

**Provincializing Eurafrica**  
*A postcolonial critique on the idea 'Eurafrica'*

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## **Introduction**

*“But no one can ask of the generations of today to expiate this crime perpetrated by past generations. No one can ask of the sons to repent for the mistakes of their fathers... The colonizer came, he took, he helped himself, he exploited. He pillaged resources and wealth that did not belong to him. He stripped the colonized of his personality, of his liberty, of his land, of the fruit of his labor. The colonizer took, but I want to say with respect, that he also gave. ... There were among them evil men but there were also men of goodwill. People who believed they were fulfilling a civilizing mission, people who believed they were doing good. They were wrong, but some were sincere. ... I have come to propose to you youth of Africa, not to dwell on the past, but for us to draw together lessons from it in order to face the future together. I have come, youth of Africa, to face with you our common history.”*

In this extract of his speech on July 26 2007, at the Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar, Senegal, Nicolas Sarkozy accuses but at the same time excuses the French colonial actions overseas.<sup>1</sup> French relations with its overseas territories go far back into history and it was only after World War II that France had to rethink her colonial policies. This reinterpretation of colonial relations traces back into the interwar period, but the period of the 1950's have been the most determining for the future of Franco-African relations. This postwar period is particularly interesting because of the simultaneity of on the one hand decolonization processes and on the other hand increasing European integration processes with the establishment of the ECC in 1957.

It is fair to say that France's colonial history still influences politicians nowadays. Understanding the history of France and its colonies in the 1950's means not only understanding the position of one of the forefathers of European integration, but also its position as one of the last advocates of colonialism. This ambivalent position of striving for European unity while wanting to keep colonial structures in place, becomes clear when examining the idea of 'Eurafrica'. The importance of European-African relations remains up till today the center of interest and controversy, illustrated by Sarkozy literally mentioning "the idea of Eurafrica" in one of his speeches in Cotonou, Benin in 2006, a concept first coined during the interwar period.<sup>2</sup> Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, an Austrian essayist and pioneer of European integration, first elaborated in 1923 in his book *Panuropa* the idea of a community of European states integrating the African continent. Paneurope could then, according to Coudenhove, compete and even become the most important power bloc in the world. It is hard to say who as first exactly came up with the word "Eurafrrique", but during the interwar period an important Paneuropean movement was established with Coudenhove as the most important initiator.

As it will become clear in what follows, the idea of "Eurafrrique" is a word with different

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1 Nicolas Sarkozy, "Discours de Dakar", at the University of Cheikh Anta Diop, Senegal, July 26, 2007 : <http://www.africaresource.com/essays-a-reviews/essays-a-discussions/437-the-unofficial-english-translation-of-sarkozys-speech> (3 June 2015).

2 Nicolas Sarkozy, "Discours de Cotonou", <http://discours.viepublique.fr/notices/063001811.html> (3 June 2015).

meanings and therefore often used in political discourses like the one of Nicolas Sarkozy. Today's literature on Eurafrika consists of predominantly historical accounts with an important focus on economic and geopolitical relations. I would like to address the Eurafrikan concept from a different perspective in order to understand why this word is still used in today's politics with Africa and why it is that this idea has undergone this, I dare to say, biased approach. This has brought me to the following question:

**Considering the simultaneity of decolonization processes and the beginning of the European integration processes in the 1950's, why do the current approaches on Eurafrikan relations fail to address the complex dynamics of the idea "Eurafrika"?**

I will argue in this paper that academic gaps between the disciplines of International Relations, Postcolonialism and studies on European Integration have led to a fragmented and partial understanding of the idea of Eurafrika. The focus on Cold War history and in particular aid and development structures when analyzing postwar Eurafrikan relations negates the underlying discourses and the representational power of the idea of Eurafrika. I will conclude by proposing how a partial representation of Eurafrikan relations is caused by practices of historicism and how a postcolonial approach to historicism sheds new light on the use of 'Eurafrika' in postcolonial Eurafrikan relations.

Studying the idea of 'Eurafrika' begins with understanding European-African relations. However, during the 1950's there were not yet overarching European institutions as we have today in Brussels and therefore my focus will lie with France, as it is one of the forefathers of the European Union but also one of the last colonial powers in Europe. The idea of 'Eurafrika' was not a French idea as such because it resulted from a larger pan-european interwar movement, but it has mainly been used by French politicians in the 1950's when bridging politics on Franco-African relations with European integration processes. The emphasis of the historical chapter will mainly lie on the 1950's, as this is the decennia in which decolonization processes and European integration processes are beginning to take form, but are not yet fully accomplished or institutionalized.

The idea of 'Eurafrika', a so-called partnership between two continents, deserves more than ever special attention. This need has been responded by several scholars and I would like to mention here in particular Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson. Both are professors at the Linköping University in Sweden and respectively are Professor of Political Science and Professor of Ethnic studies. They received in 2011 a 3-year research grant from the Swedish Research Council to study the links between colonialism and decolonization and the EU project, past and present.<sup>3</sup> It is their article 'European Integration, European Identity and the Colonial Connection' that has partly inspired me to write the following thesis.<sup>4</sup> Their most recent and concluding work *Eurafrika, the untold history of European*

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3 Official website Linköping University: <https://www.isv.liu.se/medarbetare-vid-isv/hansen-peo?l=en> (4 June 2015).

*integration and colonialism* has been a great help for the writing of the first chapter, and served as a solid frame of reference.<sup>5</sup> However, the work from Gerard Bossuat and Marie Therese Bitsch *L'Europe et l'Afrique, de l'idée d'Eurafrique à la convention de Lomé I*, an collection of essays written for the occasion of a conference on this subject in Paris in 2004, shows that other scholars have been working in this field of research for quite a while now.<sup>6</sup> As for the rest of my paper I have drawn back on a range of authors from different disciplines, making use in the final chapter of the work of Chakrabarty *Provincializing Europe, Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* to illustrate how a postcolonial critique on historicism could give us new insights on the history and especially the history writing on European-African relations.<sup>7</sup>

At last I would like to clarify my intention on writing a postcolonial critique on the history of Eurafrika. I'm conscious of the fact that I will write this thesis from a necessarily Eurocentric frame of reference, especially regarding the first chapter. African authors on the Eurafrika concept will rarely be addressed in what follows and European agency will clearly be privileged over African perspectives. Consequently, the slight disregard of African point of views first and foremost results from my cognitive focus as defined above and should not be misunderstood as a continuation of traditional Eurocentric historiography. I do think that there is a lot of potential in this field of studies covering European-African relations when studying European integration processes. Taking into account African perspectives on decolonization processes, continuing European interference in Africa and European integration would truly give some interesting groundings for a non-European history of European integration.

Before we proceed to the first chapter, let me first clarify my plan for the thesis. The first chapter will contain a historical and informative account of French-African relations from the end of World War II up to the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957. The second chapter recalls the common narratives in which the idea of Eurafrika has been studied. It is in this chapter that I will examine what the word and idea of 'Eurafrika' actually does, why it is entangled in a development discourse and how it comes that Eurafrika has been studied in such a one-dimensional manner. I will argue that the academics gaps between the studies of International Relations and the Postcolonialism have contributed to this fragmentary accounts and that studies on European Integration illustrate this lack of attention for postcolonial relations. I will conclude with a third chapter in which I address how postcolonialism can contribute to new understandings of European-African relations. I will do this by

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4 P. Hansen and S. Jonsson, 'European Integration, European Identity and the Colonial Connection', *European Journal of Social Theory* 5:4 (2002) 482-498.

5 P. Hansen and S. Jonsson, *Eurafrika, the untold history of European integration and colonialism* (London 2014).

6 G. Bossuat and M.T. Bitsch ed. *L'Europe et l'Afrique, De l'idée d'Eurafrique à la convention de Lomé I* (Brussels 2005).

7 D. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton 2000).

analyzing the “Discours de Dakar” of Nicolas Sarkozy given at the University of Cheikh Anta Diop on July 2007 in Senegal, and arguing for a postcolonial critique on historicism as suggested by Dipesh Chakrabarty in his book *Provincializing Europe, Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. In the end I hope to have shown how the idea of ‘Eurafrica’ is still very important in French-African relations and that new approaches could give us interesting insights on the complex dynamics behind a concept like Eurafrica.

## I France and the Eurafrican project

The history of French relations with its overseas colonial territories in the postwar period is one of many different stories. It's about canalizing German power, Cold War politics, reconstructing war torn societies, economic dependency from the USA, European integration and consolidation and of course decolonization. In the midst of these changing settings France had to re-evaluate its position regarding its colonies but also among other shifting world powers. The ambiguous definition of the Eurafrican project appeared to be a suitable political concept and of good use in the changing world order after World War II.

As noted in the introduction, the Eurafrican concept was established during the interwar period. This period differed from the postwar period, because at that time decolonization was not yet and also an unimaginable concern for colonial powers in Europe. Colonial politics during World War II were divided between de Vichy regime and de Gaulle's Free France. After the defeat in 1940, Vichy ruled over the majority of the colonial power in the Empire, however the African continent also provided shelter for de Gaulle's Free France and its representatives. Algiers became the headquarter for the coordination of the post war policies for de Gaulle's future France and Gaullist propaganda could claim that the Empire had saved the Republic.<sup>8</sup> Despite the politically fractured landscape in France, it became clear at the end of the war that French colonial policy would mostly focus on imperial restoration in the postwar period.

This imperial continuity became painfully clear during the Brazzaville Conference in 1944 where the Free France leadership and the colonial representatives in Africa sought to stake out the future of the French Empire, focusing primarily on sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>9</sup> It was in some way a 'charm offensive' towards the overseas territories to canalize the potential revolutionary powers. Future independence and sovereignty of the overseas territories do not figure on the agenda. Instead, the Brazzaville conference led eventually to the redesignation of the French Empire in the French Union, which would provide a fixed imperial structure and through which it hoped to control the economic and political changes in Black Africa from Paris. It replaced the French colonial empire with a semi-federal entity that absorbed the colonies and gave former protectorates a limited local autonomy with some voice in decision making in Paris.<sup>10</sup> However, as it is stated in the final resolution of the Brazzaville Conference: "The aims of the work of colonization which France is pursuing in her colonies exclude any idea of autonomy and any possibility of development outside the French empire bloc, the

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<sup>8</sup> Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica, the untold history of European integration and colonialism*, 93.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem, 95.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/219518/French-Union> (10 mei 2015).

attainment of self-government in the colonies even in the most distant future must be excluded.”<sup>11</sup>

The opening speech of de Gaulle sets the tone for the colonial policy of the 1950's which would mostly focus on so-called economic cooperation and development: “When the present world war began it was already obvious that we must put the development of Africa, the human progress of its inhabitants and the exercise of French sovereignty on a new footing.”<sup>12</sup> It is with this solidified imperial structure that France entered the post war years. It is also during these years that France had to face economic dependency from the USA, decolonization processes in the rest of the world, European integration and Cold War tensions. In these changing settings France had to reformulate its national ‘identity’ in which it was not and would until now never again be the superpower it once was. It soon became clear that it would use its overseas territories in the bargain for more world power and more influence in the establishment of a European Community.

The post war period until the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957 is marked on the one hand by the institutionalization of transatlantic relations like the United Nations (UN) in 1945, the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC, subsequently the OECD) in 1948 and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949 and on the other hand by the establishment of European institutions like the Council of Europe (CE) in 1949, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951, the abortive European Defense Community and appurtenant European Political Community (EDC, EPC 1952) and finally the EEC in 1957. At the same time, new institutions were established on the national level to reinforce colonial policies. In France these were, among others, the important colonial investment fund the Fonds d’Investissements et de Développement Economique et Social des Territoires d’Outres Mer (FIDES) formed in 1946, but also the Ministry of Overseas France (Ministère de la France d’Outre-mer) that had to make sure that France would not lose its colonial territories in the foreseeable future. What we see is that these years until the establishment of the EEC consisted, just like during an enduring chess game, of regular meetings between intellectuals, European founding fathers and politicians going back and forth between different interests and different perceptions of the future of their country and Europe.

The question is then, how did France had to position itself between these changing world settings and federalizing institutions? There is not one easy answer. French colonial politics appeared to be the central pillar around which all other questions balanced. During the 1950's we see that decolonization processes gradually but surely become reality everywhere in the world with Indochina, the Bandung Conference, Algier and Suez as most important events to which French colonial policies had to adapt. On one hand, France had to reinvent the internal structure for the French Union which was based on as

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11 Les recommandations de la conférence de Brazzaville, 6 February 1944, Assemblée nationale, France ; [www.assemblee-nationale.fr/histoire/discours-de-brazzaville.asp#recommandations](http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/histoire/discours-de-brazzaville.asp#recommandations) (10 mei 2015).

12 Opening speech Charle de Gaulle Brazzaville 1944 <http://www.charles-de-gaulle.org/pages/stock-html/en/the-man/home/speeches/speech-made-by-general-de-gaulle-at-the-opening-of-the-brazzaville-conference-on-january-30th-1944.php> (13 mei 2015)



subtle synthesis between unitary and assimilatory ideas and federalism through marked decentralization within a tightly controlled French community.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, it had to take into consideration international demands for decolonization and switch between its '*vocation mondiale*' and its '*vocation européenne*'.<sup>14</sup> A good example of France's rather paradoxical position in these years can be illustrated with the following quote of Georges Bidault, who was the minister of Foreign Affairs in 1953-1954: "We have to make Europe without unmaking France. ... We must pursue two objectives which are not contradictory: the consolidation of the French Union and the Construction of Europe."<sup>15</sup>

The 1950's appear to be a timeframe in which faith and hope for a continuing imperial policy are rivaled by an increasing consciousness of decolonization processes. This resulted in a politically fractured France with the Ministry of Overseas France, whose main goal was to keep in place the integration of France including the overseas territories and who increasingly had to take into consideration demands from the Quai d'Orsay Ministry of Foreign Affairs that in turn had to respond to pressure from international liberal demands and a European political community. France's political landscape was divided between those that feared that the supranational and eventually federal character of the EPC would be to the detriment of the French Union and France's global role (mostly Gaullists, but also prominent officials at the Quai d'Orsay) and those who thought European integration and the EPC could work to benefit France's colonial objectives (including Robert Schuman the famous French politician and one of the forefathers of the European Union, Guy Mollet's Socialists and of course Jean Monnet, politician, economist, diplomat and "Father of Europe").<sup>16</sup>

A year after the failed projects of the EDC and the EPC in 1954, further integration of the six members of the ECSC was again initiated during *La relance Européenne* and would finally result in the Treaties of Rome on 25 March 1957. It was during these negotiations that France demonstrated her intentions for itself as a nation and its position as one of the forefathers of the European Union. If the late 1940's were characterized by an imperial revival in France's colonial policy, the 1950's would bring unexpected shifts that would finally led to France favoring European cooperation in her overseas territories. In 1952 it became clear that FIDES could not by itself provide enough financial aid for France's development policy. This resulted in the Ministry of Overseas France addressing its European partners for financial cooperation for the development of the African continent.<sup>17</sup> We should not forget

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13 J. Kent, *The Internationalization of Colonialism, Britain, France, and Black Africa, 1939-1956* (Oxford 1992) 340.

14 Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica, the untold history of European integration*, 145.

15 Ibidem, 144.

16 Ibidem, 139.

17 Kent, *The Internationalization of Colonialism, Britain, France, and Black Africa, 1939-1956*, 340.

that France was under pressure because of its dollar deficit with the USA after World War II. The majority tendency in the government felt that the Common market could help the French economy sort out its problems.<sup>18</sup> Association would be the key to recovery and a fundamental condition for economic expansion.

Not only did France underestimate the financial burden of developing overseas territories, it also gradually realized that its empire was falling apart with the loss of Syria and Lebanon in 1945, the withdrawal from Indochina in 1954, the insurrections in Algeria from 1954 until independence in 1962, the independence of Morocco and Tunisia in 1956-7 and the Suez crisis in late 1956. It was thus also a question of diminishing geopolitical power. French politicians and intellectual elites were all too conscious about this relative decadence of French power. To illustrate this general tendency Viviane Dif has closely examined a list of subjects offered to candidates at the Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA), at the Ecole Nationale Agronomique and at the Ecole Normale Supérieure de la rue d'Ulm.<sup>19</sup> The following question was proposed to the future elite of civil-servants at the entrance exam of the ENA: "Can a materially weakened nation continue to exercise spiritual influence?". In 1956, the year of the Suez crisis the exam included the following extract: "Is France still a great nation? Does it still have the spiritual and economic resources for that?". These accounts are interesting because these institutions, up till today, deliver the future civil servants and officials, or should we say intellectual elite, of France. The fact that these schools were concerned with these questions, shows the importance of colonial policy in France at that time.

It would be the Suez crisis that in the late 1956 would "really swung the balance in favour of the common market and the treaty of Rome".<sup>20</sup> The failure of the Suez-operation, the condemnation of the former ally USA and the UN and the sudden retreat of the British troops made France realize that she could no longer continue her colonial policy on her own and that the Transatlantic solidarity had fallen short. Guy Mollet, prime minister of France in 1956, drew the consequences: "American and Soviet reactions following Suez have highlighted the need for medium-sized nations to group together if they want to have a necessary authority".<sup>21</sup> Henceforth, Europe became the great hope of socialists in the search for ways of retaining great-power status for France, and the Common Market, in Guy Mollet's

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18 E. Di Nolfo, *Power in Europe II, Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy and the Origins of the EEC, 1952-1957* (New York 1992) 510.

19 V. Dif, 'La perception de la puissance de la France (1954-1958) : L'Express : les grandes écoles', in : Di Nolfo, *Power in Europe II, Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy and the Origins of the EEC, 1952-1957*, 463.

20 P. Anderson, 'Under the sign of the interim', in: Peter Gowan and Perry Anderson (eds), *The Question of Europe* (London 1997), 57. Cited in: Hansen and Jonson, *Eurafrica, the untold history of European integration and colonialism*, 164.

21 Di Nolfo, *Power in Europe ? II Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy and the Origins of the EEC, 1952-1957*, 349.

words, took shape as the “supreme chance for France”.<sup>22</sup> However, it should be noted that even if some authors would call Nassar “the federator of Europe”, it is too simplified to argue that the Suez crisis illustrates “the magic bullet to finally unravel the mired negotiations on colonial association”, it should be considered as one of the many events in the sequence of other powerful challenges to European global and colonial power in the 1950’s as mentioned above.<sup>23</sup>

The association of the overseas territories in the ECC has in the end been an enduring one year process of negotiations starting with the Spaak Report prepared by the Intergovernmental Committee on European Integration, delivered to the six governments in April 1956, subsequently discussed at the Venice Conference for the foreign ministers of the six governments on 29-30 May and ending with the signing of the fourth part of the Treaty of Rome on 25 March 1957. The report drafted by Paul-Henri Spaak, a Belgian politician and forefather of European integration was a first draft of propositions before the official negotiations in Brussels begun and did not include any propositions on the status of overseas territories in the future Common Market. It was argued that the colonial issues were to be left out, on the understanding that it was up to the French to decide when to take the initiative.<sup>24</sup>

It was Pierre Moussa, director of Economic Affairs at the Ministry of Overseas France that submitted a note to his minister Gaston Defferre, signaling the importance of the colonial issue for the upcoming negotiations and it was Gaston Defferre that again submitted a letter to Guy Mollet, demanding that the French government should not enter the Common Market without the colonies being on board.<sup>25</sup> The Common Market and the guaranty that other European countries could profit and have free access to African markets, could then only count on French support if the African overseas territories would integrate in the Common Market *with* special guaranties including shared development investments between the European partners, the protection of African upcoming industries, specific provisions to guaranty sales for raw materials and agricultural products of the overseas territories and specific provisions for regarding population movements between Europe and Africa.<sup>26</sup> France would sell this trade-off externally as not only rewarding for other European powers, but also as a crucial and final step in solidifying Eurafrikan relations and as an important step in countering Soviet communism. Internally it was argued that this concretization of Eurafrikan relations would make France the center of European integration, that would otherwise have been situated in Germany.

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22 Ibidem.

23 Hansen and Jonson, *Eurafrika, the untold history of European integration and colonialism*, 166.

24 Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrika, the untold history of European integration and colonialism*, 148.

25 Ibidem, 149.

26 G. Migani, ‘L’association des TOM au marché commun: histoire d’un accord européen entre cultures économiques différentes et idéaux politiques communs, 1955-1957’, in: M. Bitsch and G. Bossuat, *L’Europe unie et l’Afrique, de l’idée d’Eurafrique à la convention de lomé I* (Brussels 2005) 233-252, 235.

The negotiations in Brussels under the presidency of Spaak were in particular marked by the skepticism of the Netherlands and Germany regarding their supposed financial contributions in African territories and skepticism from different European powers towards the preferential clauses regarding African raw materials and agricultural products. Robert Marjolin, the French delegate at the Bruxelles Conference kept reassuring the other European powers that France and only France would be responsible for political questions regarding the colonies thereby confirming the totality of the responsibilities regarding her sovereignty.<sup>27</sup> The treaty was finally signed on 25 March 1957 in which the association of the overseas territories was treated in part four “association of the overseas countries and territories”.<sup>28</sup>

## II Eurafrica: historiography and discourses

Historical accounts on the Eurafrican project often follow a similar structure as will be showed in what follows. Since the first chapter was dedicated to an informative historical account, this chapter will be more critical and at the end I will problematize what I call “academic gaps” between studies on International Relations and Postcolonialism. Studies on European integration are a good example of a fragmented discipline in which decolonization processes up till today have had little attention. I would like to propose that Eurafrica in particular is an interesting field of research when trying to understand the causes but also results of a lack of cooperation between International Relations and Postcolonialism. Let me now turn to the existing historical frames of reference.

### *Current periodization*

The Eurafrican project, first coined in the interwar period, appeared to be the realization of a larger Paneuropean movement. “Pan-Europe should be the political expression of the European cultural community”, Coudenhove explained.<sup>29</sup> But Pan-Europe was also an argument for peace. To prevent a repetition of World War I it was argued that Europe should unite in a common project, namely the incorporation of the African continent.<sup>30</sup> Marked by the Great Depression from 1929, Europe also had to unite in a Pan-European movement for the sake of economic recovery and economic independence. Even if the Pan-European movement was foremost interested in continental integration, it presupposed an economic integration of the colonies as well. Economist Otto Deutsch stated that his Pan-European

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27 Migani, ‘L’association des TOM au marché commun’, 242.

28 Treaty of Rome 1957: <http://www.eurotreaties.com/rometreaty.pdf> (28 May 2015)

29 Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, ‘Die europäische Nationalbewegung’, *Panuropa*, 4:1 (1928) 8. Cited in: P. Hansen and S. Jonsson, *Eurafrica, the untold history of European integration and colonialism* (Lodndon 2014) 26.

30 Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica, the untold history of European integration and colonialism*, 26.

economic zone also included “an indispensable supplement”, “the communal exploitation of the Pan-European colonies from an economic viewpoint”.<sup>31</sup> These pacific, cultural and economic arguments were all united in a larger geopolitical argument. If European powers wanted to remain of any influence on a global scale after the devastating consequences of World War I, it had to unite in one paneuropean United Europe. “In this context we encounter the African continent, seen as a necessary condition for economic recovery and also as sufficient reason for European unification.”<sup>32</sup> To conclude, the function of the African continent in all of this would then be as Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson state in their book *Eurafrica, the untold history of European integration and colonialism*: “A geopolitical calculation based on two symbiotic benefits emerged: the new geopolitical sphere of a united Europe would be sustainable and prosperous thanks to the incorporation of Africa; and correspondingly, the bonds between once-antagonistic European states would be consolidated by the shared goal of developing Africa. ... Africa could be developed only by Europe, and Europe could develop its fullest potential only through Africa. In short, Europe’s unification would start in Africa.”<sup>33</sup>

So far for the prewar discourse, let us now turn to the changed reality after World War II. The case of France is in particular interesting when we try to elucidate the discourse around Eurafrika in the postwar period. Suspicious of a potential German revival, transatlantic (economic) dependency, Cold War threats and of course increasing autonomy for its overseas territories, France had to face national decline on different fronts and the concept of Eurafrika appeared to be very convenient regarding her colonial policy and France’s position during the negotiations for European integration. What is remarkable is how discourses about the civilizing mission of France in Africa, racial inferiority and economic exploitation fade into the background in order to make room for more rational economic argumentation. Two stories have been extensively covered in history books, namely on the one hand France-African cooperation based on aid and development and on the other the need for African raw materials for European reconstruction and in particular France’s dollar-deficit. Also, as with most of postwar events, France-African cooperation has largely been approached through a cold war analytical framework but in the case of France-African cooperation these cold war tensions and economic reasoning fail to show the integral picture.

Apart from these interwar and postwar narratives, 1957 often emerges as an *annus mirabilis*, the year in which not only the Rome Treaty was signed and the Eurafrika cooperation was institutionalized, but also the year in which the first colonial territory in Africa (Ghana) emerges from colonial subjugation to independent statehood and thereby thus creating the impression of a historical

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31 Otto Deutsch, ‘Paneuropäische Wirtschaftsprogramm’, *Pan-europe*, 3:1 (1927). Cited in: Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica, the untold history of European integration and colonialism*, 27.

32 Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica, the untold history of European integration and colonialism*, 27.

33 *Ibidem*, 27.

break or discontinuity –between colonial and postcolonial, pre- and post-European integration, white supremacy and ‘partnership’, ‘colonial exploitation’ and ‘development’, ‘civilizing mission’ and ‘third-world’ aid.<sup>34</sup>

In short, what we see is a history of the Eurafrikan project first coined by a Pan-European movement, secondly put into a postwar economic reconstruction and aid-development discourse to be finally disintegrated into the year of 1957 in which Eurafrikan neo-colonial and economic relations become institutionalized and former-colonies become independent.

### ***Why this is only half of the story***

What I would like to examine in this chapter are the dynamics between the use of a concept like Eurafrikan, the narrative in which it is used and the ‘hidden’ discourses that do not immediately appear in today’s historical accounts. I will argue that this could be approached through a broader examination of the histories of European integration and decolonization and how the academic gaps between history writing, International Relations and Postcolonialism potentially have contributed to this partial account of European integration and decolonization processes.

There is something special about the Eurafrikan concept that first should be elucidated. Epistemologically, the word Eurafrikan has not one clear meaning, it’s a word that portrays a social reality. It is this ability to adapt to different realities or to do two things at the same time and thus its ambivalence that makes it extremely powerful and useful in political discourses. During the postwar period it was argued, and France in particular functions as a good example, that the idea of Eurafrikan would keep the African continent bounded to the European one while at the same time moving away from any colonial motives. Postwar Eurafrikanism was modern because it proposed a genuine partnership between African and European countries. Europe needed raw materials for economic reconstruction but also to reduce its dollar-deficit and in exchange Africa would be modernized and supported through aid and development projects. Eurafrikan cooperation would ensure European interference in Africa without being accused by the growing anti-colonization international community. Ironically, the US conscious about Europe’s dollar-deficit, supported this economic ‘partnership’ and a part of the Marshall budget was even allocated in Africa.<sup>35</sup>

At the end, the idea of Eurafrikan changed the ways in which the world system and especially the relations between Europe and Africa were described and understood, and this in order to allow trade, traffic and power to remain unchanged.<sup>36</sup> In the case of France, we see that at first it tried as long as possible to keep undivided interference in the overseas territories, but as we’ve seen decolonization became reality in other parts of the world and France couldn’t bear the burden of economic

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34 Ibidem, 256-57.

35 N.Y. White, ‘Reconstructing Europe through Rejuvenating Empire, the British, French and Dutch experience compared’, *Past and Present* 6 (2011) 219.

36 Hansen and Jonsson, Eurafrikan, *The untold history of European integration and colonialism* 255.

investments by itself and thus opted for Eurafrikan cooperation in order to keep its old power relations in Africa unchanged. Because of the great influence of France during the European integration processes, European integration also became a partial Europeanization of colonialism ensuring economic interdependence between European countries and overseas territories, while at the same time making sure that political questions like increasing autonomy in these countries would remain a purely French sovereignty problem.

### ***Aid and development discourses on Eurafrika***

What happened in the postwar period is a shift in discourse. Words like ‘civilizing mission’ were erased and replaced with ‘development’ and ‘human progress’. So why doesn’t the story about aid and development show us the whole picture? It is by no means my intention to dismiss the economic (hi)story of European-African relations, it has formed these relations in a very important way. However, to answer the above question I will argue according to the dependency school, that the postwar period is marked by a shift in rhetorical emphasis and that the emphasis on aid and development allows linear modes of historical thinking.<sup>37</sup>

If words like ‘civilizing mission’ were often used in prewar Eurafrikan narratives, they largely disappeared from the postwar public discourse for obvious reasons. Development legitimated European interference in African affairs and the success of ‘development’ as a substitute for the ‘civilizing mission’ could be due in part to a shift in rhetorical emphasis, because while no-one wants to be colonized, everyone wants to ‘develop’.<sup>38</sup> Hansen and Jonsson have argued in most of their work it is wrong to portray the 1950’s as a period of discontinuity as well as a historical break between colonial and postcolonial history. They suggest that instead the 1950’s have been a period of transition, a period in which the old system seamlessly passed into a new one thereby ensuring the continuation of old relations of dominance even under the new system.<sup>39</sup>

Arthuro Escobar, leading in the critical field on Development discourses, argues in his book *Encountering Development: The making and Unmaking of the Third World* that the discourse on development is a discursive construct which produces its object – the ‘third world’.<sup>40</sup> What is interesting is the paradoxical meaning of development. On the one hand, aid and development in

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37 Andre Gunder Frank one of the earliest dependency theorist states: “Historical research demonstrates that contemporary underdevelopment is in a large part the historical product of past and continuing economic and other relations between the satellite underdeveloped and the now developed metropolitan countries. Furthermore, these relations are an essential part of the capitalist system on a world scale as a whole.” In: A.G. Frank, ‘The Development of Underdevelopment’, in: J.D. Cockcroft, A. G. Frank and D. Johnson eds., *Dependence and Underdevelopment* (New York 1972) 3.

38 A. R. Biccum, ‘Interrupting the Discourse of Development: On a Collision Course with Postcolonial Theory’, *Culture, Theory and Critique* 43:1 (2002) 41.

39 Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrika, the untold history of European integration and colonialism* 255-57.

40 A. Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton 1995) 11.

former colonies presupposes an unequal relation between a developed and a underdeveloped, but on the other hand it presupposes a future in which underdeveloped will get as developed as the 'developed'. The following quote from Escobar clarifies this opposition: "Development assumes a teleology to the extent that it proposed that the 'natives' will sooner or later be reformed; at the same time, however, it reproduces endlessly the separation between reformers and those to be reformed by keeping alive the premise of a 'Third World' as different and inferior, as having a limited humanity in relation to the accomplished European. Development relies on this perpetual recognition and disavowal of difference."<sup>41</sup> Development discourses reinforce modern notions of evolution, solidify the position of the 'developed' and create an excluding and differentiating gesture towards the 'underdeveloped'.

Just like the Eurafrican concepts, the use of words like 'aid' and 'development' in development discourses enables people or more concrete politicians to link two different ideologies (conservative colonialism and liberal anti-colonialism) without addressing the deeper stories of the actual roots of a problem. Biccum calls this the 'discovery' of poverty: "Rhetorically, Development is always considered to just have 'happened' in the West. ... This definition of poverty was couched in the language of 'discovery', the 'discovery' of mass poverty in formerly colonized regions and a wholesale rhetorical (re)construction of two-thirds of the world's population as 'poor', as if the new institutions had no idea how this had come to be the case. The 'discovery' of poverty as an anomaly and threat is more precisely an elision of colonial relations of power and economics as surely as it is an imposition of an arbitrary monetary, measurement which facilitates the needs of a Western trading regime in need of markets. And just as with the World Bank 'discovery' of poverty, virtually every consideration of the North-South divided occurs with no consideration of how this 'gap' was produced in the first place."<sup>42</sup>

The postwar rhetoric's and histories on Eurafrica are thus intrinsically linked to development discourses, and were some critical and postcolonial thinkers have become aware of this narrative, most historians focus on exact numbers and figures and thereby failing to put the history of development in a larger picture encompassing international power relations, European identity building and in this case the Eurafrican project. Analyzing Eurafrica becomes interesting because it brings new histories in the daylight. I would like to argue in what follows that stories like that of Eurafrica have been neglected in today's European history on integration because of the lack of collaboration and interdisciplinary between different academic fields. The relatively recent European studies, the well-established political science approach within International Relations and the post-structuralist approach within Postcolonial studies could all contribute to an enriching conversation about Europe's

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<sup>41</sup> Escobar, *Encountering Development*, 11.

<sup>42</sup> A. R. Biccum, 'Interrupting the Discourse of Development: On a Collision Course with Postcolonial Theory', 44.



shared history with Africa and transcending the one-dimensional discourse as mentioned above, but unfortunately there appear to be some insurmountable gaps between these academic fields that up to today have contributed to a very limited literature about interdisciplinary approaches to this question.

### *Academic gaps*

What I would like to argue here is that the Eurafrican concept is particularly interesting for a multidisciplinary approach because it is a project in which so many different dynamics, interests and motivation are involved. It is impossible to fully understand the ideas behind Eurafrica if we only approach it from an economic point of view or for example a realist frame of reference. It is more than that. Eurafrica would foster France's national revival, as well as European reconstruction and solidarity, but it also shows how much colonial relationships endured during the postcolonial era. Understanding the motives, dynamics and interests behind the Eurafrican concept leads to a better understanding of Europe's shared history and today's political choices regarding the African continent.

The problem would mainly lie in the isolation of two academic disciplines that threaten the same thing, namely the academic field of international relations and the academic field of postcolonial studies. The need for a rapprochement between these two approaches became apparent during the 1990's after the end of the cold war and the need for new interpretative frameworks in international relations. These critiques followed in the footsteps of the aesthetic turn that took place in the 1980's, when so-called postmodern scholars started to question the epistemological and ontological certainties of orthodox thought.<sup>43</sup> Up till today there does not exist one established discipline within International Relations that only focuses on and theorizes international relations from a postcolonial point of view. It would at best fit into a critical, constructivist, postmodernist or even a feminist discipline of international relations, all generally focusing on the rethinking of questions of agency, power and representation in modern political life.<sup>44</sup>

However, there are a few authors that I would like to mention here, that have approached on international relations from a postcolonial perspective. Robert H. Jackson wrote in 1994 a book *Quasi-states: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World* in which he challenges the established notions on sovereignty in IR. Albert J. Paolini argues in 1999 in his book *Navigating Modernity, Postcolonialism, Identity, and International Relations* for a discourse beyond the one of International Relations focusing on culture, identity, and North-South relations. Geeta Chowdhry and Sheila Nair focused in 2004 in their book *Power, Postcolonialism and International Relations* on race,

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43 R. Bleiker, 'The Aesthetic Turn in International Political Theory', *Millennium- Journal of International studies* 30:3 (2001) 521.

44 Constructivist authors in IR: see Alexander Wendt, Nicholas Onuf, Christian Reus-Smit, John Gerard Ruggie, Friedrich Kratochwil. Postmodernist authors in IR: Richard Ashley, David Campbell, Michel Foucault, Robert B.J. Walker. Feminist authors in IR: Jean Bethke Elstain, Cynthia Enloe, Christine Sylvester, J. Ann Tickner. Authors in critical theory in IR: Robert Cox, Adré Gunder Frank, Jürgen Habermas, Andrew Linklater, Antonio Gramsci, Stephen Gill.

gender and class. There is no place here to extensively discuss the content of the different academic fields dealing with postcolonialism and international relations and my findings in the following will among others be based on two highly relevant articles when studying the case of Eurafrica. One overarching article 'Bridging International Relations and Postcolonialism' from Phillip Darby and A.J. Paolini and a second article 'Interrupting the Discourse of Development: On a Collision Course with Postcolonial Theory' written by April R. Biccum.

In order to have a common understanding on the subjects treated in both disciplines, I will briefly give some core definitions of IR and postcolonialism. The first definition of IR draws back on realist theories and does not portrait the whole spectrum of IR disciplines nowadays, however it is the common point of reference for IR scholars and structures most of debates and politics on International Relations. In this realist definition, international relations are driven by the anarchical nature of state relations with a special focus on power, order, states and their sovereignty.<sup>45</sup> A relatively recent 'third-debate' has emerged among international relations scholars, drawing back on critical theory, constructivism, feminism and postmodernism. The central issue in this 'third-debate' is the questioning of the epistemological premises of the discipline, resulting in greater attention for issues of representation, discourse, textuality/narrative, and culture.<sup>46</sup> In these approaches, identity becomes a central issue in international relations when understanding that conceptions of self necessarily 'exist only in relation to Others' and that the character of international systems is not a product of anarchy, but a nature of culturally defined relationships.<sup>47</sup>

Let us now turn to postcolonialism, known for its slightly 'vague' definition, thereby its all-encompassing capacity and its work methods that mainly focus on literature and culture studies. The core of the discourse is a focus on the relations of domination and resistance and the effect they have had on identity, in, through, and beyond the colonial encounter.<sup>48</sup> Along with giving the 'subaltern' a voice of its own, postcolonialism also tries to reposition the colonial and postcolonial relationship along less essentialist lines, highlighting a more heterogeneous and syncretic dynamic.<sup>49</sup> The third-debate in postcolonialism draws back on postmodernism, focusing essentially on the particular and the marginal, the heterogeneity of meaning and narrative, the questioning of Eurocentric positivism and universalism, the ambiguity towards modernity, the critique of Western individualism, and the interest

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45 P. Darby and A.J. Paolini, 'Bridging International Relations and Postcolonialism', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 19:3 (1994) 373.

46 P. Darby and A.J. Paolini, 'Bridging International Relations and Postcolonialism', 374.

47 A. Brysk, C. Parsons and W. Sandholtz, 'After Empire: National Identity and Post-Colonial Families of Nations', *European Journal of International Relations* 8:2 (2002) 270.

48 A. Brysk, C. Parsons and W. Sandholtz, 'After Empire: National Identity and Post-Colonial Families of Nations', 375.

49A. Brysk, C. Parsons and W. Sandholtz, 'After Empire: National Identity and Post-Colonial Families of Nations', *European Journal of International Relations* 8:2 (2002) 378.

in constructions of the self and other.

I would like to argue here that this isolation of two disciplines treating of the same thing becomes painfully clear in the field of research on European integration. Studies on European integration have up till today rarely examined its object of study, namely European integration, from a postcolonial perspective. This is surprising because of the above highlighted ‘non-European’ or even ‘African’ history on European integration. Studies on European integration do heavily fall back on international relations theories. Studies on the European Union are fragmented and the field of research lacks an official definition.<sup>50</sup> Different disciplines cover the same objects of study. EU studies focuses on EU institutions and thus tracing back on political sciences, international relations and rational choice, law, economics and social sciences. European studies research agenda specifies more broadly on historical and cultural issues of the European continent, concentrating on a wider definition of Europe than in EU studies. Furthermore, Area Studies and Regional Integration studies have mainly focused on the socio-economic, political and historical-cultural dynamics behind regional integration.<sup>51</sup> One of the key questions central in these different approaches and also a common point of disagreement is the question about what it is that constitutes the driving dynamics behind European integration. The sort of third debate exposed in international relations is also present in studies on European integration. What we see is a growing attention for a constructivist approach on European integration, thereby focusing more on the impacts of deliberation, discourses, norms, persuasion, identity, socialization and argumentation.<sup>52</sup> The need for a common understanding on studies about European integration has been highlighted during last years’ Jean Monnet/ ECSA Conference “The future of EU studies” in October 2014, where the panelist agreed on the need for ‘a comprehensive and holistic approach to EU studies’.<sup>53</sup>

Interdisciplinarity, combining rational choice theories with constructivism, bridging different approaches, it is a trendy thing to do and I’m well aware that interdisciplinary approaches and in particular constructivist approaches often look good on paper, but fail in the end to come with concrete analyses and solutions. The problem essentially remains in epistemological vagueness and methodological uncertainty.<sup>54</sup> However, I do think that the case of Eurafrika is particularly interesting for a combined approach with on the one hand postcolonialism and on the other international relations

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50 Jean Monnet/ ECSA Conference 2014, The Future of EU studies, Brussels 1 and 2 October 2014: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/events/2014/doc/jm-conference-points-wg1\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/events/2014/doc/jm-conference-points-wg1_en.pdf) (1 June 2015).

51 A. Warleigh-Lack and L. van Langenhove, ‘Introduction. Rethinking EU studies: The Contribution of Comparative Regionalism’, *European Integration* 32:6 (2012) 541-562.

52 J. T. Checkel, ‘Constructivist approaches to European integration’, *ARENA centre of European studies Oslo working paper* 6 (2006) 4.

53 Jean Monnet/ ECSA Conference 2014, The Future of EU studies, Brussels 1 and 2 October 2014: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/events/2014/doc/jm-conference-points-wg1\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/events/2014/doc/jm-conference-points-wg1_en.pdf) (1 June 2015).

54 J.T. Checkel, ‘Constructivist approaches to European integration’, 1-41.

and political sciences. The ambiguity of the Eurafrican project has rarely been addressed in studies on European integration and as Peo Hansen mentions in his article 'European Integration, European Identity and the Colonial Connection': "very little work has so far focused on the more specific relationship between colonialism, as well as the movement towards decolonization, and the nexus of European integration and European identity."<sup>55</sup> The case of Eurafrica lends itself for a shift from a development, economic and furthermore a cold-war rational choice frame of reference towards a field of research in which discourses on power and economics can be connected and juxtaposed to questions about representational power of words, the meaning of culture in combination with power, the need of an 'other' in the construction of the 'self', critiques on modernity discourses and Eurocentrism and finally the acknowledgement of a non-European history of European Integration.

### **III Postcolonial approaches to historicism: the case of Eurafrica**

There are many different ways of combining postcolonial critiques and international relations that up till today have not extensively been studied. Phillip Darby and A.J. Paolini have already explored some interesting possibilities by examining certain sites of engagement where the two discourses might have been expected to have intersected, and by exploring key differences in the approaches of international relations and of postcolonialism to finally argue that a dialogue between discourses would be mutually provoking and therefore enriching.<sup>56</sup> Their article has given some interesting

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<sup>55</sup> P. Hansen, 'European Integration, European Identity and the Colonial Connection', *European Journal of Social Theory* 5:4 (2002) 484.

<sup>56</sup> P. Darby and A.J. Paolini, 'Bridging International Relations and Postcolonialism', 372.

insights on the different approaches of international relations and postcolonialism regarding concepts and words like imperialism, power, culture, (post) modernity and more generally academics. It is not my intention to echo their findings and therefore I would like to focus here on how a postcolonial critique on the academic discipline that history is, might give us some interesting new insight when understanding the complex dynamics behind the use of the word 'Eurafrica'.

The case of Eurafrica is particularly interesting when we try to understand what it does in historical narratives. Peo Hansen already noted that the concept of Eurafrica functions as a vanishing mediator: "a historical catalyst that ensures a smooth passage from one historical period or paradigm of thought to its different successor. ... Eurafrica vanishes, thus creating the impression of a historical break or discontinuity – between colonial and postcolonial, pre- and post-European integration, white supremacy and 'partnership', colonial exploitation' and 'development', 'civilizing mission' and 'third-world aid' ...".<sup>57</sup> What the concept of Eurafrica thus does, is changing a discourse in order to keep certain power relations and old dynamics in place, or as Hansen metaphorically suggest: "Eurafrica as a new dawn following the night of colonialism".<sup>58</sup>

I would like to extend the critique on the historical narrative of Eurafrica further using the critique on historicism as Dipesh Chakrabarty has elaborated in his book *Provincializing Europe, Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*.<sup>59</sup> As I have showed in chapter II, postwar narratives on Eurafrican relations were imbedded in discourses on aid and development. Europe needed Africa's raw materials for its economic reconstruction and Africa needed Europe to fully develop and eventually become as modern as Europe. It is this 'awkward' promise at heart of the Eurafrican project that is at the center of Chakrabarty's critique on historicism. Chakrabarty criticizes the Eurocentric way of portraying history, in which linear time and European concepts of modernity combined with history writing create a universalist view on human progress. The definition of Maurice Mandelbaum illustrates the relation between historicism and western notions of development: "Historicism is the belief that an adequate understanding of the nature of any phenomenon and an adequate assessment of its value are to be gained through considering it in terms of the place it occupied and the role which it played within the process of development."<sup>60</sup> Chakrabarty assigns historicism to a certain developmentalist strain of thoughts and thereby says that historicism is a: "mode of thinking about history in which one assumed that any object under investigation retained a unity of conception throughout its existence and attained full expression through a process of development in secular, historical time."<sup>61</sup> It is this postcolonial

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57 Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica, the untold history of European integration and colonialism*, 255-256.

58 Ibidem, 25.

59 D. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe, Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton 2000).

60 M. Mandelbaum, *History, Man and Reason* (Baltimore 1971), 42. Cited in: D. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe, Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton 2000).

61 Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe, Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, XIV.

questioning of Eurocentric history writing and the suggestion to provincialize Europe that can be very useful when trying to understand why studies on European integration have up till today not yet been linked to colonization and decolonization processes. Let me further elaborate my argument while citing Chakrabarty: “Historicism thus posited historical time as a measure of cultural distance that was assumed to exist between the west and the non-west. In colonies it legitimated the idea of civilization. In Europe itself it made possible completely internalist histories of Europe in which Europe was described as the site of the first occurrence of capitalism, modernity or Enlightenment. ... Historicism, and even the modern European idea of history –one might say, come to non-European peoples in the nineteenth century as somebody’s way of saying “not yet” to somebody else.”<sup>62</sup> Chakrabarty calls this the “imaginary waiting room of history”.<sup>63</sup>

### ***Nicolas Sarkozy and the history of Africa***

Let me now one more time turn to France’s relation to Africa and the Eurafrican project. I would like to argue here based on fragments of speeches given by Sarkozy during its presidency, that historicism is at the heart of today’s Eurafrican project as much as it has been in the past. Sarkozy’s policy seemed at first to announce a break with traditional African-France relations: “*The time has come to turn the leaf, once and for all, on complacency, secrecy and ambiguities ... The relationships between Africa and France is old and profound; we have a common history, one that has known instances of violence and even at times tragic episodes. I am aware of this and respect the necessary duty of memory (devoir de mémoire) we share with regards to this common, history.*”<sup>64</sup> At first, this does indeed seem like a genuine hand reach to African countries, the use of the word common history is quite different then what General de Gaulle envisaged for Africa’s future in his “Discours de Brazzaville” at the Conférence africaine française on January 30 in 1944: “*We believe that the African Continent should be treated as a whole so far as the development of resources and communications are concerned, but in French Africa, as in all the other countries where men live under our flag, no progress will be possible if the men and women on their native soil do not benefit materially and spiritually and if they are not able to raise themselves to the point where they are capable of taking in the running of their countries. It is France’s duty to see that this comes out. ... we must start planning the future today*”<sup>65</sup>

As mentioned above, Brazzaville was the first public encounter after World War II during which development discourses came to the front in French-African relations. Striking are the use of words

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62 Ibidem, 7-8.

63 Ibidem, 8.

64 Nicolas Sarkozy, “Discours de Cotonou,” <http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/063001811.html> (3 June 2015).

65 Nicolas Sarkozy, “Discours de Dakar”, at the University of Cheikh Anta Diop, Senegal, July 26, 2007: <http://www.africaresource.com/essays-a-reviews/essays-a-discussions/437-the-unofficial-english-translation-of-sarkozys-speech> (2 June 2015).

like “progress” and “future”, words that hadn’t been used before. Central point of De Gaulle’s speech would then be that African countries had to develop according France’s and more general European standards of development, or should we say civilization?

I would now like to focus on the speech from Nicolas Sarkozy at the University of Cheikh Anta Diop, Senegal, on July 26, 2007. In this speech he addresses the “elite of African youth” and the six pages long text written by Sarkozy’s adviser Henri Guaino serves as a perfect illustration of historicism in today’s French-African and more general European-African relations. As you can see in the attachments, all the colored lines are phrases that somewhat refer to the history of Africa. Sarkozy addresses Africa’s history in multiple ways, but at one point later on he says the following: “*The tragedy of Africa is that the African has not fully entered into history. ... In this imaginary world (Africa’s) where everything starts over and over again there is no place for human adventure or for the idea of progress. ... Africa’s challenge is to enter to a greater extent into history.*”. This fragment illustrates the problem at heart of historicism, namely that history in Europe is intrinsically bound to processes of modernity. Sarkozy denies Africa as having a history because it’s history is not conform to the idea of progress. This is what Chakrabarty calls “the imaginary waiting room of history”.<sup>66</sup> Sarkozy words illustrate the exclusionary gesture behind historicism. Historicism presupposes a developmental process in history, in which future and modernity walk along. History is not something that is, but something that can be acquired as long as your history falls into the theoretical categories constructed in the West.

What Sarkozy then says about Africa’s history and future is remarkable: “*It is to realise that the golden age that Africa is forever recalling will not return because it has never existed. ... I come to propose the Renaissance to you. I came to propose it to you so that we can achieve it together, because the African Renaissance depends to a large extent on the Renaissance of Europe and the Renaissance of the world. ... The African youth must feel that all will be possible, as all seemed possible to the men of the Renaissance.*”. These fragments of the speech show that not only does Sarkozy denies Africa as having entered history, it also projects European historical concepts in an African context. To choose for words like “golden age” and “renaissance” illustrate how Europe historical frames of reference are up till today projected on non-western societies. Africa does not have a history (yet) because it has never known a golden age, historicism denies history because European constructions cannot be projected on non-western histories.

The next fragments illustrate how so-called “western-values” are projected on the African continent: “*Africa’s challenge is to learn to feel itself the heir to all that which is universal in all human civilisations. It is to appropriate for itself human rights, democracy, liberty, equality and justice as the common legacy of all civilizations and of all people. It is to appropriate for itself modern science and technology as the product of all human intelligence. ... The Muslim civilization,*

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<sup>66</sup> Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe, Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, 8.

*Christianity and colonization, beyond the crimes and mistakes that were committed in their name and that are not excusable, have opened the African heart and mentality to the universal and to the history.*”. The use of the words “universal” and “human rights”, “democracy”, “liberty”, “modern science” and so on, presuppose that the world has one universal history driven by human values as mentioned above. Chakrabarty’s critique on historicism is necessarily a critique on universalism in general. For example, binding human rights to the universal presupposes a certain exclusionary and historicist vision of modernity in which Europe is seen as the center of a process of historical development, and other societies are defined by an inevitable.<sup>67</sup>

At last I would like to show how France up till today links Europe, Africa and France together in one project through the reinterpretation of the word “Eurafrique”. The following sentences show how Sarkozy foresees the role of France and Europe in the future of Africa: *“France wants to fight along with Europe, along with Africa and along with all those in the world who want to change globalization. If Africa, France and Europe together want this, we shall succeed. ... What France wants to do with Africa is co-development, that is to say shared development. ... What France wants to do with Africa is to design a joint strategy within the globalization process. ... What France wants to do with Africa is to prepare the advent of Eurafrique, this great common destiny that awaits Europe and Africa. To those in Africa who regard with suspicion the great project of the Mediterranean Union that France has proposed to all countries bordering the Mediterranean, I want to say that in France’s spirit it is not at all about side-lining Africa, which extends the south of the Sahara. On the contrary it is about making this Union the pivotal point of Eurafrique, the first stage of the greatest dream of peace and prosperity that Europeans and Africans are capable of conceiving together.”*

This citation is interesting for multiple reasons. What we read is a reinterpretation of the discourse of development. Co-development and shared development presupposes a more equal partnership in which Africa not only receives for example financial aid, but also takes initiatives about the redistribution and so forth, in order to break the dependency circle. But as written above, discourses on development are complex and are at heart of the problem of historicism and development can be perceived as a Eurocentric criterion deciding who can and who cannot get out of the ‘imaginary waiting room of history’. Remarkable is also the emphasis on the central role of the Mediterranean area and the reinterpretation of the word Eurafrica. Sarkozy has initiated the establishment of the Mediterranean Union in 2008 and thereby shifting a focus inside the EU from the North to the South but it was François Mitterand who first contended that the Mediterranean sea was the bright blue lake at the heart of Eurafrica.<sup>68</sup> These analogies show the symbolic power of the Mediterranean region in French politics. Eurafrica is in particular an interesting concept for a

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67 A. Skaria, ‘The Project of Provincialising Europe: Reading Dipesh Chakrabarty’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 44:14 (2009) 53.

68 Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica, the untold history of European integration and colonialism*, 260.



postcolonial critique because it portrays some sort of methodological continentalism. In some ways it transgresses methodological continentalism because it reunites the European and the African continent in one story on “co-operation”. However, it is not sure if this is a “genuine transgression” and Chakrabarty gives some interesting suggestion when thinking about “thought” and places: “It was to ask a question about thought related to place. ... I argued not against the idea of universals as such but emphasized that the universal was a highly unstable figure, a necessary placeholder in our attempt to think through questions of modernity.”<sup>69</sup> Postcolonial critiques could give us some interesting insights on the role of “places” in the academic disciplines of History and International Relations, laying bare dynamics of methodological continentalism. In the case of Eurafrika it would be interesting to ask ourselves if the Mediterranean sea functions as a link or as a border between Europe and Africa.

### ***Provincializing Eurafrika***

Chakrabarty’s critique on historicism is complex and it suggests more than what I have proposed. In his book *Provincialising Europe*, Chakrabarty addresses a new sort of connection between so-called History 1—the universal logic intrinsic to Marx’s category and History 2—that are histories that are heterogeneous and which are not organized along the usual abstract terms of History.<sup>70</sup> It is a critique on the developmental and universalist aspect of western history writing. Approaching development from a postcolonial point of view is not only criticizing neo-colonial financial interference and dependencies between former-colonizer and former-colonized. Criticizing development is also criticizing the academic discipline that history is. To break the dynamics in historicism and to enable other histories to be told next to the one of Europe, Chakrabarty argues for a gesture that he calls “Provincializing Europe”. It is not about cultural relativism, and Chakrabarty does not necessarily wants to finish with Western historical frames in non-western history writing, his critique is more fine than that: “As I hope is obvious from what has been said, provincializing Europe cannot ever be a project of shunning European thought. For at the end of European imperialism, European thought is a gift to us all. We can talk of provincializing it only in an anticolonial spirit of gratitude.”<sup>71</sup> Provincializing Europe entails critically thinking about history: “To critique historicism in all its varieties is to unlearn to think of history as a developmental process in which that which is possible becomes actual by tending to a future that is singular. Or, to put it differently, it is to learn to think the present –the “now” that we inhabit as we speak –as irreducibly not-one.”<sup>72</sup> Chakrabarty seeks to understand the particular intellectual and historical traditions at the root of European universal history writing and argues that European thought should be understood as one of the many other universalisms

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69 Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe, Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, XIII.

70 A. Skaria, ‘The Project of Provincialising Europe: Reading Dipesh Chakrabarty’, 53.

71 Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe, Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, 255.

72 Ibidem, 249.

or as one of many province in a world without capital.<sup>73/74</sup> Provincializing Europe becomes the task of exploring how this thought (European ) – which is now everybody’s heritage and which affects us all – may be renewed from and by its margins. Chakrabarty says: “We need universals to produce critical readings of social injustices. Yet the universal and the analytical produce forms of thought that ultimately evacuate the place of the local. ... For me, provincializing Europe has been a question of how we create conjoined and disjunctive genealogies for European categories of political modernity as we contemplate the necessarily fragmentary histories of human belonging that never constitute a one or a whole.”<sup>75</sup>

The critique of Chakrabarty is thus among others a critique on the universal, the analytical, academics, modernity, European Thought and Enlightenment. Provincializing Eurafrica becomes then a new approach to understanding how European history writing has put African influence during European integration processes in a so-called academic periphery, resulting in a biased and Eurocentric historical account on European integration on the one hand and European development policies in Africa on the other.

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73 D. Chakrabarty, ‘In Defense of Provinciliazing Europe: A Response to Carola Dietze’, *History and Theory*, 47:1 (2008) 96.

74 A. Skaria, ‘The Project of Provincialising Europe: Reading Dipesh Chakrabarty’, 58.

75 Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe, Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, 254.

## Conclusion

I have argued in this paper for a different approach to European-African relations. The ‘Eurafrican’ concept has recently been studied by scholars like Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson and is particularly interesting because it entails a non-European history of European integration. Taking France as a point of focus has enabled me to understand the Eurafrican in a national framework. Eurafrica is a complex project of different national, transnational and transcontinental dynamics. Let me take you through my argumentation one more time. The history of Eurafrica has up till today been divided in roughly three stages. The interwar period with the coining of the term by Richard Calergi de Coudehoven, the postwar period with a shift in geopolitical relations and thereby a shift in discourse and finally 1957 with the signing of the Treaty of Rome and thereby the institutionalization of an European-African association. The focus on France and its ambivalent position, illustrates the importance of European-African relations in the process of European Integration .

The idea of Eurafrica becomes interesting when we try to examine what it actually does. I have tried to show in chapter two that the current historical accounts fail to address the epistemological ambiguity of Eurafrica. The word Eurafrica does two things at the same time, it fits both in a colonizing and decolonizing discourse. The main reason for this is its embedment in aid and development discourses in the postwar period and the teleological dynamics behind this discourse in which the natives are supposed to be reformed according to the reformer’s criteria, thereby creating a converging but at the same time alienating gesture. I have then suggested that the lack of such analyses in the case of Eurafrica can be explained by the academic gaps between international relations and postcolonialism and that this fragmentation is especially noticeable in the studies on European integration.

After having raised this problematic, I have tried to give an example of a way to use postcolonialism in a context that normally has been examined from a power relations, cold-war frame of reference. The postcolonial critique on historicism of Chakrabarty gives some interesting new insights on today’s discourses regarding European-African relations. I have tried to show the importance of the word and idea that ‘history’ is in discourses on European-African relations by analyzing the speech of Nicolas Sarkozy at the University of Cheikh Anta Diop in Senegal. This has led me to the conclusion that in order to understand the complex dynamics behind the concept of Eurafrica, it is important to understand how this concept has been intrinsically bound to European history. The case of Eurafrica illustrates the tendency in European thought to portray history as something linear, but also excluding and the development discourse plays a big part herein.

I started my research with questioning the current approaches on Eurafrican relations and why they fail to address the complex dynamics of the idea ‘Eurafrica’. I would like to conclude that today’s histories on economic cooperation and development policies between Europe and Africa are not

necessarily wrong, but as I have tried to address in this paper, they do not tell us the whole story. Histories on development are inherently bound to a Eurocentric way of writing history and often forget about the colonial relations that have profoundly shaped these economic dependencies. What I have tried to show here is that European integration is not only a process succeeding out of goodwill and idealism. It was somehow also a necessity in a changing world order. The fact that France would never have agreed with the establishment of the EEC without an association of Africa reveals that the history of European integration is not only a European history, but also a non-western African history.

The suggestion of Provincializing Europe could give some interesting insights in the case of Eurafrika. Chakrabarty has focused his research on India, but I think that the idea of Eurafrika lends itself pretty well for a postcolonial critique on historicism. By no means have I tried to deny the importance of economic history as a central issue in European-African relations and neither have I tried to give an African account on the Eurafrika project. I'm conscious of the fact that I'm raised within these Eurocentric historicist frameworks which I have criticized above. However I hope to have clarified the importance for new approaches to European-African relations, with a special desire that a new narrative of Europe in a non-European world will be initiated in the future and that a transdisciplinary, transcultural and transcontinental dialogue will shed new lights on our shared history of European integration.

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