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At the Crossroads of European Integration and Decolonization: The OEEC and the Management of European Overseas Territories

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Universiteit Leiden

**At the Crossroads of European Integration and Decolonization:
The OEEC and the Management of European Overseas Territories**

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Abstract

This thesis explores the role of the OEEC in the management of Western European overseas colonies. Through a qualitative historical research drawing mainly on the archival collection of the OEEC, it argues that beyond its primary objectives of administering Marshall Aid, the OEEC became a platform in which Western European powers organized their relations with their overseas territories. Beyond economic concerns, these territories were considered as a political question, and the OEEC developed into a venue in which the interests of Europe were safeguarded, at the crossroads between integration and decolonization.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CCTA: Commission for Technical Cooperation in Africa South of the Sahara

CSA: Scientific Council for Africa South of the Sahara

DAC: Development Assistance Committee

DAG: Development Assistance Group

ECSC: European Coal and Steel Community

EDC: European Defense Community

EEC: European Economic Community

EPU: European Payments Union

ERP: European Recovery Program

FTA: Free Trade Area

OEEC: Organization for European Economic Cooperation

OTC: Overseas Territories Committee

OTs: Overseas Territories

UK: United Kingdom

UN: United Nations

US: United States

WWII: World War II

1. Introduction

The period after the Second World War saw a variety of initiatives aimed at the reconstruction, development, cooperation and integration of the European continent. One of these efforts came from the United States (US): the Marshall Plan. From this, the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) was created, with the primary objectives of supervising the distribution of Marshall aid, and working on a joint recovery programme.¹ Quite rapidly, the OEEC surpassed its original objectives: its activities were extended to activities beyond economics, and encouraged closer cooperation between member-states in various areas, such as industry, agriculture, energy, and technology.² Prosperity and productivity were essential to its work; to accomplish these, the use of resources at the disposition of its member-states, including in their overseas territories, was embedded in its establishing Convention.³

In the 1950s, many other processes developed. European integration flourished in the 1950s: examples include the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the European Defense Community (EDC), and the European Economic Community (EEC).⁴ Decolonization and changes in European empires saw a new impetus after the war.⁵ This positioned Europe at the center of different yet simultaneous dynamics. In the literature, these are often considered differently; yet, certain initiatives are an example of the interconnectedness of these processes.⁶

This thesis is located at the nexus of these different processes and fields of research: it aims to assess and analyze the role of the OEEC in the management of Western European overseas territories. Therefore, the main research question is: *what role did the OEEC assume in the management of Western European overseas territories?* From this follow four sub-questions: (1) Why was the OEEC involved in the matters of its member-states' overseas territories? (2) How was it involved? (3) How efficient was it in addressing the question of overseas territories? (4) Why the OEEC? These questions are addressed throughout this thesis.

This thesis is a qualitative historical research, and primarily draws on archival documents from the OEEC. It is organized as follows. Chapter 2 reviews the academic literature. Chapter 3 introduces the research design, methodology, reliability and limitations of

¹ "Organisation for European Economic Co-Operation."

² Historical Archives, "Organisation for European Economic Cooperation."

³ "Convention for European Economic Cooperation," Article 2.

⁴ Baldwin and Wyplosz, *The Economics of European Integration*; Griffiths and Asbeek Brusse, "Exploring the OEEC's past;" Nugent, *The Government and Politics*; Saurugger, *Theoretical Approaches*; van Meurs et al., *The Unfinished History*.

⁵ Hansen, "European Integration;" Schenk, "Decolonization and European economic integration."

⁶ Griffiths and Asbeek Brusse, "Exploring the OEEC's past," 4.

this research. Then come the analytical chapters: Chapter 4 focuses on the OEEC's Overseas Territories Committee (OTC), whose very name suggest the importance of these territories to the organization and its member-states. Chapter 5 explores the question of overseas territories in the OEEC, beyond the OTC. Chapter 6 addresses the fourth sub-question in more detail, exploring alternatives to the OEEC that existed simultaneously to this organization. Chapter 7 concludes this thesis, followed by the bibliography.

2. Literature Review

European integration has long received attention from scholars. Typically, its history is conceived and retraced with a focus on European institutions: narratives of European integration tend to equate with the linear progression from the ECSC, the EDC, to the EEC.⁷

Increasingly however, scholars have paid greater attention to the nexus of European integration with other processes, including decolonization.⁸ Colonial matters had great influence on colonial states, and shaped not only the domestic policies of the mainland, but also the very processes of European integration.⁹ Yet, this is often overlooked in the literature.¹⁰ When it is explored, such accounts tend to overlook or completely disregard other venues in which European integration took place, emphasizing the typical narrative of the ECSC and the EEC.¹¹

Parallel to these pools of research is the study of the OEEC. Most of the research on the OEEC focuses on the ERP and assessing its efficiency.¹² Although it has also been researched in other contexts, such as in relation with other international organizations,¹³ there is still a lack of research on the OEEC/OECD beyond the Marshall Plan.¹⁴ As Wendy Asbeek Brusse and Richard Griffiths state, “the OEEC was created to administer [...] American aid, and it is in this context that it has received most attention from contemporary observers and historians alike.”¹⁵ Certain studies on the OEEC have shown that the organization has influenced governments, other international organizations and even public debates in “multi-faceted and varying ways.”¹⁶ Yet, the OEEC’s role in European (economic) integration has often been eclipsed by European institutions. It has evolved from a means to administer Marshall aid to being influent in different areas and with various actors.¹⁷ The OEEC is an often-forgotten

⁷ Baldwin and Wyplosz, *The Economics of European Integration*; Griffiths and Asbeek Brusse, “Exploring the OEEC’s past;” Nugent, *The Government and Politics*; Saurugger, *Theoretical Approaches*; van Meurs et al., *The Unfinished History*.

⁸ Garavini, *After Empires*; Hansen, “European Integration;” Schenk, “Decolonization and European economic integration.”

⁹ Hansen and Jonsson, “Eurafrica Incognita;” Rempe, “Decolonization by Europeanization?”

¹⁰ Hansen, “European Integration,” 485.

¹¹ Griffiths and Asbeek Brusse, “Exploring the OEEC’s past,” 4.

¹² Killick, *The United States and European Reconstruction*; Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe*; Wexler, *The Marshall Plan revisited*.

¹³ Cohen, “When Giants Clash;” Leary and Warner, *Social Issues*; Leimgruber, “The Embattled Standard-bearer.”

¹⁴ Clifton and Diaz-Fuentes, “The OECD and phases in the international political economy,” 566; Leimgruber and Schmelzer, “Introduction,” 10.

¹⁵ Griffiths and Asbeek Brusse, “Exploring the OEEC’s past,” 15.

¹⁶ Leimgruber and Schmelzer, “Introduction,” 9.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 2-4.

component of the stories of European integration and decolonization, and its role at this crossroads remains to be further researched.

This chapter firstly addresses Western European attitudes towards decolonization, especially French and British, and identifies relational processes between the colonizer and the colonized. Secondly, the nexus between European integration and decolonization is explored: rather than being impervious to each other, colonial matters were closely intertwined with the building of closer cooperation in Europe. Thirdly, European integration is discussed. The usual narration of it does not account for the multitude of influent actors and processes. The nexus between decolonization and European integration needs to be considered in the context of different venues for European cooperation post-WWII. Finally, the OEEC introduced as one of these venues.

a. Studies on decolonization

Poka Laenui defines colonization and decolonization as social and political processes.¹⁸ These processes are complemented by a variety of factors, dynamics and phases, such as identity, history, culture, socio-economic settings, ideology, policies, movements, narratives, emotions and actions.¹⁹ Hansen and Jonsson emphasize that colonizing societies were just as influenced by imperialism as the colonized ones through these processes.²⁰ This is echoed by Frank Heinlein, who argues that the Commonwealth was an inherent part of Britain's construction of its own identity as a world power.²¹

From the late 1940s onward, the decolonization of European colonies increased, and in the context of the Cold War and multiple wars in which the US and European powers were involved (e.g. Korea, Indochina, Algeria), European colonial powers set out to reorganize their approach to their colonies.²² In a comparative study of British and French decolonization, Tony Smith identifies four areas they had to consider, and which guided their policies: the legacy of the past regarding imperial matters, which guided the responses of the leaders; their international status, and the relations they had with other world powers, especially the US; their domestic political institutions and their capacity to address decolonization, which were

¹⁸ Laenui, "Processes of Decolonization," 1.

¹⁹ Ibid, 2; Chafer, *The End of Empire*; Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Chambati, *Coloniality of Power*.

²⁰ Hansen and Jonson, "Another Colonialism," 444.

²¹ Heinlein, *British Government Policy and Decolonisation*.

²² Smith, "A Comparative Study of French and British Decolonization," 70-71.

challenged by the events of these decades; and the role of the nationalist elites.²³ He argues that in all matters, the United Kingdom (UK) was favored; notably, the multi-party system of France compared to the two-party system of the UK proved harder to reach consensus.²⁴ Historically, the UK had created the Dominion system and often reformed the status of its colonies within the Commonwealth, meeting colonial discontent with closer association of colonized peoples with the UK.²⁵ France's approach was more limited.²⁶ The Brazzaville Conference of 1944 had shown the importance of French colonies in Africa, but completely denied the "possibility of a colonial evolution towards independence."²⁷ France's policies after 1945 were centered around the "assimilation" and "association" of colonies, supplemented by protectionist policies.²⁸ Furthermore, the wars in Indochina and Algeria pressured France in ways that the UK did not face, at least until the 1956 Suez Canal crisis where both were involved, against the opinion of the US.²⁹

In the context of increased European cooperation, two new approaches towards colonies emerged: "Eurafrica" and "neocolonialism."³⁰ Eurafrica refers to the Western conception of inseparable links between Europe and Africa, portrayed as tied by a "great common destiny,"³¹ and including the association of non-imperialist states with the development of Africa.³² Eurafrica was at the service of Europe, and contradictory to African interests.³³ Inherent to this are imperialism and neocolonialism. Imperialism, rather than being strictly defined by direct colonial rule, denotes relations of dependency and control in economic and social relations.³⁴ Changes in colonial status throughout the 1950s accentuate the importance of this concept in this research. Neocolonialism refers to the construction of Western involvement in colonies, overseas territories and newly independent nations as benevolent and beneficial to these territories rather than to the West.³⁵ This is exemplified by France's conception of its African colonies as an extension of France: la Françafrique.³⁶

²³ Smith, "A Comparative Study of French and British Decolonization," 71.

²⁴ Ibid, 71.

²⁵ Ibid, 72-73.

²⁶ Ibid, 73.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid, 74-75.

²⁹ Ibid, 71; van Meurs, et al., *The Unfinished History*, 41-42.

³⁰ Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*; Hansen and Jonsson, "Eurafrica Incognita;" Uzoigwe, "Neocolonialism is Dead."

³¹ Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 276.

³² Schenk, "Decolonization and European economic integration," 452.

³³ Ibid, 453.

³⁴ Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, 27.

³⁵ Uzoigwe, "Neocolonialism is Dead," 59.

³⁶ Rempe, "Decolonization by Europeanization?" 5.

This sub-chapter has focused on defining mainly British and French attitudes towards decolonization, as examples of how different yet connected European approaches to colonies were. Yet, other actors also participated in these processes. Catherine Schenk explores the relation between decolonization and European economic integration through the Free Trade Area negotiations of 1956-1958, conducted within the OEEC.³⁷ She argues that the processes of decolonization that Britain was going through at the time heavily influenced its relations with the rest of the world, notably Europe.³⁸ Studying processes of integration and decolonization through different perspectives, specifically through institutions and organizations present at the time, and in which European states were involved, is crucial to a broader understanding of these very processes.

b. European integration and decolonization

The processes of European integration and decolonization emerged from different factors. Yet, they were not isolated from each other, but rather the opposite: colonialism and decolonization were intrinsically intertwined with the development of closer cooperation in Europe.

Yves Montarsolo emphasizes that “each time a new ‘European’ institution saw the day, Africa was always at the heart of all concerns.”³⁹ Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson argue that European integration and colonialism were intimately linked: Eurafrica was institutionalized and codified in European initiatives, especially in the Treaty of Rome.⁴⁰ The EEC considered the state of the colonies: there was a broad consensus when it was created that “colonial possessions of the member states would also be brought into the fold.”⁴¹ European constructions and perceptions of colonies oscillated between heritage from the past, and the “continental logic.”⁴² The results were identical: colonies were at the service of what “old Europe” needed them to be, whether that was in the context of the EEC or the OEEC.⁴³

Furthermore, Martin Rempe argues that the EEC acted as a stabilizing instrument, within which French-African relations came to be Europeanized, and ultimately resulted in the decolonization of French colonies in Africa.⁴⁴ While acknowledging the argument that France’s

³⁷ Schenk, “Decolonization and European economic integration.”

³⁸ Ibid, 461.

³⁹ Montarsolo, *L’Eurafrrique contrepoint de l’idée d’Europe*, 91; Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 75.

⁴⁰ Hansen and Jonsson, “Eurafrica Incognita,” 3.

⁴¹ Hansen and Jonsson, “A Statue to Nasser?” 14.

⁴² Montarsolo, *L’Eurafrrique contrepoint de l’idée d’Europe*, 91.

⁴³ Ibid; Schenk, “Decolonization and European economic integration,” 460-461.

⁴⁴ Rempe, “Decolonization by Europeanization?”

involvement in the EEC helped it preserve its relations with its colonies, he argues that this involvement also triggered processes that affected French-African relations, and that ultimately acted in favor of decolonization.⁴⁵ Although Rempe's argument is centered on the EEC, it highlights the interconnectedness of European integration and decolonization. This is echoed by other scholars: Giuliano Garavini explores how decolonization and its repercussions have affected European integration.⁴⁶ In his book, he goes beyond the explanation of European integration as a process under the influence of intra-European and transatlantic relations, and focuses on the "rise of the Third World" on the world stage, and its effects on European integration.⁴⁷

Identity was explored in the previous sub-chapter as a crucial aspect of decolonization. Peo Hansen called for studies of colonialism and notions of Europe and European identity to be approached as a "shared (Western) European experience which in many ways transgresses the particular national outlooks."⁴⁸ Yet, such approaches are lacking in the literature, and the history of European integration has often been researched separately from the history of colonialism.⁴⁹

There is therefore an intersection between the history of European integration and the history of colonialism.⁵⁰ There is a significant scholarship exploring the relations between colonialism and European states.⁵¹ Yet, the juncture between European integration and colonialism remains understudied.⁵²

c. European integration

European integration has long received attention from scholars, and it has often been a synonym to the ECSC and the EEC. Increasingly however is the take that integration goes beyond what is traditionally assumed, and that studies of integration should consider other factors that influenced the economic development and integration of Europe.⁵³ Scholars have researched European integration in relation with multiple processes, notably decolonization.⁵⁴ These were

⁴⁵ Rempe, "Decolonization by Europeanization?" 5.

⁴⁶ Garavini, *After Empires*.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Hansen, "European Integration," 485.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 486; Hansen and Jonson, "Another Colonialism," 445.

⁵⁰ Hansen and Jonsson, "Another Colonialism," 457.

⁵¹ Hansen, "European Integration," 485.

⁵² Hansen and Jonsson, "Another Colonialism," 442; Hansen and Jonsson, "Eurafrica Incognita," 3.

⁵³ Leimgruber and Schmelzer, "Introduction," 3.

⁵⁴ Rempe, "Decolonization by Europeanization?"; Schenk, "Decolonization and European economic integration."

not strictly differentiated from one another; instead, considering them as interconnected allows for an increasingly comprehensive understanding of both.⁵⁵

This has notably been argued by Schenk, whose main argument was presented earlier.⁵⁶ Peo Hansen's research similarly focuses on the nexus between European identity and European integration and decolonization, and emphasizes the interrelation of these processes.⁵⁷ This further demonstrates the interconnectedness of the processes relating to colonialism, decolonization and European integration.

Despite such findings supporting the case that European integration and decolonization were not only interrelated but also majorly influent on one another, this topic remains understudied.⁵⁸ What remains to be done to address this gap in the literature is what scholars have referred to as "deprovincializing" the usual conceptions of European integration, and to consider not only (Western) European states and their constructs (such as the ECSC and the EEC), but also other international organizations, actors, and processes.⁵⁹

When discussing European integration, "the Six" inevitably come forward: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Among Western European countries, colonial powers were Belgium, Britain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain. Britain, Portugal and Spain did not follow the Six's path to integration. The OEEC became a venue in which these countries, and more, could negotiate and make progress towards economic integration and development. These differences in membership are particularly relevant when considering the UK's position towards the Six. Several scholars, including Matthew Broad, Stephen George and Piers Ludlow, have characterized the UK as an "awkward partner" in what is typically conceived as the path to European integration, with an ambivalent position towards creating a common market and customs union with the Six.⁶⁰ The UK was not completely isolated from the Six: although it was not involved in supranational European developments, it maintained its role in other institutions, including the OEEC.⁶¹

The OEEC was one of many international initiatives created post-WWII that aimed to develop the economic cooperation and resilience of the continent, and to guarantee peace and

⁵⁵ Schenk, "Decolonization and European economic integration," 461.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Hansen, "European Integration."

⁵⁸ Ibid, 483.

⁵⁹ Broad and Kansikas, *European Integration Beyond Brussels*; Hansen "European integration;" Patel, "Provincializing European Union."

⁶⁰ Broad, "Ignoring Europe?"; George, "British policy in the European Community;" Ludlow, "The Historical Roots of the 'Awkward Partner' Narrative."

⁶¹ Ellison, *Threatening Europe*, 3.

security.⁶² To understand better the nexus between European integration and decolonization, it is necessary to consider the different processes and venues for European cooperation. The OEEC is one of these venues. Johnny Laursen emphasizes that the creation of the OEEC, which preceded the Schuman Plan, developed into the main framework for European cooperation in trade; by 1950, the OEEC had “not only established a complex organizational framework for intergovernmental co-operation, but also a set of substantial trade obligations for the member states.”⁶³

Beyond its economic role, it has been argued that the US had intended for the OEEC to become “the first stage in the political and economic integration of Western Europe, the embryonic hope for a Western European government.”⁶⁴ This did not happen; Leimgruber and Schmelzer argue that due to the governance nature of the OEEC, including the decisions by unanimity, Jean Monnet and his associates turned to the Schuman Plan to pursue integration.⁶⁵ The OEEC was an alternative, a competitor to the EEC; yet, it is often neglected and ignored in studies of European integration.⁶⁶

d. The OEEC

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Marshall Plan, Richard Griffiths edited a book that retraces the main developments in the history of the OEEC and OECD.⁶⁷ This publication aimed to contribute to research on European reconstruction and models of cooperation based on economic development and trade liberalization, contexts in which the OEEC is mostly researched.⁶⁸ Asbeek Brusse and Griffiths summarized the state of scholarly literature in 1997, and write:

Other [...] studies [...] tend to underplay the OEEC’s role in European economic and political life. To a large extent, this eclipse of the OEEC is the result of an old propaganda war with those who saw European co-operation in terms of the future

⁶² Dedman, *The Origins and Development of the European Union*; Ludlow, “European Integration and the Cold War.”

⁶³ Laursen, “Integration at cross-currents,” 149.

⁶⁴ Milward, in Leimgruber and Schmelzer, “From the Marshall Plan,” 30; see also Ludlow, “European Integration and the Cold War,” 181.

⁶⁵ Leimgruber and Schmelzer, “From the Marshall Plan,” 30; see also Ludlow, “European Integration and the Cold War,” 181.

⁶⁶ Leimgruber and Schmelzer, “From the Marshall Plan,” 43.

⁶⁷ Griffiths and Asbeek Brusse, “Exploring the OEEC’s past,” 4.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

political shape of Europe, and integration as a path or means towards European federalism. Hence, contemporary authors writing in the 1950s have highlighted and often glorified a small, visionary – and clearly visible – elite of European top politicians who considered supranationalism the sole answer to Europe’s political and economic problems. Their “explanations” of the historical process of integration usually start with the plans for closer economic co-operation developed during the Second World War, continue from there with the failed attempts, in 1947 and 1948, to create a customs union between the Marshall Plan countries and, having missed out other (OEEC) efforts in between, end with the success stories of the ECSC and the EEC. Consequently, for the period after 1950 there is much more literature on the integrative experiments within the ECSC, the EDC, EEC and Euratom than there is on the OEEC’s efforts.⁶⁹

The story of the OEEC has long been centered around its role within the Marshall Plan, but this is a limited view of its history. One of the primary arguments for this is that despite the end of Marshall aid in December 1941, the OEEC remained until it was reorganized in 1961. The range of topics it addressed evolved way beyond administering the aid, and came to encompass many areas, such as energy, trade liberalization and harmonization, transport, and manpower.⁷⁰ Furthermore, accounts of the history of the OEEC tend to be linear and emphasize a narrative of a success story.⁷¹ The history of the OEEC needs to be considered as one of reinvention of the organization itself after the end of its original purpose linked to the Marshall Plan.⁷² There is a lack of research and consideration for the role of the OEEC in the colonial period, as an economic institution in the Cold War context, and as a key player in defining the capitalist West.⁷³ One of the new issues addressed by the OEEC was that of the overseas territories of its member-states.

Matthias Schmelzer has focused on the relations between colonial donor countries, development aid, and the OECD.⁷⁴ Although he focuses on the OECD, he argues that prior to the shift to the OECD, the OEEC became active in development economics and in financial and technical assistance.⁷⁵ Yet, the OEEC’s relations with European colonies were not limited to administering development aid. As Leimgruber and Schmelzer argue, “[...] it was within and

⁶⁹ Griffiths and Asbeek Brusse, “Exploring the OEEC’s past,” 17.

⁷⁰ Leimgruber and Schmelzer, “Introduction,” 2-4.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 5.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

⁷⁴ Schmelzer, “A club of the rich to help the poor?”

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 174.

through the OECD that Western capitalist countries discussed their economic policies both in the Cold War setting and vis-à-vis the emerging power-bloc of decolonizing countries in the Global South.”⁷⁶ For the OEEC, the colonies of its members were part of the organization.⁷⁷ The OEEC became a platform for Western European colonial powers to coordinate their interests, trade issues and colonialist developments within a single venue.⁷⁸

Furthermore, scholars have increasingly argued that the ERP has proven to be importantly influential in “thinking about the ‘development’ of the postcolonial world.”⁷⁹ During and after the ERP, the OEEC has become a “promoter of the industrialized Western countries in the Cold War and post-colonial setting, and of capitalist development more generally.”⁸⁰ As Leimgruber and Schmelzer phrase it, it was a “flexible tool” that member-states could mobilize.⁸¹ Despite such findings, scholarly literature on the OEEC remains sparse,⁸² and a detailed discussion on the role the OEEC played within European integration and decolonization remains to be undertaken.

⁷⁶ Leimgruber and Schmelzer, “Introduction,” 1.

⁷⁷ Leimgruber and Schmelzer, “From the Marshall Plan,” 32.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Schmelzer, “A club of the rich to help the poor?” 173.

⁸⁰ Leimgruber and Schmelzer, “Introduction,” 2.

⁸¹ Ibid, 6.

⁸² Schmelzer, “A club of the rich to help the poor?” 10.

3. Research Design

This thesis is based on a qualitative historical research. It primarily draws on archival documents, and includes secondary sources. It is an empirical historiography, which is based on a descriptive history model and relies on recorded events, documents and facts, and allows for interpretation of these.⁸³ These are presented both chronologically and topically in the analysis chapters.

a. Methodology

i. Method of data collection

This thesis is primarily based on archival material, supplemented by secondary sources. The main archival collection consulted is the OEEC's, accessible through the Historical Archives of the European Union's website.⁸⁴ The data collection followed several phases.

The first phase was to search the database using relevant key-words (see below). It soon appeared that this would not locate every single document relating to the key-words within the OEEC holding. To avoid missing any information and to avoid selection bias, every folder and every document within these folders were reviewed.⁸⁵

The second phase was to review the documents. The order this was done in was based on the relevance of the folder and of the material included, assessed through the titles and the abstracts of the archival material. What seemed a priori more relevant was addressed first.

From then, a key-word search was conducted to first assess the relevance of each document. The first step was to ensure that the search engine would find result, and this was tested by using key-words present in the document. The key-words used follow from the focus of this research and the literature review. The archival collection consists of documents written in French and English, so this was accounted for in the choice of key words, which were: "oversea/s," "outr-mer," "territory/ies," "territoire/s," "colony/ies," "colonie/s," "colonial," "province," "integration." This also ensured that related words, such as "decoloni[s/z]ation," would also come up. When the relevance of a document was established, based on the presence

⁸³ Danto, *Historical Research*, 12-13.

⁸⁴ Historical Archives of the European Union, "Organisation for European Economic Cooperation."

⁸⁵ King, Keohane and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*, 128-139.

of these key-words and on the relevance of a topic indicated by other information, it was selected.

The rationale for this key-word search comes from the topic of this research, which focuses on the nexus of integration and the question of overseas territories. Every archival document contains a multitude of different documents, and without looking at each individually, it would have been complex to find relevant information, which could be in the form of a statement within the minutes of a meeting, a report, a confidential letter... Hence the key-word search: to first locate the relevant information, and to then read and assess the document.

ii. Method of data analysis

The method used is a document analysis. This allows for a “systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents,” and requires an analysis and interpretation of the data to “elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge.”⁸⁶ This choice is justified by the nature of the research, which is to develop an understanding of the role of the OEEC towards overseas territories, based on the analysis of primary documents from this organization.

The selection and analysis of the documents were based on the following criteria. Firstly, the authenticity of the document, which relates to the author of the document and its origins.⁸⁷ This was ensured through the location of the documents – the archives – and by the information on each document. However, there is no way to verify whether the stated authors were actually the ones who created it. Secondly, credibility ensures the “factual accuracy of reports” and whether the documents report the true feelings of the author.⁸⁸ The first factor can be contrasted with other documents. The second can only be assumed, especially depending on the context where the document comes from. This collection is mostly composed of official documents, and they are likely to have been influenced by the context in which they were produced: minutes of meetings were easily accessible and therefore less personal, whereas confidential letters between two people may reflect feelings more. Finally, representativeness: this thesis focuses on overseas territories, but archives from the OEEC are unlikely to include their point of view. This is a limitation of the research, which is discussed in another sub-chapter.

⁸⁶ Bowen, “Document Analysis,” 27.

⁸⁷ Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 545.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 545-546.

For the selection and analysis, when a document was considered relevant, themes were identified. Similarly to the selection of key-words, the themes were identified based on the focus of this research: the objectives of the organization; administrative aspects; reconstruction (focus on Europe / overseas); economic aid / assistance; focus on overseas territories / on the Overseas Territories Committee; opinions; trade; Free Trade Area. Not every document reviewed was included in this thesis: rather, it is a synthesis of the most relevant information to this research.

As an additional note, the referencing of the OEEC archival documents used in this paper is done by referring to the name of the document as it is referenced in the archives, and including the page number of the PDF file of that document, which is the standard format of the archival records. This was done to ensure easy access to the original document.

b. Reliability

This sub-chapter addresses concerns regarding the validity, reliability, transparency and replicability of this research.

Alan Bryman defines validity as depending on whether there is a good match between the researcher's observations and the ideas they develop.⁸⁹ Relevant concepts were presented in the literature review; the analysis chapters include the connections between the information gained from the archival documents, and the concepts and arguments brought forward by the thesis. Because the arguments and hypotheses developed are based on the researcher's interpretations, they may differ from another researcher's study following the same criteria as this one. The inclusion of information from the primary documents strengthens the reliability of these arguments and hypotheses, because they are verifiable.

Because not all documents selected were included in this thesis, there is an inherent selective bias to this research; this is characteristic of qualitative research.⁹⁰ To limit this selection bias, the research process was thoroughly described and presented in this chapter. This also ensures the transparency and replicability of the research.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 390.

⁹⁰ Toshkov, *Research Design*, 249.

⁹¹ Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 390.

c. Limitations

This research mainly relies on archival documents. The ones consulted were digitalized versions. This creates a limitation in itself: it may be that not all documents were digitalized, and therefore, some may be lacking from the collection available online. It also solely draws on declassified documents.

A second limitation is the reliance on archives from the OEEC collection. This thesis would have benefitted from including different archival records. This is in part remedied by the nature of the collection: most records include documents addressed to the OEEC, press cuttings, and relevant documents from other organizations. It was also addressed through the search for additional information and documents where relevant, both from primary and secondary sources.

A third limitation comes from the method of data collection. It was conducted by keyword searches through each document: therefore, it is possible that the search engine did not find matching results, even though these were present. This could for example be due to the state of the scanned document. To address this, tests were conducted by using key-words present on a given page and assessing whether the search engine found matches.

Finally, this thesis has a Western-centric bias, from its focus on Western powers and on the OEEC, and from the origin of the documents used.

4. The Management of Colonies? The Overseas Territories Committee

Within the OEEC, a special committee for overseas territories (OTs) was created. The existence of this specific committee for overseas territories is of primary interest to this thesis. This chapter analyzes several aspects of the OTC: its mandate and functioning, its actions, its efficiency, and ultimately, its limitations.

The creation of the Overseas Territories Committee stemmed from a decision from the Executive Committee to create a Working Group composed of representatives of Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Portugal and the UK.⁹² This Working Group was created in October 1948, and was then transformed into the OTC in March 1949 by decision of the Council.⁹³

The original goal of the OTC was aligned with Article 2 of the Convention for European Economic Cooperation: to promote “with vigor” the development of production and the utilization of resources.⁹⁴ These resources included not only those comprised within the member-states of the OEEC, but also in their OTs. These objectives were aligned with the realization of the joint recovery program as embedded in the creation of the OEEC.⁹⁵ The primary goal of the Committee was to examine the means to accomplish these objectives. The permanent members of the OTC were those who had overseas responsibilities: Belgium, France, Italy,⁹⁶ the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain (since its accession to the OEEC in 1959) and the UK. Other OEEC members that were not represented could participate in the deliberations of the OTC that directly affected their interests.⁹⁷

The OTC’s original mandate was to “proceed to any study regarding the economic and social development of overseas territories,” which could be entrusted by the Council or following any of its decisions.⁹⁸ The majority of the OTC’s work was to study plans for development, which included investments, the organization of agricultural production, agricultural products, economic development, industries, energy, finance, immigration, and trade.⁹⁹ It also had to determine the share of OTs in the realization of a viable economy by 1952-1953 for both Europe and its dependent territories, and the means to increase the production of OTs to attain the objectives set by the European Recovery Program.¹⁰⁰ The OTC’s

⁹² OEEC-0268, 3.

⁹³ OEEC-0268, 3, through Decision C(49)37 (Final).

⁹⁴ “Convention for European Economic Cooperation,” Article 2.

⁹⁵ OEEC-0268, 3.

⁹⁶ In 1950, Somaliland came under Italian administration.

⁹⁷ OEEC-0268, 3.

⁹⁸ OEEC-0268, 4.

⁹⁹ OEEC-0268, 4, 9-11.

¹⁰⁰ OEEC-0268, 9.

mandate thus encompassed a study for the developments of OTs, reporting on the means of development and production, and reporting on what had been accomplished by the countries represented in the Committee.¹⁰¹ Beyond a study committee, a document clearly stated that the OTC acted as a “liaison between the politics of the OEEC and that of the metropolitan governments responsible of the [OTs].”¹⁰²

The main source of information on the OTC is an archival record comprising multiple documents either created by or addressed to the OTC.¹⁰³ Within it, one document emphasizes the need for private investments in the development of overseas territories. This is a report from September 1952 presented by Jacques Albert on behalf of an expert group mandated by the OTC to study private investments in OTs. It was composed of representatives of financial circles interested in investments in OTs. Due to its nature, it may not fully reflect the position of the OTC; furthermore, there is no detail as to whom was actually involved in the research and production of this report. Yet, it gives insights into what the expert group expected to be relevant to the OTC and its areas of activity, and what was expected of it. This is highlighted by a direct demand of the group for the OTC to take into consideration their demands.¹⁰⁴ This document forms the majority of this archival record, and gives important insights on the OTC’s plans, actions and perceptions.

In that document, investments were defined as an export of capitals and financial investments and placements.¹⁰⁵ The document specified three main categories of investments: non-lucrative (administrative fees, education, public health...); primary investments (infrastructure, economic development...); productive investments (agriculture, forests, mining...).¹⁰⁶ Public investments related to the first two types, and private investments include the second and the third type.¹⁰⁷ Both private and public investments were considered crucial to the development of OTs and to primary investments.¹⁰⁸ The responsibility to attract private investments was declared to belong to both the overseas territories and their metropolitan country.¹⁰⁹ The involvement and “effort”¹¹⁰ of European states in this was clearly stated. The

¹⁰¹ OEEC-0268, 9.

¹⁰² OEEC-0268, 74.

¹⁰³ OEEC-0268.

¹⁰⁴ OEEC-0268, 49-51.

¹⁰⁵ OEEC-0268, 15.

¹⁰⁶ OEEC-0268, 16.

¹⁰⁷ OEEC-0268, 16.

¹⁰⁸ OEEC-0268, 17.

¹⁰⁹ OEEC-0268, 24.

¹¹⁰ OEEC-0268, 24.

first justification for this stems from the need for creditors and debtors to realize the importance of investments in OTs for “international economic development.”¹¹¹

Then came a second justification: reassuring the investors and addressing their concerns to make sure that investments in OTs would be worthwhile.¹¹² The basic principle for this was the “respect for the presence of European states in overseas territories.”¹¹³ Whereas one primary goal of the OTC was to be a study Committee, this highlights the role it played in reinforcing the status of European states within their overseas territories, and how it contributed to embedding certain conditions for aid and development within an organization and a framework directly serving European interests. It is stated that the “veritable role” of European states was to “arbitrate and protect.”¹¹⁴ The presence of European states in the OTs was justified through various means: it was framed as necessary to guarantee public order and to resolve issues of risks for investors, which would ultimately benefit the OTs.¹¹⁵

There were a few conditions for private investments in OTs: among them, investors had to demonstrate the contribution of their investments to the economic development of OTs. Yet, there was a loophole: this contribution could be in an “indirect way” or on the long term.¹¹⁶ This loophole is further justified by the fact that the report was created by interested investors, who had clear interests in such loose definitions of “contribution.” Yet, there were perceptions that gains going back to investors through the use of overseas capital was “immoral;” this was denied on the basis that they contributed to the development of OTs, and therefore could get benefits out of it.¹¹⁷ Metropolitan governments were responsible for changing these perceptions and any related behavior.¹¹⁸ “Issues of education and persuasion” were deemed as the cause and the solution to such perceptions, which could only be solved by a “supplementary effort” from overseas populations to help themselves and “increase their level of existence.”¹¹⁹ These terms evoke condescendence and superiority between colonial powers and private investors on one hand, and overseas peoples on the other, and relate to the role of imperialism as a type of relation between the colonizer and the colonized.

¹¹¹ OEEC-0268, 24.

¹¹² OEEC-0268, 24.

¹¹³ OEEC-0268, 25.

¹¹⁴ OEEC-0268, 48.

¹¹⁵ OEEC-0268, 25.

¹¹⁶ OEEC-0268, 25.

¹¹⁷ OEEC-0268, 26.

¹¹⁸ OEEC-0268, 26.

¹¹⁹ OEEC-0268, 26.

The OTC's views of OTs were that local public funds and other resources were “necessarily limited,” and therefore justified foreign investments.¹²⁰ Furthermore, investments of capitals were defined as a “necessary condition for the development [of OTs].”¹²¹ Investments were justified through potential benefits not only for Europe, but also for the “living conditions of poor peoples” overseas.¹²² Despite such presupposed local limitations, the “African continent” offered an “immensity and a variety of possibilities,” not for local populations to develop, but for foreign investments, whether they be from private actors or mainland states.¹²³ This framing echoes discussions of neocolonialism and imperialism: that Africa was there for other states and actors to exploit, under the pretense that it would benefit local populations, and that they therefore should not oppose such actions.

In turn, the guaranteed compensation and outcome was peace, ensured through common interests; the reasoning was that spillovers from the “developed countries’ prosperity” would contribute to that of overseas territories, which would justify foreign aid.¹²⁴ This aid was then to ensure the independence of internal affairs of overseas territories.¹²⁵ However, studies of decolonization have shown that such financial involvement of foreign actors into internal affairs can turn into leverage for certain socio-political conditions to be established in these territories.¹²⁶ It also reinforces conditionality, which is an element explored throughout this thesis. This is apparent in the same document: “if [...] the support of the order established by the [metropolitan governments], of the technical expertise and of European administration were to disappear from these countries, these would lose the benefits of their own progress [...]”¹²⁷ The document also mentions that certain sectors, for example the production and distribution of electricity and water could be entrusted to foreign actors.¹²⁸ Such utilities would therefore be dependent on foreign actors, which could be used as leverage to pursue their own interests.

Such interpretations of the involvement of metropolitan states were also present in 1952. The document refutes a “subversive idea” then-currently spreading: that the “establishment of companies and modern techniques” constitutes a “slavery-like exploitation of local populations.”¹²⁹ The counter-argument to it is that despite a certain autonomy of the overseas

¹²⁰ OEEC-0268, 14.

¹²¹ OEEC-0268, 19.

¹²² OEEC-0268, 14.

¹²³ OEEC-0268, 14.

¹²⁴ OEEC-0268, 14.

¹²⁵ OEEC-0268, 14.

¹²⁶ Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 79.

¹²⁷ OEEC-0268, 19.

¹²⁸ OEEC-0268, 45.

¹²⁹ OEEC-0268, 18.

territories, they “remain constitutionally connected to a metropolitan country.”¹³⁰ Any action that may have justified the previous comment regarding the exploitation of OTs is dismissed under the statement that what has been done cannot be undone, and that the nations that are responsible for these territories would not undo it.¹³¹ Later on in that same document it is mentioned that “a lot of Africans now have the sentiment that their security is linked to the European power who has freed them from tyrannies and from domestic slavery, and who, additionally, is not linked to any system of domination.”¹³² This highlights the importance of language, framing and symbolism in the study of international relations, and in archival research. Documents do not necessarily reveal the intentions motivating the ones who produced it. Yet, these elements give insight into perceptions and opinions, which improve our understanding of events and decisions.¹³³ This document states that overseas territories have “opened to civilization fairly recently.”¹³⁴ The prosperity of these countries, which is attributed to this “opening,” have increased rapidly – in fact, two factors supporting these claims are listed: “Africans are more numerous and better nourished.”¹³⁵ These phrasings have strong implications. The “opening to civilization” is in reality an opening to the West, and refers to Western ways of organizing social, political and economic factors, brought about by the colonialism and neocolonialism. This is emphasized by other perceived benefits for the OTs: they now “know calm and order.”¹³⁶ By associating prosperity and security to the opening to European colonial powers, and especially through the OEEC and the OTC, it emphasizes and re-establishes that these improved conditions come from Europe’s supposedly benevolent doing and involvement. It links growth and prosperity to the West and to the colonial powers, which not only implies a superiority of the colonizer over the colonized, or between the developed and developing, but also a pre-condition for growth. It also has further repercussions: it can be supposed that this lays the ground for justification of further European policies and actions justified by the presumed benefits of the populations.

So far, the OTC’s mandate, actions and perceptions were explored. The OTC seems to have had an important role towards overseas territories; yet, its efficiency remains to be assessed. A first issue impeding on the OTC’s efficiency was its status within the OEEC; it was not at a ministerial level, which did not allow it any functional independence within the

¹³⁰ OEEC-0268, 18.

¹³¹ OEEC-0268, 18.

¹³² OEEC-0268, 19.

¹³³ Bowen, “Document Analysis,” 27.

¹³⁴ OEEC-0268, 18.

¹³⁵ OEEC-0268, 18.

¹³⁶ OEEC-0268, 18.

OEEC.¹³⁷ Furthermore, diverging opinions within the Committee meant that few proposals between 1949 and 1959 resulted in significant change.¹³⁸

Secondly, the staff were high-ranking officials and civil servants from the overseas territories Ministries of the member-states, and their primary responsibility was to ensure the social and economic development of OTs, much like the OTC itself.¹³⁹ They acted as administrators and government representatives, not as technicians nor independent experts; this proved to be an important difficulty for the OTC.¹⁴⁰ Because of their functions, they were not able to conceive the issues encountered beyond the scope of their responsibilities.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, this document further specifies:

Thus, the [OTC] has long feared that the overseas territories were only involved by the [OEEC] [...] at the discretion of Europe's needs without any consideration of the own interests of the overseas territories.¹⁴²

The OTC solely consisted of European colonial powers, whose interests were represented by high officials from Ministries directly in charge of overseas territories. The influence of any other actor was to be considered suspiciously, while the Committee's actions supposedly did not reflect European interests and only had the best interest of overseas territories in mind, despite what has been explored previously.

Furthermore, it was rare for other high officials of the OEEC to participate in the OTC's meetings, which is also what limited to OTC's capacity to contribute to solving issues the OEEC was facing.¹⁴³ There were also some attempts by OTC members to converge all matters relating to overseas territories within the OTC, here again by fear that officials with no overseas territory responsibilities would interfere.¹⁴⁴ This did not succeed; matters regarding OTs were therefore open to influences that the OTC wanted to avoid from its inception.

Finally, there were mixed feelings regarding the efficiency of the OTC. A note from then-Secretary-General René Sergent to Edmond Lucas deems that some endeavors of the OTC were successes, and others were failures.¹⁴⁵ These shortcomings were attributed to difficulties

¹³⁷ OEEC-0268, 6.

¹³⁸ OEEC-0268, 6.

¹³⁹ OEEC-0268, 5.

¹⁴⁰ OEEC-0268, 5; OEEC-0240, 7; OEEC-0250, 52.

¹⁴¹ OEEC-0268, 5.

¹⁴² OEEC-0268, 5.

¹⁴³ OEEC-0268, 5.

¹⁴⁴ OEEC-0268, 6.

¹⁴⁵ OEEC-0268, 5.

of cooperation between the OTC and other bodies of the OEEC.¹⁴⁶ A 1957 memorandum from Mr. Cahan, then-Deputy Secretary General to Mr. Sergent reveals that he thought the OTC was “quite useful.”¹⁴⁷ However, in another archival material revealing the perception of the OTC by an official working in another committee, Mr. Jacomet states that his feelings are “rather negative” towards the OTC, mostly because it “rarely touches on essential policy issues” and that the studies it produces are of “limited interest.”¹⁴⁸ This highlights important differences in the perception of the OTC. Ultimately, it was decided that the OTC should not be kept during the reorganization to the OECD.¹⁴⁹

In the context of ongoing collaboration and cooperation in Europe, and in light of what was discussed, there are significant differences between what the OTC set out to achieve, and what was within its scope and influence. The OTC can be understood as an attempt to create a platform to organize Western European powers’ relations with their colonies and overseas territories. This chapter demonstrated that an important benefit gained from working through the OTC was not the achievement of an utopia for overseas territories, but rather the pursuit of interests of the mainland member-states, through actions and policies guaranteeing the reconstruction and growth of Europe. Yet, because the reconstruction and integration of Europe involved many actors, interests and venues, the attempts of a relatively small and isolated committee to administer all things overseas was ambitious. Many solutions regarding issues facing the OTs and explored in this chapter laid beyond the scope of the OTC. Therefore, another facet of the answer comes from assessing the role of the OEEC at large, beyond the OTC; this is what the next chapter explores.

¹⁴⁶ OEEC-0268, 5.

¹⁴⁷ OEEC-0203, 97.

¹⁴⁸ OEEC-0256, 27.

¹⁴⁹ OEEC-0430, 38, 61.

5. Beyond the Overseas Territories Committee: The Question of the Overseas Territories in the OEEC

The previous chapter explored the way in which OTs were managed and dealt with within the OTC. It was argued that the OTC's efficiency was limited, due to a number of factors. One of these was the inability for the OTC to become a forum for all-things overseas. The OEEC was composed of various committees, and these inevitably brought forward the discussion of OTs through different foci. This chapter explores how the OEEC dealt with the question of OTs, and shows that it was a central question to the work of the organization.

Within the OEEC, the OTs were constructed, and considered, as a resource for Europe. This was apparent through the policies and focus of the OEEC, which are addressed throughout this chapter. It was also clearly specified: a 1954 report of Working Party No. 5 of the Council on Selective Expansion, mandated by the Council, stated that member-states enjoyed "a privileged position" in the dependent OTs and the non-member sterling area.¹⁵⁰ The OTs were considered "great opportunities" for the member-states, especially in the context of trade.¹⁵¹ They proved to be one of the first regions towards which the OEEC members could expand trade.¹⁵² Yet, their economic development depended on their metropolitan governments' programs: infrastructure development was the basis for the expansion of trade. This development itself relied on the colonial powers, and their interests were partly represented in the OTC.¹⁵³ Still, studies and decisions relating to OTs were not specific to the OTC: anything beyond the scope of what was presented in the previous chapter was studied by joint committees or groups. This was for example the case for the study on the expansion of trade, mandated by the Council to the Working Party No. 5, which itself was in consultation with the OTC and other Technical Committees.¹⁵⁴

Within the OTs of the member-states, there was a special focus on African colonies. It was echoed in various documents of the OEEC: it was chosen as the first overseas region to be studied within the OTC.¹⁵⁵ A 1951 confidential paper distributed among others to the Secretary General and the Counsellors in Economic and Trade and Finance Committees symbolically recalls the wartime experience: in that context, it is stated that the development of under-

¹⁵⁰ OEEC-0255, 46.

¹⁵¹ OEEC-0255, 63.

¹⁵² OEEC-0255, 63.

¹⁵³ OEEC-0255, 63.

¹⁵⁴ OEEC-0255, 78.

¹⁵⁵ OEEC-0268, 4.

developed areas,¹⁵⁶ which specifically included the OTs, had to be done through exports from “the Western World” in the form of payment.¹⁵⁷ This was essential to the supply of raw materials to the West, including its “armament effort.”¹⁵⁸ Africa was not only considered as crucial to the economic development of Europe – it was necessary for the defense of Europe.¹⁵⁹ Therefore, the question of the OTs went beyond economic or technical concerns: it was also a political question.¹⁶⁰

Since its creation, one of the objectives of the OEEC was to achieve a greater level of freedom in external trade, primarily to encourage production and a return to stability, as well as an improvement of the members’ balance of payments.¹⁶¹ The Code of Liberalization addressed these objectives. It also impacted trade with OTs: all measures of trade liberalization taken since 1949 by a member-state had to be applied automatically to imports from other states and to their OTs.¹⁶² It was also recommended by the OEEC that member-states with OTs investigate the application of the same measures of liberalization to OTs as they did to their own imports.¹⁶³ The reality was different: different levels of trade liberalization were applied in OTs.¹⁶⁴

European Payments Union (EPU) commitments obliged member-states to liberalize at least 75% of total imports from member-states and their OTs, calculated on the basis of a reference year.¹⁶⁵ Yet, not all members were able to meet their targets. Furthermore, trade liberalization in the OTs was a contentious topic, and did not occur simultaneously with liberalization in the mainland.¹⁶⁶ International events, such as the Korean war, were used as justification: their impact on the balance of payments of certain member-states, especially Germany, the UK and France, had led to the withdrawal of liberalization measures, and prevented further progress.¹⁶⁷ France was facing issues regarding trade liberalization in its OTs.¹⁶⁸ It was undergoing policy changes in the Union Française, moving from state

¹⁵⁶ It is important to note that “under-developed areas” did not only refer to OTs, but also to OEEC member-states and other regions. The OTs were however included in this nomination. In this paper, “under-developed areas” and “OTs” are used according to this definition.

¹⁵⁷ OEEC-0242, 7-8.

¹⁵⁸ OEEC-0242, 7.

¹⁵⁹ OEEC-0268, 44.

¹⁶⁰ OEEC-0204, 184-185; OEEC-0393, 43; OEEC-0445, 257.

¹⁶¹ OEEC, “Free Trade Area - Working Party No. 21 of the Council.”

¹⁶² OEEC-0337, 681.

¹⁶³ OEEC-0337, 681.

¹⁶⁴ OEEC-0337, 681.

¹⁶⁵ OEEC-0501, 47.

¹⁶⁶ OEEC-0502, 132-133; OEEC-0350, 204.

¹⁶⁷ OEEC-0501, 47.

¹⁶⁸ OEEC-0445, 48-49.

protectionism to new economic arrangements of economic and commercial relations; it repeatedly stated that it could not commit to trade liberalization in the OTs until the new status had been implemented.¹⁶⁹ Solutions were researched by a Joint Committee of the Steering Board for Trade and the OTC; yet, progress was slow.¹⁷⁰ The archives of this Joint Committee show an important involvement from member-states with no overseas responsibilities. In 1954, the Delegate of Norway underlines that these issues were not only of concern to the powers with OTs, but also to those who did not.¹⁷¹ This contrasts with the OTC's objective to limit the influence of other member-states in OTs affairs.

In 1956 the Spaak Report was presented to the Six, and argued that sectoral integration following the likes of the ECSC would be difficult, and that it would be more beneficial to focus on eliminating trade barriers through the creation of a customs union.¹⁷² The OEEC was involved in certain questions regarding the Customs Union of the Six, through the examination of the relations between the Six and the other non-participating OEEC member-states and the elimination of tariffs and quantitative restrictions within the Customs Union.¹⁷³ Before the creation of the EEC, the UK submitted a proposal, known as Plan G, to the OEEC: to study the possibilities for association between the Six and other OEEC members within a Free Trade Area.¹⁷⁴ It would associate the Customs Union of the Six with the OEEC members, on a multilateral basis.¹⁷⁵ The proposal included the elimination of trade barriers between member-states, while retaining the right to establish their own customs duties and trade policies with third countries.¹⁷⁶ It also ensured the UK would retain its preferential policies and agreements within the Commonwealth, and it was to benefit all other colonial powers of the OEEC.¹⁷⁷

This positions the OEEC as a bridge between the Europe of the Six and other states. An OEEC document from 1953 highlights this special role for the OEEC: it stated that the OTs were part of a complex system, and the coordination of the OTs economies ultimately depended on their metropolitan states, and on the OEEC, where the specific issues of the OTs could be confronted with the issues of Europe.¹⁷⁸ The OEEC became a platform through which the

¹⁶⁹ OEEC-0393, 408; OEEC-0445, 46, 74-75.

¹⁷⁰ OEEC-0445, 250-255.

¹⁷¹ OEEC-0445, 254.

¹⁷² van Meurs, et al., *The Unfinished History*, 41.

¹⁷³ OEEC-0504.

¹⁷⁴ Schenk, "Decolonization and European economic integration."

¹⁷⁵ OEEC, "Free Trade Area - Working Party No. 21 of the Council."

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Schenk, "Decolonization and European economic integration," 453.

¹⁷⁸ OEEC-0268, 75; OEEC-0204, 189; OEEC-0205, 5; OEEC-0367, 430.

colonial states managed their OTs, and where the questions of the OTs and Europe were addressed jointly.

Establishing the FTA was not guaranteed; ultimately, the negotiations broke down and the project stopped in 1958. Before that however, the OEEC Inter-governmental Committee, known as the Maudling Committee, was mandated to study the establishment of the FTA. It worked with three Working Parties (No. 21, 22 and 23), respectively in charge of general economic matters, agriculture, and financial assistance to less developed countries.¹⁷⁹ There were various issues to account for in the establishment of the FTA;¹⁸⁰ among these was the questions of the OTs, and whether the rights and obligations of the FTA should be applied to them, and to other states linked to an OEEC member through specific arrangements.¹⁸¹ This was also a critical question within the Six' negotiations for a Customs Union, and discussions were held over how to integrate the status of OTs through both the Customs Union and the FTA.¹⁸²

The question of the association of OTs in the FTA remained unanswered for long. However, a criterion emerged in 1958: “[...] any decision on this subject must comply with the wishes of the inhabitants of these territories and [...] their association with the [FTA] must be based on the principle of a co-operation to which they have freely consented.”¹⁸³ In terms of chronology, this criterion was agreed to after two years; yet, it is interesting to keep in mind to retrospectively assess how the question of the OTs was approached within the FTA negotiations.

On the Six's side, similar conclusions had been drawn: the Treaty of Rome included “the association of the overseas countries and territories in order to increase trade and to promote jointly economic and social development.”¹⁸⁴ It included the non-European countries and territories with special relations with Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and interestingly, the UK, although it was not a signatory of the Treaty of Rome.¹⁸⁵ Following the Treaty of Rome, a Development Fund for Overseas Territories was created.¹⁸⁶ Although further discussion of the Fund is outside the scope of this study, it emphasizes the importance of the OTs in different venues of European integration.

¹⁷⁹ OEEC, “Inter-Governmental Committee on the Establishment of a European Free Trade Area.”

¹⁸⁰ OEEC-0337, 22.

¹⁸¹ OEEC-0337, 22; OEEC-0504, 443-444.

¹⁸² OEEC-0338, 49; OEEC-0504, 497.

¹⁸³ OEEC-0395, 266; OEEC-0512, 123.

¹⁸⁴ “Treaty of Rome,” Article 3; *Ibid*, Part Four.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, Article 131.

¹⁸⁶ OEEC-0395, 33.

The decision made through the Treaty of Rome regarding OTs proved problematic within the OEEC: questions on how to reconcile the Customs Union and the FTA became more present.¹⁸⁷ There were also significant issues regarding the inclusion of French and British territories.¹⁸⁸ First, there was the case of France. During the negotiations on the FTA, it was deeply involved in the Algerian war. A stable France was of interest to the creation of the FTA, and was highlighted within the OEEC by the rapporteur of the Council of Europe.¹⁸⁹ Yet, that was not the case: in 1955, France enunciated “difficult political conditions” that impacted the resolution of economic issues.¹⁹⁰ Furthermore, France’s participation in the FTA negotiations depended on whether it would get the same benefits as it hoped to obtain in Brussels, through the Six’s negotiations.¹⁹¹ When the Treaty of Rome was signed, France “abandoned [...] its own preference vis-à-vis its Overseas Territories.”¹⁹² The Economic Committee established that this would favor the UK, since it would benefit from the preferential agreements within the Commonwealth, and would also enjoy free trade towards EEC members.¹⁹³ If the OTs of OEEC members were to be excluded from the FTA, they would be in a disadvantageous position compared to the Commonwealth.¹⁹⁴ The Economic Committee, in February 1957, was of the opinion that “from a purely economic standpoint,” the proposed FTA would entail grave risks for the French economy, and that it would jeopardize the development of the EEC; therefore, it was not acceptable in this state and at that time.¹⁹⁵ One of the main arguments advanced was that the FTA would abolish customs tariffs from OEEC members, and the economic burden would be on France without any compensation: it was referred to as a “sacrifice made by France” by the French Patronat (Employers’ Association).¹⁹⁶ Discussions on the FTA continued, despite internal divisions regarding the FTA. In the words of Mr. Sergent, France was complaining about the preference given by the UK to Commonwealth products, and the UK was complaining about the preference given by the Six to French and Belgian overseas territories.¹⁹⁷

Secondly, there was the case of the Commonwealth. A 1957 memorandum from Mr. Cahan to Mr. Sergent highlights that the UK and Portugal were “press[ing] for the exclusion of

¹⁸⁷ OEEC-0205, 5, 115.

¹⁸⁸ OEEC-0208, 27.

¹⁸⁹ OEEC-0393, 408.

¹⁹⁰ OEEC-0445, 87.

¹⁹¹ OEEC-0203, 14.

¹⁹² OEEC-0206, 39.

¹⁹³ OEEC-0206, 39.

¹⁹⁴ OEEC-0206, 41.

¹⁹⁵ OEEC-0206, 43.

¹⁹⁶ OEEC-0208, 151.

¹⁹⁷ OEEC-0206, 301.

Colonies from the [FTA].”¹⁹⁸ For Portugal, the reasoning was that preference was given to protecting markets for their own exporters.¹⁹⁹ For the UK, this decision was taken despite the fact that a “large number of their Colonies [...] [were] extremely anxious to be included in the [FTA].”²⁰⁰ This shows that despite the willingness and consent of the OTs, the decision from the mainland overrode the OTs’ preferences. It was justified through the changing nature and status of OTs, which were colonies one day, and could be dominions tomorrow, which would lead to them being excluded from the FTA.²⁰¹ Another justification was brought forward by Mr. Cahan in another memorandum to Mr. Sergent, in which he states that the UK might be reticent to “give their European competitors equality of access to the markets of the Colonies.”²⁰² In a speech from April 1958, Gladwyn Jebb, previously the acting Secretary-General of the UN, legitimized the position of the UK, which had “nothing to with old-fashioned British insularity.”²⁰³ He stated that the preference of the UK to safeguard the position of the Commonwealth was because 70% of its trade was with states outside Europe, and 50% with the Commonwealth, which were higher percentages than any other Western European countries – France’s was of 22% with its own OTs.²⁰⁴ He argued that the Zone Sterling was of “immense value to world trade,” and benefitted many, including France, notably through the transferability of the currency, and the free access to raw materials.²⁰⁵ He framed discussions on the association between the Six and other European states as “not a matter in which one Commonwealth country – and that is what the UK is – can speak.”²⁰⁶ This construction of the UK simply as a part of the larger Commonwealth is noteworthy, emphasizing the decisional powers of each Commonwealth state. This contrasts with other arguments advanced by the UK that were previously presented.

These cases show that the construction of the relations between the metropolitan states and their OTs varied between a hierarchical position towards their OTs, and being an inherent and equal part of the larger systems, whether it was the Union Française, the Commonwealth, or the Portuguese colonial system.²⁰⁷ This was apparent through the varied justifications used to defend their interests. Furthermore, developments overseas, especially regarding

¹⁹⁸ OEEC-0203, 97.

¹⁹⁹ OEEC-0203, 97.

²⁰⁰ OEEC-0203, 97.

²⁰¹ OEEC-0203, 97, 151.

²⁰² OEEC-0203, 151.

²⁰³ OEEC-0208, 116.

²⁰⁴ OEEC-0208, 117.

²⁰⁵ OEEC-0208, 117-118.

²⁰⁶ OEEC-0208, 118.

²⁰⁷ OEEC-0208, 118; OEEC-0336, 516; OEEC-0479, 89-95.

decolonization and neocolonial relations between (former) colonies and the mainland, had far-reaching consequences on European economic integration.²⁰⁸ This causal relation can be established the other way around: economic integration was hindered by the preferences of colonial powers regarding the state of their domestic – and overseas – affairs.

Finally, the question of OTs got resolved: in April 1958, it was agreed that OTs should not be included in the FTA.²⁰⁹ In May 1958, it was added in Recommendation 160 that the governments should make “every effort to achieve the greatest possible measure of synchronization in the development of the [FTA] and the Common Market compatible with the vital economic interests of each of the member countries, of the overseas countries, etc.”²¹⁰ It was then generally agreed that the FTA should include provisions for non-OEEC states, and “especially [for] the Commonwealth countries and Overseas Territories of member countries.”²¹¹ The consensus was that stable and economically strong European states were necessary for the viability of a project such as the FTA.²¹²

From the discussions on the FTA rose another issue: the division of aid and preferential treatment between OTs on the one hand, and other under-developed areas of the OEEC on the other. By 1956, there was widespread discrimination in favor of overseas territories within the markets of the metropolitan states, notably through lower or free rates of duty, special agreements guaranteeing special access to markets or quotas (e.g. the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement) and customs unions (e.g. between France and Tunisia).²¹³ This was then justified with the argument that the benefits were in favor of the OTs, because customs tariffs contributed to their economic development.²¹⁴ The Customs Union reinforced these dynamics by conferring a preferential position in the markets of the Six.²¹⁵

This was an issue in other areas: in 1960, the Development Assistance Group was created (DAG; later became Committee, DAC). On the eve of the reorganization of the OEEC, the members of this group are particularly relevant to this discussion: Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Commission of the EEC; the Netherlands joined later in the year.²¹⁶ This group excluded the ones most affected by it: the UK’s position was unequivocal, stating that it was “a donor’s club” and must be “for the

²⁰⁸ OEEC-0445, 87, 327.

²⁰⁹ OEEC-0262, 266.

²¹⁰ OEEC-0393, 406.

²¹¹ OEEC-0393, 410.

²¹² OEEC-0393, 408-410.

²¹³ OEEC-0337, 685.

²¹⁴ OEEC-0337, 706.

²¹⁵ OEEC-0410, 11.

²¹⁶ OECD, “DAC in Dates: The History of OECD’s Development Assistance Committee.”

donors, not the potential recipients to decide whether aid to particular countries should be discussed at all and, if so, which countries should be the subject of discussion.”²¹⁷ Its creation was controversial, especially within the contexts of contentions on the topic of aid towards OTs and towards OEEC under-developed areas.²¹⁸ This Group was not under majority control, and many of the regions concerned by it would have preferred a similar aid agency under a different governance system, preferably the UN.²¹⁹ Much of the DAC’s work was continued within the OECD.²²⁰ From a different perspective and beyond OTs, the DAC represents a similar superior position to less developing countries as was explored in chapter 4. This perception of the donors versus the recipients, and who should be in control, did not come to be just in time for the creation of the DAC; rather, its creation and the opinions of its member-states give insights into perceptions and views guiding OEEC members’ policies during the previous decade.

Chapter 4 had demonstrated that the question of OTs was not limited to the OTC. Consequently, this chapter explored the questions of OTs in the OEEC, beyond the OTC. It supports the argument that the view of the OTs in Western European powers was constructed around a dichotomy: the OTs belonged to Europe in the sense that they were an inherent part of the mainland, while also being part of the “Global South,” with the development-related and economic implications this had. The OTs were therefore both part of the West as territories linked to European powers by colonialism, and they were considered by the West as means to mobilize resources and further develop industrially and economically. The OEEC was a forum for capitalist countries to represent and advance their interests, in the context of the Cold War and through various means. These means included the management and exploitation of resources from overseas territories, whose interests were somehow present within the OEEC, but under layers of conditionality.

²¹⁷ TNA, T 312/860, J.M. Bridgeman, “Future of D.A.C.,” in Leimgruber and Schmelzer, “From the Marshall Plan,” 37; see also OEEC-0365, 118-120.

²¹⁸ Mahon, “Gendering Development,” 336-337.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid.

6. Alternatives to the OEEC?

This research revolved around the role of the OEEC as one of many venues for European integration, itself closely linked with decolonization. However, other venues existed; so why the OEEC? This chapter presents hypotheses and arguments relating to alternatives to the OEEC. It approaches the focus of this thesis through a different angle, to give further insights and elements of answer to the research question. It explores different venues of integration and overseas territories management, to formulate a tentative answer to “why the OEEC?” It addresses such venues at European and international levels, and explores and assesses different initiatives, institutions and organizations that were alternatives to the OEEC.

a. Europe of the Six

During the time-period this thesis addresses, European integration with the Six was well underway. The UK was not a signatory to the establishing treaties, and was an “awkward partner.”²²¹ The question of the OTs was included in these developments, especially through the Treaty of Rome.²²² The UK was a colonial power, but without its involvement in the institutions of the Six, it had limited capacity to advance its interests, which was not the case within the OEEC.

There were tensions between the ECSC and the OEEC. Johnny Laursen demonstrates that in 1954, certain OEEC members, especially Denmark, were complaining about trade distortions and the commercial policy of the ECSC.²²³ There were rivalries between the functions of the two, and fears of the Six that as the consequence of these complaints, the OEEC or the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade would impose obligations on the ECSC members.²²⁴ Questions of cooperation between the OEEC, and the ECSC and the EEC shaped the policies of these organizations in the 1950s.

The 1952 Strasbourg Plan initiated by the Council of Europe included the Six, certain OEEC members, and the UK; it also had a special focus on the dependent OTs of the member-states.²²⁵ The Plan was an attempt to improve the economic relations between the member-

²²¹ Broad, “Ignoring Europe?”; George, “British policy in the European Community;” Ludlow, “The Historical Roots of the ‘Awkward Partner’ Narrative.”

²²² “Treaty of Rome,” Article 131.

²²³ Laursen, “Integration at cross-currents,” 153.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ *The Strasbourg Plan*, 11.

states of the Council of Europe and their OTs.²²⁶ The OEEC was involved in this plan: it was mandated by the Council of Europe to undertake a study relating to the methods for achieving the objectives of the Plan.²²⁷ The main OEEC organ mandated for this study was the OTC, although other divisions were also involved.²²⁸ The means to achieve that were closely linked with the mechanisms created by the OEEC: the EPU, the question of the Commonwealth and overseas investments.²²⁹ Yet, the Strasbourg Plan is often left out from histories of European integration.²³⁰ This highlights not only the importance of OTs in European integration, and hence further justifies this research, but also the role of the OEEC in these processes.

In the story of European integration, many drivers have been identified.²³¹ Another incentive to integrate besides economics was to guarantee the defense of Europe. This is exemplified by the attempts to create the European Defense Community (EDC), following the Pleven Plan (1950).²³² It was politically divisive: the US considered it a French plan to slow down the rearmament of Germany in the context of the Cold War, while others feared the withdrawal of US troops from Europe.²³³ The UK was again not involved in this initiative, which ultimately failed.²³⁴

b. International Organizations

There were other alternatives to Europe and the OEEC: other international organizations. NATO was a military alliance with a different membership than the OEEC and the ECSC / EEC, and in which the US was importantly involved. Its primary objectives were not to foster economic integration. Yet, this question was considered: in the context of the Korean war, the UK and the US increasingly turned to NATO.²³⁵ Leimgruber and Schmelzer write: “Proposals to either use NATO instead of the OEEC as the channel to distribute a blend of economic aid and military assistance, or to amalgamate the OEEC and the Council of Europe, almost dealt a lethal blow to the [OEEC].”²³⁶ Yet, a committee investigating this proposed that the OEEC

²²⁶ *The Strasbourg Plan*.

²²⁷ *Ibid*, 9.

²²⁸ *Ibid*, 9-10.

²²⁹ *Ibid*, 10.

²³⁰ Schreurs, “A Marshall Plan for Africa?” 94.

²³¹ van Meurs, et al., *The Unfinished History*, 21-64.

²³² *Ibid*, 39.

²³³ *Ibid*, 39-40.

²³⁴ *Ibid*, 40.

²³⁵ Leimgruber and Schmelzer, “From the Marshall Plan,” 31-32.

²³⁶ *Ibid*.

should be responsible for economic issues in Western Europe, with an increased focus on “tasks of importance for the Atlantic alliance.”²³⁷ In this decision, small countries played an important role, because they valued the technical work of the OEEC.²³⁸ Furthermore, considering the political division over the EDC, it can be assumed that military integration was not a preferred option, especially regarding the political viability of such a project.

The UN was another alternative. Yet, until the late 1950s, UN agencies were almost totally absent from Africa.²³⁹ By 1960, Western European states had also lost the majority in this organization, and thus their ability to influence it.²⁴⁰ In parallel, this marked a renewed role for the OEEC/OECD: to transform it into an Atlantic organization, with the US and Canada as official members, and a renewed focus on developing countries, as seen through the creation of the DAC.²⁴¹

Other organizations and initiatives of a different nature also existed, linked to European aspirations for Eurafrica. Examples of this are varied, such as the creation in 1947 of an Anglo-French working party on economic cooperation in West Africa,²⁴² and British plans for an African Development Council in 1948, which was meant to represent Belgium, Britain, France, Italy, Portugal and South Africa, under the direction of the Committee of European Economic Cooperation, itself a precursor to the OEEC.²⁴³ In such initiatives, the influence of colonial powers is undeniable. This was also the case in the establishments of the Scientific Council for Africa South of the Sahara (CSA), followed by the Commission for Technical Cooperation in Africa South of the Sahara (CCTA) in 1950.²⁴⁴ The members of both organizations were Belgium, France, Portugal, Rhodesia, South Africa and the UK (in 1953, Rhodesia became part of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland).²⁴⁵ In 1958, both organizations were linked by a joint secretariat.²⁴⁶ These organizations came from the need for greater communication between (colonized) states, and for improvements in administration, technical and scientific cooperation.²⁴⁷ Colonial powers, especially the UK and France, were involved in all kinds of venues concerned directly or indirectly with their colonies. In the case of the CCTA, Isebill

²³⁷ Leimgruber and Schmelzer, “From the Marshall Plan,” 31-32.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Gruhn, “The Commission for Technical Co-Operation in Africa,” 460.

²⁴⁰ Leimgruber and Schmelzer, “From the Marshall Plan,” 34.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Hansen and Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, 88.

²⁴³ Ibid., 89.

²⁴⁴ Gruhn, “The Commission for Technical Co-Operation in Africa,” 459.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

Gruhn argues that “it was essentially a western organization transplanted on to African soil.”²⁴⁸ She demonstrates that in the 1950s, the British and French positions towards the CCTA alternated between “enthusiastic support” and “mere toleration.”²⁴⁹ This ambivalent position was reflected in the colonial powers’ choice for the best venue for their own interests: in the mid-1950s, the UK seemed to consider the UN best suited to manage African development.²⁵⁰ By the end of the decade, this position had changed, as it was discussed earlier, and both the UK and France were back to being enthusiastic about the CCTA.²⁵¹ The CCTA was mentioned in the OTC archives: it was deemed to limit the role of the OTC in the study of technical assistance.²⁵² It was mentioned in chapter 5 that Africa was of primary concern to the OEEC; its primary focus was also on the regions South of the Sahara.²⁵³ Yet, colonial powers did not operate within the CCTA in a way similar to the OEEC: by the mid-1950s, colonial powers were accused of fostering cooperation between metropolitan countries through the CCTA, while impeding on cooperation between African territories and with the international community.²⁵⁴ Colonial powers had access to various venues for the management of their colonies, through institutions that they had themselves created. The CCTA was another example of neocolonialist attitudes and policies packaged under concerns for the development of populations overseas, while serving metropolitan interests.

c. The OEEC at the crossroads?

Based on the previous sub-chapters, the position of the OEEC at the crossroads of integration and colonial concerns is reinforced. It became a platform for economic integration in a different manner than the Europe of the Six, and for the management of its member-states’ preferences. Many venues for European integration and for the management of overseas territories existed; an answer to the question of “why the OEEC” comes from a multitude of elements, ranging from the governance structure of the OEEC, its membership, its nature and position as an economic forum, its consideration for its members’ interests, and its scope of action, to the nature and limitations of other alternative venues that existed simultaneously.

²⁴⁸ Gruhn, “The Commission for Technical Co-Operation in Africa,” 462.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 459.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 462.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

²⁵² OEEC-0268, 5.

²⁵³ OEEC-0268, 4, 18, 20, 32, 35, 41.

²⁵⁴ Gruhn, “The Commission for Technical Co-Operation in Africa,” 461.

This chapter explored alternative venues to the OEEC, in the context of and as a means for Western European colonial powers to organize and manage their overseas territories. Through its exploration of different venues at the European and international level, it aimed to provide a tentative answer to the question of “why the OEEC” based on the assessment of the role and limitations of these other venues.

7. Conclusion

This thesis aimed to answer the question: *what role did the OEEC assume in the management of Western European overseas territories?* Firstly, the OTC was explored. Despite its name and the exclusive membership of colonial countries, its efficiency was rather limited, mostly due to the scope of its actions and the nature of its staff. However, OTC archives gave important insights into the perceptions of OTs, and the construction of relations between colonial OEEC powers and their OTs.

Secondly, Chapter 5 showed that the questions of the OTs was not limited to the OTC; rather, it was a central question in many of the undertakings of the OEEC. This chapter also highlighted the relation between the OEEC and the Six, and the negotiations to accommodate for different paths to integration, as illustrated with the Customs Union and the FTA. The question of OTs was present in many initiatives, whether it was trade liberalization and harmonization, or the FTA. This chapter further built on the arguments of Chapter 4, and highlighted insidious dynamics of neocolonialism, imperialism and conditionality from the colonizer to the colonized, with the OEEC as a platform to do so.

Lastly, Chapter 6 explored the essential question of “why the OEEC.” Aiming to provide a new perspective on the research question through a different focus, it demonstrated that many initiatives, institutions and organizations present at the time were limited in their capacity to assume a similar role as the OEEC did.

These chapters demonstrated several dynamics between Western European powers and their colonies. Conditionality, superiority, dependence and self-interests shaped the relations of Western powers towards their OTs. Within these dynamics and processes, the OEEC served as a platform for European powers to organize their relations with their colonies. Rather than having a mind of its own when it came to the management of OTs, its governance nature, its areas of activities and its membership made it a platform for Western European powers to converge many areas of interests into one venue. The question of overseas territories was one of these, and it was influenced not only by the colonial powers, but also by the preferences of other OEEC members.

A first look at the approach of the OEEC to the question of the overseas territories may show that their concerns and their development were at the forefront of any policy. However, this paper has shown that rather, the preferences of the metropolitan states shaped these policies within the OEEC. It was not a question of development and growth as the original objectives of the OEEC may suggest: much like the OEEC itself, the question of the OTs evolved, and

became an important political question, situated at the crossroads between European integration and decolonization. The OEEC became a platform for Western Europe to organize their relations with their colonies. Eurafrika as a project shaped European policies in the 1950s and well into the following decades – the Europe we see today and its relations with (former) overseas territories, and especially Africa, should be understood in the context of their history, of which the OEEC is a small part, but a relevant one nonetheless.

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