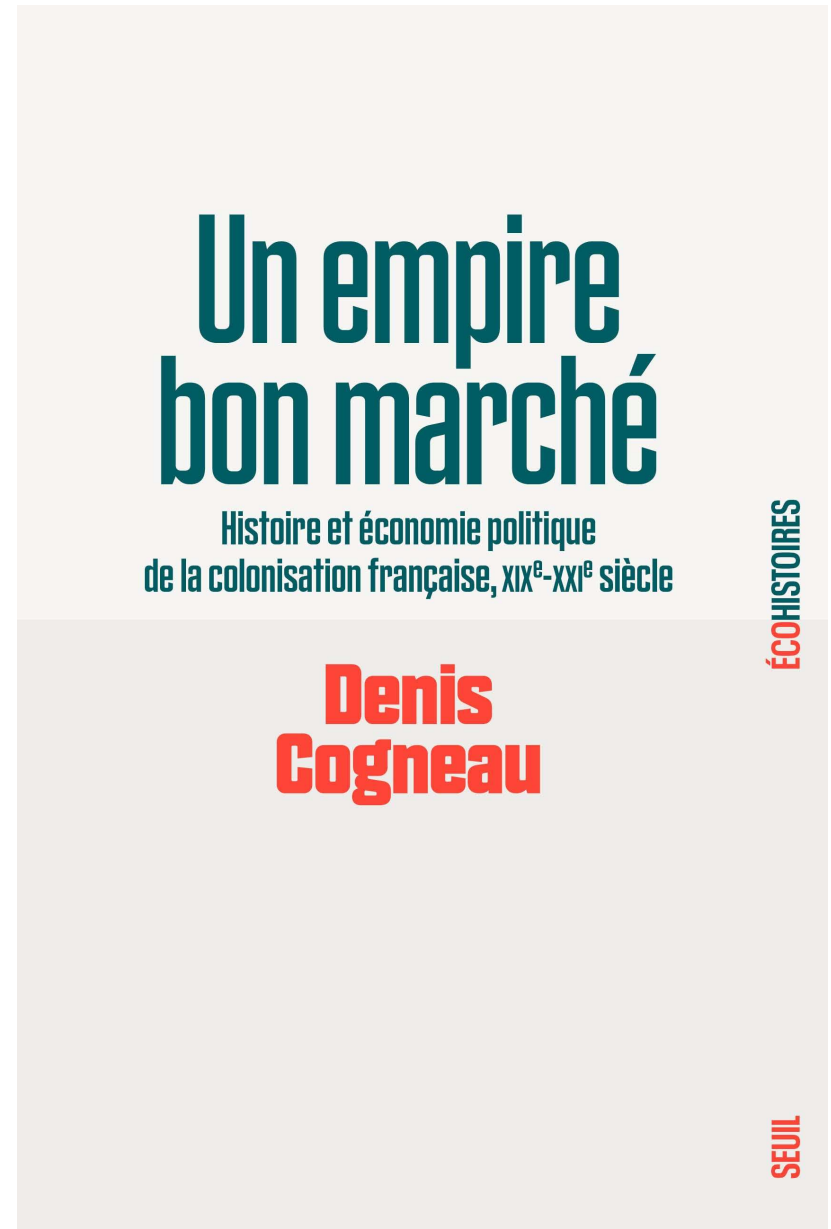
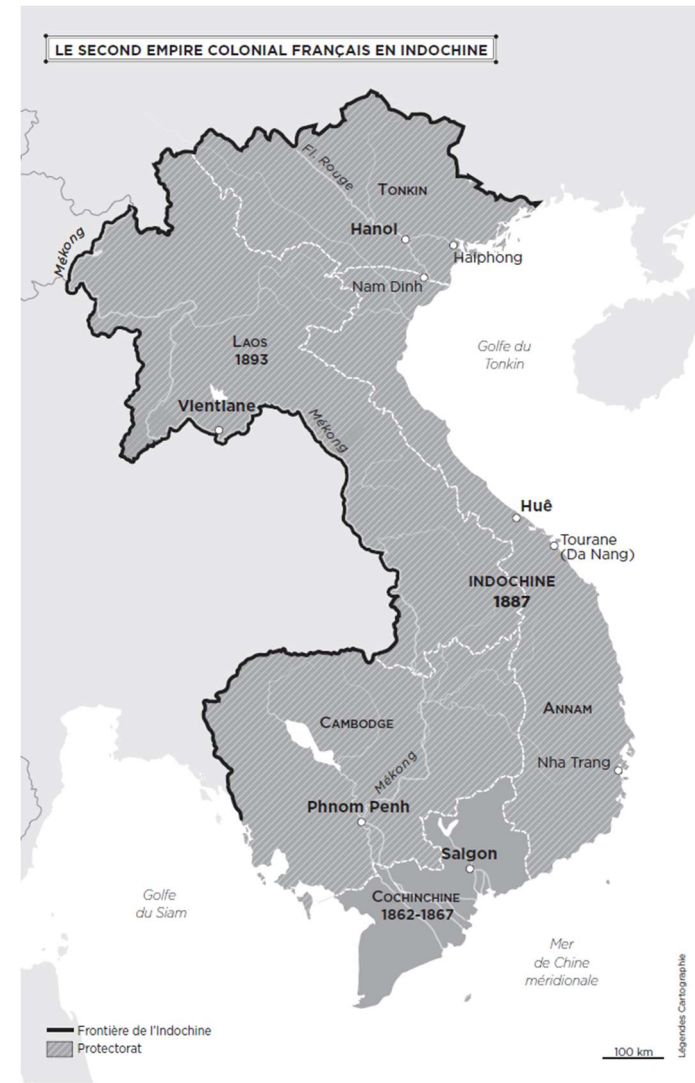
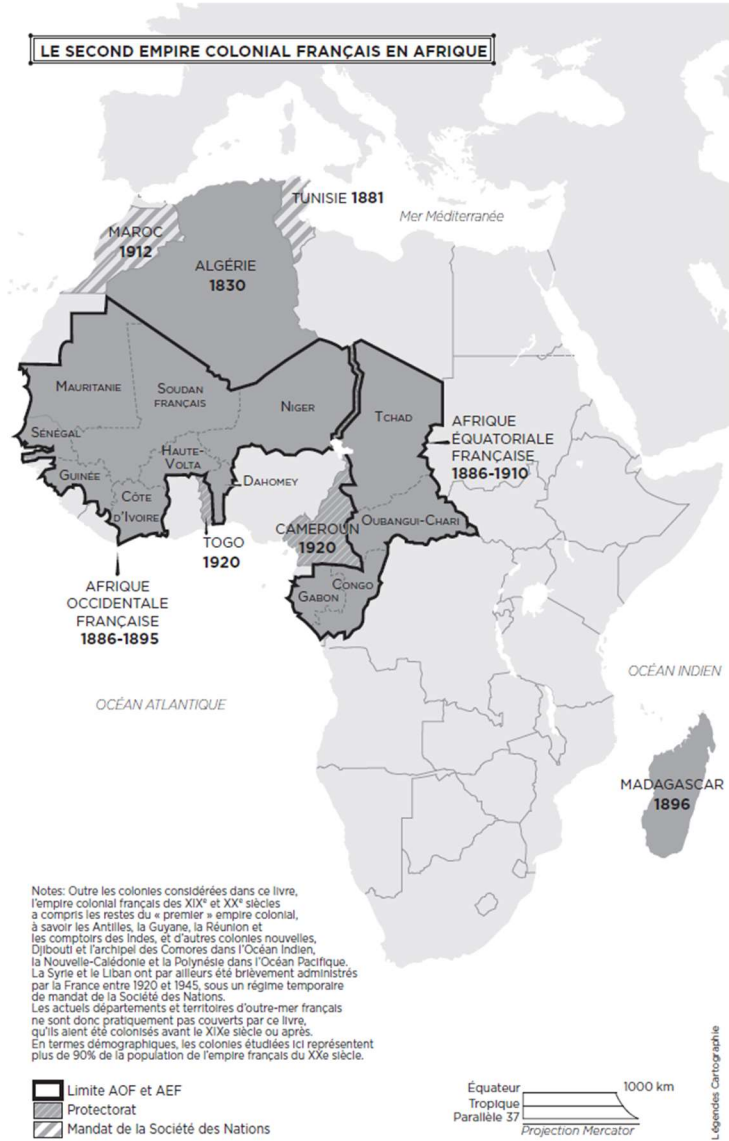


# An Empire on the cheap

History and political  
economy of French  
colonisation 19th-21st c.  
(provisional translation!)

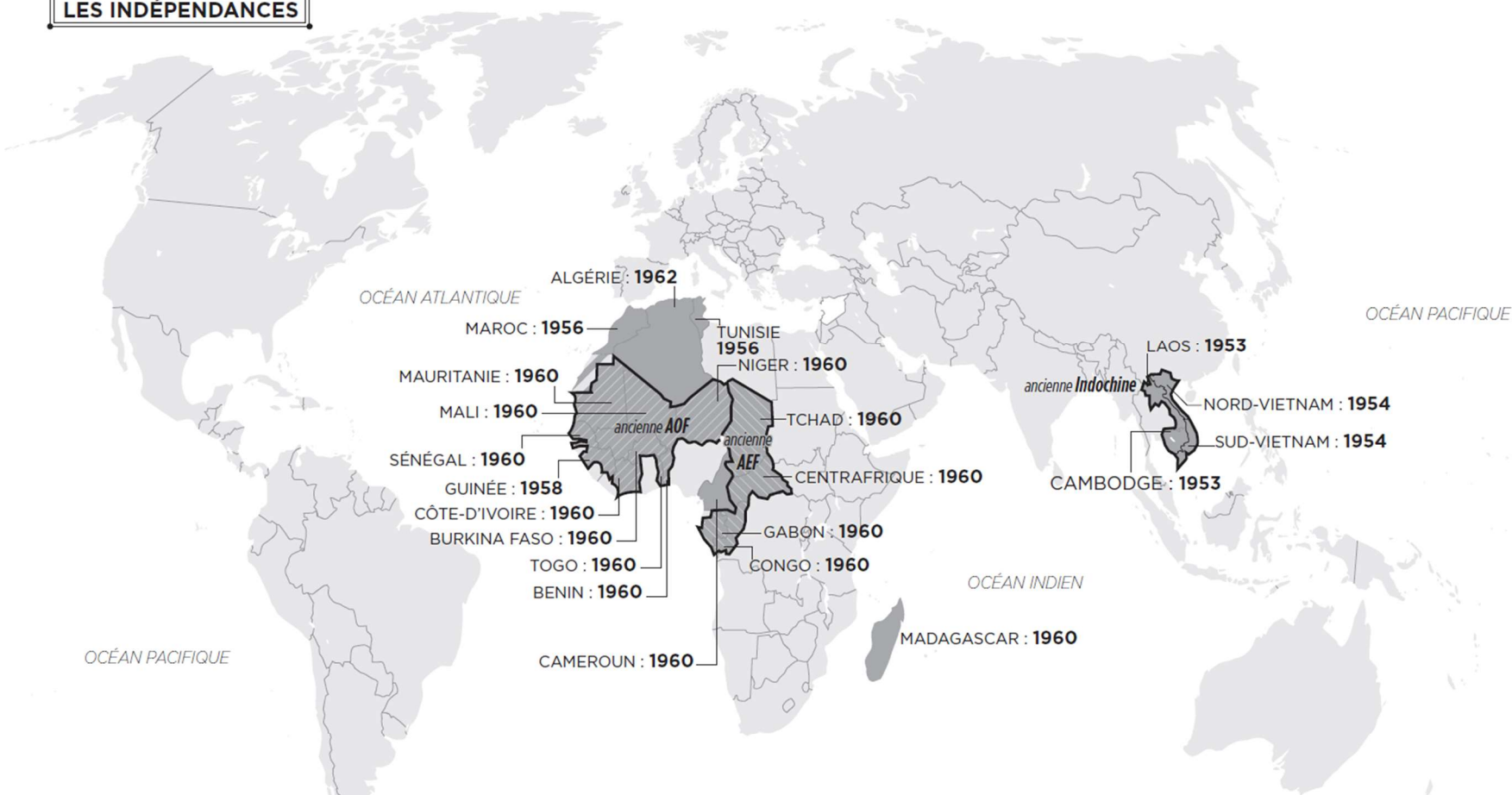
University of Oxford  
Economic and social history seminar  
May 2 2023





Future Empire in 1870: 45 million people (Africa = 28; Indochina = 17). France : 38 million

# LES INDÉPENDANCES



- MALI : 1960 Nom du pays actuel avec date d'indépendance formelle
- Ex-AOF, démantelée en 1959
- Ex-AEF, démantelée en 1959
- Le Sahara occidental (ancien Sahara espagnol) est selon l'ONU un "territoire non-autonome". Il est aujourd'hui contrôlé à 80% par le Maroc.

Légendes Cartographie

Today: 450 million people (Africa = 330; Indochina = 110 ). France: 68 million

# Empire on the cheap

In contrast with *Jacques Marseille's Empire colonial et capitalisme français. Histoire d'un divorce (1984)*:

The French Empire of the 19-20th centuries in Africa and Asia:

Cost little the French taxpayer... until independence wars

Colonial states were militarily and fiscally strong, and largely self-financed

The metropolis seldom heard about colonies, except in critical moments

It was costly to the colonized, who paid for the little development they received

Colonies did not receive large capital flows, yet marriage was quiet and there was no 'divorce'

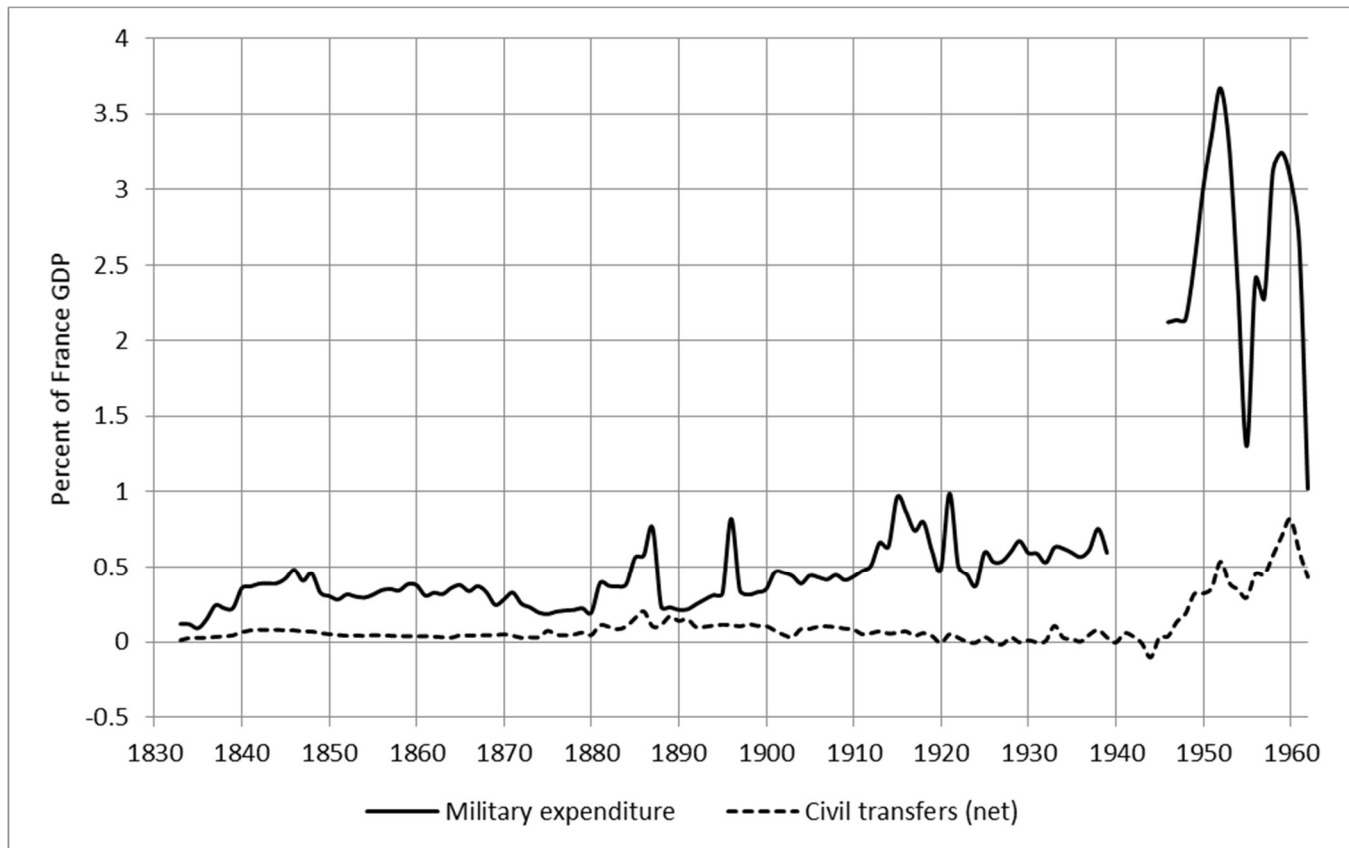
Nationalism and capitalism could go hand in hand (A Cambridge controversy of the 1970s!)

Public investment > Private (rail, roads, ports, post mail, research, etc.)

Even if many private investments failed, overall returns seem to have been positive

Limited share in total French wealth (2 to 10% max excl. land/housing), yet security mattress

# French public expenditure for colonies



Military expenditure = 4/5

Net civil transfers = 1/5

In % France GDP = 1.3% on average

# French colonial 'aid'

In percent of GDP of France		Military expenditure	Civil transfers	Total transfers	"Military subsidy"	Repudiated debt at independence	"Development Aid"
		A	B	=A+B	C	D	=B+C+D
<b>Empire</b>		<b>1.08</b>	<b>0.20</b>	<b>1.28</b>	<b>0.16</b>	<b>0.04</b>	<b>0.40</b>
<b>North Africa</b>		<b>0.70</b>	<b>0.11</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>0.09</b>	<b>0.03</b>	<b>0.23</b>
	Algeria	0.55	0.09	0.65	0.05	0.01	0.16
	Tunisia	0.04	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.01	0.03
	Morocco	0.11	0.01	0.12	0.02	0.01	0.04
<b>Indochina</b>		<b>0.28</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.28</b>	<b>0.04</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.04</b>
<b>Madagascar</b>		<b>0.03</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>0.04</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.02</b>
<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>		<b>0.07</b>	<b>0.06</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>0.03</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.09</b>
	West FA + Togo	0.05	0.04	0.08	0.03	0.00	0.07
	EFA+Cameroon	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.02
<b>Empire</b>	<b>1833-1869</b>	0.32	0.04	0.36	0.07	0.00	0.12
<b>Empire</b>	<b>1870-1919</b>	0.43	0.09	0.52	0.14	0.00	0.23
<b>Empire</b>	<b>1920-1939</b>	0.59	0.03	0.62	0.21	0.00	0.24
<b>Empire</b>	<b>1946-1962</b>	2.56	0.52	3.08	0.20	0.13	0.85

In % GDP France

A = Military expenditure

B = Civilian grants (incl. subs. loans)

C = Counterfactual defence expend.

D = Repudiated debt at indep.

Last column = 'Development Aid'

Colonialism meant 0.40% of 'development aid', far from OECD target of 0.70%

# BoP between France and colonies.

In private capital flows: flows to France > flows to colonies

In percent of GDP of France	Trade balance of colonies A	Military expend. of France in colonies B	Civil tranfers (net) C	Colonial states loans D	Other private flows =-A-B-C-D
<b>Empire</b>	<b>-0.67</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>0.07</b>	<b>-0.30</b>
<b>North Africa</b>	<b>-0.54</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>0.10</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>-0.11</b>
Algeria	-0.33	0.35	0.09	0.03	-0.15
Tunisia	-0.07	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.02
Morocco	-0.14	0.11	0.01	0.01	0.02
<b>Indochina</b>	<b>-0.03</b>	<b>0.16</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>-0.13</b>
<b>Madagascar</b>	<b>-0.03</b>	<b>0.03</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>-0.01</b>
<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>	<b>-0.08</b>	<b>0.06</b>	<b>0.06</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>-0.04</b>
West FA + Togo	-0.06	0.04	0.03	0.00	-0.02
EFA + Cameroon	-0.02	0.02	0.02	0.00	-0.02

-0.30% GDP France = -2.7% GDP colonies

In % GDP France

A = Trade balance

B = Military spending in colonies

C = Civilian budget transfers

D = Net loans of colonial states

Last = All other 'invisible flows' (private)

# Colonial states and development

Colonial states were very able to locally extract tax revenue (and recruit conscripts)

Yet their operating costs were high. High wage bills (French but not only)

Expenditure was strongly biased towards settlers and European firms

→ Little development, colonies did not catch up

Even compared to disadvantaged regions of mainland France (Corsica, etc.)

Even in the late phase of 'developmentalist' colonialism (post-WW2)

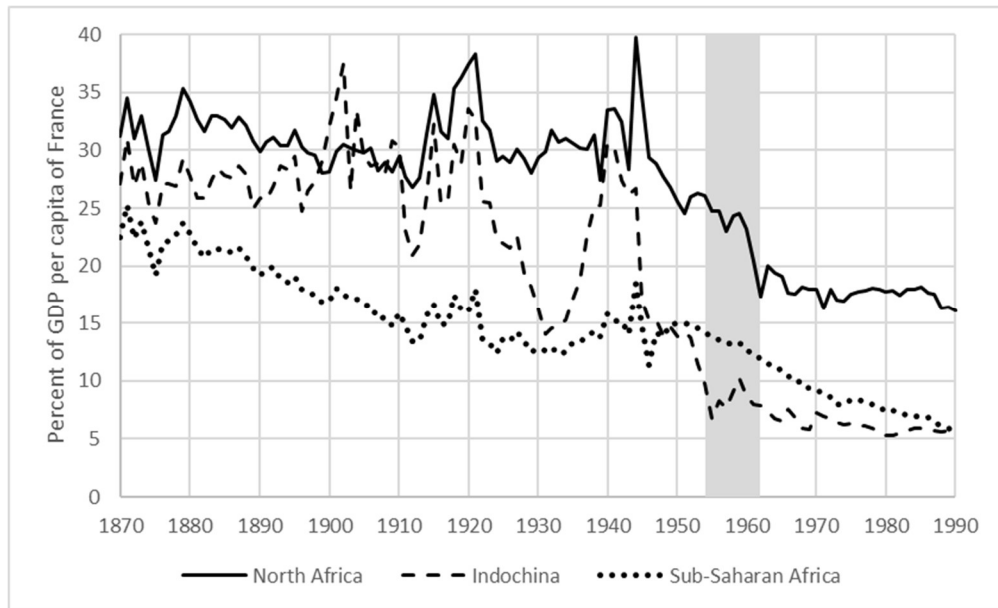
1925 or 1955: settlers + expatriates = 2-3% pop. / 25-30% income

France did no better, nor worse, than UK or other European colonizers

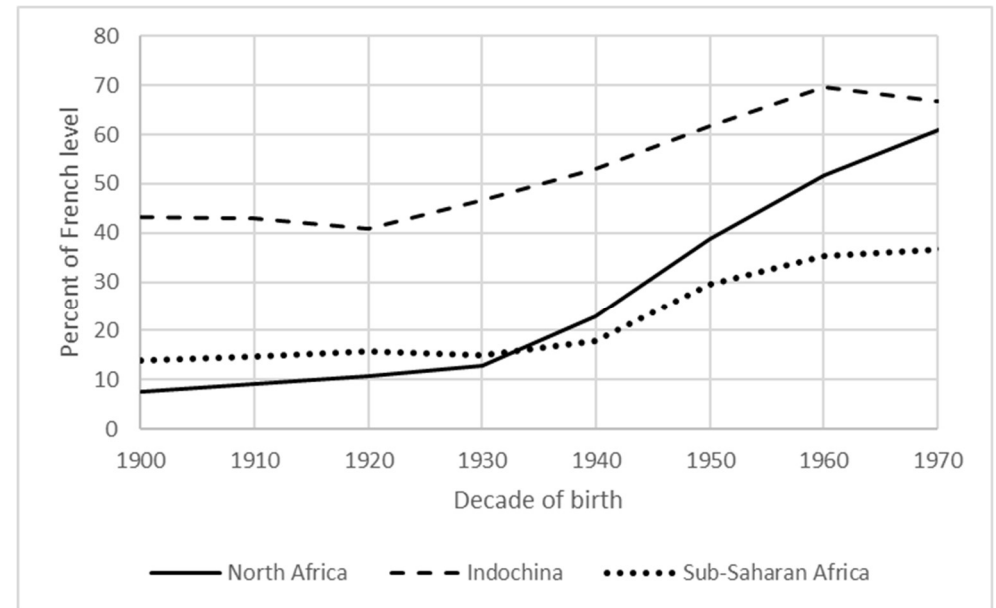
Japan (Taiwan and Korea), US (Philippines) seem to have done better in some fields



# 'Civilizing mission'? No catch-up

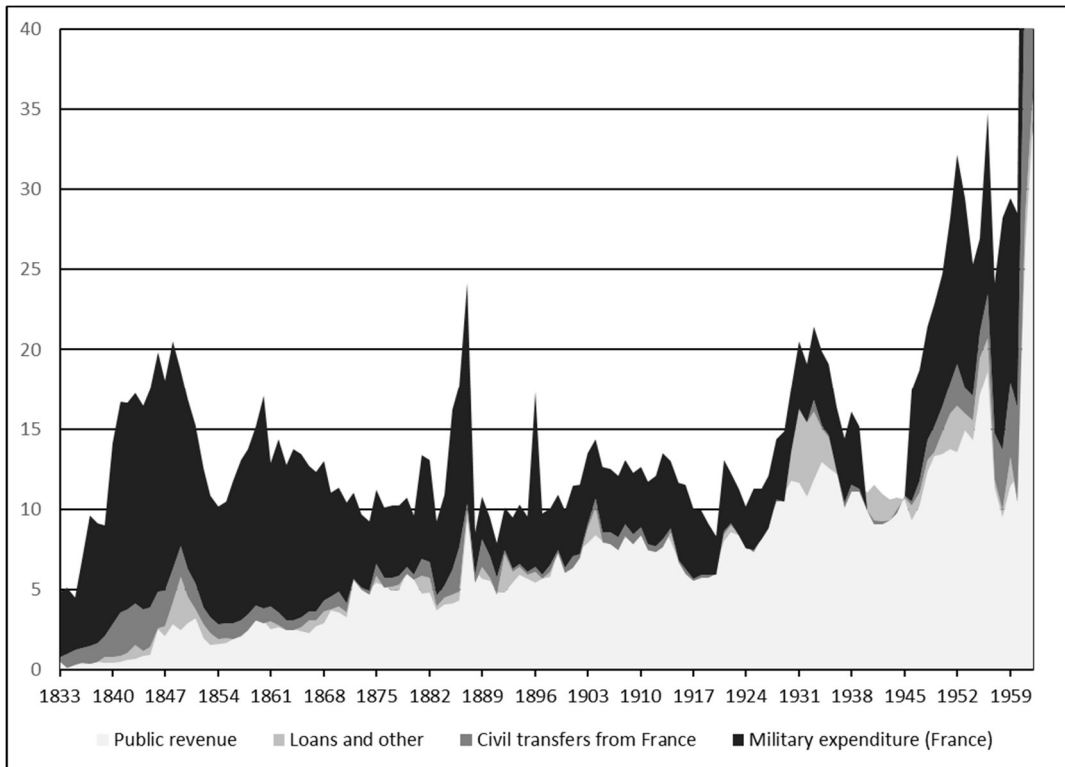


GDP per capita in % France level



N years of school in % France level  
(Birth cohorts on X-axis)

# Tax extraction did not translate into public services

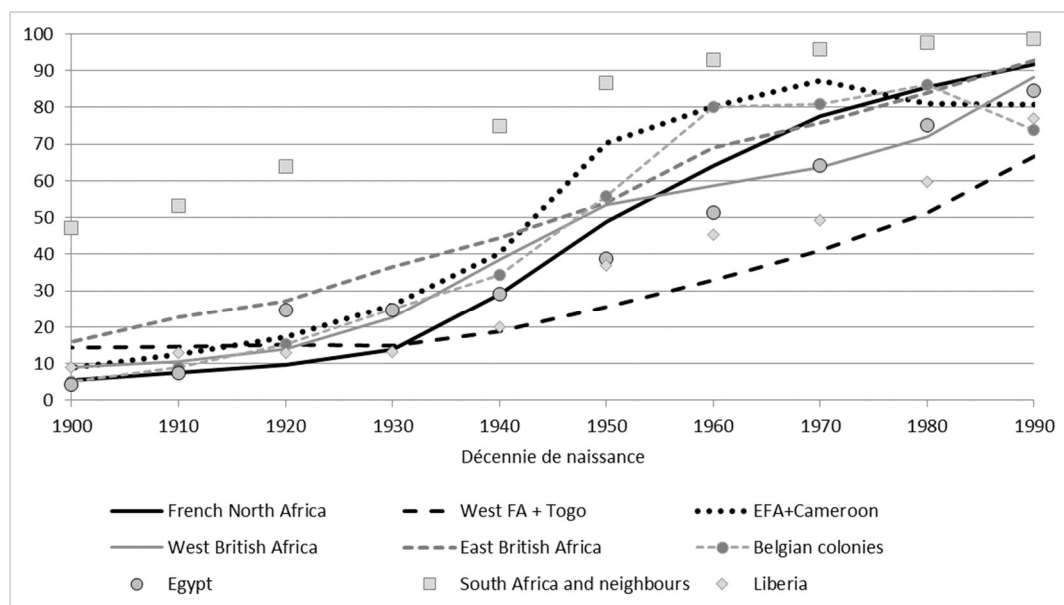


Colonial expenditure was financed by local taxation

	Public employment for 1000 inhabitants	Average public wage FF 1937 PPP to GDP per worker	Wage bill in percent of revenue
<b>Year 1925</b>			
<b>France</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>15 241</b>	<b>1.2</b>
<b>Empire</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>14 066</b>	<b>8.2</b>
<b>North Africa</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>15 118</b>	<b>4.3</b>
Algeria	3.0	15 499	3.6
Tunisia	4.5	13 002	3.6
Morocco	2.2	15 605	6.3
<b>Indochina</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>19 642</b>	<b>14.8</b>
<b>Madagascar</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>6 819</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>7 786</b>	<b>7.4</b>
West FA + Togo	1.3	8 343	7.9
EFA+Cameroon	1.4	6 420	6.1
<b>Year 1955</b>			
<b>France</b>	<b>21.6</b>	<b>27 477</b>	<b>1.3</b>
<b>Empire</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>24 412</b>	<b>7.3</b>
<b>North Africa</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>29 768</b>	<b>5.5</b>
Algeria	6.7	31 185	5.3
Tunisia	6.2	42 868	8.6
Morocco	7.2	22 633	4.5
<b>Indochina</b>			
<b>Madagascar</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>15 046</b>	<b>5.8</b>
<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>22 258</b>	<b>10.6</b>
West FA + Togo	2.7	24 890	12.1
EFA+Cameroon	4.2	15 577	7.4

The high wage bill limited service provision

# Education was lagging behind



Africa: Ever went to school  
(Birth cohorts on X-axis)

Year	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1935-40
Indochina			0.5	1	2.8	6.9	10.8
Burma	9.4	8.5	11.5	11.8	10.3	13.4	13.3
Malaysia				7.5	8.9	19.4	24.6
Indonesia	1	2	2.5	3.7	7	12.2	13.3
Thailand		0.5		5.8	7.1	24.1	52.6
Philippines			19.3	28.4	35.8	32.4	44.8
Korea				1.1	3.8	10.8	23.4
Taiwan			2	3.1	19.5	26.1	52.8
Japan	30.3	34.5	49.3	59.2	60.3	60.9	60.5

Asia: School enrol. in formal system  
(Years on X-axis)

# Decolonisation

In the 1950s, independence was finally meant a significant financial burden  
Rising demands for equal rights meant that Empire would cost *in the future*  
Granting autonomy, then formal independence, saved money *in expectation*

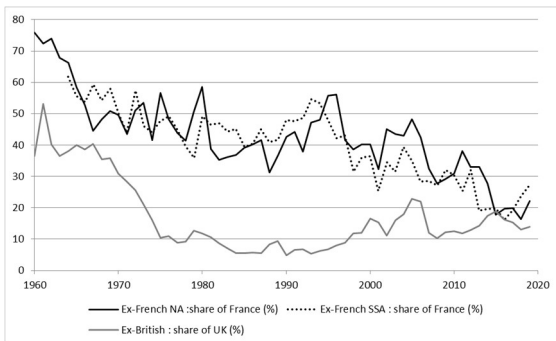
The postcolonial 'informal empire' ('Françafrique') was also quite cheap  
And also remained in the shade and made little noise, until today...

Yet colonial connections gradually shrunk, except for migration

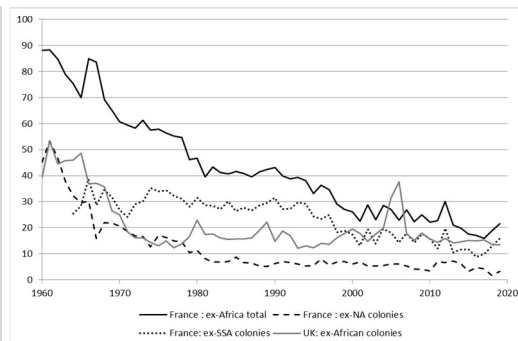
# Shrinkage of postcolonial connections

## Development Aid

Share former colonizer in Aid



Share former colonies in Aid



## Foreign direct investment

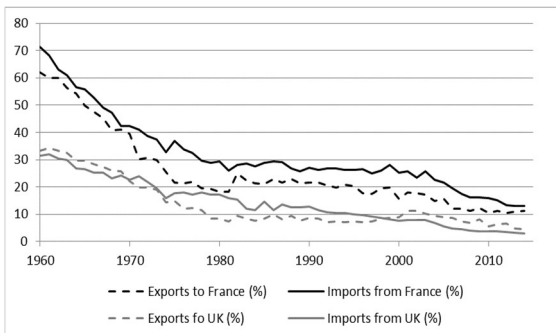
Share former colonizer in FDI

	Share former colonizer in FDI		Share former colonies in FDI	
	France	UK	France	UK
Former French colonies	19	2	2.3	0.2
Former French excl. Indochina	32	2	2.2	0.1
North Africa	29	3	1.2	0.1
Indochina	2	1	0.1	0.0
Madagascar	15	0	0.0	0.0
West FA + Togo	27	3	0.4	0.0
EFA + Cameroon	58	0	0.5	0.0
Former British colonies of Africa	6	10	1.4	1.9
Egypt	6	15	0.3	0.6
West Africa	12	5	0.8	0.3
East Africa	2	5	0.1	0.1
South Africa	3	12	0.2	0.9
Other countries	4	4	96.3	97.9
World	4	4	100.0	100.0

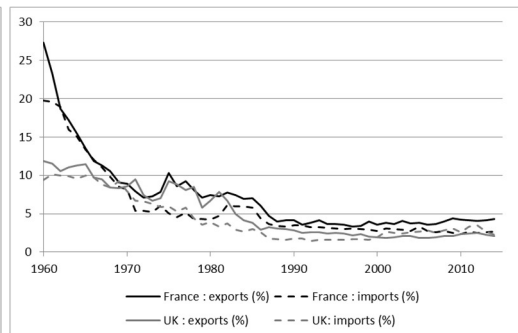
Share former colonies in FDI

## Trade

Share former colonizer in Trade



Share former colonies in Trade



## Migration

Share former colonizer in migration of OECD

	Share 2010	
	France	UK
<b>Former African colonies</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>33</b>
North Africa	56	7
Sub-Saharan Africa	56	38
<b>Other former colonies</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Total former colonies</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>25</b>

Share former colonies in foreign born

	Birth Region (%)	
	France	UK
<b>Former colonies</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>40</b>
Former colonies of Africa	46	15
North Africa	37	0
Sub-Saharan Africa	9	15
Other former colonies	3	25
<b>Europe</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Others</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
Number (million)	6.8	7.4
% in population	13	14

Compared to 2000, slowly decreasing

# Postcolonial states

Nationalist elites took the suits and the shoes of colonial administrators

Authoritarian states, limited balance of power (unions)

Dualism and inequality remained high, even if they lost their racial dimension

Only marxist Vietnam, after two wars and more, could break legacy

In Africa, socialist experiments stopped short and left little

Bureaucratic oligarchy (Fanon, Dumont, Amin)

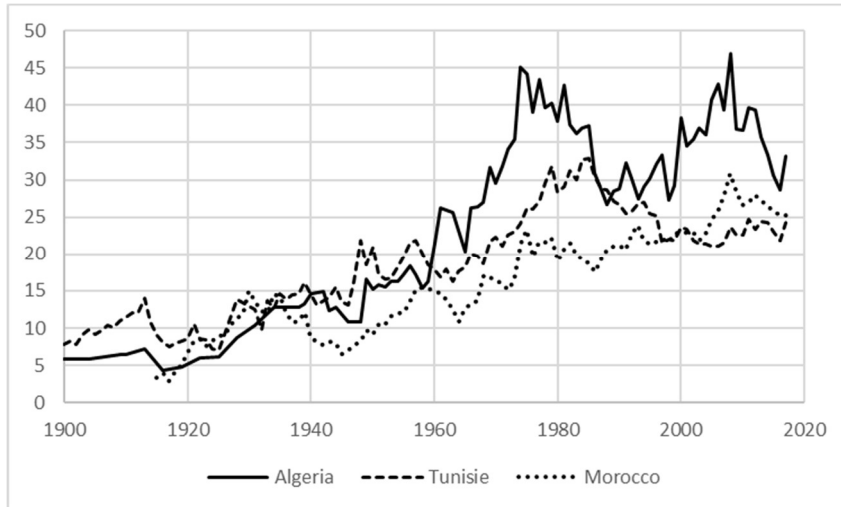
Neoliberal structural adjustments had at best mixed results

Legitimacy of ruling (many times dynastic) elites was gradually eroded:

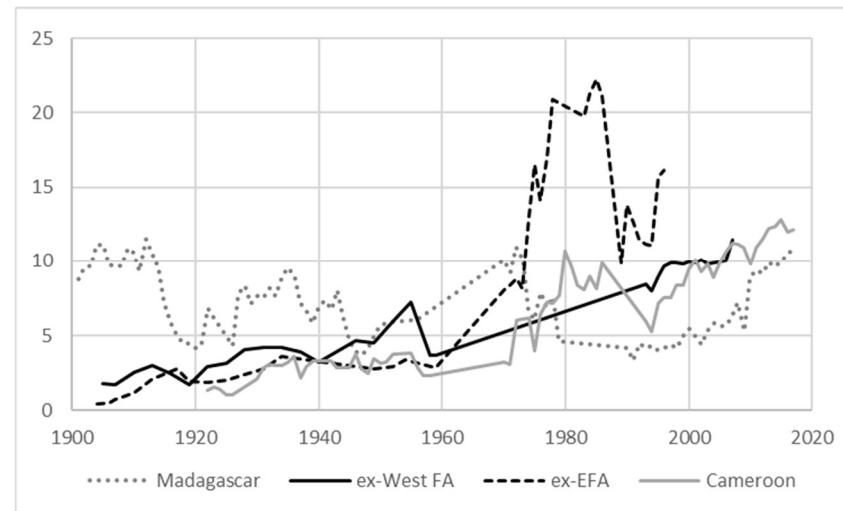
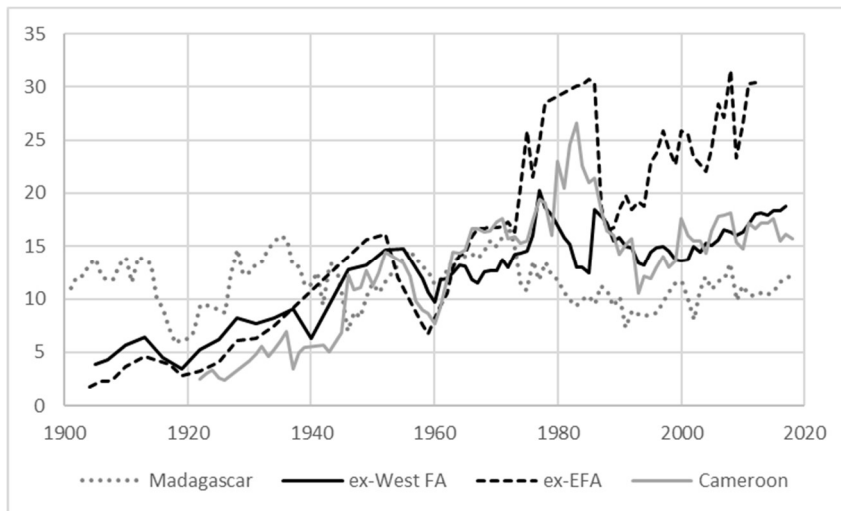
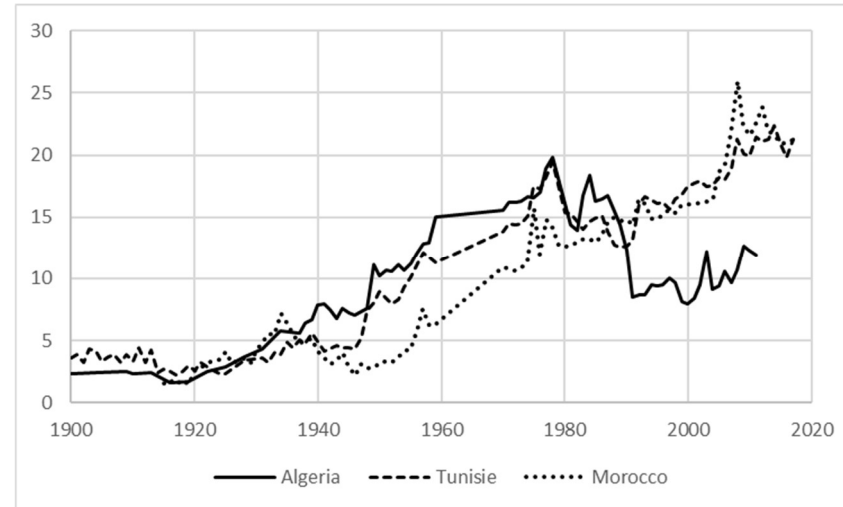
Disappointments of development, inequality, tax evasion, capital flight

# Postcolonial states fiscal capacity: limited progresses

All revenues



W/o mineral revenues



# Income inequality today

	Top 10% richest	Bottom 50% poorest	Ratio
<b>North Africa</b>			
Algeria	37.3	20.7	9.0
Tunisia	40.7	19.8	10.3
Morocco	48.8	14.6	16.7
<b>West Africa</b>			
Benin	54.7	11.5	23.8
Burkina Faso	46.4	16.5	14.1
Côte d'Ivoire	53.5	11.7	22.9
Guinea	42.1	17.4	12.1
Mali	40.6	17.7	11.5
Mauritania	39.9	18.0	11.1
Niger	42.6	17.1	12.5
Senegal	47.2	14.3	16.5
Togo	47.6	12.9	18.4
<b>Central Africa</b>			
Cameroon	51.7	11.3	22.9
Congo	55.6	10.5	26.5
Gabon	42.8	15.4	13.9
Central African Rep.	64.6	8.0	40.4
Chad	48.9	13.0	18.8
<b>Madagascar</b>	50.3	13.3	18.9
<b>France</b>	32.3	22.7	7.1



# Empire on the cheap. More on...

Political and economic motivations of colonialism in 19th century France  
Colonialism in the wider frame of imperialism

Economic and social structures of colonized regions, before conquest

Early violence: military conquest, land expropriation, subalternisation of elites...

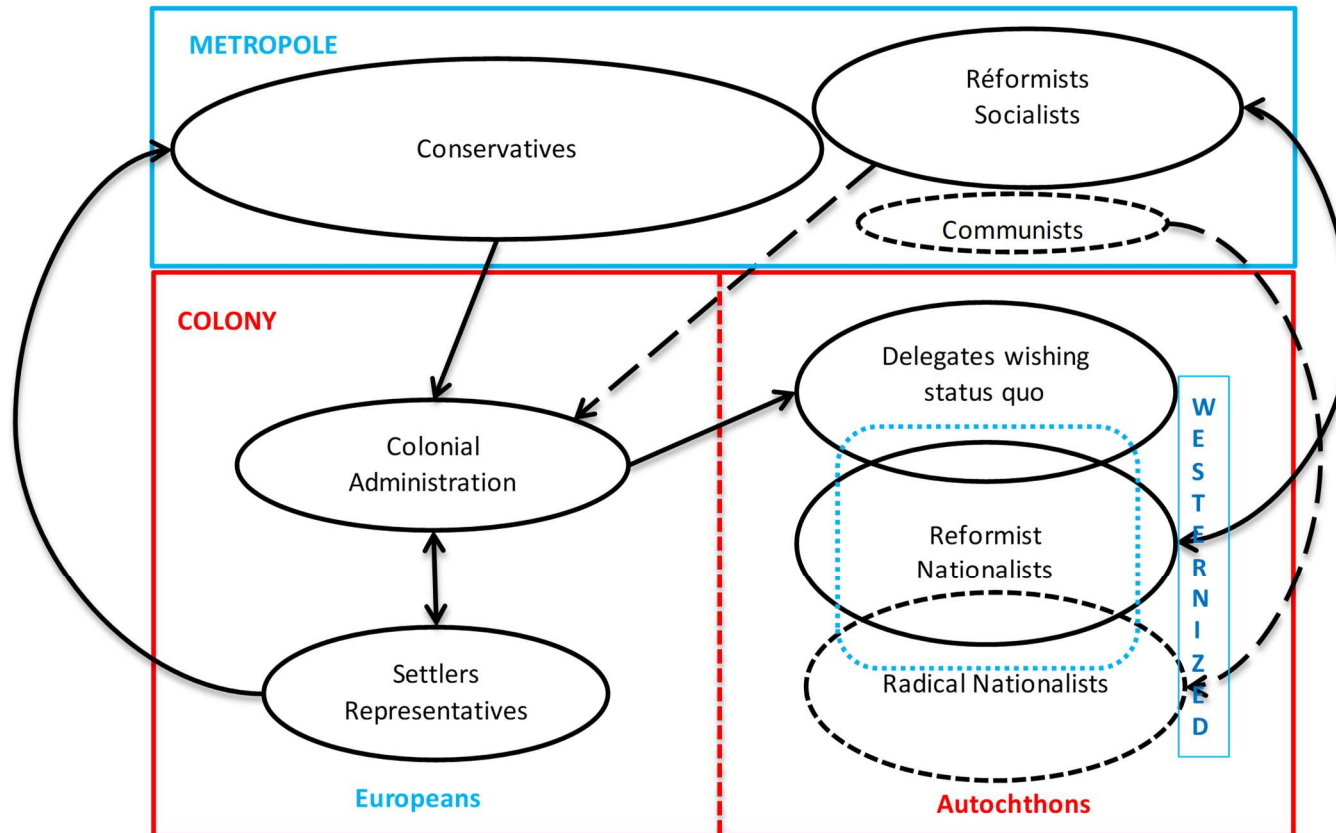
Blocking of political rights, evolution of nationalist movements

Colonial states policies, growth and income inequality, health, education

Comparisons btw colonizers: direct/indirect rule, civil/common law, capital, etc.

Independences, postcolonial states

# Political economy: Economics + politics



# Final remarks

10-15 years of research in French colonial archives

The work of a (small) team: Yannick Dupraz, Sandrine Mesplé-Somps & others

2 motivations: development economics / missing pieces of econ hist

Agency of colonized better considered? I hope

Not the end: postcolonial trajectories, migrations, etc.