that those isolated territories were partially exempted

201 Ibid, 134

202 Ibid, 137

203 Ibid, 138

204 Ibid, 139

from the movement of cultural homogenization deliberately organized by the Jacobin State in order to level down local particularisms and to shape a relation between the power and the administrated that is based on anonymity which create a distance that is essential for the equality of treatment.²⁰⁵ In those societies where identity is built upon the place one occupies among its relational network, the impersonal and functional character of the administrative rule is met with resistance and instead the notion of affectivity plays an important role in the way administration is run; relational networks being at the core of how administration functions over there.²⁰⁶ This affects the credibility of the institutions as the equality in the face of administrative rule is not ensured.

Furthermore it also impacts the relation to the State; there persists a damaged legitimacy attributed to the French State and its institutions which is said to ignore the local realities through its policies which in turn impacts the legitimacy of the French laws and fuels a growing resentment which autonomist and separatist movements capitalize on.²⁰⁷ The relation of the overseas territories, in periphery to the Republic, with the State is thus peculiar. Because of their peculiar situation they are calling for a special treatment; an adjustment of the application of laws so their constraints is toned down while at the same time fully receiving the advantages of the French legal system which has been summed up as “a citizenship lived in a purely utilitarian way”.²⁰⁸ The State is thus conceived as a stock of wealth upon which the overseas territories seek

205 Ibid, 140

206 Idem

207 Idem

208 DAHOMAY. J, « Antilles-Guyane: intégration sans assimilation. », Le Monde, 11 novembre 1999 as cited by Michalon, Thierry. *L'outre-mer français: Evolution institutionnelle et affirmations identitaires*. N.p., Editions L'Harmattan, 2009, 141

to assert rights as a form of retribution for a particularly painful history and to compensate for structural handicaps caused by a peculiar geographical situation.²⁰⁹ Aware of possessing only a largely utilitarian legitimacy and careful not to admit to it, the Republic accept to contend with the desires of the local political elites.²¹⁰

Thus according to Michalon the malaise of the overseas territories is rooted in a deep cultural gap which is translated by a reluctance to the logics of the market as well as the mechanisms of the modern State which produce an unsustainable mode of organization that aim to palliate to those obstacles but instead just fuels an economic and social dependance to mainland France which is detrimental to their development overall.²¹¹ Indeed overseas territories suffer from their peripheral situation which leads to a withdrawal into oneself that is financed externally.²¹² The solution to these problems reside, Michalon argues, in reducing the omnipresence of the French State by giving the overseas territories a more central position and responsibility in handling their own development so that they can acquire a higher degree of political, economic and fiscal autonomy.²¹³

The next chapter will examine the developmental policies invoked by the French State to tackle the inequalities and reluctances discussed in the above chapter and how they display

209 Michalon, Thierry. *L'outre-mer français: Evolution institutionnelle et affirmations identitaires*. N.p., Editions L'Harmattan, 2009, 142

210 Idem

211 Michalon, Thierry. « La France périphérique: crainte du marché et rejet de l'État. », *Revue Politique et Parlementaire*, n° 1009/1010, nov-déc. 2000/janv. fév. 2001, p. 107-117, 15

212 Idem

213 Ibid,16

elements reminiscent of the modernization theory discourse as well as being manifestations of intentional development and trusteeship.

4. Developmental policies in the French Overseas Territories

4.1. Law of May, 27 2009; “for the economic development of the overseas territories”²¹⁴

On May, 27 2009 the law n° 2009-594 was promulgated as an attempt to foster endogenous economic development in the overseas territories in order to contend with the high rates of unemployment and reduce the mechanisms of assistantship with the Hexagon. In the proposition of the law presented to the Senate it is recalled that the GDPs of the overseas departments are all below 75% of the average per capita GDP of the European Union and therefore they are recognized by the European Commission as qualifying for the “convergence objective” and eligible for specific aid measures which derogates from the common Community law as stated by the article 87-3-a of the European Treaty.²¹⁵ The notion of a “convergence objective” present in the proposition of the law text demonstrates a clear intention from the French Government to bring to par the economic situation of the overseas territories with the rest of the European Union; the idea of convergence directly echoes modernization theory as it’s one of its main prediction. The proposition of the law also states that within their proximate regional environment the overseas departments possess a level of development and purchasing power “clearly above average”²¹⁶ which points to the influence France had on shifting their immanent

214 <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000020671201>

215 <https://www.senat.fr/leg/pjl07-496.pdf>, 3

216 ^{Idem}

development. Thus this level of development paired with their structural handicaps linked to remoteness, small size and insularity generate heavier operating costs than those of neighboring countries and consequently generate a low competitiveness including in the domains where the overseas departments possess a real expertise.²¹⁷ And thus the proposition of the law formulates the objectives of giving to the overseas departments the means to achieve profitable domestic production to replace part of the imports and to produce competitive exports.²¹⁸

The law is divided into five “Titles” each relating to a specific thematic and counts seventy-six articles total. The first Title pertains to “support purchasing power”²¹⁹ and regroups three Articles. The first Article states that a decree by the Council of State may regulate the selling price of products deemed essential according to the particularities of the oversea territory in question but this was abrogated in 2012 by the law n°2012-1270, the second Article announces the installment of a quarterly publication by the price and income observatories set up in the overseas territories of price comparisons with mainland France but this was also abrogated with the 2012 law, the third Article introduce the possibility to grant an exceptional bonus financed by the State of a maximum amount of €1,500 per employee and per year although this is applicable only to the overseas departments and the overseas territories of Saint Pierre and Miquelon, Saint Martin and Saint Barthelemy. This reveals the intention to control the market mechanisms although since only one of the three Articles are still in application today it shows a mitigated efficiency to do so.

217^{Idem}

218^{ibid}, 4

219 <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000020671201>, Title 1

The second Title pertains to the “support measures for the economy and businesses”²²⁰ and counts twenty eight Articles which focus on the tax reductions attributed to companies i.e. on income tax, business tax and property tax as stipulated in the Articles 5, 6, 7, 10 and 30; these reductions are at the minimum 50% and can reach up to 80% for the sectors considered as priorities such as renewable energies, research and development, information and communication technologies and tourism.²²¹ Additionally it creates different financial aids for businesses; a freight aid destined to lower the costs related to freight stipulated in the Article 24, an aid for the renovation of hotels as stipulated in the article 26, an exceptional investment fund to provide financial assistance to public figures who carry out investments relating to collective public facilities and which participate actively in local economic, social, environmental and energetic development as stipulated in the Article 31. Measures that pertains to the structural particularities of the overseas territories are also introduced such as the Article 28 which aim to supervise the formation of the prices of electronic communications services such as the prices of fixed and mobile telephony services in order to tackle the problem of over-billing due to roaming of calls. The third Title of the law regroups fifteen Articles and pertains to the “revitalization of the housing policy”.²²² This revitalization takes the form of developing social housing by extending the tax exemption system to more cooperative public housing companies, as well as the introduction of a “titration procedure”²²³ as stipulated in the Article 35 which aim to identify the lands and real estate with no title deeds and also occupants with no title deeds in order to

220 Ibid, Title 2

221 <https://www.vie-publique.fr/loi/20531-outre-mer-developpement-economique-guadeloupe-martinique-guyane-re>

222 <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000020671201>, Title 3

223 Ibid, Article 35

constitute or reconstitute titles of ownership. The article 35 thus shows the shortcomings of the administrative system, as discussed earlier by Michalon²²⁴, in charge of establishing and regulating private property. The fifth Title of the law pertains to the “territorial continuity” and aim to ensure a national policy of territorial continuity in the name of the principles of equal rights, national solidarity and the unity of the Republic. This is translated by the effort to bridge the gap with mainland France related to the conditions of access of the population to public services such as transport, training, health and communication services while acknowledging the particular geographical, economic and social situation of each overseas communities. The idea of “Territorial continuity” thus clearly demonstrates an intent to impose a certain model of development to the overseas territory as modeled on the development of the French Republic clearly reminiscent of the idea supported by modernization theory that there is one type of transition to development and it’s the modern way.

The last Title of the law pertains to "diverse propositions"²²⁵ and regroups miscellaneous articles, most of which are modifications of articles of previous laws although there are two Articles that stand out, the Article 73 which is composed of a single sentence; "Creole languages are part of the national patrimony", this recognition is not surprising as creole languages are spoken by an important part of the population of the overseas territories; according to the General Delegation for the French Language and the Languages of France (DGLFLF) the number of active speakers of creole languages is over two million and in the example of Reuniese Creole it is the first language spoken for more than 90% of the population of Reunion

224 Michalon, Thierry. *L'outre-mer français: Evolution institutionnelle et affirmations identitaires*. N.p., Editions L'Harmattan, 2009, 140

225 <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000020671201>, Title 5

making it the regional language the most spoken in France.²²⁶ Although this Article is not a novelty as Creole languages were recognized as regional languages by the law n° 84-747 of August 2, 1984 which confers to the regional councils of Guadeloupe, Guiana, Martinique and Reunion, the competence to determine “the complementary educational and cultural activities relating to the knowledge of regional languages and cultures, which can be organized in schools falling within the competence of the region”²²⁷ although the Creole languages were expressly named only in the law of May, 27 2009. This article thus have more of a symbolic intent to recognize and include the linguistic diversity of the overseas territories but in practice the French language remains the dominating language in the functioning of the society as it is the only language allowed in public institutions as the Article 2 of the French Constitution states; “The language of the Republic is French”²²⁸ and this entails that; “the use of French is binding on legal persons governed by public law and persons governed by private law in the exercise of a public service mission, as well as users in their relations with public administrations and services”²²⁹ (as stated in the decision no. 96-373 DC of April 9, 1996 of the Organic law on the status of autonomy of French Polynesia) and that; “private individuals can claim no right, in their relations with government departments or public authorities, to use any language other than French, nor must they be compelled to do so”²³⁰ (as stated in the decision no. 99-412 DC of 15 June 1999 in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages). This reflects a paradox

226 Bertile, Véronique. « Les langues des Outre-mer : de quel(s) droit(s) ? », *Langues et cité*, 31 | 2022, 6-9.

227 Idem

228 https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/article_lc/LEGIARTI000006527453

229 <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/cons/id/CONSTEXT000017666510>

230 <https://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/en/decision/1999/99412DC.htm>

connected to the assimilation of the population of the overseas territories; while speaking a creole language in their everyday life signifies their assimilation to the territory, to not be fluent in French hinders their assimilation to the French community in charge of public institutions thus illustrating the clash between immanent development and intentional development.

Additionally in the miscellaneous articles of the fifth Title the Article 74 introduces the creation of a “National Commission for the Evaluation of State Policies Overseas”²³¹ which monitors the implementation of public policies in the overseas territories and in particular the measures taken to promote the economic and social development of these communities. This is realized by the implementation every two years of a public report, presented to the French Parliament, assessing the social and economic impacts of the application of the Titles 2 to 4 of the present law and focus primarily on the impact of the organization of distribution channels and the level of public and private remuneration on the mechanisms of price formation.²³² This Article is supplemented by the introduction of another report, this one yearly, monitoring the convergence strategies implemented by the State in regard to the convergence objectives presented in the law no. 2017-256 of February 28th 2017 “planning relating to the real overseas equality”²³³, which is discussed in the next subchapter of this thesis, and which intends to give an account of the evolution of the indicators chosen to measure the reduction of the gaps in levels of development.

231 <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000020671201>

232 [¶]Idem

233 <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000034103762/>

4.2. Law of February 28, 2017 for the; “planning relating to real equality overseas”²³⁴

The law aims to reduce the development gaps between the overseas territories and mainland France in the attempt to bring “real equality” and thus demonstrates the political will to make this objective “a priority for the Nation”²³⁵. Again the idea of convergence is present as in the previous law of 2009; “The convergence policies implemented on the basis of this law tend to create the conditions for sustainable development”²³⁶ revealing the intention to modernize those territories. The law also proposes to “promote their inclusion in their regional environment”²³⁷, inclusion that was disturbed by the fact that they are governed by a Western Government while being located in non-western areas, and also proposes to “compensate for the structural handicaps linked to their geographical location”²³⁸ their isolation and their small surface area being considered as handicaps, in the context of modernization these attributes are indeed handicaps to the mechanisms of the market and the process of industrialization. The public policies presented in this law also state to account for “their contribution to the diversity of the Nation and their strategic role for the influence of France” highlighting the relation of trusteeship between the overseas territories and mainland France; in pursuing the development of overseas territories France is pursuing the interests of the Nation.

The law thus consists of a transversal planning instrument with a duration of ten to twenty years²³⁹, and is divided into eight Titles. The first title named “Strategy for real equality

234 [¶]Idem

235 [¶]Ibid, article 1

236 [¶]Idem

237 [¶]Idem

238 [¶]Idem

239 [¶]Ibid, Article 7

overseas” regroups six Articles; three presenting the objectives of the law to reduce the gaps in levels of development between the overseas territories and mainland France as in the Article 1 which specifies two essential objectives; “to resolve the differences in levels of development in economic, social, health, environmental protection and enhancement as well as differences in access to care, education, vocational training, culture, public services and new technologies”²⁴⁰ as well as “reduce the gaps in living standards and income observed within each of them”²⁴¹, the second Article stresses the importance of territorial continuity by affirming that “the establishment and maintenance of continuous territorial links between the various components of the territory of the Republic constitute a stake of sovereignty and a priority of the action of the State”²⁴² and the third Article presents a pragmatic objective of building new housing units in the overseas territories; “the Republic has set itself the objective of building 150,000 housing units in the overseas territories during the ten years following the promulgation of this law”.²⁴³ The three other Articles of the first Title present the creation of reports intended to identify the development gaps between mainland France and the overseas territories and how to reduce them, submitted to the Parliament within a period of twelve months. In the Article 4 the report created intends to present “the situation of the overseas populations in relation to those of the Hexagon as well as the means necessary to guarantee them the effectiveness of the same rights in the following areas: access to energy and drinking water, access to electronic commerce and tax attractiveness”²⁴⁴, in the Article 5 the report created pertains to “the necessary means to guarantee

240 Ibid, Article 1

241 Idem

242 Ibid, Article 2

243 Ibid, Article 3

244 Ibid, Article 4

them the effectiveness of the same rights in the areas of transport and travel”²⁴⁵ and in the Article 6 the report created pertains to "the means necessary to guarantee them the effectiveness of the same rights in the social and health fields, in particular with regard to the fight against addictions and particularly alcoholism.”²⁴⁶ The first Title of the law thus lays down the basic factors for the development gaps and shape the narrative reminiscent of modernization theory that is the need for a transition to actual development, to modernity and it also provide justifications for a policy of interventions for intentional development by identifying the needs to develop using the mechanisms of trusteeship; mainland France is recognized as the model to emulate and consequently offer or impose to provide the means to do so. The second Title of the law named “Provisions in favor of convergence”²⁴⁷ regroups six Articles proposing instruments for implementing “convergence”. The Article 7 thus introduces a convergence plan which aims to “defines the guidelines and specifies the measures and actions aimed at operationally implementing the objectives mentioned in Article 1 of this law”²⁴⁸, the plan is set on a duration of ten to twenty years and sets a diagnostic of the economic, health, social, financial and environmental situation as well as a diagnostic of the income and wealth inequalities, discriminations and inequalities between men and women. Furthermore it sets a long-term convergence strategy determining the level of reduction of development gaps to achieve upon completion and lay downs the basic guidelines for achieving this goal by providing actions in “the areas of infrastructure, the environment, economic development and the establishment of businesses, social and cultural development, equality between women and men, health and

245 Ibid, Article 5

246 Ibid, Article 6

247 Ibid, Title 2

248 Ibid, Article 7

access to healthcare, education, the fight against illiteracy, vocational training, employment, housing, access to justice, security, telecommunications, access to public services, information, mobility, culture and sport”.²⁴⁹ The implementation of those convergence strategies are then said to be evaluated by the regional chamber of accounts according to “the observed evolution of the GDP per inhabitant, the employment rate, the differences in income per inhabitant as well as the poverty line”²⁵⁰ as stated in the Article 12. The third Title of the law named “social provisions”²⁵¹ focuses on diverse modifications of the Labour Code, the Public Health Code and the Social Security Code while the fourth Title named “Provisions relating to connectivities and territorial continuity”²⁵² focuses on diverse modifications of the Code of Transports and of the Code of Postal and Electronic Communications. The fifth Title named “Provisions relating to education and formation”²⁵³ regroups different experimental measures regarding education such as the Article 58 which proposed through a derogation of the Education Code, for a period not exceeding three years and in the overseas departments, to render education compulsory for French and foreign children from age three to eighteen as long as they have neither a job nor a secondary school diploma²⁵⁴, meanwhile in mainland France education is compulsory only until sixteen. This measure aims at reducing the number of school dropouts by increasing the level of qualification of young people and in parallel help to reduce social determinism. Another example of experimental measure is presented in the Article 60 which states that for a period of three

249 *Idem*

250 *Ibid*, Article 12

251 *Ibid*, Title 3

252 *Ibid*, Title 4

253 *Ibid*, Title 5

254 *Ibid*, Article 58

years in the territories of Guadeloupe, Guiana, Martinique, Réunion, Saint-Barthélemy and Saint-Martin and Saint-Pierre-et- Miquelon, the minimum duration of the professional training contract, may, by way of derogation from Articles of the labor code, be less than twelve months, without however being able to be less than six months.²⁵⁵ These experimental measures reveal how to some extent the overseas territory represents a “laboratory for modernity” where measures can be experimented on a smaller scale. The sixth Title named “Economic, commercial and banking provisions” regroups thirteen Articles all of which are diverse modifications of the Code of Commerce, the Monetary and Financial Code, the Labor Code and the Rural and Maritime Fishing Code except for one Article; Article 73 which presents a measure aiming at promoting the emergence of new local operators in the access to public procurement in the overseas territories with the exception of French Polynesia and the Wallis and Futuna Islands and which states that; “for a period of five years from the promulgation of this law, contracting authorities, contracting entities and public purchasers may reserve up to one third of their contracts for local small and medium-sized enterprises”²⁵⁶, which demonstrates the intent to boost the local economy and dynamize the local market.

The seventh Title named “Provisions relating to culture”²⁵⁷ introduces a modification to the first Article of the decree of the second Thermidor Year II (July 20th, 1794) which stated that; “no public act may, in any part whatsoever of French territory, be written except in the French language”²⁵⁸ and complements it with the addendum stating; “This provision has neither the object nor the effect of prohibiting the use of translations when the use of the French

255 Ibid, Article 60

256 Ibid, Article 73

257 Ibid, Title 7

258 <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000000295886/>

language is assured.”²⁵⁹ This modification shows indirectly how France is recognizing the fact that a portion of the population of the overseas territories don’t speak French and that it is necessary to make public institutions more accessible to these populations. In the same Title the Article 79 proposes the creation of a report, to be submitted to the Parliament, evaluating the conditions for; "a possible alignment of the bouquet of digital terrestrial television channels in the overseas territories with the one existing in the Hexagon”²⁶⁰ as an effort to promote the same access to technologies of communication to the overseas populations as in mainland France which is an important component in the strategy of convergence.

The eighth Title focuses on the “provisions relating to sustainable development” and regroups four Articles containing diverse modifications of the Environmental Code and the Mining Code, the ninth Title pertains to the “provisions relating to the public service” and contains measures to adapt the public service in the overseas territories such as the creation of a unique State human resources in each overseas territories, under the authority of the representative of the State, which would be responsible for “pooling human resources policy actions”²⁶¹ as stipulated in the Article 87. Adapting the public service to the particularities of the overseas territories is part of the strategy to increase the efficacy of the State apparatus within those region where it tends to be more frequently challenged. The tenth Title regroups measures relating to “legal, institutional and judicial provisions”²⁶² such as the Article ninety eight which extends the functions of the agents of municipalities and provinces of New Caledonia to take on the responsibility, alongside police officers, of applying the regulations pertaining to town

259 <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000034103762/>, Article 76

260 [¶]Ibid, Article 79

261 [¶]Ibid, Article 87

262 [¶]Ibid, Title 10

planning and authorized to seek and record violations of these regulations; revealing how the legal system is adapted to cater to the geographical specificities of the overseas territories. Another Article also testifies of this; the Article 113 which introduces the creation of a committee in charge of determining the measures intended to establish compensations for the persons whose illness was caused by nuclear tests. This measure is intended for the territory of French Polynesia where the French Government planned 193 nuclear tests between 1966 and 1996 releasing radiations causing long term effects on the health of the populations of French Polynesia and their natural environment.²⁶³ This illustrates the politic of “reparation”²⁶⁴ undertaken by France and to another extent the “historical culpability”²⁶⁵ that permeates the policies designed for the overseas territories.

The eleventh Title; “Provisions relating to lands overseas”²⁶⁶ aims to bring land regulations up to date in the overseas territories as demonstrated in the Article 118 with the creation of a transitional tax regime until 2025 in Mayotte to facilitate land regularization procedures such as the total or partial exemption of inheritance taxes and registration taxes and a degressive exemption from local taxes over three years after the deed. This measure is connected to the fact that for nearly a century Mayotte land system has been based on two types of regimes; the customary regime in which possessions are recognized locally by the community i.e. lineage and the village and the civil regime i.e. private ownership based on the allocation of properties

263[□]Argounès, Fabrice. « Le nucléaire dans le Pacifique », Hermès, La Revue, vol. 65, no. 1, 2013, pp. 67-67.

264[□]Wolton, Dominique. « Les Outre-mers, une chance pour la France et l'Europe », *Hermès, La Revue*, vol. 32-33, no. 1-2, 2002, pp. 11-25, 23

265[□]Idem

266[□]<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000034103762/>, 118

through the State.²⁶⁷ Private property was imported by the French Government in the framework of the plantation economy, in the context of agricultural colonization which started in Mayotte in 1843, in order to legitimize the appropriations and the confiscations of lands.²⁶⁸ In the context of modernizing the territory it is therefore necessary to reform the registration of lands in order to develop agriculture there needs to be a systematic land registration system which is also necessitated for the development of collective tax resources as well as the development of productive investments and land market.²⁶⁹ This creates a disruption of the social order in place, the modernity of land regulations clashing with the customary land regulations, reminiscent of the resistance of traditions in the context of modernization. Indeed this transition is not smooth as exemplified with the rise of clientelist practices within the modern land system due to the role of the bureaucracy having discretionary power in the attribution and recognition of deeds which led to administrators and local notables to take advantage of the system at the expense of customary owners.²⁷⁰

The twelfth Title named “Provisions relating to women’s rights”²⁷¹ contains a single Article introducing the possibility of the creation of an observatory of inequalities between men and women upon the request of the overseas territories and in charge of studying violence against women, offering comprehensive care to victims and concluding partnerships with the

267 Barthès, Carole, « Effets de la régularisation foncière à Mayotte. Pluralisme, incertitude, jeux d’acteurs et métissage », *Économie rurale*, 313-314 | 2009, 99-114, 101

268 Ibidem

269 Ibid, 102

270 Ibid, 101

271 <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000034103762/>, Title 12

actors involved in the fight against violence against women.²⁷² Again this is experimental as the option for the creation of such observatory is in place for five years and is followed by an evaluation report focusing on its impact submitted no later than six months before the end of the experiment to the Parliament. A report published by the CESE (Economic, Social and Environmental Council) in 2017 noted that in the context of violence against women; "if the figures are higher than those observed in the Hexagon, the means made available to the overseas territories are much lower"²⁷³ while taking into account the particularities of the Overseas Territories such as; "the diversity of the Overseas Territories and their situations not only regarding the reality of the violence but also the historical, structural, organizational and governance elements."²⁷⁴

The thirteenth Title named "Fiscal Provisions"²⁷⁵ pertains to taxation reforms and the optimization of financial benefits such as in the Article 145 which introduces the creation of a report to the Parliament concerning the various scenarios to achieve an increase in the financial benefits for the territorial collectivities of French Guiana of the space activity in this territory while aiming to preserve the competitiveness of the Kourou site. The activity of the Guiana Space Center of Kourou is crucial for the economy of the territory as it represents 15% of its GDP in 2018²⁷⁶ and has a considerable impact on foreign trade with Space activity representing 40% of total Guyanese imports and 83% of the exports.²⁷⁷ However this reform is also part of

272 Ibid, Article 119

273 https://www.lecese.fr/sites/default/files/pdf/Rapports/2017/2017_09_violences_femmes.pdf, 58

274 Idem

275 <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000034103762/>, Article 145

276 <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/4512863?sommaire=4475978>

277 <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/6685384>

the politic of “reparation”, after attempting to exploit Guiana’s forests and its arable land, France chose to take advantage of its insalubrity, caused by the penal colony, and of the rotation of the earth which is faster there than elsewhere.²⁷⁸ And thus the city of Kourou, nicknamed “Kourou the White” by the Guyanese people, was created on the order of Charles de Gaulle in 1960 by expelling and imposing the relocation of the local inhabitants of the area and thus causing a lasting trauma which still impacts “Kourou’s malaise” to this day.²⁷⁹ Indeed “French-style technocracy”²⁸⁰ erased the past of Kourou to replace it with a model of “industrial mono-activity and foreign urbanization”²⁸¹ when installing a Space Center, filling the city with concrete buildings to house the workers of the Space Center. Additionally it had a considerable negative impact on the natural environment of the area in question as shown with the construction of the hydroelectric dam of the Petit-Saut, built to support the electricity’s needs of the Spacial Center, the lake used for the barrage which is considered the biggest lake in France engendered the disappearance of over 370 km² of forests with all the associated fauna and flora.²⁸²

Thus the case of Kourou illustrates how from a traditional society it was transformed with the Space Center into a “laboratory of modernity”, to the detriment of the Guyanese people who are left aside from the benefits generated by the Space Center as despite its efforts to integrate more Guyanese engineers in the base teams the project remains in majority composed of “outsiders”.²⁸³

278^{Théry, Hervé. « À quoi sert la Guyane ? », Outre-Terre, vol. 43, no. 2, 2015, pp. 211-235, 211}

279^{Ïzoard, Celia. « Kourou, ville des astres. Escale au port spatial de l’Europe », Z : Revue itinérante d’enquête et de critique sociale, vol. 12, no. 1, 2018, pp. 174-185, 176}

280^{Idem}

281^{Idem}

282^{Ibid, 177}

283^{Ibid, 182}

The fourteenth and final Title pertains to the “Provisions relating to statistics and data collection” and aims to harmonize the methods of calculating statistics and collecting data between the Overseas Territories and mainland France as demonstrated by the Article 148 with the creation of a report to be submitted to the government pertaining to; "the bases and perimeters for calculating the poverty rates of the overseas populations and the populations in mainland France in order to harmonize the calculation methods applied between the different territories.”²⁸⁴ In the spirit of achieving convergence establishing a consistent instrument to measure the differences in development between the overseas territories and France is essential.

5. Conclusion

This paper demonstrates that the influence of modernization theory is perceptible in the way France designs development policies for its Overseas territories. In the case of French Overseas Territories the transition to modernity coincides with a process of integration to the French Republic. This process is pursued through a hybridization between the local rules of Overseas Territories and the common rule of the Republic of France and a certain institutional pluralism.²⁸⁵ However this process is paved with obstacles namely French universalism clashes with the communitarianism that pervades in French Overseas territories. Indeed French universalism is based on the principles of equality, secularism, and a standardized notion of citizenship, which aim to transcend ethnic, cultural, and religious differences. In contrast, communitarianism emphasizes the importance of collective identities, cultural diversity, and

²⁸⁴Ibid, 148

²⁸⁵Milia, Monique, “Histoire d’une politique d’émigration organisée pour les départements d’outre-mer”, *Pouvoirs dans la Caraïbe* [Online], Spécial | 1997, Online since 16 March 2011, connection on 10 June 2023. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/plc/739>; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/plc.739>

community-based values. The clash between these two perspectives can create tensions and challenges in the process of integration. The territories' communitarian tendencies and strong attachment to local cultures and traditions tend to resist the universalist approach promoted by France. Balancing the principles of equality and unity with the recognition and accommodation of local identities and aspirations represent a complex task.

One can argue that the obstacles to development of the Overseas Territories also reside in the social and economic dependence to France; thus trying to fit in the French mold of development constitutes a challenge. Additionally the example of French Overseas Territories shows the limitations of intentionally inducing a transition to modernity in areas that are not necessarily compatible with this type of development. Indeed the territories' historical ties to France have shaped their economic structures, patterns of trade, and social dynamics, which may not necessarily align with the traditional model of development depicted in modernization theory. The attempt to fit the territories into the French mold of development can be problematic due to the unique circumstances they face. The modernization model of development, which prioritizes industrialization, market-oriented reforms, and certain institutional frameworks, may not be fully compatible with the realities of the territories. The territories' geographical isolation, small size, specific cultural heritage, and ecological vulnerabilities can present constraints to such development approach.

To conquer nature, one of the prescriptive aspect of modernization theory clashes with the insular nature of those French Overseas Territories which remain partially traditional. As Cowen and Shenton pointed out modernization as a doctrine of development was formulated to manage the changes in Europe connected to its immanent development by pursuing politics of intentional development, Western countries then tried to export their model of intentional

development to other countries even though they had a different kind of immanent development and the result is a difficult transition to this foreign model of development. Following the logic of Trusteeship France who asserts itself has developed take on the mission of developing those Overseas Territories which it deems as underdeveloped, in comparison to mainland France, through plans of convergence and plans of reaching “real equality”. However transforming the Overseas Territories from what has been described as "empire confetti" to achieving convergence and real equality with mainland France is a significant challenge. The history and societal characteristics of the territories play a crucial role in shaping the complexities and obstacles they face on the path to development and equality. Indeed the Overseas Territories have experienced a history of colonialism, which has had lasting effects on their social, economic, and political structures. The legacies of colonization, including patterns of exploitation, limited opportunities for economic diversification, and social inequalities, continue to impact their development trajectories. Overcoming these historical burdens and addressing the resulting disparities is a challenging task.

Despite the obstacles paving the way to a real transition to modernity for the Overseas Territories, France is determined to undertake the challenge through the practice of a strong centralized government as preached by modernization theorists such as Rostow, Smelser and Coleman while practicing a flexible approach to politics by adapting some of its policies to the local specificities of Overseas territories and to use the analogy of Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson; it resembles the shackled Leviathan, the State, carefully managing its way through the narrow corridor of the path to liberty.²⁸⁶ While it is true that France maintains a strong

²⁸⁶Acemoglu, Daron, and Robinson, James A.. *The Narrow Corridor: States, Societies, and the Fate of Liberty*. United States, Penguin Publishing Group, 2019.

centralized government and follows principles advocated by modernization theorists, it also recognizes the importance of adapting policies to the local specificities of the territories.

The concept of a "shackled Leviathan" implies that the state has the potential to exert significant power and influence, but its actions are constrained by various factors, including the need to navigate through complex challenges and respect the unique characteristics of the territories. France, as the governing authority, exercises considerable control over the development process in the Overseas Territories while being mindful of the limitations and constraints imposed by historical, social, and cultural contexts. Thus the recognition of local specificities reflects a departure from the purely top-down, uniform approach of modernization theory. It acknowledges that the path to development is not a linear process and that flexibility and adaptation are necessary to address the complexities and challenges faced by the Overseas Territories.

The transition to modernity in the French Overseas Territories has also been characterized by experimental measures implemented by the French government. In this perspective these territories can be described as "laboratories of modernity". Historically, these territories were colonies with distinct cultural, social, and economic contexts. As France underwent its own modernization process, it sought to extend those changes to its Overseas Territories. The French government implemented various policies and initiatives aimed at accelerating their development and integrating them into the broader French system as discussed in chapter five. One key aspect of this experimental approach was the implementation of specific legal frameworks, known as "statutes," for the Overseas Territories. These statutes provided a unique status to the territories, granting them a certain degree of autonomy and specific measures tailored to their needs. For example, the Organic Law of 1946 established the French Overseas Departments and provided them with representation in the French Parliament. This allowed the

territories to have a voice in national decision-making processes. Additionally, the French government has implemented targeted policies to address specific challenges faced by the Overseas Territories. These policies have focused on areas such as economic development, infrastructure improvement, education, healthcare, and cultural preservation. The government has invested in infrastructure projects, supported industries like tourism and agriculture, and promoted educational and training programs to enhance the territories' human capital. Furthermore, the French government has recognized the importance of preserving the unique cultural heritage of the overseas territories while promoting their integration into the broader French identity. Efforts have been made to protect and promote the local languages, traditions, and customs, alongside the dissemination of French language and culture. The experimental nature of these measures reflects simultaneously a willingness to adapt policies to the specific needs and situations of the Overseas Territories and also an opportunity for the French Government to test different policies to appreciate their applicability before implementing them in mainland France. Even though it could be said that the French government has recognized that a "one-size-fits-all" approach may not be suitable, given the distinct challenges presented by these territories the insistence for assimilation to French culture remains a priority for the French Government. By viewing them as laboratories of modernity, the government has sought to experiment with innovative approaches to address the complexities of development and in a way has attempted to implement a sense of shared progress and identity between mainland France and the Overseas Territories.

Overall, the obstacles to development in the French Overseas Territories, including their social and economic dependence on France, highlight the need for a more nuanced and flexible approach to development that takes into account the territories' specific circumstances and

aspirations. It requires balancing the benefits of modernization with the preservation of local identities and sustainable practices.

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