

# Tjibaou's Kanak: Ethnic Identity as New Caledonia Prepares its Future



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SSGM DISCUSSION PAPER 2014/4

The return to tradition is a myth...the search for identity, for a model ...[is] ahead of us, never in the past — it's a permanent process of renewal ... . Our identity is *ahead* of us.

Jean-Marie Tjibaou, 1985. Interview: Facing our Identity, *Les temps modernes* 464, March.

## Introduction

On 11 May 2014, New Caledonia elected its fourth, and final, local Congress under the historic 1998 Noumea Accord.

There was no Australian media coverage of that election, nor of a violent protest at the end of May just out of Noumea, when Kanak protesters shot and injured two French gendarmes. Indeed, few Australians are aware that our closest neighbour just two hours flying time off the east coast of Queensland is France, in its Pacific possession, New Caledonia.

One reason for this is that the French, along with the local pro-France and pro-independence groups who were engaged in a bloody civil war only 25 years ago, successfully negotiated a series of agreements ending the violence of the 1980s and postponing a sensitive self-determination vote in return for a promised schedule of handovers of responsibilities by 2014. These agreements, the 1988 Matignon/Oudinot Accords and the 1998 Noumea Accord, have so far presided over a long period of peace and prosperity, keeping the French collectivity out of the regional and Australian newspapers.

But time is up. The Noumea Accord provides that a self-determination referendum process must now be held, between 2014 and 2018. The newly elected Congress can decide by 3/5 majority to proceed to a referendum process. If a decision cannot be reached, the French State is obliged to initiate it by 2018.

No one group holds 3/5 of the Congress. Given the balance of forces in the Congress, the 3/5 requirement demands co-operation between supporters

and opponents of independence. The recent election showed that, while the pro-France groups retain the majority (29 of 54 seats), the pro-independence groups with 25 seats have won more representation than ever before, and the pro-France groups less, a continuation of the trend since 1998. Since the electorate for any referendum process is broader than that for the Congress, and is as yet untested, the outlook for the future in this collectivity where blood was shed as recently as 25 years ago, is uncertain and fragile. Indeed, the fragility and divisions remaining in New Caledonia are shown by the violence resulting in the above-mentioned shooting of two French police by Kanak protesters just weeks after the elections, and in another incident in early June 2014 when a senior pro-independence political adviser was shot in a drunken brawl involving pro-independence Kanak figures. On 19 July 2014 the most senior French official in New Caledonia resigned his post as High Commissioner over issues related to the future of New Caledonia.<sup>1</sup>

Given that politics in New Caledonia essentially have revolved around support for independence or for staying with France, with fragmentation in recent years within each camp, my objective is to look, not as an anthropologist, but as a political analyst, at the progression of concepts of indigenous ethnic identity and nationalism in New Caledonia within the context of French colonisation, which is how such concepts crystallised and continue to evolve there. I focus particularly on the articulation of these concepts in the 1970s and 80s by the Kanak independence leader, Jean-Marie Tjibaou, an articulation which represented a turning point for the people of New Caledonia, both Kanak and non-Kanak. His view of Kanak identity is based on a core ethic defined by the answers to the questions



‘Where do we come from? Who are we? Where are we going?’ His answers, the first recorded coherent public articulation by a prominent Kanak leader, shaped the Accords themselves and continue to influence the post-Accord future of New Caledonia — particularly, as will be shown, two major discussion papers, one prepared by the French and one by Kanak chiefs, over the last twelve months. Because what happens in New Caledonia will impact inevitably on other parts of the Pacific, particularly Melanesia, but also certainly French Polynesia, it is arguable that Tjibaou’s views have broad relevance to the South Pacific as a whole.

First, some definitions. In my paper today, the term ‘Kanak’ refers to the indigenous people of New Caledonia, all of whom are Melanesian, who speak about 28 different languages and who are located throughout the archipelago. Until the 1970s, the French used the term ‘Melanesian’ to refer to the indigenous people of New Caledonia; it was only by 1983, at a meeting at Nainville-les Roches, that France specifically recognised the ‘Kanak people’, only formalised in the 1998 Noumea Accord. The idea of one term ‘ethnic identity’ for such peoples seems fairly inadequate, but such complexity is not new, Phinney and Ong (2007) noting the multi-dimensional nature of ‘ethnic identity’, as Tajfel (1981) defines it: ‘that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from [his] knowledge of [his] membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership’ (cited in Phinne and Ong 2007, 255), and which others have seen as closely linked with culture (Nagel 1994, Linnekin 1990).

The term ‘Caldoche’ loosely refers to those European (French) settlers who arrived from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and who form today the bulk of the long-term non-Kanak residents in New Caledonia. The term ‘French’ refers to those sometimes dubbed ‘metros’ or more pejoratively, ‘zoreilles’ or ‘zozos’ (from the term ‘les oreilles’ or ‘ears’, implying that they are spying on the locals) who are posted by the sovereign French state to administer New Caledonia, who generally stay two to three years; those French experts who have come periodically and temporarily to advise and work on the exploitation of the nickel resource with which the collectiv-

ity is generously endowed; and includes also those relatively recent arrivals who have retired there responding to attractive French pension arrangements to entice them to do so. There are in addition a number of minorities including Wallisians, Indonesians, Vietnamese, and ni-Vanuatu. Understanding these various layers of peoples in the French sovereign territory of New Caledonia is fundamental to notions of ethnicity in New Caledonia.

Because history brought the French to New Caledonia, the development of a sense of ethnic identity, for the indigenous people there, has necessarily been tied up with their relationship with European newcomers to their archipelago. Without the benefit of the written Kanak word, our understanding of the early aspects of their identity comes from others. I propose to skate lightly over earliest perceptions of Kanak ethnic identity, principally because these have been long recorded and are exclusively written by foreigners. For a good, fairly recent review of the earliest perceptions of the British and French arrivals, including the first-hand reports of the explorers, see Bullard 2000 on which I draw below.

### The Past

The British Captain Cook was the first European to sight the coast of the archipelago in 1774. He saw the local people as welcoming and friendly, with their own languages and culture. One record describes the British drawing a line in the sand in order to protect themselves from being touched by the locals. One Kanak then drew a circle entirely around himself, apparently with great good humour (Bullard 2000, 30). The message of self-protection was clear.

The French who arrived twenty years later under Captain D’Entrecasteaux, had a more hostile impression, with Captain Rossel recording a war-mongering and unattractive people, casting them as the ‘ignoble savage’ (Kohler 1991, 41). Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the various perspectives of the French missionaries, administrators and settlers consolidated this fundamental image:

- for missionaries (who arrived in 1843) and administrators, the indigenous people were to be redeemed, by the civilizing mission of France and all it stood for (Bullard 2000, 38)

- for colonists, the native was ‘the obstructor, monopolizing land, a laborer destined to die out’ (Saussol 1979).

The experience of encroachment by both groups alienated the indigenous people and set off a cycle of rebellion and domination. An early example was missionary behavior after having negotiated the use of land to cultivate yams after their arrival. The yam is a plant sacred to the Kanaks. The missionaries harvested the entire crop, only to be robbed of it by the Kanaks who were thereafter marked as thieves (Bullard 2000, 40). Discontent mounted, and the missionaries were routed by 1847.

French officials landing in 1851 arrived to a hostile reception. Formal annexation was declared in 1853. The ‘civilising mission’ of the administrators was encapsulated in the contract they concluded with Kanak leaders in 1854 granting French citizenship in return for ‘regeneration and civilization’ by the French.

As the French encroached on their lands, and with the confinement of Kanaks to cantonments from 1876, Kanak discontent gathered momentum and resulted in an uprising led by Chief Atai in 1878, and another under Chief Noel in 1917, both firmly quelled by the French, who saw the uprisings as revolts against ‘civilization’ (Bullard 2000, 47). From 1887 the *indigénat* system was enforced, confining Kanaks to reserves, imposing a per head tax, circumscribing their freedom of movement and requiring them to perform free labour. Kanaks were often ‘blackbirded’ or pressed into labour aboard foreign ships and plantations elsewhere in the Pacific. The French themselves appointed chiefs, often without regard to customary authority figures.

Moving forward to the two World Wars, images about the Kanaks continue to be second-hand. The Kanaks fought in both wars to defend the interests of the French. Heavy-handed colonial war recruitment practices in World War I contributed to the Kanak insurrection in 1917 (comprehensively written about by Adrian Muckle in Muckle 2014). Maurice Leenhardt, a French pastor and ethnologist in New Caledonia from 1902 to 1927, studied and recorded aspects of Kanak culture, and learned the Houailou language. On his arrival the French mayor

asked why he had come to evangelise the local people as ‘In ten years, there will be not a Canaque left’ (Leenhardt 1922, 5). From his careful writings, published in the 1930s, valuable knowledge about the Kanak culture was recorded. His writings were sympathetic and relatively dispassionate, and drew on direct inputs from the indigenous people he interviewed, but his accounts were nonetheless those of an observer outside the culture, and of an observer with a particular religious perspective towards those he interviewed (reviewed in Clifford 1980).

Meanwhile the Kanaks were again recruited to fight for the French in World War II, when they saw once again that their proud colonial masters were fallible and could suffer defeat (Waddell 2008, 38 and Chesneaux and Maclellan 1992, 67). After 1940, when the Americans arrived in great numbers in New Caledonia to set up their base for the Pacific campaign there, the Kanaks were exposed to the idea that there were other white people who worked with, respected, and paid blacks in their ranks, albeit on a basis of segregation — and this strengthened nascent consciousness of their identity as a group, and of rights.

Interest from white settlers in more autonomy dates from 1932, and was renewed, abortively, amidst the disarray surrounding the installation of a Gaullist administration in Noumea in 1940. But it was from the missionaries that political groupings first emerged in 1946, when French citizenship (but not yet the universal right to vote)<sup>2</sup> was extended to some of its overseas residents, and when the discriminatory *indigénat* scheme came to an end. In 1946 two groups were formed, each encompassing both indigenous and Caldoches, one Catholic (UICALO) and the other Protestant (AICLF). Both groups united in 1953 into the first political party, the Union Calédonienne, with the motto ‘two colours, one united people’, a party that remains prominent on the political scene today (see Kurtovich 1997). Ethnic identity was not the basis of these early groupings.

By 1956, in the Defferre *loi cadre*, France was legislating for self-determination, autonomy and even independence of its overseas territories, and had granted the vote to all ‘native’ residents overseas. In a 1958 referendum the Pacific territories

voted to stay within France, but within an environment of increasing autonomy. However, with all but one of the African territories independent by 1960, and under pressure from the Caldoches, by 1963 France began to roll back the powers it had devolved to the local council (Jacquinot Law). Over the 1960s further restrictions were imposed, in part to maintain French control of the increasingly lucrative exploitation of New Caledonia's nickel resource (Billotte Law).<sup>3</sup> Moreover, as the nickel boom peaked from 1969 to 1972, large numbers of French experts arrived in the territory, and the local people were employed in more menial roles. The Kanaks, their relative numbers reduced by inflows from the *métropole*, reacted thereafter by increasingly strident demands for independence (in 1975 by Yann Uregei and the Union Multiraciale, and in 1977 by the Union Caledonienne).

At this time, the 1970s, pro-independence indigenous leaders revived the term 'Kanak' to identify themselves (Kasarerhou and Boulay 2013, 10), drawing on the term 'canaque', which had been used by Captain Cook in 1774 to refer to indigenous Hawaiian peoples. At the same time, the French State was overtly encouraging French migration specifically to outnumber the indigenous people and head off mounting indigenous nationalism.<sup>4</sup> By the early 1970s too, in response to the arrival of thousands of newcomers, a sense of common cause emerged between some Caldoches and Kanaks as they faced similar pressures on their employment and conditions from the well-paid newcomers.

Still, to this time, most of these images of the Kanaks remain secondary, derived from other's perceptions and experience of them. As nickel mining intensified, to the early images of hostility and 'savagery' of the indigenous people now were added perceptions of reluctance to work and laziness as the mines employed Kanaks typically in the lowest positions.

### The Present of Tjibaou

It was in this environment that Kanak independence leader Jean-Marie Tjibaou emerged. A former Catholic priest, he came from the French missionary tradition with all that that entailed: on the one hand, he understood and could proficiently use the

language of the French; and, as a customary chief himself, he experienced first-hand and the more acutely, the French perceptions of the indigenous people and saw their effect on his people.

Tjibaou was the first Kanak leader who saw it as necessary and worthwhile to explain what it meant to be Kanak, and who had the skill and the will to articulate elements of Kanak culture and identity. In 1987 in a booklet of his coalition, the FLNKS (Front de Libération Nationale Kanak et Socialiste, or Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front), he wrote that 'whereas the colonial endeavour has been to make our people lose their identity by alienating them from their history and expunging the evidence of it' the booklet 'will have its place in the creation of the written memory which will allow the new people of Kanaky to know about themselves and to create for themselves a self-image which is deeply rooted but new, satisfying and heroic' (Tjibaou 2005, xxxix). He acknowledged the role of Maurice Leenhardt in recording aspects of Kanak culture, telling the University of Geneva in 1981 that 'It was fortunate for us that he wrote' (78).<sup>5</sup>

He was a rare Kanak, too, in wanting to educate non-Kanaks about Kanak culture, and in his acknowledgement of the rights of non-Kanaks in relationships based on mutual respect (other Kanaks in this tradition include Rock and Raphael Pidjot, and Eloi Machoro, see Mokaddem 2011). In his words and writings, he laid the conciliatory foundation stone on which the dialogue and acceptance of the 1988 and 1998 accords was to be built; and, I would argue, on which the post-Accords period will be based.

### 1970s and early 1980s

His first effort to show what it was to be Kanak was in 1975 when he collaborated to stage a major event called Melanesia 2000, bringing together 2000 Melanesians from all over the archipelago in a cultural experience to celebrate Kanak identity. He described the Festival as a 'commercial' on Kanak culture for the White world, and to awaken the Kanak people to their own heritage (Tjibaou 2005, 11). Talking later about the Festival, he says he saw it 'as one means of overcoming the insignificance we suffered then, when the whole environ-

ment was set up to alienate the Kanak, who existed only through his relationship with the White, and in which all the images he gets of himself are negative' (243). His wife, Marie-Claude, referring to the numerous clans involved, describes it as a 'unity in diversity' experience.<sup>6</sup> The whole event was underwritten by the French authorities, who sent representatives and participated. But the settler Caldoche stayed away. A counterpart Caledonia 2000 Festival to focus on their culture never took place (275).

By this time, the French continued to roll back powers they had devolved on New Caledonia, and nationalist moves by the Kanaks had gathered pace. The unity of the Union Calédonienne broke down. Palika (Parti de libération Kanak, or Kanak Liberation Party) was founded in 1976 from the Foulards Rouges movement and the ex-student left; and the FULK (Front Uni de Libération Kanak, or United Kanak Liberation Front), was formed from Uregei's Union Multiraciale (surveyed in Chappell 2013). Tjibaou remained at the head of the UC, which by 1977 was calling for independence. Pro-France Caldoches in turn broke away from the UC and in 1978 formed the RPCR (Rassemblement Pour la Calédonie dans la République, or Rally for [New] Caledonia within the Republic), under Jacques Lafleur. After an initial conciliatory Statute (Stirn 1976) the French further tightened control (Loi Dijoud 1978), driving the unification of pro-independence parties into the FI (Front Indépendantiste, or Independence Front) headed by Tjibaou.

By the 1980s, violence had erupted between the principally Kanak pro-independence supporters and pro-France loyalists. Blood was shed on both sides and positions hardened.

During this time, within this highly political context, as independence demands mounted, Tjibaou made a further contribution to defining Kanak identity through three key writings: the first an article written with Philippe Missotte before the Melanesia 2000 Festival in 1975; the second, an article in the *Journal de la Société des océanistes* in 1976; and the third a presentation to the University of Geneva in 1981. Tjibaou set out cultural elements fundamental to Kanak identity, such as the significance and sacredness of the yam; the role of the father in bestowing social status and land; and of

the mother in giving life and blood (Tjibaou 2005, 78). But he also elaborated on further principles of Kanak life and identity, which were at the basis of Kanak political demands and linked to European lack of understanding of these principles, viz.:

- the 'ethic', or cultural inspiration, which is the reply to the questions 'who are we? where do we come from? where are we going?' (31),<sup>7</sup> with corresponding ideas of time in relationship to the seasons and the rhythm of nature (86); of death and of history as not linear but successive layers of events (46)
- the strong identification with the land, which is 'patrimony', and 'archives' (82–83) 'We do not come from elsewhere. We are people of and from this land' (76) 'A clan which loses its territory ... loses its personality' (42)
- the idea of prestige coming from giving, rather than acquiring (78)
- the importance of the *parole* as sacred (21), or the word of honour, which is identical with action (60)
- the fact of any Kanak existing only in terms of relationships, *by reference to others* (78).

He sometimes specifically presented these facets of Kanak identity as explaining popular European stereotypes, for example, in relation to the non-linear aspect of time and history, the pace of Kanak life and European images of the Kanak work ethic. By explaining the nature of the Kanak attachment to land, and the importance of the link between word and action, he was setting up bases for future negotiation. At the same time, he cautioned about the idea of 'custom' which he saw as a European word imposed on ideas they did not understand.

Drawing on the fundamental idea of the Kanak existing only 'by reference to' others, with the implicit hurtfulness of the way Europeans had related to them, Tjibaou nonetheless took pains to build on an idea of inclusion that was remarkable in the context of the dissension around him. In 1978, acknowledging the role of the non-Kanak Indonesian, Wallisian and Tahitian populations, his UC espoused 'an obligation to rethink the legal status of people and their property...the status of the culture within...each group'. In a 1981 interview, talking about independence, he says 'Other peoples with

another way of life will be able to stay if they accept that we run the country' (Tjibaou 2005, 91). By 1982 he was expanding on this idea: 'We want recognition of this people first, and of its right to claim the independence of its country... To be nationalist is not to be racist'.

Arguably it was this enunciation of the Kanak identity with its ideas of relationships and inclusivity that led, in 1983, to the French directly acknowledging, at an historic meeting with both the pro-France and pro-independence parties at Nainville-les-Roches, 'the innate and active right to independence of the Kanak people', while Kanak leaders acknowledged longstanding New Caledonian settler communities as 'victims of history' with the right to participate in a vote of self-determination, a right not accorded to more recent arrivals (Tjibaou 2005, 251). This fundamental recognition did not culminate in an agreement at the time, but was to result in the success of the historic Matignon and Noumea Accords years later.

### 1980s

The civil disturbances continued after Nainville-les-Roches, intensifying in opposition to yet another French Statute (Lemoine 1984), when the pro-independence group boycotted 1984 elections. Here ethnic identity, the Kanak people as a political construct, was clearly at the heart of the political objective, when Tjibaou declared the independent state of Kanaky. Shortly afterwards in a bloody massacre at his home town Hienghene two of his brothers were killed. French Statutes came thick and fast (Pisani and Fabius 1985, Pons I 1986, Pons II 1988) but could not resolve the fundamental differences between the pro-French and pro-independence movements, the latter principally but not entirely Kanak, pointing to increasing identity of interests between the more long-term Caldoches and the Kanaks.<sup>8</sup> Finally, tensions came to a head in early 1988, midway through French presidential election rounds, when the French made a heavy-handed, bloody response to Kanaks taking French police hostage in a cave on the island of Ouvéa.

Tjibaou's language at this time, not surprisingly, becomes increasingly nationalist. Declaring the provisional government of Kanaky in 1984, he

said 'independence means: 'This is Kanak country.' Kanak sovereignty, the sovereignty of this country, belongs to the Kanaks and to no-one else ... . We demand primacy in this country because it is our country' (Tjibaou 2005, 138–41). From 1985 the UC slogan changed from 'Two colours, one people' to 'Acknowledge the Kanak people that it in turn might acknowledge you.' 'What is Kanak identity? Why a Kanak independence? These questions take us to the core of Kanak society — its culture' and again [on culture and identity] 'We can't put one before the other, they go together in this struggle of ours' (168, 180). The blending of independence and Kanak identity is complete by 1988, when he says, 'accession to sovereignty is our top priority, a matter of national identity' (232).

He refines the idea of Kanak identity, principally in building on the idea of indigenous rights. This is a prescient stance, foreshadowing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which was finalised only in 2007, years after his death. Of course, Tjibaou situates the declaration of the Provisional Government of Kanaky within the UN decolonisation processes at the time. He refers to the rejection by the French government of 'article 1514 of the United Nations Charter, under which the Kanak people can be considered as an indigenous people with the right to decolonisation' (Tjibaou 2005, 159). However, he moves beyond this idea of a simple self-determination mechanism for indigenous people. He notes that 'we have to agree on what the act of self-determination means; it can't be something scheduled every four, five, even every 10 years. It is a once only thing' and calls for 'discussion first on the concept of self-determination' (229). He notes that losing any independence referendum 'does not destroy the Kanaks' right to independence, because this right is inherent in their status as the indigenous people' (107). 'The claim for independence belongs to the Kanak people, to the legitimate, indigenous people' (113). 'Every Kanak born is born with the right to independence, which is not the case for the French' (231). 'The fact of the Kanaks as the first inhabitants must be taken seriously' (228). This kind of language is reflected in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a potential tool for

the Kanak people to further their interests as the current post-Accord discussions proceed (as evidenced in the Kanak Charter, see below).

Even at this politically charged time, Tjibaou's ideas are not exclusive, but leave room for change and compromise. In 1985, he says 'The return to tradition is a myth ... the search for identity, for a model...[is] ahead of us, never in the past — it's a permanent process of renewal ... . Our identity is *ahead* of us' (160).

His ideas are inclusive even of the Caldoches. He proposes a 'referendum on self-determination' for colonised peoples alone, but 'what we ask ... is that the right of the Kanak people to the mastery of their own destiny be recognised ... . It is a matter of recognising the legitimacy of the indigenous people in their own country, their whole sovereign identity. Once their sovereignty is recovered, they can exercise their right to admit others, and they can discuss matters as partners with governments of goodwill' (108); '... the indigenous people who are not prepared to tolerate imposed systems any longer, ... want to control their own destiny, that is, to establish a system with the others, if the others agree' (206).

His ideas of independence too evolve. While Tjibaou was clearly talking of independence at the time, the language he used provided space for the accommodation and compromise ahead in the Matignon and Noumea Accords. As such, this kind of language paved the way for a future status of New Caledonia that is not necessarily that of an independent sovereign territory. The essence of independence for Kanaks, he said, flowing from their identity involving reference to others, is being able to choose with whom they would like to relate. As early as 1979 he referred to countries who 'seek to establish relationship systems which make them dependent on other countries but place them in a system which safeguards their national independence. This right to choose with whom we shall be interdependent, politically and economically, is one of our fundamental demands' (Tjibaou 2005, 66). 'Independence, for us, is the right to choose the partners with whom we want to work' (141), where the right to control immigration, 'the right to decide whom we shall welcome' was fundamental

(142). Later, in 1984, he expanded: 'Sovereignty is the right to choose partners; independence is the power to manage all the needs that colonisation, the present system, has created. We have an ongoing need for the restitution of the Kanak people's sovereignty over their land — sovereignty over men, over the land, what is under the ground, the airspace, the sea, etc.' 'Sovereignty gives us the right and the power to negotiate interdependencies. For a small country like ours, independence is choosing our interdependencies skilfully' (150). The idea of building a new relationship with France based on equality remains an important basis for the discussions currently under way in New Caledonia.

He identifies as another element of independence closely tied with identity, ideas of economic expertise and power. On the returns of the nickel revenues: 'if the country holds the heritage, it has the power to decide what use is made of it' (Tjibaou 2005, 67). In 1987 he wrote: 'At the moment, the Kanak world is on the fringe of the economy. We have to emerge from marginalization...It has been pointed out to us...that no colony has won its independence through economic expertise. But is the lack of examples a reason not to try this path?' (215). This idea provided room for time for Kanaks to acquire economic expertise.

His ideas of inclusiveness of other non-Kanak residents also evolve in the 1980s. In 1985 he writes, 'Those who are prepared, as Cook was, to acknowledge us and make custom could eventually, if they want to take it that far, gain Kanak nationality. But above all, whether citizens or not, if they live in the Kanaks' country he will be living in Kanaky. It's about history, the search for dignity and the acknowledgement of our people' (Tjibaou 2005, 178). By 1988, he says 'we are open about the future with those who are French nationals or those who would like to adopt Kanak nationality' (233). He refers in quite specific terms to an independence vote including 'all those affected by the *fait colonial* [fact of colonialism]. So all those born in the country who are over 18 years old and have at least one parent born in the Territory ... those who voted in 1951 ... It doesn't cover those who have just arrived.' 'The *fait colonial*..involve [sic] Kanaks and those colonists who made them

suffer colonisation. They are the ones who must decide on independence through a free act of self-determination'; 'Guarantees must be given to those who don't come under the act of self-determination and to all French citizens wanting to live in the country without losing their citizenship. At the same time, a definite cut-off date must be given for those who would like to acquire the new nationality. Those who decline it will have a resident's permit with certain privileges; a special status could be envisaged for French citizens in our country. All this should be determined along with the act of self-determination and the Constitution' (230). These ideas are as relevant today as New Caledonia defines its future, as they were influential then.

After the debacle of the Ouvea cave massacre, the re-elected French President Mitterrand authorised a special mission to New Caledonia which resulted in the successful negotiation of the Matignon/Oudinot Accords. The words and ideas in the Accords clearly reflect Tjibaou's writings and philosophy. Effectively postponing an independence referendum for 10 years, the Accords specifically refer to 'a common recognition of the identity and dignity of each of the communities present in the territory' (*Matignon Texte No 1*). While not confining the electorate for the referendum to those born in New Caledonia, as Tjibaou wanted, the electorate was restricted, albeit only to those resident in New Caledonia in 1988 and their descendants. The Accords provided for a program of economic rebalancing over the 10 years, within three Provinces, two of which would see a Kanak majority. Nickel processing, up till then confined to the European-dominated south, would be developed in the mainly Kanak Northern Province, and training programs for Kanaks were established.

The Matignon Accords were not perfect. They did not recognise the Kanak people, but simply spoke about 'communities'. Tjibaou noted that 'It's just as difficult for Jacques Lafleur [leader of the pro-France mainly white group] to live with this handshake as for me' (Tjibaou 2005, 260). Jacques Lafleur told the author in 2003 that he had returned to New Caledonia with some trepidation at the task of securing his party's support for what he'd signed on to. Tjibaou expressed himself 'least happy with

the restricted electorate' (252). He had argued that all those 18 and older with one parent born in the territory shared the same '*fait colonial*' but that what had been put forward by the government was not the same thing, and Kanaks would not gain a majority. He said that 'many wanted militant action to continue'. He had agreed with them 'that, if they had taken tougher action, they may have been able to negotiate independence, but not necessarily with economically competent people.' 'We have both decided to build peace, to accept each other as we are.' He told his supporters: 'During this 10-year period we shall try to build the country economically... We're gambling on using the economy to promote the cultural values that are our own, and which allow us to affirm our identity' (279).

In an interview explaining the logic of the Accords, Tjibaou refers once more to the Kanak identity, the Kanak view of the ancestors, those 'present-absent' as well as those 'present', and repeated 'our basic claims .... . Acknowledgement of all this, in an all-encompassing form that includes the basic demand for independence and for recognition of our identity, in its fullest expression' (Tjibaou 2005, 268). He refers to the Caldoches as culturally impoverished and unsure of their identity. In some circumstances they 'try to identify with us...Its "we" here, but at home they don't want to know us', and refers to their 'cultural abyss once the "real French" turned up' (274). He affirms that 'We have to promote our nationalism on the basis of our culture, to affirm Kanak identity and the identity of the country' (281).

But with all his explanations and interpretations, he did not convince everyone. Many FLNKS supporters disagreed with the Accords. Less than a year after its signature, Tjibaou and his deputy were assassinated by a disaffected supporter.

### The Future Beyond Tjibaou

Conscious of continued differences and the risk of resurgent bloodshed, by 1998, as the Matignon Accords neared their endpoint, the principal parties once again decided to defer an independence vote, this time for 20 years, through the 1998 Noumea Accord. This Accord foreshadows a vote from 2014 to 2018 but in the meantime, sets out a 20-year

schedule of handovers of responsibilities to local authorities.

A fundamental difference between the Noumea and the Matignon Accords lies in the explicit recognition, in the Preamble of the Noumea Accord, of the existence of the Kanak people, of the 'shock' of colonisation, of the 'negation of fundamental elements of Kanak identity', of 'enduring trauma for the original people' whose presence and specific identity pre-dated the French in New Caledonia and whose identity is linked with the land. It talks of decolonisation as 'the means of ... allowing the Kanak people to establish new relationships with France corresponding to the realities of our times'. The Accord provides for the bases of a New Caledonian citizenship, and the construction of a 'common destiny' by the original people with men and women living there, a citizenship which will be specifically voted on in the promised independence referendum. It says: 'The past was the time of colonisation. The present is the time of sharing, by rebalancing. The future must be the time of identity, in a common destiny'. These are all ideas drawing from Tjibaou's discussions of Kanak identity and his view of including newcomers in what is Kanak land. Specific reference to these issues was instrumental in securing the support of the pro-independence parties.

Just as Tjibaou's presence is resonant in this document, his prescience has been reflected in its implementation so far.

There is no doubt that the Noumea Accord has enabled the continuation of peace and prosperity for New Caledonia for the last twenty years. Much progress has been made in establishing institutions and frameworks for unique power sharing between the Kanak people and non-Kanak communities of New Caledonia (Anaya 2011, Fisher 2012). However, it is the identity-related issues that Tjibaou highlighted where the biggest differences and concerns have emerged:

- different interpretations of the fundamental restricted electorate issue emerged early and were only resolved in 2007 after much resistance by the French authorities and pro-French parties
- the French State, disregarding local sensitivities over the central idea of ethnic identity, unilat-

erally removed the category of 'ethnic identity' from the census in 2009, and only after protests from the pro-independence groups did it reinstate such a category, albeit with different sub-groups limiting the comparability of figures (Fisher 2012, 2013)

- developing legislation to protect local employment rights has been time consuming and difficult
- there has been a pattern of ethnic tension between Kanaks and Wallisians
- immigration questions still have not been resolved. The Noumea Accord is silent on who is responsible for immigration, and it is excluded from the list of remaining responsibilities that will be voted on in an independence referendum
- environment and land issues have been particularly difficult, reflecting Kanak cultural identification with the land. It was Kanak opposition to environmental practices at the major nickel plant in the south, Goro, which led to significant delays and greater attention to these issues on the part of the major nickel mining companies. In May 2014 violence recurred at Saint Louis near Noumea, as Kanak clans protested against environmental practices at Goro, and included the shooting of two gendarmes. The issue of land returning to the Kanak people through the ADRAF (*Agence de développement rural et d'aménagement foncier*) has been sensitive, with ADRAF's handover to local authorities scheduled for the last phase of the Accord, by January 2014 (an issue still outstanding in the October Meeting of the Committee of Noumea Accord signatories, *Comite* 2013). UN Special Rapporteur for the Rights of Indigenous People, James Anaya, pointed to continued frustration by Kanaks and the lack of a proper land registration system (2011).
- 'identity signs' such as the name of the country, flag, and anthem remain points of contention and indeed will be amongst the key areas for discussion in coming years. Differences over the flag were so intense that they led to the moribundity of the government for much of 2010,<sup>9</sup> and are still not resolved
- results of economic rebalancing are mixed. There has been an increase in percentages of

the returns of nickel going to the local governments. The local share in the huge Northern Province Koniambo/Vavouto project is 51 per cent, and the local share of the 150 year old French plant SLN increased to 34 per cent by 2007. But the latter is still far short of the sought-after 51 per cent; and the local share of the massive Inco Vale project in the south is only 5 per cent. While there has been considerable French investment in new infrastructure and projects at Goro in the south and Koniambo in the north, neither of these new plants is producing at planned capacity, and a long-promised strategic survey of the resource has still not been completed. Imported labour was used in construction and few Kanaks are employed in managerial positions

- progress on educating and employing Kanaks in senior positions has been slow. Responsibility for primary and secondary education has passed to local authority, but Kanak achievement of the Baccalaureat has remained low — 23 per cent of candidates in 2009 compared to 69 per cent Europeans (*Nouvelles calédoniennes*, March 2010) — and the special 400 cadres program designed to train Kanaks has failed to ensure Kanak managers and professionals.<sup>10</sup>
- confusion of identity continues amongst young Kanaks, many of whom are unemployed and aimless. Young Kanaks can be seen roaming the central squares and squats of Noumea. They take refuge in music and drugs. The anthropologist Pillon refers to their ethnic identity being rejected by the dominant European society at the same time as their 'urban' identity is stigmatised by their community of origin (Pillon 1999, 69).

With the 2014 deadline of handovers upon us, differences remain about critical transfers, of so-called Article 27 powers, including administrative rules relating to the Provinces and Communes, tertiary education, and audiovisual communications.<sup>11</sup> Tjibaou's plan of developing economic competence among Kanaks so that they can participate fully in decisions about their country's resources has not yet been realised. More importantly, the way in which many issues (for example, the restricted

electorate and the census ethnic category) were handled undermined Kanak confidence that the French understood their expectations flowing from the idea of the *parole*, keeping one's word by taking appropriate action.

### Pointers For the Future

Tjibaou's notions of ethnic identity continue to provide guidance, as New Caledonia prepares for the last phase of the Noumea Accord. This involves discussions about a referendum process which is to focus on the last five sovereign responsibilities (defence, foreign affairs, civil law, justice, and currency); New Caledonian citizenship and nationality; and New Caledonia's international status.

The May 2014 provincial elections delivered a pro-France majority more divided and slimmer than ever before (29 of 54 Congress seats). While the component parties have different views about a referendum process, they are united on one thing: that New Caledonia will remain with France.

The pro-independence side managed to overcome their own divisions to attain their strongest representation to date (25 seats). It is significant that, at least for public consumption, in their formal election campaign statements all but one of the pro-independence parties now talk of 'full sovereignty' or 'full emancipation' rather than 'independence'.<sup>12</sup> While some leaders may talk of independence to Kanak audiences, there is a clear will amongst the main groups to avoid the use of the 'I' word publicly, no doubt with a view to maintaining stability given the recent bloody past, but also, nonetheless, with an eye to the negotiations about the future now under way.

This evolution in the thinking of Kanak political leaders about sovereignty, independence and identity issues has been evident over the course of implementation of the Noumea Accord. They have increasingly talked about 'recognition of identity', 'decolonisation' and 'full accession to sovereignty' rather more than independence, but all only on the basis that everyone fulfills their commitments under the Noumea Accord (adhering to the *parole*, putting it into action).

The principal Kanak political leaders today have not been voluble or prolific in expressing their

views. Principally they do so in occasional interviews. And Tjibaou's abiding influence is evident. In November 2013, Paul Néaoutyine — Northern Province President and leader of the pro-independence Palika party, a member of FLNKS — said that for 38 years Palika's 'objective is to have recognised the identity of our people and to lead the fight to end the colonial system and have the Kanak people accede to independence' (Néaoutyine 2013).

But his idea of 'independence' seems more nuanced. In 2009, he specified as his priority to 'seek out other citizens from non-Kanak communities... to share with them the formidable construction of a common destiny' (Néaoutyine 2009). Repeating this message in 2013, he noted that the mission of Palika is 'to convince Caledonians that independence or full sovereignty is not a spectre, it is the situation of 95 per cent of the country at the moment. Why not take responsibility to take the [next] step?' He adds in the same interview '[we want to] perfect living together because many of the responsibilities have not really been exercised and rebalancing has not yet finished... We have entered into a process of decolonisation, to be complete with the accession to full sovereignty. We continue to make Caledonian citizens believe that it's possible to stay in statutory links with France' — but only if commitments are met. In an interview in 2009 he premised the discussions on the post-Accord issues on 'the achievement of the transfers of responsibilities' by 2014; and at the end of 2013 he indicated that not all transfers had been completed (Néaoutyine 2009, 2013). Néaoutyine has emphasised the diversity of views amongst the pro-independence side, albeit with unity over the essentials, such as the restricted electorate, the transfers of responsibilities, the North nickel plant, and identity signs (Néaoutyine 2009). These elements are all at the heart of Kanak identity, and resonate with the thinking of Tjibaou.

Charles Washetine, Palika Politbureau member, has talked about 'playing the game [of the Noumea Accord] to its conclusion', provided that all sides fulfil their commitments (Washetine 24 February 2009). This reflects Tjibaou's own perspective, with its ominous foreshadowing of what might happen if others do not fulfill their commitments: in one of his last interviews, in January 1989, he said:

'The FLNKS is not married to the 10 years, but it will stick to it if the others stick to it. The minute the partners drop it, we ask for independence, we don't ask for 10 years. We stopped the disturbance because of the Accord' (Tjibaou 2005, 284).

Tjibaou's specific idea of Kanaky choosing relationships with other countries continues to inform statements by Néaoutyine, who has spoken about New Caledonia choosing links with France or any other country (2006), and by FLNKS spokesman Victor Tutogoro, who has argued that independence and sovereignty meant the capacity to choose one's own interdependencies, to choose with whom one wanted to work and exchange (*Nouvelles Calédoniennes* 2008).

Tjibaou's idea of Kanaks developing economic competence over the period of the Matignon Accords also lives on. In his capacity as president of the mainly Kanak Northern Province, Néaoutyine takes pains to point out that in successfully administering the Northern Province he and other Kanaks have demonstrated that they can manage a province, and a country (2013).

French analyses too draw on Tjibaou's ideas. In October 2013 the Committee of Signatories to the Accord released a discussion paper on options for New Caledonia's future prepared by French Counsellor of State Jean Courtial and law professor Ferdinand Melin-Soucramanien. The document does not address the idea of deferring a vote yet again, although does point to legal technicalities allowing a vote as late as 2022 (not 2018 as originally agreed) (Courtial et al. 2013, 62). It poses four options: full sovereignty, sovereignty in partnership with France, expanded autonomy and continued limited autonomy.

Tjibaou's enduring presence is reflected in the paper. Very early the authors address the idea of a 'common destiny', citing the Noumea Accord itself: 'The past was the time of colonisation. The present is the time of sharing, by rebalancing. The future must be the time of identity, in a common destiny' (Preamble 14).

Recognising the importance of whether or not the commitments under the Accord have been implemented before all parties can agree on the future, the paper specifically says that it is not its

task to evaluate the decolonisation process or the rebalancing policy, or whether the construction of identity is under way. Later when evaluating the ‘expanded autonomy’ option, the authors refer to ‘the thorny question of whether holding a referendum on accession to full sovereignty is predicated on the transfer of ... responsibilities’ (that is, the Article 27 responsibilities); and later devote an entire section to evaluating this question (Courtial et al. 2013, 54, 80–81). The paper notes the lack of equality for Kanaks<sup>13</sup> and the inability to agree on identity signs, and analyses various options of ‘Caledonian citizenship’ for the future, in or outside of France, recognising that ‘these questions are absolutely decisive for the institutional future of New Caledonia’ and for its relations with France (14–15). As noted earlier, ideas about Caledonian citizenship are fundamental identity issues identified by Tjibaou.

In words that could be Tjibaou’s, the authors write, ‘A socio-political community of citizens not constituting a State defines itself in relation to others from that State, to those who do not belong to that community’ (Courtial et al. 2013, 16). They reflect Tjibaou’s thinking on identity when they identify ‘markers’ of exclusion or inclusion (control of immigration, access to local employment, business and professional rights) and other symbolic ‘markers’ (a language, identity signs such as flag and name, institutions of representation to the outside community) which mean nothing if ‘the community does not really exist by itself’: ‘the essence is the common feeling of belonging to the same community, the identification of the peoples concerned with that community’, a ‘real community which feels itself as such’ (17). But the authors then proceed to judge that such a ‘feeling of belonging and the sense of sharing a common destiny had only been partly solidified over the three quarter-period of the Accord’ to date (18) — a highly controversial statement with implications for the discussions now under way. They note that the sensitive restricted electorate for provincial elections could not continue after the Accord, and are ascerbic in pointing to lack of agreement over a name of a country or a flag (19). Such judgements have led to scathing criticism from one academic at the University of New Caledonia (Chauchat 2013).

In their consideration of alternatives for the future, the authors refer explicitly to Tjibaou’s idea of the freedom to choose partners. In the case of full sovereignty, they refer to the reality of sovereign States ‘more often engaged in relations of more or less narrow interdependences’ and cite Tjibaou’s 1985 article ‘Our identity is ahead of us’: ‘For a small country like ours, independence is choosing our interdependencies skillfully’ (Courtial et al. 2013, 23). In the case of sovereignty in partnership with France, they refer to Tjibaou’s formula: ‘the partnership of sovereign States is the voluntary choice by these States of their own interdependencies’ (36).

When discussing sovereignty in partnership with France, the paper rather worryingly notes, ‘To evoke a common language and culture is not to deny the Kanak identity and culture, the existence of Kanak languages, no more than the identity, culture and languages of other communities living in the country’ (Courtial et al. 2013, 39). This acknowledges the importance of Kanak identity but seems to miss Tjibaou’s point about the primacy of Kanak culture and identity over those of newcomers such as the French, including the Caldoches, the Wallisians, the ni-Vanuatu, Vietnamese and Indonesians.

And in addressing the ‘existing autonomy’ or status quo option, the authors weigh carefully options around Caledonian citizenship based on the Accord’s provision for the translation of a ‘community of chosen destiny’, one of Tjibaou’s ideas (Courtial et al. 65–66). In its discussion of the continuation of ‘consensus government’ as currently applies under the Accord, the paper includes the idea of ‘an institutional identity unique to New Caledonia’ and a ‘Pacific’ solution as possibly being appropriate (72), ideas reminiscent of Tjibaou’s.

There has been remarkably little public reaction or specific comment from Kanak political leaders on the French paper, not even during the early 2014 election campaign. This is not an unusual state of affairs, but silence would be mistaken for agreement. As Tjibaou himself symbolised throughout his life, and as he explicitly warned, in 1988:

Kanak never say no — it’s bad manners, it’s not civilised. .. With Europeans, if you fall out, they send you packing, but with us

very often we'll just keep quiet. And then the Whites think we've agreed with them. (Tjibaou 2005, 276).

And, while Kanak political leaders have been reticent, a major paper has been released by the Kanak clan chiefs as members of the Customary Senate. This institution was established by the Noumea Accord, and consists of the customary chiefs and representatives of the eight customary areas. While these chiefdoms were historically established and appointed by the French, the chiefs are clan chiefs and accepted as senior Kanak elders. The Customary Senate is obliged to provide advice on all legislation and judicial proceedings touching on Kanak customary issues.

On 20 June 2014, a paper called *The Charter of the Kanak People: a common base of values and fundamental principles of Kanak civilisation* was presented to the New Caledonia Congress by the Customary Senate. It had been released to Kanak chiefs and councils at a prominent cultural centre, Ko We Kara, on 26 April 2014, just days before the provincial elections (11 May 2014). It presents itself as a formal Kanak contribution to the beginning of the discussions about the post-Accord future, and followed a process of consultations amongst the clans throughout 2013. It is in some ways a counterpart to the French paper. As it says, 'This Charter is at the end of the Noumea Accord process the contribution of the Kanak indigenous people to the construction of a new plan for society. The Charter of the Kanak people is what we carry to the basket of negotiations on the post-Noumea Accord' (31).

Once again, Tjibaou's influence is evident. The Charter begins, in its Introduction, with the same Noumea Accord reference made by the French paper in its Preamble 14 ('The past was the time of colonisation. The present is the time of sharing, by rebalancing. The future must be the time of identity, in a common destiny') (Sénat Coutumier 2014, 6). It begins with historical ideas about the Melanesian people then moves to the Kanak clans and the traumatising of colonisation (3–4). In an inclusive way, it specifically endorses the role of Christianity in transforming and consistent with Kanak spirituality (5). In its Preamble, reflecting Tjibaou's

inclusivity, the Charter situates Kanak identity within a common destiny and identity (7). While enumerating the continued inequalities suffered by the Kanak people, it refers to the 2007 UN Declaration of Indigenous Rights and the 'double-exercise' of the right of self-determination, both of the Kanak people and of New Caledonia under UN Resolution 1514 decolonisation principles (8). The Charter claims to give the Kanak people 'a superior judicial framework embracing a historical reality, in fact, and guaranteeing its unity and the expression of its inherent sovereignty', and pledges to affirm 'a cooperative and balanced judicial pluralism to allow the implementation of the Values and Principles of the Charter in sectors and institutions of society'. This is all part of a 'prerequisite and incontrovertible contribution' to the construction of a common destiny (9).

The substance of the paper itself reflects even more of Tjibaou's thought, when it elaborates on characteristics of Kanak identity, their values and civilization ranging from the sacredness of life, the word, the link to the land, the yam, consensus, and relationships with others whereby 'a Kanak person is always referenced to his social group' (Sénat Coutumier 2014, 10–11 and subsequent chapters).

The use of these identity traits as a political construct in the tradition of Tjibaou continues. There is an extensive discussion of the right of self-determination of the Kanak people. Nowhere does the paper use the word 'independence'. Instead, conciliatory concepts are advanced: the paper talks of the 'sovereignty' of the Kanak people, with the right to self-determination being exercised 'at an internal level', resting on a principle of 'joint and shared sovereignty' with 'no breach of the territorial integrity of the [French] State' (24). 'The Kanak people, their customary authorities and their institutions, freely determine the level of their participation and contribution in the management of the [French] State and [New Caledonia] Territory institutions and the degree of their cooperation with these institutions' (24) 'Each individual Kanak freely determines the level of his participation in the [French] State institutions through the exercise of his citizenship rights'. The authors are firm, however, that, 'all participation or cooperation of the

Kanak people and its component parts can no longer be conceived other than with institutions respectful of the principle and values affirmed in this Charter and on the basis of relationships freed from all form of discrimination and subjection' (24).

In this context, the Charter announces the formation of a Kanak People's Assembly consisting of the chiefdoms and districts of the eight customary areas, who are 'the only traditional and legitimate representatives of the Kanak people of New Caledonia and constitute the Kanak People's Assembly' (25). The Assembly is charged to exercise the attributes of indigenous Kanak sovereignty until a new social contract will be established with the other component [peoples] of New Caledonia. The Charter commissions this Assembly to 'organize and reinforce Kanak sovereignty and...redefine a mutually acceptable framework of relations between the Kanak people and the French State and the territory of New Caledonia' (25). The Charter calls on all State and territory Authorities to implement the Charter and the international community, and specifically, the Pacific countries and people, to support it (26).

In a related Solemn Message of the Customary Senate to the Kanak area Councils on 12 April 2014, the authors note that the Charter is not 'fixed in marble. We propose to give it life' (30). 'This step is an undertaking at the end of the Noumea Accord process. It should, or could, stand on its own, as we realize today that citizenship and the common destiny can only be built if we correctly reposition indigenous Kanak rights' (30). 'Our Charter opens the way to innovation and creativity in all areas. It opens the way to negotiation ... . Adopting the Charter should permit the opening of new paths for dialogue. We will be able, thanks to the Charter, to renegotiate the public Kanak policies that we have never been able to achieve until the present.'(30) 'But first and foremost, the adoption of this Charter must be a detonator, or a spark in the clans and chiefdoms allowing for a reappropriation of our rights, in each territory or customary zone of influence'(30).

It is of some interest that in these important days of preparing for discussion of the post-Noumea Accord, it is the Kanak customary elders that are providing the mouthpiece, rather than the pro-independence political leaders (although there is some

overlap, Rock Wamytan for example being a clan chief as well as the head of the FLNKS group in the south). No doubt one motivation is that Kanak supporters of independence want to reinforce the placement of Kanak identity front and centre in the political discussions for the future.

In closing, at this important juncture in the history of New Caledonia, where the people who live there are in the process of defining their future identity, it is worthwhile reminding ourselves of some of Tjibaou's words and his synthesis of past, present and future, and his ideas of inclusion. There are warning signs. As he often repeated 'To accept autonomy [as opposed to independence] is to walk on the graves of our ancestors' (Tjibaou 2005, xxxii). As he noted:

I am transient but must do my utmost to ensure that the country I leave for my sons will be the most beautiful country, one where there is wealth, wealth of thought, wisdom, flowers and nourishment...abundance..self-sufficiency No matter where you are, you have the same responsibility towards the current and future generations (291–92).

And in his very last speech before his death, in May 1989, referring to the blood of those who had gone, he enjoined us to 'remembering not to forget': 'we have a duty not to forget' (295).

### Author Notes

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### Acknowledgements

Different versions of this paper were presented, first at the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia conference on Ethnicity, the Asia-Pacific and French Scholarship, Kuala Lumpur, 24 April 2014; and as a public lecture 'Tjibaou's Kanak: ethnic identity in New Caledonia past, present and future' jointly sponsored by the Australian National

University State, Society and Governance in Melanesia (SSGM) program and Centre for European Studies at the SSGM State of the Pacific Conference, 19 June 2014, in Canberra.

## Endnotes

- 1 While there had been a history of differences over Brot's handling of such issues, the immediate trigger was a visit by the French Overseas Territories Minister and the announcement of a special mission to visit New Caledonia to address post-Noumea Accord discussions (*les Nouvelles Calédoniennes* 19 July 2014).
- 2 Although some Kanaks were able to vote from 1945 (war veterans, pastors and customary chiefs), it was only in 1956 that all native residents of the overseas territories were entitled to vote.
- 3 New Caledonia nickel reserves, representing about 30–40 per cent of world reserves, are the third-largest in the world (see Angleviel 2003).
- 4 French Prime Minister and former DOM-TOM Minister Pierre Messmer wrote to his DOM-TOM secretary of state on 17 July 1972 that indigenous nationalist claims could only be avoided if residents coming from metropolitan France, or from elsewhere in Overseas France, became the demographic majority (*À long terme, la revendication nationaliste autochtone ne sera évitée que si les communautés allochènes représentent une masse démographique majoritaire*' in Sanguinetti 1985, 26).
- 5 The author cites Tjibaou's various works and interviews from the collection translated into English and published by Helen Fraser and John Trotter in 2005. For ease of reading, the citation will appear as (Tjibaou 2005 and page number) using only page numbers for successive references within any one paragraph.
- 6 Marie-Claude Tjibaou said that everyone defined their unity while being very diverse : «chacun s'est affirmé dans son unité tout en étant très divers : les Ajie c'est les Ajie, les Paici c'est les Paici, les Drehu c'est les Drehu... On est quand même bien particulier. Même au niveau du faciès des gens on voit bien que l'on est différent mais on vibrait de la même chose » (revue *MwàVéé* 10, septembre 1995, 20).
- 7 Tjibaou was invited to speak to the University of Geneva on 'The Melanesians of yesterday and today'. As Eric Waddell points out, this was a distinction his people did not make, rather 'the Melanesian community is a continuously unfolding experience where time past, time present, and time future are all part of a distinctive whole' (Waddell 2008, 96–97).
- 8 Tjibaou himself refers to this, noting in 1985 that Europeans and other non-Kanaks working with independentists 'are 7% of our strength. Or 10 % depending on the area' and 'Melanesians [Kanaks] on the white side: 10 or 15%' (Tjibaou 2005, 150).
- 9 The Accord/related Organic Law provides for the 'government' (Cabinet) to dissolve if one of the members resigns. In February 2011, the UC member resigned over decisions made to fly two flags (the French and the FLNKS flag) in preparation for a visit by the French Prime Minister in mid-2010, triggering a series of re-elections and resignations stultifying government for months until rules about the effects of resignation were revised in legislation, leaving the flag issue suspended.
- 10 UN Special Rapporteur Anaya in 2011 cites damning results: 'There are no Kanak lawyers, judges, university lecturers, police chiefs or doctors, and there are only six Kanak midwives registered with the State health system, out of a total of 300 midwives in New Caledonia' (Anaya 2011).
- 11 Article 27 of the 1999 Organic Law implementing the 1998 Noumea Accord provides that 'The Congress can, from the beginning of its 2009 mandate, adopt a resolution for the transfer, by a further Organic Law, of the following responsibilities: Rules relating to the administration and legal control of the provinces, communes and their public establishments, and accounting and financial system for the public collectivities and their public establishments; tertiary education; audiovisual [televised] communication.'
- 12 During the campaign, in formal summaries of their positions, Palika leader Paul Néaoutyine (7 seats) proposes 'Caledonian citizenship, with a voluntary step to full emancipation...for equal and sovereign relations with France and all other free nations'; FLNKS leader Roch Wamytan (6 seats) 'full sovereignty...in today's realities...ready for cooperation agreements, even management of certain responsibilities, with France and Europe as with other regional countries'; with his Rainbow Coalition calling for 'access to full sovereignty, nationhood and the exercise of the sovereign powers'; the Dynamique autochtone (1 seat) also assuming full sovereignty, supporting a 'delegation of sovereignty' wherever

the sovereign country would not have the capacity to exercise sovereignty'; the UC-FLNKS (9 seats) favours full application of the Noumea Accord including on the three main referendum questions, a position shared by the small Union pour construire les Loyautés (1 seat). The standout remains the left wing Labour Party (1 seat), whose leader Louis Kotra Uregei refers to creating conditions whereby independence supporters would obtain the majority, after which it would control the country, culminating in independence.

- 13 The paper cites one review of the Accord showing that 'despite advances in favour of Kanaks, social policies have not yet created a true equality of opportunity in academic achievement and access to the employment market' (footnote in Courtial et al. 2013, 15).

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The State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Program acknowledges the generous support from the Australian Government for the production of this Discussion Paper.

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