

# GOVERNANCE

BASEL INSTITUTE ON GOVERNANCE

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## Madagascar, FFKM and politics

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**\*\*\* For a better understanding, all originally French quotations have been freely translated. The original text can be found in the original French paper (annotation of the translator)**

At the beginning of the XXIst century, the revival of Madagascar's political scene is marked by the increasing weight of the two sectors of civil society in relation to the State: the private sector of the economy and the historical Churches. Regarding the latter ones, the organizations which emanate from them are financially quasi-autonomous and benefit from an important social standing due to their ancient roots, according to the opinion of numerous observers.

« The private sector<sup>1</sup> is undoubtedly the most effective ..., best structured of the non-state actors. Economic operators have largely accompanied the emergence of non-state actors on the Malagasy public scene at the beginning of the 1990s, seeing there an... opportunity to protest against the stranglehold of the State on the economy. The private sector has thus opted for a policy of friendly cooperation with the public authorities and is keen to forge partnerships with the State in order to draw up and implement economic programs based on free trade ....».

Equally "Churches are (...) an integral part of the Malagasy landscape and, although their real influence is impossible to quantify, their presence is undeniable. Their highly developed structures and networks give them a social coverage that is unparalleled in civil society. Religious associations and organizations consequently dominate the Malagasy network of associations and, via these networks, the churches are running an increasing part of the educational and health systems. This explains why the Church holds such an important position in Malagasy political life. Over the years, the Federation of Christian Churches of Madagascar<sup>2</sup> has become a key player in political debates."<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Represented by the Groupement des entreprises de Madagascar (GEM), the Syndicat des industries de Madagascar (SIM), the Organisation des opérateurs économiques de Madagascar (Fivmpama) and the Conseil national économique et social (Conecs).

<sup>2</sup> Or *Fikambanan'ny Fianganana Krisitnina Malagasy* (FFKM)

<sup>3</sup> Valette, C. 2005. *Non-state actors in Madagascar: From support for local development to support for governance*. Maas-

In fact, the real influence of the historical Churches is clearly evident by the election<sup>4</sup> of Marc Ravalomanana as President of the Republic of Madagascar in 2002. He was then vice-president of the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (union of the Reformed Protestant churches or FJKM) and one of the most dynamic businessmen of the island's industry, the FJKM being one of the four components of the Council of Christian churches in Madagascar (FFKM).

In this situation, one does not only see confusion between the *regnum* and the *sacerdotum*, at the risk of adopting a normative attitude which does not take into consideration the particularities of the history of Madagascar. The true interest of this situation, at least recently, does not revolve around this question. In the case of Madagascar, it is even a fictitious debate, as it is proved by inconsistent debates on this matter, and despite the protest of the political opposition.

The emergence of the FFKM at the end of the 1980s seems to comply with the set-up of organizations, able to define new rules of conduct in the public space. If according to the opposition, the mainstream Churches should limit themselves to the domain of *sacerdotum*, the FFKM, their emanation, will more and more interfere in the political domain, as well on the level of the political leaders, as on the one of the general public, public domains par excellence. It will even succeed in being represented within the institutions of the Republic. These institutional aspects (history of the links between State, society and Churches) constitute the frame for thinking on the status of the religious field within the public domain; and going out from there the contour of the civil society being thus (re)designed.

One of the major issues lies in the question: why do the citizens allow spiritual and moral values steered by the

tricht: ECDPM European centre for Development Policy Management <http://www.ecdpm.org/>.

<sup>4</sup> and without any doubt by his re-election in 2006, when these lines were written.

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FFKM to become norms of definition of State policy on the one hand, and progressively, norms of behavior of political leaders on the other hand, and, at the same time be inspiration for the citizens?

## 1 The institutional aspects: *sacerdotum vs. regnum*, a false debate?

The conversion of the leaders of the Kingdom of Madagascar in 1869, among them the Queen and her husband the Prime Minister, and the transformation of Protestantism to a State religion achieve a paradox aspect in the links between the political and religious domains. As a matter of fact, these events inaugurate the beginning of an autonomisation of the political sphere with respect to the religious domain

In 1869, the conversion of the Sovereigns of the Kingdom of Madagascar to Protestantism is certainly the achievement of several decades of evangelization efforts, led, in particular, by the *London Missionary Society* but, in the conjuncture of the moment, it corresponded equally to an instrumentalisation of Christianity by the leading classes. The aim of their conversion was also to undermine the bases of a possible political opposition, which was using Christianity. A considerable part of the slaves thus saw in Christianity a way to escape their conditions.

By converting, the sovereigns took over the leadership of an evolving social and political movement, but in doing so, they opened the gate of the Kingdom to another religious approach, which will adapt to the local practices, in particular with regard to the relation between the religious and politics<sup>5</sup>.

Secondarily, as a State religion, Protestantism also allowed Catholicism to seize its chance. The latter would be able to develop fully by embracing the colonial cause in 1896. Apparently, the religious now seem confined to an independent domain within the royal state system (while being part of institutions). Through Christian missions, they will invest in new domains of society by assigning themselves strategic quasi-fiefdoms such as education, including technologies, such as writing and the creation of new knowledge. The missions made themselves indispensable to power; even for the colonial State after France annexed Madagascar in 1896. Whereas the separation of the Church and the State was endorsed by the legislator in France in 1905, it took an inverted path in Madagascar. The State financed the mission schools and collaborated particularly with the Catholic church in different fields. The situation was such that during the first decade of the XXth century, the

*Mission Laïque de France* (Secular Mission of France)<sup>6</sup>, a non-governmental organization, took control of actions in favor of secularism by taking over the formation of teachers destined for the colonies. The organization has been initiated by a high ranking French colonial civil servant.

However, Christianity had problems previously to being able to take root in Madagascar. Before the conversion of the leaders of the Kingdom of Madagascar, being a Christian meant to give allegiance to another king, (does one not call Christ the king?), who is at the end or in the centre of a chain of ancestors, as is the reigning sovereign. However, in ancient Madagascan political thinking, allegiance to a king also meant the recognition of his dynasty. This comprises the deceased kings, amongst them mythical personalities who allow a tracing back of the reigning king till God. The relationship of a subject with God therefore inevitably passes through the intermediary of the King's ancestors, a personality who is at the same time political, economical, but also sacred.

In the XVII. and XVIII. centuries, at the peak of the sakalava royalty's power, the King (*Andriana*) was considered by his subjects as the visible God (*Zanahary antany*)<sup>7</sup>, based on the control of royal relics (the *dady*) and the trading of weapons and slaves with Europeans.

This perception of royalty, doubtlessly brought from South-East Asia and reinterpreted in Madagascar over several centuries, was one of the basis of the totality of the kingdoms in Madagascar at their respective apogee. The royalty was of legal but also of divine essence, as the argument of the religious historian P. Lupo suggests when discussing Malagasy monotheism<sup>8</sup>. "In the word *Zanahary* the first root *yan* carries the idea of "God" or "Divinity", it is a prefix which is never separated from the second root *hary*, indicating the "Sun". Equally, in the term *Andrianahary*, we can find the same root *hary* as the suffix. But here also appears a political resonance, because the term *hary*, "sun" is inseparably connected to the word "*Andriana*" which means "King or Prince". The term *manitra*, from which *Andria(na)manitra* proceeds, means "the perfumed Prince". *Manitra* (to smell good) is opposed to the *maimbo*, which is used for a decomposing cadaver and for everything which has a bad odor. Affixed to the word *Andriana*, the verb *manitra* evokes

<sup>5</sup> For these questions of F. Raison Jourde 1991, *Bible et pouvoir aux XIXème siècle*, Paris Karthala, p. 840

<sup>6</sup> S. Duteil, 2006, *Partir et travailler dans le domaine colonial français : Enseignantes métropolitaines et réunionnaises à Madagascar, 1896-1920*. in *Le Sextant* (to be published)

<sup>7</sup> M.P. Ballarin (2000) *Les reliques royales à Madagascar : source de légitimation et enjeu de pouvoir. XVIIIe-XXème siècles*, Paris, Karthala, p. 470 See also the description of King Andrianahevenarivo by European traders in S. Ellis, S. Randrajanja 2001, *Les archives de la compagnie néerlandaise des Indes orientales et l'histoire de Madagascar, l'expédition du navire de la VOC, le Schuylenberg, septembre 1752, dans Ignace Rakoto ed. La route des esclaves, système servile et traite dans l'est malgache*, (Paris : L'Harmattan.), 47- 75

<sup>8</sup> P. Lupo, *Dieu dans la culture malgache*, Friday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2003, [http://www.haisoratra.org/article.php3?id\\_article=122](http://www.haisoratra.org/article.php3?id_article=122)

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the idea of "being constantly perfumed". This idea then broadens into one of "incorruptible and eternal Prince". A king will always be said to be "*manitra* and *masina*, "perfumed and sacred", even if his mortal shell is already in a stage of advanced decomposition."

To these considerations, one must doubtlessly add an evocation of the essential notion of *Hasina*, the beneficial fluid energy which circulates all along this chain, legitimating dead and living kings in interdependency with their subjects. The rupture of the chain renders illegal the component which is responsible for it. In the terminology of Montesquieu reviewed by the Anglophones, the process can be compared to the *check and balance*, which allowed this perception of power to persist.

With this in mind, the difficulties of Christianity in gaining a foothold can be understood insofar as one who converted was at the same time a political opponent and a heretic.<sup>9</sup>

The conversion of the leaders to Christianity at the end of the XIXth century certainly opened a breach in the autonomisation of politics in relation to religion. But it does not appear to have decisively upset this way of considering the political authorities, even if apparently the institutions which corresponded to the two domains were distinct.

In the attempt of the first to affirm itself upon the second, no decisive advances had been achieved regarding the secularization of politics and of certain institutions related to it<sup>10</sup>.

Under the First Republic (1960-1972), the authorities attempted to force places of worship to hoist the flag of the Republic to affirm its supremacy. But the presidentialism of the V. French Republic, which the regime of president Tsiranana inherited, matched well with the rich remains of the Malagasy monarchical ideology. One of the results was the transformation of the presidential elections into a plebiscite, which excluded the opponents from the national community.

So it could be read in the *Madagascar Mahaleotena*, the newspaper of the Social Democratic Party<sup>11</sup>:

<sup>9</sup> In the XVI. century, the Portuguese had kidnapped a prince from the Matabasse kingdom, situated in the South-East of the island. Hoping to have found in him an ally for the propagation of the Christian faith, they instructed the prince in Goa and gave him afterwards back to his land. When he became king, he hurried up disavowing the Christian faith.

<sup>10</sup> A recent study by F. Rajaonah shows that the secularism of the first years of the colonial times echoes back a development of Christianity.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted by G. Roy in *Trois études malgaches : idéologie communautaire et mythe de la communauté. Critique de l'idéologie de la communauté dans la société paysanne malgache des années soixante*, in *TDM ORSTOM*, 33, 1988.

"Why so much insistence when the reelection of the sole candidate Tsiranana Philibert is achieved in advance? First, we answer that the electoral campaign appears, when analyzed, as a ceremonial, a ritual, a kind of a national cult which has, by the way, nothing to do with the personality cult. For us Malagasy, even if he proclaims to be a socialist, the president is not really a "secular" or "profane" leader. He preserves something of the sacred character of our ancient kings. The love the people have for the President has purportedly a charismatic character ... the numerous rounds... are the way for the President and his people to keep or regain this quasi physical and in the same time mystical contact ...".

These observations must be compared to more recent practices which make the presidential function a highly personalized one. On the eve of the presidential elections, the very serious and official *Vaovaon'ny tolobahoaka* (People Struggles News) of November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1989, qualifies Ratsiraka, the successor of Tsiranana and emblematic character of the Second Republic (1975-1992), as the "predestined candidate of God"<sup>12</sup>.

But, as the sycophant of Tsiranana underlines, the personality cult is not an essential element in the non-secularization of power. The separation of the figure from the function reduces him to the level of a simple individual. Tsiranana had disrupted the chain of the *hasina* by having shots fired into a crowd of demonstrators on May 13<sup>th</sup> 1972, after having had the dogs devour the cadavers of his opponents during the repression of a rural demonstration in the South in 1971. He will be brought to court some years later. The same happened to his successor, who left Madagascar for exile after the 2002 post electoral dispute.

These perceptions of power coexist with the apparent rupture on the level of the institutions between the machinery of the religious and the institutions of the State. The republic *regnum* inherited from the colonization appeared to be formally separated of the Christian *sacerdotum*. Besides, neither the FJKM (Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar, an association of several Protestant churches, among them the London Missionary Society), nor the Catholic Church<sup>13</sup>, never stood up, as institutions, against the First Republic. Even if Pastor Andriamanjato (eminent member of the FJKM) and the Party of the Congress for independence (associated to a

<sup>12</sup> The individuals who are taken in this logic will evidently abound in its sense. In his *Cahier bleu*, Tsiranana asks himself « pourquoi Dieu a-t-il choisi l'humble bouvier d'un village perdu pour devenir le chef d'un peuple entier ? ». As far as Ratsiraka is concerned, he did not hesitate to compare himself to Moses. In 2001, by adopting an Evangelic slogan from Saint Marc, Ravalomanana will not act differently.

<sup>13</sup> according to one of the ministers of the First Republic « ... de 1960 à 1972, aucune lettre pastorale n'a été publiée ni aucune déclaration marquant la désapprobation explicite de l'Eglise catholique sur (tel ou tel point de la politique de) Tsiranana tant intérieure qu'extérieure.. » Rabenoro p 105

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communist party), of which he was the leader, constituted the opposition. One had to wait for the First Republic to near its end, to see the Catholic newspapers administer the last unction by joining in chorus with the other institutions, including Protestants, to criticize Madagascar's approach to South Africa. This was one of the rare orchestrated interventions of the mainstream Churches in politics during the First Republic. The jolts of the then dying First Republic will also see the discrete intervention of the Churches, advancing discretely and in a dispersed manner, notably in solving the conflicts.

The rising to power of a political system claiming to be socialist, awakened the war of the institutions, provisionally concealing the more structural elements of power. But at the same time, the historical Christian churches were doubtlessly aware, that the figure of the sovereign would remain a central pillar in the political-religious perception of a large part of the Malagasies<sup>14</sup>.

In 1975, on the day after the Constitution, which established socialism as an official ideology of the Second Republic (1975-1991), was adopted, historical Christian churches used ecumenism as a form of resistance, when declared potential adversaries by it<sup>15</sup>. The attempt to nationalize<sup>16</sup> the private educational system will catalyze this opposition of historical Churches to political power<sup>17</sup>. A major part of this system belongs to different Christian missions<sup>18</sup> and, since colonial times, the successive governments have not succeeded in reversing this tendency.

In the name of freedom of thought and of education, the Catholic Church (EKAR) as well as the Protestant Church (FJKM) mobilised against this policy<sup>19</sup>. Lutheran churches (FLM) and Anglican churches (EEM) joined them. And on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1979, a "Common declaration of

the leaders of the four Christian churches<sup>20</sup> in Madagascar" affirmed that "the church has the duty to seek for the Nation's wellbeing, and speak out even if what it says may be disagreeable to hear<sup>21</sup>". This is how the FFKM ((*Fikambanan'ny Fiangonana Kristianina Malagasy*) or Council of Christian churches in Madagascar was formed, regrouping the four historical Churches and claiming to have the support of the Christians of Madagascar, whose fraction fluctuates between 40 and 60% (or more) of the population. According to Father de Torquat<sup>22</sup>, approximately 25% of the Malagasy are Catholics, i.e. 4 million. They are surrounded by an impressive machinery, comprising amongst others of 90 women's congregations. But there is a difference in the degree of evangelisation, which is 100% in the highlands and almost inexistent in other regions. This makes Christianity an identity or even ethnic marker in certain places<sup>23</sup>. The Protestants would represent the same proportion<sup>24</sup>.

During the first five years of its existence, the FFKM worked secretly or at least without any legal authorization. The intemperance of the socialist regime as well as the deterioration of the economic situation reinforced this tendency of collaboration of the churches and their increasing intervention in the political environment, at least of their emanation, the FFKM. This latter held its first congress in 1982. The resolutions which were adopted on this occasion resemble a "catalogue of good intentions, without consideration of the true possibilities of their implementation"<sup>25</sup>: more than a project of society, they are like a positive version of criticism against the political regime.

No doubt, the values which inspired these resolutions would rather be retained in the spirit of a "practical ecumenism". Their function was also to cement the new alliance and, above all, to allow dynamics to develop. This was all the more important as in numerous African, and Asian countries, Christian churches were about to play an important role in the so called "democratic transition" process<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> the political authorities will support underhand the independent churches, in order to attempt to sap the increasing influence of the FFKM.

<sup>15</sup> cf. what the « Boky Mena » or Livre rouge (addendum to the Constitution understands by class war. Cf. « La société, l'Eglise et la Nation », letter from the Synode national de l'église catholique (7-12 octobre 1975), text reproduced in *Eglise et société à Madagascar*, Antananarivo, Foi et Justice, 1990, t.3, pp. 19-26.

<sup>16</sup> Represented in the law loi n°78-040 of July 17<sup>th</sup>, 1978

<sup>17</sup> Even if many intellectuals who are related to the Churches adhere to certain aspects of socialisme cf. for instance exemple M. Combes, (1973) *Idéologies religieuses et conflits politiques et sociaux à Madagascar*, Paris, centre Lebreton, 90 p. Also, R. Andriamanjato became Conseiller suprême de la Révolution. But these personalities did not formally commit the institutions they were related to the ones of the socialist State

<sup>18</sup> One must say that the phenomena is not new, in 1896 then in 1905, the colonial State already tried to attack the monopole of the churches on the scolar system in the name of the values of the III. Republic. S. Randrianja (2000), *société et luttes anticoloniales*, Karthala Paris

<sup>19</sup> cf. « L'école et l'éducation », letter from the bishops of Madagascar as of May 31<sup>st</sup>, 1979, in *Eglise et société à Madagascar*, Antananarivo, Foi et Justice, 1990, t.3, pp. 47-50.

<sup>20</sup> The Catholic Church, the FJKM (gathering different Reformed Protestant churches), the Anglican Church and the Lutheran Church.

<sup>21</sup> cf. « Les maux qui nuisent la Nation ». Statement by the responsible persons of the four Christian churches of Madagascar, *Eglise et société à Madagascar*, Antananarivo, Foi et Justice, 1990, t.3, pp. 58-64.

<sup>22</sup> Interviewed by radio *Alliance 92* on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006

<sup>23</sup> B. Candon Moet 1984, christianisme et différenciation ethnique, les catholiques de la basse Betsiboka (Madagascar, in *Arch. Sc. Soc. Des Rel.* 57/1, (janvier Mars, 103-113.

<sup>24</sup> For S. Urfer, « les effectifs cumulés du FFKM ne dépassent certainement pas 40 % de la population malgache », *Politique africaine* p. 32

<sup>25</sup> S. Urfer, p. 32

<sup>26</sup> Cf. for instance, O. Doli (2001) on *Les Eglises chrétiennes dans la vie politique du Burkina Faso de 1983 à 2000*, mémoire de maîtrise Université de Ouagadougou, 108 p

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At the beginning of 1989, the year of the anticipated presidential elections, these resolutions however strengthened a *Democratic Alliance*, constituted of the principal opponent parties. But this alliance did not succeed in setting a strategy to get rid of Ratsiraka, the then current president. The support of the FFKM did not prevent the dislocation of the *Alliance* during the re-election of Ratsiraka. However, the National Committee for the observation of the elections (CNOE), the first organization to supervise the elections, was created for the occasion of these elections. Mainly financed by a Swiss Catholic organization, the CNOE had convincingly proved<sup>27</sup> that Ratsiraka had manipulated the results of the election in order to avoid a second round. The latter one would have permitted dynamics of the opposition's union<sup>28</sup>.

The dismay of a part of the population caused several organizations, amongst them the CNOE, to request a National conference, following the example of what was happening on the continent, also inspired by a reunion of the *Living Force of the nation*, organized during the 1960s by the PSD regime. The cooperation had, among other themes, to take into consideration the concept of a new Constitution. As a matter of fact, numerous observers argued that because of the economically liberal rebound adopted by the regime, a political change had to occur, with the abandon of all references to socialism and the constitutional guarantee of more freedom. The FFKM supported the project by presenting itself as a mediator. The refusal of the authorities to join the National Conference deprived it of this position and transformed it into an assembly of the opposition, backed by the historical Churches. Pandora's Box was opened.

The opposition, thus blessed, took on the name of *Living Forces* and used biblical pictures to force the authorities to set up a transitional government, as a premise to the sovereign National Conference and the anticipated elections. Deprived of one of the principal protagonists, as the authorities had chosen the repressive option, the National Conference did not need an intermediary. At the same moment, the FFKM openly became part of the opposition movement, in spite of the fact that the cohesion of the *Living Forces* was prevailing only because of their opposition to Ratsiraka.

Demonized, the regime had lost the *hasina* and became progressively excluded from the community<sup>29</sup>, despite the fact that it remained the depository of legality. Hoping to fill the void, the FFKM tried to regain its role as mediator

by meeting Ratsiraka, but this approach was unpopular. One should not have discussions with the devil who lost his *Hasina*. The demonization was increased by the massacre of August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1991, after the presidential guard shot into a huge crowd of demonstrators that had been called by the *Living Forces*, and this despite the warnings of the religious authorities. Henceforth the *Hasina* will flow for the benefit of the *Living Forces*, which profit by legitimizing, to their advantage, the establishment of a parallel government and this against the opinion of the catholic bishops' conference. The process projected ahead a former minister from another transitional government during the early 1970s, Professor Albert Zafy.

President Ratsiraka, whose *hasina* was definitely damaged, is forced to set up a transitional government for the organization of new elections. A convention is painfully drafted on October 31st, 1991. The FFKM is one of the five signing parties. The Convention assures it the position of general secretary of the HAE (High Authority of the State), the most important institution of the transitional government. It allows to appoint members of the CRES (Committee for economical and social recovery), another superior instance of the transitional government. Finally, the Convention entrusts the FFKM with the organisation of the National forum, in charge of drafting the Constitution and a new election code.

The FFKM and willy-nilly the historical Christian Churches it comprises, henceforth exercises power within a transitional government having the key-players to determine what should be the next political system. It was also the occasion to shed a bad light on the presidential institution, the pillar of ancient political-religious concepts; the National Forum being the ideal instrument to do so.

According to Urfer<sup>30</sup>, the resolutions of the National Forum are similar to those of the first congress of the FFKM in 1982. The presidential elections that followed would see Albert Zafy, the leader of the *Living Forces*, become the successor of Ratsiraka with a *hasina*, strengthened by the huge expectations of the population, but who will prove to be a poor statesman. Through ecumenical cults and its social networks, the FFKM contributed to the election of the new president; and, above all, to the establishment of a new Constitution that considerably weakened the President's position in the III. Republic's institutions. During this period also, the Queen's Palace burnt down, the symbol of (ancient) omnipotence of the political-religious system<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> Ratsiraka and his partisans had avoided a second round by cheating on 10 to 15% of the results (CNOE, 1991 *Pour la démocratie, solidarité et vigilance*, Tananarive).

<sup>28</sup> S. Randrianja, 2002, *Shame on the dog which does not bark*, Swiss Foundation for Peace, Berne, p. 50

<sup>29</sup> The manipulation of ethnic tensions and instrumentalisation of the separatist and federalist movements intensified the demonization.

<sup>30</sup> Art. cit.

<sup>31</sup> In the capital, mortal remains of former sovereigns which were saved from the flames became the object of a quasi cult which was assisted by numerous political personalities. Albert Zafy lost there the bit of credibility by abstaining from participating.

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The parliamentary regime, which was thus established, gave more responsibility to the legislative group. But this was without relying on the heterogeneous character of the Living Forces and the political culture inherited from the Second Republic.

Albert Zafy himself tried to regain some remains of the presidential power by organising a disputed referendum in order to modify the Constitution. Only a quarter of the electorate participated in this referendum.

The government of Albert Zafy and his allies would disintegrate due to corruption and disputes amongst the leaders, and in the face of this, the FFKM could only remain silent and allow Ratsiraka to return in 1996, denting his moral authority.

Ratsiraka marked his comeback with a gigantic demonstration in the stadium of Mahamasina, where once the ancient kings of Imerina were enthroned and where weeks previously, the population of the capital had rendered homage to the relics of the sovereigns saved from the flames. He was shielded under red parasols, the colour of his party but also the colour of the sacred royalty. Failing to mobilise the Christian churches, Ratsiraka tried to include the ancestors in order to restore the flow of the *hasina* and regain the sacred character of authority.

Three years later, a businessman who was a complete novice in politics, got himself elected mayor of the capital against experienced political personalities. A few months later he is elected vice-president of the FJKM and will finance its national meetings. What is the role of the FJKM and from there of the FFKM's role in the decision of Ravalomanana to launch into the race for the Supreme Court in Madagascar? When did the man's ambitions find an echo amongst the thinkers of the FFKM, who saw an opportunity to regain control after the failure of Albert Zafy and the Living Forces?

His personal social success as well as the favourable impression he made as mayor of the capital, without counting his affiliation to the FJKM, were reassuring elements as well.

In any case, when Marc Ravalomanana's candidacy for the presidential elections of December 2001 was announced in the court yard of his home village church, the FFKM launched an appeal to all Christians to act as citizens by taking part in the democratic process. The message could not be clearer. The networks of temples and churches discreetly started to work. The FFKM would present a project of society suggesting the restoration of the *Fokonolona*<sup>32</sup> as the basis of the citizen's responsabilisation<sup>33</sup>. But the issue lay elsewhere.

<sup>32</sup> Yet the *Fokonolona* is from the domain of the myth of community development. This institution has been used by different

The logic of the FFKM's activities made it become more than a witness, henceforth it turns out to be "the dog which barks when the burglar is in the house". The elections of 2002 emphasized this development. The post electoral dispute of 2002 confirms the commitment of the FFKM by guaranteeing Ravalomanana's narrow victory, having been acquired due more to the pressure than to the vote, despite an incontestable lead. According to the numerous mural inscriptions in the capital, the people seem to baptise Ravalomanana "the messiah", indeed during the electoral campaign, his public appearances attracted an important crowd.

At the same time, Ratsiraka, whose *hasina* had scarcely returned since 1991, is once again demonised, and with him all his collaborators. The durability of his power can only be explained by his alliance with evil forces. Why risk a second round which would see the mobilisation of these forces and massive frauds? Ravalomanana won the first ballot and this all the more so, as the authorities refuse to compare his figures with those collected by the representatives of the candidate, mayor of the capital.

The FFKM and the organisations within its dominion, including the honourable CNOE, endorse this approach. The engulfing compels to resort to the military option, accomplished by 2000 reservists who lost only around 20 of their own during this operation. Besides, one is also struck by their scant number as well as their sporadic resistance<sup>34</sup>, whereas Ratsiraka could count, at least theoretically, on the institutions (in the name of legality) and on at least a quarter of the population.

The war between the state-owned and confessional institutions temporarily ends when Ravalomanana accedes to power with the blessing of the Churches and of the FFKM. This end is formalized by the State's announcement to initiate development activities in collaboration with the Churches. The president of the Republic remains Vice-president of the FJKM and even gets himself re-elected. During the convention of the FJKM pastors (April 2005), organised with the financial support of the World Bank, M. Ravalomanana instructs them to act as agents of the development. A few weeks prior, the President talked about the establishment of a theocracy<sup>35</sup>. But in doing so, he only confirmed an idea which originated from the beginning of his mandate and undoubtedly well before, with the entry of the FFKM in politics. Did he not inform during the Congress of the FJKM in Ambatondrazaka in 2004 about his project of

States following one after another like a cogwheel, allowing them to control the rural world.

<sup>33</sup> Midi Madagascar of August 22<sup>nd</sup> 2001

<sup>34</sup> Apart from the confrontations in the province of Diego Suarez related by the *Express de Madagascar*

<sup>35</sup> Broadcasted address of the President on March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2005, at the time of the commemoration of the rebellion of 1947.

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establishing a "Christian Republic" in Madagascar? Has the presidential function lost its sacred secular aura?

The situation however is novel, because the influence of the Churches, at least of their emanation the FFKM, seems to increase in importance: The Constitution of the III. Republic carries its marks despite the reorganisations following the two referendums. Secularity and "faith in a creator God" appear well-placed there. The Preamble stipulates that "The sovereign Malagasy People, determined to promote and develop its heritage of a pluralist society and respect the diversity, richness and dynamism of its ethical-spiritual and socio-cultural values, notably the *fihavananana* and faith in God Creator.... decides....(in its article 1 that...) The Malagasy People constitute a nation organised in a sovereign and secular State".

Hardly comfortable of course, the argument of "secularism in the Malagasy way" is more an easy intellectual subterfuge than a convincing explanation. According to pastor Ralibera<sup>36</sup>, "the Malagasy Republic is indeed secular but.... in the context of national culture, which is deeply related to the religious, the concept of secularism takes a singular character". Even if the situation is novel, the problem is an ancient one<sup>37</sup>. What has allowed this situation to persist? What has caused opinion to remain indifferent if not for the approval?<sup>38</sup>

In the editorial of the *Lettre du Forum de Delphes* (n° 63), S. Mappa indirectly starts giving an answer in the context of the beginnings of the XXI. century: "the civil society is involved in the surrounding social and political division and in the ascent of corporatism, but also in the depolitization of the issues". "The technocratisation of numerous organisations of the civil society" is also one of the consequences of this sectorialisation. The latter one does not allow the existence of "places of critical thinking within civil society", a situation which is favourable to the "increase in power of a consensual discourse which censures discrepancy and complex thinking"<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> Paper of Pastor Daniel Ralibera of Novembre 14<sup>th</sup>, 2001, issued in *Madagascar Fenêtres. Aperçus sur la culture malgache* et intitulé « D'Andriamanitra à Dieu : vers un christianisme à la malgache »

<sup>37</sup> VIDAL (Henri), *La séparation des Églises et de l'État à Madagascar (1861-1913)*, Paris, Librairie générale de droit et de jurisprudence, 1970, p. 304

ZORN (Jean-François), « La séparation des Églises et de l'État à Madagascar », *La séparation de 1905. Les hommes et les lieux*, CHANTIN (Jean-Pierre) et MOULINET (Daniel), dir., Paris, Éditions de l'Atelier, 2005, p. 201-217.

<sup>38</sup> If one puts aside a little fringe of intellectuals who would have wanted the Churches to "clear the field" after the eviction of Ratsiraka in 2002 in F. Pigeaud, *Madagascar entre the market and the bottle-brush*, *Le monde diplomatique*, mars 2005, p. 14-15

<sup>39</sup> *La Lettre du Consortium* N° 7-8 (May 2006)

The FFKM, and with it the Churches and allied associations, do not recognize themselves in this logic of the associations of civil society. As a matter of fact, the FFKM is not sectorial and is a forum for debate and criticism within civil society but also tolerates debates within itself. Furthermore, it inspires numerous associations of civil society. The FFKM, like other NGOs which are related to it, benefits from the ancient implantation of the Churches. The FFKM is positioned more in the "triangular rivalry", which according to John Lonsdale relates: "...the (political) leaders .... the population, having as object the ambiguous ethical message transmitted by this medium, the officer of cult"<sup>40</sup>.

It even seems as if a sharing of tasks between the Churches and the FFKM had taken place. The first are each in the logic of "the quest for the monopoly of salvation"<sup>41</sup> where their request for the respect of each church's ecclesiology originates from. As far as the FFKM itself is concerned, it uses the "practical ecumenism" to intervene in the more substantial fields of politics. In reality, the FFKM brings together a select group of personalities, delegated by the different churches. Its influence is exerted on all the worshippers as well as on political elites, even overcoming the incoherence of the latter one.

Since its beginnings, its statements thus reflect a skilful exercise of balance. As a matter of fact, the FFKM tries to keep pace with the aspirations of the citizens on political problems but taking on a religious expression. At the same time, it tries to promote the common positions between the Churches in the ecumenical spirit, more coarsely stated, to avoid the creation of war-like conditions between the religions or at least a quarrel of bell towers. And finally, the FFKM must pay attention that none of its constituents finds itself in a cantilever within its own ecclesiology.

This balance arose from the opposition against the socialist regime. Further on, this union, originally intended to be transitory, had to be, progressively consolidated with values and rules destined to make it endure<sup>42</sup>. Ecumenism only became the official base of this union in 1980; a value the Churches will not cease to repeat at any moment of tension, such as in February 1992, when the Catholic bishops would remind: "...we are positioned within the FFKM, in the spirit of a practical ecumenism which is at the country's service. Regarding the direct participation in political action, we request that the ecclesiology of each Church shall be respected."<sup>43</sup>. Whereas for the Catholic Church, the tension between the ma-

<sup>40</sup> J. Lonsdale, p. 151, *Politique africaine*, 1990, le passé de l'Afrique au secours de son avenir,

<sup>41</sup> P. Bourdieu quoted by Diallo and Ottayek, *Dynamisme protestant, développement participatif et démocratie locale en zone semi urbaine, cas de l'ODE*

<sup>42</sup> FFKM is starting to build its headoffice in Antananarivo city

<sup>43</sup> Urfer art. cit. p 35

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chinery and the commitment of the FFKM was and remains the motor of a permanent debate; this is less visible among the Protestants, mainly because of their less centralised organisation but also because Protestant pastors committed themselves to politics earlier compared to the Catholic ones. But it does exist<sup>44</sup>. And the recent developments only heightened this latent tension.

Moreover, the previous regime had played on this tension to try to undermine the increasing influence of the FFKM by indirectly favouring the development of numerous sects<sup>45</sup>.

The motor of these debates seems to have temporarily (?) but progressively displaced within civil society itself, a major part whereof empowering the State, rather than between the State and the organisations of civil society (OSC). The traditional political parties have been marginalised in this process, torn between the opportunism, which consists of turning with the wind, or promoting a pure and harsh secularism.

Will the fall of the main ideological paradigms such as socialism a part of the evangelic message will be considered as an ideology of the State, a demonstration of the eroding gap which separates the private and public sphere as certain analysts will say.

Will Christianity, initially a personal step in seeking individual salvation based on a spiritual commitment, become a collective instrument used by the State or at least be in the service of a system? From the elements of J. Lonsdale's triangular rivalry, which element of politics, of the religious and of the population has instrumentalised the other?

It is evident that the dialogical logic linking them benefits everyone.

Since Ravalomanana's accession to power, the new regime has put forth a plan for the cooperation between the churches and the State. The Christian churches thus contribute to the new system, i.e. to the State, an ideol-

ogy<sup>46</sup> which replaces the one of the socialist State, as well as a network built upon the parishes. Occasionally, this network is capable of operating like an electoral machinery, but it is also a kind of a transmission belt between the State and the peasantry, reluctant towards the authority of the State but always open for Christian NGOs. Peasantry as well as NGOs are therefore more visible through this network.

We are beyond the simple instrumentalisation of Christianity for the purpose of the leading classes. And even if this (new?) orientation triggers an intense debate within the Churches, it does not less reinforce its repositioning<sup>47</sup> in the contemporary world.

This course reinforces the historical Churches, since they are assured an important influence on society through the FFKM. They directly and indirectly inspire NGOs and civic organisations such as the CNOE, representing Catholic obedience, its alter ego existing among the Protestants. In the view of secular associations which operate in collaboration with the Churches, these organisations do not only have the benefit of personal and voluntary work of the parish members but also of a whole network, whose efficiency has proven itself during the numerous mobilisations, as much electoral as in favour of pressure on the executive.

As far as the State is concerned, it does not hesitate to come to the assistance of the historical Churches by impeding and even eliminating its competitors on the market of "salvation goods". Upon the Catholic churches' complaint to Fiananrantsoa, whose members had assisted in the public destruction of the bible, the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, multinational of Brazilian origin and holder of a "theology of success", paid for the consequences. In spite of its considerable means, about thirty of these foreign pastors were thrown out and their places of worship were closed. Secessionist companies that swayed the FJKM have been subjected to the same treatment with the "new Protestants" of the temple of Adravoahangay, the founders of the FVPM (*Fiangonana Protestante Vaovao Malagasy*). In only a few years, the secession will have involved dozens of thousands of members, among them 200 pastors who spread throughout the Island. The church of Anananinandra, its national headquarters, alone counts more than 30'000 parishes, among them many executive officers

<sup>44</sup> The FJKM has officially declared not to support any candidate for the presidential elections of December 3<sup>rd</sup> (Antsirabe: Crise au sein de l'association des pasteurs FLM ? *l'Express de Madagascar* du 30 septembre 2006) what the FLM did, whereas numerous pastors, after supporting Ravalomanana in 2001, would have tried to support the treasurer of the Lutheran church who declared as a candidate. Bebel R. Election

Pastor Charles Rakotonirina : "Pas de candidat pour le FJKM" dans *La Gazette* du 25 octobre 2006

<sup>45</sup> After the salvation of the information service during the regime of Ratsiraka, certain Evangelic sects have developed by profiting from this turnaround of the historical churches. In the big Evangelic dominion, the Pentecostals, the Baptists, the Evangelic (style Church of Brothers) and the Autochthon Evangelic Mission (METM) the *Jesosy Mamounjy* and the Adventists and different religious groupings presented themselves on the territory.

<sup>46</sup> The ideal of justice of the regime symbolised by Ravalomanana and contained in the slogan « *fahamarinana* » is for example shed a bad light on like at its time the socialist egalitarianism, by daily realities..

<sup>47</sup> D. HERVIEU-LÉGER, *Vers un nouveau christianisme ? Introduction à la sociologie du christianisme occidental*, avec la collaboration de F. Champion, Cerf, 1986 ; *La Religion pour mémoire*, *ibid.*, 1993 ; *Le Pèlerin et le converti*, Flammarion, Paris, 1999

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and intellectuals searching for a less stilted spirituality.<sup>48</sup> The complaint came from the branches of the FJKM, whose buildings of worship were occupied by the secessionists. More globally, the "sectarian" organisations do of course not benefit from this partnership between Church and State, which was initiated by the regime and enjoys considerable financing.

The intervention of the historical Churches in politics<sup>49</sup> poses new problems in the examination of the links between the public and private spheres. It even sheds a new light on the notion of civil society. If this "is what remains when the State withdraws", viewing this scenario, one may ask which one is being devoured by the other.

## 2 Searching for civil society

Has civil society given power to the State in the figure of the President of the Republic, who came from civil society in its classical sense, being vice-president of the FJKM while, at the same time, being a businessman? Or do we face the omnipotent Hobbes's Léviathan, caricatured by the political opposition as a Tiko State, with the name of Ravalomanana's agro-alimentary company? In any case it is difficult to recognize the will of one single man in this situation.

Despite the absence of a consensus on the definition, "civil society" has generated and keeps on generating much hope facing the distrust of the opinion on political parties<sup>50</sup>, affected by "devitalisation"<sup>51</sup>. Also before being a concept or an idea, civil society has more resemblance to a political myth, as it evokes an entirety of positive values such as emancipation of state-owned trusteeship and taking responsibility for their own problems by the individuals themselves. Due to the reactivation of the unit civil society and State, it would then be the only one capable of awakening democracy<sup>52</sup> by soliciting the citizen's involvement<sup>53</sup>.

These considerations take inspiration from the reflections of those who previously attempted to determine its con-

tours. Associatively, "civil society" would be the guarantee against tyranny of the majority (perception of Tocqueville), it could be the individual's shield against the character of the State, which is in its essence hegemonic (Hegel, Gramsci); or a stronghold to be taken on by the "organic intellectuals" (Gramsci). The contemporary "activists", using a South African expression, generally ancient militant political organisations, have given the expression a combative character<sup>54</sup>.

In the same spirit, in the aftermath of the post electoral dispute of 2002, a group of Malagasy citizens, supported by an organisation based in France, the *Consortium de solidarité avec Madagascar (Cdsm)* decided to attempt to unite all NGOs of Madagascar in a *Common platform of Malagasy civil society's organisations* in order to not only involve the citizens in the resolution of the crises that lasted several months, but mainly in long-term actions.

External promoters and observers who contributed to the establishment of this vast gathering assumed that the "Malagasy civil society is indeed discreet. Whereas it..... should, even in its multiplicity, speak for itself on the contemporary important questions in a loud voice ....inflation, corruption, disappearing or insufficiency of public services, the position and role of the State...." <sup>55</sup>.

According to its promoters, "the aim (of the platform) is on one hand to gather and to structure the Malagasy civil society around a common vision and a project of society the Malagasy people aspire for. On the other hand it is about the setting up of conditions.... which are vital in allowing civil society to become a true unavoidable force in the development, implementation and follow up of all strategies, policies, programmes and development projects in Madagascar, which must be positioned in line with this project of society ».<sup>56</sup>

The topics which are suggested for examination during the establishment of the political platform give a first idea of what civil society is in the spirit of these "activists". Indeed, six commissions had to focus on the "critical domains of development in Madagascar and ..... topics such as: What is civil society? Politics and citizenship, debts and development, internationalization, WTO, partnership, secularity of the State, questions of land »<sup>57</sup>.

From the 20<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> June 2006, over 400 delegates from numerous associations or compounds of NGOs were brought together within the *Convention des organisations de la Société civile malgache (COSCM)* in Antananarivo. The Convention adopts the *Charte commune des organisations de la Société civile de Madagascar (Dina)* which defines "civil society" as an "entity which is independent

<sup>48</sup> J. F. Hérouard : Eglise / Etat. Qui instrumentalise qui ? *La Lettre* N°5-6 (décembre 2005 - février 2006)

<sup>49</sup> Leading in its slipstream the other churches, among the 14 candidates for the presidential elections of December 2006, two belong to this dominion.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. for instance M. Razafindrakoto, L. Razafimamonjy, D. Razafindrazaka , F. Roubaud (Octobre 2005). *Gouvernance et corruption à Madagascar : perceptions et réalité*, Afrobarometer Briefing Paper No. 22 , p. 1

<sup>51</sup> S. Mappa, Editorial of the *Lettre du Forum de Delphes*, n° 63

<sup>52</sup> For the UN, "Traditional democracy aggregates citizens by communities of neighbourhood (their electoral districts), but in participatory democracy citizens aggregate in communities of interest." In *We the peoples: civil society, the United Nations and Global Governance*, report by the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil -Society Relations, dated 11 June 2004.

<sup>53</sup> L'express de Madagascar, December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2003

<sup>54</sup> C. Hendricks, (August 2006), *Civil society and governance in Southern Africa*, Villa Via, Pretoria, p. 36

<sup>55</sup> *La Gazette de la Grande Île*, May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2004

<sup>56</sup> id

<sup>57</sup> id

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of the State, of the system of professional politicians and of the private sector". As wide-ranged as this definition may be, it does nevertheless exclude the economic forces<sup>58</sup> and does not mention the Churches. For the Convention, "civil society makes politics.... politics of citizens, of course!....(But) civil society is not a political party and should not act as one."

The very high ambitions of the Platform assign to a so organised civil society a "(full) part in the sustainable development of the country, the decrease of poverty, the establishment of democracy and the fight against corruption...". Approximately 1300 Malagasy associations and NGOs join the platform a short time later, some of them already existing for at least a decade<sup>59</sup>.

Having been thus legitimised, the project presents itself very positively; to such a point that international donors<sup>60</sup> will give their support. For the United Nations Development Programme, the Platform should be a forum for dialogue and exchange between the member associations<sup>61</sup>. In the same spirit, many diplomatic missions<sup>62</sup> see in this attempt a decisive step towards the consolidation of democracy. But the Platform will not fulfil the announced ambitions. For instance, it remained silent during the debates on the eve of the presidential elections of December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2006 may be because of its recent creation.

In any case, the scepticism of some donors seems a bad omen regarding the sustainability of the enterprise:

"The sectoral platforms which exist in Madagascar add a considerable supplementary value compared to a national platform which claims to gather all sectors of civil society. Indeed, these sectoral platforms dispose of a

<sup>58</sup> The partisans of the economical liberalism in the United States include market economy in civil society and, in Madagascar, employer's organisations have pushed the protagonists they did not agree with to get along during the post electoral dispute in 2002. Likewise Ravalomanana, the president of the Republic who was elected in 2002, came from the Churches and from the employers' milieu, i.e. civil society.

<sup>59</sup> This is the case in the network Drv (Comité de Concertation et de Coordination des Associations et Ong-Femmes de Madagascar) officially established in 1995 and which counts more than 600 associations, basic communities, collectives which are implanted on the whole island, working in different sectors. Or from the L'organisation *Taratra* which was established in 1994 and working in rural development with the most disadvantaged classes, etc... This is also the case for the Comité National pour l'Observation des élections :éducation es citoyens (CNOE/KMF) prestigious and combative NGO which was established in 1989 and who was one of the first to fight against election frauds.

<sup>60</sup> Since 1995, the Comité Drv is accredited to the United Nations and since 2001 to the UNCTAD1, L'express de Madagascar of December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2003

<sup>61</sup>

[http://www.snu.mg/new/sites/pnud/article.php?article\\_id=342&lang=en](http://www.snu.mg/new/sites/pnud/article.php?article_id=342&lang=en)

<sup>62</sup> Cf. the internet site of the United States Mission <http://www.usmission.mg/hrdmc2005fr.htm>

wider membership base and the programmes and projects they have been implementing in the field for many years have given them credibility. At national level, these include, for instance, a platform bringing together women's organisations (VRD), a platform focusing on the environment and development (Comode), a platform for civic education (CNOE), a platform for human rights (UNA Civiles), etc."<sup>63</sup>

Saying that, despite their social enrooting "... none of these platforms has up to now been financially viable and all receive financial support from a donor."<sup>64</sup> This very delicate last point boosts the role of a part of the elite, searching for new resources and consequently attentive to the expectations of the "donor".

These civil society "classical" organisations have partly become a domain of intervention for the elites, as their specialisation requests the technocratisation of numerous organisms and therefore the control of specific technologies and languages. Furthermore, it implicates a social and political separation, the rise of corporatism and the depolitization of the issues. The majority of the population is inevitably excluded from what should be a social debate.

Nevertheless, the success of the organisations of civil society related to the Christian dominion can not only be explained by their ancient roots and even less by the weak performance of the classical NGOs. Although the share of Christians in Malagasy society is around half, "the market" remains open.

Certainly the devitalisation of the political parties (which seems to have affected the classical OSC) allowed the historical Churches and mainly the FFKM to engage in a field left vacant by the classical organisations of civil society. But to adhere to this sole explanation would mean considering the mass of citizens as an amorphous group. Even though the majority of the citizens are rural, many of them are also active in organisations related to the historical Churches. The multiplication of local radio stations has amplified the evangelic messages on an important scale and these local actions as well.

Why have the citizens thus validated a situation which is considered by many intellectuals to be retrograde? Must one allocate religion such a structuring role in society? From this, it has drawn a public legitimacy and a social utility which the State was forced to acknowledge.

The apparent confusion of matters arises from a collective research. The period of crisis Madagascar is going

<sup>63</sup> Valette, C. 2005. *Non-state Actors in Madagascar : From support for local development to support for governance. (ECDPM I nBrief 3D)*. Maastricht : ECDPM European Centre for Development Policy Management <http://www.ecdpm.org>.

<sup>64</sup> id.

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through, and doubtlessly has its roots in the 1970s, is far deeper than a simple economical crisis<sup>65</sup>.

We all have the spectacular pictures in mind of these women in white exorcising the ministers of Ratsiraka's offices, whereas the partisans of Ravalomanana attempted to install themselves there in 2002, these pictures rub elbows with those more "rational" of the Sisters distributing food to the guardians of the barrage in the embattled capital. Being more striking, the first pictures echo back "the rumours of diabolical murders of politicians, accused of using secret associations and "medicine" to guarantee their success, urban psychoses of child kidnappings .....<sup>66</sup>. They are of the same kind as the looting of graves by their owners for yet unknown purposes and the initiation of what corresponds to the democratic transition of 1991, to be propagated on the whole island, beyond all ethnic or political considerations.

In classical perception, the spiritual search results from private life and should not be shown in the public space. The latter one is perceived as a watertight juxtaposition of the private spaces, being confused with the domestic space. In the light of the intrusions of organisations such as the FFKM in politics and above all in the light these interventions are seen, the public space must not appear like a "physical place.... (but rather like) the social arena, where the individual lives his/her private life under the public eye of other private individuals. It is populated with atheist, agnostic, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim etc. citizens and not with disembodied individuals without a history or personal attachment or people deprived of their social identity and religious beliefs. If in the public space an atheist must hide his atheism, a Christian, a Jew or a Muslim.... his religious convictions, this means there is no public space. (...)»<sup>67</sup>. Confronted with the failure of the developmentalists' utopias and the devitalisation of the political parties, Malagasy citizens have left it to the religious to "represent the supplier of sense and to articulate the work of structuring and de-structuring of the order" in this public space<sup>68</sup>.

"The re-emergence of the religious" does not happen in the modus of the *devotio moderna*, for which prayer and personal piety are signs for commitment. The collective

ardour of the cults and the extent of participation are preferred to the intensity of spiritual search and individual commitments. The recent evolutions of Protestantism as well as Catholicism towards these forms of spirituality, have contributed to pushing the historical Churches to go along with a strong social demand, which has to face a quickly changing society to a previously unknown extent and this at the risk of being overrun by the "sects".

Secular organisations of civil society have understood the demand as well. Do they not specialize in local development and decentralisation, which is related to the reaction of gathering and mutual aid, certainly aiming to overcome the failings of the public sector, but also and mainly, the deficiencies of the former mechanisms of solidarity. But they are thwarted by their sectorialisation, an important handicap which does not allow them to address "moral values" of society, which are the proof of its cohesion and from which spirituality cannot be taken away.

As a fact, large parts of society attempt to give an answer regarding the reformation of the domestic<sup>69</sup> as well as of the public spheres, in a collective manner. Collective spirituality becomes an instrument and a way to understand and act on politics in the classical sense.

Through it, the ancient forms of politics become updated, which explains why political authorities could never secularize.

For Malagasy citizens, the sovereign as well as his successors (including colonial authorities) are considered to be sacred figures because of their function. It comprises, at the same time classical prerogatives of one who is given power by an authority of the Weberian State but who is also the guarantor of the world order and of the connection to the past. This explains the extreme personalisation of power and the easy demonization of the political opposition. The inability of the State to become autonomous as a machinery made its leader appear like the sovereign of Hobbes, the quintessence of a mechanism on which the citizens build and in which they recognize themselves.

The extreme personalisation of politics, particularly with regard to the president of the Republic, results from the adaptation of the secular values of the IIIrd French Republic, from the presidentialism of the Vth French Republic but nonetheless colonial Republic with a Malagasy cosmogony, in which the king/president holds a central position in the collective mental edifice.

This may be one of the issues for the FFKM to enter into politics: to cause the function to be secularised but the

<sup>65</sup> We also showed that the movements of contestation in opposition to Ratsiraka happened at the time when the economical indicators showed a sensitive improvement, particularly in the social milieus which initiated these movements of contestation.

S.Randrianja (2005) *Ravalomanana des produits laitiers aux affaires nationales*. <http://www.iss.co.za/AF/profiles/madagascar/fastaug05.pdf>

<sup>66</sup> F. Bernault, J. Tonda *Dynamique de l'invisible en Afrique*, PA n° 78, October 2000, p. 5

<sup>67</sup> Lahouari Addi, «Laïcité, islam et espace public», *ceras*, Les religions dans la cité, n° 267, autumn 2001, 2001, *La Revue Projet*, Publications,

<sup>68</sup> R. Otayek, C. Toulabor *Innovations et contestations religieuses. Politique africaine* 39, October 1990, p 109 to 124

<sup>69</sup> (cf. the development of paedophilia and the violence with regard to children, the division and tilting of the related system)

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State however to be sacralised because it belongs to the community, as the *hasina* rises from the collective.

Historically, the Malagasy State has not known secularisation with its "sacred" references (like the Revolution, the Republic and the fatherland as in the case of France). It is therefore able to reclaim its leader's secularisation to its advantage.

As a consequence of this first point, the second issue of the FFKM's commitment in politics could be an exercise of the collective sovereignty of citizens instead of the simple guarantee of the individual's rights, which should be entrusted to civil society. This is the recent classical and normative definition of democracy by "secular" actors in politics. This will hardly move anything.

With this perspective, the indifference of Malagasy citizens towards the problem of the separation of *regnum* and *sacerdotum* is not at all due to ignorance. The colonial fact has surely been at the origin of debates within numerous social levels, even though it only lasted 64 years. It cannot be otherwise in an issue as important as the relation between Church and State<sup>70</sup>. In our circumstances, the triangular rivalry uniting political leaders, the population and religious clerks is multi-secular. The contemporary relations between politics and religion have long-spanning roots and, as demonstrated by Braudel, this aspect of the human being is less susceptible to fast changes. The FFKM has entered in an ancient field.

The recent turmoil is more a sign of the modernity of Malagasy politics, which is being re-established. The devitalisation of the political parties and the fall of big ideological paradigms push society to re-examine "moral values"<sup>71</sup>, conditions of cohesion, civic virtues<sup>72</sup> and, above all, the way in which they are defined. Doubtlessly, it is also in these domains that the Malagasy way of democracy is contrived. Through their political branch the FFKM, the historical Churches got involved in this process in order to maintain the dynamism of its own development. New political, and in general, social elites, seem to find there what they need. The majority of the population is involved in the revival.

For the time being, Christian churches and their associations facilitate the flow of the *hasina* along the chain of power by playing the role of a guarantor of the morality of the authority and its activities. They boast of the Christians' support, who represent more than half of the Mala-

gasy population and whose majority is found in the rural world. Thanks to their taking root in all social levels as well as in the history of Madagascar, thanks to the universality of the message and to the ecumenism of the historical Christian churches' strategy, the most powerful section of "modern" civil society is constituted of associations related to it.

Do the practices which follow from this position announce a new policy in the domain of democracy and freedom? In such a situation, "can the opposition with a political-religious system from this time on only express itself in political-religious terms, and this on two levels: first the institutional, second the community"<sup>73</sup>. The phenomenon is not typically Malagasy.<sup>74</sup>

In any case, for instance in the mechanisms of alternation, a model tries to impose itself, resembling, in a reduced proportion, the *Jihad* which used demonization as one of its processes. The group which aspires access to power empowers the values of the person who is in position, and pretends to be appointed in order to exercise authority.

For instance, on Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup> 2006, Reverend Jules Randranjohary, candidate for the presidency, called upon the citizens to dedicate 7 minutes per day to prayer, in order to make "Satan's wall" fall<sup>75</sup>. Such practices show that the success (which remains to be seen) of sects would not be related to this position of the historical Churches towards politics<sup>76</sup>, since the first ones are also looking to access the mechanisms which allow the connection of *regnum* and *sacerdotum*.

The candidate Elia Ravelomanantsoa does not hide her intentions: «...new Evangelic churches, said to be awakening or charismatic, which have flourished for 15 or 20 years... know an increasing support.... but do not enjoy any gratitude. Nowadays it is important to open up these Evangelic communities of Madagascar. ... The funds (of

<sup>70</sup> For memory, the Gregorian reform which doubtlessly set in motion the debates around the secularisation of the XI. century and the separation of Church and State only became a law in France in 1905 .

<sup>71</sup> J. Lonsdale (1996), *Ethnicité morale et tribalisme*, *Politique africaine*, 61, March, 98-115

<sup>72</sup> Berman (B.) Lonsdale (J.) 1992, *Unhappy valley : conflict in Kenya and Africa*, London , James Currey, XVI-504-VIII p

<sup>73</sup> A Bononzon, les églises dans la tourmente politique, in *Politique africaine* n° 48, December 1992, pp 58-66

<sup>74</sup> "A unique encounter is taking place in the Ivory Coast between the heritage of a prophetic tradition, a profound crisis in the legitimacy of political power, and the irruption of a generation of prophet-pastors in both the religious and political-media realms. The politics of deliverance put forth by these men of God links the return of prosperity and national reconciliation to the eradication of demons in the country, an endeavour which is not without the risk of a revival of a war of spirits, as illustrated by recent events". A Mary, prophètes pasteurs, la politique de la délivrance en côte d'ivoire, *Politique africaine*, les sujets de Dieu, 87 octobre 2002, p 69 à 94

<sup>75</sup> *Tribune de Madagascar* November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2006

<sup>76</sup> For Father Sylvain Urfer, « l'engagement du FFKM dans la politique est avant tout un excellent fonds de commerce pour les sectes. ça leur permet de dire : "regardez ces Eglises qui font de la politique. Nous, nous n'en faisons pas, venez chez nous. Et ça marche ! » Fanny Pigeaud .Madagascar entre le marché et le goupillon *Le monde diplomatique* mars 2005, p 14-15.

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the World Bank) have been released almost 3 years ago, but unfortunately... the Communautés du réveil have not been called to participate in this development project. Only the traditional Protestant Churches have benefited. Additionally, President Marc Ravalomanana, vice-president of a reformed Church, has in the past insulted the Evangelists by treating them as a sect<sup>77</sup>».

## Conclusion

In a situation, where politics hardly manages to deal with the citizens without being able to mobilise them, in the Malagasy context, the religious has succeeded in imposing its structuring role in society. It compelled the State to acknowledge it a public legitimacy and a social purpose, as the latter one is unable to overcome its symbolic deficiency and the lack of its civil society's political responsibility, that is the OSCs which are unrelated to the Churches.

The historical Churches will profit from this situation by imposing themselves as institutions close to the State, while retaining their main ideas. The FFKM as well as the OSCs, related to the Christian missions, act as such within the public sphere.

Thanks to this positioning allowed by History, the historical Churches did not remain confined to the private and domestic spheres. They did not seek to achieve a minimal public perception with the blessing of a large part of the citizens (and of the religious believers).

One of the last institutional but also spiritual competitors of the historical Churches is the sacred king who represents the quintessence of the State. The secularisation of the presidential function is one of the last ramparts of an alternative spirituality. In the long run, it can only benefit the Christianisation. It is therefore worth making it an ally, even an instrument, rather than a competitor or even less an enemy. One of the consequences of this secularisation is certainly the weakening of this central pivot of the Malagasy political culture but in exchange a strengthening of civil society, which means the responsabilisation of the citizen, which is however dominated by those State related associations which are affiliated to the Churches. In this sense, democracy finds its' account with the difference that civil society is not the individualisation of the citizens but, within the frame of the FFKM, an attempt to regroup "around rituals, symbols, values, the reconstruction of a moral society", which is strongly borrowed from Christianity.

But in doing so, as the period of Albert Zafy's government has shown, overly tight bonds with the political power bind the churches to short conjunctures which are in essence unstable. As far as the State is concerned, it

risks, by not achieving to position itself outside and above religious plurality, not to be able to further guarantee equal freedom of all religions without recognizing one. And in this respect, the notions of minority and majority do not make real sense to those living their religious conviction in the city.

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<sup>77</sup> Interview with Elia Ravelomanantsoa, Evangelic candidate for the presidential in Madagascar