



## COLONIZATION, INDEPENDENCE, AND DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA AND FRANCOPHONE AFRICA: A COMPARATIVE HISTORICAL STUDY

[Étapes de traitement de l'article]

Date de soumission : 10-06-2025 / Date de retour d'instruction : 26-06-2025 / Date de publication : 15-07-2025

**Abdou Wahaed SIME**

Kara University, Togo

[abdouwahaedsime@gmail.com](mailto:abdouwahaedsime@gmail.com)

&

**Didier KOMBIENI**

Parakou University, Benin

[kombidid@yahoo.fr](mailto:kombidid@yahoo.fr)

&

**Larry AMIN**

Kara University, Togo

[l.amin@univkara.net](mailto:l.amin@univkara.net)

**Abstract :** In the context of today's global democratic instability, the United States positions itself as a guardian and referee in promoting democratic values, particularly in African countries. In this context, they sometimes find themselves at the paradigm related to a contradiction to the same values representing some flaws within their democratic system. But despite these problems, America still represents an exemplary democratic system, for their democratic model is not influenced, contrarily to most African countries, by any external or colonial power. The history of the process of achieving independence appears to be crucial and worth understanding to qualify and interpret the true status of both American democracy and the one of sub-Saharan African countries and especially in Francophone Africa. Colonization certainly contributes to both the awakening of social, political, cultural and economic spirit in the mind of colonized countries but also it represents the brake to true democracy and development in correlation to the realities and the culture of those countries. The present paper aims to expose a comparison in the American and African colonial and post-colonial history, and the influence of their respective independence modes on their democratic and development standards. The study which is based on documentary and analytic investigation, is supported by the Post-colonialism and Marxism theories.

**Key-words:** Democracy, colonialism, post-colonialism, independence, development

## COLONISATION, INDÉPENDANCE ET DÉMOCRATIE EN AMÉRIQUE ET EN AFRIQUE FRANCOPHONE : UNE ÉTUDE HISTORIQUE COMPARATIVE

**Résumé :** Dans un climat d'instabilité démocratique mondiale tel que celui que nous connaissons aujourd'hui, les États-Unis se positionnent comme un gendarme et un arbitre pour l'établissement des valeurs fondamentales de la démocratie, notamment dans les pays africains. Dans ce contexte, ils se retrouvent parfois confrontés à un paradoxe, en contradiction avec ces mêmes valeurs, révélant certaines failles de leur propre système démocratique. Mais malgré ces problèmes, l'Amérique demeure un système démocratique exemplaire, car son modèle démocratique n'est influencé par aucune puissance extérieure ou coloniale, contrairement à la majorité des pays africains. L'histoire de l'accession à l'indépendance apparaît comme un élément crucial et essentiel à comprendre pour qualifier et interpréter le véritable statut de la démocratie américaine et celle des pays d'Afrique subsaharienne, en particulier en Afrique francophone. La colonisation a certes contribué à éveiller les esprits sur les plans social, politique, culturel et économique dans les pays colonisés, mais elle représente également un frein à l'instauration d'une démocratie véritable et au développement, en inadéquation avec les réalités et les cultures locales. Le présent article vise à proposer une comparaison entre l'histoire coloniale et post-coloniale américaine et africaine, ainsi que l'influence de leurs modes respectifs d'accession à l'indépendance sur leurs standards démocratiques et de développement. L'étude, fondée sur une enquête documentaire et analytique, s'appuie sur les théories du post-colonialisme et du marxisme.

**Mots-clés :** Démocratie, colonialisme, post-colonialisme, indépendance, développement

## Introduction

Colonization occurs when one group of people uses coercion, deception, or violent force to seize control of land, populations, and resources. It often involves the imposition of the settler's culture and the marginalization or suppression of indigenous identities. While colonialism may have exposed colonized societies to new forms of intellectual engagement, it primarily functioned as a mechanism of domination and cultural disruption. Colonization helped colonized countries to access a certain level of intellectual awareness and developed in them some senses of critical thinking.

While defining colonialism, the United Nations supports that it designates processes through which a State acquires or maintains full or partial political control over another sovereign nation, or subjugation of groups or entities over others, including terms such as economic, cultural, or ideological colonialism. Human history has been marked by dynamics of power and mobility; among these, movement of peoples to areas where the inhabitants were subjugated, dominated, or exterminated, syncretism and resistance, and formation and deconstruction of national and imperial States.

The paradigm related to the history of colonization in Africa and the Americas represents a pivotal era in the world history, characterized by European powers establishing control over vast territories, exploiting resources, and exerting cultural dominance over indigenous populations.

This study seeks to demonstrate the relationship between the mode of decolonization and the strength of democratic institutions. More specifically, it compares the path to independence of the United States and Francophone Sub-Saharan African countries, and examines how these trajectories shaped their processes of democratization. A study of the correlation existing between both country cases and their colonizers and finally analyzing the relevance of democracy in both countries in accordance with those correlations. The expected results of this communication are to show that to access democracy, the US and Sub-Saharan African francophone countries went through a given process to access independence, that would determine their effective sovereignty. Finally, the existing socio-economic, political, and military relations between the Sub-Saharan African francophone countries and their French colonizer must be rethought over; the partnership must be based on the ground of freedom at all steps and a win-win one. The American experience may offer useful insights for Francophone Sub-Saharan African countries in their pursuit of stronger and more autonomous democratic systems, while acknowledging the distinct historical and cultural contexts of each case.

### 1. The colonial experiences

#### 1.1. *The colonial era in America*

The ideal of democracy must be examined from the very birth of the nation, and from the foundational principles instilled by the settlers. To appreciate the quality of their democracy, its possible strengths and weaknesses, its independence on the settlers of whether it's under their influence, one must look back to the roots of the foundation of the United States of America. The history of settlement of former colonies being in America or in Africa is worth studying to determine the foundation



of the creation of the country. This era spans thousands of years and is characterized by the presence of indigenous peoples, who had established diverse cultures, societies and civilizations across the land. Before the arrival of Europeans, the indigenous peoples of North America had developed sophisticated societies with complex political, economic, and cultural systems. They inhabited diverse regions and adapted to varied environments, including coastal areas, forests, plains, deserts, and mountains.

### ***1.2. Native Americans versus European colonists: the issue of cohabitation***

The arrival of Europeans in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century starting with Christopher Columbus's voyages, marked the beginning of the end of the pre-colonial era. The subsequent colonization and settlement by European powers would have a profound and often devastating impact on the indigenous peoples of the Americas, leading to widespread displacement, violence, and the decimation of populations due to disease and conflict. It is important to know that the history of indigenous peoples in North America did not begin with European contact. They had vibrant and complex societies that had developed over thousands of years, leaving a lasting legacy on the land and culture of the United States. As the proverb suggests, history is often written by the victors. Most accounts of settlement were produced by European colonists, who had the advantage of literacy and education. Consequently, these narratives often depicted indigenous peoples in a distorted manner, emphasizing stereotypes while minimizing their resistance and the devastating effects of colonization. Ideologies were created to tell stories by depicting a very superficial view of the true facts of history minimizing the damages or showing the bad sides of the indigenous people in their struggle to maintain their territory despite the oppression of the settlers. One of those groups in the American context was the American exceptionalism. American exceptionalism as seen in our generation is the belief that the United States is inherently different from other nations, particularly in terms of its values, political system, and historical development. This idea has played a significant role in American history and can be traced through various periods and events marking the history of the US. In contemporary times, American exceptionalism continues to influence foreign and domestic policy.

Debates about the role of the United States in global affairs, immigration, and social issues often invoke the notion of American uniqueness and moral responsibility. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the concept of Manifest Destiny embodied the idea that the United States had a unique mission to expand westward and spread its values across the continent. This belief justified territorial expansion and was a driving force behind the annexation of territories and conflicts with Native Americans and other nations. In reference to the cohabitation with native Indians "American exceptionalism offers a selective story that obscures the heavy costs of colonization. Thousands of colonists found only intense labor and early graves owing to diseases and Indian hostility. And those who succeeded bought their good fortune by taking lands from Indians and by exploiting the labor of indentured servants and African slaves. Between 1492 and 1776, North America lost population, as diseases and wars killed Indians faster than colonists could replace them. During the eighteenth century, most colonial arrivals were African conscripts forcibly carried to a land of slavery, rather than European

volunteers seeking a domain of freedom.” (Alain Taylor P.140). The spread of diseases and epidemics represented of one the various ways through which the English colonizer proceeded to take over the indigenous people for the latter did not know how to cope with such situations. “Beginning in 1492, Europeans suddenly carried their more virulent diseases to the American continents where the natives lacked the immunological resistance of past experience” (Alain Taylor P.156).

The settlement process also typically involves the extraction of resources from the colonized region for the benefit of the colonizing power. This can lead to economic underdevelopment, as resources are often exploited without adequate investment in local infrastructure or industry. Colonized peoples may experience poverty, inequality, and limited economic opportunities as a result. The natives are mostly subject to mistreatment in their own plantation and forced to produce for the benefit of the colonists. But in contrary, the colony also happen to benefit from their production in certain conditions like the one of the Rolfe’s cases. In fact, the colony also benefited from John Rolfe’s development of tobacco as a cash crop that could bear the high cost of transportation to market in England. Consumers would pay premium prices to satisfy their craving for the addictive nicotine.

### ***1.3. Pre-colonial era in Sub-saharan African francophone countries***

#### ***1.3.1. The invention of Africa***

The pre-colonial era in Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa refers to the period before the imposition of European colonial rule and administrative systems in the regions that are now mostly known as native French-speaking African countries. This era is characterized by a rich variety of diverse cultures, kingdoms, empires, and societies, each owning their specific distinct political, economic, and social structures. But before presenting the major kingdoms that impacted the lands of that era, let’s talk about Africa and the idea related to the origin of the word.

The notion of the invention of Africa becomes then a topic to be dealt with tact as most African inhabitants before the 20<sup>th</sup> century did not identify as being “Africans”. To the question of the invention of Africa, the short answer of the Congolese philosopher V. Y. Mudimbe “is that the idea of Africa was initially fashioned not by Africans but by non-Africans, as a ‘paradigm of difference’. Africa, in other words, has served as an exotic prism through which outsiders, mainly Europeans, refracted images of ‘the other’ and of themselves.”. The theory related to the name “Africa” finds its sources from the Roman to as ‘Afri’, Africa “The land of Afri” and considered as a Roman province created after the conquest of Carthage in 146 bc. That same coastal region later became known as “Afriqiya”. It was only from the 15<sup>th</sup> century when Portuguese marines brought the outline of Africa to the view of Europe that the term was then generally applied to the continent. The Portuguese voyage then helped to expand the European knowledge of Africa and the greatest contextual fact that transformed the European thinking of Africa was the transatlantic slave trade. Slavery was not just practiced by the Europeans, it also existed in the Muslim world, including North Africa and in sub-Saharan Africa itself. The Atlantic slave trade between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries involved the forced migration of a huge human physically strong resource of the African community in western countries. That forged the idea of the inferiority of African race in front of the world



and that still persist in the mind of the citizens of the contemporary world. " Slavery had been a prominent feature of the classical Mediterranean world and had continued in various forms in medieval Europe. It also existed in the Muslim world, including North Africa, and in sub-Saharan Africa itself. "Yet it was the Atlantic slave trade, which between the 16th and the 19th centuries involved the forced migration of some 12 million Africans to the Americas, that forged an explicit link in European minds between racial inferiority, enslavement, and Africa." P 12-13. It was in that atmosphere and thanks to some prominent figures of the diaspora that Africans themselves first began to appropriate the idea of Africa. Great kingdoms characterized life and power in the era before the arrival of the French settlers. Let's have a look at some of the major ones.

### 1.3.2. *Francophone African major kingdoms prior to colonization*

Some of the most influential empires that dominated that era are:

- Mali Empire (c. 1235-1600): One of the most powerful and wealthiest empires in West Africa, the Mali empire was a powerful West African empire that was around the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The Empire was known for its rich culture, strong centralized government, and control of trans-Saharan trade routes. It was famous for its rulers, like Mansa Musa, who is often regarded as one of the wealthiest individuals in history.
- Songhai Empire (c. 1430-1591): Flourishing from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Songhai empire was among the most powerful and wealthiest African states located in west Africa and extended the Atlantic Ocean to present day NIGER and NIGERIA having Gao for Capital.
- Kingdom of Dahomey (c. 1600-1904): Located in present-day Benin, the Kingdom of Dahomey was known for its highly organized military and complex political system. It played a significant role in the Atlantic slave trade. The kingdom was also known for its unique social structures, including the use of women as warriors (known as the Dahomey Amazons).
- The Ashanti Empire (c. 1670-1957): While primarily in what is now Ghana, the Ashanti Empire had significant interactions with Francophone regions. It was a major player in the gold trade and had a highly organized and centralized government.
- Kingdom of Kongo (c. 1390-1914): Located in Central Africa, covering parts of modern-day Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Republic of Congo, the Kingdom of Kongo was a powerful state known for its complex political structure and interactions with European powers. The Kongo was an early adopter of Christianity after contact with Portuguese explorers.

The pre-colonial era in Francophone Africa was a time of great diversity and dynamism. It was marked by the rise and fall of powerful empires, the flourishing of trade, the spread of religions like Islam, and the rich cultural traditions that have shaped the identities of the people in these regions. Understanding this period is crucial to appreciating the complexities and resilience of African societies before the disruptions of European colonization. Many societies in Francophone Africa were agricultural, with communities organized around kinship ties and subsistence farming. These societies had rich traditions of oral history, art, and spiritual practices.

Both in Sub-Saharan Francophone Africa and America, there was a certain living style and socio-political organization established by the local leaders. It was also characterized by kinships in the one hand and great kingdoms in the other, following a certain socio-political logic for the promotion of peace and life for the people. The arrival of the European settlers does not hence represent the era that determines the starting point of the existence of those peoples; it just comes as a game changer, an establisher of new rules and conquest of the territory. The problem of cohabitation between the indigenous Indians and African resulted on independence for no one could really stand to be subjugated to a certain condition in contradiction to their culture, traditions, pride and dignity for so long. Hence the call to emancipation and the refusal of the colonial full control over their lives.

## **2. From colonization to independence in America and Africa**

### **2.1. Colonization and independence of the US**

The American revolution refers to a seismic moment in history. First because of the fact it led to the formation of the United States, a country which economic and military power has been felt across the world. Many actions from the British colonizer motivated the colonists to urge on willing to protest and detach from them. That is actually what makes the difference in history, the detachment "It was not till the present century had more than half elapsed, that it occurred to any number of the colonists, that they had an interest in being detached from Great Britain. Their attention was first turned to this subject, by the British claim of taxation. This opened a melancholy prospect, boundless in extent, and endless in duration. The Boston port act, and the other acts, passed in 1774, and 1775, which have been already the subject of comment, progressively weakened the attachment of the colonists to the birth place of their forefathers. The commencement of hostilities on the 19th of April, 1775, exhibited the Parent State in an odious point of view, and abated the original dread of separating from it." (David Ramsay P.235, 1789).

The causes that the revolution came to represent Liberty, representation, freedom and independence, laid the foundations for social democracies for the following centuries. Famous figures such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams could not have foreseen the almost holy reverence with which their words have been treated since. While the effects of the revolution may not have been immediately revolutionary, it's clear that the thirteen colonies struggle for independence from British rule has had a significant and lasting impact. As with any revolutionary moment, it's vital to take a step back and examine the causes and progression leading up to the eventual British surrender in 1783. Most studies of the American revolution trace its beginning to the Seven Years' War (1756-1763). A conflict with the French over territory that ended with a British victory. The Seven Years' War solidified Britain's stance at the most dominant European country in the world as it gained vast tracts of land in the process. However, as Britain tried to increase control of its American colonies in a variety of ways, colonists began rebelling. The expensive conflict had led to new and unpopular taxes. The British government attempted to raise revenue by taxing the colonies. First with the Stamp Act of 1765 and then with the Townshend Acts of 1767 and the Tea Act of 1773. This led to increasing resentment. The colonists felt that these taxes were unfair since they were being taxed without any





representation in parliament. This First Continental Congress including the likes of George Washington from Virginia, as well as John and Samuel Adams from Massachusetts. They did not demand independence at this meeting but they did issue a declaration of the rights due to every citizen, including life, liberty, property, assembly, and trial by jury, a forerunner for what would come later. They were frustrated by taxation, but also at the continued British military presence in the colonies. An issue that would rear its head very soon. They agreed to meet for a second congress. In the convenient time between congresses, war broke out. On April 18, 1775, British soldiers marched to Concord to seize an arms cache that had been stockpiled by the colonial militiamen.

By the time the Second Congress met in the summer of 1775. With new additions such as Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, anti-British views were entrenched. They voted to raise a continental army with Washington as commander-in-chief. Thus began a series of battles throughout the fall and winter, starting with the battle of Bunker Hill in Boston. Though it was a victory for the British, these early skirmishes actually supplied encouragement for the lowly colonial forces, giving them inspiration for the fight ahead. With more trouble brewing, as early battles didn't bring any conclusive victories on either side, the colonists contented their position on July 4, 1776, when they voted to adopt the Declaration of Independence. This momentous document was the first time a nation's people formally asserted their right to choose their own government. The act of the united colonies for separating themselves from the government of Great-Britain, and declaring their independence, was expressed in the following words:

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands [342] which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal... (Ramsay Pp.239-40, 1789), the prelude words introducing the declaration of independence after a long discussion by taking into great consideration the care related to the disputes among the different states and by making sure there was no place left or reason that could make them regret their non-retour declaration or any reason that could let their colonizers find some strengths back to attack or reconquer them, the measure of declaring the colonies free and independent was approved, by nearly an unanimous vote.

These words influenced by enlightenment ideas were a far cry from the European model of absolute monarchy. Though of course we know that this statement, in fact, referred to a small fraction of the population of the colonies, women, men without property and slaves were all not considered to share these "inalienable rights". Nevertheless, this was the revolutionary beginning of what would be a long imperfect process toward the democratic republic we know today. As the colonists were declaring independence, the British were sending a huge fleet with 34.000 soldiers across the Atlantic to crush the rebellion. After this point, the Revolutionary War settled into a pattern of wins, losses and stalemates for the next several years.

Military history enthusiasts can enjoy the tales of Washington retreating across the Delaware River before launching a surprise attack on Christmas night in the early stages of the war or can reflect on the turning point through 1777-78. The American victory at Saratoga was crucial as it paved the way for France, sensing British weakness, to enter the war on the colonists' side. What had been a civil war now became an international conflict. "In January 1783, when Lafayette heard that the commissioners in Paris were near to arriving at a peace treaty, he wrote to Washington to congratulate him and to propose that together they finish work the Revolution had begun. "Let us unite in purchasing a small estate, where we may try the experiment to free the negroes," he suggested. "Such an example as yours might render it a general practice; and if we succeed in America," they could bring the experiment to the West Indies. "I should be happy to join you in so laudable a work," Washington wrote back, saying that he wished to meet to discuss the details." (Jill Lepore, P.56).

With the help of the training provided by a professional army, notably from the French, aristocrat Marquis de Lafayette, Washington's forces rallied in the north, in the south, the colonists suffered many setbacks with the famous betrayal of Benedict Arnold's detection to the British being the most famous of several other mutinies in the continental Army. The British occupied Georgia by early 1779 and captured Charleston, South Carolina in May 1780 under General Cornwallis. However, a charge of leadership in the American ranks led to Nathaniel Greene coming to the fore. His forces managed to push the British back to the Yorktown Peninsula. With Washington also converging to the British, they were trapped and forced to surrender. Though contemporaries didn't necessarily see it that way, this surrender effectively marked the end of the revolutionary war, with no further decisive action taking place before the British signed the Treaty of Paris in 1783. In signing the Treaty of Paris, Britain formally recognized the independence of the United States, and the colonists were free to go about building their free and independent country. We know that the story of the United States from here is not quite the legendary march of progress toward freedom and liberty. The shortcomings of the founding fathers and the damages done by subsequent US governments are well-known. Nevertheless, from a weak confederation of the thirteen colonies in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in less than two hundred years, the US had become the most powerful nation in the world. Some of the reasons for American success can be found in the rights enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution. The American victory was a kind of miracle, not only in the logistical nature of a rag-tag bunch of farmers overcoming on the imperial army but also in the triumph of new ideas over entrenched monarchical systems. A new kind of politics and new ways of thinking, had been born in history's greatest experiment, the United States. The subsequent events leading to the independence of the US and especially the act of ties cut with their fights British colonizer who solely signed the treaty of Paris to give total freedom to the US after a long period of fight. The independence of the US was complete and the declaration of Independence represented the core values of total Liberty and so of a free Democracy independent from any external or colonial power.





## ***2.2. Colonization and independence in Africa***

The paradigm of colonization and independence in Africa must be seen at a different angle from the one of the US even though the goal is to result to the same ending when it comes to a similar correlation, authenticity and freedom in the Democracy of both parts. We must acknowledge that the idea of power is a different dialectical phenomenon, that the torturer and the tortured, the racist and victim of racism, the colonizer and colonized subject, the empowered and disempowered nation, are locked in a symbiotic relation in which the first could not escape the consequences of his relations with the second. For Jean Paul Sartre: 'Colonialism denies human rights to people it has subjugated by violence, and whom it keeps in poverty and ignorance by force, therefore, as Marx would say, in a state of "sub-humanity"' (Sartre, P.22). This research focusing on African Francophone study case and especially AOF space (Sub-Saharan francophone Africa), one can understand here that Francophone Africa has been dominated for long by the political, economic and cultural repercussion of France's colonial rules. That repercussion was expressed through the upkeep of many resources representing the backbones of each of the colonized nations in order to assert their interest and as a saying goes "France does not have any friend, she only has interest". AOF a general government gathering within the same federation of eight French colonies of Owest Africa between 1895 and 1958 right before the massive independence of the concerned countries. Those countries were Mauritania, Senegal, former French Soudan (present Mali), Guinea, Ivory Coast, Niger, the Upper Volta (present Burkina Faso) and the former Dahomey (present Benin) it space covered a huge geographical territory of 4 689 000 kilometers square representing about seven times their colonizing country France. The AOF countries are fortunate enough and have an abundance of natural resources very important for the economic, military and technology growth of France in particular and the whole western world in general. But colonization was not welcome by the indigenous people, not for long as it influences the peoples and with the time, the latter started opening their eyes as the world was up for grab for each individual to discover and know about what was going on to other sides of the world. Colonialism consists of making the indigenous seen inferior and treating them as such, having not only psychological impact but also a physical one. Jean Paul Sartre supports that " the refusal to accept that freedom, which for him defines man, reduces the individual to a state of inferiority. In the situation of antisemitism as Sartre acknowledges, the choice of freedom and assuming the responsibility of authenticity requires courage"(P.12). Many Africans started raising their awareness about the ideas of rebelling and facing the reality of colonization. But the only good thing about colonialism is that, in order to last, it must show itself to be intransigent, and that, by its intransigence, it prepares its ruin. The following introduces the idealism leading to the independences of the West French African countries.

## ***2.3. Independence and democracy in Sub-Saharan African Francophone countries***

Democratization is a process leading to a more open and participatory society, and less authoritarian. Democracy is a political regime where the institutional apparatus gives substance to the ideal of a political power expressing the will of the people. But the definition that aligns better with the principles of this communication

is the one of Prof Justin Ngambu Wanki who defines Decolonization as : "the rejection of the domination exercised by the colonial power over subjugated peoples and the imposition of the personality and authority of the new state in all fields.<sup>1</sup> The right to development in Francophone Africa: Post-colonial agreements, sovereign authority and control over natural resources" from this perspective one could only talk about decolonization if there was a successful rejection or detachment from the colonizer's oppression over the colonized people. This state of cause would then give to the colonized countries, the total freedom in the organization of their country management and so their Democracy as this represent the basic point that determines the life of the citizens and the level of development the country could ever reach. There should then be given to any colonized country after their independence, the monopole to stand as a sovereign country as stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations in The Vienna Declaration on Human Rights referring to the principles of Democracy that states that: "all peoples aspire to the establishment of an international order based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations" and in particular to "democracy". Its Preamble and in its articles 1 and 55, insists on the principle of equality of nations and peoples, the right of peoples to self-determination and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. (Professor David Beetham (Democracy: Principles and Achievement) by Union Inter parlementaire, Genève, 1998, Page 30 Annex1; Extracts from the Agenda for the Democratization of the Secretary-General of the United Nations 70 Page 25). In contrary to the United States history related to their assess to independence where they declare their independence in the middle of the war through strong and clear declaration and were later proclaimed fully independent from their British colonizer, Sub-Saharan Francophone African countries did not cut ties or detach from their colonizers and still keep some toxic correlations to the benefit of the French colonizer who offered them an independence of façade by still having control over the main natural resources, the government, the politics, the monetary system etc... On the eve of independence, France covertly recolonized its former colonial territories through the medium of some 'cooperation agreements' (accords de coopération) with the governments that were poised to assume independence. "In terms of these agreements, sovereign control over all the valued natural resources of the former colonial territories in terms of their most strategic functions were transferred to France. By virtue of these agreements, even though statehood was attributed to these countries, the control over currency, military and natural resources has hitherto been in the hands of the French." This said, despite the organization of the society and the political reforms for independence in the year 60s for most African Francophone countries, the essential goal was to preserve French post-colonial domination.

The country's control over their own resources and country management being highly essential is required to reach an absolute development being in harmony with the values and culture shared by the people. If that is not the case, then the realization of the right to development and true sovereignty for a great democracy would be a herculean task for the colonized people. It is important to demonstrate the nexus between decolonization, sovereign authority over natural resources in a post-colonial context and the outreach of true and a free democracy. " As will be demonstrated later, the manner in which France conducted the decolonization and independence of its



former colonies provided it with a foothold over the control of continued colonial policy towards these territories, extending into the post-colonial period.” P3 The corporation accords represent a chain that hold the so-called independent Francophone African countries through the neck. Most of these secret accords were signed around the period of independence, some in 1959 and some just after the independence in 1961, in reference to the natural resources of the colonized countries. Let’s have a look at the content of those secret clauses and especially the agreement between France and Côte d’Ivoire, Niger and Dahomey (Benin) in 1961. “Article 4 states that Côte d’Ivoire, Niger and Dahomey (Benin) shall facilitate the acquisition of natural resources and strategic raw materials for the French army and shall limit or shall place a ban on the exportation of any of such products without the approval of France. Article 5(section 2) goes further to state that France shall reserve the right of priority to buy any natural resources from Côte d’Ivoire, Dahomey (Benin) and Niger.” Basing on some of these agreement suggests that “the defense or military and monetary cooperation agreements only enable France to further strengthen its grip on the agreement on natural resources and the strategic raw materials, which have served as the breeding ground for the neo-colonization of Francophone Africa. For instance, France uses its military forces under the guise of fighting terrorism in a bid to protect its interests when they are threatened in that state. This was the case with the ‘operation Seval’ in Mali from 2013 to 2014. During this operation, the French military prioritized the security of the cities of Gao and Kidal that are both zones of potential natural resource exploitation such as uranium.”

France retained the most radical political, social, economic and cultural ties post-independence with its former colonies, reminiscent of neo-colonialism. 27 which is defined later. This relationship has been termed *le village franco-africain* or *la Françafrique*, a personalized network that guarantees free access to natural resources and markets in Africa for French interests. 28 The terms of some of the secret agreements guaranteed France a right of priority to buy any natural resources found on the territory of the 14 Francophone African states.29 It must, however, be noted that France does not in fact buy the resources as outlined in the agreements.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, both the United States and Francophone African countries experienced independence in relation to their colonizers, although under very different circumstances. The United States of America in their process of freedom made it clear and detach from their British colonizer, creating for themselves, new way of living and deciding a given vision for their country. Despite their internal racial issues that represent such like a nightmare in their history and on the basis of their independence, one could affirm that their democracy is not influenced by any external colonial power as the core principles of democracy were the cornerstone and the reason d’être defended in the declaration of independence. They were brave enough to claim their individual rights and their sovereignty. For Jean Paul Sartre: ‘Colonialism denies human rights to people it has subjugated by violence, and whom it keeps in poverty and ignorance by force, therefore, as Marx would say, in a state of “sub-humanity”’ Sartre P22. The case of African Francophone countries tends to bring

a similar view to the previous saying from Sartre. When referring to the case topic of the antisemitism in reference to urge of true freedom, he supported that :'' the refusal to accept that freedom, which for him defines man, reduces the individual to a state of inferiority. In the situation of antisemitism as Sartre acknowledges, the choice of freedom and assuming the responsibility of authenticity requires courage'' P12. African Francophone countries must understand that true sovereignty has a given price to pay. To express ourselves as an exemplary democracy, we must learn from the United States history and rethink over the existing correlations between us and our colonizers. True democracy requires us to have a brand new view of our countries seen through our own eyes about ourselves first.

### **Bibliography**

- Alan Taylor, *Colonial America A very short Introduction*, Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press 198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, 2013
- David Beetham, *Democracy: "Principles and Achievement"*, in *Union Interparlementaire Genève* 1998 Page 30 Annex1
- David Ramsay, *The History of the American Revolution*, vol. 1 [1789] published by Liberty Fund, Inc
- Jean-Paul Sartre, *Colonialism and Neocolonialism* First published 1964 in French, as *Situations V* by Editions Gallimard, 5 rue Sébastien Bottin, 75007 Paris, France
- Jill Lepore, *These Truths: A history of the United States* (Independent Publishers Since 1923 New York London)
- John Parker and Richard Rathbone *African History, A very short introduction* Published in the United States by Oxford University Press Inc., New York, 2007
- Justin Ngambu Wanki, *The right to development in Francophone Africa: Post-colonial agreements, sovereign authority and control over natural resources* (2023)
- (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/ie-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity/sogicolonialismreparations#:~:text=It%20designates%20processes%20through%20which,%2C%20cultural%2C%20or%20ideological%20colonialism.> 10/09/2024)