

Methodology

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Methodology

The subject file 'Decolonisation: geopolitical issues and impact on the European integration process' is based on an ambitious research project on the interactions between the decolonisation process and the European integration process, with a particular emphasis on French and British decolonisation.

Research questions

This subject file was developed with the aim of analysing and linking two subjects which are generally found in different contexts. The central theme of the publication is the consequences of the decolonisation process on European integration. How did the disintegration of European colonial empires and the gradual transformation of relations between the new independent states and their former colonial powers from 1945 onwards influence the European integration process?

A literature search initially enabled us to identify the main stages in the process of decolonisation and, by taking specific examples, to examine the causes, dynamics, forms and procedures involved. The decolonisation process really began in earnest in the aftermath of the Second World War. Relations between Europe's colonial powers (including France and the United Kingdom, but also the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy and Portugal) and their colonies were completely transformed. Indigenous populations, aware of the weakening influence of the European powers and encouraged by the creation of the United Nations and the emergence of two anticolonialist superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, began to fight for their freedom and their independence. The first phase of decolonisation ran from 1945 to 1955 and mainly affected the countries in the Near and Middle East, as well as South East Asia. The second phase began after the conference of the Non-Aligned Movement in Bandung in 1955 and primarily concerned North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa. While the process of decolonisation was peaceful in some cases, in others it was marred by violence.

At the same time, the fledgling community of Europe recognised the need to examine its future relations with the European colonies. The question of the nature of relations to be established between the colonies and the future European Common Market was soon raised. How could a common market be formed while maintaining historical preferential links between the European powers and their overseas territories? Concepts and terms such as 'Eurafrica' and 'neocolonialism' emerged and re-emerged, and it was only after heated diplomatic discussions that the six founding states of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) were able to reach an agreement: the Rome Treaties of 25 March 1957 provided for the association of the overseas countries and territories (OCTs) linked with France, Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands with the European Economic Community (EEC) for a trial period of five years.

In the early 1960s, with most of the associated countries gaining independence, the association regime that was based on the principles of free trade and development aid needed to be reviewed and renegotiated. One issue of particular concern to the EEC Member States was the type of aid that should be granted to the Third-World countries. In 1963, the first Yaoundé Convention established initial cooperation between the EEC and 18 Associated African States and Madagascar (AASM).

From 1961 onwards, a new element was added to the mix: the United Kingdom's first application for accession to the European Common Market raised the question of the future relations between the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth countries and the EEC, especially the potential accession of English-speaking African countries to the AASM-EEC association. Once again, the European Communities' policy of cooperation needed to be adapted to the new international climate. In 1975, the first Lomé Convention, a trade cooperation agreement, was signed by the EEC and 46 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, marking a major milestone in the long process for the establishment of formalised economic and trade cooperation on an equal basis with the former colonies.

The principles governing archive research and the selection of documents

For this subject file, systematic research was carried out in several archive collections. Consultation of the National Archives in Kew, in the United Kingdom, provided detailed information on the process of decolonisation of the British Empire in Asia and Africa. The following sections of the archives were specifically explored: Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Foreign Office (FO), Dominions Office (DO), Colonial Office (CO), Cabinet Office (CAB), Prime Minister's Office (PREM) and Ministry of Power (POWE).

On the subject of French decolonisation in Indochina and Africa, we consulted the French Diplomatic Documents (DDF) and the National Overseas Archives in Aix-en-Provence, especially the collections of the Political Affairs Department in the Colonies Ministry, the Departmental Service for General Intelligence in Algiers (SDRG), the Ministry of State for Algerian Affairs, the Special Administrative Sections in Algeria (SAS), the French High Commission for Indochina and several sections of the Private Overseas Archives.

With regard to the debates on the question of the EEC's association with the OCTs, the AASM and the ACP, several holdings of the Historical Archives of the European Union in Florence were particularly useful, especially the following: *Assemblée parlementaire européenne et Parlement européen* (PE0), *Organes parlementaires pour la coopération au développement* (ACP), *DGVIII Développement de l'outre mer* (BAC 08), *CECA Haute Autorité — Service Juridique* (CEAB01), *Secrétariat général du Comité interministériel pour les questions de coopération économique européenne* (SGCICEE) and the section on Sub-Saharan Africa in the private collections of Edoardo Martino (EM).

In addition to the diplomatic and institutional documents found in archive collections, the subject file also includes several press articles from a range of newspapers such as *Le Monde*, *L'Express*, *Le Figaro*, *L'Humanité*, *Le Combat*, *France Observateur*, *Le Populaire*, *Belgique d'outre-mer*, *La Libre Belgique*, *La Dernière Heure*, *Le Phare Dimanche*, *La Nouvelle Gazette*, *La Flandre libérale*, *Le Drapeau rouge*, *Luxemburger Wort*, *Corriere della Sera*, *Het Parool*, *New Statesman*, *Die Welt*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *Pravda*.

The subject file contains photos and cartoons illustrating key events and players, as well as audio archives and extracts from memoirs.

The resources were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- relevance of the content of the resources to the general question addressed in the subject file and the various topics covered;
- reliability of sources;
- varied nature of the documents (institutional documents, diplomatic documents, correspondence, speeches, extracts from memoirs, press articles, etc.), documents from different geographical origins, in a variety of languages and formats (texts, images, audio recordings, etc.);
- balance between the chapters and sections.

Despite our best efforts, it should be emphasised that some documents were not able to be consulted and/or published, particularly as a result of linguistic difficulties or copyright issues.

Alongside these primary sources, the subject file features a series of educational resources such as interactive maps and timelines, as well as a selected bibliography.

The structure of the subject file

This subject file, which combines thematic and chronological approaches, is structured into four broad chapters:

- Decolonisation in Asia;
- The emergence of the Third World;
- Decolonisation in Africa;
- The repercussions of decolonisation on the European integration process.

The chapters are divided into several sections. Each thematic unit starts with an article which sets out the context and the main events linked to the topics addressed.

The units each include an extensive, varied selection of resources presented in chronological order, from the oldest to the most recent. These resources are enhanced with metadata (source, media type, copyright, etc.) and accompanied by contextual, analytical captions.

Finally, the subject file includes several chronologies and an interactive timeline, as well as a specialised bibliography on the topics explored.