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Abstract

Toward the end of the 1960s, authorities in the Ivory Coast decided to build the Kossou Dam, a hydro-electric dam on the Bandama River near the geographic center of the Francophone country. Initially conceived as a technopolitical measure to meet the growing energy demand of the most economically successful country of France's former colonies, the damming experiment soon emerged as a multipurpose regional development project aimed at correcting the regional disparities that tarnished the Ivory Coast's phenomenal economic growth.

This article focuses on the Kossou modernization experience and the sociopolitical transformations that it caused. I argue that the nationalist enthusiasm that followed the country's independence in 1960 all the way through the first decade of postcolonial nation-building provided the Ivorian authorities with an opportunity to flesh out their electrified vision of their country's future.

Keywords

Bandama River, Kossou Project, Ivory Coast, modernization

Disciplines

African History | Diplomatic History | History | Social History

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Triangulating a Modernization Experiment: The United States, France and the Making of the Kossou Project in Central Ivory Coast¹

Toward the end of the 1960s, authorities in the Ivory Coast decided to build the Kossou Dam, a hydro-electric dam on the Bandama River near the geographic centre of the Francophone country. Initially conceived as a technopolitical measure to meet the growing energy demand of the most economically successful country of France's former colonies, the damming experiment soon emerged as a multipurpose regional development project aimed at correcting the regional disparities that tarnished the Ivory Coast's phenomenal economic growth.²

This article focuses on the Kossou modernization experience and the socio-political transformations that it caused. I argue that the nationalist enthusiasm that followed the country's independence in 1960 all the way through the first decade of postcolonial nation-building provided the Ivorian authorities with an opportunity to flesh out their electrified vision of the country's future. Such a vision, which linked modernization with the potentials of electrification, was hardly new. In fact,

1 For their support and critical readings of earlier versions of this article, I would like to extend my gratitude to Ian C. Fletcher, Larry Youngs, Isa Blumi, Tim Stoneman as well as Uwe Lübken, Thomas Adam, Sonya Michel and the participants of the 2007 Young Scholars Forum at the University of Texas, Arlington. My appreciations also go to Corinna Unger and Stephan Malinowski for their subsequent encouragement and suggestions on how to improve and make the article publishable.

2 Incorporated into the expanding French colonial empire in the late 19th century, the Ivory Coast officially became a colony in 1893. By the early 1950s, it had emerged as the most successful of France's territories in West Africa. In 1960, the Ivory Coast became independent along with the other territories that constituted French West Africa. For an overview of the history of the country, see P. Kipré, *Côte d'Ivoire: La Formation*

d'un peuple (Paris, 2005); L. Gbagbo, *Côte d'Ivoire: Economie et société à la veille de l'indépendance, 1940–1960* (Paris, 1982); A. Zolberg, *One-Party Government in the Ivory Coast* (Princeton, 1964); I. Wallerstein, *The Road to Independence: Ghana and the Ivory Coast* (Paris, 1964). On the post-war economic growth in the Ivory Coast that soon came to be known as the «Ivorian (economic) miracle», see N. B. Ridler, «Comparative Advantage as a Development Model: The Ivory Coast», *Journal of Modern African Studies* 23 (1985) 3, 407–417; R. M. Hecht, «The Ivory Coast Economic «Miracle»: What Benefits for Peasant Farmers?», *Journal of Modern African Studies* 21 (1983) 1, 25–53; M. O'Connor, «Guinea and the Ivory Coast: Contrasts in Economic Development», *Journal of Modern African Studies* 10 (1972) 3, 409–426; S. Amin, *Le développement du capitalisme en Côte d'Ivoire* (Paris, 1967).

as early as 1959, the Ivorian leadership had bet on the production of hydro-electricity as a significant step toward modernity. With the support of the French colonial authorities, they undertook the construction of the Ayamé Dam, the country's first economic infrastructure of this kind. At this juncture, the Ivorian ruling elite predicted that hydro-electric power would help secure the welfare of the Ivorian people while simultaneously providing the basis for national industrialization, which they considered the «pre-condition for the creation of the modern state».³

Like Ayamé, Kossou was viewed as an embodiment of this symbolic linkage between electricity and the genesis of a modern Ivorian society. Unlike Ayamé, however, the construction of Kossou went beyond the traditional bilateral relations between metropolitan France and its (post)colonies. In a context where they were trying to diversify, albeit timidly, the international partners to be enlisted for their country's modernization, the Ivorian authorities did not call exclusively upon France; they also demanded help from the World Bank and, later, called for US expertise and capital, which soon arrived in the form of technical know-how through Kaiser Engineers and loans administered by the Export-Import (Exim) Bank of the United States.⁴ The less than friendly response of the French diplomats to this American involvement in the electrification programme of the Ivory Coast is succinctly analysed in this article. Beyond the Franco-American tensions over the Ivorian postcolony, however, I suggest that the American presence in the electrification programme of postcolonial Ivory Coast confirmed the pervasiveness of US know-how in the practice of comprehensive regional development both in France and the Ivory Coast. Besides the shared perception of electricity as both a tool of modernization and the quintessential symbol of modernity, this was due to the fact that regional development of the type promoted by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) had re-emerged as a favourite technique in the transnational world of modernization.⁵

This article sheds light on some of the assumptions that informed the modernist and transcultural process of the damming of an African river. It contends that while recent studies on US-inflected transnationalism have unveiled the dynamics of the transmission of values and know-how across societal and national borders, few have scrutinized the triangulated nature of the transfer of American ideas and values to most of the (post)colonial societies in the latter part of the twentieth

3 *Fraternité*, 31 July 1959.

4 For the history and function of the Export-Import Bank of the United States see W. H. Becker and W. M. McClenahan, *The Market, The State, and the Export-Import Bank of the United States, 1934–2000* (Cambridge, 2003); and for a first-hand account by a key Ivorian actor, the former ambassador to the US and later Minister of the Economy of the Ivory Coast (1966–1977), see H. K. Be-

dié, *Les Chemins de ma vie: Entretiens avec Eric Laurent* (Paris, 1999), 84–87.

5 On the birth, death and rebirth of the TVA model as a favourite modernization paradigm around the world see A. B. Bamba, «*Branchements Transatlantiques: The Circulation of the 'TVA Idea' in the United States, France, and the Ivory Coast*». Paper discussed at the 2007 Young Scholars Forum, Arlington, Texas, 29–30 March 2007.

century.⁶ Taking the Ivory Coast as a case that crystallizes US-inspired transnationalism in a postcolonial situation, it appears that the concept of triangulation is a necessary detour for anyone trying to make sense of the American presence in the modernization landscape of Francophone Africa. But, as we shall see, the roots of triangulation reach deep. Indeed, they can be traced as far back as the post-war years, when French colonial subjects increasingly showed their dissatisfaction with France's *mission civilisatrice*.

1. The Rise of the Politics of Triangulation: Decolonization, Post-war Developmentalism and the American Century

Historians of modernization theory and diplomacy have recognized that the coming of the American Century and the Cold War in the post-war years operated as a historical conjuncture that fuelled the diffusion of an American-inflected understanding of development.⁷ In fact, both the production of new economic spaces, which the maintenance of American global economic hegemony necessitated, and the containment policies of the United States in the context of the emerging Cold War forced American diplomats and modernizers to take steps toward the establishment of an empire aimed at bringing the rest of the so-called Free World into the fold of what American cold warriors saw as legitimate (meaning: American-style) modernity. From Italy to Indonesia, from Latin America to India and Vietnam, the American economic planners and social engineers initiated spectacular modernization programmes informed by a US-centric understanding of the good life.⁸

While recent studies on modernization theory have dramatically expanded our understanding of the historical consequences of these illusive attempts at imposing an American-orchestrated modernity on foreign peoples, few have discussed

6 On the issue of US transnationalism, see S. Chan, ed., *Chinese American Transnationalism: The Flow of People, Resources, and Ideas Between China and America during the Exclusion Era* (Philadelphia, 2006); R. Duncan and C. Juncker, eds., *Transnational America: Contours of Modern U.S. Culture* (Copenhagen, 2004); T. Bender, ed., *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* (Berkeley, 2002); M. Kipping and O. Bjarnar, eds., *The Americanization of European Business: The Marshall Plan and the Transfer of US Management Models* (London, 1998); G. M. Joseph et al, eds., *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations* (Durham, 1998).

7 O. A. Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (New York, 2005), esp. chapter 4; N. Gilman, *Mandarin of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold*

War America (Baltimore, 2003); D. C. Engerman et al, eds., *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War* (Amherst, 2003); Nick Cullather, «Development? It's History», *Diplomatic History* 24 (2000) 4, 641–653.

8 B. R. Simpson, *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and U.S.-Indonesian Relations, 1960–1968* (Stanford, 2008); C. R. Unger, «Modernization à la Mode: West German and American Development Plans for the Third World», *GHI Bulletin* 40 (2007), 143–159; M. Adas, *Dominance by Design: Technological Imperatives and America's Civilizing Mission* (Cambridge, 2006); C. Fisher, «The Illusion of Progress: CORDS and the Crisis of Modernization in South Vietnam, 1965–1968», *Pacific Historical Review* 75 (2006) 1, 25–51; M. Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and «Nation-Building» in the Kennedy Era* (Chapel Hill, 2000).

how the globalization of the American developmentalist paradigm operated as a subtle critique of the European colonial powers' civilizing mission, especially at a time when colonial subjects in Africa and elsewhere were calling for the end of colonial rule. Having realized that the «disintegration of the old colonialism is inevitable», American policymakers in the 1950s came to the conclusion that the «old concept of the «white man's burden» is obsolete and provides no valid justification for colonialism».⁹ They proposed instead a new teleology of progress for the colonized peoples. Furthermore, American economic planners used their own colonial experiment in the Philippines and its reliance on the expertise of the engineers as a template that the Europeans should emulate. In so doing, not only did they equate mechanization with modernity but, in sharp contrast to European colonialism, they also saw their civilizing/modernizing mission as «one of tutelage rather than paternalistic domination».¹⁰

Of course such a perception was replete with an exceptionalist sense of superiority that associated European colonialism with backwardness, even as it built on the racialized ideology that sustained Europe's long history of expansionism.¹¹ These contradictions notwithstanding, the emergence of the American Century invariably acted as a force that threatened to dislodge European rule in the colonial world. This was all the more possible since the diffusion of American-style developmentalism provided the colonial subjects with an alternative model to the extant colonial modernity, which many of them increasingly regarded as an ineffective socio-political arrangement for bringing about real social change in the colonies.¹²

Post-war developments in the Ivory Coast involving Kouamé Binzème shed an interesting light on this historical process, especially if we pay attention to the strategies he deployed in order to criticize France's colonial rule in West Africa. Acting as the mouthpiece of a group of disgruntled Ivorian planters, this French-educated Ivorian lawyer decided in the fall of 1948 to write directly to American Marshall Plan administrators to enlist their active support for what he anticipated would be the effective modernization of his country.¹³ Binzème's plan for the modernization of the Ivory Coast was striking in more than one regard. From the outset, it boldly

9 Henry A. Byroade, «The World's Colonies and Ex-Colonies: A Challenge to America,» *Department of State Bulletin*, 16 November 1953, 656.

10 M. Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca, 1989), 406–410.

11 M. Adas, «Improving on the Civilizing Mission?: Assumptions of United States Exceptionalism in the Colonization of the Philippines,» *Itinerario* 22 (1998) 4, 44–66. For an early perceptive, if overlooked, formulation of this idea, see M. Ugarte, «The New Rome», in *The Destiny of a Continent* (New York, 1925), 123–148.

12 M. Frey, «Tools of Empire: Persuasion and the United States' Modernizing Mission in Southeast Asia», *Diplomatic History* 27 (2003) 4, 565–566; Adas, «Improving on the Civilizing Mission?», 48–49; D. Little, «Cold War and Colonialism in Africa: The United States, France, and the Madagascar Revolt of 1947», *Pacific Historical Review* 59 (1990) 4, 527–552.

13 National Archive and Records Administration (College Park, Maryland, hereafter USNA), RG 469, Box 7: Maître Kouamé Binzème, «Le Développement économique de la Côte d'Ivoire: Plan d'action,» 2 September 1948.

argued for an active participation of the United States in the Ivorian post-war development drive, almost to the exclusion of the French colonial state. As the lawyer put it himself, his programme was informed by the «principle of *partnership* (*association*) between American *capital* and African *labour*».¹⁴ Implicitly critiquing the French doctrine of colonial *mise en valeur*, which was more exploitative than beneficial to the colonial subjects, Binzème added that the Ivoirio-American partnership in the domain of development should, above all, «protect the integrity of indigenous natural resources» while at the same time promoting «freedom, economic progress, and social betterment for the Africans».¹⁵

In practical terms, however, the Binzème Plan was a reappropriation of some of the programmes that the French *Fonds d'Investissement pour le Développement Economique et Social* (FIDES) had initiated in the Ivory Coast earlier. These included the industrial exploitation of strategic minerals such as manganese, iron, silver, gold and oil.¹⁶ Still in line with the FIDES programme, Binzème hoped to mechanize Ivorian agriculture and forestry for a better exploitation of their resources.¹⁷ Against France's protectionist policy, which limited the import of foreign consumer goods into French overseas territories, Binzème solicited the «active collaboration» of American industries to meet the «unsatisfied needs» of the indigenous peoples.¹⁸ Finally, the lawyer requested that American financial groups participate in the creation of a venture firm whose aim would be the exploitation of his country's natural resources.¹⁹

It is not clear how American Marshall Planners responded to Maître Binzème's proposals. Nor can we ascertain whether the French colonial authorities took notice of his correspondence with the Americans. Still, the attitude of the Ivorian lawyer crystallized a tendency visible throughout the larger French empire in the post-war period: the nationalist politics of triangulating development. If modernization had emerged as a transnational ideology that most people espoused, French colonial subjects increasingly came to doubt the modernizing capability of Paris and its imperial extension. In contrast to France's *mission civilisatrice*, people like Kouamé Binzème emphasized the potential benefits of the American way of life and the modernization theory that informed its expansion.

The dangers inherent in the politics of triangulating modernization were not lost on the French colonial administrators. They reacted with massive development projects through FIDES and by dubbing American modernization techniques. For instance, under the Productivity Mission programme, French colonial authorities sent hundreds of their agents to the United States.²⁰ They also invited a number of

14 USNA, RG 469, Box 7: Maître Kouamé Binzème to ECA/Paris, 2 September 1948. (Emphasis in the original).

15 Ibid.

16 Binzème, «Développement économique», 1.

17 Ibid., 2–5.

18 Ibid., 6–7.

19 Ibid., 8.

20 Centre des Archives d'Outre Mer (Aix-en-Provence, hereafter, CAOM), 2 FIDES 911: Commissariat Général à la Productivité, «Organisation des missions françaises de productivité aux Etats-Unis en 1956», January 1956.

American experts to France to train French colonial specialists, making sure that France remained the sole mediator in the post-war modernization of the Ivory Coast and the larger empire.²¹ If desperate, these actions suggested that knowledge, comparison and translation had become transnational historical forces in the post-war world of French imperialism. Despite these efforts, or maybe because of them, independence became inevitable, and in 1960 the country proclaimed its formal separation from France.²²

However, French authorities did not give up their role as mediators. In fact, they continued to deploy similar efforts so as to check the possibility of a bilateral relationship between the Ivory Coast and the United States, even after the country had gained independence. Perhaps no other instance epitomizes this continuity between the colonial and postcolonial modernization drives better than the making of Kossou, which relied heavily on French mediation, although it was American money and technical know-how that kept the project on track. As we shall see, the missionary activities of French experts such as the chairperson of the French *Commission Nationale pour l'Aménagement du Territoire* or the researchers of the *Office de la Recherche Scientifique et Technique Outre Mer* (ORSTOM) proved crucial in turning an original US-Ivory Coast developmentalist encounter into a triangular socio-economic modernization experiment.

2. Framing a Francophone Postcolony:

Modernization, Regionalization and the Impact of French Expertise

In late February 1969, Philippe Lamour, the chairman of the French national agency on regional planning, visited the Ivory Coast. A man who had been intimately involved in the post-war modernization drive in metropolitan France, Lamour was a veteran of planning.²³ Chief Officer of the firm set up for the rehabilitation of the Lower-Rhône region or *Compagnie du Bas-Rhône Languedoc* (CBRL), he had emerged in the 1960s as «one of France's great economic managers».²⁴

21 CAOM, 2 FIDES 911 : «Rapport préliminaire», 8 February 1951.

22 Kipré, *Côte d'Ivoire*, 141–144; J.-P. Gourévitch, *La France en Afrique. Cinq siècles de présence: Vérités et mensonges* (Paris, 2004), 242–244; F. Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Questions in French and British Africa* (New York-Cambridge, 1996); Y. Benot, *Massacres coloniaux, 1944–1950: La IV^e république et la mise au pas des colonies françaises* (Paris, 1994), 146–157; Gbagbo, *Côte d'Ivoire*, 91–102; G. Chaffard, *Les carnets secrets de la décolonisation* (Paris, 1965), 29–59, 100–131; R. Schachter Morgenthau, *Political Parties in French-Speaking West Africa* (Oxford, 1964), 88–90. For a memoir by one of the major protagonists of these events, see

F. Houphouët-Boigny, *Chronique de la décolonisation* (Abidjan, 1986).

23 For an overview of Lamour's life, see J.-R. Pitte, *Philippe Lamour (1903–1992): Père de l'aménagement du territoire en France* (Paris, 2002). For some of Lamour's ideas regarding regional planning, see P. Lamour, «Land and Water Development in Southern France», in *Comparison in Resource Management: Six Notable Programs in Other Countries and Their Possible U.S. Application*, ed. H. Jarrett, (Baltimore, 1961), 227–250; P. Lamour, «Les Plans d'aménagements régionaux en Italie et en France», *Politique étrangère* 21 (1956), 1, 61–84.

24 E. Weber, «Nationalism, Socialism, and National-Socialism in France», *French Historical Studies* 2 (1962), 3, 232–307, 282.

Thanks to his proven experience in regional development, Monsieur Lamour had been commissioned to study the social issues regarding the relocation of the individuals about to be displaced by the construction of the Kossou Dam and ultimately to lend his expertise to remedy the problems arising from this project. The Frenchman reportedly carried out his task to the satisfaction of the Ivorian authorities and then returned to France.²⁵

In many respects, the Lamour visit also brought some degree of contentment to the French diplomats posted in Abidjan. They were observing the mushrooming of competing private consulting firms that tried to tap the booming Ivorian economy and, simultaneously, the development of what the chief of French Aid Mission in the Ivory Coast denounced as «unofficial technical assistance» (*assistance technique parallèle*). In this context, the Lamour mission seemed to provide an opportunity for French Ambassador Jacques Raphaël-Leygues to reassess his policy options and chart a new course of diplomatic action.²⁶ Thus, only a couple of months after Lamour's departure, he issued a warning: because the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs was «seemingly hesitant to provide technical assistance personnel to the company in charge of the development of the Bandama valley, SCET-Coopération and other French firms have been, or are, planning to provide high-level experts to this new and very important Ivorian agency». The diplomat added: «Such a course has the advantage of helping to prevent that foreign experts exercise a monopoly in the making of the Kossou project.»²⁷

While Ambassador Raphaël-Leygues did not explicitly name the national origins of the «foreign experts» he feared were gradually excluding the French from controlling the Kossou operation, it is obvious that he was referring to the United States. For years, French diplomats and political pundits had been trumpeting that the US was increasing its interest in Francophone Africa.²⁸ In this context, Raphaël-Leygues's recommendation that SCET-Coopération and other French firms be prodded into the Kossou venture was meant to contain the expansion of America's informal empire in the economically most attractive of France's former colonies in sub-Saharan Africa. While such a move is understandable given French hysteria over losing influence in the *pré carré*, it is also true that many French deci-

25 Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, (Paris, hereafter AMAE), série: DAM/sous-série: CI, Carton 1888. Hubert Dubois (Chargé d'Affaires) to Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, 18 March 1969.

26 For the idea of «assistance technique parallèle», see Centre des Archives Diplomatiques (Nantes, hereafter CAD), Abidjan, Carton 55 : «Note sur les sociétés, cabinets et bureaux d'Etudes en Côte d'Ivoire», 6 February 1969. For views on the mushrooming of consulting firms, see Ariane Deluz (interview), 7 January 2005; Jean-Pierre

Dozon (interview), 1 February 2005; Jean-Louis Boutillier (interview), 1 March 2005.

27 CAD, Abidjan, Carton 55 : Raphaël-Leygues to Secrétaire d'Etat aux Affaires Etrangères, 18 July 1969.

28 G. R. Manue, «La Seule voie pour l'Afrique Francophone: L'Europe», *Europe, France, Outre-mer*, (January 1963), 56–60; J. Knecht, «La Visite de M. Houphouët-Boigny à Washington coïncide avec un regain d'intérêt des Etats-Unis pour l'Afrique», *Le Monde* 24 (May 1962), 9.

sionmakers and commentators overlooked the fact that the culture of US regional planning had already been studied by quite a few French planners, including such a key expert and consultant for SCET-Coopération as Philippe Lamour.²⁹

To make sense of this conjuncture, one must return to the post-1945 years, when the informal American empire was not only consolidating its hold over the minds and souls of people like Kouamé Binzème, but also over a large segment of Europe's liberal intellectuals and technocrats.³⁰ Consequently, French society came to confront modern American culture with an unprecedented intimacy. For instance, American consumer durables found their way into French households, while Hollywood movies were inundating French screens. At the same time, hundreds of the French business and political elite visited the United States as part of a vast economic training programme.³¹ It was only logical that these transatlantic encounters would eventually pave the way for the circulation of American ideas and techniques regarding modernization in post-war France and beyond.³²

Within the context of the globalization of the American Century, the escalating Cold War and post-war decolonization, the reach of American ideas and technical know-how for rapid development was further expanded to the so-called Third World that emerged during the post-war years.³³ This was particularly true in the case of the transfer of what David Ekbladh has aptly called the «TVA model» of modernization, a development technique that utilized American democratic principles and grass-root activism along with soft centralized planning to achieve a balanced socio-political transformation of a particular region.³⁴ Initiated in the 1930s

29 On the influence of the TVA experiment on Lamour, see Pitte, *Philippe Lamour*, 56–59; Philippe Lamour, *Le Cadran solaire* (Paris, 1980), 278–81.

30 V. de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge-London, 2005); R. Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France: Renovation and Economic Management in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge-New York, 1981).

31 K. Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge, 1995); R. Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization* (Berkeley, 1993); F. Costigliola, *France and the United States: The Cold Alliance Since World War II* (New York, 1992).

32 K. R. Pedersen, «Re-Educating European Management: The Marshall Plan's Campaign Against Restrictive Business Practices in France, 1949–1953», *Business and Economic History* 25 (1996) 1, 267–274; Kuisel, *Seducing the French*, 131–153; L. Boltanski, «Visions of American Management in Post-War France», *Theory and Society* 12 (1983) 3, 375–403.

33 M. Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American*

Social Science and «Nation-Building» in the Kennedy Era (Chapel Hill, 2000); A. Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton, 1995); C. E. Pletsch, «The Three Worlds, or the Division of Social Scientific Labor, circa 1950–1970», *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23 (1981) 3, 565–590; J. E. Orchard, «ECA and the Dependent Territories», *Geographic Review* 41 (1951) 1, 66–87; A. L. Moffat, «The Marshall Plan and British Africa», *African Affairs* 49 (1950), 302–308.

34 D. Ekbladh, ««Mr. TVA»: Grass-Roots Development, David Lilienthal, and the Rise of the Tennessee Valley Authority as a Symbol for U.S. Overseas Development, 1933–1973», *Diplomatic History* 26 (2002) 3, 335–374. The literature on the TVA is quite vast. While some of the scholarly contributions to the study of the TVA experiment are very critical, others adopt a celebratory tone. See, for example, W. L. Creese, *TVA's Public Planning: The Vision, the Reality* (Knoxville, 1990); N. L. Grant, *TVA and Black Americans: Planning for the Status Quo* (Philadelphia, 1990); M. J. McDonald and J. Muldowny, *TVA and the Dispossessed: The Resettlement of Population in →*

Chart: Map of Kossou

the Norris Dam Area (Knoxville, 1982). Of course, the classic text on the TVA as a truly American «democratic» experiment is D. E. Lilienthal, *TVA: Democracy on the March* (New York-London, 1944). Moreover, a number of researches have mined the tangled links between the TVA, the New Deal, and the reassertion of American

democratic liberalism in the inter-war period. For a representative sample of these, see S. M. Milkis and J. M. Mileur, eds., *The New Deal and the Triumph of Liberalism* (Amherst, 2002); C. Sussman, ed., *Planning the Fourth Migration: The Neglected Vision of the Regional Planning Association of America* (Cambridge-London, 1976).

during the New Deal to help bring regions traversed by the Tennessee River into the fold of American modernity, the Tennessee Valley Authority's techniques of integrated regional development emerged in the 1950s and 1960s as an omnipresent icon that many modernizers in the postcolonial nation-states of Africa and Asia strove to emulate as they attempted to effect multi-purpose damming schemes of their own.³⁵

The Kossou experiment in Central Ivory Coast was indicative of these larger trends of incorporating American modernization techniques into local developmental practices. As we shall see, however, what made the Ivorian example unique and perhaps worthy of investigation was its reliance on the expertise of French development personnel (*coopérants*), who worked to triangulate American modernization concepts as they secured the continuity of France's hegemony over the Ivorian postcolony.

To better understand Kossou and the incidence of French mediation during its construction, we should place the whole modernization experiment within the context of the regionalist turn that the Ivorian development planning underwent in the mid-1960s. In effect, with an increase in the flow of French *coopérants* and *bureaux d'études* to the Ivory Coast in the 1960s and 1970s, the early post-independence period witnessed the deployment of a vast survey programme, which was largely carried out by French research agencies. Known as *Etudes Régionales*, these investigations, which lasted from 1962 until 1965, were meant to assess the development potentials of the various regions of the Ivory Coast. Besides making the various regions of the Ivory Coast legible for development planning, the *Etudes Régionales* signalled the incorporation of regionalist concerns into the discourse of how to support the alleged Ivorian economic miracle.

An interesting indicator of this shift in development strategy was provided, if obliquely, by a 1967 article written by Hugues Lhuillier, a French expatriate and junior economist at the Office de la Recherche Scientifique et Technique Outre Mer. Reappropriating the developmentalist ideas that informed the TVA experiment along with American economist Walter Isard's notion of «location economy», Lhuillier argued that earlier modernization and nation-building endeavours in the Ivory Coast had performed rather poorly because they lacked not only a clear definition of strategies for regional development but also a sound conceptual framework

35 R. Rook, «Race, Water, and Foreign Policy: The Tennessee Valley Authority's Global Agenda Meets «Jim Crow»», *Diplomatic History* 28 (2004) 1, 55–81; N. Cullather, «Damming Afghanistan: Modernization in a Buffer State», *Journal of American History* 89 (2002) 2, 512–537; J. Nashell, «The Road to Vietnam: Modernization Theory in Fact and Fiction», in *Cold War Constructions: The Political Culture of United States Imperialism*,

1945–1966, ed. C. G. Appy (Amherst, 2000), 132–154; J. Oliver, «The Application of TVA Experience to Underdeveloped Countries», in *The Economic Impact of TVA*, ed. J. R. Moore (Knoxville, 1967), 26–40; R. E. Hamilton, «The Damodar Valley Corporation: India's Experiment with the TVA Idea», Ph.D. Dissertation, Duke University, 1966.

for organizing ideas related to such planning.³⁶ Most importantly, the French *co-opérant* criticized the previous Ivorian development strategy because it did not include specific methods for making viable projections with regard to regional development, the result of which was the unevenness of Ivorian economic development.³⁷ In order to get around these limitations, he proposed a number of measures: First, regional growth poles for industrial decentralization should become a part of national planning so as to distribute growth evenly in the national space.³⁸ Secondly, since national planners had to work with preliminary sketches produced by regional planners, there should be collaboration between the two for stronger coherence in development programming.³⁹

Ivorian authorities heeded these recommendations and took further steps to enlist the continued counsel of Lhuillier, who would eventually work for the Ivorian Ministry of Development Planning. Furthermore, ORSTOM was recruited to draw up a five-year plan for the entire country, a plan that ultimately enshrined regionalist precepts in the planning of Ivorian economic development. As many ORSTOM researchers subsequently pointed out, one effect of this move was the explicit effort in the ORSTOM-produced Loi-Plan of 1967–70 to fight against what was perceived to be «regional disparities» and uneven development in the Ivory Coast.⁴⁰ In many regards, the Kossou regional development project was one of the brain-children of this regionalist tilt. As we shall see, however, French control over the making of Kossou was a precarious affair, especially because the multi-purpose damming project occurred within an international financial context marked by the Ivorian need for developmental funds, which the French government was reluctant to provide.

3. Securing Funds for Kossou: Development and the Politics of International Finance

Historically, plans about construction of the Ivory Coast's largest hydro-electric dam were revealed as early as 1960, when the newly independent Ivory Coast asked Electricité de France (EDF) along with American Kaiser Engineers and Constructors to carry out hydrological surveys in order to determine the ideal location for the country's third hydro-electric complex.⁴¹ Equipped with the first results, the

36 H. Lhuillier, «Outils et cadres pour une planification régionale», *Cahiers ORSTOM, série Sciences Humaines* IV (1967) 2, 61–111. For the story of the French reappropriation of American-inflected regional development ideas as well as Walter Isard's «location theory» see F. Perroux, «Notes sur la notion de pôle de croissance», *Economie appliquée* 64 (1950), 307–320; W. Isard, «The General Theory of Location and Space-Economy», *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 63 (1949) 4, 476–506.

37 Lhuillier, «Outils et cadres», 62–63.

38 *Ibid.*, 104–05.

39 *Ibid.*, 109.

40 G. Ancey and M. Pescay, *La Planification à base régionale en Côte d'Ivoire: Le Plan 1981–1985 et ses antécédents* (Paris, 1983); J.-P. Trouchaud, «Recherche d'un cadre régional de planification en Côte d'Ivoire», in *Etudes de géographie tropicale offertes à Pierre Gourou* (Paris, 1972), 463–476.

41 République de Côte d'Ivoire/Autorité pour l'Aménagement de la Vallée du Bandama, *AVB: Opération Kossou* (Abidjan, 1971), 8.

Ivorian planners hurriedly submitted an application to the World Bank. The international financial institution rejected the plan because of its high cost and low profitability. It was the consequences of this rejection that threatened to dislodge French domination over the Kossou project, while it provided the United States with an opportunity to push for larger involvement in the making of the so-called Ivorian economic miracle.⁴²

In fact, reacting to this rejection, the Ivorian ambassador to Washington, Henri Konan Bedié, accused the bank of having a bias against Francophone Africa and implicitly criticized France's inaction in this matter. Anticipating an appeal, the ambassador, reportedly «on instruction» from the Ivorian president, requested that French diplomats intervene «in favour of the Bandama».⁴³ His efforts were disappointed, however, and all the more so since information leaked out that the World Bank rejection had been encouraged by the French members of the international financial institution.⁴⁴ The ensuing bitterness of the West Africans must have temporarily cooled Franco-Ivorian relations. As a result, EDF was outbid by Kaiser Engineers, which not only developed a more thorough feasibility study in 1966, but also encouraged the Ivorian government to submit its damming project to the Exim Bank.⁴⁵ Alarmed by this supposed American encroachment, the French commercial attaché in Abidjan concluded that the «total exclusion of any French participation (through EDF) in this new study» as well as Kaiser's pretence to control works sub-contracted to French laboratories, could «give a certain weight to the rumours that the new Ivorian economic policy is in favour of the United States».⁴⁶

The French diplomat may have been right. An indication was provided by Bedié, newly promoted to Minister of Finance, who, as a further reprisal of French inaction and opposition, requested that France no longer have any direct involvement in the new Bandama venture.⁴⁷ President Houphouët-Boigny apparently agreed. This is why he directly wrote to President Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) soon after the World Bank rejection and asked for US participation in the Kossou project. In his response to the Ivorian request, the American president assured his Ivorian counterpart that the US government had «given this matter [the Kossou

42 On the rejection, see World Bank, *Appraisal of the Agricultural Aspects of Proposed Bandama River Project* (Washington DC, 1966).

43 AMAE, série: DAM/sous-série: CI, Carton 1888: Incoming Telegram, 13 October 1965.

44 Bancroft Library, Edgar F. Kaiser Papers, (University of California, Berkeley) BANC MSS 85/61c, Carton 328/1c: Memorandum for Re-cord (by Earl G. Peacock), 13 May 1966; *ibid.*, Peacock to Connor, 23 May 1966. See also Lyndon B. Johnson Library (Austin, hereafter LBJ Library), National Security File (NSF), Country File, Box 91: Memorandum for W. W. Rostow, 1 May 1967.

45 Bancroft Library, Edgar F. Kaiser Papers, BANC MSS 85/61c, Carton 328/1c: Earl G. Peacock to J. R. Connor, 29 March 1966.

46 AMAE, DAM/CI, Carton 1888: Commercial Attaché (Abidjan) to Ministre de l'Economie & des Finances, 3 February 1966.

47 Bancroft Library, Edgar F. Kaiser Papers, BANC MSS 85/61c, Carton 328/1c. Joseph Rucinski (Vice President of Kaiser Industries Corporation) to Willem van Ravesteijn (Paris Office), 6 May 1966.

project] our thorough attention and shall continue our efforts to be of help». ⁴⁸ LBJ instructed the Exim Bank to study the Bandama project and suggest options for an American backing, which the bank did in 1968.

If anything, the involvement of the United States in Ivorian modernization projects turned the cold alliance between the United States and France into something akin to a hot peace. In fact, provisions for a US loan to the Ivory Coast in 1968 increased tensions between the United States and France. This is confirmed by the fixation of French diplomats on the US, while ignoring the Italian and later Canadian interests, whose representatives also became involved in the Kossou project. ⁴⁹ The politics of Ivorian postcolonial electrification, however, shed light on more than just the mechanics of international finance and its connections to development in the postcolonial worlds of Africa and Asia. In fact, a closer look at the boosting of the «Ivorian miracle» through the multi-purpose damming scheme on the Bandama River reveals more than anything else that triangulation was almost always at work in the transfer of American know-how to the postcolonial societies of Francophone Africa.

4. Practicing Postcolonial Triangulation: Ivorian Authorities, French *Coopérants* and the Making of Kossou

It is not clear why the Ivorian authorities called specifically upon Philippe Lamour to consult and give expert advice regarding Kossou. It is equally uncertain whether they knew about Lamour's post-war visits to the United States to observe the TVA experiment. But Lamour served as a postcolonial node that effectively triangulated American social engineering knowledge to make Kossou a smoother developmental experience. Once in the Ivory Coast, the chairman of the CBRL lectured against viewing the production of electricity as an end in itself, for the Ivory Coast «could well build thermal plants which would be both more powerful and cost-effective». Taking the TVA lessons of comprehensive regional development to heart, Lamour advised the Ivorian planners that they should tend to the societal transformations that the damming scheme would effect in the Bandama Valley: «Agriculture, fishing and animal husbandry – these are what will be the major activities.» The central Ivory Coast region, he prophesied, would effectively «witness rapid [economic] expansion.» ⁵⁰ As he left the country, Lamour «promised he [would] submit a brief memorandum to the Ivorian government within three weeks, in which he would

⁴⁸ LBJ Library, National Security File (NSF), Special Head of State Correspondence File, Box 29: Lyndon B. Johnson to Félix Houphouët-Boigny, 13 December 1965.

⁴⁹ For an elaboration on this point, see A. B. Bamba, «Complicare una «Risposta Molto Semplice»: L'Assistenza allo Sviluppo degli Stati Uniti e il

«Miracolo Economico» della Costa D'Avorio, 1960–1975», in *Gli aiuti allo sviluppo nelle relazioni internazionali del secondo dopoguerra: Esperienze a confronto*, ed. L. Tosi and L. Tosone, (Padova, 2006), 29–49.

⁵⁰ *Fraternité Matin*, 5 March 1969.

lay out the objectives to be pursued so that Kossou would become a success story in the larger frame of the *aménagement du territoire* in the Ivory Coast.⁵¹ Before submitting his memorandum, the Frenchman recommended having a census of the people to be displaced by the construction of the dam. As he had done in Languedoc-Roussillon, Lamour also encouraged the Ivorian authorities to survey the valley in search of land to be irrigated for agriculture. Most importantly, he requested that comprehensive development road maps (*schéma directeurs d'aménagement*) should be drawn up for both the Bandama Valley and south-western Ivory Coast, which were expected to host the displaced population from the Kossou reservoir area.⁵² Thus, although US money and technological expertise were building the Kossou Dam, this was largely done through the intervention of a French Americophile.

French mediation in the making of Kossou was not restricted to the missionary activity of Philippe Lamour, though. In fact, in the context of the increasing internationalization of the Kossou project, other French actors would rise to prominence. This included ORSTOM, whose researchers would help the French foreign assistance apparatus (cf. *Coopération*) secure a position of advantage in the market of postcolonial expertise in the Ivory Coast.⁵³

As early as June 1969, Mohamed T. Diawara – the Ivorian minister for development planning – had asked Pierre Etienne, one of the Orstomians who had carried out the census campaign of the *Etudes Régionales*, to take charge of the sociological survey of the villages to be displaced by the construction of the Kossou Dam.⁵⁴ A month later, the Swiss consulting firm Bonnard & Gardel wrote to ORSTOM Director General Guy Camus and proposed a partnership: «We believe that the work being carried out by your agency, and specifically by Messieurs Etienne, Chevassu and Michotte, justifies and would make a collaboration on our part most rewarding.»⁵⁵ The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) further confirmed the prestige and power of ORSTOM as an intellectual resource in the implementation of the Kossou operation. After visiting the Ivory Coast in mid-1969, UNDP experts concluded that the country lacked not only sufficient knowledge to develop the resources of the Bandama Valley, but also skilled personnel and trained social scientists to «carry out successfully (*mener à bien par eux-mêmes*) a project as huge and complex» as Kossou. In light of this weakness, the international agency requested

51 AMAE, série DAM, sous-série Côte d'Ivoire, Carton 1888: Hubert Dubois (Chargé d'Affaires) to Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, 18 March 1969. See also CAD, Abidjan, Carton 61: Hubert Dubois (Chargé d'Affaires) to Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, 18 March 1969.

52 Ibid.

53 A. B. Bamba, «Epistemic Memories and the Making of Post-colonial Expertise: The Rise of ORSTOM in the Development Planning of the Ivory

Coast». Paper presented at the 20th Biannual Meeting of the African Studies Association of Germany (VAD), Frankfurt am Main (Germany), 24–27 July 2006.

54 Archives Nationales de France (Paris, hereafter ANF), Fonds ORSTOM, F 17 Bis 90.17, Article 20: Note à l'attention de Monsieur le Secrétaire Adjoint, 10 June 1969.

55 ANF, Fonds ORSTOM, F 17 Bis 90.17, Article 20: Bonnard & Gardel to Camus, 24 July 1969.

that the expertise of ORSTOM be mobilized.⁵⁶ Given the hegemony of the Orstomians on the Ivorian epistemological landscape, the request was granted. Furthermore, Pierre Etienne was appointed as part-time consultant with the *Autorité pour l'Aménagement de la Vallée du Bandama* (AVB), the agency set up in 1969 to carry out the Kossou project.⁵⁷

It would be a mistake to conclude that all of the American technocratic knowledge used in the making of Kossou filtered through France and its expatriate extension in the Ivory Coast. This was far from being the case, especially in a post-independence context in Africa marked by what a contemporary French observer called a relative «trend toward the loosening of old imperial ties».⁵⁸ In fact, as early as 1963, a group of Ivorian parliamentarians and lawmakers had visited the TVA installations in the Knoxville, Tennessee, area.⁵⁹ Although at present no evidence allows us to gauge the impact of the Tennessee Valley tour on the Ivorian visitors, it is clear that both David Lilienthal and the TVA model exerted a lasting influence on the Ivorian policymakers. Revealing the effects of this spell, Raphaël Saller – the man who ran Ivory Coast's early development planning – flatteringly remarked in 1962, when he met Lilienthal: «I know about you and about TVA, so I know TVA isn't just dams.»⁶⁰ The Ivorian minister, who had reportedly longed for «fifteen years» to meet Lilienthal, even reminisced having sent «two of his men to TVA in 1946 because «There was the center, the mecca for planned development the world over»».⁶¹

Beyond the flatteries of an eccentric French-born Saller, whom Lilienthal himself described as «not really an Ivorian»,⁶² the radiance of the TVA model reached deep into the very elitist imagination of the regional planning world of the Ivory Coast. President Houphouët-Boigny himself had expressed interest in the TVA as a model when he first met David Lilienthal.⁶³ Consequently, the *Autorité pour l'Aménagement de la Vallée du Bandama* was juridically patterned on the Tennessee

56 ANF, Fonds ORSTOM, F 17 Bis 90.17, Article 20: Rapport de la mission du PNUD pour le projet de Kossou, [en] Côte d'Ivoire, July-August 1969; *ibid.*, Paul-Marc Henry (Deputy Director of UNDP) to Camus (Director General of ORSTOM), 11 September 1969.

57 ANF, Fonds ORSTOM, F 17 Bis 90.17, Article 55: Note à l'attention de Monsieur le Directeur Général, 20 October 1970.

58 J. Chazelle, «Les Moyens d'action des grandes puissances», in *Politiques nationales envers les jeunes Etats*, eds. J.-B. Duroselle and J. Meyriat, (Paris, 1964), 81.

59 These visitors included Raymond Kouassi Goffri (vice president of the National Assembly), Aimé Barou (secretary of the National Assembly), Alphonse Boni (chief justice), Dr. Apagny Tanoe,

Mrs. Jeanne Gervais and a certain Mr. Assamoua. For details, see USNA-South East Region (Atlanta, GA), RG 142, Records of TVA International Visitors Center (IVC), Box 1: Report on operations for the period of six months ended in 11 December 1963. See also *ibid.*, Box 2: Log book 0-1963, 4 August 1963.

60 D. E. Lilienthal, *The Journals of David E. Lilienthal*, Vol. 5: *The Harvest Years, 1959-1963* (New York, 1964), 349.

61 *Ibid.*, 349-50.

62 *Ibid.*, 183.

63 Seeley Mudd Library, Princeton University, David E. Lilienthal Papers, Box 483: Lilienthal to Diawara, 1 June 1969.

Valley Authority.⁶⁴ In this light, besides its name, which easily recalled the TVA, the *maître d'œuvre* of the Kossou operation was the first non-sectoral modernization agency in the postcolonial history of the Ivory Coast whose goal it was to achieve the comprehensive and integrated regional development of the Bandama Valley.⁶⁵ Perhaps it was in its statutory positioning within the Ivorian administrative landscape that AVB came closest to the TVA model. In a country that had largely inherited the French Jacobin tradition of centralized government, AVB was given a semi-autonomous status that effectively removed the agency's actions from the jurisdiction of any given ministry. AVB was placed under direct presidential supervision in an effort to bestow the new agency with a flexibility that would enhance its efficiency.⁶⁶

While these actions strengthened Ivorian oversight on the making of Kossou, the need for more funds to run the whole regional development operation helped the French government to achieve a diplomatic comeback. The setback that had allowed the American Kaiser Engineers to win the bid to build the Kossou Dam had left many French expatriates with a feeling of bitterness. This atmosphere encouraged some members of the expatriate community to accuse the Ivorian leaders of favouritism toward American interests.⁶⁷ Alarmed by these developments and in full appreciation of their potentially negative consequences with regard to the maintenance of French hegemony in the Ivory Coast, French diplomats decided to act dexterously. In the late 1960s, they started to gather intelligence reports on the financial implications of the damming experiment.⁶⁸ Furthermore, some French diplomats opted to call for a direct involvement of France in the implementation of Kossou's social programmes.

For instance, a note intended for the French ambassador suggested that since Kossou had turned out to be an irreversible venture (despite French opposition), it was in the interest of France not to remain a passive spectator. Rather, Paris should provide developmental funds for the resettlement of people to be displaced because of the filling of the Kossou reservoir. In fact, the note's author argued, if France's diplomats had missed the opportunity to get involved in the initial infrastructural transformations that the damming required, they could not afford to be bystanders in the social transformations that Kossou was likely to cause. Ultimately, the note

64 V. Lassailly-Jacob, «Un Exemple éphémère de planification du développement: L'AVB en Côte d'Ivoire centrale (1969-1980)», *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 26 (1986), 333-348, 334.

65 République de Côte d'Ivoire, *Kossou: Un Vaste programme de développement intégré* (Abidjan, 1973), 12-24; M. S. Kalms, «L'Intervention de l'AVB dans la région centre Bandama de la Côte d'Ivoire», in *Le Développement: Idéologies et pratiques* (Paris, 1983), 79.

66 Lassailly-Jacob, «Exemple éphémère», 335.

67 AMAE, DAM/CI, Carton 1888. Commercial At-

taché (Abidjan) to Ministre de l'Economie & des Finances, 3 February 1966; AMAE, DAM/CI, Carton 1885; Ambassadeur de France to [unidentified] correspondent, 25 June 1964.

68 CAD, Abidjan, Carton 61. [Anonymous writer], «La situation politique et économique en Côte d'Ivoire: Les Projets de San Pedro et de Kossou», November 1969; CAD, Abidjan, Carton 61: J. Bourgeois, «Les Operations Kossou et San Pedro et les besoins de financement de la Côte d'Ivoire», 28 August 1969.

concluded, French intervention in the Kossou project was an ideal and timely opportunity since any involvement in the social and population issues would have a «deep and lasting impact» on the people of the region.⁶⁹ Given these suggestions, it was only understandable that the missionary activities of French nationals such as Philippe Lamour or the researchers of ORSTOM received the blessing of the French embassy in Abidjan. By their participation in the making of Kossou, these actors eventually turned the regional development experiment into a transatlantic and triangular techno-socio-political saga that aimed at bringing the central Ivory Coast into the fold of modernity.

5. Conclusion

In hind-sight, we know that the making of Kossou suffered from the modernist hubris that informed the planning of so many modernization experiments. In fact, the political élan for orchestrating techno-political changes in the central Ivory Coast did not survive the crises that challenged the Ivorian miracle during the 1970s: bureaucratic centralization within AVB, the jealousy of civil servants in the various technical ministries, the competition of other sectoral development agencies that felt their spheres of actions were being encroached by AVB's activities, and the burden of foreign debt – all of these factors converged to turn Kossou into another short-lived modernization experiment. As a consequence, AVB was closed in 1979 along with the *Autorité pour l'Amenagement de la Region du Sud-Ouest* (ARSO), the other regional agency established in the late 1960s to carry out the modernization of the Ivorian south-west region.⁷⁰

These setbacks notwithstanding, the story of the making of Kossou is indicative of how fruitful the concept of triangulation can be in interpreting post-war modernization drives in Francophone Third World countries. While this article has focused on the case of the Ivory Coast, there is reason to believe that similar triangular processes were at work in such diverse countries as Morocco, Senegal and Gabon.⁷¹ Furthermore, moving away from a monolithic understanding of developmentalism – even within the so-called West – this article has shown how competing national interests between France and the United States provided colonial subjects and postcolonial leaders with a number of opportunities to rearticulate their

69 CAD, Abidjan, Carton 61. [Anonymous writer], «Note pour M. L'Ambassadeur», 8 May 1969.

70 For a brief discussion of these problems, see A. Dubresson, «Dernière la contradiction, l'Etat: Discours et pratique de l'aménagement du territoire en Côte d'Ivoire», *Politique africaine* 21 (1986), 77–89; Ancey/Pescay, *Planification à base régionale*, 99–115.

71 J.-L. Cohen and M. Eleb, *Casablanca: Colonial Myths and Architectural Ventures* (New York,

2002), 275–299; P.-M. Durand, «Les Relations franco-américaines au Gabon dans les années 60 ou la «petite guerre froide»», in *Les Relations franco-américaines au XX^e siècle*, ed. P. Melandri and Serge Ricard, (Paris, 2003), 117–138; P. J. Schraeder, «From Berlin 1884 to 1989: Foreign Assistance and French, American, and Japanese Competition in Francophone Africa», *Journal of Modern African Studies* 33 (1995) 4, 539–567.

visions of modernization and nation-building. As it turned out, these opportunities also bore the seeds of challenges, which became apparent in the Ivory Coast by the end of the 1970s.⁷² Still, one cannot deny the magnitude of the transformations that Kossou and other regional development endeavours wrought on the Ivorian landscape of social change planning.

⁷² P. Wick and J. S. Shaw, «The Côte d'Ivoire's Troubled Economy: Why World Bank Intervention Failed», *Cato Journal* 18 (1998) 1, 17–18; World Bank, *Ivory Coast: The Challenge of Success* (Baltimore, 1978).

Triangulating a Modernization Experiment: The United States, France and the Making of the Kossou Project in Central Ivory Coast

ABSTRACTS

This article attempts to analyse the complex history of the post-war modernization drives in Francophone Africa. It focuses on the damming of the Bandama River in central Ivory Coast. Adopting a transnational historical approach, I argue that the making of the Kossou damming experiment necessitated the importation of regional planning à la Tennessee Valley Administration, i.e., modernization in the style of the New Deal. While such US-inflected modernization approach informed the Bandama project, it was, mediated through the expertise of French development workers and social scientists – a process I call triangulation. Although short-lived, the Kossou experiment supports the claim that competing national interests between France and the United States provided (post)colonial societies in the Francophone world with a number of opportunities to rearticulate their visions of modernization and nation-building.

ABSTRACTS

Triangulation eines Modernisierungsexperimentes: Die USA, Frankreich und die Realisierung des Kossou-Projektes in der zentralen Elfenbeinküste

Dieser Artikel versucht, die Modernisierungsschübe der Nachkriegszeit im frankophonen Afrika in ihrer Komplexität zu fassen und zu analysieren. Er setzt dabei den Akzent auf das Stauen des Bandama-Flusses in der zentralen Elfenbeinküste. Indem ich einen transnationalen historischen Ansatz wähle, versuche ich aufzuzeigen, dass die Realisierung des Kossou-Staudammexperimentes eine regionale Planung erforderlich machte, die sich an der Tennessee Valley Administration orientierte – das heißt Modernisierung im Stil des New Deal. Obgleich ein solcher US-amerikanisch gefärbter Modernisierungsansatz das Bandama-Projekt entscheidend prägte, wurde dieses mithilfe des Fachwissens französischer Entwicklungshelfer und Sozialwissenschaftler entworfen: ein Prozess, den ich Triangulation nennen möchte. Trotz der kurzen Lebensdauer des Projektes ermöglichten die konkurrierenden nationalen Interessen Frankreichs und der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika den (post)kolonialen Gesellschaften der frankophonen Welt eine Reihe von Gelegenheiten, ihre Vorstellungen von Modernisierung und Nationenbildung neu zu artikulieren.

De la triangulation d'une expérience de modernisation: les Etats-Unis, la France, et la mise en œuvre du projet Kossou dans le centre de la Côte d'Ivoire.

Cet article tente de complexifier l'histoire des élans de modernisation conduite en Afrique francophone dans l'après-guerre. Il se concentre sur la construction d'un barrage sur le fleuve Bandama dans le centre de la Côte d'Ivoire. Adoptant une approche historique transnationale, je soutiens que l'expérience de la construction du barrage de Kossou a nécessité l'importation de la planification à base régionale dans la ligne de la Tennessee Valley Administration, i. e. la modernisation dans le style du New Deal. Quoiqu'une telle inflexion américaine dans l'approche de la modernisation informa le projet Bandama, il était, cependant, conçu par l'entremise de l'expertise des assistants techniques et chercheurs en sciences sociales français – un processus que j'appelle triangulation. Bien qu'éphémère, l'expérience de Kossou confirme l'affirmation que la compétition des intérêts nationaux entre la France et les Etats-Unis a fourni aux sociétés (post)coloniales dans le monde francophone un grand nombre d'opportunités pour réarticuler leurs visions de la modernisation et de la construction de la nation.

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