INTRODUCTION

Re-imagining France’s Policies Toward Africa in the Twenty-First Century

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France is perhaps the only ‘super power’ to have a special relationship with its former colonies on the African continent. According to Schraeder, irrespective of the ideological angle from which France is led at any given time, French policy makers have consistently claimed that historical links and geographical proximity justify placing Francophone Africa within France’s sphere of influence. This ideological position has been challenged in the post-Cold World era in which a new generation of democratically elected African elites are clamouring for a new trajectory in Franco–Africa relations. During the La Baule France Africa summit in June 1990, French President François Mitterrand gave an indication that France’s policy towards its former colonies on the continent was about to change. He noted that France’s aid to African countries would be conditional on these countries opening up the political space to multiparty democracy and to good governance. Renou noted that France’s shifting policy stance towards Africa was precipitated by a new international context and growing challenges in African countries following the rise of China and the increasing demand for democracy and good democratic institutions, inspired by the collapse of the Soviet Union and its satellite republics.

Waning French interest in Africa in the post-Cold War era was evident from the defeat of the pro-France regime in Rwanda in 1994 and the collapse of the Mobutu administration in the former Zaire in 1997. According to Renou, the collapse of these regimes, but more particularly the manner in which there were defeated, discredited French African policy both in Africa and in France. The collapse of these two regimes exposes what Charbonneau describes as: France as an imagined state. It is imagined because, although the French state and French society are functional realities, the myth of France as a country hides the particularities of both. The myth of France exerting a strong foreign policy is essentially an elitist idea that camouflages sectional interests within French society. In essence, Charbonneau argues that an elitist France putting up a united face opens spaces of legitimacy, authority and immunity for the abusive and destructive practices of French security policy in Francophone Africa.

To understand the intricacies of the imagined analogy, it is important to state upfront that the French nation was in fact a political construction of the French state, nation being the cultural and historical element, whereas the state was more the place of the French nation within the concert of nations, a sort of international recognition of the French nation. The notion of the French state was created through a systematic process of the founding French royalty, the Capetian dynasty, which legitimised the notion that French kings were chosen by God. Through the process of consolidation of the Capetian
dynasty, the blood of royalty became holy, heroes were transformed into saints, sanctuaries were built and the kings of France became the object of royal religion, closely involved with the Catholic faith. The King was therefore not the leader of France, he was France. Though the French revolution debunked the myth of the sanctity of the French royalty, the intricate notion of the superiority of France’s elites still permeates French society and its former colonies.

At the start of French colonial exploits in Africa, some elitist French projects were implanted in Africa. These were manifested through assimilation and integration policies. These policies ensured that colonised subjects could only be accommodated within French society once they had agreed to observe customs and behave like ‘Frenchmen’. The notion of accepting French customs made it seem as if France was a racially and culturally homogenous entity. According to Charbonneau, territorial France was more of a dream than a reality, for its borders were not natural, but the product of history and geopolitical factors. The annexation of Brittany in 1532, Metz, Toul and Verdun in 1648, the Catalan regions of Roussillon, Conflans and Cerdagne in 1659 and many others demonstrates that France is actually the product of militarist and expansionist policies of the French royalty. As in France, French policy in Africa has been to place all the constituent parts of Francophone Africa under the political and economic control of France. Has this endeavour yielded the necessary gains for France? What are the implications of such policies for the economic and political trajectory of Francophone African countries? This edited book attempts to shed light on this and many other aspects of French cooperation and interaction in Africa in the twentieth century.

The central objective of the book is to assess French policy issues that may have contributed to or influenced the consistent economic, political, social and security crises in former French colonies on the continent. Senegal has been the exception, but in most cases, the exception is not the rule. The relative political stability and the entrenchment of a tradition of democracy in some Anglophone African countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya and Tanzania beg the question why Francophone Africa still lags behind in this domain. However, specific objectives of the study include the following:

- To examine the broad context of French–African policy;
- To examine the theoretical basis of French–African relations;
- To assess the distinctiveness and uniqueness of the Francophone African experience in democratic processes;
- To assess the opportunities that exist for France to understand Africa and its specificities better; and
- To investigate and provide specific recommendations that can assist in the long-term stability of Francophone African countries.

FRENCH AFRICAN POLICY IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

France is perhaps the only former colonial power that has maintained special a relationship with its former colonies since the instigation of African independence in the 1960s. This special relationship, which is generally referred to as Francafrique, epitomises the incestuous rapport between African dictators and the political elites in France, allowing
rupt to turn a blind eye to the rampant siphoning off of African wealth against opposition. Francophone Africa ordinarily refers to the 15 West African states formerly under French rule and the three Great Lakes states under Belgian and German administration. Rwanda is an exception, since it to the British Commonwealth during a meeting in Uganda in 2007 despite being a former British colony. In practically all these countries, French is the language of public life and international communication.⁸ The fact that the and German colonies of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and Rwanda grouped together with the former French territories reflects both a historical contradiction. The historical contradiction stems from the fact that the territories of Burundi and Rwanda were handed over to the Belgians after World War, and the cultural contradiction lies in that France stepped into the Belgians after 1962 when the two former German colonies achieved.

It has to be understood that France’s involvement in Africa dates back to 1870 French possessions in Africa were limited to several offshore island fringes of commercial and strategic interest. After the Berlin Conference, France acquired control of vast expanses of land along the west and central parts of the continent. For ease of administration, the territories were grouped into two federations: West Africa with its capital in Dakar and French Equatorial Africa with headquarters in Brazzaville, Congo.⁹ France also obtained large portions of Togo which were administered as part of the League of Nations and after 1945 as United Nations (UN) Trust Territories. Despite the diversity in terms of the people and resources, France developed broad common policies for their administration. Policy formulation ensured centralisation, hierarchy and uniformity. It was possible to assume with some amount of certainty what a teacher could expect in any particular classroom at any given time. The Ministry of the Colonies ensured uniformity of such a framework. This form of caricatured implantation on the continent was effected by the two distinct policies of association which will be developed further in this publication. Because of the success of the assimilation and association policies, France was able to rule with small numbers of French officials by securing the collaboration of colonial administration.

In the Var I when they threw their weight behind President Charles de Gaulle and his Free France Movement, which he formed in London after France's entry into World War II. After 1945 and as a sign of appreciation for the French colonies were allocated seats in the French parliament, to end politically.
ich colonies in the 1960s. Some of the clauses of these secret agreements were even
own to many Francophone African leaders, but suffice it to say most of them were
towards France coming to the aid of these dictators, should their grip on power
threatened.

he propagation of this Francophone African political culture was made possible and
reinforced by African political elites who strove for the maintenance of French-
ised political and educational systems and their policy of spreading knowledge of
ch language and culture to much larger portions of their peoples. At the La
meeting of France and Francophone African political elites in 1990, then French
ent François Mitterrand (1981–1995) questioned the need for the continued fur-
ce of Françafrique. He called for a new dawn in Franco-African relationships
isted on incremental reforms to liberalise and democratise the political space in
phone Africa. Thus, this study assesses whether the current French intervention
continent is specifically tied to the unravelling of Françafrique or is an attempt
ce to hold on to Françafrique and continue to perpetuate French neo-imperial
ies on the continent.

he period after the La Baule meeting there was a significant shift in the Francophone
political and security landscape. The first to occur was the liberation of the po-
space and the introduction of multi-party democracy in all Francophone African-
ies. The holding of sovereign national conferences followed, which led to peaceful
change in Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, the Central African Republic, Senegal, Mali and
and violent political revolution in Chad, Burundi, Rwanda and the former Zaire.
anging face of Francophone Africa has greatly perturbed the erstwhile tranquillity
and French political and security charade on the continent. Surprisingly enough,
opened with the express acknowledgement and support of some super powers. This
question whether the post-La Baule period could have been the unbundling of
phone Africa, or whether there are other mitigating factors that have contributed
efarious collapse of Francophone Africa.

PTUAL FRAMEWORK

heoretical scenarios have been put forward to explain the constant political and
cises in Francophone Africa. Prominent among them are globalisation, liberal-
and/or democratisation. Globalisation has been the main cause of the recurrent
and security crises experienced in Francophone Africa. Among others, glo-
on strives for financial, trade, communication and political interaction between
s. Horithi maintains that globalisation implies that that we are already integrated

liberalisation refers to government disengagement in the economic and trade country. The rigid control of African economies soon after independence and disengagement after 1990 have been seen as factors that could have led to the of several Francophone African economies. The third wave of democratisation tinent and the holding of sovereign national conferences have been viewed as gative effects on the stability of several Francophone African countries. This ect assesses problematic areas in the stability of Francophone Africa.

ICA IS IMPORTANT FOR FRANCE

major resolutions of the 13th World Congress of the International Federation Teachers that was held in South Africa in 2012 was to refocus attention on the French in Africa; the likelihood is that the future of the French language ica. Besides the future of the French language being determined in Africa, equally be understood that the future of France, as a super power, could lie as well. According to Renou, the future of France as a super power lies on continent, principally because France wants to use its special relationship with Francophone African countries to enhance the world status of France in context of a permanent confrontation between two forms of imperialism, use of the United States and Russia. There is no need to highlight that the force of China into the African economic spaces has also created some unease among political elites, which have seen China as an economic competitor rather than in the development of the continent.

cal importance to France is also the fact that the special relationship it has with African countries has allowed it to enjoy the diplomatic support of its African UN General Assembly, World Bank meetings and World Trade Organisation giotations. The support of these African allies has enabled France to maintain s a super power and to ensure that France supported French African candidates therings and multilateral institutions. Furthermore, France depends on many countries for access to strategic raw materials to maintain its industrial base. The n and defence agreements, which France signed with all these countries after in 1960 and which were eventually renewed in 2009, granted France special strategic raw materials such as oil, natural gas and uranium. France's rate of e on mineral imports from Africa averages 100 per cent for uranium, 76 per tungnese and 59 per cent for cobalt. Renou has further noted that more than
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global power and lastly deterring communist expansion in Africa. The economic realm of Françafrique has been the most important, as it offered preferential investment outlets for French multinational companies whose tax base is the source of funding for the French elites.

Equally important for France is the monetary gains accruing to the French treasury following the accommodation of the three central banks in Francophone Africa, which continue to lodge their reserves in the French treasury. The West African Central Bank, the Central African Central Bank and the Central Bank of Comoro, according to a special agreement with the French government, all lodge about 50 per cent of their foreign reserves in a special account open to that effect at the French treasury. According to Bloomberg, as of 2014 France has held more than US $20 billion of such monies in an operating account at the French treasury, yielding a little less than 0.75 per cent interest per annum. The operating account was designed and formulated to serve the interest of France and not that of its former colonies. The justification for the hoarding of these large sums has been attributed to France’s intention to guarantee the convertibility of the West African CFA franc. However, the benefits accruing from such convertibility have not been clearly explained to the vast majority of Africans. It has therefore been argued that France uses such money to backstop some of its financial obligations both in France and in the international financial market system.

CONTENTS AND SECTIONS OF THE BOOK

PART ONE: CONTEXTUAL AND CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES

The book is divided into two parts. The first part of the book deals with contextual and conceptual approaches relating to France’s relations with Africa. The second part focuses on country case studies and how France approaches specific issues in selected countries. The first chapter in this section is by Prof. Adar and Dr Kathambi, entitled France and East Africa relations: Securitisation of France’s geostrategic and geopolitical national interests. The chapter contends that France’s relations with the East African sub-region have always been centred on securing France’s geostrategic and geopolitical interests. In the chapter, France’s East African relations are discussed in the context of the geostrategic and geopolitical securitisation of national interests, incorporating the countries in the region as well as the contiguous states brought into this equation through conflict triangulation. These issues revolve around econo-political and security interests. In order to maintain its interests in the region during and after the post-colonial era, France has consistently defined these interests in the broader context of secu
ary power on African soil in a more subtle way, not easily noticeable, but arguably
staking. Benin remains one of the strategic points for Paris in West Africa. Indeed,
y of its multinational companies are well established in the area, where they still
some control over sectors such as agriculture, energy, hydropower, mining, and
portionation.

With regard to the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC)
gion, Dr. Check’s chapter, entitled *France and the evolution of sub-regional integra-
n Central Africa: The case of CEMAC*, examines France’s policy direction towards
formation of regional economic commissions (RECs) on the continent. Dr. Check
that France’s African policy, in general, was characterised by the centralisation of
formulation and decision-making, as well as respect for administrative hierarchy
infomity in the application of these policies. It is, however, important to note that
cessful implementation of these policies was only possible after the French secured
s’ collaboration through conquest. Within the prism of such understanding, and
h a system called indirect rule, traditional African rulers became French agents for
etration of French authority and culture in the traditional fold of many French-
societies. In areas where there was no centralised authority, the French ‘created’
nal rulers and bestowed colonial symbols of power on them. The beneficiaries of
em of administration in colonial Africa were the traditional rulers. The chapter
es how the formation of these loose federations of colonial possession informs
policy towards sub-regional integration in post-independence Africa. The empha-
French policy towards *Afrique Equatoriale Française* (AEF) and subsequently its
the formation of CEMAC. The chapter examines French policy towards CEMAC
es and decipherers to what extent this relationship has affected French geostrategic
wards regional groupings and Africa in general. This is particularly important
be recalled that, during the decolonisation period, power was transferred to the
d states and not to *Afrique Occidentale Française* and AEF.

Fifth chapter in this section, entitled *Francophone Africa works*, critiques France’s
ionist approach in Francophone Africa. In the chapter, Prof. Ekwe-Ekwe points
, although in popular literature the United States has been seen as an interven-
ation, in reality this unenviable ‘accolade’ in global politics is in fact not held by
d States but by France. And the global South’s geographical focus, where France
ot to have anything but invasion as its own definitive credo in foreign policy,
. In chapter five, entitled *Violence, freedom and African cosmopolitanism in con-
y Francophone African fiction*, Prof. Harting examines violence, freedom and
alism in contemporary Francophone Africa. Her point of departure is Nicolas
speech on 26 July 2007 in Dakar, Senegal. Sarkozy’s speech invested deeply in
of a Francophone Africa and caused an intense and ongoing

e argues that literature is germane to this public debate because it challenges received models of representing Africa as a series of stereotypes, while locating its own production reception in a larger global debate of identity formation, including the specific role of Africa in current debates of a new human universalism. Furthermore, the historical nexus between literature, power and politics has been prominent and effective in global anti-colonial movements and the post-independence era of French-speaking Africa. Such authors as Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Amilcar Cabral, and L.S. Senghor have productively combined literature, arts, and politics to articulate and implement their notions of a new man and freedom, either as poets or leaders of their countries. Indeed, part of their texts, as documented by the négritude movement, was to find a pan-African political language through which to represent Africa on its own, non-colonial terms. The last chapter in this section, entitled Security reforms of France African policy cooperation: An incremental process?, highlights the dynamic security cooperation between France and francophone Africa. Prof Christiane argues that these inclusive security arrangements are not new in France’s approach to international relations but are rather a continuation of what France has been known to pursue even during the height of the Cold War. The first generation of cooperation agreements and their security clauses in Francophone Africa were bilateral. The specific characteristic of such clauses was the secret component part of the defence and security agreements, often applied according to the ‘away from public eye’ principle. The chapter contends that the concept of bilateral cooperation translated into ensuring the security of African countries, the regimes in place and the French interests in the face of external and internal threats. It was a matter of ensuring Francophone Africa’s political stability, homogeneity and coherence, which would be durable to French and African partners’ transactions.

This kind of bilateral agreement was much criticised and contested. On the one hand, it was considered as allegedly being a ‘reproduction of colonial relations’ favourable to the uncafé network. On the other hand, it met with increasing competition from the actual powers as well as from emerging powers. Its decline was also due to multiple levels of stakeholders of international relations and global democratisation. Interdependencies being intensified, setting off ‘reverse’ flows of influence from African players to French policy. The context of this evolved contestation and new geopolitics is mainly reasing multilateralism, emergence of regionalism, development of European defence diplomacy, a fight against terrorism and burden-sharing re-organisation. The chapter riffs how the second generation of cooperation agreements and their security clauses arms form part of an incremental reform process. Financial and economic crises tightening French cooperation and defence budgets. Behind the economic crisis,
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SECOND PART: COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

The second part of the book focuses on France’s bilateral, and in most instances unilateral, approaches to addressing fundamental issues affecting its relations with specific countries. In the first chapter of this section, entitled Senegalese-French relations: The historical and intellectual resources of a ‘special relationship’, Dr Niang examines Senegalese-French relations in the context of the historical and intellectual resources of a ‘special relationship’. She argues that as the oldest French colony in Africa, Senegal has historically had close ties to France. Its national politics and socio-economic life were heavily influenced by the ideas, choices, orientations and policies of its political and intellectual elites who had been involved in French metropolitan politics since the nineteenth century. The multiple threads of the French colonial legacy extend beyond language and have to be appended in their various historical and political contexts. Senegal can in a way be seen as a caricature of the problematic relationship between France and its former colonies in progressive aspects of the cultural and intellectual encounter between the countries, conflated with many negative consequences of French-style colonialism. The chapter is how the historically rich and politically determinant events and structures involving Senegal and key Senegalese actors in the history of the colonial encounter give ficit to this ‘special relationship’. It is tempting to look at the different approaches of us Senegalese presidents to Senegalese foreign policy with regard to France, but that should not be the most fruitful way to go about it.

Ina’s chapter, Françafrique and the resurgence of the French military in Africa: case of the Ivorian crisis, examines the impact of the French policy of Françafrique in case of resurgence of French military responses to crises affecting Francophone Africa. The chapter’s focus is Côte d’Ivoire, where France has had a military base since the 1940s. He notes that the resurgence of France’s military presence in Africa raises several questions. While some regard this as necessary, considering serious security challenges on the continent, others consider it unnecessary and a continuation of France’s imperialism on the continent. This paper specifically examines the broad context of military presence in Africa, with specific reference to Côte d’Ivoire. Analysis of the military involvement in Côte d’Ivoire is done with the aim of showing its effects on society. The third chapter in this section, entitled France and the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement for Côte d’Ivoire: Implications for Africa’s continental integration, follows the preceding chapter, with a narrow focus on France and Côte d’Ivoire within the framework of the Linas-Marcoussis agreement. In this chapter, Dr Check notes that the death of Côte d’Ivoire’s founding president, Felix Houphouët-Boigny, in 1993 signalled a new phase in Franco-Ivoirian politics. As the main protagonist of Françafrique, Houphouët-Boigny’s death was considered a turning point in the relationship between France and Côte d’Ivoire.
he Linas-Marcoussis agreement and concludes that, because of France’s long presence in Côte d’Ivoire, its role in resolving the crisis should be more decisive.

Prof. Muntunutwine’s chapter, entitled ‘Cooperation through military agreements between France and the Great Lakes region during the post-colonial period. The case of Rwanda from 1975 to 1994, highlights France’s security and diplomatic relations with Rwanda before the 1994 genocide. He notes that France’s relations with Rwanda post-independence and more specifically during the 1980s and early 1990s were marked by attempts on the part of France to assuage the effects of the Structural Adjustment Programmes, SAPs, which have rendered most African countries susceptible to bullying in return for aid. Relations between France and Rwanda were not an exception to this atrocity and benign cooperation. Originally written in French, the chapter provides a succinct narration on why and how Rwanda became a puppet of France, with devastating consequences, as the events of 1994 suggest. Prof. Salem’s chapter, entitled Security versus democritisation: French priorities in Tunisia’s transitional period, 2011–2014, assesses France’s relationship with Tunisia during the transitional period between 2011 and 2014. He notes that France was taken aback by the revolution in Tunisia and other Arab Spring countries. Well after the revolutions began, France maintained its support of the newly eposed dictators, who served the security interests of the West in general and France in particular. Having noted the initial successes of Tunisia’s revolutions, however, it was in a critical position and faced a serious dilemma: should it prioritise security over democratisation and therefore turn a blind eye to the popular demands? Or should it stand up for the principles of the French revolution and the outcomes of the La Baule meeting of Francophonie in 1990 in which French President François Mitterrand insisted on incremental reforms to liberalise and democratise the political space in Francophone Africa? Acing such dilemmas, most foreign policy makers redefined the situation in a way that allowed for maximum harmony between national interests and principles.

Based on the above chapters, it is clear that France’s multifaceted policy direction towards Africa has been characterised by three critical approaches: domination, continuity and contradiction. Moreover, the chapters in this book reveal France’s patrilineal relations, ambiguity and outright interventionist approach on the African continent. This has implications for how Francophone Africa in particular relates to metropolitan France through the French commonwealth, commonly referred to as la Francophonie, France as being able to direct and manage its soft diplomacy towards its former colonies. With the bulk of the members of la Francophonie coming from Africa, there is no gainsaying that Francophone Africa’s relations with France and other countries are tightly controlled from Paris. Though a lot has been written about the monetary cooperation between France and Francophone Africa, the impact of this cooperation is yet to be objectively measured.
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