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Université de Provence (U1) et Université de la Méditerranée (U2)

- 35 avenue J. FERRY - 13626 AIX-EN-PROVENCE CEDEX

Tél. : Standard : 04.42.37.85.00 - Fax : 04.42. 26.79.37 Email lest@univ-aix.fr

<http://lest.univ-aix.fr>

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**THE POLITICS OF FRIENDSHIP :
BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL STUDIES**

Workshop 15

coordinated by Preston King and Oleg Kharkhordin

When Local Institutions structure Bonds of Friendship

EVIDENCE FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF FRENCH CITIES DURING THE COLD WAR
(1948-1990)

Antoine Vion

Assistant Professor at the Mediterranean University
Institute of Labour Economics and Industrial Sociology

(UMR CNRS 6123)

and Centre de Recherches sur l'Administration et les Politique en Europe (CRAPE)

a.vion@univ-aix.fr

INTRODUCTION

The sociological study presented in this paper focuses on the role of local institutions in the structuration of international bonds of friendship. The role of cities as actors in the international relations' system has been questioned in the literature since the 60' (Boulding, 1968). In a more institutional perspective, studies have also taken into account the importance of subnational entities in the definition of foreign policies, but mainly in federal States (Duchacek, 1986 ; Duchacek, Latouche, Stevenson, 1988, Hocking, 1993, Belanger, 1995, Phelippart, 1998). Yet, even when initiatives of municipalities have been studied for themselves (Hobbs, 1994), friendship initiatives have rarely been the main centre of interest (except Khalaf, 2002). The following paper will focus on the structuration of bonds of friendship at the local level, and stress the importance of institutional configurations in this process.

A neo-institutional approach to bonds of friendship

Mainstream political science could try to take a neo-classical approach to this nebulous set of bonds and agreements. Such an analysis would emphasise the potential for these agreements to fail as a result of information asymmetry, incomplete contracts, moral hazard and agency problems. What we would like to stress is that, from a sociological point of view, bonds of friendship cannot be seen as contracts, even when they lead to trade and classical contractual relationships. Thus, it is proposed here that whatever the levels of cooperation and types of bonds involved, there are internal factors at work in the implementation of these relationships that play a significant role. One cannot deal with such relationships separately from the interactions, relationships and principles that constitute, and occur within, the institutional context. Institutions refer to formal rules, compliance procedures and standard operating practices that structure the relationships between individuals in various units of the polity and the economy (Hall,). Our theoretical framework is thus closer to neo-institutionalism than to neo-classical theory. These two approaches are outlined in the following comparative table (Table 2).

Table 1: Comparative situation of the analytical framework

	Neo-classical Framework	Neo-institutional framework
Method	Individualism	Institutionalism
Status of action	Constrained or favoured by contracts (subordination/incitement)	Oriented by rules and social patterns
Evaluation	External: allocative efficiency / prevention of <i>hold up</i> effects / reduction of social cost	Reflexive (coming out from the situation)
Information	Endowment analytically given to agents involved in the relation	Construction processed by the relation
Rationality	Maximisation of utility	Bounded
Relationship	Produced by an inter-individual agreement	Produced by institutional frames

From this theoretical perspective, the evolution of bonds of friendship may be analyzed across time and space as a result of interactions consolidated through institutions. This kind of historical institutionalism (Thelen, Steinmo, 1993 ; Immergut, 1998) is an attempt to overcome the limits of group based pluralist explanations of political phenomena. Critics addressed to historical institutionalism are well known: this theoretical framework would not furnish any theory of action, so that institutions would explain anything. Fisher qualified a statement to these critics by arguing that "it is not that institutions cause political action, it is their discursive practices that shape the behaviours of actors who do." (Fischer, 2003). Anyway, it is true that macrosociological approaches like theories of path dependency are very uncomfortable with the questions of policy change. This is why I prefer to focus on very local interactions. This kind of context allows to explain emerging or changing configurations, though it explains few on stable institutions made of routinized formal rules (Lahire, 1998).

Two main fields of investigation : town twinning and cultural institutes

Our historical investigations through the four decades of the Cold war period furnish data in two main fields : involvement in town twinings and local support to cultural institutes.

The role of local authorities' organizations in impulsing the development of town twinings since the forties has been fully explored in recent works (Vion, 2002a ; Bautz, 2002). In other papers (Vion, 2002b ; Vion, 2003), I have explained that this movement has been in France the main historical learning process of what is now called local foreign policies or paradiplomacy. When looking at the statistics, it is very interesting to notice that such a movement has been very progressive, with only a few big cities in the fifties and much more since the seventies, and with broader exchanges since the eighties (table 2). But the local structuration of bonds of friendship needs further explanations. This paper will show the importance and the regularity of rituals, feasts and exchanges structured by twinings.

Local support to cultural institutes is a difficult question, because it is much more tied to the implementation of cultural diplomacy initiatives and national foreign policies. The paper will only suggest how such organizations impact social life culturally as well as politically and economically. The role of such institutes in the promotion of Arts, intellectual exchanges and democratic values is well known, notably in the Franco-German case (Defrance, 1996). But links with firms and economic exchanges may also be observed, all over the time, in some cases.

Historical investigations have been led in the French Diplomatic Archives (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Municipal Archives of Rennes, Lille, and Puteaux, associative and local newspapers' Archives. Interviews were made with 60 persons, and direct observations conducted mainly in Rennes and Lille.

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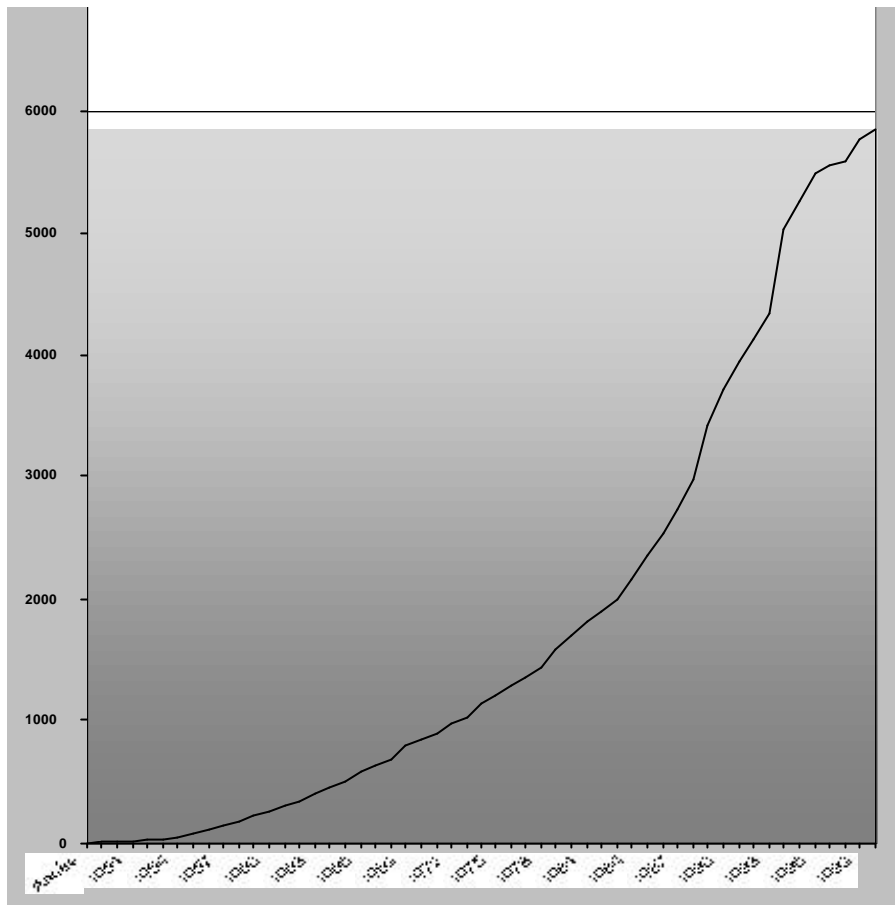


Table 2. International agreements signed by French local authorities (1947-2001) (Baraize, Négrier, Allès, 2002)

TOWN TWINNING : A COMMUNAL SCOPE OF INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP

The paper edited in *Contemporary European History* (see Vion, 2002a, attached) explains how the invention of town twinning established a municipal 'tradition' through which the opening of international friendly relationships among municipalities could be read. In the paper, I stressed that twinning fits Eric Hobsbawm's definition of an invented tradition: a set of ritual and/or symbolic practices, normally governed by openly or tacitly accepted rules and designed to inculcate certain values and codes of behaviour by dint of repetition, automatically suggesting the idea of continuity with the past (Hobsbawm, Ranger, 1983). If 'inventing tradition' means anything it must mean a rational intention to use reference to past situations as a basis for the creation of new practices which may then become routine – *become* a tradition. Genuine 'tradition', according to its etymology – 'passing on' a message – is in origin simply a chain of links, from the spoken word to the written word and back again, or vice versa (Ricoeur, 1990). It can leave room for innovation as long as the chain, going back into the mists of time, remains unbroken. 'Invented' tradition, on the other hand, has a discernible origin: it is a 'link' of innovation which, by virtue of its own creation, establishes the fiction of a 'chain'. It gathers up the fragments of a more or less imaginary past and puts them at the service of a social, cultural or political innovation (Bayart, 1995). The invention of tradition is a dynamic process which gives rise to political debate and doctrinal controversy. In the invention of town twinning it is important to note that the ideological disputes over the choice of partners and the parameters for the exercise of the tradition were much more lively and decisive than disputes over the form of the rite. Nonetheless they did oppose two very different concepts of what made a municipality. As far as the CEM was concerned, municipal tradition could not be embodied outside Christian Europe, where municipal liberties had been forged by the experience of centuries: indeed, the municipality or commune was the natural seat of liberty. For *Monde Bilingue* the municipality was a location for popular initiatives, where equal citizens could take the destiny of the world into their own hands. Pointing the fact there was a competition between organizations helps understand the spread diffusion of this practice. In this communication, I would like to go further and to analyse how municipal institutions, beyond national debates and controversies, practically structured bonds of friendship.

The celebration of friendship by feasts

Town twinning is generally conceived as a kind of folklore because it has, before all, been celebrated by rituals and feasts. Isambert (1983) suggests that any celebration consists on symbolic valorisation, what means a form of collective insistence on a being or an event which fits together properties of solemnity and enjoyment. Thus, organizing feasts consists on both linking fun to rituals and overwhelming rituals.

Feasts as rituals

Official ceremonies have been a very important concern in the first decades of town twinning. As I have already explained (Vion, 2002a), the solemnity of rituals has been promoted by organizations, which emphasized the needs of protocol, oath and spectacular acting. The main symbolic resources mobilized in these rituals have always been the vestiges of medieval communes :

« In Reims, one could see exterior decorations of the City hall made of lis from Reims and Florence, banners of the corporations from Champagne, the prestigious gonfalon of the City of Florence, the reception of the mayors on the square of the Cathedral, the fly of jets coming back from Florence and throwing on the two towns flags trimmed with the arms of the communes » (*Le Figaro*, 3 juillet 1954.).

Original text :

« A Reims la décoration extérieure de la mairie avec les lys de Reims et Florence, les bannières des corporations champenoises, le prestigieux « gonfalon » de la ville de Florence, la réception des maires sur le parvis de la cathédrale, le passage à l'heure du serment d'avions à réaction revenant de Florence et jetant sur les deux villes un pavillon orné de leurs armes... »

« In the central lounge of the City Hall, the Municipal Council, the two préfets, the roman delegation and the Ambassador of Italy strode towards the top of the room, as the trumpets of the Capitole heralds opened the hand for them. An hand drew back a half-part violet and golden canopy, and then appeared the She-wolf bronze giving Romulus and Remus the first milk of our civilization. Then, this short 'extraordinary session'. In the deliberation room, councillors of Rome sat amongst councillors of Paris. The Mayor of Rome, whose loins were girt by the green-white-red sash, sat down in vis-à-vis with the Mayor of Paris, while the Ambassador of Italy took a sit between the Prefet of Paris and the Police Prefet. Mr Rebecchini and Mr Feron read the twinning oath in French in a round of applause. (...) At the end, Mgr Feltin read a texte of a telegraph adressed by His Holiness Pie XII: "We are feeling great satisfaction to have been told of this new bond of friendship between the councillors of Rome and Paris, and we are pleased, in this occasion, to evoke the history of our two cities, which worked at promoting christian civilization in the world". » (*Le Figaro, l'Aurore*, 31 janvier 1956).

Original text :

« Dans le salon du centre de l'Hôtel de ville, le Conseil Municipal, les deux préfets, la délégation romaine et l'ambassadeur d'Italie se dirigèrent vers le fond de la salle, tandis que les trompettes des hérauts du Capitole ouvraient le ban. Une main écarta un velum mi-partie violet et or et alors apparut la Louve de bronze donnant à Romulus et Remus le premier lait de notre civilisation. Puis cette « session extraordinaire » de quelques instants. Dans la salle des séances les élus de Rome s'assirent parmi les élus de Paris. Le Maire de Rome, ceint de l'écharpe vert-blanc-rouge, se plaça en face du maire de Paris pendant que, entre le Préfet de la Seine et le préfet de police prenait place l'ambassadeur d'Italie. M. Rebecchini, en italien, et M. Jacques Feron, en français, lurent le serment de jumelage parmi les applaudissements. (...) A l'issue du Service Mgr Feltin a lu le texte d'un télégramme adressé à l'archevêché par SS Pie XII : « Nous apprenons avec une grande satisfaction ce nouveau lien d'amitié qui se noue aujourd'hui entre les élus de Rome et ceux de Paris et nous nous plaisons, en cette circonstance, à évoquer l'histoire de nos deux cités, qui ont travaillé à promouvoir la civilisation chrétienne dans le monde. » »

In every ceremony, solemnity is performed by unusual decorations (sprays of flowers, garlands, and so on) in city halls and their outsides. In flowerished rooms, flags and badges are embellished by the arms of the communes. A foreign mayor then may be given the keys of the commune, or any medal struck with its arms, or any other object expressing a privilege. In other cases, it may be a symbolic exchange of clothes: the vestments of French and English ushers, suits and 'boubous' in Franco-African twinings. All these things materialize the promise. In any case, the communal imaginary is made concrete by clothes:

« Let's remind the councillors of the fact that they must have their sash and their rosette. The ushers must wear their formal dress and every thing must be perfect. »

(AMR 7 / 81 - 3. Préparatifs des cérémonies du jumelage Rennes-Erlangen, octobre 1964, dernières instructions du maire)

Original text :

« Il y a lieu de rappeler aux conseillers qu'ils devront être, mardi, munis de leurs écharpes et de leurs cocardes. Les huissiers devront être en habit et tout devra être impeccable. »

In this topics, the somptuosness of the Italian pomp and the publicity given to franco-italian twinnings contributed to stimulate ceremonials. The bulletins of the CEM made sharp descriptions of them, with enthusiastic comments:

« Four valetti in purple and gold jerkins of the Sixteenth Century, whose patterns had been drawn by Michel-Ange, held silver trumpets or roman standards and conferred moreover brilliance to this ceremonial. » (*Communes d'Europe*, février 1956)

Original text :

« Quatre valetti en juste-au-corps pourpre et or du XVI^e siècle, dont les costumes avaient été dessinés par Michel-Ange, portaient les uns des trompettes d'argent, les autres des étendards aux couleurs romaines et apportaient à cette cérémonie un surcroît d'éclat. »

Music also plays a big role. When everybody has taken his seat, the municipal orchestra or fanfare does the best. All of this means that achieving international friendship is not only discursive. Aesthetic experiences take an important part in such processes. And what is exemplified by such rituals is not simply State diplomacy but communal autonomy.

In such a framework, friendship cannot be achieved without collective participation, what Eisenhower used to call 'people-to-people'. In order to guarantee the success of such a ceremony, the city hall must be full of more or less representative people (see Table 2).

Table 3. First reception of a German delegation (Erlangen) in the city of Rennes, September, 8, 1964 (AMR 7 / 81 - 3. Préparatifs du jumelage Rennes-Erlangen)

Composition of the German delegation	The Deans of the faculties of Health, Literature, Chemistry, and the institutes of Agriculture and Trade
The mayor (CSU)	The regional head of Tourism
Two CSU councillors (one man and one woman)	The clergyman
One CSV-GDP councillor	The director and one civil servant of the Prefet's office
One FDP-GUW councillor	One Inspector of Academy
Three SPD councillors (two men and one woman)	Two civil servants of the Ministry of Youth and Sports
One municipal architect	Two civil servants of the Ministry of Youth and Sports
One assistant professor in roman languages	Eight municipal servants (including the General Secretary, his Adjoint, and the Director of the financial service)
Local VIPs who joined the ceremony	One Head of the Chamber of Crafts
Meeting of the whole municipality (except Communists) and:	One Head of the Union of Trade
The German Ambassador	One Head of the Chamber of Agriculture
The consul of Belgium	One Head of the Union of Young Patrons
The Prefet and his wife	The director of the tourism office
The Recteur d'Académie and his wife	One head of the Regional Academy of Music and of the Youth Orchestra
The General and two Colonels of the Regional Headquarters	The proviseur du lycée préparatoire aux grandes écoles
The President of the judicial Court	Three directors of highschoools
The President of the commercial Court	One German teacher, also interprete
Eight journalists of regional and national newspapers	Twenty-four teachers
The President of the Chamber of Trade and Industry	Nineteen members of associations

Such a crowd is not specific to genuine franco-german celebrations. What is more original in this case is the presence of the Ambassador and all the protocolar precaution taken by the municipal elites, in a critical context of reconciliation, as this letter exemplifies:

“There should be an official presentation of the delegation of Erlangen with a welcome speech of the Mayor of Rennes and an answer from the Mayor of Erlangen. I remind you of the fact that during the official twinning ceremony in Germany, Mr Lades introduced me as Chairman of the ceremony, so he and his first assistant Sponsel stood up at my right and at my left. A German Chair of our ceremony is of course irrelevant. I even doubt that Lades should be the Chairman of the unofficial part of the ceremony, but it seems to me that fairness should lead you, as Chairman, to welcome the German delegation, and then, to invite him to take your place in order to do his speech.”
(translation) (AMR 7 / 81 - 3. Préparatifs des cérémonies du jumelage Rennes-Erlangen, octobre 1964. Note de Victor Janton à Henri Fréville).

« Il faudra bien une présentation officielle de la délégation d'Erlangen avec un discours d'accueil du maire de Rennes et une réponse du maire d'Erlangen. Je te rappelle que lors de la cérémonie officielle du jumelage, M Lades m'en a d'autorité donné la présidence, lui même n'occupant que la place à ma droite et le premier adjoint, M. Sponsel celle à ma gauche. Il n'est pas question évidemment d'une présidence allemande pour notre séance publique. Je ne crois même pas qu'il serait judicieux de donner d'emblée à M. Lades la présidence de la partie officieuse de la cérémonie mais il me semble qu'il faudrait lui rendre sa politesse et que tu pourrais, après avoir pris la présidence et salué la délégation allemande, l'inviter à prendre ta place pour prononcer son discours de réponse. »

As one can notice in Table 2, protocolar issue also concerns the obliteration of political divergence. In every ceremony, bonds of friendship also mean that a whole council also reconciles by expressing superior values. As Van Gennep pointed out, rituals also renew feelings of community membership. By celebrating international friendship, communal institutions also celebrate themselves as political bodies. Bringing back politics is there considered as a nonsense. All parties are represented in delegations. The only opposition comes out automatic hostility towards the designated friends. In this case, the mode of political acting is only exit, what, for example, have always done communist councillors when Franco-German ceremonies were at stake.

Rhetorics of friendship between twinning cities

When I analyzed a corpus of about 50 official speeches, I noticed these speeches were made of very similar frameworks from one ceremony to another. A first part of such a speech very often inserts the narrative of the genesis of the twinning oath in the long-lasting history of friendship between the two peoples or, on the contrary, the necessity to surpass hostility, to make peace concrete. In this frame, historical discourses often refer to religious history, such as previous links between missionaries or pilgrims. Narratives about progressive pacification of conflicts between religions, insistence on oecumenism, allows believer mayors as well as agnostic ones to stress the conciliating properties of twinning feasts. This beginning part of speeches emphasizes friendship as a way to go over political oppositions by transcending time periods of polity.

Then a second part is generally based on exemplifications of bonds of friendships favoured by the relationships between the two cities. Figures of success are the increase of the number of individuals involved and the regularity and density of such exchanges. Arguments are here much more basic, made of anecdotes, difficulties in learning languages, sports' results, and so on. The best figure of success is when relationships lead to mixed marriages. The fact that a twinning ritual, considered itself as a kind of marriage (Vion, 2001), may lead to official weddings fires the imagination: “it is not a demographic trend, but it is revealing”. (interview of a municipal councillor, Tourcoing, 1997).

Then the conclusion of speeches project friendship bonds in the future, referring to expected tenth, twentieth, thirteenth birthday celebrations, according to what usually happens in conjugal life. Rhetorics thus appear as embedding bonds of friendship simultaneously in what Koselleck (1990) calls 'topics of experience' and 'horizon of expectation'.

Beyond ceremonies : fun

Transitions between ceremonies and collective fun are often managed by a banquet, in which people taste typical dishes. In France, French wine has always been a matter of pride in such events. In Germany, such dinners may fit with 'beer feasts'. Drinking together is a very usual way to share emotions far beyond protocolar frames and barriers of foreign languages. Drunkenness as a way to fraternize is an antediluvian pattern, though it might be absent of any theory of friendship.

Feasts also take place in streets and squares, with folkloric ballets, orchestras, beauty queens, and so on. Cities of the North of France may have shown their cortèges of Giants. Cities from Brittany may have asked their bagadou (traditional music bands) to play. In any case, even when there was no current tradition, municipalities have played active roles in restoring such local habits. In Rennes, for example, whereas the city has never been the centre of the Breton culture, traditional bands have been encouraged. In Lille, the immense carnivalesque mannequins called Giants are associated to every reception or trip to sister cities. As Lyderic and Phynaert, the most famous ones, who are supposed to have founded the commune, all these Giants have legendary heroic lives. A French ethnologist, Marie-France Gueusquin, showed that Lille had never been a dominant place of gigantic figures, what rather were cities like Douai, Cassel, Dunkerque or Bailleul. She pointed out that Lille « is noticeable by the predominance of the municipal institution, by the fact only the City Hall promotes these festive mannequins, whereas in other cities, support and promotion belong to official groups. » Marie-France Gueusquin stresses that the quarter administrative reform led by Mauroy in 1975 marked the beginning of the creation of Giants in every quarter. This funny activity has been linked to the organization of feasts, among which twinning feasts have been the most important ones. Travelling with Giants has been a big matter of fun for people.

Sports' competitions are also a major activity of twinning feasts. Many cities organize special tournaments, such as soccer ones, or rugby ones and water tourneys (more likely in Southern cities). Little clubs have always been active participants of such events, because that allowed them to practice international matches, what they could not usually do. Such competitions are everything but anecdotic. Elias and Dunning, about rugby, have shown how the practice of this sport had trained aggressiveness, and sublimated rivalry and warlike urge. The fact that not only professional athletes but any people may take part to peaceful or, at least, fair-play fights, may be analyzed as another dimension of what Elias called the civilization of habits. It is interesting to notice that this historical trend consisting on organizing popular competitions and games between cities has strongly inspired some very popular TV shows invented in the sixties, like *Intervilles* and *Jeux sans frontières*, created by the very famous compères Léon Zitron and Guy Lux. Zitron himself, who was born in Russia, had had the idea of such games after presenting radio reports on East-West twinings of the Monde Bilingue in 1955. Controversies about these twinings (Vion, 2002) made him adapt his original idea of a TV competition between sister cities.

When bonds of friendship keep alive local communities

What I noticed, when I studied the development of these practices from the 50' to the 80', was that the more innovative have been municipal councils in governing cities, the more they celebrated international friendship.

Such bonds of friendship have often been considered as elements of professional exchanges, or even trade. In some cases, exchanges through corporations or professions have been the spearhead of the twinning process, such as exchanges between hosiery firms of Troyes and Tournai or glass artists of Chartres and Varenne. Universities have intended to multiply their links by this way, too. In any case, such exchanges contributed to buck up local professional organizations, and to stimulate the international circulation of know-hows. French bakers would learn to make bretzels, Spanish wine growers would learn French methods of wine-making, judges would compare their law systems, and so on. These relations have often been an occasion of reasserting the value of corporative traditions. Professors, judges or attorneys have enjoyed to wear their robe or gown in professional twinning ceremonies comparable to *'doctor honoris causa'* ones. Brotherhood rituals have been restored, for example in wine-growing. This kind of corporative folklore is all the more interesting that the corporatist experience of the fascist Vichy regime had definitely made unsuitable corporatism after World War II in France (Kaplan, 2002). The promotion of corporative traditions may rather be analyzed as a way to distinguish social groups who had played a major role in the political constitution of the city. Weber sharply insisted on the historical role of corporative qualification in the formation of an economic class of bourgeois who had been powerful enough to gain the constitutive privileges of communal autonomy. A quick culturalist view would lead to analyze such exchanges as a kind of permanence of local culture in political life. One should better notice that such exchanges have helped reintroducing old status in cities, as new political compromises (concertation with unions or quarter committees) emerged. This observation fits with one of Hobsbawm's hypotheses about invented traditions: « we should expect it to occur more frequently when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which 'old' traditions had been designed, producing new ones to which they were not applicable, or when such old traditions and their institutional carriers and promulgators no longer prove sufficiently adaptable and flexible, or are otherwise eliminated...» (Hobsbawm, 1983, 4) Expressing the historical predominance of one's group in local society might be a way to try to keep alive a social order made of closed communities, to reintroduce status into a world of contract. The development of clubs such as Lyons' Club and Rotary club also goes this way and takes part in such a process.

This is to say that bonds of friendship may be simultaneously open in popular feasts and closed in professional or club exchanges, according to Weber's analyses of open and closed communities (Weber, De Coninck, 1999). Aristotle's or Arendt's frameworks refer to a political order based on one open community. Locality studies may show a more complex and segmented one.

Promoters of friendship : Tocqueville's paradox

As we have said, the more French local councillors have favoured local interventionism in social, cultural and sports policies, the more they also encouraged the twinning of their city. This process has been supported by associative militants. Studies on the associative movement in France (Héran, 1988) have statistically pointed overadhesion of teachers and liberal professions in associations, especially in the most voluntaristic ones. My own local interviews and observations in Rennes, Lille, and Toucoing, show that these individuals

have been the main promoters of international friendship since the beginning of the fifties. Studying local interactions allows to go further than macro explanations. If one explains political change by the changing social structure of cities, they will not pay attention on the social structure of local activism, which may be different from basic demography. Furthermore, if one explains friendship on a national level, they will see for example that the perception of the German people by the French people has began to change in the sixties (Inglehart), but the vectors of such a change remains vague.

The experience and the know-hows of political activism or, at least, associative membership or multi-membership may be needed to structure committees and debates. In his famous book *La Démocratie en Amérique*, Tocqueville stressed the paradoxical situation of voluntaristic associations. He had noticed that people promoting universal values could be organized in very closed *milieux* or communities. Local interviews led in French cities about the milieu of twinning committees and international friendship associations have brought this paradox out. One of the militants who were interviewed in Rennes, who was also a Christian teacher and a socialist activist, even said : « If we resume it, I did the whole tour of twinning committees. I gave a new start to Rennes-Sendai exchanges in the seventies and I even became the Chairman of the Committee. I became a member of Rennes-Mopti after taking part to the Catholic Committee for Development and the Third World commission of the Associative Office. I went to Erlangen for the twentieth birthday, in Alma Ata, too. So, I traveled all over the world ». On the contrary, simple members with simple projects are pushed to the margins of the system, as students explain: « People make it too serious. It is much instituted. All these chairmen of twinning committees in the International House, this makes a hierarchy which is not necessary. – Yes, we did not feel it very much, all of them were old. »

As the number of sister cities is limited by local councillors for financial reasons, the predominance of multi-membership in the control of municipal friendship policies closes the little policy communities.

LOCAL SUPPORT TO CULTURAL INSTITUTES

Local support to cultural institutes is much more tied to the implementation of cultural diplomacy initiatives and national foreign policies. But the following case studies make clear that the durability of such organizations have depended on their social anchorage in localities and notably on municipal efforts to promote them. In some cases, municipal support has permitted to maintain such structures in localities.

Franco-German institutes

As I wrote in the CEH paper, French mayors were ready, even as early as 1947, to translate their desire for peace between France and Germany into action. Though their initiative was not universally supported, it led to a new international association, the *Union Internationale des Maires* (UIM), dedicated to Franco-German reconciliation and understanding among nations. From 1947 to 1950 its efforts were isolated. In 1947, for example, two eminent Swiss supporters, the writer Eugène Wyler and Dr Hans Zbindon, organised a discussion session for French and German mayors with the aim of launching an exchange programme in a spirit of reconciliation. After the First World War there had similarly been a few scattered attempts by municipalities to re-establish dialogue between French and German youth movements (Tieman, 1989) in the wake of political discussions

between the two countries (Delbreil, 1994). But such direct exchanges between the two peoples at municipal level had remained very much the exception. The Mont Pèlerin meeting witnesses the mayors' willingness to reinstate them. It led to a solemn mutual undertaking to simplify visa formalities and encourage exchanges among young workers, and annual study trips by mayors and local government officers. The French contingent was led by the mayors of Montbéliard (M. Tharradin), La Flèche (M. Montgascon), and, most important of all, the Gaullist MP René Radius, deputy mayor of Strasbourg. The participants were not delegated by their town councils and attended in their personal capacity; those who had AMF responsibilities took care not to mention the fact.ⁱ

Moreover, the association was drawn into the orbit of French cultural diplomacy in Germany.ⁱⁱ From 1948 onwards, the UIM worked with the French Institute at Ludwigsburg, founded by the Franco-German jurist Carlo Schmid, head of the first government of Würtemberg-Hohenzollern. After the inauguration of the German Federal Republic in 1949, there was a heavy demand for exchanges among German mayors, but the implementation of these plans was hedged around with precautions by the French foreign office, which supported the idea in principle but feared French local reactions which might disturb the peace.ⁱⁱⁱ Up to the Stuttgart Congress in June 1950 the UIM's activities remained modest; but this congress was supported and attended by French and German representatives at the highest level,^{iv} and it led to the organisation of a first official exchange between the municipalities of Montbéliard and Ludwigsburg at the end of 1950. As early as 1948, the strong local links which had been tied between the mayors of Ludwigsburg and Montbéliard have been a major support of the activities of the Institute. This was the first expression of the municipal ethic of peaceful co-existence, but there were other initiatives in the pipeline. The heteroclit French Germanophil milieu, made of Christian Democrats and youth movements, Socialists, some Gaullists, planners, civil servants, trade-unions, associations of German teachers, and journalists, encouraged public support to Goethe institutes and youth exchanges.

The French official History considers that bonds of Friendship between France and Germany were impelled by the signing of the Elysée Peace Treaty in 1963. People who studied this field (Defrance, Ménudier, etc.) have shown that this event has much more been the outcome of a first post-war wave of exchanges than the beginning of anything. What is clear, nonetheless, is that the creation of the Franco-German Office for Youth and the big budget allowed to this institution have done of it the nexus of Franco-German institutes and Franco-German cultural exchanges. Looking to local Archives make it evident: institutes and exchanges benefitted from the political support of municipal teams (except the communist ones, who began to promote links with GDR at the end of the fifties) and from the financial support of the Franco-German Office. The problem is that the broad increase of initiatives made more and more difficult their financial achievement. In some cases, local institutions have relieved financial support to institutes and youth exchanges.

So, if one looks at the link between transnational organizations and intergovernmental cooperation (Risse-Kappen, 1995 ; Keohane and Milner, 1996), they should pay attention to local institutions too, in an extended perspective of multi-layered diplomacy (Hocking, 1993).

Franco-American institutes

Franco-American institutes were part of the U.S. cultural diplomacy after WW II in Europe. In France, they have been created mostly in the fifties, in cities where Marshall plan's offices had been opened.

The U.S. Embassy supported the creation of libraries, English lessons, Arts and photographic exhibitions, American movies' shows and so on. These institutes functioned in the context of the quick spread of American culture and American way of life through magazines, radios and cinemas. They also encouraged programs of youth exchanges, such as Eisenhower's 'People-to-People program' created in 1956 a few weeks before his reelection. All of these activities made these institutes rather popular. Though, French public highschool teachers did not participate to their functioning as much as they did in Franco-English town twinnings. Marxist and anti-imperialist theories which had been popularized by the Communist Party and Left movements and trade-unions led a majority of them to proclaim their anti-americanism, or, at least, to keep their distance with American people. This might be a reason why these institutes did not find many active supporters when the Congress, involved in the Vietnam war efforts, voted budget cuts in 1966. American support to these institutes was no longer considered as a priority by anyone, as far as President Charles de Gaulle had decided that France would quit the integrated Headquarters of NATO. Most of these institutes got closed at the end of the sixties, causing few demonstrations, what shows again the decisive importance of local voluntarist associations.

What is quite interesting is that the only remaining institute has been the one U.S. services had not wanted to create in the fifties. This institute, in Rennes, had been supported by local institutions since the beginning, contrary to the other ones, which were entirely financed by the United States. The mayor of Rennes, Henri Fréville, who was a Christian-Democrat, had negotiated this implantation after his city and its universities had twinned with Rochester, in the State of New York in 1958. This implantation was not a priority of the U.S. Embassy, but the mayor was supported by his predecessor, who was the Chairman of the local *France-Amérique* Committee, and the boss of the French branch of Kodak, whose global head office was in Rochester. They obtained from the American services that they would let an American bookshop, *Brentano's*, have the ground floor of the local office of the Marshall Plan and a local independent association have the two other steps of the building. The French local institutions (commune and department) paid for the functioning of the Institute, what meant recruiting a director and assistants, supporting exhibitions and youth exchanges. Local contacts with Rochester helped opening the Institute. The City of Rochester gave materials for exhibitions and books. The global head office of Kodak supported youth photo competitions by offering films and cameras as prizes to the winners. All these local arrangements made the device quite original. This explains why it remained the only Franco-American Institute at the end of the sixties. This centre has developed many activities for forty years (teaching, training periods, exchanges, exhibitions, conferences, translation, political debates about American elections, etc.).

Since the beginning of the eighties, the director is also associated to all the local efforts to attract American direct investment. When implantations of production units of Kodak, Rank Xerox, or Motorola have been negotiated, he was the leader of the welcome team. The Institute also tries to attract American firms in international trade fairs and shows.

CONCLUSION

What have we learnt about friendship politics in this short empirical study ?

The first result is the fact that its embeddedness in local communities favours the long duration of the bonds. Governmental initiatives might have big impacts, but rarely go on

without local support or relieve.

The second result is that the embeddedness of friendship politics in local communities has partly gone through a process of invention of communal traditions. The European communal history has been a major symbolic resource in this process.

The third result is that achieving friendship might not favour the structuration of a broad and open community but, on the contrary, favour a dense network of closed communities who join all together within ritual activities such as feasts or competitions, which allow the bridging of social frames.

ⁱ Subsection Central Europe (Seydoux) to Minister's office, summary note on 'Visit to Germany by French mayors and to France by German mayors', 28 July 1950, Archives du Ministère des affaires étrangères (France), Series Europe (1944-1960), Subsection Central Europe, Subseries Germany, April-July 1950.

ⁱⁱ On the overall programme of French cultural diplomacy in Germany, aimed at the political re-education of young Germans (and of which the Gaullist Raymond Schmittlein was one of the principal architects), see the comprehensive study by Corinne Defrance, *La politique culturelle de la France sur la rive gauche du Rhin 1945-1955* (Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 1994).

ⁱⁱⁱ Subsection Central Europe (Seydoux) to Minister's office, summary note on 'Visit to Germany by French mayors and to France by German mayors', 28 July 1950, Archives du Ministère des affaires étrangères (France), Series Europe (1944-1960), Subsection Central Europe, Subseries Germany, April-July 1950.

^{iv} Report by the French High Commissioner in Germany, 2 June 1950, Archives du Ministère des affaires étrangères (France), Series Europe (1944-1960), Subsection Central Europe, Subseries Germany, April-July 1950. André François-Poncet, 'Address to the Congress of French and German Mayors at Stuttgart, 2 June 1950', *Réalités Allemandes* 18 (1950), 25-7.

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