

WASEDA UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies

Doctoral Thesis

**France's International Quest for Prestige in the Great
Powers' Competition of the Second Half of the
Nineteenth Century:
Prestige through Civilisation**

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Keywords: France, Civilisation, Prestige, International Competition, Second Half of the Nineteenth Century.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Problem Statement

"Edo is a battlefield for European powers in a similar way to Egypt," wrote Joseph Emile Colson, chief of the cabinet of the war minister Niel, to Jules Chanoine, chief of the first French military mission to Japan, on the 4th of February 1868.¹ Yet, in these 'conflicts', no swords would be drawn and no shots would be fired, rather, only the diplomatic talks and strategies of some diplomats and experts who attempted to spread internationally the influence of their country against their rivals'.

As one of the experts involved in them, the French jurist Georges Hilaire Bousquet, who worked with Gustave Boissonade on the writing of the new Japanese legal codes, believed that the origins of such international competition stemmed from the opposition between the matters of common interests negotiated through the collective influence of the western legations and the domains in which they acted completely independently. Indeed, this desire for special interests of nations allowed the Japanese government to take advantage of it to renegotiate the general interests. From Bousquet's perspective, this fact was especially true in the case of the choice of the foreign personnel employed by the government in which the European nations were being deceived as "each pushes its candidates and tries to fill the places occupied by the other [...] Germany seeks to supplant France, Italy works to leave her mark [...] each nation unfolds in this competition the qualities that distinguish it."² For a French elite of diplomats and experts, the 'distinctive qualities' of France took the shape of a civilisational template and achievements that were believed to be sources of pride for the country and the reasons for her high rank in the world order.

Although the situation in Japan could be considered to be an exception in the world at that time, the presence of similar discourses in various contexts around the world, as hinted by Colson's comment among others, rather suggests otherwise. Consequently, the reliance of some nations on the 'unfolding of their qualities' as a mean to compete against their rivals in a heavily imperialistic and conflictual era arouses curiosity and raises numerous questions regarding the nature of the elements that were put forth, the way they were presented and discussed about, and the overall purposes and gains they were aiming to achieve.

Furthermore, the destabilisation and progressive end of the European order established by the 1814-1815 Congress of Vienna, as a consequence of the 1853 Crimean and the 1859 Italian wars, initiated a period of fierce international competition among great powers. As the main target of the measures of the congress and as one of the major victors of these wars, France was more than any other country particularly freed and reinforced in this process. The conclusion of decades of concerns and constraints in French international relations allowed the far expansion of her reach and influence in the world.

However, while the scholarship has extensively discussed this topic from the perspective of colonialism, little has been done, in comparison, concerning the contexts and occasions in which the use of force or the direct and full control by a single great power could not be initially implemented. In this way, the exacerbation of the rivalries due to the great powers' competition of the second half of the nineteenth century transformed these 'grey areas' of the world into major platforms of international competition. In those, the impossibility of the emergence of a unique and clear hegemon due to the presence of other competing powers resulted in the expression, the flourishing, and the clash of unorthodox diplomatic strategies and discourses. As briefly mentioned earlier, in regard to France within this context and perspective, a part of the French elite used her civilisational template and its achievements in the world as sources of prestige in order to maintain, regain, and ensure the country's status of world power. This utilisation and argumentation seem particularly vivid in cases where France had to deal with one of her two major rivals, the United Kingdom and Prussia/Germany,

¹ Jules Chanoine (1907a). *Documents pour servir à l'histoire des relations entre la France et le Japon [Texte Imprimé]*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-6579479), BnF, Paris, pp.44-45.

² Georges H. Bousquet (1877a). *Le Japon de nos jours et les échelles de l'Extrême-Orient... [Texte imprimé] / Georges Bousquet*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-6580477), BnF, Paris, pp.255-256 (Tome 2).

presumably as a result of her own self-consciousness of a loss of power in comparison to the glory of her past and to the strengthening of their influence.

Thus, inspired by the works of other scholars such as Sylvie Aprile, Paul Kennedy, Pierre Renouvin, and Richard Sims, this dissertation aims at revisiting and complementing with additional details some events of the existing literature by providing a recreation of an elite's mindset that shared a common reasoning, vision, and argumentation through the analysis of its discourse in various diplomatic and international affairs of the second half of the nineteenth century.

1.2 Literature Review: France in the Nineteenth Century's International Relations

As explained by Sylvie Aprile in her study, the European leaders governing Europe after the end of the Napoleonic wars were mainly concerned in establishing both a political and economic stability through the implementation of a new world order. Within this context, while her rival, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, occupied a strong position of economic and maritime worldwide power, France came out of the wars as a diminished power whose foreign policy was being dependent on the decisions of their victors.³ Furthermore, the 1814-1815 Congress of Vienna is considered by Aprile as a moment of refoundation of the European political map around the notion of balance of powers but also the idea of a common civilisation through shared values such as Christianity, monarchic legitimacy, and the eighteenth century's vision of liberalism. As such, one of the goals of the congress was to prevent the rise of another conqueror like Napoléon I in Europe by making great powers collaborate. While a certain balance of power existed on land in Europe after Napoléon I's fall as supported by Paul Kennedy, "there was no equivalent at sea" in which the United Kingdom reigned strong thanks to its unrivalled naval power reinforced and "underpinned by the economical lead which they had gained over all their rivals."⁴ Moreover, among the numerous consequences of the congress, the redraw of the French borders, the occupation of her territory until the full payment of the war compensations, and her placement under the supervision of Austria, Prussia, Russia, and the United Kingdom, appeared as great humiliations for France and her people.⁵

Thus, Aprile underlines that the objectives of the French monarchs and leaders in the first half of the nineteenth century was to free their territory from the foreign occupation and restore the French power through diplomacy, war, or a new colonial policy after the humiliation and severe hit to its reputation provoked by the congress. In such a way, the end of the First French Empire in 1815 meant for French international relations the beginning of a "long and slow period of reconquest of the French prestige in Europe, which took place outside of the European scene." Both the 1826 intervention in the Greek Revolution and the 1830 conquest of Algeria are representative of this aspiration. Nevertheless, Aprile emphasises that the French foreign policy remained focused on Europe as "the constant need to assert her existence in the eyes of the European powers" and the "obligation" to make her absolute monarchist neighbours accept her constitutional monarchist regime remained central elements of concerns.⁶ Yet, Aprile also underlines that the ancient French-British rivalry had been resurrected through the support the United Kingdom provided to the victors in 1815. As phases of rapprochement and tensions occurred quite often, the relations with the British remained quite important throughout the entirety of the century, some regions of the world being torn between French and British influences, such as through, respectively, Egypt and Turkey for the sake of Syria in the 1830s.⁷ However, within its own borders, the attempts from France of a rapprochement with the United Kingdom despite numerous tensions were seen by the public opinion as "sacrificing the honour and interests of France in favour of seeking an *entente* with England."⁸

³ Sylvie Aprile (2010). *La Révolution inachevée (1815-1870)*. Belin, Paris, p.227.

⁴ Paul Kennedy (1989). *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*. Vintage Books, New York, p.138.

⁵ Aprile (2010), op. cit., p.229.

⁶ Ibid., p.228.

⁷ Ibid., pp.244-245.

⁸ Ibid., p.247.

Following that idea, Aprile highlights that foreign policy in France also served a particular role domestically as it represented a mean to criticise the ruling power and to reinforce its oppositions. As a result, liberals and republicans in France during the first half of the nineteenth century incarnated the nationalist movement and the idea of the *Grande Nation*.⁹ Consequently, the return of the French republican regime and its "universalist mission" during the European revolutions of 1848 is considered to have been the result of this legacy. From the author's point of view, rather than from the French Revolution, the nature of these European revolutions came from a version of France that, "powerful again, would intervene in the name of a renewal of her prestige."¹⁰

Years later, the establishment of the French Second Empire from 1852 after the coup made by the president Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, nephew of Napoléon I, signed the beginning of a series of events that would eventually result in the complete vanishing of the European balance imposed by the Congress of Vienna. Namely, the French successes in the 1853 Crimean and the 1859 Italian wars, later followed by the events of the 1866 Austro-Prussian war that brought the end of the German confederation birthed from the 1815 congress. Although France did not directly participate in the latter war, it was still considered at that time to be a fortunate event. As explained by Jacques Valette, these events represented the fall of the two "'conservative powers' of the social and political order," Austria and Russia, who guaranteed the respect of the order established in 1815.¹¹ In addition, beyond the shattering of the balance of the congress of Vienna, these wars served as a mean for the new regime to arouse patriotism within its own borders through military victories.¹² Moreover, the access to power of Napoléon III also signs the end of a form of passivity of France in her foreign policy. As underlined by Aprile, surprisingly, despite his ties with Napoléon I, the figure of the emperor appeared internationally as the return of order and stability in France which, as a consequence, allowed the practice of a more aggressive type of diplomacy. Thus following the Saint-Simonian ideas advised by the economist Michel Chevalier, Napoléon III aimed for the control of the trade and communication routes,¹³ i.e. the control of passageways also described by Pierre Renouvin in his study.¹⁴ Moreover, the Second Empire is also considered by Aprile to have been the first French regime to have officially expressed its intent to focus on objectives of economic nature such as through the construction of railways in France.¹⁵

Similarly, Kennedy describes the time period from 1815 to 1885 in Europe as a moment of industrialisation and of "shifting global balances."¹⁶ From his point of view, the international system following Napoléon's downfall was defined by three unusual set of characteristics. First, a steady growth of the global economy, which intensified after the 1840s, that linked many nations in a "transoceanic and transcontinental trading and financial network centred upon western Europe" and created a context of relative peace and stability for the sake of these economic interests. Second, an absence of "prolonged Great Power wars" and other major conflicts, however counterbalanced by smaller wars by the Europeans against "less developed people" or between themselves. Finally, the improvement of technology resulting from the Industrial Revolution started to make an impact in military and naval powers whether in terms of mobility or firepower, more especially in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Accordingly, Kennedy asserts that "the shifts in Great Power balances" had been "caused by the uneven pattern of industrial and technological change" and "probably affected the outcome of mid-

⁹ The Great Nation, expression used during the Napoleonic era to designate a powerful, dominating, and conquering version of France as explained by Jean-Yves Guiomar in Jacques Bernet, Jean-Pierre Jessenne, and Hervé Leuwers (2000). *Du Directoire au Consulat 1. Le Lien Politique Local dans la Grande Nation*. Histoire et littérature du Septentrion (IRHiS), Lille, pp.317-328.

¹⁰ Aprile (2010), op. cit., pp.228-229.

¹¹ Jacques Valette and Alfred Wahl (1986). *Les Français et la France (1859-1899)*. Tome 2, SEDES, Paris, p.13.

¹² Aprile (2010), op. cit., p.413.

¹³ Ibid., p.411.

¹⁴ Pierre Renouvin and Jean-Baptiste Duroselle (1991). *Introduction à l'histoire des relations internationales*. Armand-Colin, Paris, pp.15-18.

¹⁵ Aprile (2010), op. cit., p.394.

¹⁶ Kennedy (1989), op. cit., p.143.

nineteenth century wars more than did finance and credit" as most of these wars were short and favouring military strength rather than a long-term commitment of national resources.¹⁷ Due to an intensification and acceleration of the factors responsible for the changes in this period,¹⁸ the end of the nineteenth century was, for some of the European powers such as the United Kingdom, France, and Austria-Hungary, a moment of questioning of "whether they could maintain themselves in the face of these new challenges to the international status quo" that represented the rise of new great powers such as the United States of America.¹⁹ Furthermore, to the contrary of the early industrialisation of Great Britain in the first half of the nineteenth century, Kennedy emphasises that the middle powers of continental Europe, including France and her particular way of industrialisation, only started to see changes in their societies from the 1850s and 1860s.²⁰ As such, the unparalleled economic expansion of Prussia during that specific time period is a relevant example of these differences in development between European continental great powers and Great Britain.²¹ Nevertheless, Kennedy describes France's position after the Napoleonic wars as better than Prussia's or Austria's whether in terms of national income, capital, population size, army, and navy. Yet, from his perspective, France fits into the category of middle powers due to "strategical, diplomatic, and economic circumstances" inherited from the effects of the congress of Vienna and limiting her possibilities to access to leading positions in multiple domains.²² Moreover, despite potential opportunities for France of establishing close bilateral relations with some of the former victors in the first half of the nineteenth century, Kennedy highlights that none of them desired to change the status quo, at least until the Crimean war, that an agreement with France, beside simple diplomatic friendship, would provoke.²³

In addition, Kennedy expresses that "the coming of peace exposed it [the French economy] to the commercial challenge of its great British rival" while its overall slow industrialisation, despite quickening in the second half of the century, was being beaten in speed by Germany.²⁴ Besides, due to its nature of "hybrid power," France was "torn between its European and its non-European-interests" thus affecting "its diplomacy, which was already complicated enough by ideological and balance-of-power considerations" and resulting in ambivalent positions. Still, due to her sheer size, power, and position on the continent, Kennedy supports the idea that France acted as "a check upon the other Great Powers" forcing them to consider her in their quests for influence both within and outside of Europe.²⁵ For instance, Kennedy emphasises that the end of the second part of the nineteenth century was also marked by multiple colonial clashes involving France and the United Kingdom. Whether for the sake of Congo in the 1880's, West Africa in the 1880-1890's, or Siam in the 1890's, examples of confrontations between French and British imperialisms are quite numerous. What this particular fact reveals is the phenomenon of massive expansion the French colonial empire went through at the end of the century, reaching the rank of second "largest overseas empire after Britain's." Kennedy attributes the success of this colonial policy to the fact that the Third Republic's officials had accidentally reinforced a group of colonial 'enthusiasts' then in charge of France's imperial policy and that the volatility of the French ministers prevented the control.²⁶ However, although Kennedy concludes that France during its recovery after 1815 remained "a considerable

¹⁷ Ibid., pp.143-144.

¹⁸ Industrialisation, science, and technology as vital components of national strength in Ibid., p.197.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.196.

²⁰ Ibid., p.159.

²¹ Ibid., p.160.

²² Ibid., p.166.

²³ Ibid., p.167.

²⁴ Ibid., p.168.

²⁵ Paul Kennedy mentions the important military role of France against Russia in the Crimean War, the French undermining of Austria's influence in Italy, the concerns for Napoléon III behaviour regarding the Austro-Prussian war, and the French presence in Africa and Asia preventing their monopolisation by the British as multiple examples of this fact.

²⁶ Kennedy (1989), op. cit., pp.219-220.

power, very active diplomatically," he also emphasises that her "own leaders were aware that it was no longer so dominant as in the previous two centuries."²⁷

Although Vincent Duclert's study principally focuses on France's internal political and ideological struggles stemming from the arrival of the Third Republic to power in 1870, the historian somehow indirectly concurs with Kennedy's above statement. From his perspective, the stabilisation of the republican institutions and political context had for goal to bring France in a time of prosperity and peace,²⁸ which consequently implies a consciousness of a loss of power. Accordingly, Duclert asserts that multiple projects of civil engineering, railways, and river routes were initiated in this spirit of growth, and that the opening of the 1878 *Exposition Universelle* officialised "the national sentiment of renewed power." But, for Duclert, the way to recovery for France from the point of view of a part of her leaders, like Léon Gambetta or Jules Ferry, was to be found in imperialism. Hence, after the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, the construction of a colonial empire was seen as a way to bring back France to her former rank of great power in the mindset of revanchism against Germany.²⁹ The large colonial empire inherited from Napoléon III was then widely expanded under the republican regime that accelerated its spread and made it "one of the foundations of its material and spiritual power."³⁰ As such, Duclert highlights that the republican colonial enterprise was based upon the idea of a necessity of national grandeur which would allow the country to regain boldness on the European and worldwide scenes. Paradoxically, for the republican supporters of colonialism, colonisation and republic went hand in hand as a way to spread progress and the democratic beliefs of the regime. This specific way of thinking gave strong support to the concept of civilising mission.³¹ In such a way, Duclert briefly considers the notion of civilisation under the prism of its colonial utilisation in which urbanisation, investments, the development of infrastructures, schools, ports, and railways serve an economic domination and exploitative purposes.³²

In the end, the analysis made by Valette on the French international relations from 1859 to 1899 perfectly summarises what most other historians discussed after him. From his perspective, these forty years corresponded to a period of research of power internationally for France contrasting with the prudence resulting from the aftermath of 1815. On the initiative of the emperor Napoléon III himself, the various French governments intervened "in the redefinition of a territorial status in Europe, they act on all continents, except in distant Australia."³³ As such, Valette asserts that the Second Empire's imperial policy aimed "to make obvious the power of France" through a unique policy of worldwide expansion driven by multiple complex considerations, including economical ones, and centred around three axis: a colonial expansion, a Mediterranean policy, and an American policy.³⁴ In that time period, French imperialism thus seems to have taken the form of multiple projects undertaken in order "to ensure the pre-eminence of France."³⁵

In addition, Valette asserts that the change of regime in 1870, from the Second Empire to the Third Republic, did not mean the end of such international ambitions. Rather, the republican leaders from 1877 took over this "active policy." Valette even qualifies France's foreign policy in the second half of the nineteenth century as in search for power.³⁶ Thus, to the contrary of the negativity of the general belief stemming from the 1870 defeat, Valette claims the success of these efforts as in the end of the century "the restoration of France's international power is a given." For him, this fact is the result of a few republican statesmen linked to the government involved from 1871 in the establishment of

²⁷ Ibid., p.169.

²⁸ Vincent Duclert (2014). *La République imaginée (1870-1914)*. Belin, Paris, p.154.

²⁹ Ibid., p.185.

³⁰ Ibid., p.554.

³¹ Ibid., pp.560-562.

³² Ibid., p.577.

³³ Valette and Wahl (1986), op. cit., p.5.

³⁴ Ibid., pp.71-72.

³⁵ Ibid., p.75.

³⁶ Ibid., p.5.

policies, away from parliamentary discussions and in a closed circle around the Head of State or the Minister of Foreign Affairs.³⁷

Therefore, while the scholarship has clearly highlighted a consciousness of a loss of power shared by a part of the French elite and France's international search for power and prestige in the strongly imperialism driven second half of the nineteenth century, the actual details of the latter's manifestations and occurrences in the world remain quite undiscussed, especially outside of the domain of colonialism. For instance, Kennedy mentions the events of the Crimean war in which military victories and the following 1856 international peace conference in Paris boosted France's pride and glory,³⁸ yet without developing on how it was expressed, discussed about, or even potentially used diplomatically. Thus, in an attempt to provide elements of answer by revisiting major contexts in which France faced her rivals, this dissertation aims at underlining the utilisation of civilisation and its achievements in international relations as a way for France to regain her rank of world power through prestige during a heavily imperialistic era. However, in order to proceed, the analysis and review of the key concepts of civilisation and prestige must be performed beforehand.

1.3 Analysis and Review of Key Concepts

1.3.1 Civilisation

Most of the earlier studies on the topic of civilisation have analysed it under a comprehensive approach in attempt to both define the concept and highlight the main traits of the major civilisations populating the world. For instance, the study realised by the French historian Fernand Braudel published in 1963 had for main objective to become a handbook for high school students. After explaining the origin of the word and defining it through the lens of various scientific disciplines, his work retraces the history of the major civilisations of the world divided into two categories, non-European and European civilisations, both subdivided into more specific groups.³⁹ Through his work, Braudel ambitioned to not only inform about the concept of civilisations as a whole, but also to show and demonstrate that a complex and new vision of history could be accessible and easily taught.⁴⁰ Indeed, Braudel's work fits into a context of reform of the program of history and overall renewal of academic disciplines in the aftermath of the second world war. From Braudel's point of view, the teaching of history had to consider the use of other sciences, such as geography and economics, in order to explain and make intelligible to young adults the complexity of the modern world. Accordingly, his study on civilisations acted as a critique of the French educational system that did not teach this "new history" to last-year high-schoolers.⁴¹ Nevertheless, the great success of his work outside of the educational sphere eventually influenced the entire scholarship, even abroad, leading other scholars to rely on Braudel's definition as an introduction for their own analysis. As such, a first trend of studies on civilisation mainly considered the term in its plural form and on the scale of the entire world, as grand ensembles differentiating populations and frequently presented with the concept of "culture." Although being one of the earliest perspectives of the scholarship on the topic, some more recent studies, such as the one of Maurice Aymard focusing on religion and language as major traits of civilisations,⁴² still attempt to redefine the concept in order to update it to the reality of the contemporary world.

Another more recent trend of studies rather focuses on the term in its singular form. In this case, civilisation bears the meaning of a high status of development only reached by a minority of countries in the world and opposes a former or foreign form of "barbarism." Quite representative of this trend,

³⁷ Ibid., p.153.

³⁸ Kennedy (1989), op. cit., p.175.

³⁹ For non-European civilisations, Islam and the Muslim world, the African continent, the Far-East and for European civilisations, Europe, Americas, Moscovia-Russia-USSR.

⁴⁰ The historian Maurice Aymard in Fernand Braudel (1993). *Grammaire des civilisations*. Flammarion, Paris, p.7.

⁴¹ Maurice Aymard in Ibid., p.17.

⁴² Maurice Aymard (2007). La longue durée des civilisations. *Diogenes*, N°218, 2, pp.142-151.

the study realised by Niall Ferguson aims at detailing the reasons for the rise of the West over its rivals. Consequently, Ferguson retraces the historical origins of the western model and centres his argumentation around "six identifiably novel complexes of institutions and associated ideas and behaviours" he believes that made the West distinguishable from "the Rest": competition, science, property rights, medicine, the consumer society, and the work ethic. From his perspective, these six elements were the "killer apps" that allowed the domination of the Western civilisation and the reproduction by others of its template.⁴³ However, apart from the reasons for the success of the West, Ferguson also explains that the weaknesses of its rivals are even more reasons for its predominance in the world for a long period of time. Resulting from this approach of civilisation as a status that can be reached, opposed and compared to other models, a "package" as qualified by Ferguson,⁴⁴ also comes the possibility of its transmission and acceptance by outside nations.

Thus, the study conducted by Karube Tadashi⁴⁵ on the Japanese experience with civilisation during the Meiji era is also a relevant example of this second trend in the scholarship. On the opposite of the general statement and narrative that Japan's modernisation solely came from her adoption of "Western techniques" while keeping her "Japanese spirit," Karube claims that Japan rather went through a longer revolution that started much before the Meiji Revolution due to the underlying changes happening in the Japanese society, such as in the social relations of the class system, from the decline of the rule of the Tokugawa in the second half of the eighteenth century. From Karube's perspective, Japan's first confrontation and quest for civilisation are more ancient than assessed by many historians and reveal a very unique and personal conception of the notion. Hence, Karube rather claims that the phenomenon of *bunmei kaika*, civilisation and enlightenment, of the early Meiji years is less of a top-down government-initiated westernisation as frequently exposed due to the feeling of liberation quite largely experienced by the people in reaction to the fall of a government that was constraining many aspects of their lives. Consequently, western institutions and cultural elements were rather considered as elements of this general process and positively welcomed.

Finally, a third trend of studies in the scholarship considers the term civilisation in its adjective form, as a qualifier or an object of a grander policy or process carried on by civilised nations. Within this category, a large number of scholars choose to focus on the concept of civilising mission and the imperialistic context that birthed it, mainly the nineteenth century. While the concept of civilising mission differs between languages and nations that practiced it,⁴⁶ most studies attempt to explain the main components of its functioning, either religion or technological superiority, or tend to stress its important role and relation with the topic of colonialism as a whole. For instance, the study realised by Patrick Petitjean⁴⁷ aims at revealing the importance of science within the French civilising mission and colonisation of the 1880s. As such, Petitjean highlights that science "claimed to give a 'rational' basis for hierarchies between civilizations" and was both a measuring unit for civilisation and a notion inseparable from the idea of imperialism during the nineteenth century.⁴⁸ Thus, from his perspective, the arrival of the Third Republic to power in 1870 introduced scientism as the ideology of an elite. Resulting from this growing importance of science in the minds of French leaders, religion was also replaced by science within the French conception of the *mission civilisatrice*.⁴⁹ Moreover, Petitjean emphasises the important part played by some ministers, such as Jules Ferry, who introduced the Saint-Simonian perspective of the civilising mission to political debates in 1885 which led a form of "altruism" to become the core value over economic or political interests.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, within this last trend of the scholarship, civilisation has rarely been considered as a

⁴³ Niall Ferguson (2012). *Civilization, the West and the Rest*. Penguin Books, New York, p.12.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.324.

⁴⁵ Tadashi Karube (2019). *Toward the Meiji Revolution: The Search for "Civilization" in Nineteenth-Century Japan*. Japan Publishing Industry Foundation for Culture.

⁴⁶ *Mission civilisatrice* in France, "white man's burden" for the United States of America, etc.

⁴⁷ Patrick Petitjean (2005). Science and the "Civilising Mission": France and the Colonial Enterprise. *Science Across the European Empires – 1800-1950*, Benediky Stutchey (ed.), Oxford University Press, pp.107-128.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.108-109.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.113-115.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.118.

specific element outside of the field of colonialism. Furthermore, as seen previously, civilisation has been mainly analysed as either grand ensembles differentiated from one another and potentially in conflict or as a status reached by a minority of nations in history and a goal for others. Therefore, usually preferring the study of the opposition between civilisations, or civilised and non-civilised, or colonisers and colonised, the concept of civilisation has rarely been considered by scholars as an element of diplomatic discourses between and within already civilised nations themselves.

As such, for his own definition, Braudel first explains that the notion of civilisation can only be defined through the lenses of the other man-made sciences. In such a way, he proposes a definition of civilisation based upon the vision of four of them: geography, sociology, economy, and collective psychology.⁵¹ If taken from the perspective of geography, Braudel explains that civilisations are areas and, hence, are dependent on the advantages and constraints stemming from their geographic positioning. Besides, the environment also influences civilisations in the many domains they develop as a reaction to the challenges of their own areas, such as the type of agriculture, food, communication, industry, and more.⁵² But, in the case of large civilisations, Braudel emphasises that historians and geographers divide them in smaller portions of areas sharing the same cultural features: cultural zones. In the case of the Western civilisation, the American civilisation can be distinguished from the European, while the latter can also be divided between the multiple "national civilisations" composing it: the British, French, German, Italian, Polish, etc. civilisations.⁵³ Although, for Braudel, despite the fixity of areas and the presence of borders delimiting them, no civilisation is actually impermeable to the exchanges of cultural goods, and thus, to the influence stemming from them.⁵⁴

From the perspective of sociology, Braudel asserts that civilisations and societies are mutually inseparable as they both relate to the same object of study but from different, yet complementary, perspectives. For him, there can be "no civilisations without societies that carry them, animate them with their tensions, their progresses."⁵⁵ In addition, the separation between societies and civilisations also relates to the distinction between "primitive societies" and "modern societies," i.e. between "cultures" and "civilisations" as used by anthropologists. Braudel explains that while primitive societies create very little disorder and have a tendency to maintain themselves in their original state thanks to an egalitarian functioning, modern societies utilise to their advantage "a difference in potential," permitted by a hierarchical structure, that produces social conflicts, political struggles, but also "a constant evolution." Also, a distinctive sign of difference between cultures and civilisations lies in the presence or not of cities. For Braudel, cities are abundant at the level of civilisations but barely developed at the one of cultures. Yet, even within civilisations the disparities of development of certain regions allow for the establishment of isolated or under-developed cultures, "elementary societies." However, the author highlights that a major early success of the western civilisation was the capture of these "countryside cultures" by cities.⁵⁶

Then, Braudel supports the idea that societies and civilisations are dependent on economic, technological, biological, and demographic factors. As such, he underlines the importance of numbers and growth in terms of population as "any rise in population has fostered the development of civilisations." Nevertheless, Braudel also explains that this advantage of abundance of people becomes a drawback once the rise of population is quicker than the growth of the economy, leading to periods of "decline." But the occurrence of uprisings and biological catastrophes, such as famines, plagues, sometimes resulting from this decline, helped counterbalancing the difference in growth by reducing the total population. The survivors hence benefit from better life conditions for some time, allowing expansion and growth until the next catastrophe. Braudel thus highlights that only the industrialisation of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe stopped this loop on top of

⁵¹ Braudel (1993), op. cit., p.49.

⁵² Ibid., pp.50-52.

⁵³ Ibid., p.54.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.55.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.57.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp.58-60.

giving an increasing value to workforces despite their abundance. Consequently, this higher value eventually brought incentives for the invention of machines as a way to save money on the costs.⁵⁷ Braudel concludes that as societies and civilisations are dependent on these economic fluctuations, the prolonged effect of periods of decline or growth impacts the minds whether negatively or positively and produces various movements as a counter-reaction, as can be seen in the case of the Age of Enlightenment after the acceleration of the multiple economic expansions that occurred in the second half of the eighteenth century.⁵⁸ Lastly, Braudel emphasises that the spending of the surplus resulting from the economy has been "one of the essential conditions for the luxury of civilisations, for certain forms of art," almost as a form of "redistribution" of wealth through the spread of art, culture, sciences, philosophy, and more. Yet, while luxury had been the privilege of a minority, an elite, the rise of population in Europe during the nineteenth century led to the increasing involvement of more people in a "collective civilisation" reached thanks to "the development of education, the access to culture, to universities, the social advancement."⁵⁹

Finally, regarding the perspective of collective psychology, Braudel asserts that to each era corresponds "a certain representation of the world and things," i.e. a collective mentality, that leads and spreads to a large part of the society. Braudel claims that "this mentality that dictates attitudes, guides choices, roots prejudices, influences the movements of a society, is eminently a fact of civilisation."⁶⁰ From his point of view, the way a society reacts to events, pressures, or even decisions have more to do with this "collective unconscious" than rationale, as collective mentality is the legacy of ancient beliefs and unconscious concerns transmitted through generations. Only slowly changing and quite durable through time, Braudel believes that they are hardly transmissible from one civilisation to another, thus facilitating their differentiation.⁶¹ While religion is considered to be their major feature within numerous civilisations, the West witnessed the blending of "secularism, science and religion" rather than the complete separation of religion and culture by rationality as one could interpret. Hence, a wide array of values and behaviour derived from the Christian faith, for instance ethics, are still in force in the West, but, emptied of their religious meaning.⁶²

To all these perspectives on civilisation Braudel concludes by saying that from the viewpoint of history, civilisations are also continuities and as such imply a notion of long-term.⁶³ Furthermore, Braudel explains that all the endless constraints stemming from the areas, social hierarchies, economic needs, collective mentalities, and other "profound forces" developed in the previous points, are lasting "realities" nowadays designated as "structures." While there are variations within civilisations due to certain events or figures, "permanence" or "semi-permanence" are revealing themselves as the "foundations," i.e. "structures," of civilisations. For Braudel, "these structures are in general ancient, long-lasting, and always distinctive and original traits," but also are shaping civilisations and are hardly exchangeable due to their nature considered irreplaceable.⁶⁴ Accordingly, Braudel supports the idea that civilisations usually reject cultural goods or ideas that challenge one of their structures. In this case when a civilisation simply does not fully reject them, it tends to assimilate by reinterpreting them.⁶⁵ Besides, this process of acceptance or refusal does not only happen between a civilisation and external ones, but also between a civilisation and its own self. Thus, civilisations are constantly, yet very slowly, changing and are redefining themselves by these choices.⁶⁶ In conclusion, Braudel explains that a civilisation "is neither a particular economy nor a particular society, but what, through series of economies, series of societies, persists to live while

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp.61-62.

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp.62-63.

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp.63-64.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.65.

⁶¹ Ibid., pp.65-66.

⁶² Ibid., pp.66-67.

⁶³ Ibid., p.68.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp.72-73.

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp.74-75.

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp.76-77.

letting itself be influenced only barely and little by little."⁶⁷

Referring to Braudel's definition in his introduction, Niall Ferguson's idea of civilisation is defined as a "highly complex human organization" and "the single largest unit of human organization." From his point of view, cities are the central element of civilisations within which material achievements bear as much importance as immaterial ones. In other words, Ferguson's definition of civilisation puts walls and palaces on the same level of significance as laws and constitutions. But he also emphasises that these "eye-catching achievements" that are physical creations cannot be comprehended without the understanding of the "economic, social and political institutions which devised them." As a result, Ferguson considers that the success of a civilisation is not only measured "in its aesthetic achievements but also, and surely more importantly, in the duration and quality of life of its citizens." Hence, Ferguson supports the idea that a civilisation is at a same time "a practical response by human populations to their environments" and of cultural nature. Finally, based on Braudel's idea of civilisations as long-term concepts, Ferguson concludes that while the interactions between the major civilisations of history have been one of the important drivers for change, they remained quite "true unto themselves for very long periods, despite outside influences."⁶⁸

As can be briefly seen through Ferguson's definition, recent studies still tend to agree with the major aspects of civilisation developed by Braudel in his work. Yet, in order to fully understand the meaning of the word "civilisation" as it was thought and used in discourses of the nineteenth century, it is quite important to put it back in its actual context.

Within his own work, Braudel explains that the word civilisation appeared in France in the first part of the eighteenth century as a derivative of "civilise" and "civilised"⁶⁹ and was initially used in the domain of law to designate a judgement that makes a criminal trial civil.⁷⁰ The more modern meaning of civilisation, as the "transition to a civilised state," only appeared in the second half of the century between 1752 and 1756, in the writings of, respectively, Anne Robert Jacques Turgot's then unpublished book of universal history and Victor Riquetti de Mirabeau's *Traité de la population*. Then roughly used in opposition to the word "barbarism," the word civilisation emerged in reaction to the absence of a noun associated with the words "polite," "policed," "civil," and "civilised." The latter then only qualified well-mannered individuals. As a result of the birth of the word came a clear opposition between what were considered to be "civilised peoples" and "primitive" or even "savage" peoples.⁷¹ The word then spread to the rest of Europe in the following decades and rapidly entered in use in other languages such as in English from around 1772, replacing civility by civilisation, or German, making coexist *Zivilisation* and *Bildung*, but encountered resistance both in Dutch and in Italian. Although the Italian language resisted the intrusion of the new word, preferring the already in use *civiltà*, numerous debates surrounding it continued during the course of the nineteenth century. Despite the only relative successful penetration of the word in the vocabulary of other languages, the propagation of the word "civilisation" in Europe was frequently accompanied by its association with another concept: culture. Despite being a much more ancient word, as it had been used by Cicero himself thousands of years earlier, "culture" at that time bore a very similar meaning than civilisation and was even "used interchangeably" by the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel at the university of Berlin in the 1830's.⁷²

Yet, Braudel emphasises that due to the fact that the notion of civilisation is double,⁷³ as it both designates moral and material values, many authors have tried over the centuries to differentiate the two words of culture and civilisation by assigning one to the spiritual and the other to the material domains. However, the understanding of the distinction still differs to this day depending on the

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.82.

⁶⁸ Fergusson (2012), op. cit., pp.2-3.

⁶⁹ These two 'ancient' terms were already commonly used in the sixteenth century, Braudel (1993), op. cit., p.41.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., p.42.

⁷² Ibid., p.43.

⁷³ For instance, the German philosopher Karl Marx separates the spiritual superstructures and the material infrastructures in Ibid.

language, the country, the period, or even the author concerned. In some languages such as in German, Polish, and Russian, the word "culture" ended up dominating in comparison to "civilisation." The former word in German being "the normative principles, values, ideals," i.e. the spirit, while the latter being only "a body of technical knowledge and practices." On the contrary, in the French and English languages, both in the United Kingdom and the United States of America, the word "civilisation" remained dominant. Thus, Braudel highlights that in France the word would rather designate "collective values."

Nevertheless, it is quite important to emphasise that Germany only adopted and promoted *Kultur* in the twentieth century after a "conscious depreciation of civilisation," most probably in order to compete with the foreign influence and understanding of the latter word. In addition, Braudel even mentions that it was only after a period of hesitation, i.e. after the duration of the nineteenth century, that the change occurred.⁷⁴ Also, even between similar understandings, meanings still differed as, in the case of the Anglo-Saxon anthropologists, the expression "primitive cultures" was employed from 1874 in opposition to the "civilisation" of the modern developed societies. Most anthropologists then followed this example.⁷⁵ In other words, it is possible to affirm that "civilisation" in the nineteenth century is a highly subjective concept going through a critical moment of transition.

Further strengthening this period of 'in-betweenness', Braudel also underlines that, from around 1819, the word civilisation started to be used in its plural form rather than solely in the singular. The meaning of the word also slightly changed to designate "all the characteristics present in the collective life of a group or an era."⁷⁶ On top of complexifying the overall definition of the word, the popularity of the plural form in the mentalities of the twentieth century participated in concealing the idea of "one civilisation merged with progress in itself and reserved for a few privileged peoples [...] for the elite." Therefore, the eighteenth century's vision of civilisation as the highest moral and intellectual value, or as a mark of excellence and human superiority, progressively disappeared as "civilisation," in the singular, "lost its lustre."⁷⁷ Accordingly, the twentieth century also witnessed the disappearances of multiple value judgements and of the idea of a 'best' civilisation with the weakening of the word in its singular form and the difficulties in finding the correct criteria to evaluate a presumed superiority.⁷⁸

As a result, the meaning of the singular form of the word "civilisation" became the common elements shared by all civilisations, and thus humanity, without distinction of their origins, i.e. "the collective goods of the civilisation" such as fire, writing, agriculture, etc.⁷⁹ Hence, despite the spread of an "industrial civilisation" by the West, Braudel asserts that both singular and plural forms of the word civilisation will still coexist in the future as it represents only one aspect of the western's, meaning that its adoption does not imply a full conversion to the entirety of its civilisation. Based on the words of Raymond Aron, Braudel explains that while the industrial civilisation might mean the end of the era of civilisations for the sake of a new era of a unique and universal civilisation, the resistance of the particularisms and originalities of the civilisations adopting the industrial civilisation ensures the longevity and necessity of differentiation of the two concepts thought behind the singular and plural forms of the word civilisation.⁸⁰

Indeed, as explained by Pierre-François Souyri in his study, the notions of modernity and modernisation, quite common in recent studies, were not much in use during the nineteenth century whether in industrialised nations of Europe, such as in France, or in nations in process of industrialisation, such as in Japan. Rather, the terms became much more popular and used during the twentieth century. In this way, Souyri emphasises that, in the case of Japan, other wordings were preferred at that time to describe this idea such as "opening," "Enlightenment," "civilisation," and

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp.43-44.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.45.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.46.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.47.

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp.47-48.

"progress." Accordingly, in the example of Japan, the government was looking to build a "civilised" nation rather than a "modern" one. As such, the Japanese of the Meiji era were referring to the concept of *bunmei kaika*, civilisation and enlightenment, rather than *kindaika*, modernisation.⁸¹ While the latter expression came in use in the twentieth century due to its connotation of "temporal proximity," the former was associated with the idea of big cities and urban culture as represented through the transformation that Yokohama, Kobe, and Nagasaki were going through at that specific time.⁸²

In the specific case of France in the nineteenth century, based upon the renowned *Littré dictionary* published in 1873, the word civilisation was defined as the "action of civilising; state of what is civilised, i.e. the entirety of opinions and mores that result from the interplay among industrial arts, religion, fine-arts and sciences" but also "the particular period of social life that European nations are presently in."⁸³ Similarly, the esteemed encyclopaedic dictionary *Grand Dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle* of Pierre Larousse published between 1866 and 1877 defined civilisation as the "action of civilising; result from this action, state of a people in which intelligence is cultivated, mores softened, arts prosperous and the industry active."⁸⁴ As a consequence, these definitions of civilisation also imply the achievement of a higher status for a society in comparison to its own earlier stages or others. Hence, while Braudel considers that the idea of superiority borne by the word civilisation was specific to the eighteenth century and disappeared in the twentieth century, these definitions and the analysis of the discourse of the French elite during the second half of the nineteenth century reveals how much this idea remained present in their mindset at that time. As explained previously, the nineteenth century once more reveals to be a period of transition for the word "civilisation" and its meaning.

Moreover, the analysis of the elite's discourse also indirectly confirms and strengthens these two definitions. Whether in the early 1850's, under the Second Empire, or in the late 1890's, under the Third Republic, the meaning of the word remained quite constant and referred to very similar notions. An element of answer explaining the persistence of such similarities in the way the concept of "civilisation" was thought in France in the nineteenth century is the fact that the word corresponded to a specific reality of the French industrialisation pattern. Indeed, the 'higher status', detailed in the definition of "civilisation," of industrialised nation reached by France stemmed, in the minds of many, from her unique alliance of the domains of industries and arts. This uncommon way to industrialisation thus even transpires in the definition of the word "civilisation," from the acceleration of the process in the middle of the nineteenth century up to this day. In other words, as the industrialisation corresponded to the process needed in order to reach the nineteenth century's European understanding of civilisation,⁸⁵ a 'higher status', the elements that made its completion possible in the case of France transpired in the definition of her own language. Consequently, the unique alliance of industries and arts that made France's industrialisation so peculiar is present as the tangible elements of the French definition of *civilisation*. Similarly, the evolution of the French society in which religion got progressively replaced by science, and in which the mores and education of her citizens were of growing importance and evolving, is present as the intangible elements of its definition. In other words, the definition of *civilisation* in France in the second half of the nineteenth century corresponds to her own past experience and then present reality. As a result, material achievements, such as the Suez Canal, or immaterial ones, such as the teachings of the military in Japan, were being equally referred to as achievements of civilisation as they answered to different parts of the same definition.

⁸¹ Pierre-François Souyri (2016). *Moderne sans être occidentale, aux origines du Japon d'aujourd'hui*. Gallimard, Paris, p.31.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp.31-35.

⁸³ Emile Littré (1873-1874a). [*Dictionnaire de la langue française (français)*]. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5406710), BnF, Paris, p.632 (Tome 1).

⁸⁴ Pierre Larousse (1866-1877). *Grand dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle [Texte imprimé] : français, historique, géographique, mythologique, bibliographique... / par M. Pierre Larousse*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-39791), BnF, Paris, p.366 (T.4 CHEMIN-CONTRAY).

⁸⁵ The main elements composing the European civilisation in the nineteenth century as developed by Braudel in his work are: Christianity and humanism, scientific thinking, industrialisation, and liberalism in Braudel (1993), op. cit.

Surprisingly, even the current 9th edition of the dictionary of the *Académie Française* uses a similar wording to Littré's and Larousse's definitions, describing civilisation as the action of civilising or becoming civilised, but also as a state of spiritual and material development considered superior and opposed to barbarism, and most importantly as "the entirety of knowledge, beliefs, institutions, mores, arts and techniques of a society."⁸⁶ Therefore, even though definitions slightly differ in their phrasing, most underline the same material and non-material core elements on which relied, in many occasions, France's reasoning and justification for its international actions, interactions, presence, and relevance in some regions of the world.

1.3.2 Prestige

Most studies focusing on the topic of prestige in international relations tend to agree that the overall scholarship undermines its importance in comparison to more classical approaches and material assets such as territorial or economic interests, natural resources, military power, etc. Consequently, a major trend of studies has attempted to demonstrate the importance and relevance of the notion of prestige within debates of power and interests in international relations. As such, the study realised by Ronald P. Dore aims at emphasising the role of prestige and aspirations for status of some countries in international affairs.⁸⁷ From his own analysis, these two factors have been studied only by sociologists and political scientists, whom he designates as "peripheral to the international relations field," thus leaving major aspects of them unstudied.⁸⁸ Mainly, Dore focuses on Japan's important concern for her own external image influencing her policies and behaviour internationally, and the "international spread of ideas about the right to a career" in countries such as Mexico as the main proofs of the existence of "a prestige hierarchy of nations."⁸⁹ Dore hence claims that modernisation is a central element of this idea of ranking as it led developing nations to follow the example drawn by its early adopters in order to reach the same place as them on the scale of progress. Nevertheless, Dore highlights that "modernisation involves a psychic cost" as the introduction to its process quite implies the demeaning recognition of a form of "backwardness" by the concerned nation that becomes a "pupil to the more advanced nations," i.e. "the dilemma of pride and pupillage."⁹⁰ From his perspective, the "awareness of Japan's 'standing' vis-à-vis the Western powers" had been in many cases an important factor influencing Japanese policies. Yet, Dore once more emphasises the reluctance of diplomatic historians to recognise the weight of this factor in comparison "to the drive for territory, markets and raw materials."⁹¹

With a similar objective, the study conducted by Youngho Kim aims at examining "the role of prestige as an important intersubjective element of power in international relations."⁹² In this case, prestige is presented under the lens of both its positive and negative sources: respectively, achievements or success and deception or trickery. For instance, the author underlines the prestige gained by General Douglas MacArthur during the early stages of the Korean war as a "determining factor" that influenced the American policy and conduct for the rest of the conflict. To the contrary, "the policy of bluff" in which a nation "builds its prestige on the appearance rather than the substance of power," such as Mussolini's wars and campaigns in Africa between 1935 and 1942, are taken as examples of the negative sources for prestige. But Kim highlights that in both positive and negative cases, prestige gets "enhanced regardless of its source."⁹³ Furthermore, one of the first conclusions

⁸⁶ Académie Française (1992-2023). *Civilisation*. Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française. Retrieved August 7, 2023, from <https://www.dictionnaire-academie.fr/>

⁸⁷ Ronald P. Dore (1975). The Prestige Factor in International Affairs. *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, Vol.51, No.2, Oxford University Press, pp.190-207.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p.206.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.192.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p.194.

⁹¹ Ibid., p.204.

⁹² Youngho Kim (2004). Does Prestige Matter in International Politics? *Journal of International and Area Studies*, Vol.11, No.1, pp.39-55.

⁹³ Ibid., p.42.

drawn by the author is that "prestige is not simply something recognized by others, but also something a nation asserts." As a result, Kim explains that it means that prestige can only be gained if it is recognised by another state, but also that it can be both created and manipulated in the pursue of national interests.⁹⁴ Whether from positive sources, such as self-restraint after a victory, or negative sources, such as brutality as an "evidence of power," Kim asserts that states aim to gain prestige in the research of influencing "how other states define their interests."⁹⁵ Hence, Kim argues that while prestige is not the only factor determining the behaviour of states, its significance and even important role in some cases is undeniable. While mainly taking the Korean war as a demonstration of this relevance, Kim's work aims at becoming a starting point for similar studies, in the domain of international politics, taking other examples in the world and history as further proofs of this argument.⁹⁶

Within the scholarship of prestige in international relations, although highlighting the same issues as the first, a second trend rather focuses on the relationship between certain behaviours of states and the notion of prestige. Following so, the study conducted by Lilach Gilady provides a clear example of the application of such approach.⁹⁷ Starting initially with a similar intent, as the main trend, of countering the neglect prestige has been suffering from in international relations, Gilady however attempts to demonstrate that "states engage in conspicuous consumption in a quest for prestige and that the pursuit of prestige rivals the pursuit of power as a motivating force in international affairs."⁹⁸ Through this work, Gilady aims to stress the link between the practice of excess, the demonstration of power, and the research of prestige, and quickly expresses that costly policies sometimes bear the underlying intent for states to place themselves higher in a form of international hierarchy. As such, Gilady focuses on consumption that she describes as a social signal both directed internally and externally, respectively, in the case of policy decisions, as "means for achieving specific material goals" and "a gesture to be observed by other peers."⁹⁹ In such a way, Gilady takes multiple examples that could be considered unexplained at first glance in order to support her argument: the investment of China in a space program years after the end of the American-Soviet race, the purchase of an old French aircraft carrier by Brazil with little to no military value, and the market failure of the 'cheap' American F-20 plane due to the preference of most countries for lesser in number but of very high quality forces. From her point of view, these odd examples can be explained thanks to the concept of conspicuous consumption as all of these "actors engage in expensive behavior in the hope of gaining prestige," whether it is to become recognised as a superpower, a major power, or even avoid the humiliation of having smaller finances. From this, Gilady quickly highlights the awareness of these states of the link between consumption decisions and social standing, i.e. "between costly conspicuous consumption and international prestige." While Gilady emphasises that "conspicuous consumption does not cover all possible prestige-seeking-behaviors," her study aims at contributing to the establishment of a grand theory of prestige in international relations.¹⁰⁰

One of the main bases shared by most of these studies lie in the common agreement that the notion of prestige either strongly relates or is the equivalent of other similar concepts such as hierarchy, rank, glory, and even honour. In addition, it appears quite clear that the topic of prestige in international relations is relatively under-represented within the scholarship. Yet, even though sometimes only for a few sentences¹⁰¹ or as a conclusion of a greater argument, historians focusing on France have sporadically been referring to the notion in their works.¹⁰² For instance, the comprehensive study

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p.44.

⁹⁶ Ibid., pp.51-52.

⁹⁷ Lilach Gilady (2018). *The Price of Prestige, Conspicuous Consumption in International Relations*. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p.1.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p.2.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p.3.

¹⁰¹ Such as the "long and slow period of reconquest of the French prestige in Europe" of Sylvie Aprile mentioned previously in Aprile (2010), op. cit., p.228.

¹⁰² See Daniel Laqua's mention of the use of internationalism by Belgian intellectuals as a source of national prestige in

realised by Richard Sims on the Franco-Japanese diplomatic history from 1854 to 1895 is particularly representative of this use of prestige in the scholarship.¹⁰³ By focusing on the development of the French policy towards Japan after its opening to the world, Sims reveals the struggles and inconsistencies that occurred between French representatives in Japan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Due to the greater importance of the European affairs and considerations towards the United Kingdom and Russia from the point of view of the latter, the French interests in Japan became of second importance. Moreover, the frequent change of representatives also created an environment suitable for the expression of personal approaches and visions which affected the French policy,¹⁰⁴ further supported by the long-distance separating the two countries which only aggravated the communication issues and disagreements between the ministry and its agents. Although the last part of Sims' study briefly deals with the involvement of French individuals in Japan's modernisation, he asserts that "France mattered far more to Japan than Japan did to France," even if the *japonisme* movements has to be considered.¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, despite the relative lack of incentive and "predominantly negative quality" of the French policy in Japan during this second half of the nineteenth century, Sims asserts as another one of his conclusions that the urge to increase French prestige was one of the main motivations for French decision-making.¹⁰⁶ As a result, Sims claims that more than commerce it is probably prestige that initially brought France to Japan and made her participate in her modernisation, as it would eventually "confirm France as a power of the first order and make its achievements respected throughout the East" from the point of view of her representatives. Yet, from the point of view of Sims, due to the fact that the main foundation for the admiration of French culture was language and that its expansion only received very little funding from the ministry, the French prestige in Japan would inevitably have limitations.¹⁰⁷

On a related note, the study conducted by Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, on the questions of the motives of statesmen and national interests in the history of international relations, also briefly highlights a certain interest of the French elite for prestige at the end of the nineteenth century. Regarding this theme, Duroselle especially focuses on the case of the minister Jules Ferry and his vision of colonisation as a way to bring back France to her former glory. Consequently, Duroselle analyses Ferry's motives and justifications for colonisation to which he adds that the minister was "haunted by the necessity of restoring the 'greatness' of France." Similarly, Duroselle also quotes the words of the President of the Chamber of Deputies Léon Gambetta to Ferry in May 1881 after the conquest of Tunisia, asserting that "France is regaining her rank of great power," as more proofs of a certain conception of the 'French grandeur' in that time period. Further supporting this idea, Duroselle also mentions multiple occasions in which Jules Ferry expressed the idea of ranking in the world order of France or the role she ought to play in it.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, for Duroselle, Ferry's idea of colonisation responded to both political and ideological motives, as he thought that France "would not resign itself with a light heart to play in the world the role of a big Belgium" and would lose her positions of influence in the world to her European neighbours, such as in Tonkin, if she were to leave as the "competition is more and more fierce between European nations."¹⁰⁹ As a conclusion, Duroselle asserts that, with the great war crises, the colonial and semi-colonial expansions of the Europeans, Americans, and Japanese have been one of the two major aspects of the history of international relations. While the economic and financial interests are believed to have been the main motives of such expansions, Duroselle also argues that in some cases they were not. For instance, in the case of the 1898 Fashoda Incident, the French policy was "dominated by a prestigious project: forcing Great-Britain to reopen the negotiation on the future of Egypt," thus relegating the economic and financial

Daniel Laqua (2013). *The Age of Internationalism and Belgium 1880-1930, Peace, Progress and Prestige*. Manchester University Press, Manchester, p.211.

¹⁰³ Richard Sims (1998). *French Policy Towards the Bakufu and Meiji Japan 1854-95*. Japan Library, London.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.3.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.4.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.296.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.297.

¹⁰⁸ Renouvin and Duroselle (1991), *op. cit.*, pp.333-334.

¹⁰⁹ Jules Ferry in *Ibid.*, pp.334-335.

motives to a "very secondary role."¹¹⁰ Likewise, in the case of China at the end of the nineteenth century, Duroselle emphasises that what motivated the European nations to invest in the railroad works and what oriented the division of the zones of influence were indeed economic and financial interests, but also the political openings resulting from them. In addition, Duroselle also stresses that motives can drift from their initial goals during the development of such policy. For instance, the French conquest of Indochina from 1860 to 1867 was initially guided by the action of missionaries and sailors looking for footholds. Decades later, the access to natural resources or to the Chinese market it provided became much more important, but "in the mind of Jules Ferry, promoter of the French policy in 1883-84, the essential motive, it is the desire to restore the French prestige, lost after the defeat of 1871."¹¹¹ In such a way, Duroselle highlights that the influences orienting international relations are always numerous and difficult to rank in importance. Some might be linked, some might oppose one another. As such, it seems hardly possible to claim the dominant role of one only or to establish bigger rules without distorting history. Hence, from his perspective, the work of the historian in international relations must rely on an open-mindedness to other possible influences.¹¹²

Regarding the exact way prestige was thought in the nineteenth century, the evolution of the definition of the word reveals a profound change and growing importance of the notion for France during that period. Indeed, the fifth edition of the dictionary of the *Académie Française* in use at the very beginning of the nineteenth century provides a rather magic or spectacle-oriented definition of the word "prestige" as "an illusion produced by a spell" or as a synonym of "fascination." Yet, already at that time, the word was also described in its figurative form as the "illusions brought by Art," but also as the "illusions acting on the imagination."¹¹³ The opposition of the two understandings of the word, between a more ancient and mystic-oriented definition, synonym of charm, and a more recent figurative approach pinpointing the effects of man-made realisations on minds only became bigger with the sixth edition of the dictionary published in 1835. While the classic definition of the word did not change much in this particular edition, its figurative form then began to be associated with some other sources responsible for the creation of such "illusions." On the one hand, "natural means," yet resulting from technological innovations, such as from the perspective, optics, or even horror theatre. On the other hand, the "illusions brought on the soul, the spirit, the imagination by literary productions and arts."¹¹⁴ Very similar definitions were shared by both the *Littre dictionary*¹¹⁵ and Pierre Larousse's one.¹¹⁶ However, the latter also defined prestige as a "seduction, attraction that seems to have something marvellous [*merveilleux*]," i.e. have something "very admirable, that is capable of producing great admiration."¹¹⁷ In such a way, it is possible to affirm that it is through the course of the nineteenth century that the notion of prestige in France, despite its undeniable subjective nature, was recognised in the minds as a potential force of influence and persuasion.

Nevertheless, it is through the 1878 seventh edition of the dictionary of the *Académie Française* that the word "prestige" went under the biggest change of its history, giving concrete expression to the above observation. While this edition's definition maintained the same phrasing as in the previous one, it however added another perspective to the word, quite representative of the growing importance

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.447.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p.448.

¹¹² Ibid., p.454.

¹¹³ Académie Française (1798). *Prestige*. Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française. Retrieved December 20, 2023, from <https://www.dictionnaire-academie.fr/>

¹¹⁴ Académie Française (1835). *Prestige*. Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française. Retrieved December 20, 2023, from <https://www.dictionnaire-academie.fr/>

¹¹⁵ Emile Littré (1873-1874b). [*Dictionnaire de la langue française (français)*]. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5460034), BnF, Paris, p.1304 (Tome 3).

¹¹⁶ Pierre Larousse (1866-1877). *Grand dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle [Texte imprimé] : français, historique, géographique, mythologique, bibliographique... / par M. Pierre Larousse*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-205365), BnF, Paris, p.117 (T.13 POUR-R).

¹¹⁷ Pierre Larousse (1866-1877). *Grand dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle [Texte imprimé] : français, historique, géographique, mythologique, bibliographique... / par M. Pierre Larousse*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-205363), BnF, Paris, p.96 (T.11 MEMO-O).

the notion took in the French society in the second half of the nineteenth century: prestige as "the moral authority of a person, the action that person exerts on the imagination of men."¹¹⁸ Consequently, while in the beginning of the nineteenth century the word "prestige" was much more associated with the domain of illusions, the end of the century showed a clear evolution in the direction of the domains of influence, admiration, and even moral authority, i.e. an obtainable higher status in comparison to others.

Furthermore, within the definition itself of the word "prestige," some elements of the French definition of "civilisation" can be found. In other words, a certain link exists between the two definitions in that time period, whether regarding the sources through which they take form, for instance, science and arts, or the 'upper' status they both imply in their definitions. As such, quite similarly to the word "civilisation" and its French roots, the word "prestige," a French word borrowed from Latin, also corresponds to a French particularity and reality. Thus, *prestige* in the nineteenth century was not seen as a specific policy of a government or a state, but rather as a motive, an objective, a force of influence that could prove a higher status in the world order and influence others' perspective in international relations by provoking admiration thanks to arts, literature, and other man-made realisations, i.e. thanks to some aspects of what defines *civilisation*, especially from a French perspective.

Yet, as can be seen through the previous examples of the literature, while many historians in their studies have mentioned a certain interest of France for prestige in her diplomatic relations and affairs of the nineteenth century, most of them described it either as a broad objective of the French government or mostly as a result of larger colonial policies, but also most of the time focusing solely on the last decades of the century, and without pinpointing its source or the precise ways of its occurrences, uses, and purposes. For instance, the example of the French military missions,¹¹⁹ and even of the writing of the Japanese modern codes of law, is widely known as being one of the major sources of the French influence in Japan in the second half of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, studies focusing on the topic are much more centred on what the missions have achieved, rather than on how they were perceived and even diplomatically instrumentalised for prestige by a part of the French elite. This different perspective on international relations finds its support in the study of the concept of *forces profondes*.

1.4 Interpretative Framework: The *Forces Profondes*

In international relation, the concept of *forces profondes*¹²⁰ developed by Pierre Renouvin aims at studying the major trends influencing states outside of the sole policies and decisions taken by the ministries of foreign affairs, such as geography, economic and financial interests, mentalities, and the great sentimental movements.¹²¹ As the concept encompasses a wide array of issues, Renouvin emphasises that the goal of his study is to present an overall overview in order to provide a structure for future research, but also highlight shortcomings to suggest the study of new topics in the field of the history of international relations. Hence, far from being clear of any criticism, the author explains that it is sometimes necessary to arbitrarily select some examples in order to achieve that goal.¹²²

For instance, from the perspective of geography within the concept of *forces profondes*, the richness of the soil for food purposes tremendously lost its value for states from the nineteenth century as it was majorly compensated by innovations in the domain of means of transportation which allowed further importations. To the contrary, the richness of the undergrounds, thanks to coal and iron, became of "an essential role in the development of the political power" and the "inequality of

¹¹⁸ Académie Française (1878). *Prestige*. Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française. Retrieved December 20, 2023, from <https://www.dictionnaire-academie.fr/>

¹¹⁹ Three military missions in 1867-1868, 1872-1880, and 1884-1889, later followed by an aeronautical mission in 1918-1919.

¹²⁰ Profound forces.

¹²¹ Renouvin and Duroselle (1991), op. cit., pp.1-2.

¹²² Ibid., pp.3-4.

resources in raw materials (encompassing under this term the energy sector) thus became, in international relations, a factor of the utmost importance."¹²³ As a result, this new factor eventually led states to compete and even wage wars for the access and possession of these particular resources, consequently creating new dynamics for international relations from this century. On a related note, regarding the topic of the importance for states of their location in the world and although already considered crucial through history, the access to sea or more extensively the "control of passageways" became of even more importance during the nineteenth century in order to convey these resources to the industries back home, but also to better resist potential economic pressures.¹²⁴ Accordingly, one of the first conclusions made by Renouvin is that the importance of the geographic conditions in international relations have been heavily changing, sometimes positively and sometimes negatively, based upon the "evolution of techniques." In such a way, the nineteenth century is a great representation of this phenomenon as, for instance, the technological innovation of steamboats propelled some formerly badly positioned for sailing ships harbours to the status of major supply points, and the projects of multiple great canals¹²⁵ opened new ways of communication that decreased the value of regions and cities based on the natural sea lanes but increased the value of others.¹²⁶ As summarised by Renouvin, "the action of humans succeeded, especially over the past century, in restricting the influence of the physical environment, thanks to the processes they invented and the regulations they established."¹²⁷ Therefore, the nineteenth century reveals to be the beginning of these profound changes in international relations. Furthermore, Renouvin also emphasises that the nineteenth century was the moment in which the population rapidly increased and many movements occurred. While the former presumably modified the economic and political powers of states, the latter became sometimes the cause sometimes the opportunity for tensions and even conflicts between states.¹²⁸ Nevertheless, similarly to the previous point, the presumably strong impact of the demography on military strength got modified by the progresses made in armaments, organisation, and even psychology.¹²⁹

Regarding the topic of economic forces, Renouvin considers the nineteenth century as a moment of increase of industrial production allowed by a phenomenon of mechanisation and sustained thanks to a simultaneous trade expansion. In addition, the progresses made in the domain of transports during the century are believed to have facilitated this expansion. Hence, Renouvin highlights that the conquest of new exportation markets and the establishment of a form of control over the great lines of communication were the essential, and even rival, concerns of industrial states in that time period. For Renouvin, while the negotiation of trade treaties acted as the main mean of action in the research of new markets, the concept of the 'most favoured nation' (MFN) greatly participated in reducing rivalries. However, in the international competition for new markets of exportation outside of Europe the great industrial states used individual or collective pressure in order to obtain the opening of new markets, hence giving up the usual practice of negotiation of treaties and establishing "for their benefit zones of economic influence within the territory of another state."¹³⁰ For instance, in the case of Asia, while these practices and regulations rose tensions between the Asian countries and the great industrial states, they did not between the industrial states themselves as they mostly benefited from the same situation.¹³¹ In the same way, although the establishment of zones of economic influence, for instance through concessions for railroads and mainly used as a mean of expansion of industrial states in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, brought some disputes, Renouvin asserts that they were all resolved in the end through compromises or sharing.¹³²

¹²³ Ibid., p.14.

¹²⁴ Ibid., pp.15-18.

¹²⁵ Such as Suez (1859-1869), Kiel (1887-1895), and Panama (1882-1914).

¹²⁶ Renouvin and Duroselle (1991), op. cit., p.19.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p.27.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p.30.

¹²⁹ Ibid., pp.64-65.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p.74.

¹³¹ Ibid., p.77.

¹³² Ibid.

On the subject of the establishment of a form of control over the great lines of communication, Renouvin attributes its importance to both the development of railway and the progresses made in the domain of the navy which transformed and opened new trade activities in the world for industrial states.¹³³ Renouvin highlights that while Europeans had a freedom of action regarding railways in the territory they dominated, they had to rely on the authorisation of the local government through concession contracts in independent states.¹³⁴ Nevertheless, the establishment of railroads in many African and Asian countries, except Japan, was also accompanied by the grant of large benefits to foreign interests. In some cases, not only were the foreign dealerships allowed to exploit and fix the rates, but they also had the right, among other benefits, to exploit the mineral deposits near the rails.¹³⁵ Thus, Renouvin concludes that the foreign companies involved in these enterprises played an active role in the diplomatic relations of the great powers as they were linked with the establishment of zones of influence in foreign countries.¹³⁶ Hence, Renouvin explains that although it is "the financial interests that are leading [...] the political ulterior motive appears clearly, since the rail initiatives are almost always combined with the cession of a 'leased territory'." Therefore, as seen by the author, the economic zones of influence obtained, for instance in China, during the late nineteenth century had the potential of becoming political zones of influence.¹³⁷ But even more so, Renouvin then concludes that the "allocations of zones of influence that were negotiated between the European States in China, in Asia Minor, in Ethiopia were inspired by concerns of prestige and power." For him, they relied on the establishment of a compromise between rival economic interests in order to eliminate causes for potential political conflicts while preparing a partition of the concerned region between different dominations.¹³⁸ Regarding naval lines and more especially the case of the Suez Canal, the author emphasises that the initial situation did not present any signs of tensions. Issues started to appear once the financial troubles of the Khedive forced him to sell his shares of the Suez company to the British government in 1875 and were aggravated by the 1882 occupation of Egypt by the British forces in response to the Egyptian national uprising. From that specific moment the question of the free passage for trade came into play. Although the October 1888 convention ensured that Great Britain would keep the passage constantly open for both trade and war ships, in reality, it did not prevent her to force an indirect blockade thanks to her military forces present in Egypt and her navy dominating the Mediterranean.¹³⁹

In conclusion, Renouvin asserts that economic questions if put in the perspective of rivalries between states are hardly separable from their political context, i.e. "concerns about safety, power or prestige." He highlights that while economic forces have been the motive of political initiatives, they have also acted as the instrument of political aims. Hence, Renouvin considers that the competition surrounding the concessions for railways almost always served political purposes, while the control over maritime lines of communication was "directly linked to strategic concerns and the imperatives of 'power politics'."¹⁴⁰ Similarly, the middle of the nineteenth century was also the starting point of the growing importance of financial questions in the domain of international relations. Consequently, Renouvin asserts that investment policies sometimes acted as weapons of political pressure for lending states.¹⁴¹ Nevertheless, financial expansion might also have served in some cases as a peace factor, preventing, in the targeted countries, crises and revolutions that would have only resulted in stronger rivalries and political issues for the industrial states.¹⁴² Yet, Renouvin highlights that it does not mean that international capital flows necessarily have a 'peaceful' influence, rather that it only

¹³³ Ibid., p.87.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid., pp.88-89.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p.90.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p.119.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p.124.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p.91.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p.103.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p.153.

¹⁴² Ibid., p.155.

occurred in some instances.¹⁴³ On the contrary, Renouvin highlights that, in the second half of the nineteenth century, these flows usually either served for armament policies, such as in the case of the Japanese navy from 1873 to 1875 with the British banks, or granted a point of financial pressure to industrial states that favoured their colonial expansion and their acquisition of zones of influence.¹⁴⁴ In the case of Egypt, the Khedive borrowed money from both British and French banks in order to finance public works and the extravagant spendings of the court. Eventually, the accumulation of the debt led to the creation in 1876 of the French-British condominium. Therefore, the mixing between financial and political matters became stronger, giving a strong power of influence to the creditors on Egyptian internal affairs. Finally, the tensions resulting from the budget savings and the feeling of humiliation led to a national uprising tamed by the military intervention of Great-Britain that used the opportunity to establish her domination over the country.¹⁴⁵ As a result, Renouvin concludes that governments mainly responded to different motives than private businessmen in the case of financial questions, replacing the aim to make profits with concerns for political interests of the state, i.e. "the extension of its influence, of its power, of its safety or of its prestige." In consequence, even though financial profits and material advantages for the sake of national prosperity might have been considered in the process, Renouvin affirms that external investments were meant for governments to be used to benefit these specific political interests and to be oriented "towards the regions of the world where they wished to extend their political action" while taking advantage of the opportunities permitted by their protection.¹⁴⁶

Finally, the nineteenth century is also the scene of a conceptualisation and strengthening of the ideas of nation and nationalism in Europe. Renouvin highlights that since the end of the eighteenth century, political philosophy had been attempting to comprehend the distinctive elements of differentiation between human groups and to determine the signs of affiliation of one of these groups to a particular nation. The debates surrounding the different understandings of these ideas went on over the course of the nineteenth century while actual national movements declared themselves, such as the Italian and the German ones.¹⁴⁷ Thus, Renouvin differentiates three periods within the question of nationalities. A first movement from 1815 to 1848 in which national groups aimed at freeing themselves from the domination of a government whose members were of a different nationality¹⁴⁸ and create an independent state or aimed at reuniting in a single state or in a national minority group the population of a same nationality previously under the rule of another sovereignty.¹⁴⁹ Then, a second movement starting from 1848 in which unitarian attempts became central, through the examples of the German and Italian states or the Romanian united principalities, thanks to the decrease in power of Austria due to the aspirations of national minorities. Finally, a third movement from 1871 up to the end of the first world war in which protester movements of national minorities went under the greatest boom.¹⁵⁰ As such, Renouvin underlines that the movement of nationalities in Europe during the nineteenth century profoundly modified the evolution of international relations whether as a force of association, uniting national groups, or as a force of dissociation, sapping the structure of some states. In such a way, the Italian and German unifications greatly participated in the transformation of the European political map between 1850 and 1871. Consequently, Renouvin asserts that the "presence of two major new states, one of which bordering the Northern and the Baltic Seas, the other at the centre of the Mediterranean Sea, forces almost all other states to modify the foundations of their foreign policy."¹⁵¹

Also, Renouvin explains that because the national sentiment usually stood up against an already existing territorial status, it has been in almost all cases "a cause of profound troubles in international

¹⁴³ Ibid., p.158.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p.159.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p.160.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p.168.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., pp.175-176.

¹⁴⁸ Belgium in 1830 or the Russian Poland in 1831.

¹⁴⁹ The early stages of the Italian and German unitarian movements.

¹⁵⁰ Renouvin and Duroselle (1991), op. cit., p.177.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p.184.

relations."¹⁵² Nevertheless, Renouvin highlights that in theory national sentiments as perceived in the nineteenth century did not necessarily imply the domination of its neighbours as it intended to give a national basis to the state, hence allowing a form of mutual respect in regions where the geographic demarcation between nationalities was clear. However, Renouvin claims that in reality numerous examples showed that national states rarely respected the integrity of others once they acquired enough power and stability.¹⁵³ Whether due to pride, desire to increase its power, a feeling of material and moral superiority, or even the belief of duty in a "higher" mission, the end of the nineteenth century in Europe witnessed the exaltation of the national sentiments: the *nationalisme*.¹⁵⁴ In the case of France, Renouvin underlines that French nationalism from 1871 to 1914 was not "aggressive" but was rather "conservative."¹⁵⁵ Mainly as a result of the defeat against Prussia in 1871 and the fear of the new German strength, French nationalism is even qualified by the author as "defensive."¹⁵⁶ From his point of view, the differences between the various movements of nationalism in the end of the nineteenth century can be explained by their link to collective mentalities. Hence, "the radiant optimism of Germany, after the victories of 1866 and of 1871 [...] the disquietude of France, after the defeat of 1871, in front of the German strength" resulted in very contrasting outcomes regarding the nature of their nationalism. On top of their link with collective mentalities, the nationalisms were also dependent on the resources at the disposal of states whether in terms of military forces, demographic or economic superiority, and more. Thus, Renouvin explains that the specificity of the French nationalism stems from the fact that security and stability were the main traits of the French collective mentality during that time period.¹⁵⁷

Among other profound forces, Renouvin asserts that collective mentalities influence statesmen and their decisions.¹⁵⁸ Yet, the historian Saül Friedländer explains that collective mentality "includes some commonly shared perceptions, as well as some commonly accepted attitudes" which, all of the assembled, translates to "a sense of identity," the concept of identity being related to the one of "internal consistency." Consequently, collective mentality is considered as "the common denominator of perceptions and attitudes, stemming from a specific culture, or of one of its aspects, at a specific period."¹⁵⁹ In such a way, in various cases, the presence of very similar thought processes and discourses about prestige, in which French civilisational achievements are believed to be at its source, can lead to believe that the notion had a great presence in the French elite's minds. Thus, in the second half of the nineteenth century, while security and stability were considered by Renouvin as the major traits of the French collective mentality, prestige seems to have specifically been one of the major traits of the French elite's collective mentality.

1.5 Objective of the Historical Examination and Sources

Inspired by the overall scholarship and the new perspectives provided by the concept of *forces profondes*, which also briefly addresses some concerns for prestige in that era, this study focuses on the examination of the discourse and state of mind of a part of the French elite rather than policies themselves. Indeed, as explained previously in the literature review and analysis of the key concepts, while policies and events themselves have been extensively discussed in the scholarship, the details of their occurrences, expressions, or uses in diplomatic discourses remain understudied. Further supporting this choice, the study conducted by Valette once more provides compelling elements. Through the words of the diplomat Léon Noël, he emphasises that the discourse of political leaders,

¹⁵² Ibid., pp.208-209.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p.210.

¹⁵⁴ Pierre Renouvin emphasises the difference in the French word *nationalisme*, the exaltation of the national sentiment, and the English word nationalism that is used to designate both national sentiment and its exaltation.

¹⁵⁵ Renouvin and Duroselle (1991), op. cit., pp.219-220.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p.229.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p.231.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p.2.

¹⁵⁹ Saül Friedländer (1974). "Mentalité collective" et "caractère national": une étude systématique est-elle possible ? *Relations Internationales*, Presses Universitaires de France, No.2 (November 1974), p.26.

although only evoking broad objectives, becomes a policy through "negotiations or at least conversations, either between diplomats or between diplomats and ministers of Foreign Affairs."¹⁶⁰ In such a way, Valette asserts that the personal role of government leaders, ministers, and diplomats is of the utmost importance in order to conduct the historical analysis of France in this time period.

Besides, the particular focus of this study on the discourse and way of thinking of a part of the French elite rather than the entirety of the French public opinion is explained by the relative lack of interest of the latter on topics of international relations in the second half of the nineteenth century. As explained by Valette, although the "public opinion" had been considered by statesmen during the Second Empire, it actually only represented a small political class of people frequently reading newspapers and commenting on events, i.e. a minority of citizens while the opinion and behaviour of the mass "stayed in the shadow."¹⁶¹ Valette hence even concludes that the public opinion was equivalent to "nothing else than the behaviour of sociologically narrow groups, the elites" and that "any public discourse, whatever the medium" was specifically targeting it.¹⁶² Similarly, Renouvin states that while the cautiousness in foreign policy of King Louis-Philippe I, during his reign from 1830 to 1848, was an important element of criticism of the regime, the French public opinion, meaning the masses, only rarely gave signs of support to Napoléon III's international enterprises, although it did not attempt to hinder it either. In the same way, Renouvin also explains that, after the defeat of 1871, most of the public opinion "showed little interest in the initiatives of colonial imperialism and even in the problems of foreign policy."¹⁶³

Moreover, the analyses of the scholarship of studies conducted on the topics of civilisation and prestige present a common conclusion: both of these two concepts have mostly been thought as elements of colonialism. Similarly, as suggested by the example of the work of Duroselle among others, historical studies centred on the topic of France's international relations in the second half of the nineteenth century are also quite in majority focusing on the same themes. In addition, the relative academic unpopularity of the 1852-1870 French Second Empire for the past few decades results in a certain lack of studies taking the period as an object or even as a starting point. Furthermore, the scarcity of studies on the relations and exchanges between France and other nations, such as Japan, in comparison to the significant number of ones on the United States of America or the United Kingdom, as supported by Jean Charton,¹⁶⁴ only makes this shortage of studies even greater.

Thus, in an attempt to develop the concepts of civilisation and prestige outside of the domain of colonialism by rather considering them as elements of a diplomatic discourse and argumentation between France and her European rivals, this study aims to provide another perspective on the subject than the already discussed top-down vision focusing on civilised and non-civilised nations, or colonisers and colonised. As such, taking Sylvie Aprile's comment on the "long and slow period of reconquest of the French prestige" initiated after the congress of Vienna,¹⁶⁵ but also Richard Sims' conclusion on prestige as a motivation of France's policy in Japan's opening from the middle of the century, and even Jean-Baptiste Duroselle's observation on the shift of France's foreign policy towards prestige at the end of the century as its inspiration, this historical research aims at further supporting and expanding the scope of previous studies by finding similarities and additional details¹⁶⁶ in other events and situations around the world during the same period while also providing a recreation of an elite's mindset through the analysis of its discourse. In other words, this study attempts to underline a shared reasoning, vision, and argumentation employed by a French elite in various diplomatic and international affairs throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. As a result, this study also

¹⁶⁰ Valette and Wahl (1986), op. cit., p.5.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p.20.

¹⁶² Ibid., p.28.

¹⁶³ Renouvin and Duroselle (1991), op. cit., p.229.

¹⁶⁴ Jean Charton (2016). La France du Second Empire au Japon, 1858-1871. *Bulletin de l'Institut Pierre Renouvin*, N°43, pp.103-112.

¹⁶⁵ Aprile (2010), op. cit., p.228.

¹⁶⁶ Such as expanding on Richard Sims' last chapter "The Broader Picture: Modernization and Culture" in Sims (1998), op. cit.

indirectly highlights the reliance of a state on less classical means, than solely the economic or military powers, as a way to compete against its rivals and prove its rank of world power in a heavily imperialistic era.

Indeed, facing the overwhelming economic power of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the menacingly growing militarisation of Germany, the French elite of the second half of the nineteenth century became more and more aware of a certain loss of power in comparison to the glory of its past.¹⁶⁷ In addition, the frequent changes of regimes through the century, the overall lingering political instability stemming from the events of the 1789 Revolution, the multiple economic crises such as in 1847-1848, and the two national humiliations of the 1814-1815 Congress of Vienna and the defeat in the 1870-1871 Franco-Prussian war made France and her elite particularly self-conscious and in need to prove herself and her glory to the world. Hence, the analysis of its discourse reveals that the French civilisational template and its achievements in the world were presented and utilised as sources of prestige in order to maintain, regain, and ensure the position of France as a world power in the shaken balance of the great powers' competition of the second half of the nineteenth century. Rather than a unique glorious achievement that would have bolstered France's pride internationally for years if not decades, the successive French governments, representatives, and even involved civilian agents under both the 1852-1870 Second Empire and 1870-1940 Third Republic referred to a set of multiple French civilisational achievements around the world as further proofs of a certain superiority of France.

Therefore, the argument developed in this study relies on the analysis of the direct discourse of ministers, diplomats, government officials, and affiliated civilian agents contained in a wide array of documents: ministry of foreign affairs reports, diplomatic messages and conversations, personal journals, written reports of speeches, newspapers, and more. Most of these primary archival sources are available online and stored either in the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* (BnF) or the diplomatic library of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but also in their respective digital libraries.

In order to conduct such study, the most salient cases of international competition for France during the second half of the nineteenth century will be taken as its primary focus. In such a way, the "international" perspective of this study refers to France's project in the world, yet mainly aimed at her European rivals, the United Kingdom and Germany. Consequently, regions monopolised by France or her colonies are excluded from this study as they would simply fit in the already crowded scholarship focusing on the viewpoints of colonialism, and as they lack the highly competitive environment and presence of a major rival, either the United Kingdom or Germany in that time period, that seem to have particularly triggered such behaviours and justifications from a French elite quite self-conscious of a loss of power of France. Furthermore, rather than focusing on a unique and specific event or figure who developed and represented this way of thinking and argumentation, this study aims to provide elements to support the fact that these ideas were shared by a wide part of a French ruling or diplomatically involved elite of the time. Thus, this study focuses on major platforms of international competition for France and her rivals without any clear hegemon during the period studied, in other words, grey areas in which diplomatic strategies could be expressed, thrive, and be challenged.

For the purpose of selecting the specific contexts for this study, a wide quantity of documents from various origins and contexts were firstly analysed. Indeed, the initial research process followed a rather quantitative approach both inspired by Pierre Renouvin's method of attempting to highlight the major trends influencing states outside of policies and decisions and Louis Trénard's second method of historical research on mentalities focusing on highlighting the "continuities and permanence," i.e. "the constants," in a wide selection of documents "as diverse as possible."¹⁶⁸ As a result, all of the major international events of the second half of the nineteenth century involving France in some way or another were first reviewed through the analysis of their related written productions and archival

¹⁶⁷ Kennedy (1989), op. cit., p.169.

¹⁶⁸ Louis Trénard (1969). L'Histoire des mentalités collectives : les pensées et les hommes. Bilan et perspectives. *Revue d'Histoire Moderne & Contemporaine*, Tome 16, No.4, p.662.

sources in order to identify potential shared constants. From this preliminary work stood out multiple contexts in various places of the world, but the inequality or low number of primary sources available, especially in the cases of the French expeditions in Greece, Mexico, and China, sometimes led to the impossibility of confidently and properly establishing continuities and permanence, and thus, to put them aside in order to prioritise the most documented ones in terms of archives.

As such, three different contexts have been selected in order to support this intent. First, every French *Expositions Universelles* before the control exercised by the International Bureau of Expositions (BIE), corresponding to multiple universal national exhibitions aimed at her European rivals but more especially focused on the five universal international exhibitions from 1855 to 1900¹⁶⁹ organised as a reaction to the 1851 British initiative and the overall industrial rise of Germany. Then, from the peak of France's influence in Egypt, thanks to the construction of the Suez Canal whose conception started in 1854, until its complete disappearance at the end of the 1890s, gradually lost to her British rival. Finally, the important role of France in the opening of Japan, especially in the domains of military and law, from her first mission to the country in 1858 to the Japanese independence from Western powers after its victory in the 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese war and the signature of the 1907 Franco-Japanese Treaty.

All of these situations share the initial major common point of having works of civilisation as the source of France's influence and prestige in the concerned region. Indeed, the *Expositions Universelles* were seen as illustrious temples of civilisation through their display of industrial works, fine-arts, and sciences. Next, France's favourable position in Egypt stemmed from the construction of the Suez Canal, industrial and scientific work believed to have linked the civilisations of the world, in addition to the legacy of years of influence of her language, funds, military and other sciences on the development of the country. Finally, her prestigious reputation as a civilisational template in the domains of military, naval industries, law, and other scientific domains led France to obtain an advantageous status in the opening and development of modern Japan.

This fact coupled with their competitiveness make these contexts particularly relevant to observe France's leaders' way of thinking, argumentation, and even justification against her rivals as they all also represent either a period of doubt or of loss of ground of France. However, these three samples also present different stances of France internationally. While the *Expositions Universelles* represent France within her own borders, thus the epicentre of a certain ideology and foreign policy towards the entire world, the situation in Egypt rather highlight France challenged in a region she influenced for decades, and the one in Japan, her matching with a newly opened distant nation carefully selecting its models of civilisation. Moreover, the fact that these three situations represent three different locations in terms of distance but yet witness similar behaviour and discourses provides a strong case. While the increased distance meant relatively more independence for French officials and affiliated civilian agents, as they had to wait longer before receiving directives from the mainland and sometimes even act without them, the presence of very similar arguments and rhetoric regardless of it quite strongly indicates the presence of a shared mentality. It is also important to emphasise once more that while these three contexts are being analysed as the main focus of this study, similar discourses can be found in other places and situations in the world during the same time period. The argument developed in this study is hence not exclusive to them. Smaller examples, such as France's expedition to Mexico from 1861 to 1867 or even France's diplomatic use of the Catholic Protectorate in China after the 1856-1860 second opium war, contain very similar statements from a part of the French elite.

¹⁶⁹ A universal exhibition corresponds to the gathering of 'all' industries without necessary being opened to the international, while an international exhibition to the gathering of 'all' countries without necessary the presence of 'all' industries. In France, the first national exhibitions were only universal but with the idea of becoming international one day, while the *Expositions Universelles* were both universal and international.

1.6 Organisation of the Dissertation

In such a way, this study is divided in five different chapters. The introduction developed in the first chapter aimed at providing an overall explanation of the stakes of the dissertation, through the statement of the issue, the analysis of the literature review and key concepts of civilisation and prestige, the examination of the particular perspective on international relations provided by the concept of *forces profondes*, and the presentation of the objectives of this study, before diving deeper into more empirical matters.

Subsequently, chapters two, three, and four focus on each of the three contexts briefly mentioned previously, respectively: France in the organisation of the *Expositions Universelles*, France in Egypt after the construction of the Suez Canal, and France in Japan's opening to the world.

Thus, chapter two reveals how France controlled and used the *Expositions Universelles* as self-glorifying international stages aimed towards her European neighbours and shaped around her assets and particular model of industrialisation: mixing the two domains of industries and arts.

Next, chapter three underlines the heavy reliance of French officials on past civilisational achievements, more especially the construction of the Suez Canal, in order to boost France's prestige and, eventually, justify her relevance in Egypt once facing her collapse of influence against the United Kingdom.

Then, chapter four emphasises how France's catch-up in the opening of Japan eventually led to a prestigious privileged position in the fields of military sciences, naval industries, and law, later on challenged by the growing participation of her German rival in these domains, Japan's distancing, and even the French ministry of foreign affairs' own failures.

Finally, chapter five aims at closing the study by highlighting the major findings of each of the empirical chapters and by detailing the different contributions of this dissertation to the literature, followed by concluding remarks on the overall topic.

Chapter 2: France in the Organisation of the *Expositions Universelles*

As the physical embodiment of the Industrial Revolution and progresses towards civilisation, the *Expositions Universelles* could be considered as one of the main cultural bridges between nations in the second part of the nineteenth century. Through them, many relations were built, developed, and even new statuses expressed. Furthermore, the rarity of international events gathering most of the major powers and even nations of the world at that time made the World's Fairs' importance even greater in terms of possible influence and opportunities for diplomacy. Besides, the *Expositions Universelles* also provoked the production of a tremendous quantity of written documents on a wide variety of topics and from all over the world. As a consequence, the *Expositions Universelles* are not only the scenery of national interactions or a vector for civilisational ambitions, but also an important source of records and archives. As such, the occurrence of the *Expositions Universelles* and their novelty in the world led to the publication of numerous newspapers, guides, and books which focused on informing, explaining, debating, and even criticising their content and organisation while giving an increased importance to a journalistic, artistic, or even enlightened on the topic elite. Thus, although this empirical chapter belongs to the classic trend of the scholarship, as it reinserts the role of the state and elites in the literature, the study of the five French *Expositions Universelles* organised pre-control of the BIE, from their origins and all together, through the perspective of both civilisation and prestige remains quite underdeveloped.¹⁷⁰

¹⁷⁰ Since the 1980s, most of the existing literature on the topic of the World's Fairs in France focused on how these events promoted modernity and its ideas. More especially, this first trend of the scholarship has highlighted the universal international exhibitions as mediums used to spread precise messages and representations for the sake of both states and elites. The study conducted by Brigitte Schroeder-Gudehus on the diplomatic battle surrounding the organisation of the French 1889 *Exposition Universelle* led by Chancellor Otto von Bismarck and his ambassadors as a way to discredit France internationally is particularly representative of this trend in which the fairs are emphasised as instruments of national advertising and as indicators of foreign policy, see Brigitte Schroeder-Gudehus (1989). *Les grandes puissances devant l'Exposition universelle de 1889. Le Mouvement Social*, (149), pp.15-24. In the same trend, Anne Rasmussen considered the organisation of the international congresses within the *Expositions Universelles* as a way for the state to control the spread of ideas for the sake of a specific representation and vision of the intellectual world, see Anne Rasmussen (1989). *Les Congrès internationaux liés aux Expositions Universelles de Paris (1867-1900). Mil neuf cent. Revue d'histoire intellectuelle (Cahiers Georges Sorel)*, 7, pp.23-44. In a similar manner, Michael Wilson concluded that the 1900 *Exposition Universelle* followed rules and narratives specifically designed and thought to transmit a specific image of the nation through his analysis of the commodities showcased during this edition. Accordingly, Wilson considers the exhibitions as important elements in the formation of the French national identity. See Michael Wilson (1991). *Consuming History: the Nation, the Past and the Commodity at l'Exposition Universelle de 1900. The American Journal of Semiotics*, Kent, Vol.8, n°4, pp.131-153. Also, by pondering the reasons for the establishment of the 1867 edition, Edouard Vasseur emphasise the exhibition as a necessity and way to validate an economical and commercial strategy, see Edouard Vasseur (2005). *Pourquoi organiser des Expositions Universelles ? Le "succès" de l'Exposition universelle de 1867. Histoire, économie & société*, vol.24e année, n°4, pp.573-594. Resulting from this important number of studies, the scholarship went under a shift which took the reinterpretation and the takeover of these emitted representations and messages by a wider range of exhibitors and public as its main goal. For instance, Colette Wilson opposed the points of view of an official representative and a more critical journalist on the presumed peace of the 1878 *Exposition Universelle* and the 30th of June celebration in a time of remembrance of the 1871 bloodshed of the Paris Commune, see Colette Wilson (2005). *Memory and the politics of forgetting: Paris, the Commune and the 1878 Exposition Universelle. Journal of European Studies*, Vol.35, Issue 1, pp.47-63. Likewise, Antoine Picon stressed the importance of the utopian networks and ideas in the composition of the personnel in charge or their influence on the fairs, such as on social issues, see Antoine Picon (2012). *Expositions Universelles, doctrines sociales et utopies. Les expositions universelles en France au XIXe siècle: techniques publics patrimoine*, ed. Anne-Laure Carré, pp.37-47. Besides, Christelle Lozère considered the *Expositions Universelles* organised in Paris as sources of influence and motivation for the establishment of the provincial colonial exhibitions of the nineteenth century through which many cities took the opportunity to both display their own characteristics and their adherence to the nation, see Christelle Lozère (2014). *Expositions provinciales et identités coloniales au XIXe siècle. Diacronie. Studi di Storia Contemporanea*, No.18, 2. The overall analysis of the scholarship and its fluctuation can be found in Peter Soppelsa's response essay on the subject of the international exhibitions in France, see Peter Soppelsa (2020). *Universal Expositions: Behind the Scenes and Beyond the Fairgrounds (Response Essay). Dix-Neuf*, DOI: 10.1080/14787318.2020.1794452, pp.1-8.

2.1 National Exhibitions, a Republican Response to War and Crises

Initiated in 1851, the Great Exhibition of London at Hyde Park aimed at being the first worldwide international fair. However, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland was not the actual originator of this particular type of event. The birthplace of these fairs lies on the other side of the English Channel, in France, and this, a few years only after the turmoil of the French Revolution of 1789. On the 19th September 1798 exactly was held the very first exhibition of products at the Champs-de-Mars in Paris on the incentive of the French Directory and its minister of the Interior, François de Neufchâteau.¹⁷¹ The date coincides with the anniversary of the new republic born from the revolution, and as a result, in a way, also acted as the celebration of the victory of the new regime over its monarchic predecessor. At that time, the main goal of the event was to give a noticeable boost to the development of the industries, especially in their creativity, productivity, and quality by gathering products coming from all regions of France and rewarding them with prizes and medals.

One of the main originalities of the first French exhibitions of the late eighteenth century comes from the alliance of the world of industries with the one of art, and more especially of *Beaux-Arts*.¹⁷² In a century marked by innovation through the First Industrial Revolution, France distinguished itself from the other newly industrialised nation by intensely melding these two worlds. The development of the silk industries of Lyon throughout the multiple phases of the French Industrial Revolution is representative of this particular aspect. Even within his inauguration speech of the first national exhibition, François de Neufchâteau mentions the importance of strengthening the links between mechanical arts, sciences, and fine arts.¹⁷³ It can also be underlined that from the second national exhibition, the new centre of arts of the First Republic, the Louvre, was holding the events. Initially designed under the monarchy, but only achieved under the republican regime in 1793, the Louvre particularly incarnated the specific French communion of Art and Industry. Therefore, this first edition also represented for France the occasion for the assessment of her industries, products, and their quality in comparison to foreign ones.¹⁷⁴

Hence, it is important to underline that the first national exhibition inserted itself in a complex context of European conflicts. As such, successively the 1791-1792 Constitutional Monarchy and the 1792-1804 First Republic waged war, from 1792 to 1797, against what became the First European Coalition. Following this first conflict, a Second Coalition was established from 1798 to 1802 in order to stop the expansionist desires of the French Republic. Thus, after multiple years of repeated wars against her neighbours united in coalitions, the government of the French First Republic ambioned through the 1798 exhibition to demonstrate both to her citizens and enemies that despite her isolation against most of Europe, France would not fall. More than half a century later, official guides still referred to this moment as an aspiration to assert "an industrial triumph after recording so many military victories ; to show, in one word, that France, while it was enthusiastically fighting all of Europe, had maintained and had grown the internal production."¹⁷⁵ Similarly, the second, third, and fourth national exhibitions of 1801, 1803, and 1806 were also organised within a similar context of coalition wars.

Following that idea and as expressed by François de Neufchâteau himself in his bulletin of the 15th of October 1798, despite the haste of its planning and organisation, the first national exhibition had for purpose to be a campaign of the French industry against the foreign industry and, as such, revealed to be from his perspective "a disastrous campaign for English industry and glorious for the Republic." Even more than that, while planning a potential exhibition for 1799, the minister proposed the idea to reward with a golden medal, the exhibitor who would be considered by the jury "to have dealt the

¹⁷¹ Alfred Picard (1891a). *Exposition universelle internationale de 1889 à Paris [Texte imprimé] : rapport général par M. Alfred Picard*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5657416), BnF, Paris, p.19 (Tome 1).

¹⁷² Fine arts.

¹⁷³ Picard (1891a), op. cit., p.21.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p.21.

¹⁷⁵ Exposition internationale (1867). *Guide officiel à l'Exposition universelle de 1867 : vade mecum du visiteur*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-9739795), BnF, Paris, p.6.

most fatal blow to English industry" for the quality and the commercial extent of his product.¹⁷⁶ Consequently, François de Neufchâteau asserted in this same bulletin that the French "manufactures are the arsenals from which must emerge the deadliest weapons to the British power." In a context of war, it becomes quite clear that the goal of the French Directory was to damage the British trade,¹⁷⁷ with whom peace had not been signed after the First Coalition War, almost making the exhibition as an indirect way of waging war against her rival.

Yet, it is also surprisingly the theme of peace that was frequently associated with the organisation of the first national exhibitions. Such aspect can be witnessed in the own words of François de Neufchâteau in his bulletin of the 21st of August 1798 sent to the central administrations of the departments for the organisation of the first national exhibition¹⁷⁸ where he asserts that the "French have astonished Europe by the rapidity of their warlike achievements, they must launch themselves with the same ardour into the career of commerce and the arts of peace."¹⁷⁹ Similar statements were later made during the 1801 national exhibition by the minister of the interior Jean-Antoine Chaptal who expressed, by presenting the exhibition to the three consuls of France,¹⁸⁰ that "the ameliorations realised are the result of the peace you gave back to Europe, and of the security you restored in France."¹⁸¹

Through the growing number of exhibitors displaying their products at the national exhibitions, can be witnessed the relative success of this objective of stability and economic development within its own borders. Due to a short amount of time allowed for the preparation of the event, thus limiting the number of cities or industries capable of participating in the event, the first national exhibition of 1798 only gathered 110 exhibitors. Nevertheless, as the tradition started to become part of the customs, the numbers grew more and more. As such, the second and third exhibitions in 1801 and 1803 respectively reached 220 and 540 exhibitors. The largest growth came with the fourth exhibition of 1806 and its 1442 exhibitors while the fifth exhibition of 1819 'only' reached 1662 exhibitors. The sixth and seventh exhibitions, respectively in 1823 and 1827 grew steadily in a very similar manner with 1684 and 1795 exhibitors. However, as a consequence of the French revolution of July 1830, the eighth exhibition initially planned for 1831 was postponed to 1834. Moreover, due to the great numbers of exhibitors planned for the eighth exhibition of 1834, with 2447 exhibitors, the Louvre could not anymore suffice to hold the extent of the event. In that sense, the exhibition of 1834 started another distinctive tradition of the *Expositions Universelles*: the construction of temporary pavilions. Four of them were established at the Place de la Concorde, the biggest square in Paris. Furthermore, the exhibitions were now also held for a longer period of time: 6 days for the first against 2 months for the eighth one.¹⁸²

Finally, the ninth, tenth and eleventh editions all represent a form of turnover in the organisation and influence of the next generation of exhibitions: the World's Fairs. On the one hand, the expanding scale of the ninth edition of 1839 with its 3381 exhibitors forced the organisers to relocate to the Marigny Square in the Champs-Élysées. This particular location remained one of the centres of attraction even during the later international exhibitions. On the other hand, the tenth exhibition of 1844 and its 3960 exhibitors is believed to have been so successful that it influenced the United Kingdom to prepare the Great Exhibition of 1851. Finally, the eleventh exhibition of 1849 surprisingly gathered around 4500 exhibitors despite the turmoil of the revolution of February 1848 leading to the birth of the 1848-1852 Second Republic. As emphasised later in May 1855 by the journalist D. Leprince, "the industry had suffered more particularly from a state of things in which

¹⁷⁶ Jules Simon (1880). *Introduction [Texte imprimé] ; Exposition universelle de 1878, rapports du jury international*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-6375639), BnF, Paris, p.73.

¹⁷⁷ Picard (1891a), op. cit., p.22.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., pp.19-20.

¹⁷⁹ Jules Brunfaut (February 1877). *L'Exposition universelle de 1878 illustrée [Texte imprimé] : publication internationale autorisée par la Commission*. Digitised Archives (NUMP-7107), BnF, Paris, p.188 (VOL3,N79).

¹⁸⁰ Napoléon Bonaparte, Jean-Jacques-Régis de Cambacérès, and Charles-François Lebrun.

¹⁸¹ Brunfaut (March 1877), op. cit., p.220 (A3,N82).

¹⁸² D. Leprince (25th of May 1855). *Revue générale de l'Exposition universelle de 1855*. Digitised Archives (NUMP-7223), BnF, Paris, pp.3-5.

the public wealth had necessarily decreased. And yet it showed up at its exhibition, energetic and strong, ready to act, ready to reconquer the future."¹⁸³ In such a way, the 1849 exhibition reconnected itself with one of the first goals of the national exhibitions as initiated in 1798: facing and recovering from a crisis.

Concerning this last point, within the official guide of the 1867 *Exposition Universelle* published by E. Dentu, the publisher and bookseller of the Imperial Commission, the long history of the first national exhibitions is detailed on top of revealing the argumentation developed by the Second Empire to reattach them to their own World's Fairs. Thus, the writers of the guide assert and insist that the basis of the future national and international fairs were defined as soon as the organisation of the very first national exhibition: "teach what has been done, reward the smart producer, encourage him to persevere by showing him that, regardless of the major crises suffered by any part of humanity, the work perpetuates itself and increases its power by building on its previous results." In other words, the public display and assessment of the industrial development, further boosted and incentivised by free competition and rewards, in order to strengthen the country and counter crises and instability. As a result, the writers of the guide linked these specific goals and purposes of the first national fairs to the 1867 *Exposition Universelle* by claiming that the latter was their utmost representation.¹⁸⁴

As highlighted by this attempt, the occurrence of national exhibitions in France for more than half a century resulted in a strong and prestigious legacy that became one of the central points of the strategy of the Second Empire to reclaim possession of the events after the French failure, against the United Kingdom, to be the first to open them to the international.

2.2 1855 Exposition Universelle

2.2.1 Opening to the International and Retaking Control of the Events

Although the eleven exhibitions held in France from 1798 to 1849 were all limited to the sphere of national products and exhibitors, discussions among politicians regarding a possible opening to the international of the fairs rapidly appeared. The idea was supposedly brought by Jean-Antoine Chaptal, renown chemist and Minister of the Interior of France under Napoléon Bonaparte, who had the ambition to open them to foreign nations as soon as 1802. It was also reiterated a few decades later, in 1834, by the president of the *Société d'émulation*¹⁸⁵ of Abbeville, Jacques Boucher de Perthes, who believed that the competition between industrials was the most effective way of learning. From his perspective, the organisation of a "European exhibition" would be a "mine of education" for all participants without any drawbacks.¹⁸⁶ As supported by D. Leprince and Jules Simon in their respective writings, the idea was also presumably in the minds of the of the government in 1848 through a project of the French minister of commerce Charles Gilbert Turret who desired to open the exhibitions to the entire world. Nevertheless, due to the great instability of France during the first part of the nineteenth century and a wide majority of French industries and chambers of commerce dominated by manufacturers committed to protectionism, the British 1851 Great Exhibition of London became the first real successful attempt at expanding the scale of such event after other smaller efforts such as the "failed" call to foreign nations of Birmingham in 1849.¹⁸⁷

Even though the tradition of the exhibitions in France came from a republican background, the actual change of scale to the international for France only occurred under the imperial regime. Yet, in his opening speech to the 1855 *Exposition Universelle*, although Napoléon-Jérôme Bonaparte, cousin of the emperor and president of Imperial Commission of the 1855 fair, frequently refers to the international dimension of the event, such as through the term "exhibition of the whole word," he

¹⁸³ Ibid., p.5.

¹⁸⁴ Exposition internationale (1867), op. cit., pp.6-7.

¹⁸⁵ An academic association whose purpose is to gather members around the study and research in the domains of arts, sciences, and letters.

¹⁸⁶ Leprince (25th of May 1855), op. cit., p.5.

¹⁸⁷ Simon (1880), op. cit., pp.74-75.

however also insists quite often on the French nature of its origins. In that way, he links the intent of the emperor Napoléon III to organise this international edition, despite the hindrances of a part of the public opinion, to the national exhibitions, claiming that the Napoléon III is "following in this the traditions of the first Emperor," his uncle Napoléon I. Furthermore, Napoléon-Jérôme even adds that "the idea of an *Exposition* is eminently French; it has progressed over time, and, from national, it has become universal."¹⁸⁸ The clear insistence of Napoléon-Jérôme on the French origins of the exhibitions almost echoes as a regret of a missed opportunity for France in establishing the first international exhibition and an attempt at recuperating the control over the events. In such a way, although Napoléon-Jérôme recognises that it is their British "neighbours and allies who had the glory of the first attempt," he politely nuances his own praise, redirecting the glory stemming from the originality of the event by affirming that France "completed it by the call to fine arts."¹⁸⁹ Similarly, from the point of view of some journalists such as Henri Bacquès, the long tradition of national exhibitions initiated by France is at the source for the inspiration of other "enlightened nations" to organise public exhibitions. Consequently, the journalist even advanced the idea that the United Kingdom, initially reticent to the idea, changed her mind once witnessing the progresses made by France after her last national editions.¹⁹⁰

Thus, at the same time of the French opening to the international and attempt at regaining control of the events, both organisers and affiliated journalists of the Second Empire began to heavily accentuate the "gathering" nature of the exhibitions and the benefits stemming from it. For instance, once more in his opening discourse of the 1855 exhibition, Napoléon-Jérôme Bonaparte emphasises that the event had been considered as a mean to "bring industrial forces together, raw materials within reach of the producer, products within reach of the consumer." Likewise, the journal *Le Moniteur universel*, closely affiliated with the successive governments of France ever since its creation in 1789, even wrote that the purpose of the 1855 exhibition in the minds of its organisers was to "bring nations closer together by bringing the works of their intellect closer." In addition, the journal also evoked the necessity for a "community of ideas and interests" to be created from this gathering of nations. Hence, through this newspaper, the 1855 *Exposition Universelle* was being officially presented to the public as an invitation from the emperor Napoléon III to all nations of the world in order to participate in a "great celebration of universal work." The *Moniteur* highlighted the great number of foreign exhibitors beyond the initial estimations as the success of this policy undertaken by the cousin of the emperor and the French government. Yet, Napoléon-Jérôme Bonaparte went even a step further as he believed that the 1855 exhibition bore a greater meaning and purpose as it had to be "a new step towards refinement, this law that comes from God, this first need of humanity and this indispensable condition of social organisation," rather than only and simply a "great teaching" in various domains of industries and arts.¹⁹¹

Therefore, as can be seen through these extracts, the opening to the world of the fairs was also the occasion for the expression and realisation of greater national and international ambitions, not only in a warmongering manner as in the case of the national exhibitions, but also in a more pacific way as, for instance, to evoke the new-found stability of a regime returning to power.

2.2.2 Internal Stability and International Peace

Firstly, it is quite important to underline the fact that the first French *Exposition Universelle* of 1855 coincides with the return of the Napoléon family to the head of the country in 1852. As France still remained badly hurt after the economic crisis, which occurred during the reign of Louis Philippe I in 1847 and impacted the following Second Republic, the newly imposed imperial regime had to succeed where the two previous ones failed. Even though, the 1849 national exhibition acted as a first

¹⁸⁸ Leprince (25th of May 1855), op. cit., p.16.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Henri Bacquès in L'Écho de l'industrie (8th of July 1855). *L'Écho de l'industrie [Texte imprimé] : de l'Exposition universelle de 1855 : des lettres et des arts*. Digitised Archives (NUMP-6566), BnF, Paris, p.7 (N°35).

¹⁹¹ Leprince (25th of May 1855), op. cit., pp.15-16.

attempt at countering the crisis, the *Exposition Universelle* of 1855 also had the burden to reassure the industries about the change of regime. In order to do so, the responsibility of the preparations of the exhibition was given to Napoléon-Jérôme Bonaparte, cousin of the emperor, purposefully named at the position of president of Imperial Commission of the 1855 *Exposition Universelle*. The main idea behind it was that any economic success would be directly awarded to the Bonaparte family and thus, the imperial regime. Further supporting that idea, it is important to underline the decision taken by Napoléon III to leave more freedom to the private sector in the creation of the buildings meant to hold the event, mainly the *Palais de l'Industrie*. This decision can both translate the willingness of the emperor to reassure the industrials and boost the sector by acting in a more "liberal" manner at the antipodes of the rest of the organisation of this celebration of the Industries and Arts mostly under the leadership of his relatives. This particular point gets even praised within the opening speech of Napoléon-Jérôme Bonaparte. Hence, the president of the Imperial Commission responsible for the organisation of the exhibition and member of the imperial family himself emphasises in front of the emperor that "it is usually the government that handles all of the great works: in order to stop the exaggeration of this trend, Your Majesty has given a great boost to private industry."¹⁹²

In addition, another aspect highlighting the attempt of the imperial regime to reassure and support the private sector comes with the return of the tradition of rewards and other medals attributed to the successful exhibitors. Going back to the first national exhibitions of France this tradition was meant to produce competitiveness among the participants. However, it can also be linked with the practice of rewards carried out by Napoléon Bonaparte at the beginning of the century. As such, the example of the creation of the Legion of Honour in 1802, meant to reward not only the military but also civilians in their participation in great acts for the nation is quite representative. Its first purpose was to keep a circle of loyal members around the person of the emperor by obtaining a variety of privileges linked with the medal. In a similar fashion to his uncle, Napoléon III then began to reward industrials and artists who were successful at the 1851 Great Exhibition of London, in a foreign land. On the total of 5186 rewards attributed in London, France gained 1050 ones of them. Following so, the emperor awarded multiple Legion of Honour, but also 6 crosses of officer, the 2nd rank of the system, a very first in France at that time.¹⁹³ Naturally, the system was also kept and applied to reward some of the participants of the 1855 *Exposition Universelle*.

Moreover, the benefits of this type of events could also come in terms of ideology and stability. Even journalists, such as Bacquès, heavily emphasised that the former national exhibitions were already "one of these great conceptions that the revolution gave birth to, and that the political tribulations could not make disappear,"¹⁹⁴ i.e. a form of unshakable stability that could be used in periods of turmoil. Consequently, as the memory of the Napoleon wars remained, the access of another Bonaparte to the head of a newly proclaimed French Empire made the neighbouring European leaders fear for the return to an era of conflict. Nonetheless, the goal of the French emperor was not to bring another decade of conflict with its neighbours, but rather to bring back to its former glory the sphere of influence of France, tarnished by countless revolutions and crisis. The arrival of Queen Victoria at the exhibition, but also in the meantime the strong participation of France in the 1853-1856 Crimean War, alongside the Ottoman Empire and the British Empire, against the Russian Empire, underline the choice of this particular strategy of reconciliation. Besides, due to the fact that the *exposition* was held while the war was still ongoing, it is possible to perceive the invitation of Russia by France as a diplomatic attempt to prove its good will and promote the progressive aspect of the exhibitions: peace over war through culture and civilisation against its warmongering enemy. The Russian Empire, however, declined the invitation, and with this lost an opportunity to join the other nations in an event promoting the benefits of modernity in all of its domains, diplomacy included. In a way, through this event, France won an ideological battle while conducting a physical war. Even within the speech of Napoléon-Jérôme Bonaparte to the opening of the fair, the absence of Russia at the exhibition despite her invitation was mentioned. Furthermore, Napoléon-Jérôme insists

¹⁹² Ibid., p.16.

¹⁹³ Henri Bacquès in *L'Écho de l'industrie* (8th of July 1855), op. cit., p.7 (N°35).

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p.6.

that Russian industrials could also have participated as long as they followed the same rules as the other nations and exhibitors. From his perspective, this last point was important in order to "set the demarcation to be established between Slavic peoples, who are not our enemies, and this government, whose preponderance civilised nations must fight."¹⁹⁵

As explained through the own words of Napoléon-Jérôme Bonaparte at the opening of the exhibition in a context of Crimean War, the imperial regime had the ambition to show that France under his rule was "worthy of its past within war and greater than it has ever been in the arts of Peace."¹⁹⁶ In such a way, the cousin of the emperor heavily insisted that the organisation of this "considerable" event in normal times became "unique" in history due to its context of war. Hence, almost as a reminder of the establishment of the firsts national exhibitions under the First Republic,¹⁹⁷ Napoléon-Jérôme Bonaparte asserts that France "fights with glory against her enemies" while the French people showcase to the world their industrial and artistic genius.¹⁹⁸ Moreover, as an answer to the speech of his cousin and as a concluding remark to the opening of the 1855 *Exposition Universelle*, emperor Napoléon III himself even referred to the fair as a "temple of peace, which invites all nations to harmony."¹⁹⁹

Concerning this particular point, similar views can be found in the journal *Revue Générale de l'Exposition Universelle de 1855* dating from the 25th of May 1855. As such, the exhibition is there described as a gathering of "all civilised nations" showcasing their products in an atmosphere of peace. As the physical embodiment of "the prodigious industrial movement of modern times," the 1855 exhibition is believed, for some French journalists of the time, to be at the source of an elevation of human reason that makes the idea of waging wars "petty and miserable" in comparison. In other words, the *Expositions Universelles* were considered as an alternative to classic conflicts, in which civilisation and progress were achieved through the power of cannons and the price of blood, as they replace them with a peaceful competition in which leaders of progress are determined by the value of their products and their contribution to humanity.²⁰⁰ Consequently, the editor in chief of the *Revue Générale de l'Exposition universelle de 1855* D. Leprince pushed this logic even further in the direction of universality as he declared that the journal would consider every nationality equally in their analysis throughout the whole duration of the exhibition as only civilisation mattered.²⁰¹

Nevertheless, while a certain journalistic elite supported such ideas of fairness, equality, and universality in the events, the reality of the international competition and importance of the fairs in terms of potential gains of prestige rather meant an environment in constant need of innovations and quite favourable to its organiser.

2.2.3 International Competition, a Constant Need for Innovation

Considering the fact that these events had the ambition to promote civilisation, progress, and peace within Europe, it appears quite clear that the competition did not lie only in the hands of the exhibitors themselves as individuals, but also in the hands of nations as a whole. The disparities of progress and civilisation resulting from the different stages of development and industrialisation of the competitors hence resulted in the fierce display of national elements meant to showcase the leading position of a nation in particular domains. As such, journalists of the period sometimes claimed, as D. Leprince, that "a nation will not be the first anymore only because it is the strongest, but because it will accomplish the most of useful progress for humanity."²⁰² More than a simple march towards

¹⁹⁵ Leprince (25th of May 1855), op. cit., p.16.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ On a related note, the journalist Henri Bacquès highlights that the First Consul Napoléon Bonaparte for the 1802 national exhibition "showed as much care for the arts of peace than he had displayed skill and talent for the arts of war" in *L'Écho de l'industrie* (8th of July 1855), op. cit., p.6 (N°35).

¹⁹⁸ Leprince (25th of May 1855), op. cit., p.16.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p.1.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p.2.

²⁰² Ibid., p.1.

modernity, such newspapers conveyed a form of spiritual dimension to the scientific and material conquests present within the exhibitions, in which the Crimean War should be the very last conflict of the European powers as the continent was experiencing an unprecedented transformation. Beyond classic borders and ancient conflicts, the World's Fairs were sometimes thought as the new and sole battlefield on which the European nations should ever fight again. Further supporting this idea, the fact that juries from different nationalities were appointed in order to decide who and what should be awarded, despite a vast majority being of the nationality of the host nation, transmits the aspiration of putting the idea of civilisation over nations and rivalries. Hence, it could be argued that the 1855 *Exposition Universelle* participated to develop elements of a notion of Western universalism within which some nations would lead in the domains in which they were recognised prominent. Following that idea, it would be natural to consider that the international exhibitions gave equal chances and exposure to each participant. In reality, and as the example of the 1851 Great Exhibition provided to the world, the exhibitions rather put the hosting nation in a status above and against the rest of the exposing nations. In 1851, the United Kingdom decided to put forth the success of its wide colonial empire to its neighbours and rivals. As the biggest colonial Empire among the European nations at that time, the United Kingdom clearly understood the potential of influence its colonies represented in the battle over the leadership of modernity and civilisation. As its main rival and due to the lesser extent of its empire, the French Second Empire had to come up with new innovations in order to gain substantial chances in this international competition.

As such, for its first international edition of 1855, France decided to level up the domain of Fine Arts to the same rank of the one of the industries. While the United Kingdom focused mainly on her industrial power, resources, and colonies, France believed, through her experience of national exhibitions, that the strong link between industries and art should be celebrated as it represents her own strength and uniqueness of model of industrialisation. As a result, the originally planned for 1854 French annual exhibition of Fine Arts had been delayed in the perspective of being melded with the 1855 *Exposition Universelle*²⁰³ and held in the *Palais des Beaux-Arts*,²⁰⁴ especially built for the occasion. In addition, it is worth highlighting that, in order to give exposure to this innovation, both French and foreign journalists could freely access the exhibition without charge, and that all monuments, such as the Louvre and other museums, were kept open for the whole duration of the celebrations.²⁰⁵ Another example of innovation meant as a reaction to the 1851 London exhibition is the one of the construction of structures meant to last not only for the duration of one edition, but rather for the long term and for the city. While the United Kingdom opted for a main structure made of cast iron and glass through the Crystal Palace, which was supposed to be deconstructed after the events but got instead relocated, France deliberately counteracted with the *Palais de l'Industrie*,²⁰⁶ a massive structure made of cast iron, glass, but also stones. The building erected in 1855, and located in the traditional Marigny Square, lasted until 1896.

Thus, while France lost the opportunity to organise the very first international exhibition to the United Kingdom, she ambioned to surpass her rival's in many ways as greatly represented by the sheer size of the exhibition. Because the exhibition of London left a feeling of heaviness in the minds of some visitors, the French Imperial Commission aspired to oppose it with an overall bigger area for each and every of the 20,000 exhibitors. With the *Palais de l'Industrie*, the *Palais des Beaux-Arts*, and their respective galleries, the 1855 *Exposition Universelle* reached a total surface of nearly 15,20 hectares. The *Palais de l'Industrie* alone was initially planned for a surface of 4,8 hectares on top of which 4 hectares of annexes were added due to the rising numbers of potential exhibitors. In comparison, the London exhibition had been held on a surface of around 9,6 hectares in which only 4,6 hectares were actually dedicated to the exhibitors. In other words, the sole surface of the *Palais de l'Industrie* and its annexes represented almost the double of the surface dedicated to the exhibitors in London. Moreover, the surface of the *Palais des Beaux-Arts* reached 2 hectares in which 1

²⁰³ Ibid., p.6.

²⁰⁴ Meaning the Palace of Fine Arts in French.

²⁰⁵ Leprince (25th of May 1855), op. cit., p.15.

²⁰⁶ Meaning the Palace of the Industry in French.

additional hectare was added as galleries in order to facilitate the movements between the different areas. It is also important to underline that within the 20,000 exhibitors present during the 1855 exhibition, around 9,500 of them belonged to the French Second Empire.²⁰⁷ Nevertheless, despite this great display of means and investments, the 1855 *Exposition Universelle* failed to surpass the number of visitors reached by London in 1851: respectively 'only' 5,15 million visitors against 6 million. Yet, one of the main targets of the event was still reached through its relative success: proving that France under the Second Empire would be a fierce rival and dedicated to her next exhibitions despite her past instabilities.

2.3 1867 Exposition Universelle

2.3.1 An Even Greater Scale and More Innovations

If the main goal of the 1855 *Exposition Universelle* was to demonstrate a good image of the newly introduced Second Empire to its European neighbours while offering a competitor to the 1851 World's Fair, the 1867 *Exposition Universelle* was not only meant to revolutionise their scale and purpose, but also ambitioned to outperform the success of the three previous international exhibitions.²⁰⁸ From the point of view of the writers of the official guide, the success of the previous exhibitions was assured to be surpassed by the 1867 fair thanks to its numerous innovations, such as, for instance, the introduction for the first time of new domains of sciences to the competition like ethnography, archaeology, and social sciences.²⁰⁹ Among the other innovations of the 1867 edition of the *Expositions Universelles*, the creation of the tenth group entitled "Objects specifically showcased with the aim of improving the physical and morale condition of the population" is quite representative of the context and spirit in which the exhibition had been planned.²¹⁰ Meant as much for children education and for adult education, this group somewhat underlines a willingness to improve the quality of life of the labour workers without whom neither the innovations displayed nor these particular events would even come to life. Moreover, it also specifically highlights the remaining influence and importance of the Saint-Simonian doctrine, promoting the idea of elevation through industrialisation, in France at that time. Some of the successors of the movement, such as the 'liberals' of its economic branch, thus found in the 1867 *Exposition Universelle* a place for the representation of their ideals.

In addition, the 1867 fair also innovated within its own structure and organisation through its financing borne not only by the government of the emperor, but also by the "individual initiative." The renowned journalist Léon Plée advances the idea that it was meant to alleviate the cost of its creation.²¹¹ Hence, this particular choice further supports the liberal turn initiated in 1855 by Napoléon III by allowing the private sector to have a greater presence and involvement in the establishment of the event. As such, while Napoléon-Jérôme Bonaparte remained at the head of the committee, he shared the position with the engineer Frédéric le Play. Although at the time of publishing the guide the complete results of the fair did not yet occur, the writers further supported their enthusiasm by relying on the positive revenue figures of the event, described as an impartial "universal suffrage" from the audience, as the proof of their argument.²¹²

In order to accommodate the numerous 42 countries taking part in the event, a gigantic structure of around 14,9 hectares had been built in only two years in the middle of the Champs-de-Mars. In other words, the new *Palais de l'Exposition* was of almost the same size as the whole area needed for the exhibition of 1855. Therefore, the edition of 1867 broke all records with a total surface of 68,7

²⁰⁷ Leprince (25th of May 1855), op. cit., p.16.

²⁰⁸ The 1851 Great Exhibition (London), the 1855 *Exposition Universelle* (Paris), and the International Exhibition of 1862 (London).

²⁰⁹ Exposition internationale (1867), op. cit., p.7.

²¹⁰ Ibid, p.75.

²¹¹ L. Lesestre (1867). *L'Illustrateur de l'Exposition universelle [Texte imprimé] / directeur-gérant : L. Lesestre*. Digitised Archives (NUMP-7037), BnF, Paris, p.2 (Numéro-Spécimen).

²¹² Exposition internationale (1867), op. cit., pp.7-8.

hectares.²¹³ The rest of the surface, not occupied by the main structure, was dedicated to large gardens within which another innovation, the national pavilions, were located. Much bigger in scale, the exhibition also topped its predecessors both in terms of numbers of visitors and exhibitors: respectively around 15 million and 42,217.²¹⁴ Similarly to what had been done in 1855, within this great number of exhibitors present at the 1867 exhibition, France represented 11,645 of them, only followed by the Ottoman Empire with 4,499, the Kingdom of Italy with 3,992, and the United Kingdom with 3,609. Furthermore, on the 148,990 square meters allocated to the exhibitors, France occupied 63,640 of them, followed by the United Kingdom with 21,059, Prussia and the Northern German States with 12,765, and Austria with 8,362.²¹⁵ Thus, as in 1855, through these compelling numbers, it is once more quite easy to notice the difference of treatment between the organising country and its competitors in what was usually described as a "peaceful competition" for progress. As a way to efficiently sort out the exhibitors and their products, similar nationalities were gathered together in separated fringes of the oval-shaped main structure, while the categories of products were established by common theme inside of the galleries going through all the said fringes. In this way, visitors could easily access their point of interests while the exhibitors could exchange with members of their own field.²¹⁶

Consequently, the 1867 exhibition is also quite representative of a change of scale that will become a norm for the international fairs organised by France in the second half of the nineteenth century. As highlighted by Léon Plée, the 1867 *Exposition Universelle* ambitioned to not only showcase contemporary industrial products and art works but rather to display "processes implemented on a larger scale" and "performed sets," in other words cultural narratives and work methods in front of the public. In such a way, products from various domains, such as for instance music and paintings, melded with one another as an ensemble to showcase the specificity of the concerned nation.²¹⁷ Interestingly, almost as the physical representation of the French model of industrialisation through the shape of the exhibition, the buildings dedicated to the various forms of art and culture, such as the museum of labour workers, were located in the centre of the area surrounded by the industries.

Moreover, the introduction to the competition of some other unique innovations almost seems as an intent to further push into that direction. One of the best examples comes with the creation of the class 9 of the group 2 of liberal arts: "trials and devices of photography." Presented as a French speciality by the official guide of the exhibition, photography is the perfect representation of the alliance of the domains of machines and art.²¹⁸ Hence, the fact that this particular technology had been integrated to the exhibition not only for its new devices but also for competitions of art, contributed in a way to promote the French template of industrialisation. Besides, the description made by the writers of the official guide of the class 8, named the "utilisation of drawing and plastic to ordinary arts" and following their highlight of the class 9, as a representation of "one of the aspects through which the French industry has acquired a just reputation of superiority" further supports this last statement. From their perspective, no matter the potential merits that the other nations might have in this particular domain, this specific French section was beyond compare.²¹⁹

Thus, held during the apex of the Second Empire, the 1867 *Exposition Universelle* brought major innovations strengthening the importance of its own model of mixing industries and arts, only further boosted by the impressive gigantic scale of the overall fair. Yet, within all of these innovations, the briefly mentioned national pavilions are actually the ones representative of a certain change of nature of the international exhibitions towards more diplomatic oriented events.

²¹³ Number shared by the *Bureau International des Expositions* (BIE).

²¹⁴ The number varies between roughly 35,000 and 43,000 depending on the source taken as a reference, the number of 42,217 can be found in *Exposition internationale (1867)*, op. cit., p.11.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.22.

²¹⁷ Lesestre (1867), op. cit., p.2 (Numéro-Spécimen).

²¹⁸ *Exposition internationale (1867)*, op. cit., p.34.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.35.

2.3.2 Becoming a Diplomatic Event

Further adding to the immense scale of the event and the numerous innovations made to the core structure of the events, the *Exposition Universelle* of 1867 specifically differentiated itself from the previous ones by the much greater number of foreign officials and rulers who attended it. The power of attraction of the 1867 exhibition was such that even the new rulers of the former enemies of France during the Napoleonic wars, such as the Russian Tsar Alexander II, the Prussian King Wilhelm I, and the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph I, visited Paris and its exhibition despite it being organised under the reign of another member of the Bonaparte family. Other noticeable examples come with the unprecedented visits of the Sultan Abdülaziz of the Ottoman Empire, who left his country for the first time of his reign in order to take part in this fair, and of Tokugawa Akitake, brother of the Shogun Tokugawa Yoshinobu, accompanied by a Japanese delegation.²²⁰ Hence, the international fairs from 1867 began to bear the function of international meetings rather than solely exhibitions of industrial and artistic creations. This evolution of nature has been underlined by Léon Plée, in the specimen copy of the *L'Illustrateur de l'Exposition Universelle*,²²¹ as soon as right before the beginning of the fair in April 1867. From the journalist's point of view, the presence of not only governments but also rulers to the exhibition demonstrates this change as they participate "in the peaceful competition" where "Emperors and Kings become exhibitors."²²²

Combined with the newly implemented tradition of national pavilions, meant to host cultural elements and innovations of each of the participating nations and which remained present in the following editions, the *Exposition Universelle* of 1867 gave a rather diplomatic turn to the conduct of this type of events. This specific point was even recognised by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself in one of its reports of the year 1867. From its perspective, to the contrary of the year 1866 which was marked by the occurrence of major political and military affairs, the year 1867 would be representative for a long time of "the pacific conquests of progress and civilisation." Indeed, in a context of European tensions after the 1866 Austro-Prussian War and its consequence for the French-Prussian relations through the Luxembourg Crisis,²²³ the opening of the 1867 *Exposition Universelle* in April represented a moment of rapprochement in diplomacy. Through the words of emperor Napoléon III himself the Ministry introduces its report of political affairs: "from every part of the earth the representatives of the arts and the industry came running *à l'envi*, and it can be said that peoples and kings have come to honour the efforts of work and by their presence crown them with an idea of peace and conciliation."²²⁴ In such a way, the Ministry supported the idea that this "vast competition of all the noblest emulations" helped nations to go beyond their "obsolete" assumptions and supported their rapprochement which appear as first steps in order to achieve world peace.²²⁵ Thus, while the message quite resembles the pacific intent borne by the 1855 *Exposition Universelle* in its context of war, the 1867 edition rather seems to have aimed at prolonging a period of relative easing of tensions in European international relations.

The change of the fairs from 1867 towards a more diplomatic and international meeting-oriented nature can also be witnessed through the various demonstrations of foreign policy that took place during its course. For instance, the Japanese Satsuma clan saw the 1867 exhibition in Paris as an opportunity to assert the growth of their power in comparison to the Tokugawa shogunate. It is also worth noting that many foreign projects linked with the modern development of Japan began their history within the course of this fair. In the case of France, from the perspective of emperor Napoléon III and his government, the 1867 *Exposition Universelle* also represented in a certain way a step on the path to universality. As such, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs asserted that the 1867 *Exposition*

²²⁰ Simon (1880), op. cit., p.89.

²²¹ The newspaper frequently claims its independence in its own headline.

²²² Lesestre (1867), op. cit., p.2 (Numéro-Spécimen).

²²³ Resolved on the 11th of May 1867 through the Treaty of London.

²²⁴ France. Ministère des affaires étrangères (1860-1873). *Documents diplomatiques [Texte imprimé] / Affaires étrangères*. Digitised Archives (NUMP-2209), BnF, Paris, p.7 (1867, N10).

²²⁵ Ibid., pp.7-8.

Universelle represented an occasion to further discuss the general trend of governments to eliminate the barriers to the development of international relations by the unification of the various systems of legislation specific to each country. From their perspective, the presence in Paris of many notables from diverse nationalities and domains of expertise in sciences, arts, and industry, brought "an exchange of ideas favourable to this trend." As a result, the French government attempted to bring the topic of the monetary unification to the discussions as the central pavilion of the Champ-de-Mars contained a wide variety of currencies allowing their comparison and revealing their differences in terms of size and weight.²²⁶ A conference including many of the European nations in addition to the United States of America gathered on the 17th of June to discuss this specific topic. Sensitised by the project, emperor Napoléon III gave the high presidency of the international commission to his own cousin, Napoléon-Jérôme Bonaparte. Although no tangible decisions were agreed nor expected beside some minor wishes from the participating nations, this experience is quite indicative of the new direction and nature the *Expositions Universelles* bore from 1867.²²⁷ Similarly, in the November 1869 report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whilst the Ministry addressed the concerns and complaints of the Northern and Western industrial centres regarding the presumed negative effects of the 23rd of January 1860 Cobden-Chevalier Treaty free trade agreement on the French factories, the 1867 *Exposition Universelle* was brought as an argument and proof of the initiative the imperial government took to work for the "movement to expand and merge the general interests of peoples" that the 1860 agreement participated to initiate.²²⁸ Considered to be "the brilliant demonstration of this trend," the 1867 edition especially, but also later smaller international exhibitions, were even praised by the Ministry for the long lasting influence they generate and their participation in maintaining "a fruitful emulation and these individual relationships that increasingly bring societies together" despite the rarity of their occurrences.²²⁹ Alongside the display of products and cultural elements, the international exhibitions thus gradually became an occasion for great powers to organise various international meetings and conferences, as is also highlighted by Anne Rasmussen in her study.²³⁰

Nevertheless, the greater emphasis put on the international and diplomatic aspects by the 1867 *Exposition Universelle* had for major consequence to strengthen even more, in the minds of its observers, the already existing link between success or failure at the fair and the actual condition and ranking of a country in the world order.

2.4. The Expositions Universelles, the Mirrors of States' Conditions for an Elite

2.4.1 Judging a Nation Based on its Displayed Elements

The article written by P. Duchesne de Bellecour, in the cultural and literary journal *Revue des Deux Mondes* of August 1867, further supports this statement and way of thinking of a certain elite during the fairs. In this document, the author debates and compares the development of both China and Japan through the analysis of their displayed products at the 1867 *Exposition Universelle*. On the one hand, Duchesne de Bellecour describes the Chinese pavilion and its content as lacking variety, materials, and techniques in comparison to the huge size of its population and territory. Moreover, the author also underlines that the Chinese government did not financially support the delivery of any production to the exhibition.²³¹ Consequently, Duchesne de Bellecour interprets this behaviour as an "indifference" revealing the struggles of an empire whose administration is dependent on the "whims" of its ruler, but also giving the image of a nation uninterested in the outside world, diplomatically

²²⁶ Ibid., p.24.

²²⁷ Ibid., pp.24-25.

²²⁸ France. Ministère des affaires étrangères (1860-1873), op. cit., p.19 (1869, N13).

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Rasmussen (1989), op. cit., pp. 23-44.

²³¹ P. Duchesne de Bellecour (1867). *La Chine et le Japon: à l'Exposition Universelle*. *Revue des Deux Mondes* (1829-1971), Seconde Période, Vol.70, N°3 (1er Août 1867), p.710.

isolated, and stuck in its past glory.²³² On the other hand, Japan's side of the exhibition is presented by the author as "infinitely more complete and varied than the Chinese" in almost every domain, but also showing more ambition as it was supported by the financial participation of the Japanese government to the contrary of China.²³³ For Duchesne de Bellecour, the high concern of Japan regarding its participation to the *Exposition Universelle* stemmed from the difficulties the government was facing both nationally and internationally in relation to it opening and foreign powers. In such a way, he believed that the participation of the Japanese government was a "delicate flattery towards Europe," even though the desire of independence of the Satsuma clan could also be perceived during the fair.²³⁴ Furthermore, the author also heavily emphasises the progresses made by Japan in the domains of military, navy, clothing, and education based on European models and technologies in his description of her exhibition, as further proofs of the resolve of Japan to "put herself on an equal footing with modern nations."²³⁵ Accordingly, the comparison of the products displayed by China and Japan revealed, for Duchesne de Bellecour, two stances regarding the exhibitions and, hence, two very different types of foreign policy. However, as underlined by him, both of their presence at the exhibition regardless of their respective degree of investment could "have a considerable importance on the continuation of their relations with the peoples of the West."²³⁶ As such, once more is highlighted the new nature of international meetings of the *Expositions Universelles* starting from the 1867 edition.

Besides, this also illustrates the argument made by Brigitte Schroeder-Gudehus in her study in which she highlights the exhibitions as means of national advertising and indicative of degrees of relationship between states based upon their investment in the fairs.²³⁷ Therefore, it is possible to affirm that for a part of the French elite of the time, the products and other cultural elements displayed during the *Expositions Universelles* by nations had a clear impact on their reputation and perceived strength in the world order. Against this trend, a part of the elite became quite critical of the new turn and scale took by the fairs, such as the French artist Adalbert de Beaumont who especially targeted the fact that the *Expositions Universelles* seemed to have become an occasion and place for nations to "measure themselves against each other, take away each other's new techniques" rather than simply spreading and selling products.

Linked with this belief of an elite of a relation between the elements displayed at the fairs and the power of a nation, concerns regarding the position of France in the world order gradually became more abundant. Hence, added to his overall critique of the way art evolved in Europe in comparison to the Orient as represented in the 1867 fair, de Beaumont also asserted that due to her lack of funds, perseverance, and union for her industries, France would remain behind the United Kingdom while 'Germany' and her cheaper labour forces would eventually represent an inevitable obstacle to them.²³⁸ As a solution to this issue for France, the artist advised to fully take advantage of the free market and influence the 1867 *Exposition Universelle* created in order for her to become "the world's warehouse" and the centre of the commercial streams. From his perspective, as the industrial relations between nations are what mattered the most, being at the centre of them was a "civilisational role" that fell to France. Thus, he believed that if the 1867 fair were to be expanded and extended, it could "acquire an unparalleled importance and give to France incalculable results."²³⁹

Yet, beside the prestige gained and that could be further obtained thanks to her numerous innovations and leading role borne in the international exhibitions of the nineteenth century, France's actual scale for success or decay used by most throughout the years and the fairs lied in what was believed to be her uniqueness and main asset in the industrialisation process: art.

²³² Ibid., pp.710-721.

²³³ Ibid., p.722.

²³⁴ Ibid., p.725.

²³⁵ Ibid., p.733.

²³⁶ Ibid., p.742.

²³⁷ Schroeder-Gudehus (1989), op. cit., pp. 15-24.

²³⁸ Adalbert De Beaumont (1st November 1867). *Les Arts Décoratifs en Orient et en France: une visite à l'Orient à l'Exposition Universelle*. Revue des Deux Mondes (1829-1971), Seconde Période, vol 72, n°1, pp.159-160.

²³⁹ Ibid., p.160.

2.4.2 Art as France's Continuous Scale of Success or Decay

Indeed, even within the first months of the first French *Exposition Universelle* in 1855, the domain of art held an important place in the success of the French international and national fairs in the eyes of many of its commentators. For instance, the journalist Baul d'Ivoy, in the journal *L'Écho de l'industrie de l'Exposition Universelle de 1855* of the 24th of June 1855, expressed the large benefits for the artists and public of holding Fine-Arts exhibitions in a context of privatisation of art. From his point of view, the practice of public exhibitions of art, such as during the *Expositions Universelles*, participated in stopping the decadence of art both by sponsoring artists and their creativity, but also by allowing a large public to enlighten themselves in the domain through the opportunity of comparison.²⁴⁰ Moreover, the journalist supported the idea that art required a competitive environment in order to thrive and produce its best works. As a result, the 1855 *Exposition Universelle* represented a great opportunity for all schools of art to challenge each other in a "peaceful and fruitful struggle" in which nations ardently rival with each other, reminding him of "the good ancient times of Greece, or those of the glorious Italy of the Renaissance."²⁴¹

Similarly, on the 8th of July 1855, Henri Bacquès published an article detailing the long history of national exhibitions in France and their link with the then ongoing *Exposition Universelle*. For him, the organisation of the first national exhibitions followed years of a long series of attempts of the government of the First Republic to favour and accelerate the development of the industrial domain by generating the idea of contribution to this progress in the minds of the masses. Interestingly, the journalist then declares that it was "while the country was declared to be in danger, that the alliance between arts and science has been truly inaugurated."²⁴² For Bacquès, among the various innovations birthed from this intent, such as the *Conservatoire national des arts et métiers*²⁴³ and the *Ecole Polytechnique* both created in 1794, the national exhibitions were intended to spread and "popularise their influence, by stimulating the emulation, by organising the industrial glory."²⁴⁴ Consequently, it could be said that from the point of view of Bacquès, art was a continuous element essential for the success of the fairs and the prestige of France within them.

Likewise, regarding the 1867 edition, other journalists, such as Théodore Labourieu, began to stress the important influence France and her fairs played in combining industries and arts. Presumably, for him, what was before judged by many as "a monstrosity, a disastrous heresy" became an essential component of modern times. Labourieu even declares that "the *Expositions Universelles*, by merging art and industry in the same thought, will teach art to be more industrial, the industry to be more artistic."²⁴⁵ In consequence, the idea of "alliance between arts and science" and its importance for France, expressed a decade earlier by Henri Bacquès among other journalists and members of the French elite, still remained strong and growing in the 1867 fair. As others before him, Labourieu supported the idea that by being mixed with industry, art was not decaying but rather "on the contrary, it ennobles itself" thanks to the opportunities it provided through the use of new materials or shapes. Hence, Labourieu asserted that the *Expositions Universelles* were at the source of a revolution for art and industries that, however, remains to be fully followed and accomplished. Thus, the journalist heavily insisted on the necessity to organise the *Expositions Universelles* as he believed that they represented the first step for the great unification of humanity, in which art should play a greater role, as represented through the cosmopolite city that is the 1867 *Palais de l'Exposition* and the numerous nationalities exposing their products in it.²⁴⁶ To further strengthen his point of view, Labourieu continued his argumentation in the journal of the following weeks by citing the words of the French sculptor Jean-Baptiste-Jules Klagmann who expressed right before the 1855 *Exposition Universelle*

²⁴⁰ Baul d'Ivoy in *L'Écho de l'industrie* (24th of June 1855), op. cit., p.3 (N°33).

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.4.

²⁴² Henri Bacquès in *L'Écho de l'industrie* (8th of July 1855), op. cit., p.5 (N°35).

²⁴³ The French National Conservatory of Arts and Crafts.

²⁴⁴ Henri Bacquès in *L'Écho de l'industrie* (8th of July 1855), op. cit., p.6 (N°35).

²⁴⁵ Lesestre (1st of April 1867), op. cit., p.3 (N1).

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

that "the French industry owes its superiority over all the markets of the world, to the good taste, the imagination, the art, in a word, that underlie its products."²⁴⁷

Nevertheless, it is important to underline the fact that, from the point of view of a part of the French elite, the organisation of the exhibitions in London in 1851 and 1862 corresponded to a moment of realisation that the United Kingdom, followed by the German states and the rest of Europe, would attempt to battle France on its own domain of predilection that is art. As supported by the writer and historian Prosper Mérimée in his report of the second international exhibition of London: "Since the *Exposition Universelle* of 1851 and even since 1862, immense progress has been made throughout Europe, and, although we have not remained stationary, we cannot hide the fact that the lead we had taken has diminished, *that it even tends to disappear*." Hence, as a reaction of the success of the two British international exhibitions and in order to prevent the artistic decline of France, the *Union Centrale des Beaux-Arts Appliqués à l'Industrie*²⁴⁸ was created in 1864 as a mean to boost the domain.²⁴⁹

Quite in the same manner, Labourieu became more and more critical of the way art was realised and managed during the 1867 exhibition as time went by. In such a way, the journalist claimed that although France "still holds the lead, other countries threaten more and more in addition to rise to her level to one day surpass her in terms of originality, power and grandeur," the three essential components of art. From his perspective, the French art displayed during the 1867 exhibition remained stuck in a form of complacent praise regarding its own past without further innovating. As such, due to this lack of inspiration, Labourieu affirms that "France significantly loses her prestige and authority in the eyes of foreigners."²⁵⁰ Thus, as the essential component of France's success and originality, art also became the focal point of shared fears of France's decay once it became challenged even the slightest.

While the end of the imperial regime in 1870 due to its defeat in the Franco-Prussian war could have meant the end of a long tradition of organisation of exhibitions, their relevance as an indicator of France's condition in the world order after crises maintained their practice. Besides, the continuous involvement of some personalities in their organisation from one regime to the other, prolonged the longevity of some of the ideas, practices, and purposes borne by the fairs. For instance, the conservator Edmond Du Sommerard, after participating in the 1855 *Exposition Universelle* and obtaining the responsibility of organising multiple sections on top of the function of director of the retrospective section of "labour history" in the 1867 edition, also became general commissioner during the 1878 edition.²⁵¹ Also, the engineer Jean-Baptiste Sébastien Krantz, who was in charge of the construction of the palace of the 1867 *Exposition Universelle*, later became the general commissioner of the 1878 exhibition until 1877.²⁵² Likewise, the engineer Jean-Charles Adolphe Alphand, who led the construction of the garden of the 1867 *Exposition Universelle*, was also involved in the 1878 edition and even became the general director of the construction of the 1889 edition.²⁵³ Furthermore, Alphand in 1889 was also helped by the support of Georges Berger who gained experience in the domain thanks to his former position of assistant to Frédéric Le Play²⁵⁴ in the organisation of the 1867 fair where he also was the director of the foreign sections, and as one of the organisers of the 1878 edition.²⁵⁵ Hence, whether in the discourse of journalists²⁵⁶ or of

²⁴⁷ Lesestre (15th of April 1867), op. cit., p.3 (N2).

²⁴⁸ Central Union of Fine Arts applied to Industry.

²⁴⁹ Brunfaut (August 1876), op. cit., p.51 (VOL3,N67).

²⁵⁰ Lesestre (1st of June 1867), op. cit., p.2 (N4).

²⁵¹ Brunfaut (15th of May 1876), op. cit., p.10 (VOL3,N62).

²⁵² Brunfaut (September 1876), op. cit., p.65 (VOL3,N69).

²⁵³ Alfred Le Roy (1st of February 1887). *L'Universelle exposition de 1889 illustrée... [Texte imprimé]*. Digitised Archives (NUMP-3719), BnF, Paris, p.1 (A20,SER3,N2).

²⁵⁴ Director of the commission for the 1867 *Exposition Universelle* with Napoléon-Jérôme Bonaparte.

²⁵⁵ Le Roy (1st of March 1887), op. cit., p.1 (A20,SER3,N3).

²⁵⁶ For instance, for the newspaper *Journal Illustré des Expositions Internationales et de l'Exposition Universelle de 1889* the arrival of the 1889 edition and its success could show the world that France remained "the torchbearer of civilisation and the pioneer of progress" despite recent "temporary events" that were slowly fading in memories in Depierre de Courcelles (21st of April 1889). *Journal illustré des expositions internationales et de l'Exposition*

ministers,²⁵⁷ relatively similar phrasing or argumentation than under the Second Empire could still be found up to the end of the century. Therefore, the return of war in France ended up reviving the original purpose of the fairs, which only participated in further establishing them as a source of stability and of potential gains of prestige in the eyes of a French elite during times of national threats, crises, or even humiliation.

2.5 French Cultural Ambitions under the Third Republic (1878-1900)²⁵⁸:

2.5.1 A State's Controlled International Competition

After the damages caused by the loss of the Franco-Prussian war, the abrupt change of regime, and a century of instability, the officials of the new republican regime saw in the *Expositions Universelles* an opportunity to reverse the trend through their organisation as a state-controlled international stage strongly favouring France.

Indeed, the defeat of the Second Empire against Prussia, followed by the events of the Commune in 1871, left the new Third Republic in a difficult position both internationally and nationally. The 10 billion of francs of material losses added to the disappearance of the important industries located in the region of Alsace-Lorraine could have meant the end of France as a major European power. However, the government in 1876 decided to organise a new *Exposition Universelle* in an attempt to reconnect with its glorious past and thus counter the idea that France was now a crumbling nation. Through the words of Jules Simon, former Chief of the government, Senator and General Rapporteur of the international jury, the exhibition of 1878 aimed at showing that France "can be defeated, she cannot be killed."²⁵⁹

The benefits were thus expected to come both in terms of material and morale. In such a way, the fact that the millions of francs necessary for the organisation of the exhibition had been presumably unanimously voted by the two chambers was put forth in official documents as a symbol of unity.²⁶⁰ Similarly, the Senator and General Commissioner until 1877, Jean-Baptiste-Sébastien Krantz, addressed to the Senate that France could have easily avoided the organisation of the exhibition due to the lack of financial means, but on the opposite decided to as the government wanted to see peace in France and Europe.²⁶¹ Presented as such, the event is almost described as a burdened tradition for France, which had to continue it in order to show the path to pacifism and progress to its neighbours. The economic and morale wager of the organisation goes even further with the innovative decision of the French State to take all the expenses of the exhibition at its own charge.²⁶² Except the cost necessary for their installation, exhibitors had thus truly little constraints in joining.

Hence, as to probably guarantee the success of the 1878 exhibition, most of the elements composing its organisation and functioning were controlled by the government. For instance, each of

universelle de 1889 [Texte imprimé] : sciences, industrie, beaux-arts. Digitised Archives (NUMP-5734), BnF, Paris, p.1.

²⁵⁷ For instance, for the announcement of the organisation of the 1900 *Exposition Universelle*, the minister of commerce Jules Roches asserted, on the 14th of July 1892 in his report to the president of the republic Sadi Carnot, that this next exhibition would represent the summary of the philosophy of the nineteenth century and should be well prepared in order "to allow France to close with a peaceful triumph the century she inaugurated by organising the first national exhibitions" in *Société de langue française Japon (1892-1897). Revue française du Japon [Texte Imprimé]: publiée sous le patronage de la Société de langue française.* Digitised Archives (NUMP-15009), BnF, Paris, p.305 (1892, A1).

²⁵⁸ The following part has been extracted from the No.41 of the *Journal of the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies* published in March 2021. It has been slightly modified to better fit the overall structure of the dissertation. The original version of this section was published as Alexis Vandekerckhove (2021). *French Cultural Ambitions under the Third Republic: The Expositions Universelles (1878-1900).* *Journal of the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies.* No.41 (March 2021), pp.111-125.

²⁵⁹ Simon (1880), op. cit., pp.129-132.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., p.132.

²⁶¹ Brunfaut (August 1876), op. cit., p.57 (VOL3,N68).

²⁶² Brunfaut (November 1876), op. cit., p.123 (VOL3,N74).

the juries²⁶³ could elect their own leading members and give their judgment, but they were eventually surpassed by the final authority of the group bureaux whose members were directly named by the Minister of Agriculture and Trade.²⁶⁴ The place of the State in the exhibitions of the Third Republic did not change much afterwards. In the cases of 1889²⁶⁵ and 1900,²⁶⁶ the departmental committees' and subcommittees' members, responsible for the admission of the French products, were also eventually named by the Minister of Trade and Industry. Furthermore, the place of the Minister became even greater from July 1886 through a decree giving him also the functions of General Commissioner.²⁶⁷ Even though the function had been separated again for the 1900 edition,²⁶⁸ it represents a clear attempt at giving more direct control to the government under the parliamentary power to realise a successful unifying exhibition.

Moreover, it was frequent for some personalities to be asked to participate in the organisation of the next exhibition. For instance, Pierre-Edmond Teisserenc de Bort, Minister of Agriculture and Trade and leading organiser of the 1878 exhibition, participated in the commission of control charged to supervise the 1889 edition,²⁶⁹ while Alfred Picard, General Rapporteur of the 1889 exhibition, became General Commissioner of the 1900 edition due to his major written contribution. The indirect result of this practice is the establishment of a group of experts maintaining a form of continuity despite the changes of governments. Therefore, the *Expositions Universelles* of the Third Republic were meant in their nature to be a direct enterprise of the State.²⁷⁰

Additionally, ever since the birth of the Third Republic, European monarchies had had trouble in dealing with a neighbouring regime constantly claiming the legacy of an anti-monarchic revolution. Despite that, the 1878 exhibition provides a great example of the economic interests and power of attraction surpassing the actual diplomatic tensions. From the Prince of Wales to the Shah of Persia, many of the surrounding monarchs officially attended the opening of the exhibition or were expected to visit the event at some point.²⁷¹ This power of attraction is also particularly relevant if put in perspective with the private incentives and the number of foreign visitors. Despite the absence of Germany in the official participation, except in the Fine Arts section, German visitors represented the third most numerous nationality after the British and Belgians.²⁷² The French exhibitions were attractive beyond ideological quarrels.

Similarly, despite the controversy of the 1889 exhibition, 34 foreign countries²⁷³ officially gathered for the event. France found enormous support in the participation of the Southern American nations, which for most shared the same republican ideology. Additionally, as foreign exhibitors were supposed to gather in national commissions from which only one delegate would treat with the general commission, the practice of a real one-on-one diplomacy could be undertaken by France. In

²⁶³ The products exhibited during the *Expositions Universelles* were assigned to categories divided into subcategories possessing juries whose members were in charge of judging and rewarding them.

²⁶⁴ Simon (1880), op. cit., p.155.

²⁶⁵ Alfred Picard (1891b). *Exposition universelle internationale de 1889 à Paris [Texte imprimé] : rapport général par M. Alfred Picard*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5656967), BnF, Paris, p.23 (Tome 3).

²⁶⁶ Ministère du commerce et de l'industrie (1897). *Ministère du commerce, de l'industrie, des postes et des télégraphes. Exposition universelle internationale de 1900 à Paris. Règlement général [Texte imprimé]*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5622816), BnF, Paris, p.6.

²⁶⁷ Le Roy (1st of October 1886), op. cit., p.2 (A20,SER3,N1).

²⁶⁸ Ministère du commerce et de l'industrie (1897), op. cit., p.5.

²⁶⁹ Le Roy (1st of February 1887), op. cit., pp.3-4 (A20,SER3,N2).

²⁷⁰ E. Caillaux, Minister of Finances, to the President of the Republic on the 13th October 1877 in Brunfaut (October 1877), op. cit., p.327 (A3,N96).

²⁷¹ Brunfaut (May 1878), op. cit., pp.476-481 (N114).

²⁷² From the 1st of May to the 15th of October 1878, respectively 21,778 and 58,916 and 28,283 visitors in Brunfaut (November 1878), op. cit., p.907 (N169).

²⁷³ Official participations: Republic of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Costa-Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, USA, Cape of Good Hope, New Zealand, Tasmania, Victoria, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Hawaii, Honduras, Japan, Morocco, Mexico, Monaco, Nicaragua, Norway, Paraguay, Persia, San Marino, El Salvador, Serbia, Siam, South-African Republic, Switzerland, Uruguay, Vale of Andorra, Venezuela in Picard (1891a), op. cit., pp.359-361.

the case of the boycott of 1889,²⁷⁴ a bulletin of the 9th of August 1887 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs asked for the creation of committees for the countries which refused the invitation but possessed some private incentives.²⁷⁵ French diplomats were thus requested to use their influence in order to get the most of exhibitors allowed to participate. The tradition of the exhibitions and their prestige eased the process in some countries such as Belgium, Italy, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Consequently, within the countries which initially refused, 17 of them allowed some nationals to join as private exhibitors.²⁷⁶ Even Germany eventually agreed to allow major artists to send some works in the international section of paintings.²⁷⁷ In total, around 27,785 foreign exhibitors²⁷⁸ from more than 50 nationalities participated. Although less than the number reached in 1867, it still represents a slight increase in comparison to 1878²⁷⁹ despite a much stronger international disapproval. Here is perfectly demonstrated what Jules Simon pointed out in 1880 in regard to the international exhibitions ever since 1851, they "are the most powerful instrument of universal peace."²⁸⁰

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to believe that peace meant equality in the international competition. For instance, the "international" jury in 1878 was composed of 800 members of which half of them were French nationals named by decree on the decision of the superior commission.²⁸¹ In 1889, on the near 42 hectares solely dedicated to the various sections, France and its colonies alone occupied 32 of them.²⁸² Finally, in 1900 where the colonies were the success of an empire, the "international" jury of the subcategory number 113, entitled methods of colonisation, was composed of 12 members within which 9 were French and 2 from Russia, an allied country.²⁸³ It is thus clear that the French State was inviting the world to the *Expositions Universelles* but on its own ground, under its own rules, and for the sake of its own influence and ideology.

2.5.2 Vectors of a Republican Ideological Victory

As a result, benefiting from this advantageous state-controlled stage, the Third Republic officials took the opportunity to internationally display and legitimise the national political victory of the republican ideology. Hence, the two backbone themes of their ideological strategy at that time, the imagery and the education, transpire in the *Expositions Universelles*.

While the sole purpose of the exhibitions might not have been to only consolidate the current government, it is almost impossible to deny the presence of a consistent republican message beginning at a time where monarchists and republicans were debating within and outside of the nation. The gradual political victory of the republicans in France from 1877 comes physically in the form of an intense multiplication of republican symbols and statues. This widely known phenomenon also had its representations within the exhibitions. For instance, a statue designed by Auguste Clésinger had been inaugurated in July 1878 in the Champ-de-Mars, the centre location of the event.²⁸⁴ The particularity of this sculpture comes from its representation of the Republic, personified and seated while holding a sword and the constitution. Among the various other elements, its stance and the annotation R.F. - *République Française* - leave absolutely no doubts as regards to its meaning:

²⁷⁴ Schroeder-Gudehus, op. cit.

²⁷⁵ Picard (1891a), op. cit., pp.361-368.

²⁷⁶ Unofficial participations: Austria-Hungary, Belgium, China, Brazil, Colombia, Denmark, Egypt, Spain, Great Britain, Italy, Great Duchy of Luxemburg, Netherlands, Peru, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Great Duchy of Finland in Emile Monod (1890). *L'Exposition universelle de 1889 [Texte imprimé] : grand ouvrage illustré, historique, encyclopédique, descriptif... / E. Monod*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-3414013), BnF, Paris, p.50 (Tome 1).

²⁷⁷ Ibid., p.49.

²⁷⁸ Picard (1891b), op. cit., p.72.

²⁷⁹ Respectively 35,736 and 26,820 exhibitors in Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Simon (1880), op. cit., p.81.

²⁸¹ Picard (1891a), op. cit., p.247.

²⁸² Picard (1891b), op. cit., pp.151-154.

²⁸³ Jean-Louis Deloncle (1906). *Rapports du jury international. Classe 113 : procédés de colonisation / Exposition universelle internationale de 1900 à Paris*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5791049), BnF, Paris, p.7.

²⁸⁴ Brunfaut (July 1878), op. cit., p.708 (N143).

the victory and now reign of the republican regime. This particular attempt of combining the victory of the republican ideology with the exhibitions can also be witnessed in the very special display of national portraits in the palace of the Trocadéro. While taking example on the United Kingdom from 1866 to 1868, the intent of the Ministry of Public Education and Fine Arts was to meld the past of France with the 1878 exhibition.²⁸⁵ A total of more than 900 pieces²⁸⁶ represented various personalities of French History, from Kings to artists, in an attempt to unite in one building France as one nation through a common constructed History, a *roman national*.

Although the creation of a common French identity through a *roman national* is a common theme of this period, its application within the *Expositions Universelles* is less known. Yet, most of the organisers or officials participating in the events were actually quite outspoken on their inspiration taken from the very first revolutionary national fairs. In the detailed history of the exhibitions, present in almost any report of the exhibitions of the Third Republic, can be found the idea that workers under democratic regimes were judged far happier and much more productive.²⁸⁷ As the work of the labour forces was at the centre of the exhibitions, such statement underlines an attempt to constantly link the legacy of the revolution of 1789 to the new regime through the fairs, while taking full ownership of the progresses and successes realised during the century.

Likewise, even though the famous work in public education of the Third Republic mostly happened in the 1880s as the consequence of the Ferry Laws of 1882,²⁸⁸ the *Expositions Universelles*, ever since 1878, also had their small share of importance in this domain in development. Through a series of conferences addressed to the schoolteachers in August 1878, the goal of the Ministry of the Education and its Minister, Agénor Bardoux, was to encourage them to unite as faculties in order to be more efficient and nationally coherent in their methods. Already then, relying on books as a teaching method was considered to be a powerful ideological mean as "the good book which you put in the hands of the child enters with him in the paternal house, in the domestic dwelling, and it there spreads the moralising truths."²⁸⁹ Thus, educating the children to the republican ideas of secularism and to the new national identity would also, in theory, slowly convert entire families to the regime. Another element linking the educational ambitions of the Third Republic and the exhibitions lies in the idea that schools were forging men, thus workers who would eventually work in the industry, hence continue to improve the French products present in the *Expositions Universelles*. With schools as their basis, "the saint crusade, the crusade of science"²⁹⁰ of the education was believed to be the only way to provide security and superiority to the nation.

Consequently, the defeat of France in 1871 was frequently considered to be the result of the superiority of the Prussian education.²⁹¹ Hence motivated by nationalism and a strong sentiment of revenge, the education became the focal point of the regime and of national pride in the 1880s. The exhibitions were thus a good place to analyse the most efficient educational templates and also display the progresses made, especially in the battle between the republican and the religious educations. In the official documents of the *Expositions Universelles*, the republican education was presented as a duty that elevates men, while the religious education as an instrument of domination.²⁹² The narrative

²⁸⁵ Henry Jouin (1879). *Exposition universelle de 1878 à Paris. Notice historique et analytique des peintures, sculptures, tapisseries, miniatures, émaux, dessins, etc. exposés dans les galeries des portraits nationaux au Palais du Trocadéro [Texte imprimé]*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-6439343), BnF, Paris, p.III.

²⁸⁶ Picard (1891a), op. cit., p.241.

²⁸⁷ Simon (1880), op. cit., p.570 and Picard (1891a), op. cit., p.357.

²⁸⁸ Public schools became free (1881) and primary school mandatory (1882), while promoting secularism in the education.

²⁸⁹ Agénor Bardoux to the school teachers on the 28th of August 1878 in Unknown Author (1880). *Les conférences pédagogiques faites aux instituteurs délégués à l'Exposition universelle de 1878 [Texte imprimé]*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5473872), BnF, Paris, p.191.

²⁹⁰ Simon (1880), op. cit., p.576.

²⁹¹ Alfred Picard (1891c). *Exposition universelle internationale de 1889 à Paris [Texte imprimé] : rapport général par M. Alfred Picard*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5675746), BnF, Paris, p.357 (Tome 4).

²⁹² Alfred Picard (1892). *Exposition universelle internationale de 1889 à Paris [Texte imprimé] : rapport général par M. Alfred Picard*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5656736), BnF, Paris, pp.182-185 (Tome 9).

of the Third Republic hence presented the republican ideology as in perfect accordance with the core concept of the *Expositions Universelles*: a path towards progress and modernity.

In the context of the 1900 exhibition, the contemporary colonisation was described in the same objective of elevating humans, a way "to strip away from barbarism immense territories for too long ignored."²⁹³ The end goal was to ensure both material and moral conquests in order to reach unity and stability. As such, the teaching of French was considered to be the "most active agent of colonisation."²⁹⁴ This idea was also put forth with the presence of the Alliance Française in the colonial section of the exhibition. Although the private organisation was only one among many others, its position of "collaborator of the French State"²⁹⁵ made it a great example of the colonisation methods of France during the time of the exhibition. The private society, created in 1883 and quickly recognised as of public utility, participated in the exhibitions from 1889.²⁹⁶ For the first international colonial exhibition in 1900, the society had been granted a land and the establishment of a building, all paid by the official colonial administration.²⁹⁷ In such a way, the private society was presented during the exhibition as a private influential patriotic force voluntarily participating in the spread of the French culture hand in hand with the Third Republic. Therefore, displaying a successful education of their natives would prove again the greatness of a particular civilisation over its rivals'.

2.5.3 The Embodiment of French Identity and Glory

Across these three editions, the officials further promoted the glory of the French template of civilisation by merging the traditional and modern French identities with the idea of success in the international competition.

Indeed, despite the change of political regime in 1870, the idea that the industries could not be competitive internationally without the implication of arts stayed in the speech of French officials, but most importantly for France, stayed at the core of any universal international exhibitions. The Senator and General Commissioner Krantz even insisted in his speech to the Senate that France "reappears in one of these pacific battles where strength does not surpass intelligence and work, and where science and good taste reign supreme."²⁹⁸ As seen by the French organisers, science and good taste, or industries and arts, were the fundamental elements on which the exhibitions were based, and thus constantly kept this idea alive. In order to protect their own supremacy in this domain, a reform in 1879 had been established, making the teaching of drawing in schools mandatory.²⁹⁹ The importance of arts was such that famous national schools of arts and drawing, such as the one of Sèvres or the *Gobelins*, were planned to be put forth and celebrated for their contribution to the domain of the industries during the 1889 exhibition.³⁰⁰

Even more than that, science and arts were sometimes considered to be the "two elements of civilisation"³⁰¹ in the history of humanity. Consequently, not conforming to this model would make the participation rather unsuccessful if not self-harming in the international competition. The example of the lack of interest of the United Kingdom after 1862 and the non-participation of Prussia in 1878,

²⁹³ Jean-Louis Deloncle, State Councillor and Secretary of the Superior Council of the colonies in Deloncle (1906), op. cit., p.5.

²⁹⁴ Jules Charles-Roux (1901). *Exposition universelle de 1900. Publications de la Commission chargée de préparer la participation du ministère des colonies. Les Colonies françaises [Texte imprimé]*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-6184265), BnF, Paris, p.11.

²⁹⁵ Henri Froideveaux (1900). *L'Oeuvre scolaire de la France aux colonies [Texte imprimé] / Henri Froideveaux. [suivi de] Survivance de l'esprit français aux colonies perdues / par Victor Tantet*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5701469), BnF, Paris, p.20.

²⁹⁶ Unknown Author (1889). *Colonies françaises et pays de protectorat [Texte imprimé] : catalogue officiel / République française. Exposition universelle de 1889*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-83092), BnF, Paris, p.23.

²⁹⁷ Jules Charles-Roux (1902). *L'organisation et le fonctionnement de l'exposition des colonies et pays de protectorat : les colonies françaises / rapport général*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5471602), BnF, Paris, p.194.

²⁹⁸ Brunfaut (August 1876), op. cit., p.57 (VOL3,N68).

²⁹⁹ Picard (1892), op. cit., p.180-181 (TOME 9).

³⁰⁰ Le Roy (1st of June 1888), op. cit., p.3 (A21,SER3,N9).

³⁰¹ Simon (1880), op. cit., p.181.

which industries were presumably too militarised, even support the adoption of this idea and the compliance of foreign participants. The good conjugation of industries and arts, the French template of modernity, thus became the scale of reference for the success of nations during the time of the events. By investing every decade in the organisation of the *Expositions Universelles*, France constantly had the opportunity to keep the international exhibitions under her own vision and to make of Paris their stronghold.

Additionally, by gathering the entirety of the best industries and forms of art and inviting the world to the same location each time, the *Expositions Universelles* confirmed the dominance of Paris as the heart and head of the nation. Through the exhibitions, Paris, "the capital city of science and art [...] Should now be the symbol of the invigorating strength, after having been for so long the symbol of the terrible force."³⁰² After a century of instability and international threats mainly birthed in Paris, the exhibitions were an opportunity to restore the image of the capital city, and consequently, of the French nation. Nevertheless, the role of the city of Paris in the exhibitions was not limited to being the exclusive location of the *Expositions Universelles*. In collaboration with the State, the capital city financially contributed to their organisation. Besides, Paris was also the only town participating in the republican exhibitions as an exhibitor through its own pavilion,³⁰³ making of it an active challenger in the international competition. Moreover, the *Expositions Universelles* also attempted to make the city the capital of the modern world. For instance, the very controversial project of the Eiffel Tower, heavily supported by the Minister Edouard Lockroy, was meant for the "whole world to turn the head, look at France and to be concerned about the exhibition."³⁰⁴ By breaking the record of the tallest construction of the world, the goal was to demonstrate the power of France in the "art of metal constructions,"³⁰⁵ which could also be interpreted as the monument physically representing and promoting the French path to modernity: the alliance of industries and arts.

The practice of the *Expositions Universelles* also came into place in a period of time where many art critics and artists considered that the industrialisation ripped European art from its renowned creativity.³⁰⁶ In consequence, the Orient or the foreign, as not yet modernised areas of the world, were viewed as a haven for art. In parallel, the construction of national identities brought attention to the study of the past and their own origins. As pointed at by Alfred Picard about the 1878 exhibition, "the scholars wanted to break the mysteries of the extinct civilisations."³⁰⁷ In the same way as the concept of "Greek Miracle"³⁰⁸ touched the domain of science, Greece in the exhibitions was frequently indirectly presented as the fantasised far originator of most modern European identities. For instance, the exhibition of ancient art at the Trocadéro in 1878 started its narrative with Greek art as the source, until reaching the Italian and French renaissances.³⁰⁹ Likewise, as regards to some of the education analyses of 1889,³¹⁰ ancient Greece was also presented as the first step. The consequence of such vision is the apparition of a strong interest in the ancient oriental cultures related to Greece. As explained by Donald Malcolm Reid,³¹¹ European nation states in the second half of the nineteenth century saw in ancient Egypt the precursor of ancient Greece. As a result, Europeans tried to save and protect these abandoned cultural elements necessary to indirectly understand the origins of their

³⁰² Jules Simon on the 1889 exhibition in Henri De Parville (1889). *L'exposition universelle de 1889*. Journal de la société statistique de Paris, 30, p.331.

³⁰³ Le Roy (1st of April 1887), op. cit., p.6 (A20,SER3,N5).

³⁰⁴ E. Lockroy in Monod, op. cit., p.XVII.

³⁰⁵ Alfred Picard (1891d). *Exposition universelle internationale de 1889 à Paris [Texte imprimé] : rapport général par M. Alfred Picard*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5657087), BnF, Paris, p.265 (Tome 2).

³⁰⁶ De Beaumont (1st of November 1867), op. cit., pp.154-157.

³⁰⁷ Picard (1891a), op. cit., p.241.

³⁰⁸ The fantasised origins of science minimising the place of Asia and Africa in Petitjean (2005), op. cit., p.6.

³⁰⁹ Karel Versnaeyen (1878). *L'Art ancien au Trocadéro, exposition universelle de Paris, 1878. Illustrations photographiques par E. Letellier [Texte imprimé]*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-1180634), BnF, Paris.

³¹⁰ Picard (1891c), op. cit., pp.140-141.

³¹¹ Donald Malcolm Reid (1992). Cultural Imperialism and Nationalism: The Struggle to Define and Control the Heritage of Arab Art in Egypt. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Cambridge University Press, Vol.21, n°1, pp.57-76.

newly defined national identities. Within the republican fairs, the display of Greek or foreign related elements was contributing to the idea that the new French identity was legitimate due to the fact that it was taking its roots in a very distant past surrounded by prestige and glory.

The direct consequence of this way of thought is an ambition of universality, particularly in terms of knowledge. The organisation of the exhibition implied the production, mostly ordered, of a vast range of national and international knowledge, which was then gathered, analysed, and finally compiled in dedicated libraries, ever since 1851.³¹² By the sole fact that each section of the event had a jury in charge of comparing the different realisations, written traces of the products presented or official methods used in one particular country were produced. For instance, the Japanese Ministry of Public Education sent an official catalogue redacted by its own Chief Secretary in 1878,³¹³ in order to retrace the entire history of public education in Japan ever since the new imperial era and underline the major progresses made. For France, the exhibition thus provided an encyclopaedic knowledge of the activities of the world in almost every major domain, with detailed data, methods, and experiences. This foreign knowledge could then be used as a form of inspiration in order to correct the weaknesses of France. The *Expositions Universelles* hence also represented a fortunate opportunity for France to practice a form of wide accumulation of knowledge as a step in the work of universalism and progress.

On a related note, although colonies played a role early on in the exhibitions, even the major ones of France, such as Algeria, were mostly presented for their natural resources and products rather than anything else.³¹⁴ Moreover, only a very limited number of them, both for the organiser and the participating empires, were displayed. The actual international comparison of the colonisation work had thus not yet been done. For France, the major reason as to why the colonies had not been officially brought into the international competition was that the new acquisitions from 1878 were judged too recent and not yet enough developed in 1889 in order to assess the potential progresses realised.³¹⁵ Without any progress displayed, there would be no gain of prestige. Hence, waiting until the 1900 exhibition was considered to be much more beneficial for the image of France.

Accordingly, the creation of the seventeenth category dedicated to colonisation, and more especially the subcategory number 113 - methods of colonisation -, represents the attempt to bring colonies into the spotlight as one of the new major elements of national power. Through this specific subcategory, the Ministry of Colonies became a simple exhibitor with the purpose of showcasing the place of the State in the colonisation. The particular method adopted by France in the administration and development of the colonies relied on the collaboration of national organisations and private societies. On the one hand, national organisations such as the *Office Colonial* and the *École Coloniale* aimed at teaching nationals about the colonies and inspire "French sentiments"³¹⁶ to the natives. On the other hand, the numerous private societies, such as the *Union Coloniale* for the economy or the *Comité Dupleix* for the education,³¹⁷ acted as auxiliary elements reinforcing the empire in its weaknesses. By being displayed and celebrated with the Ministry of Colonies at the exhibition, France was in a way showcasing the presumed unity of the nation behind the idea of colonisation, after years of criticism as regards to its necessity, morality, and cost.

Through this first international colonial *exposition*, France had the ambition to not only teach its citizens about the recently acquired colonies but also to prove to its neighbours and rivals that she "had learned again the so long forgotten art of colonisation."³¹⁸ The idea of a rebirth of the French colonial empire transpires during the exhibition through the deliberate choice of French architecture

³¹² Picard (1891a), op. cit., p.114.

³¹³ Ryuichi Kuki (May 1878). *Catalogue des objets envoyés à l'Exposition universelle de Paris (mai 1878) par le ministère de l'instruction publique du Japon [Texte imprimé]*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-6581785), BnF, Paris.

³¹⁴ Exposition internationale (1867), op. cit.

³¹⁵ Deloncle (1906), op. cit., p.5.

³¹⁶ Georges Scellier de Gisors (1900). *Les Colonies françaises et Pays de Protectorat à l'Exposition [Texte imprimé] / par G. Scellier de Gisors*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-1100324), BnF, Paris, p.414.

³¹⁷ Ibid., pp.661-690.

³¹⁸ Deloncle (1906), op. cit., p.512.

of the pavilion of the Ministry of Colonies, meant to represent the central power, among the huge variety of indigenous buildings.³¹⁹ Furthermore, the delegate of the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs and of the Colonies, Jules Charles-Roux, expressively asked for the creation of a statue in homage of Jules Ferry in order to celebrate the man responsible for this renaissance.³²⁰ Finally, within the pavilion itself, the names of most of the major contributors of the past and contemporary colonial enterprises were being displayed.³²¹ Hence, the pavilion of the Ministry of Colonies was the utmost celebration of the French empire and its template of civilisation, a republican pantheon dedicated to their glory.

In the end, by directly controlling the organisation of the three editions of the *Expositions Universelles* and by merging the national identity with the idea of success in the fairs, the officials of the Third Republic ensured a favourable international stage on which the newly created nation could promote the rebirth, victory, and modern empowerment of its ideology, and consequently, civilisation. Thus, as the ideology of the regime became more rooted, the emphasis in the exhibitions gradually shifted from a traditional republican identity of France in 1878 to a more modern one in 1900: from legitimisation to affirmation.

However, the practice of shaping the events demonstrated by the case of the Third Republic did not remain publicly unnoticed, as opponents of the exhibitions expressed concerns as soon as 1878 regarding a presumed tentative of hijacking the event for the benefits of the government.³²² Even decades later, artists officially involved in the exhibitions kept emphasising the fact that art should remain separated from any uses for the sake of national pride.³²³

Nevertheless, the complexification of the World's Fairs and the multiplication of specialised exhibitions gradually brought an end to the *Expositions Universelles* as known in the late nineteenth century in France. Industrials came to abandon them for the sake of trade fairs, leaving the colonial and artistic domains the sole masters of the events.³²⁴ In addition, the creation of the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) in Paris on the 22nd of November 1928, as an international organisation, gave a clear and defined framework for country members to compete. In consequence, through a change in the nature of the exhibitors, but also more variety of the organising nations and more balanced settings, particular national ambitions became much more difficult to promote.

In conclusion, the historical study of the numerous *Expositions Universelles* organised in France in the second half of the nineteenth century reveals how both regimes of the Second Empire and the Third Republic developed, controlled, and used them in a very similar way: as self-glorifying international stages.

As the *Expositions Universelles* took their roots in a French revolutionary 'tradition' from the end of the previous century and as they physically represented the French understanding of civilisation on top of the peculiar way to industrialisation for France, both regimes had solid ground to repeatedly claim for France a form of prestige stemming from their organisation. Mainly held either during or after periods of crisis in order to counter them, the exhibitions were as much aimed nationally than internationally, towards her European neighbours and most importantly her own rivals.

In such a way, after having missed the opportunity to be the first to open the fairs to the international, the Second Empire held a particularly massive and innovation-oriented edition in 1855 in an attempt to 'retake control' of the events and fiercely compete. Similar preparations were arranged in the case of the 1867 *Exposition Universelle*, thus further confirming a certain intent of the imperial regime to conserve a leading position in this type of events. But, from that moment on, their shift

³¹⁹ Scellier de Gisors (1900), op. cit., p.58.

³²⁰ Ibid., p.66.

³²¹ Ibid., p.90.

³²² Brunfaut (December 1876), op. cit., p.133 (VOL3,N75).

³²³ The art Historian Léonce Bénédicté in Louis Liard and Léonce Bénédicté (1904). *Rapports du jury international, introduction générale. Tome premier [Texte imprimé] / Exposition universelle internationale de 1900, à Paris*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5844551), BnF, Paris, p.133.

³²⁴ Vasseur (2005), op. cit., pp.593-594.

towards diplomatic meetings gave them a new nature and importance in international relations which eventually strengthened the link between displayed products or investments in the fairs and perceptions of states' conditions and statuses in the world.

While the change of regime in 1870 could have meant the end of the practice of the *Expositions Universelles* and their benefits for France in terms of prestige, the difficult context of the period made the organisation of the 1878 edition particularly useful to present the glorious return of France on the international scene in a government-controlled environment. With similar ambitions and even sharing some of the same organisers as its predecessors, this edition confirmed their relevance and usefulness for the republican regime who dived further in the 'tradition'. In the perspective of further improving the powerful and glorious image of the nation displayed thanks to the fairs and increasing the prestige gained from them, the French officials of the republic developed them more and more with the intent of making France's template of civilisation their key to success.

Chapter 3: France in Egypt after the Construction of the Suez Canal

Differently from the classic trends of the scholarship focusing for the most part on economic, financial, cultural, and language perspectives,³²⁵ this empirical chapter rather centres on the

³²⁵ Concerning the literature on the topic of France in Egypt in the second half of the nineteenth century, most studies tend to take the perspective of either trade and investments or culture and language as their primary focus. For the former, studies particularly lean towards the last decades of century in which the years 1875-1876 have been located as the turning point for French investments by the reference on the subject, Jean Bouvier. In his work focusing on financial groups and issues, Bouvier considers the economic interests as the source of many of the political and diplomatic decisions made in Egypt by either France or the United Kingdom, including the 1882 intervention, see Jean Bouvier (1960). *Les intérêts financiers et la question d'Égypte (1875-1876)*. *Revue Historique*, T.224, Fasc.1 (1960), pp.75-104. Yet, going against one of Bouvier's conclusions and the general idea that the 1882 intervention ruined the French interests and investments in Egypt for the benefit of the British, the investigation realised by Samir Saul, on the period from 1882 to 1914, further contributes to the study of the *forces profondes* in Egypt from the perspective of economy. Saul thus highlights the multiple paradoxes resulting from the British occupation, such as the success of the absence of implementation of new strategies from the French-owned companies despite the new context. Although Saul briefly mentions the early years of the Suez Canal company, his analysis primarily centres on either capital, financial matters, events happening from 1882, and also other companies, see Samir Saul (1997). *La France et l'Égypte de 1882 à 1914, Intérêts économiques et implications politiques*. Institut de la gestion publique et du développement économique, Comité pour l'histoire économique et financière de la France, Paris. More targeted studies are also taking similar themes and timeframe, such as Kais Firro regarding the prosperity of the town of Marseille relative to French commercial and financial interests in Egypt, see Kais Firro (1988). *Marseille et les intérêts français en Égypte, 1870-1913*. *Annales du Midi*, T.100, No.181, pp.63-80. As mentioned above, the rest of the scholarship on this time period tends to take the perspectives of culture and language as their main focus. Magdi Abdel Hafez Saleh thus analyses the cultural relation of France and Egypt and argues that they have been at the source of many interactions and exchanges between the two countries, as for instance the decision of Muhammad Ali Pasha to have chosen France as a model of modernity resulting in French experts coming to Egypt and Egyptian students to France. The author hence claims the uniqueness of this relation that impacted Egypt to the point of having kept French institutions, a few systems, names, and even traces of language in some cases and impacted a French elite attracted by her art and the legacy of the 1798-1801 expedition of Napoléon I, see Magdi Abdel Hafez Saleh (2004). *Les Rapports Culturels entre la France et l'Égypte*. *Cahiers de l'AIEF*, 56, pp.57-66. Similarly, Doha Chiha asserts that the development of education has been the main vector of the spread of the French language in Egypt, thus becoming a "language of culture," to the contrary of other Northern-African countries that witnessed its rise due to colonisation. As such, Chiha declares that the creation of schools and other institutions based on French models influenced generations of Egyptian leaders and cemented the position of France to the point of allowing her to resist the effects of the British occupation, see Doha Chiha (2004). *La Francophonie en Égypte, aperçu historique*. *Cahiers de l'AIEF*, 56, pp.67-73. Caroline Piquet even describe the French language in Egypt as a language of work as it went beyond the Egyptian elites to the workers, notably through the Suez Canal company. Piquet even mentions the civilising mission borne by the company, yet, only from a religious and teaching of language perspective, see Caroline Piquet (2012). *L'enseignement du français dans la région du canal de Suez (de la fin du XIXe siècle à 1956)*. *Actes des congrès nationaux des sociétés historiques et scientifiques*, 133-5, pp.125-135. Regarding the topic of the Franco-British rivalry in Egypt in the second half of the nineteenth century, a relative scarcity can be observed in the scholarship. Although not entirely focusing on this aspect, the study conducted by Richard A. Atkins provides some elements of answer on the rivalry happening at that time. Meant as a complement to Bouvier's work, Atkins aims at providing the British perspective on the events of the same year. Consequently, Atkins describes some of the issues that rose from the two countries divergent interests despite their tentative of cooperation to solve the Egyptian financial crisis. Nevertheless, similarly to the previous statement on the overall status of the scholarship, Atkins' analysis exclusively focuses on issues of the financial sector, see Richard A. Atkins (1974). *The Origins of the Anglo-French Condominium in Egypt, 1875-1876*. *The Historian*, Vol.36, No.2 (February 1974), pp.264-282. Other works rather examined the impact of the rivalry in very precise and narrow cases. For instance, Byron D. Cannon considered the role and influence of the Franco-British rivalry, before the 1904 *Entente Cordiale*, on the methods of studies of European law in Egypt. Indeed, the teaching of law in Egypt in the 1880's went under a growing French influence, later used a way to embarrass the British occupation, see Byron D. Cannon (1975). *Perspectives politiques de l'enseignement du droit européen en Égypte avant 1900*. *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, 20, pp.35-48. More general works on the Franco-British rivalry sometimes mention the case of Egypt, but mostly, as the above studies, starting from the late 1870s or the beginning of the 1880s, and, from the perspective of colonialism, such as Martin Thomas and Richard Toye, in Martin Thomas and Richard Toye (2017) *Arguing about Empire, Imperial Rhetoric in Britain and France, 1882-1956*. Oxford University Press, Oxford. Lastly, major works on the Suez Canal in the international relations of the second half of the nineteenth century are also very few in number and or frequently outdated due to having been written in the first half of the twentieth century. Studies on its creator, Ferdinand de Lesseps, also suffer from this scarcity. As a result, recent studies attempting to tackle the question of the Suez Canal usually focus on the company rather than the canal itself, and/or tend to be rather wide studies as many

underdeveloped topic of the diplomatic utilisation, for reasons and concerns of prestige, of the French civilisational achievements in Egypt in the discourses and argumentations of a French elite. Indeed, as described by Jean-Joseph Tarayre, Lieutenant-General under Napoléon Bonaparte and former deputy, in a document of August 1844 published in 1855, Egypt had always been a precious region whether for its knowledge of science, its art, its "premature civilisation," and geographical position.³²⁶ In consequence, from his perspective, the opening of the isthmus of Suez appealed to every European nation as most of them possess interests in the region and its surroundings: to name a few, the Netherlands with its Eastern colonies, the United Kingdom with India, and Austria with its Italian possessions needing to recapture their central place of commerce with the Orient.³²⁷ Furthermore, Tarayre also added that even a rising power like Prussia and the Northern German States had a keen interest in participating to the "great commerce and civilisation of the globe."³²⁸ Yet, although most should be in favour of the opening, he underlines that the United Kingdom might actually benefit from opposing the project as, from his point of view, she seems to ambition to control most of the world's trade and the domination of all the seas while the other European powers diminish their own strengths through continental wars. Nevertheless, Tarayre insisted that the ambitions of the United Kingdom were too big to remain solely kept by them, due to the fact that the world was entering a hardly stoppable new era of transition and evolution that was only waiting for a major work of Fine-Arts in order to initiate this time of progress: the Suez Canal.

3.1 The Suez Canal, between Universal Views and France's Prestige

3.1.1 A Project for Civilisation and Humanity

In such a way, Jean-Joseph Tarayre rather described his contemporary time as a moment of stagnation of art that could be broken through the union of the West and the East represented by the opening of the isthmus.³²⁹ In a poetic manner, Tarayre even compared the idea of the Suez Canal to a temple of progress similar to a place of pilgrimage in which all could experience the union of mankind, and hence concluded that Fine-Arts' "civilising power is the greatest means of advancing humanity on the path it must take."³³⁰ Thus, Jean-Joseph Tarayre emphasised that the realisation of the project could be easily achieved if France and the United Kingdom were to work together, or if the latter were to ever reject it, with the nations of central Europe as it would benefit them all both for their navy and trade. As such, Tarayre believed that the project would contribute to give back the natural right of all nations of the world to freely communicate with one another.³³¹

Quite similarly, in his essay of the 15th of November 1854 regarding his own project for the Suez

choose to cover the entirety of the course of the project, sometimes even from its first idea in the 1800s to more contemporary issues in the 1950s. As a first example, see Hubert Bonin (2010). *History of the Suez Canal Company, 1858-2008, Between Controversy and Utility*. Droz, Genève. As a second example, Caroline Piquet takes the Suez Canal and its company, from 1854 to 1956, as a demonstration of the concession system used by Europeans as a tool of colonial domination. Hence, opposing the view at the time that the company was helping to modernise Egypt, Piquet asserts that it was actually rather the cause of Egypt's economic dispossession, see Caroline Piquet (2004). *The Suez Company's Concession in Egypt, 1854-1956: Modern Infrastructure and Local Economic Development*. *Entreprise & Society*, Vol.5, No.1 (March 2004), pp.107-127. But, once more, this study rather fits into the domain of colonial studies. As a last example, Zachary Karabell provides a detailed history of the construction of the canal and of Ferdinand de Lesseps' motivations, as a successor of the Saint-Simonian movement, of economical, industrial, and civilisational nature, see Zachary Karabell (2003). *Parting the Desert: The Creation of the Suez Canal*. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. Yet, the analysis of the diplomatic use of this civilisational achievement in the discourses and argumentations of, not only Lesseps but also, a diverse part of the French elite as a way to gain or, at least, maintain France's prestige in the region once facing the fall of her influence remains quite underdeveloped.

³²⁶ Jean Joseph Tarayre (1855). *Importance de l'Égypte et de l'isthme de Suez [Texte imprimé] / [signé Tarayre]*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-6210562), BnF, Paris, p.1.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.21.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.22.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.23-24.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.24-25.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, p.26.

Canal addressed to the Egyptian Khedive Mohamed Sa'id Pasha, Ferdinand de Lesseps presented the project as being beneficial to many if not all nations of the world. To name a few, Lesseps asserts for instance that 'Germany' would see a complement to its new marine routes, Austria would benefit from new trading opportunities for its products, Spain a better access to its possessions in the Philippines and the Netherlands to Java. Moreover, even the United Kingdom, as one of the "two nations placed at the head of civilisation" with France, should also be in theory supportive of the project through the eagerness of opening one of the biggest trading routes of the world.³³²

Furthermore, Lesseps also frequently presented the project as a mean of bringing civilisation to remote places of the world. As soon as 1855, Lesseps asserted that the canal would "open to the universal civilisation vast lands nowadays foreign to the world trade movement."³³³ Consequently, by linking Europe and the Orient, the canal held the ambition of making of the Red Sea one of the main trade routes of the world. Lesseps also insisted that the opening of the isthmus would also benefit the Ottoman empire, then administratively struggling due to the great size of its territory. Hence, Lesseps advocated that European capitals and intellect represented by the industrial project of the canal were the keys for the future of the empire. Indeed, from his point of view, the prosperity of the Orient then was "related to the interests of civilisation in general," and the best way to attain it was "to break the natural barriers that still separate men, races, and nations."³³⁴ But Lesseps went even further in his reasoning as he supported the idea that while both "war and trade civilised the world," the era of war would end thanks to the current trends developing. In that way, he believed that only trade would "pursue its conquests," which could be further facilitated by new routes such as the one opened by the Suez Canal.³³⁵ As a conclusion, Lesseps ended his presentation by inviting the rest of the world "to participate in the benefits of civilisation" by getting them closer to Europe thanks to his project.³³⁶

However, it is important to underline that Ferdinand de Lesseps was not the only French national involved in the project who quickly considered and spoke of it as a work of civilisation and progress at that time. In their report of the 20th of March 1855 on the topic of the potential financial gains that could be made from the opening of the isthmus, the two engineers Linant-Bey and Eugène Mougel-Bey³³⁷ concluded their analysis by claiming that it "will offer not only unquestionable profits, but it will be even the greatest work of progress and civilisation that will have produced the nineteenth century."³³⁸ Still years later, Ferdinand de Lesseps even ended his speech of the 12th of February 1865 in Lyon on the borrowed quote of a fellow national that the "first half of the nineteenth century opened with harsh wars between great Christian nations, the second must see the completion of the work of civilisation in the Orient."³³⁹

On a related note, associating the project, humanity, and religion in a conference to the *Cercle des Beaux-Arts* on the 8th of December 1866 Lesseps linked the progress of the project of the opening of the isthmus of Suez to the grand "history of humanity." Besides, Lesseps went even as far as to mention that, thanks to the investors and the help of France, this project made true the remark of the prophet of the Old Testament Isaiah that the region would disappear and be replaced by rivers of fresh water.³⁴⁰ In consequence, almost a the realisation of a prophecy, it is quite frequent to witness in

³³² Ferdinand de Lesseps (1855). *Percement de l'isthme de Suez... [Texte imprimé] / documents publiés par Ferdinand de Lesseps*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-4224133), BnF, Paris, pp.50-51 (Tome 1).

³³³ Ibid., p.19.

³³⁴ Ibid., p.39.

³³⁵ Ibid., pp.39-40.

³³⁶ Ibid., p.40.

³³⁷ From their respective birth names Louis Maurice Adolphe Linant de Bellefonds and Dieudonné Eugène Mougel, working for the Khedive of Egypt.

³³⁸ Ibid., p.214.

³³⁹ Ferdinand de Lesseps (1865). *Visites à l'isthme de Suez en 1855 et 1865, conférence faite à Lyon, le 12 février 1865, par M. Ferdinand de Lesseps, sténographiée par M. A. A. [Texte imprimé]*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-1194820), BnF, Paris, p.16.

³⁴⁰ Ferdinand de Lesseps (1867). *Conférence de M. Ferdinand de Lesseps à Nantes sur le canal maritime de Suez [Texte imprimé] : Cercle des Beaux-arts, 8 décembre 1866 / [sténographié par A. Sabbatier]*. Digitised Archives (NUMS-100368001), BnF, Paris, pp.4-5.

Ferdinand de Lesseps' speeches and writings, numerous mentions of the very long tradition and ambitions of humanity his project of the Suez Canal fulfilled through its construction, even more emphasised by the long history of unachieved attempts the region went under as regards to the isthmus he constantly details in most of his interventions.

Thus, thought from its earliest stages as a project for civilisation and humanity as it would contribute to bring nations of the world closer to one another on top of being beneficial for all, Ferdinand de Lesseps, as others before him, believed that no one would purposefully oppose its achievement. Yet, the actual diplomatic context and economic interests produced a very different outcome than Lesseps' initial expectations, most especially regarding the role the United Kingdom would play in its progress.

3.1.2 A Project for Peace and Prosperity

In his letter of the 28th of February 1855 to the Viscount Stratford Canning, British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Ferdinand de Lesseps evoked the idea of the opening of the Suez isthmus in relation to the tensions between France and the United Kingdom for the control of Egypt.³⁴¹ As the two European nations were allied at that time due to the occurrence of the Crimean war, Lesseps seized the opportunity to detail the reasons for the importance of keeping the truce in the long term. Lesseps mentioned the investments of the United Kingdom in French companies or even the massive development of international trade as many reasons for the rapprochement of the countries. Consequently, Ferdinand de Lesseps went even as far as to claim that now the two nations shared a common ambition greater than past jealousy concerning territorial extensions: "the triumph of law over strength, of civilisation over barbarism."³⁴²

However, from his perspective, the question of the control of Egypt might become the reason for return of the tensions. Regarding the legitimacy of France in the region, Ferdinand de Lesseps mentions in his letter the former ambition of France to possess the region and the blood spilled by the French on multiple occasions in order to achieve this goal.³⁴³ While he then proceeds to explain his understanding as to why the United Kingdom would oppose such acquisition by her rival, he also emphasises that France would prevent the same thing coming from her. Nevertheless, Lesseps optimistically claims that he thinks the United Kingdom would not invest too many resources in a conquest for a transit region as long as the route to India would remain open, while France would not pursue a project "of another time" as long as her rival does not invade Egypt. On this last point, Lesseps insists that it would be counter-productive for France to attempt such former ambition as the country's policy has consisted for the past 50 years "to contribute to the prosperity of Egypt as much by her advice as by the help of a large number of French people well-known in the sciences, in the administration, in all the arts of peace and war."³⁴⁴

Furthermore, from the point of view of Ferdinand de Lesseps, the prosperity of the Orient was closely linked to the interests of civilisation, and as such, one of the best ways to achieve it was to destroy the barriers still separating nations and populations, i.e. realising the opening of the isthmus.³⁴⁵ As soon as the 25th of March 1856, Lesseps affirmed that the Suez Canal represented great and "universal interests." In such a way, the Suez company was considered to have the responsibility of this "powerful element of civilisation and wealth" and hence, was expected by Lesseps himself to publish publicly its results and struggles in a semi-official journal.³⁴⁶ Through this, the intent of Lesseps was to bring back the spotlight on Egypt in order to create interest and investments. As he

³⁴¹ Ferdinand de Lesseps (1869). *Égypte et Turquie [Texte imprimé] / par Ferdinand de Lesseps*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5803516), BnF, Paris, p.44.

³⁴² Ibid., pp.45-46.

³⁴³ Ibid., p.46.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., p.47.

³⁴⁵ Ferdinand de Lesseps (1854-1856). *Lettres, journal et documents pour servir à l'histoire du canal de Suez [Texte imprimé] / Ferdinand de Lesseps*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-6544615), BnF, Paris, p.241 (Série 1).

³⁴⁶ Ferdinand de Lesseps (1890). *Origines du canal de Suez [Texte imprimé] / F. de Lesseps*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-941145), BnF, Paris, pp.110-111.

emphasised, the fate of the Suez Canal was also linked with the one of Egypt as a whole. No prosperity could be achieved for the company if Egypt were to remain underdeveloped.³⁴⁷ Similarly, in April 1856, Lesseps' collaborator and member of the international commission of the Suez project Jules Barthélémy-Saint-Hilaire considered the potential new path that could be opened by the canal as "an immense progress for civilisation" on top of the tremendous savings it would create on trade. In addition, Barthélémy-Saint-Hilaire believed that the path would also, as a result, allow civilisation to spread to areas and peoples who do not yet enjoy its "touch and benefits."³⁴⁸ Thanks to its great significance both in terms of trade and humanitarian values, Barthélémy-Saint-Hilaire viewed the opening of the isthmus as "one of the most useful and most honourable enterprise of the nineteenth century."³⁴⁹ Thus, Barthélémy-Saint-Hilaire defended the position that the path decided through the concession of the 30th of November 1854 was an innovation of the century that will not disturb anything in Egypt while it will enrich the country by "bringing on its border the perpetual passage of civilisation."³⁵⁰

Nonetheless, Ferdinand de Lesseps heavily insists that the situation in Egypt still presents huge risks of an explosion of tensions, hence of an end to the alliance. In order to counter this constant threat, Lesseps proposed to the British ambassador a solution that would relieve the United Kingdom of her concerns regarding the passage of her trade route to India in the core of Egypt and cement the alliance with France: the opening of the isthmus of Suez, located at the limits of the country and "open to the whole world." Hence, not only for the prosperity of Egypt, but also for the sake of the alliance and peace in the world it ensures, Lesseps shared his project idea to the ambassador in the hope that it would bolster its support within the debates of the British political sphere.³⁵¹ In a similar way, Ferdinand de Lesseps frequently evoked in his letters to British officials the peaceful nature of the accomplishment of the Suez Canal. As such, the French entrepreneur qualified the project itself as a "work of peace, of progress and of civilisation" in a letter to Richard Cobden on the 22nd of November 1856.³⁵²

Yet, the discourse of Ferdinand de Lesseps regarding the opposition of the British to the project changed years later. While he initially hoped that most would give up on their feelings of jealousy and other grudges based on the concern of seeing the French influence dominate the world, the fact that a part of the British politicians in 1864 still attacked the project brought him to begin to criticise their out-of-date practice of politics.³⁵³ One of the frequent arguments used by Ferdinand de Lesseps to answer the United Kingdom's opposition to the project relies on this idea that the canal represents a major work for humanity. Therefore, based upon the general discourse of the French official and agents in Egypt, and more especially Ferdinand de Lesseps, as the Suez Canal represented in their minds the ideas of progress and civilisation in the world, opposing the project, as the United Kingdom did, was perceived as opposing these values as a whole. Consequently, the hostility of the British towards a "private company" aiming at realising the project countered for him the reputation of the nation as a defender of progress, civilisation, and public wealth, hence presumably diminishing the impact of her doctrines around the world.³⁵⁴

Besides, the civilisational dimension of the project coupled with the British opposition participated in further strengthening the development and spread of a parallel discourse rather focusing on the prestige gained thanks to the French origins and national support to the Suez Canal.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., p.112.

³⁴⁸ Ferdinand de Lesseps (1856). *Percement de l'isthme de Suez... [Texte imprimé] / documents publiés par Ferdinand de Lesseps*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-6208209), BnF, Paris, p.17 (Série 2).

³⁴⁹ Ibid., p.18.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., p.19.

³⁵¹ Lesseps (1869), op. cit., pp.48-49.

³⁵² Ferdinand de Lesseps (1864a). *Entretiens sur le canal de Suez [Texte imprimé] / par Ferdinand de Lesseps, d'après la sténographie de M. Sabbatier*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-6209259), BnF, Paris, p.28.

³⁵³ Ibid., p.23.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., p.30.

3.1.3 A Project Supported by an 'Entire' Nation

In a note of the 19th of June 1855 answering the concerns and doubts of the British officials, although Ferdinand de Lesseps reaffirmed that the project of the opening of the isthmus had always been thought to be advantageous for the trade and naval interests of all nations, he also emphasises that the idea had been supported by the government of Emperor Napoléon III which sponsors any work "intended to increase the well-being of peoples and to foster international relations."³⁵⁵ Hence, the involvement of the emperor himself progressively became an argument for the righteousness of the project within debates. Even years later, in contrast to the tensions coming from the Ottoman Empire helped by the United Kingdom against Egypt and France supporting the project, the decision in 1864 of Isma'il Pasha to nominate Napoléon III as the mediator was seen as a great success for France. As explained by the journalists of the *Revue Britannique*, the fact that the French emperor decided to personally take care of the mediation became a glorious high point of his reign, as it participated in solidifying a great work based on a French initiative and capitals, and the political conditions which made the project possible.³⁵⁶

Beyond the involvement of Napoléon III and the prestige gained from it, it is also the support of other French representatives and even of the entire nation that were frequently highlighted in discussions surrounding the project. For instance, in three letters of the 9th of March 1860 addressed to the members of the general councils, the chamber of commerce, and the consultative chamber of arts and manufactures of France, Lesseps highlights that their initial support helped the creation of the Suez company. From his point of view, the success of the project would be beneficial at the same time for the industrial and commercial development of France on top of helping the progress of civilisation.³⁵⁷ Likewise, in the introduction of the written version of the speech spoken by Napoléon-Jérôme Bonaparte, cousin of the emperor, on the 11th of February 1864 at the banquet organised for the success of the funding campaign of the Suez Canal, the unknown author presents the project as the effort of an entire nation as represented by the audience attending³⁵⁸: "in a thought of goodness and progress, mingled and merged harmoniously all levels of French society."³⁵⁹ From diplomats to mere farmers, the picture presented by this document aimed to convince that the project was unanimously supported in France. Furthermore, the presence of members and official representatives from Spain, Italy, Austria, Poland, Belgium, the United States, and Tunisia gave to the event "a nature even more universal" on top of to the already extraordinary French consensus.³⁶⁰

Regarding that matter, the author particularly insists on the uniqueness in the world of such diverse reunion for a common goal. Presented as "a new development in history," this reunion is perceived as joining the "trend of our time towards confraternity of peoples and interests" while the overall project of the Suez Canal as "the tool of a great moral progress before being the creator of a great material progress."³⁶¹ The actual discourse of prince Bonaparte joins the ideas developed by the author of the introduction as he expresses that the opening of the isthmus would be "one of the great works of humanity." In addition, he even went as far as to claim that the project served the purpose of helping Egypt as it would bring back prosperity to the country by making of it an essential point of commerce once more. As such, for Napoléon-Jérôme Bonaparte, the Suez Canal is not only a French work but also "a humanitarian work accomplished by the French engineering."³⁶²

³⁵⁵ Lesseps (1854-1856), op. cit., p.213.

³⁵⁶ *Revue Britannique* (1864). *État de la question du canal de Suez [Texte imprimé]*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-6210597), BnF, Paris, pp.10-11.

³⁵⁷ Ferdinand de Lesseps (1859-1860). *Lettres, journal et documents pour servir à l'histoire du canal de Suez [Texte imprimé] / Ferdinand de Lesseps*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-6545524), BnF, Paris, pp.332-337 (Série 3).

³⁵⁸ Ferdinand de Lesseps, André Marie Jean Jacques Dupin, and Napoléon-Joseph-Charles-Paul Bonaparte (1864). *Banquet du canal de Suez [Texte imprimé] : 11 février 1864 / Discours de S. A. I. le prince Napoléon, de M. Dupin et de M. de Lesseps*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5427271), BnF, Paris, pp.5-7.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.5.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.7.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.8.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, p.17.

Following the discourse of the prince Bonaparte, Ferdinand de Lesseps also expressed very similar views regarding the signification of the support and audience present at the banquet. From his point of view, it was the proof that France "did not lose any of the national sense that always rallied her around the flag of progress and of the civilisation of peoples."³⁶³ Moreover, Lesseps also praised the support of the contributors present for the occasion and declared that thanks to their capitals the prosperity of some parts of Egypt had been made, which perfectly corresponds to the manifestation of "the universal thinking which created our work."³⁶⁴ Similarly, Lesseps insisted that the Suez Canal is not the success of only one nation, but rather comes from the "aspiration of mankind," hence further strengthening his universalist views.³⁶⁵ But, Lesseps believed that the fact that France presumably did not desire any privilege in this project was "still one of the glories of our country."³⁶⁶ This last point is further emphasised as Lesseps asserts that the various investors of the project were supposedly more interested in the "civilisational success of their work" rather than their financial interests, as they firmly supported and believed in it even during harsher times.³⁶⁷

Yet, in another document gathering the speeches of Ferdinand de Lesseps, the entrepreneur insists that these common investors and employees participated despite the struggles and criticisms the company went through thanks to their devotion and union for the sake of what he qualifies of a "universal and patriotic work." Lesseps even goes as far as to link the money given by the common investors from November 1858 to the blood spilled for France in previous occasions.³⁶⁸ From France, the Suez company received the total sum of 120 million of francs. Nevertheless, it started with only a capital of 500,000 francs gathered from Lesseps' acquaintances. Years later, Lesseps even highlighted that many of common investors also participated out of spite for the United Kingdom, as they were the objectors of the project.³⁶⁹ From his point of view, the huge part financed by the French was the testimony that the country was supporting him and his project. While Lesseps expressed that the Suez Canal would be for all nations to share, he later claimed that the project was a "work of art eminently French."³⁷⁰ Ferdinand de Lesseps even concluded his speech of the 10th of April 1870 by asking the audience to wish the canal to succeed for the sake of its investors and in "the same way it succeeded for science and for the honour of France."³⁷¹

This specific double discourse of Lesseps on the project of the canal, oscillating between universal intents and French origins and glory through its realisation, is also apparent in a series of earlier conferences dating from 1864. In those, Ferdinand de Lesseps frequently links the ancient history surrounding the isthmus and the various cultures which dreamt to open it, to the French conquest of Egypt by the expedition of Napoléon Bonaparte considered by him to have revived the project "forgotten for ten centuries"³⁷² through the works of examination of the French engineer Jacques-Marie Lepère. But more importantly, the various backgrounds of the investors in the project were perceived as the perfect representation of France as a nation, from farmers to bankers and industrials, even including magistrates and some within the military.³⁷³ As a result, from the discourse of Lesseps within these documents can be understood that the project of the Suez Canal was sometimes seen, by him, as the possible origin for France of the return of "the legitimate influence she should have in the world."³⁷⁴

Similar statements as Lesseps' were still made later on by official representatives under the regime

³⁶³ Ibid., p.43.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., p.44.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., p.45.

³⁶⁶ Ibid., p.47.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., p.48.

³⁶⁸ Lesseps (1864a), op. cit., p.42.

³⁶⁹ Ferdinand de Lesseps (1884). *Allocution de M. Ferdinand de Lesseps [Texte imprimé] / Société des études historiques, séance du 23 mars 1884, Fête de la cinquantaine*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5807232), BnF, Paris, p.5.

³⁷⁰ Ferdinand de Lesseps (1870). *Histoire du canal de Suez [Texte imprimé] / par Ferdinand de Lesseps*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5808845), BnF, Paris, p.30.

³⁷¹ Ibid., p.46.

³⁷² Lesseps (1864a), op. cit., p.7.

³⁷³ Ibid., p.47.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., p.46.

of the Third Republic. For instance, in a letter of the 13th of February 1873 to the ambassador of France in Constantinople, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Charles de Rémusat expressed that the strategy he intended to adopt in the debates concerning the toll of the canal had for goal to save "the interests of the numerous French whose patriotic thought, more than the lure of profit, has led them to support with their funds an enterprise, despite its foreign origin, whose nature was, in their view, eminently national."³⁷⁵ Few months later, on the 3rd of April 1873 in another letter to the ambassador, Rémusat explained how he shared to the National Assembly his willingness "to prevent [...] this great work, which France take pride in, from passing into other hands."³⁷⁶ Likewise, the ambassador of France in Constantinople Charles-Jean-Melchior de Vogüé, in a letter of the 5th of April 1873 to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Ottoman Empire, further supported the stance of the French government to inquire in "a work that concerns so much the interests of its nationals."³⁷⁷

However, not only restricted to few speeches and writings made by Ferdinand de Lesseps or other French officials, the ambiguity stemming from mixing universalist and patriotic perspectives and discourses on the project of the Suez Canal became even greater, yet still used and claimed diplomatically, once facing the dual identity of the company responsible for its realisation: the *Compagnie universelle du canal maritime de Suez*.

3.2 The Issue of the Double Identity of the Suez Canal Company

3.2.1 A Universal Company

In his opening remarks to the *Société des études historiques* on the 23rd of March 1884, the French diplomat and entrepreneur Ferdinand de Lesseps evokes the origins of the project of Suez Canal in which he reveals the close ties of his family with the dynasty of the leaders of Egypt as one of the reasons for the concession made by Mohamed Sa'id Pasha to him.³⁷⁸ In such a way, this close friendship between the two men seems to have been used by Lesseps in many occasions as a way to justify to the other ambassadors, more especially the British, the trust given to him by Mohamed Sa'id. However, it seems to have had little effect on the overall tensions the project created with the British. Hence, the origins of the project were quite sometimes presented as a rather private and even personal endeavour. Yet, a change of nature and identity occurred as soon as the early beginnings of the actual work and birth of the company responsible for it.

As briefly mentioned previously, the initial idea behind the Suez Canal came to Ferdinand de Lesseps through his studies about the Orient and its expanding trade with the West "doubling every ten years."³⁷⁹ Therefore, Lesseps believed that as the proper timing for the opening of the isthmus had arrived, the generous trade and timing would highly benefit the company responsible for the project. From his perspective, the idea behind the company was to allow all to financially participate regardless of their nationality.³⁸⁰ Further representative of this aspect, after the first exploration of the site meant for the project, Ferdinand de Lesseps asked the ministers of the major world powers to designate their best engineers in order to gather and exchange ideas. As such, Austria, Italy, Spain, Prussia, and France recommended their specialists, while the United Kingdom, then opposed to the project, refused to do so. Nevertheless, Lesseps went in person to England in order to choose some qualified engineers. From the own words of Ferdinand de Lesseps, all of these men stopped their current business "with a remarkable selflessness, in order to found an era of new civilisation."³⁸¹ The engineers designated a subcommittee charged with the mission of studying the terrain in Egypt.³⁸²

³⁷⁵ France. Ministère des affaires étrangères (1875). *Affaire du Canal de Suez [Texte imprimé] : décembre 1875 / Ministère des affaires étrangères*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5810172), BnF, Paris, p.30.

³⁷⁶ Ibid., p.48.

³⁷⁷ Ibid., p.51.

³⁷⁸ Lesseps (1884), op. cit., p.3.

³⁷⁹ Lesseps (1870), op. cit., p.7.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., p.11.

³⁸¹ Ibid., p.17.

³⁸² Ibid., p.18.

Later documents also emphasise that, after the preliminary explorations, the first twelve engineers recruited by Ferdinand de Lesseps came from all over Europe.³⁸³

Yet, it is within many of the letters written by Ferdinand de Lesseps from 1854 to 1856 and addressed to either French officials or British representatives and diplomats that the universal nature of the Suez company and its project of canal is even more apparent and underlined. At that time, as most of the concerns regarding the project stemmed from the United Kingdom who saw in this project a threat to her position in the world through a potential capture of the region by the French through it, Lesseps frequently justified and attempted to convince that the idea and business behind the Suez Canal "was not initiated by any government or for the exclusive benefit of any nation."³⁸⁴ For instance, this topic was even specifically addressed in the 1855 written presentation of the project of opening of the Suez isthmus in which Lesseps attempted to counter the idea and rumours that bringing many foreign European workers to the isthmus would lead the creation of a colony belonging mainly to one nation, i.e. to France, hence reducing the influence of others, meaning the United Kingdom.³⁸⁵ Thus, Lesseps rather defended the idea that the "universal company" of Suez did not select its workers based on political goals, and that, thinking from a purely capitalist perspective, Egyptian workers represented the better option overall.³⁸⁶ Still years later, answering the criticism of the lords on the working conditions of the *fellahin*³⁸⁷ in the construction of the canal, Ferdinand de Lesseps assured that their treatment was far better than in the rest of Egypt, and that mixed with the benefits their salaries would bring to the rural areas, they "gradually mingle with our civilisation" and are progressively being raised to the equivalent of the status of "the free worker." Furthermore, Lesseps also supported the idea that even the schools of Port Said, meant for the children of the workers of the Suez Canal, were the mean through which "the Orient will become civilised."³⁸⁸ In addition, the development of the city was seen by Lesseps as being filled with "all the resources of civilisation"³⁸⁹ thanks to the establishment of forges, arsenals, and machines meant to dig the canal. In other words, Lesseps claimed that through the employment of Egyptian workers in the construction of the canal, the company was helping Mohamed Sa'id Pasha "in his work of civilisation" who began their emancipation.³⁹⁰

In such a way, since the very beginning of the conception of the company, potential oppositions and criticism were expected. In order to avoid them as much as possible, Lesseps deliberately abstained from asking any support from the French government. For him, the work of the Suez Canal had to "always maintain its universal nature" and not to be given any specific national characteristic.³⁹¹ Even years later, in a note of the 20th October 1857 to the emperor Napoléon III about his intent to go to Constantinople in order to negotiate with the Sultan, Lesseps explained that he intended to rely on the representatives of the various countries supportive of the project³⁹² if the United Kingdom ever decided to negatively influence the outcome of the negotiations.³⁹³ As such, "to preserve the company's universal nature," Lesseps informed the emperor of his plan to require the help of the French representative if necessary, but on the same level as the representatives of the other nations. A day later, Lesseps indeed ended up sending letters to each of concerned nations' ministry of foreign affairs, asking for the help of their representatives in Constantinople during his negotiations

³⁸³ Lesseps (1884), op. cit., p.6.

³⁸⁴ Lesseps (1854-1856), op. cit., p.231.

³⁸⁵ Lesseps (1855), op. cit., p.29.

³⁸⁶ Ibid., pp.29-30.

³⁸⁷ Peasants or agricultural labourers in the Middle East and Northern Africa.

³⁸⁸ Lesseps (1865), op. cit., p.9.

³⁸⁹ Ferdinand de Lesseps (1864b). *L'isthme de Suez [Texte imprimé] / par Ferdinand de Lesseps*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-4227650), BnF, Paris, p.18.

³⁹⁰ Ferdinand de Lesseps (1862). *Lettre à M. Layard, sous-secrétaire d'État au Foreign-Office [Texte imprimé] / par Ferdinand de Lesseps*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-6210596), BnF, Paris, p.13.

³⁹¹ Lesseps (1856), op. cit., p.6.

³⁹² Austria, the United States of America, Russia, the Netherlands, Belgium, Prussia, Sweden, Denmark, Spain, Portugal, Greece, etc.

³⁹³ Ferdinand de Lesseps (1857-1858). *Lettres, journal et documents pour servir à l'histoire du canal de Suez [Texte imprimé] / Ferdinand de Lesseps*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-6544755), BnF, Paris, pp.128-129 (Série 2).

while clearly reasserting his desire to maintain the universal nature of the company as a convincing argument.³⁹⁴

3.2.2 British Criticism, European Support, and French Funds and Directives

Facing the relentless criticism and pressures coming from the United Kingdom, the company of the canal eventually decided to address in August 1859 a note to the Emperor of France requiring the help of his government. Interestingly, in this particular occasion, the fact that most of the funds invested in the company came from French investors was put forth in the document as a way to convince its reader. The note also mentions for the first time the idea of an official petition to the Emperor in order to urge him to ask the British government for explanations.³⁹⁵ Months later, in October 1859, the delegation representing the petition was received by the Emperor who guaranteed to protect the considerable interests engaged in the company.³⁹⁶ From the point of view of the company, this meeting "left no uncertainty about His Majesty's benevolent and active dispositions in favour of our enterprise."³⁹⁷

However, the scope of this call for help was not limited to the Emperor of France only. On the 7th of November 1859, Lesseps addressed letters to the rulers of the nations with whom he claims to "have been in personal relation with": Austria, Belgium, Spain, Greece, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, the Kingdom of Two Sicilies. Once more, the argument put forth is of acting for the defence of the funds invested in the company by the nationals of each of these rulers. Yet, Lesseps also specifically emphasised that it was "as a work of general progress, of progress of civilisation and Christianity" that the project of the opening of the isthmus required the support and protection of these rulers.³⁹⁸ Consequently, it is around the idea of the project as a "universal work" that the company, and more especially its president Lesseps, frequently defended its demands for help to various rulers throughout the year 1860.³⁹⁹

Hence, as a defence to the political criticism of its adversaries claiming that the company became French and as such represented a threat to the independence of Egypt, Lesseps argued that as it was established in Alexandria, the company was firstly Egyptian, and that based on the source of its investments, its administrative composition, and its purpose, the company was also universal.⁴⁰⁰ Besides, Lesseps added that the neutral nature of the canal, declared by the article 11 of the 5th of January 1856 concession deed, should also shelter the company from any political dispute.⁴⁰¹

Yet, as most of the British criticism on the company targeted its French origins and ties, Lesseps also regularly attempted to defend the role of his own nation in Egypt. From his point of view, for half a century the goal of the French policy had always been to "foster Egypt in the development of its resources and on the path of progress and civilisation."⁴⁰² In that way, by having promoted the strengthening of Egypt for decades, the accusations that France intended to monopolise Egypt should remain unfounded. Furthermore, Lesseps emphasised that the competitiveness of the various origins of countries of the investments for the Suez Canal would also act as the guarantor that no single nation would ever be able to absorb Egypt as they would all want to maintain their own trading and sailing rights.⁴⁰³

Nevertheless, in a letter of the 13th of September 1861 to Mr. Beauval the *chargé d'affaires* of France in Alexandria, Lesseps reveals more details about the instructions he received from the Emperor of France and his government. In order to avoid the occurrence of a diplomatic crisis which

³⁹⁴ Ibid., p.132.

³⁹⁵ Lesseps (1859-1860), op. cit., pp.198-200.

³⁹⁶ Ibid., p.239.

³⁹⁷ Ibid., p.240.

³⁹⁸ Ibid., pp.245-246.

³⁹⁹ Ibid., p.288.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., p.294.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., p.295.

⁴⁰² Ibid., p.296.

⁴⁰³ Ibid., p.297.

could compromise the progress of the project, Lesseps discloses that the emperor preferred to avoid official statements on the subject. However, he also emphasised that such official statement would come if the rights of the company were to be infringed or if the important French interests involved in the project were to be threatened.⁴⁰⁴ In this way, Lesseps claimed that "the company maintaining its private and commercial nature will have much more strength than if a government were to come forward to sponsor it." Moreover, through this method it was also expected that the Khedive of Egypt would have more freedom and independence to support the company without being criticised for being the target of a foreign influence. From Lesseps own words, this specific course of action had been "personally recommended by the Emperor himself" and as he did not have any objection to it, he would continue to act "following the views and wishes of the government of the Emperor."⁴⁰⁵

The relative success of these directives can be found in a letter of the 23rd of May 1862 to the undersecretary to the Foreign Office Layard in which Ferdinand de Lesseps attempted to rectify the misunderstandings surrounding his project and company for the Suez Canal in the debates of the British House of Commons. Lesseps rejoiced at the fact that some of the British lords seemed to have understand the benefits, opposed to the dangers then frequently discussed, the project would have for the United Kingdom. Accordingly, Lesseps in this letter indirectly confirmed and asserted once more the "universal nature" of the Suez company, as it was not founded on an idea of "national exclusivism" and should remain away from "any political action" in order to convince his audience.⁴⁰⁶

Even under the Third Republic, the ambiguous nature of the Suez company and its 'double' identity remained present in the discourse of some officials. In a letter to the French ambassador in London on the 5th of May 1873, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Rémusat addressed this specific topic of various origins. As such, Rémusat disagreed with the way Lord Granville George Leveson-Gower of the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in his discussions with the French ambassador, referred to the company as being French and that it was presumably attempting to reject the Turkish nationality with the support of the French government. For Rémusat, based upon its contract of the 22nd of February 1866 ratified on the 19th of March, the Suez company was Egyptian and thus governed by the local laws and customs, "except for the relationship between associates, for which it is liable to the French courts."⁴⁰⁷ Hence, from his point of view, the confusion came from the compromise the Khedive made in order to help Ferdinand de Lesseps face more easily the potential threats that would come to him, that is to solve the defence cases through administration or the appeal to the French consular court. However, Rémusat highlighted that this arrangement was "essentially temporary; it must cease as soon as the new Egyptian courts are constituted, also nobody presses with more zeal than the Company the conclusion of the arrangement."⁴⁰⁸ Rémusat concluded by claiming that although the opening of the isthmus was a French idea, "an established fact in the history of civilisation" that they consider as a form of help France provided to civilisation, the company "became morally universal by the funds that, from all over the world, contributed to its work."⁴⁰⁹

Therefore, the ambiguity surrounding the actual origins of the Suez company, due to the universal dimension of its objectives and intents mixed with its large fundings and involvement coming from France, had been quite often used in discussions in order to conveniently either ease tensions or claim national prestige depending on the situation. The official commitment of other French figures in events related to the project and the company of Suez only participated in further blurring the picture but provided opportunities for France to strengthen her position and ties with Egypt.

⁴⁰⁴ Ferdinand de Lesseps (1861-1864). *Lettres, journal et documents pour servir à l'histoire du canal de Suez [Texte imprimé] / Ferdinand de Lesseps*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-6544621), BnF, Paris, p.97 (Série 4).

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.98.

⁴⁰⁶ Lesseps (1862), *op. cit.*, p.2.

⁴⁰⁷ France. Ministère des affaires étrangères (1875), *op. cit.*, p.57.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.58.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.60-61.

3.3 A Project Indirectly Opening French Opportunities to Strengthen Ties with Egypt

As such, the most relevant example of this can be witnessed in the French military mission in Egypt from 1864 to 1869 led by Lieutenant-colonel Hippolyte Mircher,⁴¹⁰ based on the demand of Ferdinand de Lesseps and chosen by the Khedive Isma'il Pasha, whose purpose was to bring back order to the site of the construction of the Suez Canal after some strikes and fights between the workers occurred.⁴¹¹ But, while the French officer was then directly under the authority of the Khedive, allowing him to initially develop good relations with the Egyptian ruler, he also had to report to the French Consul in Cairo. Through these relations, Mircher and his mission presumably maintained a presence for the French influence in Egypt which was then the target of pressures coming from the United Kingdom.⁴¹²

Further information on the opportunity of spread of a positive influence for France in and on Egypt through this mission related to the project of canal can be found in a letter dated from the 2nd of September 1867 to Jules Chanoine, chief of the French military mission in Japan, in which Colonel Mircher compared their situations. Mircher supported the idea that the success of their missions was extremely dependent on the good will of the foreign governments they work with, Egypt and Japan. Consequently, Mircher praised the behaviour and strategy of Chanoine to avoid getting involved in the "mercantile wanderings" of the other Europeans employed until then in Japan, and mentioned that, similarly to him, he had explained to the Egyptian government that it was being robbed by these former agents, thus guiding them without directly interfering in their affairs.⁴¹³ Yet, from Mircher's point of view, the domain in which both of them could interfere with more freedom was the one of the personnel of the industries that needed to be created as part of their missions. Mircher took the example of the struggles of the tannery of Alexandria, established by the Egyptian, in order to explain his intent to revitalise it by employing a French director supported by foremen chosen by the Egyptian government. For other fields of the industry, Mircher explained how he intended to found a school in Cairo from which he could, in the matter of few years, involve its students in the major French industrial establishments.⁴¹⁴

However, it seems that the cautiousness of Colonel Mircher on the impact of his interference and warnings to the Egyptian government might have been the source of jealousy of the British agents in Egypt. As reported by Colonel Colson in a letter to Jules Chanoine on the 4th of February 1868, Colonel Mircher had been pushed out by the Khedive of Egypt and lost the control over the schools presumably due to the scheming of his British rivals. Colson even added that only after months of work could he gain back the trust of the Egyptian ruler.⁴¹⁵ The situation for Mircher seemed to have improved later on as demonstrated by a letter of the Ministry of War to Chanoine on the 18th of March 1868 which described the result of the mission of Mircher in Egypt as an example of success which Chanoine's military mission would similarly join.⁴¹⁶

The example of Mircher's mission particularly emphasises the privileged position held by France in Egypt in the end of the 1860s, partially explained by her involvement and support in the project of the Suez Canal among other works. As such, in January 1869, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs took the opportunity of the near opening of the canal to proudly reaffirm the French origins of the project by describing it as the access to a great commercial path built by "men whose enterprising and tenacious genius honours our nation" and which would give a new impetus to the relations with the Far East.⁴¹⁷ Months later, for its actual opening in November 1869, official documents of the ministry even referred to it as a "work essentially pacific and of a nature to inspire to all peoples

⁴¹⁰ Later promoted Colonel.

⁴¹¹ Daniel Furia (2008). *Le Général Mircher (1820-1878), Témoignages sur ses missions en Orient, au Sahara, en Egypte – la captivité en 1870-71 – les débuts de la IIIe République*. L'Harmattan, Paris, p.143.

⁴¹² Ibid., pp.145-146.

⁴¹³ Chanoine (1907a), op. cit., p.27.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., pp.27-28.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., pp.44-45.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., p.53.

⁴¹⁷ France. Ministère des affaires étrangères (1860-1873), op. cit., p.30 (1869, N11).

thoughts of union and harmony."⁴¹⁸ Lastly, the presence of the French empress Eugénie in the opening was said to have been followed by France with "a patriotic sympathy" as she, and other foreign leaders, applauded the project at the source of the direct commerce between Europe and the Orient.⁴¹⁹

Nevertheless, the growing importance of the relationship between Egypt and France also brought back issues related to the organisation of the judicial system for foreigners. Consequently, the Government of the emperor created a commission, composed of French jurists and agents who had lived in the Orient, whose goal was to examine the complaints and propositions of the Egyptian government.⁴²⁰ Ferdinand de Lesseps was one of the French agents consulted by the commission during their investigation. The commission started its report to the Minister of Foreign Affairs by emphasising that within their work and investigations, the interests of the French nationals and of the European trade, both closely linked to the interests and future of Egypt, remained central. However, the commission heavily insisted that the spirit of justice and the benevolent equity, essential to France's relations with the Levant, had always been considered. To further emphasise this, the commission reminded the Minister Henri de La Tour d'Auvergne of his own words that the role of France in the Orient had "always been to encourage all actions for progress."⁴²¹ In such a way, the aim of this First French commission was to help the Egyptian government "walk on the path of progress" through new solutions that would improve the interests of Egypt without compromising the status of the foreigners specially protected by these regulations. From their perspective, a lack of guarantees for the Europeans would make them leave and, hence, bring the disappearance of the precious funds which helped build the Egyptian prosperity. The commission went even as far as to claim that it would bring back Egypt to the former status "where she was before Europe developed the civilisation and the activity."⁴²²

While the question of the judicial system for foreigners itself was not at the source of Egypt's troubles in the following decade, it however correctly highlighted the growing concerns of European nations for the funds invested abroad by their nationals and the presence, or lack of, guarantees protecting them,⁴²³ which in the case of Egypt forced the government to give control to the Europeans. Nevertheless, what represented a stronger control of Europe over Egypt actually corresponded to the beginning of a decline of influence for France in the region for the benefit of the United Kingdom.

3.4 The French-British Condominium, the Beginning of France's Downfall in Egypt

3.4.1 Working with the United Kingdom in "Perfect Equality" and French Passivity

In order to repay the considerable debt accumulated after its war with Ethiopia, the Egyptian government decided to sell its shares of the Suez Canal to the United Kingdom in 1875, giving her a new strong and justified importance in the region and its affairs, at the expense of France's influence. However, a following British inquiry of the finances of Egypt advised for the intervention of the world's great powers in order to ensure the respect and pay back of the multiple loans taken at that time. As a result, the *Caisse de la Dette Publique* was established in May 1876 with the intent of supervising the claims of the European loans. Although this international commission initially represented the interests of multiple nations including France, Italy, and Austria-Hungary, another French-British inquiry in 1878, "meant to verify the true financial situation" of Egypt,⁴²⁴ eventually led to the formation of the French-British joint control over Egypt's finances: a condominium.

Through a letter of the French Minister of Foreign Affairs William Waddington written on the 5th of February 1878 can be witnessed the "upper interest" of the French government in this affair. More

⁴¹⁸ France. Ministère des affaires étrangères (1860-1873), op. cit., p.9 (1869, N13).

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., p.10.

⁴²⁰ Ibid.

⁴²¹ Ibid., p.85.

⁴²² Ibid., p.113.

⁴²³ Ibid., p.11.

⁴²⁴ France. Ministère des affaires étrangères (1880). *Affaires d'Egypte [Texte imprimé] / Affaires étrangères*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5613853), BnF, Paris, p.10.

especially, Waddington reveals the clear intent of France to collaborate with the United Kingdom as "if our efforts are united, they will easily overcome all obstacles, for the greater good of our nationals and of Egypt herself." Waddington believed that the Khedive would not be able to deny the complete and detailed assessment of the finances of Egypt from them if both nations were to be undivided on the question.⁴²⁵ Subsequently, in August 1878, the higher commission of inquiry assembled in a commission and, realised by Joubert and George Goschen, produced a comprehensive report of the analysis of the financial situation in Egypt.⁴²⁶

One of the main consequences of the approval of the Khedive of the result of this report is his decision of the 23-24th of August to transfer the role of minister of finances to the British Charles Rivers Wilson, then vice president of the higher commission of inquiry, and the role of the minister of public works to a French representative based on the choice of France.⁴²⁷ Although Waddington accepted the proposition, the minister explained to the director of the general consulate of France in Egypt Raindre in a letter of the 26th August 1878 that it would only be if the position of minister of public works benefited from "an equal status to that of the Minister of Finances" and was directly chosen by the French government. In such a way, Waddington heavily insisted on the idea of working for the amelioration of the financial administration of Egypt by "sharing with England, under the conditions of perfect equality [...] the influence that the Khedive agrees to grant them."⁴²⁸

This specific demand was reiterated to the Khedive through Raindre a few days later, on the 5th of September, as the specificities of the functions that were supposed to be given to the foreigners remained quite unclear. Waddington seemed to have lost patience as he highlighted that the Khedive would only find support in France and the United Kingdom if he were to agree to the principle of equality of assignment. Moreover, the French minister also maintained that the Khedive would not be able to pursue the reforms he intended to realise without "the energetic and combined support of France and England." From his point of view, agreeing and working with the two European nations was even qualified of being the "obvious interest of Egypt."⁴²⁹ Eventually, Ernest de Blignières was chosen in October 1878 after clearly defining, with both United Kingdom and Egypt, the limits and powers of his new function.⁴³⁰

Nevertheless, the decision of the Khedive in April 1879 to remove the European ministers and go back to the former system of control established by the decree of the 18th of November 1876 broke the trust and hopes of the European governments. Following so, the higher commission of inquiry decided to quit its functions as a sign of protest against the "severe infringements" of the order settled on the 28th of August 1878. From their perspective, combined with the first conclusions of the reports they were working on, this return to the past system would not be able to solve the situation nor prevent it from further aggravating.⁴³¹ As Waddington condemned the decision of the Khedive, in a letter of the 25th of April 1879 to the general consul of France in Egypt Godeaux, the minister also reiterated the intent to "favour the development and the proper management of the resources of Egypt" as the sole goal for the two European nations in the region. Hence, he insisted that only in the prosperity of Egypt would they be able to find guarantees for their own nationals.⁴³²

Yet, the tensions between the Khedive and the European powers only grew stronger in the following months, eventually leading France and the United Kingdom to declare an ultimatum for his abdication on the 18th of June 1879.⁴³³ Later joined by Germany and Austria on the 23rd of June, the Khedive Isma'il Pasha was dismissed by the Sultan on the 27th of June and replaced by his own son Tewfik Pasha.⁴³⁴ After this, it was decided that the system of dual control established by the decree

⁴²⁵ Ibid., p.11.

⁴²⁶ Ibid., pp.28-112.

⁴²⁷ Ibid., pp.113-114.

⁴²⁸ Ibid., pp.117-118.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., pp.122-123.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., pp.124-127.

⁴³¹ Ibid., p.198.

⁴³² Ibid., pp.278-281.

⁴³³ Ibid., pp.320-321.

⁴³⁴ Ibid., pp.325-333.

of the 18th November 1876 was to be put back in function, hence propelling the British Evelyn Baring and the French Ernest de Blignières at the positions of controller-generals of Egypt in September 1879.⁴³⁵

Thus, from this first phase of events in the Egyptian financial crisis can already be witnessed a certain change of position of France in Egypt. While it previously benefited from a prestigious and privileged relationship and status thanks to her achievements in the country, the crisis rather showed France fighting to get an equal treatment as her rival, and, later on, even a more passive stance as the simple follower of the British decisions. As such, in order to provide a decisive and final solution to the financial issues of Egypt, France and the United Kingdom invited the most concerned nations by the debt, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy, to join forces in a liquidation commission established on the 31st of March 1880.⁴³⁶ One of the goals of the commission was also to rally the less concerned by the debt nations under their banner, and consequently under the results of the decisions of the commission. After months of negotiations, seven of them agreed⁴³⁷ while both the United States and Russia declined, the latter asserting that there was no point joining the decisions of a commission in which she could not be represented directly.⁴³⁸

Nonetheless, the control exerted by the European nations over Egypt eventually led to the nationalist uprising of the 'Urabi revolt, hence cancelling the plans of the commission. Facing the declaration of the first tensions coming from the Egyptian officers of the army, the French minister of foreign affairs Jules Barthélemy-Saint-Hilaire, formerly involved in the project of the Suez Canal, attempted to manage the situation by firmly asserting once more the policy of France to stand united with the United Kingdom for the consolidation of the position and authority of Tewfik Pasha and his government, favourable to both of these nations. In a letter of the 8th of March 1881, the minister went even as far as to instruct the general consul Monge to identically coordinate his behaviour and even language with the British representative to leave no doubt about their common support to the Khedive.⁴³⁹ Few months later, in August 1881, Barthélemy-Saint-Hilaire even advised the general consul Joseph Adam Sienkiewicz to only "remain a vigilant observer" in order to protect the national interests of France.⁴⁴⁰ In other words, France rather decided to adopt a more passive stance regarding the progress of the events. This particular point was even reaffirmed by the minister in a letter of the 2nd of September praising *Sienkiewicz whose reserve preserved "our entire freedom of action, in the middle of personal rivalries and competitions."* Barthélemy-Saint-Hilaire hence affirmed that France did not want to bear the responsibility of the actions of a new cabinet she would have favoured in this competitive turmoil. Thus, Barthélemy-Saint-Hilaire ended up reaffirming the same main goal for France developed by Waddington a few years before which was to "protect in Egypt interests deeply linked to those of the country itself," and as such, would support any cabinet working for the reorganisation initiated by the government of the Khedive with the help of the general control.⁴⁴¹

Moreover, Barthélemy-Saint-Hilaire also firmly supported the French-British *entente* as being the guarantor of the safety of their respective interests in the country in addition to the ones of Egypt herself. While the British cabinet seemed to push to jointly conduct "a peace-making action in Egypt," the French minister rather believed that the *entente* would suffice to bring back order to the country, as long as they remain united.⁴⁴² As a result, the intent of the British government, relayed to the French on the 8th of October, to send a ship of the Royal Navy to the port of Alexandria in order to appease the situation and protect their nationals was positively received by Barthélemy-Saint-Hilaire who

⁴³⁵ Ibid., p.373.

⁴³⁶ France. Ministère des affaires étrangères (1881). *Affaires d'Egypte 1880-1881 [Texte imprimé]*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5613740), BnF, Paris, p.83.

⁴³⁷ Including Greece, Belgium, Spain, Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden-Norway, and Portugal.

⁴³⁸ France. Ministère des affaires étrangères (1881), op. cit., p.123.

⁴³⁹ France. Ministère des affaires étrangères (1882a). *Affaires d'Egypte, 1881 [Texte imprimé] / Ministère des affaires étrangères*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5613730), BnF, Paris, pp.6-7.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid., p.25.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., p.26.

⁴⁴² Ibid., pp.27-28.

decided to act in the same manner.⁴⁴³ While the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire sent two of his ambassadors to officially inquire about the condition of the population in Egypt, two cruisers of the United Kingdom and France were planned to be jointly sent to Alexandria to ensure the *status quo*.⁴⁴⁴

3.4.2 Justifying France's Relevance in Egypt

It is on this occasion, few days before the departure of the cruisers on the 17th of October, that Barthélémy-Saint-Hilaire addressed to the consul general Sienkiewicz a comprehensive explanation of the reasons for the "indisputable preponderance of France and England in Egypt." In this way, the minister insisted that France had "in this country, as in all this part of the Orient, ancient traditions that have given her a prestige and an authority that she cannot let diminish."⁴⁴⁵ From his point of view, these ancient traditions of France corresponded to the "half scientific, half military" 1798-1801 expedition of Napoléon which "resurrected Egypt which, since then, has not ceased to be the object of our solicitude and that of Europe," but also to the French colony established in Egypt, and finally to the Suez Canal which "opened a new path to the commerce of the universe."⁴⁴⁶ Concerning the latter, it is interesting to notice that the minister presented that it was France that "undertook and achieved in a few years" the canal rather than even mentioning Ferdinand de Lesseps or even the Suez company that he personally helped as a member of the international commission. Later on, Barthélémy-Saint-Hilaire praised the canal, and thus indirectly France, even more, arguing that the "prodigious development of the traffic passing through it" was the proof of its usefulness.

After having highlighted the relevance of France in Egypt, Barthélémy-Saint-Hilaire linked the one of the United Kingdom to her importance in the customer base of the canal. Hence, the French minister asserted that even though the British colony and position in Egypt was different from the one of France, it was not less relevant. Nevertheless, while he supported and insisted that both countries benefited from an equally important situation in Egypt yet with different motives, whether as the main client of the canal or as the user of this new path allowing her to reach her Indian colony, his presentation of the reasons for the presence and relevance of the United Kingdom in the region was constantly being tied with this particular French work.

Despite their different nature, Barthélémy-Saint-Hilaire insisted that the interests of France and the United Kingdom in Egypt were equal and, accordingly, ended up reasserting his firm belief that the solution for the country resided in a common action of the two European nations. In such a way, the past and future interventions of the two European nations were presented by the French minister as the saviours of not only Egypt but also of much higher stakes. As such, he declared that "the two protective powers of Egypt could not fail her without essentially failing themselves, without failing civilisation and humanity." Following that idea, from his point of view, the case of the financial mediation was representative of the tremendous benefits resulting from the unity of these two nations. Through the work of the French-British controller-generals, Barthélémy-Saint-Hilaire affirmed that hope and prosperity was brought back to an almost ruined Egypt, but also to the European creditors.⁴⁴⁷ He believed that the example of the financial restoration showed "what the good intelligence of two powerful and civilised nations can produce" and could be reproduced and applied to other issues if the same spirit and impartiality were to be respected. In other words, the minister underlined that these "higher considerations" must constantly be kept in mind in order to "maintain the equal balance" of the two nations at all costs. No matter the service in which either a French or a British representatives were to be involved, Barthélémy-Saint-Hilaire heavily insisted that the share must be identical or, if not possible, compensated in some way in order to prevent the emergence of any form of rivalry.⁴⁴⁸ As a conclusion, Barthélémy-Saint-Hilaire advocated that beside their respective

⁴⁴³ Ibid., p.37.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., p.41.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., p.44.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid., pp.44-45.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., p.45.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., p.46.

interests in Egypt, both France and the United Kingdom had an "eminent duty towards the Egyptian people" which encouraged for the further strengthening of their unity: the protection and development of civilisation. The minister defended the idea that this aspiration for civilisation initiated sixty years earlier was still young and should not be smothered and that, consequently, Egypt would still need the supervision of the two European nations for her own regeneration in order to properly govern. Therefore, this supervision of both France and the United Kingdom was presented as the mean for Egypt to quickly, safely, and successfully pursue her reforms thanks to their experience.⁴⁴⁹

Furthermore, in a letter of the 4th of November 1881 to the agent and consul-general of England Edward Baldwin Malet whose copy was transmitted to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lord Granville George Leveson-Gower clarified the position of the government of the Queen regarding its intents and goals in Egypt. As such, the Leader of the House of Lords exposed very similar views to the ones developed by Barthélémy-Saint-Hilaire, considering that the prosperity, progress, and peace in Egypt were the only aims of the policy of his government, and that only the occurrence of anarchy, or the pursue of personal expansion would change this stance and "wreck this useful cooperation."⁴⁵⁰ This overall discourse held by the two ministers perfectly illustrates the shift of stance of France's diplomacy towards an almost complete agreement with the United Kingdom, as previously mentioned.

The willingness of French representatives to work in accord with the United Kingdom is further supported in a letter of the 15th of December 1881 of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Léon Gambetta to the French ambassador in London Paul-Amand Challemel-Lacour. Facing the rise of the military movement in Egypt, the minister explained his decision to have shared with the British ambassador Richard Lyons his desire to see the two nations "coordinate their actions even more closely," and as such, declared to the Khedive their absolute support. In other words, Gambetta firmly believed that a solution to prevent the crisis or its remedy should be thought and realised jointly.⁴⁵¹ Accordingly, a joint declaration was transmitted to the representatives in Egypt on the 7th of January 1882.⁴⁵² Nevertheless, the message was interpreted by the Egyptian as a rejection of the rising national party by both European countries and as a threat of intervention.⁴⁵³ The joint action did not prevent the situation from aggravating but however succeeded at first at bringing France and the United Kingdom together as the union "persists and intensifies."⁴⁵⁴

One of the interesting outcomes of the alignment of France and the United Kingdom in their diplomacy in Egypt is a form of abandonment of the previously defended idea of France and the United Kingdom as the protectors of all European nations' interests in the region. In a letter of the 25th of January 1882 of Challemel-Lacour to Gambetta, the French ambassador transmitted the content of his discussions with Lord Leveson in which he supported the idea that the involvement of the Ottoman Empire or the other European nations would be detrimental to the French-British influence. Still from Challemel-Lacour's point of view, all of the great powers seemed to want to be involved in Egypt as it was part of the Eastern question, but both France and the United Kingdom had "interests and titles that assure them the right to act, within certain limits, independently."⁴⁵⁵ Moreover, Challemel-Lacour then heavily insisted that while the United Kingdom held indisputable and special interests in the region, France's one, although being different, "are neither less obvious, nor less significant." For him, the interests of France in Egypt were not only "financial or sentimental interests, they are political interests, because it should not be forgotten that France is an African power." Furthermore, he also wished to remind that thanks to the decrees of 1876 and 1879, both France and the United Kingdom benefited from a particular position, the joint control, that was recognised by Europe and never contested at any time by any of those nations. As such, Challemel-

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., pp.46-47.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid., pp.50-52.

⁴⁵¹ France. Ministère des affaires étrangères (1882b). *Affaires d'Egypte, 1881-1882 [Texte imprimé] / Ministère des affaires étrangères*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5810212), BnF, Paris, pp.3-4.

⁴⁵² Ibid., pp.26-28.

⁴⁵³ Ibid., pp.29-30.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., p.57.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid., p.87.

Lacour believed that it was only natural and unsurprising for the two nations to take care of the situation in Egypt themselves.⁴⁵⁶

However, this last statement got denied in early February 1882 by the intent of the British cabinet, and then supported by the new French minister of Foreign Affairs Charles de Freycinet, to exchange with the other powers ideas and solutions in order to maintain order after the resignation of the Egyptian prime minister Mohamed Sherif Pasha⁴⁵⁷ and the growing dissatisfaction of the Sublime Porte. Concerning this last point, facing the discontent of the Ottoman Empire ever since the declaration of the 7th of January, the new minister Freycinet reiterated similar views as the one developed by Waddington two years earlier about the goal of France in Egypt: to realise progress and prosperity by contributing to the "financial and material improvement of the country, and the introduction of reforms demanded by the various branches of administration" while maintaining the independence status that Egypt held within the Empire. Following so, Freycinet insisted that France did not intend to build and hold an exclusive influence over the country, but at the same time, would not let any other power do as such. Therefore, the declaration of the 7th of January stating these goals and the cooperation with the United Kingdom was meant to prevent "events likely to plunge Egypt into anarchy and to destroy the result of the successful efforts made in recent years to improve the condition of the country."⁴⁵⁸

As a result, despite the rising tensions in Egypt, both France and the United Kingdom initially maintained a similar stance in their diplomacy, even within the first discussions of a naval intervention like few years before. On the 12th of May 1882, Freycinet informed London that the French Council of Ministers decided to agree with Lord Leveson's idea to send light naval ships to Alexandria and Suez to ensure the safety of their nationals and other Europeans and support the power of the Khedive. It is worth noting that even in this dire context, France's proposition heavily emphasised the necessity for the first ships of both nations to arrive at the same time "so that the complete agreement of the two countries is clear for all to see."⁴⁵⁹ In a similar way, Freycinet advised Sienkiewicz to support the Khedive as much as possible, except in cases that would threaten the French interests, while ensuring that "the French-British supremacy is equitably protected."⁴⁶⁰ Yet, while the French were still using this principle of equality as a way to justify and maintain their relevance despite a decrease of influence exacerbated by a passive foreign policy mainly following the United Kingdom's decisions, the British ambitions in the final resolution of the crisis led to the separation of their two policies, and thus, the ruin of France's last portions of privilege and prestige in Egypt.

3.4.3 The Separation of the French and British Policies in Egypt

As the tensions and difficulties only grew stronger with the involvement of the Ottoman Empire in the matter, in a letter of the 30th of May to the French ambassador in London Charles-Joseph Tissot Freycinet called for the establishment of a conference meant to gather the ambassadors of the great powers and Turkey. Witnessing that "the hope of a pacific solution resulting from solely the moral influence of our squadrons and the good services of our Agents in Cairo does not seem to be reasonably maintainable," Freycinet bet to resolve the issues thanks to the authority stemming from this international gathering.⁴⁶¹ In addition, the multiple European casualties in the riots of the 11th of June 1882 in Alexandria only further strengthened the involvement of the European powers in a previously 'uniquely' French-British matter. In such a way, Freycinet proposed on the 16th of June, ahead of the conference, the idea of a "protocol of disinterest" meant to ensure that none of the powers involved in the discussions would at any time attempt to gain any territorial or commercial advantage

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., pp.87-88.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., pp.124-125.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., pp.127-128.

⁴⁵⁹ France. Ministère des affaires étrangères (1882c). *Affaires d'Égypte [mars-mai] 1882 [Texte imprimé] / Ministère des affaires étrangères*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5613372), BnF, Paris, p.69.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., p.95.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., p.148.

or any privilege that the other powers would not equally benefit from.⁴⁶² The protocol was signed on the 25th of June.⁴⁶³ Moreover, the proposition of the Italian ambassador on the 27th of June to make the powers abstain from any isolated action in Egypt, with the exception of case of *force majeure*, during the duration of the conference pushed more and more in the direction of a European concert for the resolution of the situation in Egypt.⁴⁶⁴ Although the Ottoman Empire refused to participate in it and, later on, even attempted to shut it down,⁴⁶⁵ the conference started its first reunion on the 23rd of June in Tarabya, Istanbul.⁴⁶⁶

However, in parallel of the conference, the first disagreements between France and the United Kingdom started to occur. In a letter to the French ambassador in London Tissot, Freycinet declared that the British ambassador Lyons shared with him the desire of the British cabinet to send armed forces to the Suez Canal in order to protect it. On the contrary, Freycinet defended the position that the canal was not threatened and that on the opposite, as declared by the Suez company itself, such plan would most probably result in an occupation closing the path which would make the canal a target for further conflicts.⁴⁶⁷

The splitting between the two nations became gradually more visible when the Egyptian decided to fortify Alexandria which triggered the United Kingdom to prepare for the bombardment of the city in response. In a letter to the ambassador Tissot on the 5th of July, Freycinet explained that the French council of ministers decided to not follow its British partner as offensive actions would be against the promises made earlier during the conference, but also because such decision would require a prior authorisation from the parliament.⁴⁶⁸ Following the bombardments started on the 11th of July, the British representatives pressed even more in the direction of an armed occupation of the Suez Canal advocating that their action coupled with the presence of French ships in the region might provoke the Egyptian government to obstruct it in reaction. As such, Lord Leveson transmitted to Freycinet his intent of voting the occupation of the canal at the conference with the other European powers.⁴⁶⁹ Eventually, on the 24th of July, both France and the United Kingdom shared to the conference their intent to protect the canal, with the help of any willing European power, if it were necessary.⁴⁷⁰

Nevertheless, it was more especially after the armed intervention of the United Kingdom against the army of Ahmed 'Urabi that the influence of France in Egypt plummeted. Rumours of the cessation of the joint control began on the 9th of October 1882 as the French agent and consul-general Raindre heard from his British counterpart Edward Malet that the British general controller Colvin would temporarily not take his functions again after his return to Cairo.⁴⁷¹ This information was then officially confirmed a week later by the British ambassador Francis Richard Plunkett to the French Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Charles Duclerc and followed by further British inquiries on the future functions of the French general controller Léon Jacques Marie Brédif after his return to Egypt. Lord Leveson even pressed France for the modification of the functioning of the joint control and wished for the French controller to follow the example of his British partner to not act.⁴⁷² However, Duclerc on the 20th of October first advised Brédif that, in the absence of British suggestions, he was to fulfil his functions as usual, including sitting at the council of ministers as was expected of him by his function.⁴⁷³ Yet, in a letter of the 23rd of October 1882 to Duclerc, Lord Leveson pressed even more for the modification of the control and provided more details of the

⁴⁶² France. Ministère des affaires étrangères (1882d). *Affaires d'Egypte, [juin-juillet] 1882 [Texte imprimé] / Ministère des affaires étrangères*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5613418), BnF, Paris, p.46.

⁴⁶³ Ibid., p.83.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid., p.91.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., p.92.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., p.80.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid., p.81.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., pp.104-105.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., pp.123-125.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., p.156.

⁴⁷¹ France. Ministère des affaires étrangères (1883a). *Affaires d'Egypte, 1882-1883 [Texte imprimé] / Ministère des affaires étrangères*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5613339), BnF, Paris, pp.57-58.

⁴⁷² Ibid., pp.60-62.

⁴⁷³ Ibid., p.64.

vision the British government had. Justifying that although the former two controllers system provided some benefits to Egypt, it was "not free from serious defects and dangers," and thus should be abandoned and replaced by "a single European adviser," not able to interfere in the Egyptian administration in order to foster "opportunities for self-development on the part of the Egyptian people."⁴⁷⁴ Further discussions on the following days rapidly revealed that the "European" adviser should in fact be, from Lord Leveson words, a British national.⁴⁷⁵ Consequently, on the 28th of October, Duclerc took the British proposition not as a reform of the joint control but rather as the "suppression of the French controller," also arguing that the British representatives never provided explanations on what "defects and dangers" the former system bore, while its benefits and successes were praised even by them. From his point of view, from that moment on, the United Kingdom only had three options: reorganising Egypt with France, or with Europe, or alone.⁴⁷⁶

While the ambassador Lyons assured in response that the United Kingdom was willing to find a solution to this matter, a note coming from Brédif on the same day detailed that the British general controller Colvin had been advised by his government to fulfil his functions but not to attend the councils of ministers. As a result, the French general controller Brédif was also forced not to attend as the joint control required the presence of both members during councils.⁴⁷⁷ Later discussions of Duclerc and Lyons showed how much French representatives were still holding onto the principle of equality between the two nations in Egypt, and even considered the other great powers as implicated in the situation. As such, Duclerc insisted that France benefited from the exact same rights as the United Kingdom in the "international general agreement" that was the resolution of the financial issues of Egypt.⁴⁷⁸ The absence of Colvin to the councils gave the Egyptian government leverage to not invite Brédif and, quickly after, to call the overall agreement into question. Accordingly, the Egyptian Prime Minister Mohamed Sherif Pasha asked on the 7th of November 1882 for the abolition of the 1876 and 1879 decrees as they were now deemed meaningless and to be the source of the national uprising.⁴⁷⁹ Interestingly, this last point of argumentation is an element that quite resembles the previous justifications of Lord Leveson to Duclerc, such as on the 30th of October that the former system aggravated the negotiations after the first uprisings, on the "dangers" of the joint control.⁴⁸⁰ From that moment on, it could be said that not only the United Kingdom was attempting to reduce the European element within Egypt, but the Egyptian government itself was aligning itself more and more with the British vision.

Later messages exchanged between Duclerc and Tissot only further demonstrate the complete separation of the quasi-identical discourse and vision the two European nations previously shared. While Lord Leveson underlined the issues the system brought, Duclerc rather emphasised its benefits. As such, on the 24th of November, Duclerc insisted that France still saw the joint control as the best way found for the defence of the interests that they were trying to protect, and hence, its spirit should be kept in the creation of a new transformed institution.⁴⁸¹ Subsequently, the French minister further asserted the position France held in Egypt by highlighting that it was an "acquired status" stemming from "interests that we have in this country, the role that we have always played in it, the great endeavours due to our initiative and our industry, and, more specifically, joint diplomatic agreements with England and with the Khedive in 1879 and in 1879." In such a way, Duclerc reused similar elements used by French representatives years before that put past achievements and industrial realisations as core elements of France's relevance in the region. The joint diplomatic agreements were also put forth as they were described as being a greater goal for both nations that agreed to "renounce past rivalries and unite the action of the two countries in a shared thought of protecting European interests and of progress for local civilisation." Thus, Duclerc perceived the recent attempts

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid., pp.65-67.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., p.71.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid., pp.72-73.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., pp.73-74.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., pp.74-75.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., pp.95-96.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid., p.87.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., p.110.

from the United Kingdom as a way to destroy the French-British control without any form of compensation for France almost as if the recent events changed these previous statements and common goals.⁴⁸² Even more than that, Duclerc declared that the British proposition of "unique adviser" went against the principles of the "friendship agreement" that served as the basis of the action of the two countries for years until now. From his perspective, the abolition of the joint control without compensations, as was indirectly hinted by Leveson's propositions, would simply be the equivalent for France of "the outright loss of the role that must assure us in Egypt our past, our traditions and our legitimate interests."⁴⁸³ In other words, Duclerc here called once more for the main pillar of legitimacy of France in Egypt developed by him and other representatives for decades: her civilisational past achievements.

Although further discussions between the two ministers of Foreign Affairs occurred at the end of the year 1882, the inability to find an agreement led to the complete disappearance of the joint control in place for six years. While Duclerc admitted as soon as the 4th of January 1883 that he did not ambition to reestablish the joint control as it used to be, he however expected a transformation that would have given an equivalent position for France's action in Egypt.⁴⁸⁴ Finally, Duclerc justified that the compensations mentioned by French representatives were not meant to favour specific national interests but rather to maintain the balance of a system whose good results came from the shared and equal status of both France and the United Kingdom. The absence of clear compensations meant for him an imbalance, and therefore, the return of France's "freedom of action" in Egypt.⁴⁸⁵ Yet, in reality, the end of the joint control rather meant the degradation and progressive end of France's remaining influence and possibility of action as Egypt became fully occupied by the United Kingdom.

3.5 Losing Egypt against the United Kingdom

3.5.1 Failure, Resignation, and Reconnection

In his report of the 15th of January 1883 to the National Assembly and the Senate, Duclerc still invoked the "traditional ties" of France in Egypt when addressing the new international situation of the country after the British invasion. For him, despite the difficult context for her interests, France was still bound to Egypt thanks to "the role that we have always played there, the great works to which our name remains attached in this country, and the importance of French funds that were successively involved there."⁴⁸⁶ Hence, Duclerc justified the creation of the condominium in 1876 for France as the result of the fear to see these interests compromised. Yet, the minister also asserted that the "diplomatic commitment" resulting from this new control was meant to save the European interests, strengthening Egypt's credit, on top of developing the country and its resources.⁴⁸⁷ In this way, Duclerc emphasised that most of the other international institutions in Egypt shared this same spirit and objectives: protecting the European interests while supporting the local administration in its reorganisation and refinement. Consequently, from the own words of Duclerc, neither the action of France nor the one of the United Kingdom in Egypt were motivated by any strategic or mean-spirited calculations. Rather, he advocated that the intervention had an "activity eminently civilisational."⁴⁸⁸ As a result, the British armed intervention of 1882 brought the end of the 1876 French-British condominium in Egypt, pushing France and her ideals away. Duclerc insisted that from that moment on,⁴⁸⁹ France remained in a stance of support and reconciliation towards her

⁴⁸² Ibid., p.111.

⁴⁸³ Ibid., p.112.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., pp.132-133.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., pp.133-134.

⁴⁸⁶ France. Ministère des affaires étrangères (1883b). *Affaires d'Egypte [Texte imprimé] : 1882-1883 : exposé de la situation présenté aux Chambres le 15 janvier 1883, avec un recueil de documents diplomatiques / par le président du conseil, ministre des Affaires étrangères*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5613309), BnF, Paris, p.3.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., p.4.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., p.5.

⁴⁸⁹ Corresponding to the beginning of his term.

neighbour, ultimately waiting for the restoration of the "*statu quo ante*" that was the joint action in Egypt.⁴⁹⁰ Thus, despite their failure, Duclerc claimed to have led the negotiations with the United Kingdom "without recrimination," but in the objective in mind "to save on the Nile's banks our acquired rights, our legitimate interests and the traditions of our past."⁴⁹¹

Yet, in the introduction of a compilation of discourses spoken by the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1883 to 1885 Jules Ferry, the lawyer in the Council of State Paul Robiquet emphasised that the loss of Egypt to the United Kingdom represented the "greatest political mistake our country, or rather its representatives, have made since the disasters of the dreadful Year" that was the 1870-1871 Franco-Prussian war and its aftermath.⁴⁹² Robiquet went even as far as to claim that Ferry had to battle against French political opponents who, surprisingly, skilfully sapped the interests of France. From his perspective, the French interests in Egypt had been threatened ever since the United Kingdom bought in 1875 the shares of the Suez Canal company from the Khedive Isma'il Pasha. Nevertheless, due to the turmoil in Egypt starting from the 'Urabi revolt, the balance and *entente* between the two European powers began to fade. Moreover, the switch of Ministers of Foreign Affairs from Léon Gambetta to Charles de Freycinet also meant a very different stance regarding the relationship between the two nations. As underlined by Robiquet, while Gambetta, even as a deputy, defended the idea that the French interests were the main concern and, as such, cooperating with the British was essential, Freycinet as a minister rather demonstrated uncertainty and compromise once facing the issues at hand.⁴⁹³ In the end, the internal issues of French politics allowed the United Kingdom to take control by force of Egypt and the Suez Canal in August 1882. From that moment on, the French-British cooperation ceased to exist despite the efforts of some to bring back the *status quo* as explained previously. In such a way, as the successor of Freycinet, Jules Ferry began his term as minister of Foreign Affairs by attempting to reconnect with the government of London.⁴⁹⁴

Such intent can be witnessed in a letter of the 15th of June 1884 of the French ambassador in London William Waddington to Lord Leveson which clearly affirmed that the French republic did not intend to reestablish the French-British control over Egypt.⁴⁹⁵ Although Waddington supported the idea that the condominium produced "good and beneficial effects, and that under its influence Egypt was peaceful and her finances prosperous," France officially recognised its disappearance. As such, Waddington emphasised that it was on behalf of the "collective interests of Europe, and the legitimate part we represent in it" that now France was dealing with the issues of Egypt. Moreover, through Waddington, the French government also conceded not to be willing to replace the British military occupation of Egypt. Even more than that, the government officially declared to take "the formal commitment to not proceed, in any case, with an armed intervention in the Nile Delta, without a prior agreement with England."⁴⁹⁶ While this letter only represented one example of the overall stance of the French government vis-à-vis the place of the influence of France in Egypt in comparison to the British one, it is quite characteristic of the trend of policies, and overall resignation, it undertook from that moment on.

This trend got confirmed and officially announced by the prime minister Ferry himself in a discourse of the 23rd of June 1884 to the national assembly. From his perspective, while "to be gradually ousted, day by day, from a country where France brought her best: her genius, her language, her capitals, a hard-working colony, - to let it happen and watch, it is not a policy," the troubles the United Kingdom was then facing after their occupation was also not solace nor a form of compensation for France.⁴⁹⁷ Following so, Ferry insisted that Egypt was a "land essentially

⁴⁹⁰ France. Ministère des affaires étrangères (1883b), op. cit., pp.6-7.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., p.7.

⁴⁹² Jules Ferry (1897). *Discours et opinions de Jules Ferry [Texte imprimé] / publiés avec commentaires et notes, par Paul Robiquet*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-6220111), BnF, Paris, p.225 (Tome 5).

⁴⁹³ Ibid., pp.225-227.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid., p.229.

⁴⁹⁵ France. Ministère des affaires étrangères (1884). *Affaires d'Egypte [Texte imprimé] : 1884 / Ministère des affaires étrangères*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5613685), BnF, Paris, p.19.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid., p.20.

⁴⁹⁷ Ferry (1897), op. cit., p.231.

international and European," and hence, brought back to the assembly the past international ambitions for Egypt of the former British prime minister William Ewart Gladstone. Although Ferry admitted that tensions were inevitable due to the fact that the British and French points of interests in the world were rather similar, he advocated that the dialogue between two reasonable powers could overcome any of these difficulties.⁴⁹⁸ Accordingly, to reassure the British government and in the hope of freeing Egypt, France admitted giving up the idea of bringing back the French-British condominium and asserted having no interest to replace the British occupation by a French one.⁴⁹⁹ Rather, within later negotiations concerning the state of the Suez Canal or even the evacuation of the British troops in Egypt, Ferry seems to have aimed to make of France and her representatives the "spokesman of the European interests."⁵⁰⁰

3.5.2 Defending the European Interests and Neutrality of the Suez Canal

Interestingly enough, even during that period of resignation, the Suez Canal still remained as a central element for France and its representatives at that time. As expressed by Ferry, there was "no interest more significant, at the moment, for our country than the freedom of the canal."⁵⁰¹ Therefore, based on the words of the Lord Leveson on the 3rd of January 1883 claiming the neutrality of the Suez Canal, Ferry saw the success of the policy of dialogue between France and the United Kingdom and asserted it to be relatively worth the loss of the shared control of Egypt.⁵⁰² In a discourse of the 26th June 1884, facing the critiques of the opposition at the National Assembly,⁵⁰³ Ferry went even as far as to declare that the new accords should be compared to the previous political and diplomatic influence of France in Egypt which "was truly equal to none."⁵⁰⁴ Shortly after, Ferry also claimed that Egypt was a "European land, which contains significant international interests, where French interests have the first place."⁵⁰⁵ However, Ferry rather defended the idea that Egypt had never been coveted by France, but rather that the latter brought great benefits that now justify her presence in the European concert deciding her fate. For Ferry, the rich and powerful colony, the spread of the French language, the work of scientists, and the achievements made on Egyptian territory were enough to satisfy France without needing to take control of the government militarily. Instead, Ferry ambitioned to create, with the European concert, a neutral "international Egypt"⁵⁰⁶ for the sake of keeping the Suez Canal free by maintaining the attention of the European nations on it.⁵⁰⁷ Nevertheless, the deputy Francis Charmes saw in these new accords and more especially the decision of the United Kingdom to leave Egypt after three years and a half a diminution of France's prestige.⁵⁰⁸

As such, for many French representatives and officials, the Suez Canal was still considered as an important symbol of French influence in Egypt and, consequently, was used in this way in their discourses. For instance, in a letter of Waddington to Ferry on the 21st of March 1885, the French ambassador underlined his discussion with Lord Leveson in which he defended the idea to hold in Paris rather than London the negotiations of the international commission for the freedom of the canal as an homage to the founder of this "essentially French work."⁵⁰⁹ Although Waddington claimed that this proposition was not to obtain any political advantage, this example still highlights a certain preoccupation of the French elite to maintain a link with the past achievements of their fellow

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid., p.232.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., pp.233-234.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., p.235.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., p.237.

⁵⁰² Ibid., pp.237-238.

⁵⁰³ The opposition claimed that the new accords and concessions gave everything to the United Kingdom while France received nothing.

⁵⁰⁴ Ferry (1897), op. cit., p.248.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid., p.249.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid., p.250.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., p.259.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid., p.260.

⁵⁰⁹ France. Ministère des affaires étrangères (1885a). *Affaires d'Egypte [Texte imprimé] : 1885 / Ministère des affaires étrangères*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5613235), BnF, Paris, p.40.

nationals. Even in the discourse of Jules Ferry of the 30th of March 1885 at the first meeting of this international commission, the minister still slightly emphasised the French origins of this "genius design" bringing "glory" to France despite the fact that he declared that the project had always been considered as "essentially universal, European, humanitarian."⁵¹⁰ Ferry went even further by claiming that it was "to state clearly and definitively this international nature that the Government of the French Republic [...] called this meeting." Like others before him had done for decades, Ferry uses the ambiguity of origins of the canal in his discourse in order to both claim France's prestige and shelter it behind the protection of universal and European motives shared by most. In that way, the written report of the 19th of May 1885 of the meeting of the international commission concluded that the effort and work of its members would hopefully "show results and serve the interests of universal trade and of civilisation."⁵¹¹

Yet, in the late part of the nineteenth century, French remarks surrounding the Suez Canal seem to put more insistence on the universal and European aspects rather than the French. While the emphasis was previously rather put on its French origins, the British occupation led the French government to include it in a wider and more international scenery, focusing on the question of the canal's neutrality, probably as a reaction to the realisation of France's loss of power and influence in the region. This particular point can be observed in one of the message of the minister of Foreign Affairs Charles de Freycinet to the French ambassadors on the 2nd of July 1885 on the topic of the commission in which he even positively considered a possibility in which "the freedom of the Suez Canal becomes a principle of public law of civilised peoples."⁵¹² Thus, while the canal used to be presented as the heart of French influence and genius in Egypt, it seemed then to have progressively become the centre of rather broader universal and civilisational concerns for France. Therefore, within the discussions surrounding the resolution of the situation of the Suez Canal, Freycinet insisted that it was not anymore solely an issue of France and the United Kingdom, but rather that it belonged "to the entirety of Europe."⁵¹³ Likewise, the French government in its negotiations with the United Kingdom defended the idea of a reconciliation policy regarding the topic of the canal, even affirming once more to its rival, through its ambassador Waddington to the prime minister Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, having no intent to monopolise it. Rather, the French government asserted that, in France, "all those involved in the Egyptian affairs wish to ensure the true neutrality of the Canal."⁵¹⁴

While the signature on the 29th of October 1888 of the Convention of Constantinople, guaranteeing that the canal would remain open both in times of war and peace, by the United Kingdom among the other European powers could have meant the success of France's strategy and influence in the matter, the conditions required by the British on some its parts made it ineffective in the eyes of the French and, hence, delayed its enforcement up until the 1904 French-British *Entente Cordiale*.⁵¹⁵ Thus, due to the relative lack of successes and even actions from France in Egypt at the end of the nineteenth century, criticism and last bits of hope of her return in the region were expressed from various backgrounds, even from representatives related to the ministry of foreign affairs itself.

⁵¹⁰ France. Ministère des affaires étrangères (1885b). *Commission internationale pour le libre usage du canal de Suez [Texte imprimé] : avril-novembre 1885 / Ministère des affaires étrangères*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5613091), BnF, Paris, p.3.

⁵¹¹ Ibid., p.140.

⁵¹² Ibid., p.234.

⁵¹³ France. Ministère des affaires étrangères (1887). *Négociations relatives au règlement international pour le libre usage du Canal de Suez, 1886-1887 [Texte imprimé] / Ministère des affaires étrangères*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5613747), BnF, Paris, p.11.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid., p.60.

⁵¹⁵ Fact seen by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs Théophile Delcassé as a success for France as, by remaining "faithful to her traditions," she convinced the United Kingdom to accept the 1888 convention in France. Ministère des affaires étrangères (1904). *Accords conclus, le 8 avril 1904 entre la France et l'Angleterre au sujet du Maroc, de l'Égypte, de Terre-Neuve [Texte imprimé] / Ministère des affaires étrangères*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5814137), BnF, Paris, p.19.

3.5.3 The 'Necessity' of French Ideas and Remains of Influence in Egypt

For instance, in 1890, years after the invasion of Egypt by the British army, Ferdinand de Lesseps still supported the idea that modern Egypt was mainly the result of the French influence. As such, he asserted that it was from the "Bonaparte expedition and from the arrival of French that the prosperity of Egypt began, and currently it is being ruined." Concerning that last point, Lesseps advocated that, in order to save Egypt, and even the British, from her issues stemming from the occupation, the return of France and her influence on the country was necessary, not in an exclusive manner, but at least in the share she deserved thanks to the many decades of civilisation the French provided.⁵¹⁶ Similarly, in 1892, in a report addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of his mission on behalf of the Ministry of Commerce concerning the economic situation of Egypt and Turkey on French nationals as a result of the troublesome context while he was accompanying diplomatic agents, the deputy of Rhône Ernest Bérard supported the idea that the schools in Orient had a great responsibility in the spread of the French language, which as a consequence created a knowledge of France and even affinities for her in these regions.⁵¹⁷ In such a way, Bérard supported the idea that the question of the education of those regions had to remain central for France as it "considerably contributed to the development of our influence in the Valley of the Nile, as well as in the whole Orient."⁵¹⁸ To do so, the management of schools had to be maintained in order to keep the influence it produced and to allow their perfecting. Although most schools in Egypt were managed by religious people, Bérard, as an anticlerical politician, still supported their doings thanks to the quality of education and influence they provided. Moreover, he emphasised that the education spread there was relatively laic and based upon the French one, which consequently fed a form of respect for France to the students. Furthermore, Bérard also mentioned that outside of the scope the schools founded by Europeans, the French language was even used in many of the schools founded by the Egyptian government and her Ministry of Education. Nevertheless, the British occupation also had an impact in this domain in which many school directors "in order to flatter the current masters of Egypt" replaced the use of French by English.⁵¹⁹ Thus, once more, Bérard insisted that for the sake of the influence of France, the successful spread of the French language in the valley of the Nile "would be the most useful weapon for the triumph of our ideas."

In addition, Bérard also highlighted the importance for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the overall French government and Senate, to give answers to a petition written in August 1889 by French merchants complaining about service issues with the *Compagnie des messageries maritimes*.⁵²⁰ From his point of view, the lack of answer from the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies to the complaints of the French traders "would be very bad for our influence in the valley of the Nile."⁵²¹ Bérard went even as far as to claim that the rejection of them would give the impression to the nationals that France was disinterested in Egypt, which, as a consequence, would damage both French material interests and dignity. Hence, Bérard supported the idea that it was of the utmost importance for France to "raise our prestige on the Egyptian soil."⁵²² Following this comment, Bérard carefully shared his concerns, and the ones he gathered from his meetings with other politicians living there, to the Minister on the "disaggregation of our formerly so great power" in those regions.⁵²³

Bérard also contested the idea that the British had any direct interests in Egypt. Rather, he explained that the control over Egypt gave access to Sudan in order to establish a grand new trade route.⁵²⁴ Besides, the author further emphasised his argument by claiming that the British traces would fade if

⁵¹⁶ Lesseps (1890), op. cit., pp.22-23.

⁵¹⁷ Ernest Bérard (1892). *Rapport sur l'Égypte et la Turquie, adressé par M. Bérard, ... à M. le ministre des affaires étrangères [Texte imprimé]*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-1183734), BnF, Paris, p.3.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., p.17.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., p.20.

⁵²⁰ A French merchant shipping company of mail and passengers.

⁵²¹ Bérard (1892), op. cit., p.4.

⁵²² Ibid., pp.4-5.

⁵²³ Ibid., p.5.

⁵²⁴ Ibid., pp.15-16.

the occupation were to end, but also that they had no reason to take root "in this country where everything is organised in the French manner: laws, regulations, customs, language, public instruction, etc..."⁵²⁵ As the conclusion of his report, Ernest Bérard went beyond the limits of his initial mission in order to give a comment on the global situation of Egypt under the British occupation. From his perspective, the power of the United Kingdom was being overestimated mostly due to the great importance of its trade and commerce power, while they seemed to lack an equivalent power in terms of military. The author went even as far as to compare the strength of England to the one of the Italian republican city states of the Renaissance time, relying on "the power of gold, which in some cases is not much."⁵²⁶ Hence, on the one hand Bérard presented a very bad image of the United Kingdom in Egypt, mostly motivated by "selfish" interests, while on the other hand, supported the idea that France overseas was mostly looking to create new diplomatic ties, and used military power and conquests "only when humanity or necessity" required them. To further accentuate his remarks, Bérard even mentions the idea that against the discourse of the United Kingdom claiming that the situation in Egypt was excellent, the reality of the field as he experienced it showed how much the country gradually became impoverished.⁵²⁷

Likewise, even from the perspective of the British statesman and colonial administrator Alfred Milner, France had in Egypt, before the intervention and control of the United Kingdom, greater interests and influence than the sole heritage of the expedition of Napoléon.⁵²⁸ As such, the expert of the British occupation in Egypt highlighted that France was the only nation to have supported Egypt in its fight for independence against Turkey, on top of supporting Muhammad Ali in civilising the country. Hence, Milner evoked that during "almost half a century, French jurists, French engineers, French professors did their best [...] to provide Egypt with all the advantages of European culture." Although not all projects might have been successful, Alfred Milner emphasised that they started a spread of ideas which made the French "the pioneers of the European influence" in Egypt. On a related note, Alfred Milner even insisted on the fact that the Suez Canal was fully a French accomplishment. Although the success of the canal relied on a share of the trade largely British and that the actual benefits for Egypt might be debatable, the author maintained that it did not diminish the legitimacy France obtained in Egypt from it, as it remained "an irradiating source of French influence established in Egyptian soil."⁵²⁹ Nevertheless, Milner mentioned that both Austria and Italy also contributed to the development of civilisation in Egypt, although with less influence than France. From his point of view, the great influence of France which should have been brought by her language and culture in Egypt was cancelled by the selfishness of her political action.⁵³⁰ In such a way, Milner highlighted that the French policy got even worse since the British occupation, further hurting her own interests instead of improving them.

In conclusion, the situation in Egypt unveils the heavy reliance of French officials and experts on the glory of past civilisational achievements, mainly of the construction of the Suez Canal and its consequences, in order to both boost France's prestige and justify her political relevance in the region in a period of debacle of influence against her rival's, the United Kingdom's.

While originally thought as a grand universalist civilisational project whose completion would benefit Egypt's prosperity, the progress of humanity, international trade and even peace, the actual early days of its financing and realisation witnessed the emergence of a more nationalist vision in French discourses further reinforced by the long-lasting British opposition to the opening of the isthmus of Suez. As a result, whether due to the origins of its design, funds, or goal, the Suez Canal was being promoted by a French elite, Emperor Napoléon III, and Ferdinand de Lesseps himself as a

⁵²⁵ Ibid., p.17.

⁵²⁶ Ibid., p.21.

⁵²⁷ Ibid., p.22.

⁵²⁸ Alfred Milner (1898). *L'Angleterre en Égypte [Texte imprimé] / Sir Alfred Milner ; ouvrage traduit de l'anglais par M. F. Mazuc*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5803946), BnF, Paris, p.478.

⁵²⁹ Ibid., p.479.

⁵³⁰ Ibid., p.481.

project supported by the 'entirety' of the French nation.

In a similar manner, the company responsible for the achievement of the canal purposefully enshrouded itself in the same ambiguity, by being an Egyptian company with universalist ambitions and supported by many European nations despite obvious ties and directives coming from France, thus further deepening the overall blur surrounding the project. This ambivalence between French roots and civilisational aims allowed French officials and experts to either claim a form of prestige for France or ease tensions with her rivals depending on their current needs in international relations.

Yet, while the Suez Canal acted as a source of prestige in discourses and confirmed a prestigious position of influence for France in Egypt, it also ended up being at the source of her own downfall. Indeed, the acquisition of the Egyptian shares of the canal by the British gave them a leading role in the establishment of the French-British condominium, further strengthened by the passivity of the French government who ended up forced to constantly justify the relevance and legitimacy of France's remaining parts of influence in the region. Interestingly, even after the humiliation that represented the forced end of the joint-control, the Suez Canal still represented a solution for France to come back and act on the Egyptian scene in the minds of a French elite, yet this time through the defence of the European interests and neutrality of the canal, hence coming back to the original universalist ambitions of the project.

Chapter 4: France in Japan's Opening to the World

Following Richard Sims' conclusion of prestige as a motivation for France in Japan, in his diplomatic history and trade oriented analysis, and revisiting his last chapter through the lens of civilisation instead of modernisation and culture,⁵³¹ this empirical chapter aims to expand the literature with additional details and to respond to a scarcity in the overall scholarship of the early Franco-Japanese relations.⁵³² Also, as opposed to the classic approach of studies treating of civilisation in Japan from her point of view as a 'receiver', this chapter rather takes the perspective of one of the 'senders', France. In this way, in the case of the Far East and more especially Japan, some French experts of the time believed that it had entered the "orbit" of Europe thanks to the innovations realised in the domain of steam boats coupled with a specific French industrial innovation: the

⁵³¹ "The Broader Picture: Modernization and Culture" in which Sims calls for future research on the "non-diplomatic aspects of the Franco-Japanese relationship" in Sims (1998), op. cit., p.235.

⁵³² Major works on the topic of the early Franco-Japanese relations are relatively few in number. The study conducted by Alain Cornaille is a good example of the ambition of scholars to arouse curiosity on the topic by simply presenting the political correspondence of the first French ambassador in Japan, Gustave Duchesne de Bellecourt, rather than exhaustively analysing both countries' attitudes. From Cornaille's own words, his work hence heavily relies on primary sources and excludes important questions related to economy, navy, military, and religion, preferring to lay the foundations for future studies, see Alain Cornaille (1994). *Le Premier Traité Franco-Japonais, son application au vu des dépêches diplomatiques de Duchesne de Bellecourt*. Publications Orientalistes de France, Cergy. As a result, Richard Sims' comprehensive research on the first four decades of Franco-Japanese relations (1854-1895) is one of the first published studies answering to this lack in the scholarship. Focusing on the perspective of diplomatic history, and a largely on Léon Roches (1864-1868) and his legacy, Sims highlights the "predominantly negative quality" of France's policy in Japan riddled with inconsistencies, more preoccupied by issues with her European neighbours, and hindered by distance and the frequent replacement of her representatives. Still, as one of his concluding remarks, Sims asserts that prestige was a clear motivator for France's arrival in Japan, and that part of her contribution to modernisation was based upon the idea of being recognised as a first order power through it. Nevertheless, Sims main conclusion is that France showed very little desire to expand her influence and overall lost a great opportunity of connecting with Japan due to "a lack of imagination," see Sims (1998), op. cit., p.303. Offering a different point of view through a focus on the 9th of October 1858 Edo treaty between France and Japan, Eric Seizelet rather presents France's initial motivations as a mixture of purely diplomatic aspirations and of concerns about falling behind her European neighbours, see Eric Seizelet (2008). *Le traité d'Edo entre la France et le Japon : acteurs et enjeux. Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 152e année, N.2, pp.747-774. Christian Polak has also produced a two-part general view of the major events and, especially, figures of the Franco-Japanese relations, including diplomats, military, artists, engineers, and more, see Christian Polak (2002). *Soie et Lumière : l'âge d'or des échanges franco-japonais (des origines aux années 1950)*, CCIFJ and Christian Polak (2005). *Sabre et Pinceau par d'autres Français au Japon (1872-1960)*, CCIFJ. It is thus quite frequent for studies of the scholarship to rather focus on the relation of one French personality in particular with Japan, such as Georges Clémenceau in Matthieu Séguéla (2014). *Clémenceau ou la Tentation du Japon*. CNRS Editions, Paris. The present condition and main issues of the scholarship is particularly well defined in the analysis made by Jean Charton in which he explains some of the reasons for the scarcity of studies in comparison to the large number of ones taking the angle of the relationship between the United Kingdom or the United States with Japan. Namely, a lack of interest for the period of the Second Empire (1852-1870) in French historiography correspondingly impacting the subject of the late Edo period, the so-called "defeat" of French politics after the 1868 Meiji Restoration further aggravating the previous point, and a language barrier coupled with different interests between French and Japanese researchers, the latter more interested in cultural approaches than diplomatic or political. Yet, Charton underlines that the new impetus in the scholarship started from the 2000s brings the necessity of updating previous findings with understudied sources to further support its visibility. As such, Charton briefly presents his arguments defending the important role the French Second Empire played during the end of the Edo period, see Charton (2016), op. cit. In consequence, many studies oppose each other regarding the actual success or failure of France's involvement in Japan during the second half of the nineteenth century. For instance, Seizelet sees the four decades after the signature of the 1858 treaty as a "golden age" for the Franco-Japanese relations, in Seizelet (2008), op. cit., p.774, while Séguéla claims the period from 1868 to 1894 to have had "unsubstantial" Franco-Japanese diplomatic relations, in Séguéla (2014), op. cit., p.428. Furthermore, while the topics of modernity and civilisation have been mentioned in some of the above studies, most of them treated these two concepts for the length of a few paragraphs or as a single chapter that invited future researchers for more in-depth analysis, such as did Richard Sims in Sims (1998), op. cit., p.235. Those that made them major components of their studies are however most of the time taking the point of view of the 'receiver', Japan, rather than the 'senders', such as France among others, as can be witnessed in Marius B. Jansen (2002). *The Making of Modern Japan*. First Harvard University Press, Cambridge, but also Souyri (2016), op. cit. and even Karube (2019), op. cit.

opening of the Suez Canal.⁵³³ This fact combined with France's overall self-consciousness of a loss of power,⁵³⁴ but also her huge concerns for prestige and ranking in the world order, led the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the second half of the nineteenth century to seek further away new opportunities for the spread of the influence of the French civilisation.

4.1 The Basic Premise of France in Japan in the Early Years of the Opening

4.1.1 Intentions of France's First Diplomats: Liberalism and Civilisation

Regarding some of the reasons developed by previous studies as to why France was involved in Japan's opening to the world or even why France thought it was important to develop relations with the Far East nation in the middle of the nineteenth century, the historian Richard Sims explains that a part of it is related to France's "concern with the propagation of Catholicism" which led to the sending of missionaries in Asia, from the beginning of the century, as a way to establish permanent communication lines and politically enter the region.⁵³⁵ Although Sims develops the argument of trade as a motivation for France to get more involved in the affairs of the Far East, he supports the overall idea, similarly to other scholars, that it only played a "very minor part in the nineteenth century revival of French interest" both due to the very low number of French ships visiting at that time and to the relative disinterest of French manufacturers in foreign trade.⁵³⁶

As such, Sims underlines that these two arguments in the overall context of Asia are not sufficient to explain France's involvement in the opening of Japan as they were "quite limited" and only "marginally related" to the Far East nation. Sims even concludes that "Japan did not rank very high on France's list of priorities" as the missionaries' views on the concessions were ignored and trading interests "showed no apparent enthusiasm."⁵³⁷ Consequently, he asserts that neither religion nor commercial pressure were "key factors" in the French government's decision to establish relations with Japan.⁵³⁸ Instead, Sims claims that it was most probably the influence of prestige and France's concerns for her "status as a leading Power" that led her leaders to attempt to secure a treaty with Japan.⁵³⁹ Indeed, French leaders of the middle of the nineteenth century felt the need to follow other powers in the obtention of treaties with Japan as, from their perspective, showing no interest in the region "would lower France's standing in the world."⁵⁴⁰ In other words, it could be said that France was more or less 'dragged' into Japan's opening as a consequence of the 1854 convention of Kanagawa and the 1858 Harris treaty, and mixed with her own concerns for prestige and influence.⁵⁴¹ Hence, following the United States of America, the Netherlands, Russia, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, France signed on the 9th of October 1858 her first treaty with the formerly closed Japanese government thanks to the action of her diplomats: mainly, Baron Jean-Baptiste Louis Gros assisted by two *attachés*, Charles-Gustave Martin de Chassiron and Alfred de Moges.

From the written documents produced on the side by the members of the first French diplomatic mission to Japan can be witnessed some of the ideas shared by a French elite in reaction to the opening of new opportunities in the Far East. In the memoir of his 1857-1858 mission to China and Japan, the diplomat Alfred de Moges concluded by expressing that the slow opening of Japan to the Western civilisation was for him the demonstration that the government was gradually less fearful of the foreigners and, consequently, that it could eventually be convinced that the intentions of France in Japan were not the domination of the country nor, to some extent, commercial interests, but rather "a

⁵³³ Bousquet (1877a), op. cit., p.201.

⁵³⁴ Kennedy (1989), op. cit., p.169.

⁵³⁵ Sims (1998), op. cit., p.6.

⁵³⁶ Ibid, pp.7-8.

⁵³⁷ Ibid, p.20.

⁵³⁸ Ibid, p.12.

⁵³⁹ Ibid, p.13.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid, p.14.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid, p.22.

fair concern for her political influence and for the honour of her flag in the Far East."⁵⁴²

In order to proceed to a rapprochement that could prove this specific intent, Charles de Chassiron expressed in 1861 that an important aspect of the strategy of French diplomats to reach the Japanese relied on their affinity for progress, which the French civilisation possessed, that was presumed by them to stem from their skilful ability for crafts, considered to be special in comparison to the other East Asian nations such as China.⁵⁴³

Similar views were shared by Charles Descantons de Montblanc, also member of the 1858 mission of Baron Gros, close to the Satsuma clan,⁵⁴⁴ and later on first accredited French diplomat by the Japanese emperor in 1867, who promoted peaceful relationships with Japan in order to benefit from the unique desire of the Japanese to assimilate the progress of the West.⁵⁴⁵ As Japan possessed many resources coveted by the Europeans but lacked the machinery and other products necessary for their mass exportation, the direct exchange was seen by him as mutually beneficial for the Western nations and Japan.⁵⁴⁶ Hence, from his point of view, good relations had to be promoted with the Shogunate rather than the use of force, as commercial relationships with Japan would eventually bring industrial relationships in which, beside the rich resources France might enjoy through it, "two civilisations will then be able [...] to assist each other in the development of their societies."⁵⁴⁷ In consequence, Montblanc supported the idea that rather than a violent interference in the organisation of Japan, a liberal policy supporting the development of Japan would prove to be highly beneficial for France as it would satisfy "our moral, scientific, industrial and commercial interests."⁵⁴⁸ Quite similarly, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs concluded that the treaties signed by Japan with the West was breaking with the old traditions and testified that the court of Edo was willing to "drive Japan into the orbit of civilisation" in which the Western nations jointly progressed.⁵⁴⁹

As a result, in the following years of the opening, Charles de Montblanc became very critical of the management of the foreign relations by the Japanese government as the *shogun* tried to monopolise the relationships by using the tensions with the *daimios* as a scapegoat to frighten the Western powers. Montblanc hence declared that the *shogun* was isolating himself and the country while the *daimios* were following the path of "useful and friendly relations" by buying the "instruments of western science and industry" and by sending students or other high-profile characters to Europe.⁵⁵⁰ Regarding this last point, from his perspective, the European education of some Japanese head figures' children was crucial to cement and enhance the relationship between the West and Japan as the relations were only tied by a "superficial and incomplete trade."⁵⁵¹ His argument goes even further as he concluded in awe that "the civilisation of a nation can be a mean of action on the entirety of the Far East" in addition to benefiting the interests of Europe.⁵⁵² Consequently, Montblanc brought a message of hope in this context of tensions in which civilisation appeared to be his key element for solving them.

In a less enthusiastic manner, the adoption by Japan of the Western civilisation was also a case of

⁵⁴² Alfred de Moges (1860). *Souvenirs d'une ambassade en Chine et au Japon en 1857 et 1858 [Texte imprimé] / par le marquis de Moges*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-6580319), BnF, Paris, pp.345-346.

⁵⁴³ Charles-Gustave Martin de Chassiron (1861). *Notes sur le Japon, la Chine et l'Inde [Texte imprimé] : 1858-1859-1860*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-6581832), BnF, Paris, p.113.

⁵⁴⁴ Charles de Montblanc is at the origin of the participation of the Satsuma clan to the 1867 *Exposition Universelle*, separately from the Shogunate legation.

⁵⁴⁵ Charles de Montblanc (1867). *Le Japon, ses institutions, ses produits, ses relations avec l'Europe [Texte imprimé] / par le Cte de Montblanc*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-116006), BnF, Paris, p.32.

⁵⁴⁶ Silk, cotton, tea, gold, copper, silver, tin in *Ibid.*, p.27.

⁵⁴⁷ Charles de Montblanc (1865). *Le Japon [Texte imprimé] / Cte Ch. de Montblanc*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-74893), BnF, Paris, p.103.

⁵⁴⁸ Montblanc (1867), *op. cit.*, p.31.

⁵⁴⁹ France. Ministère des affaires étrangères (1860-1873), *op. cit.*, p.36 (1867, N8).

⁵⁵⁰ Charles de Montblanc (1866). *Considérations générales sur l'état actuel du Japon [Texte imprimé] : discours prononcé à l'assemblée générale de la Société de géographie, le 15 décembre 1865... / par le Cte de Montblanc*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-74892), BnF, Paris, pp.11-12.

⁵⁵¹ Montblanc (1867), *op. cit.*, p.24.

⁵⁵² Montblanc (1866), *op. cit.*, p.12.

concern for others, such as Chassiron, who saw in this influence the gradual corruption of the identity of the nation.⁵⁵³ Nevertheless, while being more critical about it, the argument made by Chassiron does not refute the link stressed by his 'colleagues', nor by himself previously, quite the contrary as it acknowledges the potential effect one's civilisation can have on another.

While the actual reasons for the implication of France in Japan might differ if regarded from a more material perspective, the analysis of the discourse of a French elite, as demonstrated above, provides the reader some insight on the mindset which was developed and further developing at the time. Therefore, two major themes seem to stand out from the discourse of French diplomats in Japan of the middle of the nineteenth century: the attraction of Japan for civilisation and the prestige France would gain from sharing hers.

Few years only after the signature of the first Franco-Japanese treaty, the departure of the first French military mission to Japan under the initiative of Napoléon III and on the request of the Japanese shogunate inaugurated the beginning of a relationship in which these two themes became central.

4.1.2 The First Military Mission, a Basis for Prestige

In a context of European conquests and sharing of the world in spheres of influence, some military experts believed and affirmed that the superiority of the army and navy coupled with the success of the first distant expeditions in Asia and Africa provided a prestige which ensured the continuity of these practices.⁵⁵⁴ From a series of documents addressed to Jules Chanoine, commander of the first French military mission sent to Japan from 1867 to 1868 after having been part of the Major State in two expeditions to China,⁵⁵⁵ by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other military officers involved in the projects can be witnessed this overall mindset and objectives shared by this French elite. As such, the first military mission's method as instructed to Chanoine by the cabinet of the War Minister Jacques Louis Randon was to adapt to the Japanese habits the French military instruction and organisation rather than just copying it, in order to enhance the troops with knowledge and discipline which "will gradually bring them on to the path of progress."⁵⁵⁶ The cabinet also insisted that discipline and good performance must be respected by the French members of the mission so that it can "reconciles the esteem and respect accorded everywhere to the French army."⁵⁵⁷ Although the Minister Randon got replaced quickly after beginning of the mission in January 1867, the new War Minister Adolphe Niel shared the exact same ideas and phrasing once facing the decision of the Edo government to extend the instructions taught by the French mission to the entirety of its army.⁵⁵⁸ Hence, in the eyes of the War Ministry under the Second Empire, the first military mission was supposed to be beneficial not only to Japan and its army, but also to France and the progress of its influence and prestige abroad.

Later discussions on the topic of the Boshin war present more arguments to the idea that the military mission is hardly possible to be dissociated from the concept of civilisation and prestige. Jules Brunet, member of the mission and interim commander, in a letter of the 16th of July 1868 to Matsudaira Taro, Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Army, briefly expressed regarding the pause of the mission due to the civil war that "Emperor Napoleon III sent us to spread the European sciences and the ideas of our civilisation in Japan," and hence, was wondering if the Japanese government was still willing to instruct his troops to the modern ideas of Europe considering the current situation.⁵⁵⁹ Added to this, few months later, the War Minister Niel praised the discipline of the French officers of the mission

⁵⁵³ Chassiron (1861), op. cit., p.109.

⁵⁵⁴ Jules Chanoine (1907b). *Le Japon et les suites de la guerre russo-japonaise [Texte Imprimé] : Sinicae Res / par le général Chanoine*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5801248), BnF, Paris, p.32.

⁵⁵⁵ 1859-1860 in the Major State of the expeditionary corps and 1860-1862 as the Chief of Major State of the occupation corps.

⁵⁵⁶ Letter of the 5th of November 1866 in Chanoine (1907a), op. cit., p.12.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid., p.12.

⁵⁵⁸ Letter of the 19th of November 1867 in Ibid., pp.38-39.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid., pp.62-63.

who respected a certain neutrality and restraint in the conflict that contributed "to maintain a position which matters, not only to the French influence, but also as you understood it, to the highest interests of civilisation."⁵⁶⁰ From a note written by Jules Chanoine, he assures that these views were frequently present in the letters of Marshal Niel and General Colson, but also later on in the ones of the War Ministers Cissey, du Barail, Berthaut, and Gresley and that they were also aligned with the projects of a potential Franco-Japanese alliance.⁵⁶¹ Overall, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Second Empire in 1869 believed that the civil war had little to no impact on the relations and treaties of France with the new government and as such, did not require a change of course as the French "civilisation is more appreciated as it becomes better known" in the Far East.⁵⁶²

Although it could be argued that the first military mission was an isolated case, due to its short length and abrupt end, and that the second and third military missions had no link with it as they were established under different regimes both for Japan and for France, respectively the Meiji government and the Third Republic, the reality is very much different. First of all, within the discussions related to the preparation of the second, quite a few members of the first military mission participated in them such as Captain Descharmes, Captain Jourdan, and Lieutenant Peyrussel.⁵⁶³ Second of all, the compilation of documents provided by General Jules Chanoine in 1907⁵⁶⁴ provides an important quantity of sources proving the relation of quasi mentorship sustained by the commander of the first military mission and his successors. Resulting from this, similar opinions were carried on for decades, only further bolstering the pride of the military for their work in the process.

While the first military mission might appear as the central source for prestige for France in the early years of her relationship with Japan, the involvement of the navy, including its mission of protection of the foreign settlement in Yokohama, reveals to be almost as important if not more for prestige thanks to its beneficial effect in partially countering in the Far East the French humiliation of the 1870-1871 Franco-Prussian war.

4.1.3 Navy and Naval Infantry in Yokohama, a Shield against Humiliation?

From the perspective of Alfred Houette, sub-lieutenant of the French navy and member of a crew operating in the Chinese and Japanese seas from 1879, the fact that French and British navy infantries were needed in order to protect the settlement of Yokohama was due to the inability of Japan to ensure the security of the foreign residents in the settlements. Although they were sometimes used as a support for other operations, their real value came into play after the first assassinations on Europeans which happened from around 1857 to 1869.⁵⁶⁵ The navy eventually left Yokohama in 1875.⁵⁶⁶ In such a way, for many members of the navy, the mission of protection of the European residents of Yokohama with England by the infantry and navy detachments was considered to be an "honour" that also "contributed to ensure our weaponry in Orient the prestige it had in Europe, when the 1870 war abruptly burst."⁵⁶⁷ In a very similar way, Maurice Dubard, sub-commissioner of the navy and writer who participated in the second military mission to Japan,⁵⁶⁸ defended the idea that the presence of a naval infantry company helped to maintain "a very strong esteem" for France in the minds of the Japanese, further supported by the work of the French engineers in Yokosuka, the naval hospital of

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid., pp.65-66.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid., p.66.

⁵⁶² France. Ministère des affaires étrangères (1860-1873), op. cit., p.13 (1869, N11).

⁵⁶³ Chanoine (1907a), op. cit., p.83.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁵ Georges Lebon (1898). *Les origines de l'armée japonaise [Texte imprimé] / par le colonel Lebon*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5804264), BnF, Paris, p.17.

⁵⁶⁶ Alfred Houette (1881). *Chine et Japon, notes politiques, commerciales, maritimes et militaires, par M. Alfred Houette,...* [Texte imprimé]. Digitised Archives (NUMM-375388), BnF, Paris, p.106.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid., p.126.

⁵⁶⁸ Following the death of Captain Francis Garnier in the battle of Hanoi in December 1873 in Maurice Dubard (1882). *La vie en Chine et au Japon [Texte imprimé] ; précédée d'Une expédition au Tonquin / par Maurice Dubard*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5816795), BnF, Paris, pp.91-92.

Yokohama and a shop managed by the Chief of the Naval Service.⁵⁶⁹ Hence, Dubard supported the idea that the garrison of Yokohama was seen by the Europeans as a place within which the soldiers proudly represented the country's army and incarnated the "absent" nation.⁵⁷⁰ Nevertheless, from the moment of the departure of the military, France was presumably only represented by the navy, the officer of the shop, and the doctor of the hospital. Consequently, this departure was seen by Dubard as the beginning of the "French disarray" as later on both the hospital and the shop were removed while the *Montagne*, "quasi-French land," was retroceded to Japan.⁵⁷¹

Despite this presumably prestigious presence, the 1870 Franco-Prussian war also had impacts in Japan, and more especially in Yokohama. As such, Alfred Houette emphasised that the war sent the message of the "tremendous collapse" of France's military power in which every Prussian's victory was celebrated by its nationals in the foreign concessions.⁵⁷² Houette even highlights that the success of the Prussians led some of its diplomats to attempt to permanently destroy the French influence in Japan through the expulsion of the naval infantry companies of Yokohama on the basis of neutrality.⁵⁷³ Although the tentative failed, it was later followed by rumours spread by the same diplomat of a Prussian attack on the French fleet. On this particular event, Paul de Lapeyrère, embassy *attaché* in Japan from 1881 to 1882, explains that the presence of the two French warships *Vénus* and *Dupleix* in the nearby waters of Yokohama during the 1870 war was blocking the passage of Prussian steamboat despite its protection by the *Medusa* and the *Herta*. The reason advanced was that the Prussian had for orders to only take fights in the case of an assured victory. Presumably, the word of these orders spread to the Japanese who disliked such behaviour, hence supporting the idea that France, in comparison, did not lose much of their esteem despite her defeat in the war.⁵⁷⁴ As a consequence, the incapacity of the Prussian fleet to leave Yokohama while the French could go as they pleased was also seen by Houette as a clear success. Although playing a rather secondary role in the war, the French navy for Houette "contributed for the most part in Orient to mitigate the disastrous effects of the news from the continent."⁵⁷⁵

However, despite the efforts from the navy, Houette also considers that the 1870 defeat had consequences which severely damaged the position of France in China and Japan and put the French "in a state of inferiority from which we must escape at all costs."⁵⁷⁶ From his point of view, widespread facts were far stronger than the positive testimonies of the few Japanese nationals who went to study in Europe. As a result, the reputation of France after the war took a serious hit, spreading the idea that the country was now financially ruined and generally declining. This idea got further aggravated due to the slight impoverishment of the French legations, while Germany could stand proudly thanks to its gleaming buildings. As a clear representation of this idea, Houette highlights the fact that the sites of the French navy hospital in Yokohama, which burnt in 1874, and of the *Montagne*, former stronghold of the French infantry, were still left in ruins years later. In the meantime, the British had well improved and expanded their hospital, while both the Americans and Germans built theirs. To these material losses Houette concludes: "the Japanese just as the Chinese understood it well and compared too frequently the continuously growing establishments of Germany to the ruins of ours."⁵⁷⁷ Nonetheless, as a message of hope, Houette claimed that the severe strike to the influence of France in the Orient after the Franco-Prussian war could be countered by the swiftness with which the nation paid back its war reparations, and also by the numerous achievements realised by French nationals in the region, such as the arsenal of Yokosuka or the military missions. In conclusion, Houette supported the idea that these achievements would have an impact on mainland France despite

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid., p.121.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid., p.123.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid., p.125.

⁵⁷² Houette (1881), op. cit., p.126.

⁵⁷³ Ibid., pp.126-127.

⁵⁷⁴ Paul de Lapeyrère (1883). *Le Japon militaire [Texte imprimé] / par P. de Lapeyrère*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-9681036), BnF, Paris, pp.42-49.

⁵⁷⁵ Houette (1881), op. cit., p.127.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., p.128.

the visible disinterest of his fellow mainland countrymen for these topics and region.⁵⁷⁸

This specific practice of self-justification by the French elite in an attempt to counter the negative effects of humiliation was not limited to the domain of the navy nor to topics about Yokohama. On the contrary, it became one of the central aspects of the argumentation and discourse deployed by French representatives and agents in a second phase of the relationship with Japan. In order to restore the prestige and image of France internationally, many of them attempted to link the French achievements realised earlier in the country to the later successes of Japan.

4.2 Linking Japanese Successes and French Prestige

4.2.1 The Choice of France "Alone" in the Aftermath of the 1870's Defeat

Even before the involvement of other foreign officers in the works of the military missions,⁵⁷⁹ some members of the French elite such as Paul de Lapeyrère, already proclaimed and heavily insisted that it was France "alone" which organised the Japanese modern army, and to which "the honour is due."⁵⁸⁰ Similar statements had been made by Alfred Houette who underlined that not only France was honourably represented in many of the schools of Tokyo reforming Japan and "all managed by foreigners until recently," but that the military school was exclusively assigned to the French military mission "to which all the merit of the creation and organisation of the Japanese army belongs."⁵⁸¹

In such a way, taken by many as the major reference compiling the achievements of France in the domain of military in Japan,⁵⁸² the 1883 *Le Japon militaire* of Lapeyrère is filled with elements glorifying the involvements of France and tying them to the military successes of Japan. From the point of view of Lapeyrère, but also of some members of the subsequent missions,⁵⁸³ the moment the *bakufu* decided to request a French mission in Japan corresponded to the highest days of the military successes of the Second Empire thanks to the "glorious memories" of the 1855 victory of Malakoff followed by the 1859 victory of Solferino, respectively the Crimean and the Italian wars.⁵⁸⁴ As such, Lapeyrère insisted that this military glory was one of the major influence in the decision of Japan to exclusively select France for the reorganisation of her military. Lapeyrère further strengthened his argument by claiming that, despite the 1871 defeat in the Franco-Prussian war, the former glory of France remained strong enough to convince Japan to select her for a second military mission.⁵⁸⁵ Although this statement got partially supported by the redaction of the *Revue française du Japon*, their comment is much more nuanced and rather underlines the important role played by General Yamada Akiyoshi, who personally witnessed the Franco-Prussian war, in this decision.

Even much later on, in a conference to military officers in March 1897 Colonel Georges Lebon, former member of the second military mission from 1872 to 1876, explains that while the *shogun* obtained a military mission from the government of Napoléon III, the *daimio* of Satsuma also asked Charles de Montblanc, accompanied by some French non-commissioned officers, to instruct his own troops.⁵⁸⁶ From his point of view, as the goal of the second military mission was to merge the former system of regional feudal battalions in order to create a national army directly linked with the emperor, the good relationships established by both the first official mission of France and the one of Charles

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid., pp.129-130.

⁵⁷⁹ The United Kingdom was involved in the education of the Japanese navy in 1867-1868 and 1873-1875 but not in the army, some German officers joined the military missions from 1885, and one Italian from 1884.

⁵⁸⁰ Lapeyrère (1883), op. cit., p.V.

⁵⁸¹ Houette (1881), op. cit., p.123.

⁵⁸² Even by Gustave Boissonade in *Société de langue française Japon* (1892-1897), op. cit., pp.360-366 (1894, A3).

⁵⁸³ Baron de Courcel, P. Deschanel, P. Doumer, E. Etienne, Général Lebon, Victor Bérard, R. de Caix, M. Revon, Jean Rodes, Dr. Rouire (1910). *Les questions actuelles de politique étrangère en Asie, conférences organisées à la Société des anciens élèves de l'École libre des sciences politiques... [Texte imprimé]*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-373613), BnF, Paris, p.185.

⁵⁸⁴ Lapeyrère (1883), op. cit., p.25.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid., pp.49-50.

⁵⁸⁶ Lebon (1898), op. cit., pp.13-14.

de Montblanc, helped to convince Japan to choose France for the second despite the loss in the 1870-71 war.⁵⁸⁷ Besides, later speeches underline that although the first military mission was abruptly stopped because of the Japanese civil war, Georges Lebon still supported the idea that it was enough time to build a relationship of friendship and trust that would have for consequence to alleviate in Japan the effect of the defeat coupled with the harsh criticism France was facing both in and out of Europe resulting from it.⁵⁸⁸ Furthermore, Lebon insisted that the Japanese understood perfectly that the 1870 defeat was mostly due to political mistakes and not due to the quality of the French army. In a way, it could be understood that this emphasis on the political responsibility in the war is revealing of a certain sense of pride coming from the military, quite bitter from the result of the Franco-Prussian war, for whom Japan's support in this second military mission provided them the recognition of their competence they needed.⁵⁸⁹

Nevertheless, Lebon underlined the fact that a part of the Japanese government was rather supportive of Germany, but that the action of Marshal Saigo Tsugumichi favoured France. As a consequence, the mission also had to face the criticism and obstacles due to this opposite party which claimed that they would succeed in cancelling the French mission after only six months. Lebon proudly highlights that on the opposite, the mission was such a success that it had doubled its personnel after a year.⁵⁹⁰ Even after the departure of the mission, Lebon insisted that the French mission had not been replaced by other nations but rather that, from his conversation with Marshal Oyama Iwao in 1884, the now more experienced Japanese decided to employ foreigners individually instead of in a grouped and more autonomous official mission like it previously happened with France. Similarly, Jules Chanoine asserted that the decision of Marshal Yamagata to choose the German major Jacob Meckel in 1884 to instruct the Japanese general staff was not an insult to the work of the French officers, but rather a way for the Japanese government to ensure its independence from "exterior influences."⁵⁹¹ As such, the end goal was to give a final eclectic instruction to the army through a personal approach, but "there was no other officially constituted military mission, like the French mission, with officers from every category, with its autonomy, under the command of a chief who depended from the French ministry of War."⁵⁹² Through this last sentence of Lebon can be witnessed the major fear of the French agents: the threats represented by the growing influence of their rival over theirs in Japan. In the same way, Chanoine underlined that following the first victories of Japan, military writers in Germany, England, France, and the United States emphasised the part played by their representatives in the military and naval education of the Japanese modern nation. However, he emphasised that the Japanese were not exclusive, just like the ancient Romans, and thus did not experience a conversion to one model only. Yet, as previously mentioned, Chanoine, like others, saw the great military school inaugurated in 1875 by the French as the source of most of the executives of the Japanese army in the three major subsequent conflicts.⁵⁹³

Therefore, while the initial pretensions of the French agents were to claim that it had been France alone that was responsible for the remodelling of the Japanese army, the argument later evolved in reaction to the similar behaviour of France's rivals, probably in an attempt to dilute their efforts into a greater mix of origins while at the same time emphasising that the French model was prime within it. As a result, the idea that France "alone" built and taught Japan the modern ways of the military provided to her representatives and agents the perfect argument necessary in order to produce prestige thanks to the military 'prowesses' of her pupil.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid., pp.23-24.

⁵⁸⁸ Baron de Courcel, P. Deschanel, P. Doumer, E. Etienne, Général Lebon, Victor Bérard, R. de Caix, M. Revon, Jean Rodes, Dr. Rouire (1910), op. cit., p.186.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid., p.187.

⁵⁹⁰ Lebon (1898), op. cit., p.24.

⁵⁹¹ Journal des sciences militaires: revue militaire française (1904-1914). *Journal des sciences militaires... [Texte Imprimé] / publié avec l'approbation des ministres de la Guerre et de la Marine*. Digitised Archives (NUMP-11985), BnF, Paris, pp.35-36 (July-September 1906) (A82,SER11,T3) .

⁵⁹² Baron de Courcel, P. Deschanel, P. Doumer, E. Etienne, Général Lebon, Victor Bérard, R. de Caix, M. Revon, Jean Rodes, Dr. Rouire (1910), op. cit., pp.187-188.

⁵⁹³ Chanoine (1907a), op. cit., pp.1-3 (Foreword).

4.2.2 Claiming the Successes of a Japanese Army 'Built' by France

Although the civil war in Japan occurred after the beginning of the French military mission, many sources of the time tend to emphasise the fact that it was too early for the Japanese military to have assimilated any of the French principles in order to use them during the conflict.⁵⁹⁴ Whether this statement reveals to be true or not in reality is difficult to assess, but it still provides a first example of the later attempts made by a French elite to link almost any of the military 'prowesses' of Japan to French origins for the sake of potential gains of prestige. In such a way, Paul de Lapeyrère dedicated an entire chapter of his book to the two occasions during which this new Japanese army could "test its strengths": Formosa in 1874, and the Satsuma rebellion in 1877.⁵⁹⁵ From his perspective, the 1874 Taiwan expedition in particular demonstrated the rapid and great progress made by the Japanese "army under reorganisation," in other words, the army instructed by French officers. Moreover, it could be interpreted that the triumph in Formosa was even greater for France as Lapeyrère heavily emphasises that the success of the negotiations "entirely" goes to another French, Gustave Boissonade, charged by the Japanese government to achieve them in China.⁵⁹⁶

In a similar manner to Lapeyrère, among the long list of facilities or institutions created from 1872 to 1876 under the direction of the military mission that many of the French experts of Japan like to expose as the proof of the glorious involvement of France on the nation, the details given by Georges Lebon voluntarily highlight their impact in the subsequent conflicts. As such, Lebon mentions that the military arsenal of Edo containing 2500 workers, mostly using machines coming from France, saw its numbers elevated to 4000 during the 1874 Japanese Taiwan expedition.⁵⁹⁷ Lebon also mentions that during the following negotiations between China and Japan, it was the same mission that was responsible for the establishment of the coastal defences in anticipation of a potential conflict.⁵⁹⁸ Similarly, the military school of 1875 is put in the spotlight by Lebon as it provided 110 of its students-officers to fight during the 1877 Satsuma rebellion.⁵⁹⁹

Still decades later, similar attempts can be found in the 1892-1897 *Revue française du Japon*, sole French-based journal in the Far East at that time whose mission was to spread the French language and influence in the region, and supervised by Gustave Boissonade, head figure of the initial modern legal codes of Japan. Even before his participation in the Sino-Japanese and the Russo-Japanese wars, the journal was already reporting in January 1892 the satisfaction they felt in witnessing the praise Prince Kan'in Kotohito was receiving for his wedding, as he went to France to get his military education.⁶⁰⁰

Likewise, concerning the events of the 1894-1895 Sino-Japanese war, Captain Descharmes, member of both first and second military missions, addressed to Chanoine his satisfaction as the conflict "does justice to your work and ours."⁶⁰¹ From his perspective, the progress of the war in favour of Japan was demonstrating that the Far East nation was now a "first-class power" in the region that the Europeans had now to reckon in the world order, and that, thanks to the work of the French military missions. Years later on the 10th of March 1909, Georges Lebon, now General, went even as far as to claim that the secondary military mission was also "the starting point of this military transformation that Japan was able to pursue this quick and this far, and which allowed mark its entrance into the modern world by the lightning strike of Manchuria."⁶⁰² Even though the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905 represented a difficult situation for the position of France in the international order due to her alliance with Russia, a wide number of military articles flourished with

⁵⁹⁴ Lapeyrère (1883), op. cit., pp.38-39.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid., pp.111-124.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid., p.116.

⁵⁹⁷ Lebon (1898), op. cit., p.26.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid., p.28.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid., pp.27-28.

⁶⁰⁰ Société de langue française Japon (1892-1897), op. cit., p.32 (1892, A1).

⁶⁰¹ Chanoine (1907a), op. cit., p.172.

⁶⁰² Baron de Courcel, P. Deschanel, P. Doumer, E. Etienne, Général Lebon, Victor Bérard, R. de Caix, M. Revon, Jean Rodes, Dr. Rouire (1910), op. cit., p.185.

the main theme being the involvement of the French army in the creation of the modern Japanese army.⁶⁰³ From the point of view of General Jules Chanoine, regardless of the outcome of the war, exposing to the public the part played by the French officers in the Japanese army would be of interest as her exploits are expected by him to "remain engraved in the history of the world"⁶⁰⁴ and "will have so much influence on its destinies."⁶⁰⁵ While Georges Lebon partially linked the numerous institutions built from 1872 to 1876 by French officers in Japan to the 1874 Taiwanese expedition, Chanoine on the other hand especially linked the great military school created in 1875 by Captain Vieillard to most of the subsequent conflicts Japan took part in, as he claims that most of the Japanese army executives involved in the Sino-Japanese war, the 1900 expedition to the North of China, and the Russo-Japanese war came from it.⁶⁰⁶ Furthermore, in a note related to this school, Chanoine put a particular emphasis on the fact that many of the French officers who managed the military instruction or schools in Japan became either generals⁶⁰⁷ or at least superior officers. To the extensive list of forty-seven members of the personnel he provided, Chanoine concluded that it was "a clear proof of the care the French war ministers [...] always gave to the composition of the mission staff."

In consequence, on the one hand the Russo-Japanese war brought a sense of defeat and decadence in the minds of the French and other Western powers. On the other hand, it showed that the strategies and ideas taught in the French military schools for decades were not only correct from French points of views, but also internationally praised. Hence, tying the origins of one of the opponents while being allied to the other ensured a position of moral high ground which would appear to be beneficial in many situations. The same kind of arguments were also developed in the case of the navy, thus signing the timid return in significance of this domain decades after the end of the mission of protection in Yokohama.

4.2.3 Claiming the Successes of a Japanese Navy 'Built' by France

While the role played by the troops posted in the defence of Yokohama might have acted as one of the first sources of prestige for the French navy in Japan, the importance of the domain got multiplied with the occurrence of both Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars. Due to the fact that Japan was facing the construction of two heavy battleships of 7335 tons by China in Germany while Japan was only equipped with two light ones of 3777 and 2284 tons, the government called for the help of France through the employment of Louis-Emile Bertin. Bertin decided to go for the construction of three ships of 4278 tons, one of them in Yokosuka, the two others in France in La Seyne-sur-Mer: the *Matsushima*, the *Itsukushima*, and the *Hashidate*. After these, Bertin established the plans of other boats such as the *Chiyoda* of 2439 tons built in England, or the *Yaeyama* of 1609 tons in Yokosuka. It was reported that all of them quickly became of use in the 1894 war against China but were also later on involved in the Russo-Japanese war.⁶⁰⁸ In such a way, the redaction of the *Revue française du Japon* highlighted a series of articles published by the *Yomiuri Shinbun* from 1893 on the foreign relations of the *bakufu*, and more especially one about the Yokosuka arsenal. As an 'answer' to it, the redaction committee decided to retrace the history of the origins of the Japanese Navy in which France had a huge influence. As a conclusion, the redaction claimed that the successes the modern Japanese

⁶⁰³ The *Journal des sciences militaires* published from 1904 to 1914 contains an outstanding number of articles analysing the tactics employed by the Russian and Japanese armies during the war. The journal was published with the approval of the Ministries of War and Marine.

⁶⁰⁴ Chanoine (1907a), op. cit., p.1 (Foreword).

⁶⁰⁵ Although the article is anonymously signed by the mention "General***," the title of the article *Sinicae Res* coupled with the exact same phrasing and views exposed by Jules Chanoine in other documents leave little doubt as to the identity of the writer, in *Journal des sciences militaires: revue militaire française (1904-1914)*, op. cit., p.167 (January-March 1906) (A82,SER11,T1).

⁶⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.168.

⁶⁰⁷ Nine of them, including: Berthaut, Brunet, Chanoine, Descharmes, Jourdan, Lebon, Munier, Orcel, and Vieillard in *Ibid.*

⁶⁰⁸ Togari (1935). *Louis-Emile Bertin [Texte imprimé] : son rôle dans la création de la marine japonaise / par le capitaine de vaisseau Togari, ... ; avec une préface de Ch. François*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-851065), BnF, Paris, pp.21-29.

Navy registered in the Sino-Japanese war would once more bring the light on the ones who contributed to its creation, in other words: France and the French.⁶⁰⁹

Similar views were developed by Jules Chanoine who underlined that even though both France and England had been chosen by Japan for the development of its army and navy, it was from France especially that naval engineers were asked to create the required arsenals to build the ships. The construction of the Yokosuka arsenal started in 1865 by Léonce Verny was later on continued by Jules César Thibaudier. Chanoine then mentions that these works received a new impetus under the Meiji government, and eventually brought "a powerful support to the creation of the military and naval institutions, from which the land and the sea Japanese victories from 1894 to 1905 came out."⁶¹⁰ However, the argument developed by Chanoine goes even further when mentioning the involvement of Louis-Emile Bertin in the construction of the Japanese fleet. While taking the details from a Russian newspaper, Chanoine implied that the French contribution in the navy got recognised even within the ranks of the enemies of Japan. As such, from the massive additions of warships commanded by Bertin, Chanoine concluded that it was "the original nucleus of the dreaded fleet that would eight years later destroy or capture the one of China first in Yalou, then in Wei-hai-wei, and, ten years later, annihilate the Russian navy in Port-Arthur and Tsousima."⁶¹¹

Yet, although praised for their efficiency by Japanese officers such as Admiral Ito Sukeyuki and used by French agents such as Jules Chanoine as a source of prestige for France, written documents produced by Bertin rather showed his reluctance to take credit for the implication of the ships he built in the battles against China, instead attributing it to the quality of the Japanese tactics.⁶¹² Nevertheless, what the extreme insistence of some French experts on this type of argumentation and justification actually reveals is the progressive loss of ground of the French influence in these domains in Japan to the ones of her rivals, and more.

4.3 Threats to France's Sources of Prestige

4.3.1 The Forever Rival: The United Kingdom

Although the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland was not directly involved in the same spheres of influence as France in the military as the expertise of the British had been requested only twice in the navy for a total of three years,⁶¹³ their presence represented in the eyes of the French representatives and agents a force that had to be considered. As soon as the preparations for the first military mission, the French Minister in Japan Léon Roches in his letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Edouard Drouyn de Lhuys heavily insisted on the necessity to send proper and polite officers in this mission as they would be facing the well-mannered and "perfectly put together" XXth regiment of infantry of the Queen. While transmitting the request of the mission to the war minister Randon, Drouyn de Lhuys concurred by emphasising the necessity to choose qualified officers for the successful completion of the mission.⁶¹⁴ Few years later, Joseph Emile Colson, chief of the cabinet of the war minister Niel, even compared the situation of the first military mission and the position gained by Jules Chanoine to the one of Colonel Mircher, in a military mission in Egypt, who had been reported by British agents and eventually got ousted by the Khedive due to his too great influence on the country. From this, Colson concluded that "Edo is a battlefield for European powers in a similar way to Egypt," hence justifying the strategic decision of the war ministry to keep the French military mission in Japan in low numbers.⁶¹⁵

In the end, from the point of view of Jules Chanoine, the mission was stopped on the 14th of

⁶⁰⁹ Société de langue française Japon (1892-1897), op. cit., pp.303-318 (1894, A3).

⁶¹⁰ Journal des sciences militaires: revue militaire française (1904-1914), op. cit., p.165 (January-March 1906) (A82,SER11,T1).

⁶¹¹ Ibid., p.166.

⁶¹² Louis-Emile Bertin (1914). *La Marine Moderne* in Togari (1935), op. cit., pp.23-24.

⁶¹³ 1867-1868 Tracey Mission and 1873-1875 Douglas Mission.

⁶¹⁴ Respectively on the 15th of February and 10th of April 1866 in Chanoine (1907a), op. cit., pp.1-4.

⁶¹⁵ On the 4th of February 1868 in Ibid., pp.44-45.

September 1868 due to the troubles the Japanese ministers were dealing with, but also due to the external pressure of "European agents, hostile to the French" they were facing.⁶¹⁶ The "rivalries of influence between the European nations" and more especially the dominance of the British influence with the southern *daimios* was pointed as one of the main reasons for the failure of the French representatives in Japan. Chanoine asserts that the interests of the British went beyond the trade sphere, as it was rather an "imperial question." It was rather believed that the British tried to diminish the French influence in Japan in order to consolidate the link between its Asian trading posts and colonies.⁶¹⁷

But the concerns of the influence of the British in the military domain only resurfaced more than three decades later once both the 1902 Anglo-Japanese alliance had been signed, and the 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese war had been over. From this moment, the British went under the suspicion that, similarly to what France had been doing, they were attempting to link themselves to the military successes of Japan and the prestige they granted⁶¹⁸ while they had based their policy in the Far East on a rapprochement with China ever since the 1894-1895 Sino-Japanese war. Chanoine even emphasised that although the British policy shifted towards Japan, most of the ships destroyed by the Japanese in the naval battles of Yalu and Weihaiwei had been built in the United Kingdom and "if the crew of these ships were Chinese, they were in reality commanded and driven by British officers and mechanics."⁶¹⁹ Furthermore, Chanoine also explains that although the British might have succeeded in Europe to partially share the "the prestige of the Japanese victories [...] this tactic remains without effect on the Asian nations, for which, in the last war, there is only one victor, Japan."⁶²⁰ In other words, for Chanoine, the victory of Japan against Russia was perceived as the victory of Asia on Europe, as some kind of 'revenge' from the unfair treatment and unequal treaties the Asian nations underwent.

Yet, within this battle for influence and prestige in Japan, the United Kingdom does not appear as the main threat and source of fears for the French who rather focused their attention on the unprecedented rise of Germany both in Europe and in the Far East, threatening the position of France in her own domains of predilection.

4.3.2 The Rising Rival: Germany

One of the frequent arguments mentioned by French military experts for the decision of Japan to have chosen France for the modern remodelling of her army lies on the idea that the Japanese were constantly on the lookout for progresses.⁶²¹ Nevertheless, this argument initially favourable for France became the bane and source of concerns of her representatives confronted to the rapid rise of the influence of Germany in this domain. Some military experts began to express their worry such as Joseph-Jean-Marie Mordrelle, battalion commander in the 1900-1901 expedition to China, who wrote in the *Revue des Troupes coloniales*⁶²² his concerns on the declining influence of France in Japan, "replaced in our role by the Germans," which he attributed, not to the positive judgement of the Japanese on the abilities of the Germans in comparison to the French, but rather to the fact that "small nations always turn towards strength, and the prestige of a victory consistently draws them into the orbit of the victor."⁶²³ Consequently, the expedition to China was expected to have a beneficial

⁶¹⁶ Ibid., p.69.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid., pp.75-77.

⁶¹⁸ Jules Chanoine in *Journal des sciences militaires: revue militaire française (1904-1914)*, op. cit., p.5 (October-December 1907) (A83,SER11,T8).

⁶¹⁹ *Journal des sciences militaires: revue militaire française (1904-1914)*, op. cit., p.164 (January-March 1906) (A82,SER11,T1).

⁶²⁰ *Journal des sciences militaires: revue militaire française (1904-1914)*, op. cit., p.325 (April-June 1907) (A83,SER11,T6).

⁶²¹ Emile Bujac (1896). *Précis de quelques campagnes contemporaines [Texte imprimé] / [par É. Bujac]*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-103859), BnF, Paris, p.59 (T.2).

⁶²² A monthly journal officially published by the Ministry of War from 1902.

⁶²³ Joseph-Jean-Marie Mordrelle (1904). *Notes sur le Japon. Extrait de notes prises au cours de la campagne de Chine*,

outcome and to represent a form of hope for the prestige of France and her army. From the perspective of Mordrelle, the war strategies and combat methods demonstrated by the French military during the campaign of China "have been observed with the utmost care, and they have been unanimously declared superior to all."⁶²⁴ As a result, Mordrelle claimed that this superiority had been observed by the Japanese who, on the look-out for every bits of progress, were presumably initiating discussions with the French government in order to send a large military mission to France and some of their officers to French military schools.

However, the first signs of the progress of the German influence in Japan in disfavour of France can be traced back decades earlier. As such, on the subject of the Sino-Japanese war, the written production of the commander Emile Bujac, posted at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and charged of various overseas missions, highlighted that even though the Japanese army recruitment rules of 1875, later modified and completed in 1879, 1883, and 1889, were based on the French ones of 1873, the territorial divisions of recruitment were much more similar to the German ones.⁶²⁵ In such a way, this domain once dominated by the French influence was gradually being invested by a German influence that "manifests itself in more detail in the higher spheres of command."⁶²⁶ Regarding the overall influence of the French military mission, Bujac claimed that, although the French officers had a great impact on the Japanese army, "the German plots gradually succeeded in ruling us out in order to replace our instructors with teachers." For him, the situation was such that the last officer of the third military mission, the commander Berthaud, had to be called back to France, while the German officers von Meckel, von Wildenbruck, and Greitscheider "could then freely quintessentialise the higher military sciences." On this last point, Bujac quite heavily insisted that the analysis and critique of the Sino-Japanese war would reveal how little of use this highly refined military education was for the Japanese general staff, and how it was even "a bad advisor." Moreover, Bujac further criticised its presumed inadequacy and ineffectiveness by asserting that, rather than the German method and theory, it was the knowledge of the military profession that appeared to be the most useful during the conflict, "profession in which the victors had been initiated by our instructors."⁶²⁷

When it comes to the analysis of the Russo-Japanese war years later, Bujac also supported the idea that the German infantry tactics used by Japan revealed to be unsuccessful, leading the Japanese to change their model for the joy of the British who saw in this evolution the adoption of their own system. Yet, Bujac once more linked the Japanese army progresses with the French methods as he underlined that Japan's changes were very similar to the theories developed in the 3rd of December 1904 French regulations on the manoeuvres of the infantry.⁶²⁸ However, while the shift of models of the Japanese infantry might have been the subject of debates during the Russo-Japanese war, the influence of the German instruction on the major staff was much more widely accepted, and for French military experts, the best proof of the decay of the French influence and recognition in Japan. As such, in a series of documents highlighting the lessons that must be taken from the war, Lieutenant-colonel Picard took the War Academy, which forms the Major State, as the beginning of his argumentation on the prevalence of the German influence over the French, hence claiming that most Japanese institutions were now based on the German template, which had for consequence to bolster "with haughtiness" the pride of their military *attachés*.⁶²⁹

Although most of the testimonies written in counteraction and attempting to promote the indirect role of France in the war 'prowesses' of Japan came from military experts, other voices of experts of Japan rose once facing the rise of the influence of Germany in the domain. Even the jurist Gustave Boissonade claimed that to the contrary of the acknowledged role of France in the Japanese navy,

1900-1901 [Texte Imprimé]. Digitised Archives (NUMM-1183480), BNF, Paris, p.21.

⁶²⁴ Ibid., p.21.

⁶²⁵ Bujac (1896), op. cit., pp.59-60.

⁶²⁶ Ibid., p.60.

⁶²⁷ Ibid., p.67.

⁶²⁸ Emile Bujac (1907). *Précis de quelques campagnes contemporaines [Texte imprimé] / [par É. Bujac]*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-103863), BnF, Paris, p.85 (T.6).

⁶²⁹ Journal des sciences militaires: revue militaire française (1904-1914), op. cit., p.362 (July-September 1905) (A81,SER10,T27).

thanks to the light shed by the Sino-Japanese war, the role of France in the military was clearly being undermined by the foreign, but also the French, newspapers that gave, he judged, an exaggerated role to the German officers.⁶³⁰ From his perspective, this recent trend almost gave the impression that Japan only copied the German system, and that the Germans were the only foreigners present at the time. After detailing the comprehensive history of the involvement of France in the two first military missions, Boissonade highlighted that in reality the German participation was only in very small numbers, and only started from the third military mission once the new organisation was almost fully achieved. As the third mission was in much lesser numbers for France and only included four German officers in total in the span of nine years from 1885 to 1894, Boissonade considered that the influence of Germany on the organisation of the Japanese army could not be compared to the multiple decades and large investments in personnel France provided. To further accentuate his point, Boissonade also mentioned that a Dutch and three Italian officers also participated to various activities and developments for the Japanese army, during roughly the same years, but that no Dutch nor Italian journals seemed to be claiming that the Japanese army was based on their models, to the contrary of the other foreign newspapers with Germany. Finally, Boissonade almost bitterly concluded that it was mostly from courtesy for their power and position in the world that the Japanese government decided to involve some of these nations.⁶³¹ Although Boissonade claimed that he wanted to avoid hurting the national susceptibility of the French, German, and Japanese, his article clearly had the purpose to counter the idea that the Japanese army copied the German model only, while he rather advocated that the two teachings melded into something new.

Nevertheless, outside of these debates and fights of legitimacy between European powers, the overall modern development of Japan confirmed by her military successes allowed her to gradually grow more independent, thus implying the termination of relations of tutorship with Western powers and, consequently, the gradual end of sources of prestige for them.

4.3.3 The Distancing of Japan

Regarding the topic of the gradual independence and distancing of Japan from the European teachings, some voices began to rise as soon as the last years of the second military mission as they started to sense what was about to come and how it would impact the overall French influence in Japan in comparison to their rivals'. The best example is given by Colonel Munier, superior commander of the mission, in a letter of the 23rd of June 1878 to Jules Chanoine in which he believes that the Japanese might eventually get rid of the Europeans "out of complacency." Yet as a note of hope, he also underlines at the same time that the military school would remain indispensable to the Japanese, meaning for him that the French would probably be the last Europeans to leave. Hence, even within the later cases of gradual abandonment of the European works, such as the difficulties the Mito arsenal was going through, Munier still expressed his comfort in the fact that "no European has replaced us."⁶³²

Most probably due to the fact that it had been for so many years one the core of the French influence and prestige in Japan, the halt of the second military mission in 1880 left a bitter feeling in the minds of many. As can be seen in the words of Alfred Houette, some considered that the Japanese leaders were too hasty in revoking their teachers after having learnt what they think should have been enough.⁶³³ In such a way, the departure of the British naval mission in 1879 followed by the departure of the French military mission in 1880 left a huge part of doubt as regards to the future of the Japanese army. Similarly, the change of management, from French to Japanese, of some of the facilities, like Yokosuka, was sometimes deplored. Such can be witnessed in the testimony of Alfred Houette who even saw in it a change in the quality of the arsenal, and even shared some regrets of the time it was

⁶³⁰ Société de langue française Japon (1892-1897), op. cit., p.359 (1894, A3).

⁶³¹ Ibid., pp.364-365.

⁶³² Chanoine (1907a), op. cit., p.141.

⁶³³ Houette (1881), op. cit., p.123.

under the management of the former regime.⁶³⁴

Furthermore, while the Sino-Japanese war acted as an indirect source of prestige for France through the Japanese victories, its aftermath through the 1899-1901 Boxer rebellion triggered another wave of tremors in the minds of French experts, mainly due to the high position of power reached and demonstrated by Japan through the events. As such, General Barthélémy-Edmond Palat, under the pseudonym of Pierre Lehautcourt, claimed that the intervention of Japan in order to support the foreign settlements was the confirmation that Japan attained a position of great power and newcomer in the concert of nations, mostly thanks to the great organisation, qualitative equipment, and efficient leadership the Japanese battalion demonstrated. He even added: "It seems that the Japanese aim at capturing the imagination of their allies from Europe and America. The fact is that they are succeeding. The officers of other nationalities are roughly unanimous to recognise their warfare skills; official publications are echoing it."⁶³⁵

The situation worsened even more in the minds of French experts after the Russo-Japanese war. For instance, Chanoine developed the idea that the Japanese would have much less issues in teaching the Chinese troops thanks to their common use of *kanjis*. Thus, Chanoine believed that this fact linked with her victory against Russia provided a good example and a strong case for China to follow similar teachings as the Japanese.⁶³⁶ Moreover, still from his point of view, Asia seemed to be closing itself now to the Europeans and the only ones left were facing "the Japanese engineer, professor, instructor, manufacturer, to whom he can no longer oppose a technical or professional superiority." Coupled with the presumed similarities in mores and languages, and "not to mention the prestige and moral ascendancy which passed from the European to the Japanese," it seemed that the European nations were losing ground against their former student.⁶³⁷ Likewise, Lieutenant-colonel Picard mentioned that probably out of ignorance and disdain, the European nations had ignored the historical war 'prowesses' of Japan and paid little attention to "her initiation by Europeans to a perfected military system." Consequently, Picard emphasised that the Russo-Japanese war made them realise, almost as a shock, the rapid assimilation the Far East nation achieved by defeating what was then considered to be one of if not the most powerful nation of Europe.⁶³⁸ In such a way, on the side to the threats represented by the growing importance of her rivals in Japan, France also had to face the gradual independence of Japan which was menacing her prestige, relevance, and purpose in the region in the long term. The signature of the 1907 Franco-Japanese Treaty only confirmed the fact that France was now dealing as equals with her former pupil.

Yet, the struggles of prestige and influence of France in Japan were actually not only the result of foreign forces, but also the outcome of misunderstandings, opposition of opinions, and preference for European concerns coming from the French ministry of Foreign Affairs itself.

4.4 Self-Justification for the Ruin of France's Prestige in Japan

4.4.1 The Failure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs?

As pointed out by Richard Sims in his work, the entanglement of France in the European affairs meant that the decision makers were sometimes compromising their interests in Japan for the sake of keeping good relationships with European powers, namely with the United Kingdom.⁶³⁹ From the follow-up of the United Kingdom in the Ansei treaties to the distant support of its Russian ally in the Russo-Japanese war, the examples are numerous to represent the sacrifices made. To this behaviour, the actors of the French influence and prestige in Japan were heavily critic as some like Chanoine

⁶³⁴ Ibid., pp.121-122.

⁶³⁵ Journal des sciences militaires: revue militaire française (1904-1914), op. cit., p.323 (April-June 1905) (A81,SER10,T26).

⁶³⁶ Chanoine (1907b), op. cit., pp.33-35.

⁶³⁷ Ibid., p.70.

⁶³⁸ Journal des sciences militaires: revue militaire française (1904-1914), op. cit., p.42 (January-March 1905) (A81,SER10,T25).

⁶³⁹ Sims (1998), op. cit., p.300.

considered that "nothing was more dangerous [...] than making of the French policy the support of the one of another European nation [...] and thus *de facto* go down to the status of satellite,"⁶⁴⁰ while Captain Dubousquet believed that following the United Kingdom was "the ruin of our influence at the same time as it is a shame for our country."⁶⁴¹

Some of the first testimonies of the conflict of visions between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the agents present in Japan can be witnessed in the event of the tensions between China and Japan in 1874. In a series of letters to Chanoine, Captain Descharmes and Colonel Munier both expressed their concerns regarding the decision of the Minister in Japan Berthemy to call back home the mission in the case of war.⁶⁴² Considered by them to be a British stratagem laid by Sir Harry Parkes and meant to attain the "hearth" of the French influence, Munier even irritably added that this "blind and deaf diplomat who claims to play a role, does not see that the English and the Germans are here, on the prowl, waiting for our departure to take our position."⁶⁴³

Such example is even representative of a sort of rivalry growing between the two entities responsible for the influence of France in Japan. From the perspective of the military, as pointed out by Descharmes, the French ministers in Japan seemed to dislike the fact they were constituted as a "mission," then synonym of legation or embassy, which represented another official source of influence, and thus, were trying to make them appear as private personnel employed by a foreign government instead of being part of the official French system.⁶⁴⁴ Another one of the main arguments for the tearing of the French representatives in Japan concerns the debate upon the right of extraterritoriality. While the Ministry was in favour of its conservation, many of the agents saw in it a poison for the future of the diplomatic relationship.⁶⁴⁵

Another frequent argument for the "ruin" of the French influence and prestige as seen by current and former agents in Japan is illustrated by the behaviour adopted by France in the years before the Russo-Japanese war. As such, Jules Chanoine condemned the fact that France blindly followed its ally in a similar way to its prior behaviour in Japan as the 'satellite' of England, both situations in which "it would have been more honourable and more useful to maintain its independence."⁶⁴⁶ Moreover, as soon as May 1896, Captain Descharmes had mentioned the idea that in the case of a future conflict between Russia and Japan due to the tensions surrounding Korea, France could play the role of intermediary in order to "provoke a cordial arrangement."⁶⁴⁷ Jules Chanoine insisted even more on this last aspect and claimed that France should have and could have acted as the intermediary between Russia and Japan instead of following its ally and Germany in the ultimatum of April 1895, which led to the departure of Japan from the occupied zones of China before receiving her war reparations. By doing so, Chanoine believed that France would have helped her ally even more, instead of choosing an approach "harmful to the credibility of France towards the Japanese government, while the British took advantage of the circumstances to make people forget their former alliance with China, to strongly establish their influence in Tokyo and to wage a merciless war to the French commerce and interests."⁶⁴⁸ Chanoine concluded that this decision of the French government destroyed in the matter of days the popularity of France among the Japanese masses and elites,⁶⁴⁹ and eventually participated in sharing the unpopularity of Russia.⁶⁵⁰

However, the topic on which the division of mindsets between the French government of the Third

⁶⁴⁰ Journal des sciences militaires: revue militaire française (1904-1914), op. cit., p.165 (January-March 1906) (A82,SER11,T1).

⁶⁴¹ On the 12th of April 1879, in Chanoine (1907a), op. cit., p.145.

⁶⁴² Ibid., pp.109-111.

⁶⁴³ Ibid., p.111.

⁶⁴⁴ Ibid., p.114.

⁶⁴⁵ Captain Dubousquet in Ibid., p.145.

⁶⁴⁶ Journal des sciences militaires: revue militaire française (1904-1914), op. cit., p.31 (July-September 1906) (A82,SER11,T3).

⁶⁴⁷ Chanoine (1907a), op. cit., p.181.

⁶⁴⁸ Journal des sciences militaires: revue militaire française (1904-1914), op. cit., p.34 (July-September 1906) (A82,SER11,T3).

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid., p.35.

⁶⁵⁰ Chanoine (1907b), op. cit., p.11.

Republic through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the agents in Japan is the more obvious is the one of the presumed missed opportunity of alliance between France and Japan. Jules Chanoine supported the idea that the intention of the Ministers Oyama Iwao in 1884 and Yamagata Aritomo in 1896 to negotiate a potential alliance in Europe, more especially with France, was the result of the many decades of exchange of military knowledge the two nations participated in. In some way, Chanoine claimed that France merited such honour from its involvement in Japan, which would have given the country an "impregnable situation" both in Europe with Russia and in Asia with Japan. Hence, the event that seems to have marked the most the minds of the French agents is the indifference the French and Russian officials showed to the Japanese embassy of 1896 sent for the coronation of Emperor Nicholas II. As it was partially composed of officers who had been educated in French military schools, such as Colonel Ikeda in Saint-Cyr and Lieutenant-Colonel Uehara in Fontainebleau, some such as Chanoine perceived it as a peace offering in the perspective of a potential *entente* between Japan, Russia, and France.⁶⁵¹

Nevertheless, an interesting aspect of this 'incident' is that Chanoine insisted that the opportunity was severely missed not because of the French agents nor the Japanese advisors, as the latter remained the same through all these years, but, for him, because of the erring ways and the neglect of the forever changing French government personnel whose incompetency and conceit were condoned by an oblivious and gullible French public opinion quite uninterested in the matters of a distant and barely known land.⁶⁵² Chanoine also insisted that the missed opportunity, despite the warnings of the agents, had been widely reported around the world, notably in the *Times* and *New-York Herald*, thus further exacerbating the feeling felt by them of an international decadence of France caused by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁶⁵³ In such a way, Chanoine concluded that it was the ignorance of the Russian and French diplomats that pushed Japan in the arms of England, as the country presumably clearly expressed its openness to an agreement with Russia on numerous occasions,⁶⁵⁴ and the French parliamentary politicians who contributed to "push Russia on the path of war and disasters."⁶⁵⁵

Although it would seem at first glance that these views were only shared by few of the military officers of the former missions in Japan, the analysis of the speeches and writings of French agents of other domains of expertise in Japan reveal clear common points, even sometimes referencing one another.

4.4.2 Other Attempts at Countering the Fall of Prestige: Language and Spirit

As such, in a speech of the 10th of March 1909, Michel Revon, jurist and successor of Gustave Boissonade in Japan, expressed extremely similar ideas to the military officers both regarding the role of arbitrator France failed to play and the missed opportunity of alliance with Japan that would have better guaranteed the protection of Indochina than the 1907 Franco-Japanese treaty. Instead, Revon underlines that all of it had been lost for the benefit of England and the security of its Indian colony.⁶⁵⁶ Therefore, it is important to underline the fact that not only French agents were communicating with one another, or at least aware of each other's achievements despite belonging to different domains, it was also quite frequent for them to be part of the same organisations or newspapers whether as honorary or simple members, but sometimes even as their founders. Such can be seen in the case of the *Société franco-japonaise* whose founders were the naval engineer Louis-Emile Bertin and the industrialist traveller Emile Guimet and in which the jurist Gustave Boissonade was an honorary

⁶⁵¹ Journal des sciences militaires: revue militaire française (1904-1914), op. cit., pp.32-33 (July-September 1906) (A82,SER11,T3).

⁶⁵² Chanoine (1907b), op. cit., p.13.

⁶⁵³ Chanoine (1907a), op. cit., pp.186-187.

⁶⁵⁴ Such as an exchange between the Marshal Yamagata with the Russian Minister reported by the journal *Novoye Vremya* in Chanoine (1907b), op. cit., pp.7-8.

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid., p.8.

⁶⁵⁶ Baron de Courcel, P. Deschanel, P. Doumer, E. Etienne, Général Lebon, Victor Bérard, R. de Caix, M. Revon, Jean Rodes, Dr. Rouire (1910), op. cit. pp.172-174.

president, Brunet a member of the council, and Bousquet an honorary member.⁶⁵⁷ The *Revue française du Japon*, founded by Boissonade, also contained articles from a wide array of personalities from various domains of expertise.

Resulting from this, the military and navy were not the only domains in which French civilisation was being connected to potential gains of prestige in Japan. For instance, many assessed in that time period that language was considered to be an essential mean in order to deeply implant and support the ideas of a civilisation. Gustave Boissonade firmly believed that the knowledge of foreign languages was vital for Japan. In a speech to the Italo-Japanese society, he addressed the fact that not only through them one can learn and spread the knowledge of others, but also can elevate an entire domain of modern expertise as "under the liberal Government inaugurated with the Meiji era, the French and English have been officially taught and powerfully served in the study of law which, until then, was not a *Science*, but a customary and judicial *Practice*, highly imperfect."⁶⁵⁸ Furthermore, these two languages also served to the modern military and naval instruction of Japan, while the use of German in medical schools introduced rational and experimental therapeutics replacing the ancient Chinese medicine and techniques.⁶⁵⁹ The knowledge of the French language by the Japanese through a school founded by their government was even considered by Lapeyrère as a factor for the success of the beginning of the very first military mission.⁶⁶⁰

On a different level, Georges Bousquet emphasised that the place shared by the European languages was not only related to the quantity of books circulating in the country, but also to the domains of predilection in which they prevailed. As such, he concluded that, "apart from the army and law, French does not open the door to any career," in comparison to English which dominated as the language of trade, industry, and engineering.⁶⁶¹ Coming from this consciousness of this lack of importance of the French language in Japan, the *Société de langue française*, created in 1881 in Tokyo, began the publication of the *Revue française du Japon* in around 1892 in order to broadcast the reports and conferences of the society. Although articles on political topics were prohibited, a few examples showed that this rule could be broken at times, especially by the first president of its publishing committee, Gustave Boissonade. As the only magazine published in French in the Far East at that time, its goal was sometimes described as "to maintain at its rank the French language and to contribute to its development in Japan."⁶⁶² The journal also proposed at times some articles on French or Japanese who contributed to the development of the scientific, literary, political or economic relationships between France and Japan. For instance, was announced the return to Europe of A. Revilliod, successor of M. Appert at the position of Professor of the Imperial University and Counsellor of the Ministry of Justice. Similarly to many other articles, this event was also the opportunity for the redacting committee to praise a French figure and his achievements, as "M. Revilliod has never ceased to be actively involved in all the works aiming at propagating the French science and civilisation" through his free teaching of political economy at the School of Franco-Japanese law, but also as a member of this society, and as a contributor to this journal's committee.⁶⁶³

Other voices from other domains also rose in the beginning of the twentieth century in an attempt to counter the progress made by other nations in Japan such as the one of Pierre Foncin, president of the *Alliance Française* from 1899 to 1914, who believed that the Japanese and French personalities were close to each other, and that the distancing of Japan for the benefits of France's European opponents was only temporary as "only we can be their selfless advisors." To that end, Pierre Foncin firmly believed that the increasing numbers of members of the French language Society in Tokyo was a proof of this potential comeback and that it "is through our language, our literature, our ideas, our

⁶⁵⁷ Société franco-japonaise de Paris (1905). *Annuaire-bulletin de la Société franco-japonaise de Paris*. Digitised Archives (NUMP-15658), BnF, Paris, pp.7-8.

⁶⁵⁸ Société de langue française Japon (1892-1897), op. cit., p.209 (1893, A2).

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid., p.210.

⁶⁶⁰ Lapeyrère (1883), op. cit., p.27.

⁶⁶¹ Georges H. Bousquet (1877b). *Le Japon de nos jours et les échelles de l'Extrême-Orient... [Texte imprimé] / Georges Bousquet*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-6579582), BnF, Paris, p.346 (Tome 1).

⁶⁶² Société de langue française Japon (1892-1897), op. cit., pp.5-6 (1892, A1).

⁶⁶³ Ibid., p.89.

sympathies, that we will one day realise [...] the moral conquest of Japan."⁶⁶⁴ Likewise, Michel Revon expressed few years after Foncin that the Japanese were at first quite uninterested in the British before the signature of their alliance and that in contrast they "instinctively" liked France, fact demonstrated from his point of view by the decision to entrust the French "for the organisation of two very important departments: justice, the very condition for the new treaties, and the army." Once more, the reason invoked for such result is the belief in a closeness of the French and Japanese spirits supported by a presumed shared interest in the "intellectual finesse, the generous feelings, the arts" and cemented by the previous gestures of sympathy the latter demonstrated in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁶⁶⁵ Michel Revon also formulated the idea that Russia in the 1904 war was representative of the ideas of autocracy, propaganda, conquest and exploitation while Japan of constitutional monarchy, compulsory education, freedom of thoughts, and spirit of justice. From this, he concludes that the victory of Russia over Japan would have meant "the collapse of the only folk who embodies our own ideal over there, the extinction of this young light whose radiation already spread our intellectual influence on all peoples of Eastern Asia."⁶⁶⁶

In such a way, these few examples demonstrate a certain permeability of ideas between various domains of French expertise in Japan as the rivalry of the international and diplomatic context could push even the more international and liberal oriented figures to the defence of more conservative and nationalist positions, as for instance the eclectic French jurist Gustave Emile Boissonade de Fontarabie. While, as supported by previous studies, the jurist defended an eclectic vision and study of law through comparativism in order to obtain the abolition of the privilege of extraterritoriality held by European powers in Japan, a deeper analysis of the comments surrounding his writings reveals how much the jurist ended up praising and putting the French law and codes above the other sources used, thus reflecting ambient discourses of civilisation and national prestige. Hence, although initially slightly less competitive than the domain of military, the establishment of the Japanese modern codes of law is also a relevant example of the constant research for prestige expressed by some French representatives and agents in Japan. As such, very similarly to the international competition of influence exacerbated by the victories of Japan in the subsequent conflicts, the domain of law in Japan became the scene of numerous debates, justifications, and defensive reactions once the implication of France's new rival, Germany, and Japan's progressive independence from the French model became more pronounced in the field.

⁶⁶⁴ Pierre Foncin's foreword in Emile Labroue (1901). *Le Japon contemporain [Texte imprimé] / Émile Labroue,...* ; [préface de P. Foncin]. Digitised Archives (NUMM-9682732), BnF, Paris, p.18.

⁶⁶⁵ Baron de Courcel, P. Deschanel, P. Doumer, E. Etienne, Général Lebon, Victor Bérard, R. de Caix, M. Revon, Jean Rodes, Dr. Rouire (1910), op. cit., p.172.

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid., pp.177-178.

4.5 Gustave Boissonade⁶⁶⁷ and the Codification Projects in Meiji Japan⁶⁶⁸:

4.5.1 Initial Intent and Goal

As Japan was facing the turmoil of the aftermath of the civil war, on top of dealing unevenly with the Western nations on her land, the nation's experts were actively studying the legal codes of the foreign nations in order to bring the Japanese on par with the most esteemed foreign laws.⁶⁶⁹ At that time, one of the main targets was the abolition of the privilege of extraterritoriality held by the Western nations. Hence, while the 1867 and 1872 military missions sent to modernise the Japanese army acted as one of the first domains of influence and prestige for France in Japan, the departures for Japan of the French jurists Georges Hilaire Bousquet in 1872 and Gustave Emile Boissonade de Fontarabie in 1873⁶⁷⁰ linked themselves to the beginning of a new era of the Franco-Japanese relationship. Although Bousquet left the country after four years of work, Boissonade spent more than twenty years in Japan as a legal adviser. His work focused mainly on the projects of penal, criminal procedure, and civil codes meant to shape Japan as a modern nation.

Nevertheless, Boissonade's field of action in Japan was not solely limited to law as he was also involved in diplomatic affairs such as in the negotiation, on behalf of the Japanese government, with China after the 1874 Japanese invasion of Taiwan.⁶⁷¹ Furthermore, also aware and quite supportive of the action of his fellow nationals in the influential domain of the military,⁶⁷² Boissonade hence evolved in a complex legal and diplomatic environment leading him to occasionally share views that could reaffirm discourses of civilisation and national prestige.

Yet, initially within his work of codification, Boissonade showed a much more personal approach

⁶⁶⁷ The classic trend of studies on Gustave Boissonade are biographical studies focusing especially on the jurist's life and his achievements in Japan. More particularly, Okubo Yasuo conducted multiple studies on Boissonade's project of civil code for Japan by analysing its origins, influences, positive and negative developments in Okubo, Yasuo (1981). *Gustave Boissonade, père français du droit japonais moderne (1852-1910)*. *Revue historique de droit français et étranger* (1922-), Quatrième série, Vol.59, No.1, pp.29-54. The study was followed a decade later by another analysing the reasons for the eventual rejection of the project in Yasuo Okubo (1991). *La querelle sur le premier Code civil japonais et l'ajournement de sa mise en vigueur: le refus du législateur étranger?* *Revue internationale de droit comparé*, 43-2, pp.389-405. In a similar way, other scholars of law such as Jean-Louis Sourieux examined Boissonade's works in order to highlight their contents and innovations, but also their points of disputes and much more in Jean-Louis Sourieux (1991). *La pensée juridique de G. Boissonade: aspects de droit civil*. *Revue internationale de droit comparé*, 43-2, pp.357-366. As a result, Christophe Jamin supports the idea that the scholarship is divided into three major trends: Boissonade's philosophy of law and more especially the importance of natural law in his way of thinking, Boissonade's activity and belief in comparative law, and Boissonade's image as the French "father" of Japanese modern law. Due to the wideness of these trends, Jamin asserts that new studies must put back Boissonade's life and works into the context of France in the nineteenth century, rather than the Japanese one, in order to be original and innovative. To fit his own argument, Jamin depicts Boissonade as an eclectic liberal jurist with a universalist vision who, thanks to his innovations in comparative studies and his alignment with historicism, was simultaneously a forerunner and a successor on the French legal scene in Christophe Jamin (2000). *Boissonade et son temps*. *Archives de philosophie du droit*, 44, pp.285-312. Years before him, both Okubo and Sourieux underlined this aspect of the French jurist, the first claiming that his knowledge of Belgian, French, Italian, and Roman laws and interest for comparativism made him the perfect choice and motivated him to accept his mission to introduce Western legislation to Japan, in Okubo (1981), op. cit., pp.32-36., while the second gives further proofs of Boissonade's major interest for the comparative study of foreign law through his belief in the creation of an institution of comparative legislation mixed with the historical analysis of laws as a way to help the development of modern society, in Sourieux (1991), op. cit., p.359.

⁶⁶⁸ The following part has been extracted from the No.45 of the *Journal of the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies* published in March 2023. It has been slightly modified to better fit the overall structure of the dissertation. The original version of this section was published as Alexis Vandekerckhove (2023). *Gustave Boissonade and the Codification Projects in Meiji Japan: From Eclecticism to French Primacy?* *Journal of the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies*. No.45 (March 2023), pp.107-120.

⁶⁶⁹ Gustave Boissonade (1886). *Projet révisé de Code pénal pour l'Empire du Japon [Texte imprimé] : accompagné d'un commentaire / par Mr. Gve Boissonade*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-5675598), BnF, Paris, pp.3-5.

⁶⁷⁰ On the request of Sameshima Naonobu, Japanese diplomat in Europe from 1870 to 1874.

⁶⁷¹ Lapeyrère (1883), op. cit., p.116.

⁶⁷² Société de langue française Japon (1892-1897), op. cit., pp.359-366 (1894, A3).

to his contribution than what the military was doing at the same time in theirs. While the latter constantly expressed the prestige that their work would bring to France, Boissonade had much more concerns about honouring the memory of his former teacher, the jurist Joseph Ortolan, by "propagating his doctrine" and about the revision of the privilege of extraterritoriality than anything else.⁶⁷³ Such intent can be observed in the notes added by Boissonade in both original projects and re-publication of the original codes in French, ordered by the Japanese Minister of Justice and Count Yamada Akiyoshi⁶⁷⁴ at the same time of publication of the official. From Boissonade's point of view, the printing of the original non-revised works in French went into the plan of the Japanese government to provide the origins of the revised and promulgated codes to use them as a learning tool and a reference. Hence, to provide a complete explanation of his initial intent and goal, Boissonade was allowed to add his notes and modifications to them, even the ones previously rejected by the Commission for the official text.⁶⁷⁵

As the creation of a modern legal system was the central condition required by the Western nations to cede their 'right' of extraterritoriality,⁶⁷⁶ one of the main concerns of Boissonade, in his work from 1873 to 1895, was to establish law codes that would eventually help accelerate its abolition. From his perspective, extraterritoriality was not only "outrageous" but also a barrier to the development of relations between Japan and the Western nations.⁶⁷⁷ Therefore, Boissonade's goal with the projects of criminal and civil codes was to show Western nations that Japan was a worthy modern nation to, eventually, recover the entirety of its territorial rights. Boissonade believed that the penal laws of Japan needed to be proper laws up to the standards of the West in which the ideals of reason, justice, and humanity are combined. Hence, Boissonade claimed that the demonstration of the correct application of such laws by qualified magistrates bearing and understanding their ideals would be sufficient to convince the nations doubting Japan's evolution. Through this, Boissonade believes that Japan "will be powerful in her claim for the common law of the civilised nations."⁶⁷⁸ As a result, Boissonade explained that both the revised and non-revised codes would be useful tools for these new needs of Japan. Moreover, even though the foreign powers might not have exploited the 'power' of extraterritoriality and Japan always respected it, Boissonade thought that the time for the revision would inevitably come due to the great transformation the Japanese society was facing socially and economically. For him, this transformation was "a phenomenon worthy of sincere admiration and unprecedented in the History of civilisation."⁶⁷⁹

Hence, as in the domains of physical sciences, arts, and industry, Boissonade considered that the capacity of the Japanese to assimilate "modern" foreign ideas and produce specialists would become helpful too in the domain of moral sciences, such as Law, in which the codes will prepare the country for its independence.⁶⁸⁰ Even years later, Boissonade insisted that her constitution, considered as liberal as some European nations, the religious freedom, and the legal system allowing the abolition of the extraterritoriality would force Europe and America to recognise Japan as part of the "concert of the most advanced in civilisation Nations." Although the title of "most favoured nation" might disappear with the end of the privilege of extraterritoriality, Boissonade argued that the first nation that would respect Japan's rise and autonomy would not only make a very close friend but also become the very advocate for international progress.⁶⁸¹ Thus, the codes appear to be a key element for the success of Boissonade's goals, as he claimed that during their writing was always considered "the

⁶⁷³ Boissonade (1886), op. cit., p.VIII.

⁶⁷⁴ Lord of Justice from 1883 to 1885, and then first Minister of Justice from 1885 to 1891.

⁶⁷⁵ Gustave Boissonade (1890). *Projet de Code civil pour l'Empire du Japon [Texte imprimé] : accompagné d'un commentaire / par M. Gve Boissonade*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-9608168), BnF, Paris, p.I (Tome 1).

⁶⁷⁶ Okubo (1981), op. cit., p.35.

⁶⁷⁷ Gustave Boissonade (1883). *Projet de code civil pour l'Empire du Japon, accompagné d'un commentaire [Texte imprimé] / par Mr Gve Boissonade*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-6578077), BnF, Paris, p.VII (Tome 2).

⁶⁷⁸ Boissonade (1886), op. cit., pp.X-XI.

⁶⁷⁹ Gustave Boissonade (1882a). *Projet de Code de procédure criminelle pour l'Empire du Japon, accompagné d'un commentaire [Texte imprimé] / par M. Gve Boissonade*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-6580634), BnF, Paris, p.XIV.

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. XV-XVI.

⁶⁸¹ Boissonade (1890), op. cit., pp.XXIV-XXV.

complete independence of Japan in the domain of Jurisdiction, by introducing in its laws [...] the principles of justice and natural reason [...] which will remove any plausible foundation, any pretext even, to Extraterritoriality."⁶⁸²

After their translation into Japanese and printing in both French and Japanese, the 1877-78 Criminal Codes were presented to the Supreme Council of the Government and the Senate, the *Genroin*. Additionally, another commission, composed of members from the Supreme Council, the *Genroin*, and some authors from the commission of the Ministry of Justice, was charged to revise the texts to establish and present the final and definitive version of them. The project of civil code realised years later went through a similar process until its approval in 1889 by the Cabinet, Senate, and private council of the emperor and its promulgation a year later in April 1890.⁶⁸³ However, despite being attached to the commission of the Ministry of Justice, Boissonade was not a part of this final revision. Following these events, Boissonade presented a very defensive posture as he explained that although "numerous alterations" and "considerable deletions" had been made, these decisions were neither targeting him personally as he was in charge at the same time of the preparation of the project of civil code "with an even more comprehensive initiative than for the projects of criminal codes," nor the French ideas used as "in several cases, we went back to the very wording of the French code from which we thought we had to quite often deviate."⁶⁸⁴ Similar statements were made by Boissonade in the case of the project of civil code, this time providing the reason why he thought he had to frequently deviate from the French code when, in fact, the Japanese were referring to it. Indeed, although considered eminently qualitative, the many decades of practice of the codes in France revealed several imperfections that made Boissonade deem them unclear or filled with shortcomings in some areas. In France, these weaknesses were compensated by the work of some legal experts or the use of Roman law and the older French common law. But through this project, Boissonade aimed to make the Japanese law self-sufficient and free from "the controversies still existing in France."⁶⁸⁵ Nevertheless, although Boissonade frequently mentions the various foreign sources he studied to prepare the project of the code of criminal procedure, the fact that many of them⁶⁸⁶ were either yet to be published, under revision, or simply unavailable in Japan led him to conclude that it was "thus again the French Code which, despite its known imperfections [...], served as the main basis of the Japanese project."⁶⁸⁷ As such, Boissonade underlined that even though the French codes had been taken as an example for the three modern Japanese codes, penal, criminal procedure, and civil, most of the articles were modified to fit the current reality and nation. From his perspective, although the French codes were a source of national pride, boosted by the fact they have been "so often imitated in Europe and in America," the progresses of modern science and the new needs of people made them outdated, at times, in the case of a daily practice.⁶⁸⁸ Consequently, Boissonade initially believed that the Japanese codes should not rely too much on the characteristics of a unique nation, but rather have the nature of international common law to avoid bearing the specific flaws of the nation in addition to its criticisms.⁶⁸⁹ Although Boissonade's comparativist approach, as detailed by Okubo and Sourieux, is here underlined, the primacy of the French codes as sources and models he later seemed to support rather provides a vision in which the universal law necessarily descends from the French one.

⁶⁸² Boissonade (1882a), op. cit., p.XVI.

⁶⁸³ Boissonade (1890), op. cit., pp.VI-VII.

⁶⁸⁴ Boissonade (1882a), op. cit., pp.VII-VIII.

⁶⁸⁵ Gustave Boissonade (1882b). *Projet de code civil pour l'Empire du Japon, accompagné d'un commentaire [Texte imprimé] / par Mr Gve Boissonade*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-6578048), BnF, Paris, p.5 (Tome 1).

⁶⁸⁶ Such as the German, Italian, and Belgian codes.

⁶⁸⁷ Boissonade (1882a), op. cit., pp.XI-XII.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid., p.XIII.

4.5.2 The Primacy of the French Codes in Japan

One of the major recurring themes noticeable in the discourse of French jurists in Japan is the resemblance of the role of French law in Japan to the role of Roman law in Europe: a basis, a reference. For instance, Georges Appert, foreign counsellor of the Meiji government from 1879 to 1889 and law professor at the University of Tokyo, claimed that the French law in Japan, and more especially the Napoleonic Code, "shares the same importance than the Roman Law in French schools." As such, Appert insisted that the work of codification realised by the French jurists in Japan would only further boost the already essential position of "precious source" of the Napoleonic Code in the Japanese tribunals, as it will remain necessary to be consulted in order to perfectly understand the Japanese law.⁶⁹⁰

Even Georges Bousquet, who showed much more criticism regarding the quick application as is of French law in Japan, recognised that the Napoleonic Code was considered by the Japanese ministers as "the quintessential law of civilised peoples" to the extent that they saw no "other course of action than to translate and promulgate it in the shortest possible time."⁶⁹¹ Nevertheless, since Bousquet believed that laws were shaping nations and guiding the direction of their future evolution and that 'civilisation' could not be quickly achieved by a nation as it is mainly composed of intellectual materials,⁶⁹² he advocated for a much slower pace in order to adapt French law to Japan instead of transferring it. Hence, in his work in Japan in 1872, the French jurist recommended the conduct of a parallel study of the Japanese common law and the French laws to properly adapt to the Japanese society without destabilising the nation.

On the contrary, Boissonade underlined in his first book of the project of civil code that the French codes provided an entire civil, commercial, and penal legislation that could be transferred almost as is, with few exceptions, to any other nation. For him, this only further strengthened its power of attraction on the evolving Japan. Boissonade also attributed a great part of the interest of the Japanese government in French legislation to the work of translation in Japanese of the French codes realised by Baron Mitsukuri Rinsho, later Vice-Minister of Justice from 1888 to 1889, even before the departure of the Japanese mission for France. He went even as far as to say that this translation reminded him of the re-discovery in Pisa of the Roman Pandects⁶⁹³ that resulted in the rebirth of Roman law in Europe during the Renaissance. In such a way, the French law, and more especially the civil code, became from his point of view the "written rationale" that the Japanese tribunals started using as natural law.⁶⁹⁴ Furthermore, Boissonade highlighted that up until the formulation of the two Japanese civil and commerce codes, both of the two French codes of private law have also given strong support to the Japanese tribunals in the cases of litigations.⁶⁹⁵ Finally, Boissonade finished his insistence on the importance of the French law and codes in Japan by reminding that the French criminal codes served as models for the Japanese penal and criminal procedure codes, then in effect for eight years since 1882.⁶⁹⁶ The second book of the project of civil code of Boissonade also contains very similar statements. For instance, while Boissonade insists that the project has been developed beyond the contents of its French and Italian models with a total of 281 articles on the topic of the obligations against respectively 231 and 215, he also argues that the vast majority of the rest was inspired by the French code, and more especially by the *Traité des obligations*. Written by the French jurist Robert-Joseph Pothier in 1761, this *traité* took its origins in the study of Roman law and was even described by Boissonade as the source "of the best modern theories on the Obligations."⁶⁹⁷

⁶⁹⁰ Georges Appert (20th of January 1886). *Le Courrier de l'Extrême-Orient. Revue politique, commerciale et littéraire [Texte imprimé]*. Digitised Archives (NUMP-15681), BnF, Paris, p.2 (A1,N1).

⁶⁹¹ Bousquet (1877a), op. cit., pp.56-57.

⁶⁹² Ibid., p.203.

⁶⁹³ Also known as *Digest*, ordered by Emperor Justinian in 530-533, part of the Code of Justinian.

⁶⁹⁴ Boissonade (1890), op. cit., p.V.

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid., pp.IV-V.

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid., pp.V-VI.

⁶⁹⁷ Gustave Boissonade (1891). *Projet de Code civil pour l'Empire du Japon [Texte imprimé] : accompagné d'un commentaire / par M. Gve Boissonade*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-9651982), BnF, Paris, p.I (Tome 2).

Although the French codes are said to have acted as the Roman law of Japan from the perspective of French jurists, the fact that the actual work of codification went through the comparative study of many other sources could potentially refute such primacy. But, the use of the French civil code "that so many European legislations imitated" as a constant inspiration for Boissonade in the project of the Japanese one rather confirms it.⁶⁹⁸ For instance, even though Boissonade claims that the new 1866 Italian civil code has brought some well-thought corrections to the French code, his frequent insistence on its resemblance with the latter, on its general plan or even expressions,⁶⁹⁹ could be perceived as an attempt at pushing it to the sole role of support, ensuring the prudence of the added innovations in the Japanese, instead of making it a major basis like the French.⁷⁰⁰ Similarly, Boissonade also mentions the use of the Belgian civil code during the project. But its extreme similitude to the French one presumably made it of lesser importance as only a few of its improvements were used in the end.

Hence, the description made by Boissonade of the process of his work gives a first impression of cultural eclecticism through the mention of the various codes he studied and even of the ones he did not.⁷⁰¹ Yet, regarding the project of revised penal code, these other foreign codes ended up being supplanted by the French ones as Boissonade expressed that "among foreign codes, it is still the French penal Code whose study was the most valuable."⁷⁰² Furthermore, Boissonade even claimed that although imperfect in its method and surpassed by other foreign codes, which took their inspiration from it, the French penal code was particularly designated for Japan thanks to "its clarity, its wisdom and its restraint."⁷⁰³ Likewise, in the case of the civil code, the project of the new Belgian code was considered as either too similar to the former one, hence to the French, or too bold in some of its statements. While regarding the German projects of civil legislation started in 1874, the numerous debates among jurists prevented their study.⁷⁰⁴ Thus, these issues further emphasised the status of the French codes as a stable and sturdy basis for the Japanese ones despite their recognised flaws.

In addition, Boissonade also mentioned that the second book of the civil code, on the topic of individual rights and obligations, should remain timeless and unaffected by the influence of some local specificities. In other words, Japan should have neither more nor less rights to defend or sanction than the Western nations. Hence, the work which needed to be done was mainly to establish and improve, in the Japanese law, the legislation already in use rather than completely reforming it. Nevertheless, Boissonade concluded by saying that the "Japanese magistrates who, since the Restoration of the imperial Government, already apply the principles of the French civil Code, as Natural law, will find them here in their domestic law itself."⁷⁰⁵ As such, on the one hand, Boissonade implied that Japanese law should remain unswayed from foreign influences while at the same time, on the other hand, he highlighted the precious help and qualities of the French code, almost as if it represented the universal reality of the law in the modern world.

Yet, the act of 'pushing away' the codes from other nationalities was not limited to the ones worked on by Boissonade. In the case of the Japanese code of commerce, formulated by the German jurist Hermann Roesler, Boissonade expressed that "the influence of the new German Code naturally prevails in it; but there are no serious differences between its spirit and the one of French law."⁷⁰⁶ Moreover, Boissonade also declared that although initially prepared by another German jurist, the project of the code of civil procedure had been ultimately taken over by the Japanese, almost as if the German origins were only minor. On the opposite, despite the modifications of his work, Boissonade expressed a particular satisfaction in knowing that, within the current code of criminal procedure, the

⁶⁹⁸ Boissonade (1890), op. cit., p.XIV.

⁶⁹⁹ Boissonade (1882b), op. cit., p.6.

⁷⁰⁰ Boissonade (1891), op. cit., pp.I-II (Tome 2).

⁷⁰¹ Such as the Dutch code in the introduction of the revised project of penal code, in Boissonade (1886), op. cit., p.III.

⁷⁰² *Ibid.*, p.6.

⁷⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp.6-7.

⁷⁰⁴ Boissonade (1890), op. cit., pp.XV-XVI.

⁷⁰⁵ Boissonade (1891), op. cit., pp.II-III.

⁷⁰⁶ Boissonade (1890), op. cit., p.VIII.

French laws "served as the basis of this major Japanese work."⁷⁰⁷ Years later, he even added about his project of civil code that "However imperfect our work is, it has been accepted with sympathy by the Japanese nation and favourably judged in our country and even abroad."⁷⁰⁸

4.5.3 Boissonade's Defensive Stance to the Decline of his Work

Suspensions of a failure of French experts to implant their ideas in Japan did not wait for the great shock for the European nations that was the loss of Russia in the 1904-1905 war. Some voices quickly challenged the optimism of other specialists in Japan who saw in their mission a bridge between civilisations. As such, Georges Bousquet argued in 1877 that although the Japanese might praise the West for their help in the construction of modern steamboats, products, "and other small decisions," it was only "the easy-to-borrow mechanical civilisation."⁷⁰⁹ Hence, he considered that to be far from the profound changes some presumed to have initiated. Similarly, the assessment made in 1894 by the French industrial Charles Loonen details that although the Japanese adopted a wide variety of European methods, processes, and industries,⁷¹⁰ they were helped by "volunteer initiators whom they get rid of as soon as their education and organisation are sufficient."⁷¹¹ Hence, the progressive independence of Japan from the French model led to a wide array of defensive reactions from French experts and representatives who, consequently, attempted to justify the relevance of their actions and sources of inspiration. A similar process can be observed in the case of the decline of Boissonade's work, in which the French jurist further asserted the qualities and importance of both his work and the French law and codes.

In such a way, as Japan tried to revise both criminal procedure and penal codes, respectively published in 1882 and 1886, concerns grew in the discourse of Boissonade as he shared his fears that the new projects would meet the same fate of revision as the previous ones.⁷¹² In addition, years later, ever since the end of the project of civil code, criticism rose regarding the heavy reliance of the new Japanese codes on foreign legislations rather than local customs. In reaction, Boissonade ardently and repeatedly denied the critique in his writings by insisting that they had been continuously considered. From his point of view, "At the heart of this critique, we might sense a wary patriotism that suffers to see in Japan the influence of foreign laws."⁷¹³ Nonetheless, Boissonade also argued that every great nation of history had to rely on the help of others during their development, such as Rome with Greece, Europe with Rome, and even France with its "societies of compared legislation." Furthermore, Boissonade emphasised that ever since her entrance into the international community, Japan had made huge progress "on the path of material and intellectual civilisation" thanks to her adoption of many of the Western industries, technologies, medicine, and scientific discoveries. Hence, he concluded that no shame should be felt for doing the same in the domain of law.⁷¹⁴

Nevertheless, the criticism expressed by Japanese jurists only grew stronger with the years and revisions the last projects went through, bringing Boissonade to multiply the occasions in which he fiercely defended his work and French law. During the 1892 votes for the adjournment of the Civil and Commerce codes, Boissonade even violated the 'no political article' rule of the French language journal *Revue française du Japon* to answer the criticism of eleven Japanese jurists assembled in a manifesto published before the vote of the Imperial Diet. From his point of view, many of their judgements came from the fact that most of them studied British or American law and, consequently, did not seem willing to learn the ways of French law. As such, Boissonade mentioned that most of

⁷⁰⁷ Boissonade (1882a), op. cit., p.VI.

⁷⁰⁸ Boissonade (1890), op. cit., p.II.

⁷⁰⁹ Bousquet (1877b), op. cit., pp.317-318.

⁷¹⁰ For instance, the navy was modelled on the British one, the organisation of the university on the German one, and the mailing system on the American one, in Charles Loonen (1894). *Le Japon moderne [Texte Imprimé] / par Ch. Loonen*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-6208303), BnF, Paris, pp.202-214.

⁷¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.218.

⁷¹² Boissonade (1886), op. cit., pp.IX-X.

⁷¹³ Boissonade (1890), op. cit., p.XXI.

⁷¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.XXII-XXIII.

their arguments revolved around the ideas that the civil code was based on Christianity or that it modified the traditional Japanese family members' statuses, which meant that it had not been adapted and did not respect the Japanese customs.⁷¹⁵ Moreover, the authors of the manifesto also tried to criticise the civil code by implying that it was "based on republican principles." For Boissonade, it was probably in an attempt to exacerbate the opposition between the Imperial power and the Parliament in Japan, thus, meant to frighten and persuade the former.⁷¹⁶ To this, Boissonade argued that although it was created under the First Republic, it was at a moment when Napoléon Bonaparte was already elected for life and was about to become emperor. In addition, Boissonade underlined that "in the time-lapse of 90 years, the civil code regulated France during 63 years of Monarchy, against only 27 years of Republic." Finally, during all that time, Boissonade emphasised that the civil code had also been modified and enhanced without any influence of the various political regimes and hence demonstrated a flexibility that made it perfectly compatible with the Imperial power of Japan.⁷¹⁷

Although Boissonade claimed that the Diet did not reproduce the same mistakes as the authors of the manifesto, the popularity it gained, he believed, might have influenced the vote of the two Chambers, the House of Peers and the House of Representatives.⁷¹⁸ However, what the writing of the manifesto and the ensuing debates in the Imperial Diet also highlight is the gradual distancing of Japan from the exclusivity of the French model in law. This process was then accelerated by the implementation of the German-inspired 1889 Japanese constitution and continued by the elaboration of the code of commerce by German jurists. As such, Boissonade justified that some of the criticisms the French codes received came from a member of the House of Peers "whose preferences seemed to be for the German law" and who "fought the new civil Code for its inspiration on the French Code." For Boissonade, this member claimed that the French code did not progress for the past 90 years while completely ignoring all the enhancements and modifications it went under since its creation.⁷¹⁹ In such a way, similarly to his reaction to Japan's independence from the French model in the domain of law, Boissonade adopted a defensive argumentation once facing the multiplication of origins of the sources of law in Japan. From his perspective, the modern codes seem to be superficially criticised for their provenance rather than for their actual content, as the latter was hardly questionable.

On this point, in a speech to the graduates of the Japanese-French law school detailing his struggles with the promulgation and multiple postponements of his works, Boissonade pretended not to be willing to give details but still heavily emphasised that the massive influence given to the French codes on the Japanese ones might have hurt the national pride and been the source of tensions with "rival foreign powers." Nevertheless, while questioning if the initial fame of the French codes as the Roman law of Japan might have been or not the reason for its own doom, Boissonade then proceeded to, once more indirectly, briefly criticise the decision of Japan to have, at the University and private Schools sponsored by the State, the teaching of another foreign law in parallel of the French one.⁷²⁰ From his point of view, French law did not fear any comparison but "it was bound to happen that a rivalry would appear, in the country, between the Japanese followers of the two Schools, and it was to be feared that it would become a source of difficulties in the magistrature and at the bar."⁷²¹

Despite Boissonade's defensive argumentation and praises for French law, the multiplication of sources of law for Japan ended up blurring the specificities and, thus, the influence of each nation's model in the domain. For instance, the new criminal code of 1907 was even considered by some German experts such as Ludwig Hermann Loenholm, a law professor at the University of Tokyo, to have drawn inspiration from no particular legislation but rather from the modern criminalist science

⁷¹⁵ Société de langue française Japon (1892-1897), op. cit., p.231 (1892, A1).

⁷¹⁶ Ibid., p.238.

⁷¹⁷ Ibid., pp.238-239.

⁷¹⁸ Ibid., p.231.

⁷¹⁹ Ibid., pp.264-265.

⁷²⁰ Yasuo Okubo evokes the American-British law as the source of tensions for French jurists in Japan, in Okubo (1991), op. cit., p.394.

⁷²¹ Société de langue française au Japon (1892-1897), op. cit., p.382 (1893, A2).

despite the fact that "the prior Japanese laws are more or less the imitations of current German or French laws."⁷²² At the beginning of the twentieth century, even some former agents of France in Japan, such as General Jules Chanoine,⁷²³ began to acknowledge that it was legal experts of "various nationalities" who achieved the new Japanese codes⁷²⁴ instead of underlining the work of his fellow nationals. Hence, although the French influences might have been dominant in the creation of the codes as defended by Boissonade, the gradual independence of Japan from the French model and her new affinities for other sources of law participated in concealing them.

As a result, Boissonade's initial goal of helping the abolition of the privilege of extraterritoriality through the eclectic and careful use of the French 'ageing' codes and other sources gets challenged by the analysis of his comments demonstrating how much the French model was prominent and praised by him. Moreover, the progressive independence of Japan, strengthened by the affirmation of her national pride and the multiplication of origins of her inspirations, led Boissonade to ardently defend both his work and the importance of the French law and codes. This phenomenon of distancing of Japan from the French model, highlighted by Boissonade and other experts, acted as one of the first tremors of a wave of concerns regarding the future evolution and ambitions of the Far East nation, even beyond the limits of the domain of law. Against that movement, many of the former and current French specialists in Japan tried to defend and justify the stance of Japan, such as the jurist Michel Revon. In a conference on the 10th of March 1909, the 'successor' of Boissonade in Japan⁷²⁵ expressed his views on Japan's international policy in an attempt to counter the idea that the nation suddenly represented a "danger for civilisation" as a conqueror. Rather, he explained that Japan only corrected the unfairness of the treatment of the European nations through their treaties and stopped the threat of the expansion of Russia in Asia.⁷²⁶ Thus, from that time, the perceptions of Japan and her role in civilisation defended by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and by the experts whose achievements were used in its quest for influence, like Boissonade, became irreconcilable.

In conclusion, France's spread and Japan's selection of the French civilisational template after the opening of the country to the world eventually led to prestigious privileged positions in the fields of military sciences, naval industries, and law that were used in diplomatic discourses by a French elite to claim a part of the glory coming from the Far East nation's overall progresses and successes, but later on challenged by Germany's influence and Japan's own progressive distancing.

While the first French diplomats in Japan believed in the ideas of liberalism and civilisation as the basis of a future relationship with the opening nation, one of the first actual strongholds of France's influence and prestige in the region came from the organisation of the first French military mission in Japan in 1867. The positive impacts of this first mission coupled with the military and naval presence in Yokohama of French forces were such that they even participated in protecting France's position in Japan from the potential negative effects of the civil war, both changes of regimes, and the 1870 humiliation.

Yet, despite this fact, the French elite's self-consciousness over the international degradation of France's image led them to frequently refer to and heavily insist that it was France 'alone' who had been chosen to teach Japan the modern military ways, and as such, that the modern Japanese army's and navy's glorious successes were also glorious French successes. The threats to France's leading position in these domains source of prestige, either due to the growing influence in them of her German rival or by the progressive distancing of Japan herself requiring her involvement less and

⁷²² Ludwig Hermann Loenholm (1907). *Code pénal de l'empire du Japon [Texte imprimé] / traduction par L. H. Loenholm*. Digitised Archives (NUMM-9609018), BnF, Paris, p.I.

⁷²³ Leader of the first French military mission in Japan (1867-1868).

⁷²⁴ *Journal des sciences militaires: revue militaire française* (1904-1914), op. cit., p.319 (April-June 1907) (A83,SER11,T6).

⁷²⁵ As an adviser to the Japanese government and a professor of French law at the University of Tokyo from 1893 to 1899.

⁷²⁶ Baron de Courcel, P. Deschanel, P. Doumer, E. Etienne, Général Lebon, Victor Bérard, R. de Caix, M. Revon, Jean Rodes, Dr. Rouire (1910), op. cit., pp.153-183.

less, only further intensified such particular behaviour and discourse coming from a part of the French elite.

Besides, the progressively growing conflict of visions between French experts in Japan and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs entangled in European considerations led the former to harshly condemn the latter more and more regarding missed opportunities and diplomatic failures, such as about the lack of an answer to a potential Franco-Japanese alliance that particularly marked the minds of the French elite in Japan. The high competitiveness of the international environment in Japan even led members of other domains of expertise and more liberal figures to share similar discourses as the ones developed by the military. In other words, a certain permeability of ideas and discourses existed between the French agents involved in Japan regardless of their domains of expertise. The example of the development of the domain of law in Japan by French jurist, and more especially of the jurist Gustave Boissonade, is particularly representative of this fact. France's loss of ground reinforced discourses about civilisation and prestige.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The conclusion of this dissertation is divided into three parts. The first part highlights the major findings of each of the empirical chapters while the second part addresses the different contributions of this dissertation to the literature. Lastly, the third part presents some concluding remarks on the overall topic.

As the embodiment of the French definition of civilisation but also of the specific way of industrialisation of France, mixing industries and arts, the second chapter treated of the topic of the *Expositions Universelles* and showed how both the Second Empire and the Third Republic regimes controlled and used them as self-glorifying international stages aimed towards France's European neighbours.

Indeed, while the 1851 British Great Exhibition of London was the first fair to be open to the international, the origins of the *Expositions Universelles* can be traced back to a series of eleven national exhibitions in France from 1798 to 1849, used as way to counter crises by displaying her own glory and both aimed nationally and towards her rivals in times of war. Hence, in a unstable political context and after having missed the opportunity of being the first to establish their international version, the imperial regime of the Second Empire aimed to retake control of the fairs in addition to demonstrate internal stability and international peace with its neighbours by organising an innovative, and massive by its size and numbers, *Exposition Universelle* in 1855.

However, the imperial regime did not stop after this first attempt but rather further invested and expanded the scale of these events. As such, the 1867 *Exposition Universelle* was not only bigger in its conception, innovations, and approval, but also confirmed a shift of nature of the events towards diplomatic meetings. Thus, the *Expositions Universelles* became, from the point of view of a part of the French elite, the mirrors of the states' conditions and statuses in the world based upon their displayed products or investments in the fairs. Correspondingly, France's presumed struggles in fine arts, her domain of predilection for years, were perceived as a form of decay hurting her prestige internationally.

Yet, despite a change of regime, the practice of the *Expositions Universelles* resumed from the 1878 edition which bore similar ambitions to its predecessors, and even shared some of its organisers. Through a direct control of the State, the *Expositions Universelles* under the Third Republic were used as self-promoting international stages showcasing a powerful and glorious image of the nation. Thanks to the organisation of a fair per decade, in 1878, 1889, and 1900, the republic confirmed the leading position of France as the driving force and shaper of these events. After having used them to control France's return to the international scene and to promote the victory of the republican ideology in the country in the following years of the humiliation caused by the defeat of 1870-1871 against Prussia, officials further boosted the prestige and glory of France by making of her template of civilisation the scale of success in this type of international competition.

Then, the third chapter of this study presented the conflictual context in Egypt between France and the United Kingdom after the construction of the Suez Canal and underlined the heavy reliance of French officials on this civilisational achievement, among others, in order to boost prestige and justify France's political relevance in the region once facing the collapse of her influence against her rival.

In this way, the opening of the isthmus was initially thought as a civilisational project meant for the progress of humanity and which would participate in bringing the world closer, but also allow new trade opportunities, on top of being supportive of Egypt's prosperity and the guardian of the peace between the two rival European powers interested in the region. Yet, the British opposition against its realisation eventually led to the strengthening of an already existing parallel discourse particularly emphasising the French origins of the project through its design, funds, and even deep-rooted ambition. Spread by a French elite, including the imperial power and the conceptor of the project Ferdinand de Lesseps himself, this discourse made of the canal a glorious project presumably

supported by an entire nation despite its original universal aim.

The ambiguity of the origins of the canal was even amplified by the double identity of the company responsible for the project. On the one hand, the company bore universal ambitions and ideas, relied on the support of multiple European nations, and was technically Egyptian. But, on the other hand, the company was frequently being targeted by the British for its ties and funds coming from France, and, from Lesseps own words, keeping the nature of the company private had been a directive of the French emperor himself to guarantee the success of this enterprise. Consequently, the successive French governments in the second half of the nineteenth century played on the ambiguity of the origins of the canal to gain new privileged opportunities for influence and prestige in the region or ease tensions against their European rivals by asserting either its French roots or peaceful and civilisational nature depending on the situation.

Nevertheless, the Khedive's sale of the Egyptian shares of the Suez Canal to the British due to the massive debts and loans accumulated over the years provoked a series of events that eventually led to the demise of France's influence and prestigious position in the region. Indeed, the establishment of the French-British condominium and the relative passivity of the French government, which preferred to simply follow the British policy and to insist on working in "perfect equality," brought a context forcing the French to frequently assert the relevance of France in Egypt in order to maintain a semblance of influence and presence. However, the disagreements on the 1882 British military intervention to counter the 'Urabi revolt and the end of the joint-control as a consequence marked the separation of the French and British policies in Egypt. After this humiliation, France attempted on multiple occasions to reconnect with her British neighbour but also with Egypt through the motive of the defence of the European interests and neutrality of the Suez Canal. Yet, the relative lack of success of France in this action led many, politicians included, to heavily criticise the ruination of the influence of France in Egypt, attributed to the successive governments, in comparison to the glory of her past.

Finally, the fourth chapter examined the role played by France in Japan's opening to the world in the second half of the nineteenth century and emphasised how France's catch-up in the opening of Japan eventually led to a prestigious privileged position in the multiple fields, later on challenged by the growing participation of her German rival in these domains, Japan's distancing, and even the French ministry of foreign affairs' own failures.

In such a way, initially based upon the ideas of liberal trade and spread of civilisation, the relationship between France and Japan quickly evolved to become centred on one specific aspect of her civilisational template: military sciences. The arrival of the first French military mission in Japan in 1867 provided a solid basis for France's prestige in the region whose positive legacy lasted despite the Japanese civil war, the change of regimes for both countries, and the military defeat of France in the 1870 war. Regarding this last point, while the participation of the French navy and naval infantry in the defence of the foreign settlements in Yokohama first helped mitigating the impact of the humiliation in the Far East, the gradual impoverishment of the French section in comparison to her rivals' rather aggravated the rumours of France's decline. Most probably as a counter-reaction of this disgrace, French experts began to heavily insist on the part France played 'alone' in the modern military teachings and progresses of Japan, and, consequently, claimed for France a part of the glory earned in the Japanese 'prowesses' in the following wars as both army and navy had been 'built' based on her model.

However, this particular behaviour and discourse also emphasise the growing concerns of an elite to see the major French source of prestige being threatened and France replaced in her role in Japan, not only by her European rivals, the United Kingdom and Germany, but also by the progressive independence and distancing of Japan herself. But, at the end of the century, French military experts rather attributed the degradation of France's prestige and position in Japan to a series of missed opportunities and failures from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself, entangled in European considerations and presumably unaware of the high competitiveness of the environment.

While it could be assumed that these views on prestige and the role of the French template

civilisation in Japan were only shared by the military officers directly or indirectly involved in the military missions, the analysis of documents written by French agents of other domains of expertise in Japan, such as language and law, indicates a certain permeability of these ideas and discourse. As the second important source of influence of France in Japan in this period, the example of the writing of the modern codes of law of Japan by the jurist Gustave Boissonade demonstrates similar reactions and search for prestige once facing the growing importance of the German law and the progressive independence of Japan. Therefore, while Boissonade initially defended an eclectic and comparativist study of law in the conception of the Japanese codes, the jurist ended up putting the French law and codes above all else, in addition to heavily praising and affirming their importance in Japan.

Therefore, through these three contexts, rather than major inconsistencies between them, it is numerous differences in many aspects that can be initially observed, such as in regimes, governments, ministers, figures involved in them, but also by the distance of the concerned region relative to mainland France or even the stance France adopted within them as explained in the introduction.

Yet, while these contexts seem at first sight to share no common points nor consistencies, the analysis of the discourse of a part of the French elite rather suggests otherwise. Hence, within this French international quest for prestige in the second half of the nineteenth century, the personalities involved in these three contexts demonstrated almost identical thought processes, discourses, vocabulary, and overall reactions despite a wide variety of topics, events, and threats. Consequently, the presence of, at least, a major rival in a region without any clear hegemon and with the impossibility of a full control by only one nation, i.e. grey areas, led a part of the French elite to almost inevitably refer to the prestige stemming from the French civilisational achievements in response to periods of doubt or loss of ground, almost as a form of defence mechanism. This particular common pattern is the major consistency of these three contexts.

Furthermore, while personalities involved differ as individuals, another consistency of these contexts lies in the composition of the elite 'group' implicated in these international affairs, mixing both government officials and a seemingly unavoidable reliance on highly educated civilian agents, i.e. experts.

Some other smaller links exist between them, slightly providing more overall consistency to the study. For instance, these three contexts also share the common point of all being competitive international environments for European powers that had civilisational achievements as the source of influence and prestige of France in the region. More minor links also exist, such as, for instance, the fact that Hippolyte Mircher and Jules Chanoine communicated about their respective mission in Egypt and Japan or that some relationships and projects of the following years of Japan's opening were initiated during some of the *Expositions Universelles*.

Regarding the reasons as to why these three specific contexts are the most representatives of the relation between civilisation and prestige in the minds of a French elite in the second half of the nineteenth century, it is important to emphasise once more that they all share the common point of having civilisational works or achievements as the base of France's influence and prestige in the concerned region.

In such a way, the notions of civilisation and prestige are particularly salient in the context of the *Expositions Universelles* as this French tradition was developed, designed at its core, and 'retaken' from a rival with them in mind. In other words, the *Expositions Universelles* were a physical incarnation, at home, of the French understanding of civilisation largely intended to recover from crises through the generation of prestige.

In the case of Egypt and the Suez Canal, the context is quite suitable to discuss the two concepts as the canal, a French achievement claimed as a glorious work of and for civilisation, was at the basis of many, if not most, of France's interactions in the region. The prestige stemming from its completion was thus frequently invoked in order to justify France's relevance in the last decades of her influence, lost to her rival's.

Finally, in the context of Japan's opening to the world, in addition to Sim's conclusion on prestige

as a clear motivation for France to get involved in the first place, her own civilisational template was at the source of most of her ties with the Far East nation. As a result, in this context, both civilisation and prestige emerge as striking and unavoidable elements of a discourse commonly shared by a diverse elite that further strengthened as their position got progressively threatened.

Hence, whether at the beginning of a new diplomatic relationship as with Japan, the end of her primacy in another one as with Egypt, or in the middle of the development of her tradition as with the *Expositions Universelles*, both civilisation and prestige have revealed to be crucial elements for France and her elite in international relations and affairs.

In the end, this dissertation makes multiple contributions to the existing scholarships. Firstly, while this work has rather mostly followed a classic approach of the scholarship, it however provides a different and more nuanced vision on France's international relations in the second half of the nineteenth century. In this way, while Jacques Valette's positive conclusion on the success of the restoration of France's international power at the end of the century might be true thanks to the power stemming from the sheer size of France's large colonial empire and to the balance and security given by the Franco-Russian alliance, this study rather showed that, in these 'grey areas' without hegemony, France was either slowly losing ground or actually witnessed the complete dismantlement of her influence. Hence, in those cases, France's international search for power and prestige underlined by the scholarship rather appears as last attempts of the French elite to maintain a form of presence and relevance by holding on to the prestige generated by past civilisational achievements. Yet, paradoxically, the more France's was being contested in these contexts, the more the reactions of a part of the French elite to convince of the nation's civilisation's superiority and necessity seem to have strengthened, thus counterbalancing Paul Kennedy's conclusion on its consciousness of a loss of power. Doubt reinforced these defensive responses.

Secondly, differently from most of the literature on civilisation that mostly examined the 'vertical' relationship between civilised and non-civilised, this study rather considered the concept 'horizontally' between, and even within, already civilised nations themselves. Thus, outside of the theme of colonialism that the classic trend implies, this analysis showcased civilisation as a core element in France's diplomatic discourses whose achievements in the world were utilised for gains of prestige in order to justify a certain rank in the world order.

Thirdly, following the example set by the major works on the topic, this dissertation also contributed to the development and expansion of the underdeveloped scholarship on the importance and relevance of prestige in international relations. Indeed, by presenting some concrete and precise examples of the expression and occurrences of the French elite's search for prestige in the second half of the nineteenth century, once more away from the theme of colonialism, this work gives a strong support to previous studies' general statements. Furthermore, although Pierre Renouvin mentions some concerns of prestige among other motivations of states in the century, it remains a relatively minor point in comparison to the other major trends influencing states he develops in his concept of *forces profondes*. Nevertheless, taking this indication as a stepping stone and expanding on Richard Sims' conclusion on France's motives in Japan, this dissertation emphasises the significant effect concerns of prestige had on a part of the French elite's behaviour and discourse internationally.

In conclusion, through the thorough analysis and the connection of a wide array of documents containing the direct discourses of official representatives and civilian agents in various contexts that could initially be considered completely unrelated, this dissertation has made clear the long-term reliance, for at least half a century, of France and her elite on other and less orthodox means as a way to diplomatically compete against her rivals and attempt to prove her rank of world power in this heavily imperialistic era. Indeed, by unprecedentedly expanding and linking these empirical chapters, this dissertation has demonstrated that the two concepts of civilisation and prestige were important elements of a diplomatic discourse and argumentation of France with her rivals that remained common and shared by an elite despite differences of regimes, locations, contexts, and personalities involved.

As such, civilisational achievements realised by past leaders, or under other regimes, or by fellow

nationals were frequently claimed by the Second Empire's and Third Republic's officials, without much distinction, in order to justify the international actions, interactions, presence, and relevance of France in the world. Furthermore, it is worth noting that in many cases the Third Republic resumed and repeated in a very similar manner the international projects or missions initiated by the Second Empire. Thus, obtaining or, in the cases where France was losing ground, maintaining a form of prestige appear to have been some of the long-lasting objectives and concerns of the French elite in the great powers' competition of the second half of the nineteenth century against the overwhelming economic power of the United Kingdom, the menacingly growing militarisation of Germany, and France's own self-consciousness of a loss of power after the international humiliations she endured.

Yet, while this study sought to complement other previous works by exposing similarities in events and situations around the world during the same period and to provide a recreation of an elite's mindset through three different contexts, further research might find connections in other diplomatic and international affairs of the time and beyond or could even attempt to analyse changes or differences in the continuity highlighted in this dissertation. As the subject of prestige remains quite under-represented in the scholarship of both international relations and history, possibilities for future research are quite numerous and this study only a unique attempt at tackling it.

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