

From Eurafrica to Multilateralism:  
The Europeanization of France's Africa Policy

by

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## **Abstract**

This paper explores the forces driving the far-reaching changes in French Africa policy over the past fifty years. Why has France's Africa policy changed? How has France's position within the EU affected these changes? Has French Africa policy "Europeanized"? After placing my approach in the context of the wider field of Europeanization research, this paper explores exceptionalism in French colonial policy and discusses its legacy in the EC's early Africa policy. I will demonstrate that in the first years of EC policy, France managed to impose its national agenda on the EC level. I then show that this changed by the mid-1970s as the EC gained a strengthened identity in the area of development policy. Based on analysis of changes in military policy, political discourse styles, and institutions, this paper will show that EC development policy has significantly shaped the context of France's current policy in Africa.

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## List of Abbreviations

ACP – Africa, Caribbean, Pacific  
AEF – Afrique équatoriale française  
AOF – Afrique occidentale française  
CAP – Common Agricultural Policy  
CEA – Commissariat à l'Énergie Atomique  
CFA – Communauté financière d'Afrique or Communauté financière en Afrique centrale  
CFSP – Common Foreign & Security Policy  
DG – Directorate General  
EBA – Everything but Arms  
EC – European Communities  
EDC – European Defence Community  
EDF – European Development Fund or Électricité de France  
EEC – European Economic Community  
EPC – European Political Cooperation  
ESDP – European Security and Defence Policy  
EU – European Union  
FN – Front national  
HDI – Human Development Index  
LDC – Least Developed Country  
MINEX – Mineral Exports  
NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization  
NGO – Non-Governmental Organization  
PS – Parti socialiste  
RECAMP – Renforcement des capacités africaines de maintien de la paix  
STABEX – Stabilization of Export Earnings  
SYSMIN – System for Stabilizing Minerals  
TEU – Treaty on European Union  
UN – United Nations  
UNDP – United Nations Development Program

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## Introduction

Since the signing of the Treaty of Rome, the countries of central and western Africa have occupied a special place on the EU's trade and development agenda. Although these countries demonstrated exceptional need, it was not the unanimous desire of the EC's<sup>1</sup> founding members (neither at its inception nor in later years) to offer central and western African countries a privileged relationship. Both West Germany and the Netherlands sought in vain to establish more even multilateral relations with the developing world; Great Britain too, once it joined, desired a more level playing field for poor countries. During the EC's first two decades, however, France, successfully projected its policies onto the European level, endowing EC institutions with a pronounced French character. It used leverage to pressure the EC into offering a privileged trading association to francophone African countries<sup>2</sup> and then, as the EC expanded to take on new members with colonial histories, to an ever-growing club of extremely poor countries encompassing Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific (ACP). Since the signing of the first Lomé Convention in 1975, however, the EU's approach to North-South relations has become increasingly independent of French influence, as France has become far more embedded in the European Union's laws and institutions. At the same time, France's relationship with Africa has been characterized by a distinct "Europeanization," whereby France is moving closer to the EU in its policies and institutions. This is occurring through the processes of French

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<sup>1</sup> In this text, "EC" refers to the European Communities prior to the Treaty of Maastricht in 1993 and comprises the European Economic Community (the Common Market), the European Coal and Steel Community, and Euratom.

<sup>2</sup> "Francophone African countries" is the term commonly used to describe French-speaking countries in sub-Saharan Africa which were once colonies of France or Belgium. Generally speaking, northern African countries are not included in this category (*Le Monde* "La présence française").

national adaptation of EU policies and norms and identity reconstruction as France adjusts to its role within the EU. These “bi-directional” processes of Europeanization, which are explored in more depth on page five, are effecting changes that are most evident in the EU’s and France’s Africa policies, which we can understand by exploring their trade and development policies, political discourses, political and military interventions, and political institutions.

Critical literature generally posits from a realist perspective that though French Africa policy appears today to be more restrained, with a greater tendency to engage Africa through multilateral channels (especially in terms of aid, trade, and military & political intervention), France as a nation remains a self-oriented, state-focused actor, intent on maximizing its power in the African theatre where it can (Verschave, Glaser & Smith, Renou). Other scholars, however, point to significant amounts of adaptation on the part of France to European policies and institutions in both political (Larsen, Youngs, Chafer) and military (Utley, Irondelle) domains, which indicate a more permanent reorientation towards a multilateral, Europeanized relationship with Africa. My position is closer to the latter group. Although French and EU policy towards Africa is currently in flux, with France engaging African countries in an inconsistent manner and the EU still unsure of its role as an international political and especially military actor, the evolution of their collaboration on African affairs points to a Europeanization of French Africa policy that is gaining pace.

Analysts<sup>3</sup> have since commented that many of the “favourable” terms of trade offered to these countries, particularly in the early years—including preferential market

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<sup>3</sup> Most notably: John Ravenhill (119), William Brown (4), Charlotte Bretherton & John Vogler (“EU as Development” 121), Marjorie Lister (The European Union 143)

access, guaranteed minimum commodity prices, substantial development aid grants and loans, and so on—served more to further entrench exploitative colonial patterns of trade than to help the region to develop economically. Although some of the EU's most neo-colonial<sup>4</sup> style policies towards Africa had long since disappeared (most notably in its greater openness in terms of trade to exports from the economies of the ACP in 1975 and in a lessening of the granting of tied aid through the Lomé Agreements), the EU's relationship with Africa through to the 1990s retained important elements of exceptionalism that contributed to these countries remaining in grievous states of under-development. Indeed, the evolution of the EU's trade and development policies on Africa to a more equitable position can be traced inversely to the decline of EU Eurafricanist thought, linked both to France's less dominant role within the EU and to its changing geopolitical interests. France's approach to its African pré-carré (commonly referred to as its backyard, a place of special interest to France and reserved for its own actions) or Françafrique (see page 17 for a definition) was from decolonization through to the 1980s inspired by Eurafricanism, a colonial-era ideology justifying European colonial activity in Africa on the basis of the two continents' supposed mutual dependence (Lister, The European Union: 172; Martin, "Africa and the Ideology" 222; Whiteman 31). In French consciousness, Africa formed a natural extension of France. The gradual semi-regularization of French Africa policy has occurred at the same time as the redefining of France's national identity. Having at one time seen Africa as an essential factor in its "national destiny" (Dozon, par. 9; Verschave 304; Lister, The European Union 172-3; Glaser & Smith 22), France's

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<sup>4</sup> Neo-colonial describes a state's intention to retain influence in a region where it has at some time been a imperial power.



politicians are today reluctant, for fear of sounding imperialistic, to speak too warmly of Africa; appeals to international solidarity are now more often made in favour of the country's European partners.

Although France no longer actively engages in pressuring the EU to maintain a particularist, Eurafrican-inspired approach to francophone Africa, its past influence has left a legacy of exceptionalism towards the region within the EU's development and trade policies, which has gradually been reduced through the Lomé and Cotonou Conventions. Today, French influence on the EU has reversed, and through processes of national adaptation and identity reconstruction we are witnessing the gradual Europeanization of France's foreign and development policies towards its historic pré-carré in Africa. This is evident in a number of areas, including the greater proportion of French aid that is multilateral, the detaching of France's development endeavours from its strategic business and political interests, the evolution in French political dialogue towards a national identity embracing primarily the EU, France's increasing reluctance to become involved in African conflicts, and the transformation of French institutions such as the military, the Ministry of Cooperation, and the CFA franc.

In Chapter One, I establish a theoretical basis by exploring the applications of different relevant processes of Europeanization. In Chapter Two, in order to understand the particularism that came to characterize the EC's North-South relations, I explore the concept in French colonial and post-colonial policies. I also examine France's national identity as it relates to Africa and its economic and geopolitical interests on the continent. In Chapter Three, to understand France's influence on the EC's Africa policy, I trace France's projection of its interests onto the EC level at its founding and in its early

decades, paying special attention to trade, aid, and “cooperation,” the three defining aspects of the EC’s relationship with Africa. I particularly distinguish between early French power projection and France’s later influence on the EU level, already exposing the characteristics of an embedded EU state. Finally, in Chapter Four, with the purpose of understanding European influence on French Africa policy, I demonstrate how the EU has gradually moved away from a particularist involvement with Africa, present evidence of the waning of French influence within the EC that began in the 1970s, and assess the degree of adaptation to EU methods occurring in France’s policies and institutions.

This paper examines the changes occurring in French Africa policy through the conceptual lens of Europeanization. Expanding upon Reuben Wong’s categories of Europeanization (2005: 136-9), I differentiate between early French power projection and its later Europeanizing influence. I argue that the deepening of EC institutions, and especially, through the Lomé I Agreement in 1975, its development policy, increasingly restricted France’s imposition of its Africa policy on the EC while allowing France to influence EC North-South relations in a more limited way. Moreover, as the EC’s identity as a development actor began to take shape well before the Cold War, France began responding to its Europeanizing pressure by adapting both its national identity and its policies and institutions to European norms.

## Chapter 1 – Theoretical Approach

### Contrasting Scholarly Approaches to Europeanization

In order to understand the changes that have been occurring in France's Africa policy, it is essential to consider its geo-political context as a member of the EU. With the emergence of the EU as an important actor in the realm of foreign relations, France, which has a long-standing strategic interest in Africa, has been redefining its approach to the region. This redefinition affects both national and EU policies and institutions and has been identified by many scholars as Europeanization.

The scholarly consensus, according to Pernille Rieker, is that France's guiding foreign policy vision is to foster la gloire et la grandeur de la France, which, in the African context, mostly relates to its development policies (515). This approach is reflected in the various schools of thought examining French behaviour within the context of European foreign-policy convergence. The realist school sees France's increasing support of multilateral action and international legal structures as a logical response to its relative weakness vis-à-vis the United States (Ibid 515). Not only does this stance contrast favourably with the USA's often more unilateral approach to foreign relations, and endow France with a degree of international prestige, but it also provides the opportunity for France to establish a neo-hegemonic area of influence. This view faithfully reflects the traditional Republican motive for French expansion with the informal creation of a "Greater France," by which France can "benefit" countries throughout the area with its "universal" values. Thus France's increasing tendency to appeal to the EU or the UN to solve problems in its traditional "backyard" is seen by

realists as its adapting to evolving global circumstances while retaining the same foreign policy objectives, encapsulated by a pursuit of international "greatness" (Renou 18-9).

The institutionalist school would point to the remarkable level of inter-departmental cooperation in French foreign policy affairs (among the Elysée, the Prime Minister's Office, the Quai d'Orsay, the Ministry of Defence, and so on), making pronouncements on foreign matters seamlessly consistent (Rieker 516; Blunden 28-29). In theory, this unity greatly minimizes the potential impact of individual political actors in the area of French foreign policy and strengthens France's voice. This institutionalist view may help explain the success France has had both in promoting its interests in Africa in a consistent manner and in advancing these interests within the EU decision-making forum.

Finally, the social constructivist school posits that France's strong emphasis on power is a Gaullist "value" that both informs and explains the country's foreign policy manoeuvres (Rieker 516; Cole & Drake 38). Thus as a social construction, the expansion of French influence and power has become a self-perpetuating principle informing France's governing structures and lasting well beyond the specific global circumstances that may have helped craft such an approach. The vision of a "Greater France" quite naturally leads into the notion of la Françafrique, whereby France and Africa function as one political unit; this attaches itself to France's mainframe socio-political value structure, thus explaining what is perceived as France's continuing involvement in African affairs through new channels. This influence in Africa is seen as a fundamental expression of French identity, which helps make clear why, as Henrik Larsen states, "norms and values, although present in the language, do not seem to be integrated in the

main argument" (126). This realist interpretation of France's motives towards Africa maintains that even though French decision-makers today hold to such values as good governance, multilateralism, and the promotion of democracy in their dealings with Africa, they are in reality still guided by a fundamental interest in their global power, a situation that will probably not soon change.

All the above can be said to be realist views in so far as they acknowledge the pre-eminence of French ideological expansion as a key motivator guiding the French foreign-policy dialectic. Nevertheless, they assume that the French political structure is incapable of change. Cole and Drake point to the roles of both the French Left and the receding "memories of Gaullism" (38) when they argue that because "the plural left government has repeatedly indicated a willingness to trade subsidiarity for sovereignty" and because the retreat of Gaullism has created a need for a new approach to French-EU engagement, French political society has made itself increasingly open to the devolution of certain areas of power to Brussels. They write:

What we are in fact seeing are signs of a process which reverses the traditional French stance of exporting French ( i.e. 'universal') values to the rest of the world via Europe, in favour of a willingness to adopt, in France, concepts (such as subsidiarity) initially devised to improve democracy at the EU level. This is an intellectual sea-change indeed . . .

(39)

This "sea-change" is evident first in France's recent habit of referring African conflicts, especially coups d'état, to the EU for dialogue (rather than wielding unilateral French power). The change is also manifest in the partial carry-through of France's emphasis

since the 1990s on transparency and good governance as a condition for receiving development aid (Chafer, "Franco-African Relations" 360; Gourévitch 372). Finally the change is seen concretely in France's decreasing presence in francophone Africa coinciding with its increased presence not only elsewhere on the continent (Le Monde "La présence française") but also around the world (Chafer, "Franco-African Relations" 344).

### **The Concept of Europeanization of French Africa Policy**

The "Europe" in "Europeanization" could refer either to the geographical sense of Europe as it has historically been understood or to a more "political" Europe, encapsulated in the European Union. State actors undergoing Europeanization according to the first meaning could be emulating policy-making and institution-building in adjacent European countries that do not necessarily form a part of the EU or in an area of competence EU membership does not affect. This looser form of Europeanization could also include "norm transference" under moral pressure from other European countries whose policies or institutions an agglomeration of actors perceive as more ethical or efficient. Viewing Europeanization within the context of the EU, however, implies a far more complex set of processes. The EU, as a political entity, imposes on its Member States a supranational political and legal structure encompassing institutions, policies, and laws with enormous capacity for influence and adaptation. As "the core political project in Europe" and that which scholarly publications most frequently examine (J. Olsen 927), the EU as the primary context for a discussion of Europeanization presents the more relevant approach. Further to this, though the literature on Europeanization has

most frequently addressed public policy, the same principles relating to institutional change can also be applied to foreign policy.

To explore the Europeanization of France's Africa policy, I am using Reuben Wong's comprehensive approach to Europeanization, which sheds light on concurrent dynamics of French policy change. His three principle forms are "national adaptation," "national projection," and "identity reconstruction" (136-9). The first and probably most significant of these is the concept of "national adaptation." According to this approach, states gradually adjust their own political and economic systems to fit the EU framework (Wong 136; J. Olsen 923). Cole and Drake express this process in terms of an "independent variable" (27) and point to "policy change [effected by the EU] in specific policy sectors" for evidence of this strong, supranationally-driven form of Europeanization. Knill and Lehmkuhl see a process akin to national adaptation occurring in both "explicit" and "implicit" ways. In the former sense, "positive integration," the Member State must adjust to the EU's laws and regulations. In the latter, "negative integration," the EU's legislative activity may create a new situation (in a sense, changing "the rules of the game") that makes it difficult for states to fit the new environment without changing their policies and institutions (2).

France has only recently begun to reorient both its foreign and development policies towards the EU. Although both the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the European development policy were brought legally into existence with the signing of the Treaty on European Union 1992 (TEU), more commonly referred to as the Treaty of Maastricht, these two related areas of policy have evolved very differently since the beginning of the EC. The EU's international development policy got its

beginnings in the special relationship the EC established with "overseas countries and territories" before many of them had even achieved independence (SCADPlus "Development"), and yet throughout the Cold War France maintained its own approach to development aid. Only in the past fifteen years has the EU begun to elucidate its foreign and security policy. It is thus premature to attempt to ascertain how much of a direct effect the CFSP (and, increasingly, the European Security and Defence Policy [ESDP], which forms a part of it) could have overall on French military policies and institutions. In the African context, however, where French military activity is often linked to development strategy (especially in terms of maintaining political and economic stability and intervening during humanitarian crises), France appears to have theoretically devolved some of its traditional military obligations to the European level. Though this has led to an EU military intervention in Africa only once (in Congo-Kinshasa), France's appeal to the EU Commission to open dialogue with and provide recommendations to African countries in situations where it would previously have intervened on a unilateral basis (such as in Niger, Guinea-Bissau, Comoros, and so on) heralds a notable change in its approach to African relations. The causal link between military and development policies in Africa has created a greater degree of Europeanization in this important sphere of French foreign and military activity.

Wong identifies the second form of Europeanization as "national projection"; it sees states as significant forces for change within the EU's institutional structure (Wong 137; Olsen 924). This process favours large countries with a strong international political and military presence, such as France (Wong 150). While appearing to contradict the notion of national adaptation, Wong stresses that the two concepts actually



complement each other; it was Member States that built up the institutions that make laws and set binding rules. Nevertheless, it is important to note that France's early projection of influence on the EC's Africa policy does not constitute Europeanization as much as probably "Francization," a power play with the intent of moulding the EC in its image and part of its domination of the Community in the early years of its existence. France's later influence as an embedded state in the EC, however, contributed to the maintenance of a degree of exceptionalism in the EC's Africa policy and is an important force of Europeanization.

"Identity reconstruction," the third form of Europeanization, describes the formation of a European identity, which manifests itself increasingly in areas traditionally occupied by the nation-state (Wong 138). This type of Europeanization not only redefines people's conceptions of "territoriality," it also attaches specific values and societal goals to this identity that differ from those of the national identity it may be subsuming or replacing. With its focus on the social institutionalization of values and identity, the process is very much in the social constructivist school while following a neo-functionalist model. Wong writes, "[Studies of this type of Europeanization] envisage a teleological movement: the fading away of member states' monopoly on the loyalties of their citizens over the long term to the benefit of *European* attitudes and objectives" [emphasis his] (138). Scholars have identified this process most strongly among not only the "European elites" but also the national policy-makers that come into regular contact with EU institutions (Ibid 138; Cole and Drake 30). Knill and Lehmkuhl see this as "framing integration," which "[alters] the beliefs and expectations of domestic actors" [emphasis theirs]. By modifying beliefs at the national-level, identity

reconstruction would imply a carry-through effect by re-orienting the priorities of national political actors and stimulating institutional change (2). French Africa policy has seen a series of political watersheds in the past seventeen years, including the La Baule Conference, the CFA devaluation, the partial military withdrawal from Africa, the EU's French-led Congo Mission, and France's refusal to intervene militarily in a number of African conflicts. These decisions were in part the result of an important change in mentality on behalf of individual political actors in France.

In conclusion, it is important to note that France will, of necessity, continue its foreign and development policy towards African countries and that this policy's continued existence does not negate the fact of Europeanization. Ideally, French foreign policy competences should evolve according to the principle of subsidiarity and co-exist rather than compete with EU-level foreign policy competences. This has happened in important areas of its Africa policies (the most significant are trade, aid, and increasingly, military intervention). Indeed, given the high level of cohesiveness inherent in France's foreign policy manoeuvres, the latest mixed signals coming out of France regarding its Africa policies<sup>5</sup> are perhaps evidence of a political culture in transition. The gradual Europeanization in French national institutions and political networks is causing a non-power-based foreign policy objective to emerge alongside France's traditional Africa policy objectives.

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<sup>5</sup> For example, France has affirmed it remains committed to a special relationship with Africa (Embassy of France 4) while at the same time devaluing the CFA franc (Chafer, *Franco-African Relations* 347), dissolving the Ministry of Cooperation (Ibid, *Franco-African Relations* 351), and gradually withdrawing militarily from the region (Uteley 137). I will go into more detail on these changes in Chapter Four.

## **Chapter 2 - French Post-Colonial Africa policy: Legacy of Eurafricanism**

### **Eurafricanism and the Colonial Relationship**

Relations between France and the central and western countries of francophone Africa were characterized by their highly exceptional nature from decolonization in the early 1960s to the end of the Cold War. There were many obvious reasons for the region's heavy dependence on the rich North and on France: the lack of serious industry, the political instability brought about by despotism, the always-pressing need for foreign capital, and, of course, the strong cultural and linguistic ties that were a recent legacy of France's colonial mastery of the region. Tony Chafer confirms that "against a background of extreme poverty and social and political divisions within the countries . . . , France represented . . . a source of stability" (344). Nevertheless, it would be difficult to ignore the role Eurafricanism played in ensuring the continued dominance of France in African affairs well after decolonization. Indeed, France's adherence to the ideological notion of Eurafrica in managing its empire set the stage for the strong dependence of central and western Africa upon both France and the European Union in the post-colonial era.

The ideological concept of Eurafrica implies a symbiotic relationship between Europe and Africa. Europe is supposedly dependent on Africa for both raw resources and manual labour, and Africa dependent on Europe for its expertise, capital, and technology (Bretherton & Vogler, "Development Cooperation" 112). In theory, Eurafricanism is made to sound like an equal partnership, but in practice it essentially justified the mass expropriation of African resources; even the donated technology and

infrastructure only furthered European interests (Bakary 64). France adopted Eurafricanism as a guiding philosophy in managing its empire in order to solve the most significant political dilemma it faced in its role as colonial master: how to balance its national republican ideals with the reality of its current imperialist position (Wilder 201). Until the First World War, France had achieved this balance simply by nurturing democracy in the metropole while ruling its overseas territories with blatant authoritarianism (Ibid 201).

During the inter-war years, however, as the political discourse in France became ever more concerned with the well-being of the empire's native peoples, the need grew for a more sophisticated ideological basis for the empire (Wilder 203). By then, France's entrenched republican culture implied the universalism of humankind while at the same time regarding itself as the pinnacle of human development. Clearly, its authoritarian and sometimes brutal colonial policies stood in sharp contrast to these ideals. Eurafricanism thus provided a driving force for its mission civilisatrice (Bakary 64), France's version of the "white man's burden" that fired its missionary zeal to "civilize" the native peoples of its empire. Its aim was to turn Africa's indigenous peoples into enlightened, educated citizens instead of primitives chained to superstition and black magic, a people far more "influenced by traditional sorcerers and modern agitators" (Wilder 209) than by the rule of law or an appeal to reason.

For this reason, France pursued an assimilationist model of education (Bakary 65) despite the call from many scholars and political leaders (most notably Albert Sarraute, Minister of the Colonies in the 1920s) for a policy of "association" with its African colonies (an approach that allows indigenous people greater autonomy and that

was not seriously adopted until the final years of French Empire) (Wilder 203). Thus the French, for example, banned native African languages from the educational system, in significant contrast to the British, who tended more to rule by association (Bakary 65). Furthermore, the same educated African elites who were taught, during the colonial period, that their ancestors were Gauls were groomed to be the future administrators of their colonies, filling positions in such areas as nursing, clerical work, interpreting, and teaching (Ibid 65). This class of educated African went on to maintain significant cultural and political ties to France and, mixed with a strong degree of political opportunism, set the stage for the future cultural and political subjugation of their countries to France after independence.

France's embrace of Eurafricanism helped entrench trade patterns that benefited itself primarily while inhibiting any kind of significant economic development in its colonies. Colonies were not permitted to industrialize; instead, they were discouraged from developing any kind of manufacturing sector (Martin 226). France's economic interests were clearly at the heart of this policy; Jules Ferry, the famous 19<sup>th</sup> century Republican and advocate of French imperialism, declared bluntly that "the colonial policy is but the outgrowth of the industrial policy" (Ibid 224). Foreign trade was kept as bilateral as possible; the French government prevented colonies from trading with each other or with third countries, forcing them to trade nearly entirely with the metropole. This policy translated into a system where the price of imports in colonies was set artificially high while the price of exports was set artificially low, engendering a strong dependence of the colonies on mother France and keeping them in poverty (Ibid 225-6). Imports from France (such as machines or clothing), tending to be far

more capital intensive, provided significantly more economic stimulus to the metropole than the labour-intensive but capital-poor colonial exports provided to the colonies (mostly agricultural or raw materials). Such a system also discouraged widespread education, in spite of France's mission civilisatrice, since to maintain such patterns of low productivity does not require an educated work force.

### **Decolonization**

France's Eurafrican mindset lasted well beyond decolonization, which meant very little chance existed for the type of bilateral relations that would represent a clean break with the past for France's newly-independent colonies. Indeed, as a logical extension to the concept of Eurafricanism, the idea of a greater France translated into the notion of la Françafrique, first advanced as "la France Afrique" by Houphouët-Boigny as a positive ideal of post-colonial cooperation, then renamed by François-Xavier Verschave to deride the concept as representative of the enduring exploitative nature of relations between France and its former colonies. Verschave defined la Françafrique as follows:

[Une] nébuleuse d'acteurs économiques, politiques et militaires, en France et en Afrique, organisée en réseaux et *lobbies*, et polarisé sur l'accaparement de deux rentes : les matières premières et l'Aide publique au développement. La logique de cette ponction est d'interdire l'initiative hors du cercle des initiés. Le système autodégradant se recycle dans la criminalisation. Il est naturellement hostile à la démocratie. (175)

With a pragmatism derived from the experience of France's recent loss of Indochina and its worsening position in North Africa (having also recently lost Tunisia and Morocco and already being engaged in a brutal war of secession in Algeria), the French government passed the Loi Cadre on 26 June, 1956 (Gourévitch 250). Besides making France's presence in French Africa more viable in light of the social benefits that Africans had recently won from France, the law was intended to shore up any serious notions of independence in its colonies that formed part of Afrique occidentale française (AOF) and Afrique équatoriale française (AEF). In order to achieve this aim, the law created in each colony a distinct electoral college and universal suffrage and devolved a great deal of administrative responsibility to the local elites in such expensive areas as health care, education, and public salaries (at the same time it assumed greater responsibility for such things as defence, foreign relations, and monetary policy) (Chafer, "French African Policy" 171). The Loi Cadre was thus principally aimed at satisfying the African elite's demands for greater autonomy to guarantee their cooperation in quelling movements of independence before they got out of hand (Gourévitch 250). Chafer stresses that the law was not at the time intended to lay the groundwork for independence for French Africa but to produce the opposite result; in the push to get the Loi Cadre passed, its government backers framed it as vital to France's national interest, not signalling intent on the part of the government to pull out of Africa (172).

Ultimately, however, the Loi Cadre was not able to prevent the groundswell of independence movements that washed across Africa in the late 1950s: by the end of 1960, most colonies of French Africa had achieved official independence (Gourévitch

421). The Loi Cadre was, nevertheless, a crucial bridge between the colonial and post-colonial periods in the region and prevented a rupture between France and the newly-independent states that could have severed the colonial link and set them on a new course (as eventually happened in both Algeria and Indochina). Instead, the relative painlessness that characterized the move to independence in francophone Africa provided, along with the Loi Cadre, a sense of continuity that perpetuated colonial-era patterns of political, intellectual, cultural, linguistic, and economic exchange between Africa and the “mother country.” Ironically, the attempts of some African elites (such as Houphouët-Boigny and Senghor) to negotiate better positions for their colonies within the French Union helped speed their paths to independence. Chafer writes:

[At] the socio-economic level, African political and social movements successfully exploited the French dream of creating a ‘modern’ Africa within the colonial system to obtain major improvements in African wage levels between 1936 and 1956, and in their campaigns for the extension of French metropolitan economic and social benefits such as family allowances and labour legislation, to Africans. Indeed, it was precisely this success that played a crucial role in rendering the French dream of a ‘modern’ Africa within the colonial system financially unviable and thus in obliging France to adopt a different approach to its relations with Black Africa. (175-76)

While largely unintended by those African political actors attempting to engage France from within, their collective involvement was thus pivotal in the achievement of nominal independence for their countries.



Jean-Pierre Dozon argues that the notion of a post-colonial Françafrique was cemented in the reassertion of the French state in 1944-45 when de Gaulle made Brazzaville the centre of the rebirth of France before the metropole had been reclaimed by the Free French. Dozon emphasizes the extraordinary nature of such a move by underlining that French Africa was seen as such an integral part of France that it could *be* the French state for a time. He adds:

On est bien dans le moment crucial où ce que j'ai appelé l'État franco-africain se met en place. C'est la Françafrique si vous voulez, mais on n'est pas là dans un monde d'affaires. On est dans quelque chose de régalien, d'organique. Et qui se passe où ? À Londres, à Alger et surtout à Brazzaville ! Je crois que c'est le tournant central de ce qui va se dérouler dans les années soixante où, même s'il s'agit officiellement de décolonisation, ce sont des scènes, si on les regarde de près, de renforcement permanent de cet État franco-africain décidé en 1944 et 1945. (par. 4)

In effect, well after the colonies' formal independence, the existence of a French sphere of influence in Africa provided a tangible reassurance of the integrity and power of the French nation-state.

### **France's Pré-carré**

By the time the decolonization of French Africa was complete, France's besoin de rayonnement (which implies a need to exert French influence and reveal its "glory" upon the rest of the world) had, with the decline of its global influence, become more

important than ever (Chafer, "Franco-African Relations" 345-6). France was not only grappling with the humiliation of its armistice in the Second World War and the dissolution of its empire, but also with the rise of the USSR and the USA as the new global superpowers and the loss of Algeria, its key colonial territory. Its remaining theatre of influence, France's pré-carré would thus have to be Africa. By establishing itself as a hegemonic power in central and western Africa, France could benefit politically from the prestige of appearing to be an honest and powerful "broker" both in a chaotic and needy region and in an important ideological battleground throughout the Cold War (Chafer, "Franco-African Relations" 344). At the same time, African dictators benefited from the stability France brought in its fraternal-style support for their regimes. In fact, most of France's many military interventions in Africa during this time were to shore up dictators whose hold on power was threatened by rebellions or coups d'état (La documentation française). France's military bases in seven strategically key countries (Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Central African Republic, Djibouti, Gabon, Cameroon, and Chad) served as a further reminder that it was the gendarme of Africa, ready to intervene to support its "friends." Further to this, the leaders benefited from enormous amounts of aid in loans and grants (O'Toole 111). Indeed, France regularly provided last-minute rescues during budget crises (Chafer, "Franco-African Relations" 345), thus rendering itself indispensable to countries in the region and furthering their heavy dependence.

Africa was central to France's image of itself as a global power for reasons that went beyond mere prestige and political myth-making: the development of France's major post-war industries added significant weight to the country's determination to

maintain a neo-colonialist relationship with francophone Africa. Indeed, France's status as both a nuclear power and a major energy player was dependent upon its access to oil and uranium, neither of which, as Dozon points out, exist in abundance in the French metropole. Having unhindered access to these commodities, Dozon argues, allowed France to maintain its political independence throughout the Cold War (par. 37). Energy and nuclear power, embodied in such corporate empires as Elf, Électricité de France (EDF), and le Commissariat à l'Énergie Atomique (CEA), not only put France in the small but powerful club of nuclear powers, but also provided it with a geo-political leverage that made it both less vulnerable to US policy and less dependent on Middle Eastern oil, thereby enabling it to serve as a Western intermediary between the USA and the Arab states. It was for this reason too that prominence in energy and nuclear power was a defining feature of all governments of the Fifth Republic during the Cold War. French leaders tended to have especially strong relationships with countries such as Gabon and Niger that provided France with energy resources, which is evident in the strong and consistent support provided for such leaders as Omar Bongo and Diori Hamani<sup>6</sup> (BBC News 5-7; Gourévitch 296). Indeed, the USA probably supported France in its maintenance of an African pré-carré because both countries recognized that if African states were to gravitate more towards the USSR, the Soviets would gain a crucial strategic advantage in terms of greater access to uranium deposits and other commodities.

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<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, when Hamani was deposed in 1974, France did not intervene. Some analysts argue this was because the coup occurred between the death of Pompidou and the presidential election that replaced him. The more likely story, however, is that France was hoping for a government less prone to hindering France's extraction of its uranium reserves (Gourévitch 296-7).

The French had further economic leverage in Africa through two regional currency unions, represented by the CFA franc (called in the west, Communauté financière d'Afrique, and in the centre, Communauté financière en Afrique centrale), which were tied to the French franc and based on a system of surprix (overvaluation). Although initially aimed at shielding fragile colonial economies from the devaluation of the French franc after France signed the Bretton Woods Agreement in 1945, the CFA franc was kept in place to prevent the rapid depletion of foreign capital reserves “as well as to guarantee supplies for France and stabilise [sic] prices” (Coussy 160). In other words, the CFA monetary union was designed to shield the central and western African countries from the rough conditions of the world capital markets and allow for growth not only by encouraging foreign direct investment but also by providing foreign technology and expertise. Critics soon pointed out, however, that while there was little evidence of growth resulting from this policy, there was a high level of French capitalist activity in the region with the accompanying repatriation to the metropole of large amounts of foreign exchange. Jean Coussy notes that most of this consisted of “expatriate revenues both from technical assistance and from the private sector, and of the return on capital (debt servicing and investment profits)—as well as the export of national revenue and capital (which grew over time)” (164). Even France’s development aid to this region, which was many times what it gave through the EU, came in the form of grants, seventy percent of which had to be spent on purchases from France. Luxury imports often constituted a large portion of these purchases, which obviously did not benefit the vast majority of Africans (Ibid 163).

France also helped uphold African dictatorships through its powerful weapons industry. In return for substantial aid, many African countries were expected to purchase large quantities of French arms, a tactic France used to strengthen dictatorial regimes that seemed weak or in danger of losing control of the countryside. Of course, France's arms' sector benefited tremendously from this arrangement as well. Pierre Fabre characterizes the French as taking on the role of gendarmes régionaux and adds that although these sales weren't linked to an explicitly imperialist foreign policy, due to "the interpenetration of economic, political, and military domains," it is difficult to see how they could be construed as not containing elements of neo-colonialism (228).

An additional and significant means of control France had over its former colonies was through their ruling classes. Most of French Africa's political class continued to be educated in French universities well after decolonization was complete. These African elites thus took home not only French political ideas but also strong connections to France on both a cultural and a personal basis (many of these elites went to the same grandes écoles as future French politicians). The strong linguistic ties between the two regions further sustained their loyalties. In the case of Central African Republic, for example, Thomas O'Toole writes: "Largely alienated from the indigenous society, this co-opted urban elite has become the rather inept political administrators of a neo-colonial state" (102). Referring to them as the "bureaucratic bourgeoisie," he points out that their lifestyles and personal connections link them more to France than to their own people.

La Francophonie, which preserved a certain Eurafrikan spirit in its philosophy of solidarity between French Africa and France on the basis of a common language,

represents yet another way of maintaining the French hold over francophone African. French governments have always expressed strong fears of anglophone encroachment on the continent. After decolonization, France countered this perceived threat by greatly increasing the number of French cultural centres, international French schools, and Alliances françaises across its pré-carré. La Francophonie also gave francophone countries the additional assurance of being part of a political project. Indeed, through this mythical brotherhood of nations, France was able (and in fact continues) to exert a very powerful cultural and linguistic influence in western and central Africa.

To conclude, it is important to note that though France appears to have done a good job of ensuring that its interests in Africa were met through the process of decolonization, the government did not proceed with any kind of fixed agenda or “grand plan.” Chafer argues that France’s actions in Africa were more reactive than proactive and were characterized by series of decisions that influenced the situation in its African pré-carré in its favour from a piecemeal and “incremental” approach (“French African Policy” 172). Happily for the French and African elites, the same Loi Cadre that smoothed the way to independence set the stage for them to pursue their interests much as they had always done; in fact, in many ways, these elites were able to be a great deal more active in the post-colonial period than they had been before. Houphouët-Boigny actually helped strengthen France’s post-colonial hold over francophone Africa by undermining the solidarity of the French West African bloc, essentially dissolving the AOF and fundamentally weakening the new countries’ ability to function as viable states (Chafer, “French African Policy” 177). Whereas a unified AOF would have greater bargaining power in Paris and indeed other Northern centres

of power, the small, individual, poverty-stricken states that emerged from decolonization in Africa became strongly dependent on France, allowing it to flood these countries with its professionals. Although this increased French presence was ostensibly to advise in areas such as health care, education, engineering, and economics (Ibid, "French African Policy" 177), its vast increase underscored the fact that rather than ceasing to be imperialist in Africa, France had merely redefined its imperialist role in the region.

## **Chapter 3 – French Influence on Early EC Development & Foreign Policy**

### **France and the Treaty of Rome**

The residual exceptionalism in the EU's Africa policy, evident in its special arrangements with Africa in the sectors of trade and development that persist today through the Cotonou Agreement, has its roots in France's power projection during the early years of European integration. This power projection, leading to a "Francization" (a process that endows something with a strongly French character) of many EC policies, became increasingly muted as France became an embedded member of the EU; eventually, it simply constituted a form of Europeanization through national projection. Although Reuben Wong identifies national projection as a bottom-up dynamic of Europeanization (137), it is essential to distinguish between the influence resulting from a simple power projection and the more affective influence of an embedded member of the EC. France's early power projection must be considered more a "Francizing" than a "Europeanizing" force precisely because the EC did not yet have a strong institutional identity, espousing norms and values that could be called distinctively "European." Once this identity had begun to develop within the realm of foreign relations (which I argue first occurred through Lomé I in 1975 well before the watershed in French and EC Africa policies that many scholars point to at the end of the Cold War), France's influence on the EC, though far less absolute than it was previously, became more long-lasting as it was able to penetrate the EC's identity and be preserved in its acquis communautaire.



France's strongest power projection was manifest just prior to the signing of the Community's founding document, the Treaty of Rome. At the time, France was the only country of the six original members to enjoy major global influence.

Luxembourg, Belgium, and Holland were too small to compete with France for power; Italy was relatively poor and politically unstable; and West Germany was still striving for international legitimacy in the aftermath of its defeat and partition at the end of the Second World War. By not tabling its demands until late 1956, shortly before the Treaty of Rome was to be signed and ratified, France astutely timed its negotiation with regards to a special status for its colonies, which would soon be former colonies. John Ravenhill writes: "By making a satisfactory agreement on provisions for its dependencies a *sine qua non* for its signature of the Treaty, French bargaining power was maximized" (119). Despite some protest from West Germany and the Netherlands, who would have preferred a relationship that embraced the developing world on a more even basis (Soper 466), France managed to get a provision of "association" for all its protectorates into Part IV of the Treaty, Articles 131-6 (now 182-7) (Holland 26). This strategic move guaranteed France's hold over francophone Africa well into the post-colonial period. William Brown observes, "By achieving the association of the colonies with the EU, France could maintain some of its colonial economic benefits, while transferring some of the costs of colonialism to the other EU countries" (41). Thus France was able to take advantage of its unique position as a major power broker to shape the EC's early approach to trade relations with the countries of central and western Africa, which were mostly soon-to-be former French and Belgian colonies.

## Trade Relations

Beginning with francophone Africa's Yaoundé Agreement and continuing through the ACP's Lomé and Cotonou Agreements, the EU's relationship with France's former African colonies was defined by three essential components: trade, aid, and "cooperation partnership" (Bretherton and Vogler, "EU as Development" 115). Although the dynamics of these three aspects of EU North-South relations have evolved and have seen significant power shifts over the years, they have been the focus of every related bilateral arrangement since the Treaty of Rome. In terms of trade, successive agreements have defined and redefined a preferential trading partnership that allows francophone African (and later other African, Pacific, and Caribbean) countries privileged access to certain areas of the EU's common market (Ibid, "EU as Development" 115). This partnership began with reciprocal trade preferences that favoured industrial products and severely limited agricultural output during Yaoundé; it graduated to more realistic, non-reciprocal trade preferences under Lomé and Cotonou that gradually opened up Europe's markets to ACP agricultural exports and allowed, through the recent "Everything But Arms" (EBA) initiative, almost free access to EU markets for some of the world's poorest countries (Ibid, "EU as Development" 118).

The Yaoundé Convention, enacted in 1964 and renewed in 1969, was more an arrangement to suit the EC countries, and France particularly, rather than a genuine attempt to improve the lot of poverty-stricken countries. Yaoundé only allowed industrial products tariff free into the EC—an insignificant concession as there was very little industry in central and western African countries—together with raw materials and a few agricultural products that Europe needed. In order to protect its

CAP, the EC restricted most other agricultural exports from African countries.

Furthermore, while the EC gave huge loans and grants to those countries, these were often in the form of tied aid, with extremely negative consequences for their long-term economic viability.

The EU's relationship with the developing world was first shaped along colonial lines in an effort to "accommodate the remaining colonial interests of Member States" (Bretherton and Vogler, "EU as Development" 115). In fact, the EC's early trade deals with the countries of central and western Africa in many ways continued the economic patterns in place before they gained their independence from France (Holland 25). Most of the trade continued to be bilateral, with African countries still selling their low-capital generating raw materials back to Europe rather than fostering home-grown industries that would generate not only a higher return but also an increased trade with each other or with third countries.

### **Development Aid Policy**

The EU's approach to aid has undergone a similar transformation while also remaining paramount to the EU-African relationship. Since 1959, EU-level development aid has been provided through the European Development Fund (EDF). From its inception and through Yaoundé I and II, the Fund's budget for both grants and loans was relatively small; much of it was spent on projects that did little to strengthen African economies (Montana 77-8). Gourévitch points to innumerable rusting factories, hotels, and sugar mills that sit empty while heavily-indebted countries still struggle to make their repayments to France and the EU (327).

It is important to note that France's early influence on the EC's formal relationship with the countries of francophone Africa created a tension between the neo-colonialist and the developmental agendas that the EU only began to try to resolve within the last decade or so. Many elements of Yaoundé I and II were not in line even with developmental thought at the time of their signing, nor were they in line with the approaches taken by other western developed countries, as is evidenced not only by the Netherlands' and West Germany's distaste for Yaoundé's particularism but also by the African Commonwealth's unanimous refusal to consider joining the Convention should Britain have at that time become a part of the EC (Soper 469). Article 131 (182) from Part IV of the Treaty of Rome reveals the EU's protectionist and paternalistic approach to "association":

The purpose of association shall be to promote the economic and social development of the countries and territories and to establish close economic relations between them and the Community as a whole . . . [;]  
association shall serve primarily to further the interests and prosperity of the inhabitants . . . in order to lead them to the economic, social and cultural development to which they aspire. (Celex Test)

This passage laid the foundation for future treaties such as the Yaoundé and Lomé Conventions and delineated the nature of developmental assistance through the EDF by clearly defining an exceptionalist approach to the Member States' former colonies.

The Yaoundé I Convention essentially formalized the Treaty of Rome's provision of "association" between the EC and those African territories historically connected to EC Member States by negotiating terms with newly-independent states rather than their

formal colonial masters (Matthews 153-4). The EDF grew out of this provision and first began to operate in 1959 (ECDPM), four years before Yaoundé I delineated the exact nature of the EC-African aid and trade relationship. The Fund's purpose was to distribute aid in the amount of \$581 million for the first five years to states associated with the EC; its focus was "social projects" in the realm of education and health care (Soper 465; ACPSEC). Because some Member States had more interest in the relationship than others, EDF creators judged it more equitable for Member States to finance the Fund directly than for the EC. France, whose associated countries and territories got a \$511USD million share of this, contributed one third of the budget for the Fund (Soper 465). Under Yaoundé, the EDF's budget was increased and included long-term loans given through the European Investment Bank (EIB); in addition, its development scope was widened to include projects of economic diversification and industrialization (Ibid 467-8). The direct and prominent involvement of France in the development funding structure of the EC was evidence of French power projection in the Africa policy of the Community's early years.

### **Policy of Association**

By choosing to employ the word "association" to refer to its new relationship with francophone Africa, the EC cemented the idea of continuity between the period of colonial empires and that of European integration. Association was clearly evoking the dominant philosophy driving France's colonial policy in the latter years of French empire when its traditional policy of assimilation was increasingly being called into question by scholars, philosophers, and policy-makers (Betts 31, 107; Montana 73).

Association, which had its roots in the French enlightenment's humanitarian ideals and was strongly influenced by the Quakers, came to mean, in the words of Raymond F. Betts (a scholar writing at the time of the signing of the Treaty of Rome), "mutual trust and friendly cooperation, but of two differently developed peoples whose relationship was described as one of teacher—or of 'governor' in the sense of preceptor—and pupil." Betts continues: "The idea was, perhaps, a variation on the theme of the noble savage" (108-9). The principle stressed the notion of "cooperation" between colonial occupier and a territory's indigenous people with the goal of "developing" this territory. The process was meant to rely heavily on each party's taking on the development role that suited it best (Ibid 107).

France's clear projection of the notion of association onto the EC's founding conception of its relations with Africa was part of its obvious effort to maintain its hegemonic interests in the region. With colonial-style imperialism rapidly losing favour in most parts of the world and the process of decolonization gaining equally rapidly, France ensured that a Franco-African union, which it saw as a defining characteristic of its national identity, would survive in some form. This policy of association skewed the concept of "partnership" between Europe and Africa from the beginning by intoning there would be a "teacher" (donor, developer) and a "pupil" (recipient, needing to be developed), infusing the EC's North-South relations with inequality from the start. Revealingly, the term "association" was dropped from Lomé I and all subsequent agreements between the EC and the ACP countries (Montana 85), though this does not mean the concept did not have a long-lasting effect on EC-African relations.

The term “cooperation partnership,” one of the three foundations of the EC’s relationship with Africa, is arguably the strongest element of French Europeanization of the EC’s Africa policy. As a defining element of associationism (Betts 107) but lasting well beyond Yaoundé (indeed, even the Cotonou Agreement refers to it), EC-level “cooperation” paralleled the policy of coopération practiced at the same time by France—an outgrowth of France’s emphasis on la solidarité with African countries. The French Ministry of Cooperation was essential in managing the country’s African affairs and controlling projects that had to do with development aid and loans, diplomatic activities, French business interests (especially in the energy sector), and, on a somewhat more secretive level, political and military intervention (Gourévitch 303). While seeming to imply a relationship of equality, “cooperation” was in truth a vehicle for French political, economic, and cultural domination of African countries well into the post-colonial period (Chafer, “Chirac and ‘La Françafrique’” 10). In the same sense, although disguised as an enlightened and humanitarian partnership, EC-level cooperation often translated into an imposition of both unsuitable development projects and restrictive trade policies that were crafted primarily to meet the EC’s economic needs. By taking into account France’s strong national interests at the time of the drawing up of the Treaty of Rome together with the country’s dominance in the Treaty’s formulation, one cannot help but acknowledge that France was the principle causal link between colonial policy and the European project of integration.

### **Evidence of a French neo-Colonial Agenda in Early EC Africa Policy**

By establishing that certain countries would operate under a special and protected trading status (as well as by manipulating these countries' export industries so that they would not undermine the Common Agricultural Policy [CAP]), the EC from its inception began to deviate from market principles in its dealings with Africa. Bretherton and Vogler write: "This system effectively discriminated against the exports of non-associated developing countries and was, consequently, of dubious legality under GATT rules" ("Development Cooperation" 113), which is why the EC had to apply to GATT for a special waiver in order to allow for Lomé's ratification (Ibid, "EU as Development" 120). This approach to trade and development, which also contradicted the free market principles that defined the EU's internal structure, only began to change with the latter Lomé Agreements and the Cotonou Convention.

The Eurafricanist mindset permeated the Yaoundé Convention far more than the later Lomé and Cotonou Agreements. Clearly, one reason for this is that political understandings of economic development were far less advanced in the 1960s than later, when development theory became a more prominent area of scholarly focus. In the years immediately following decolonization, economic development was often still seen through the Keynesian lens (Brown 75), with the simplistic assumption that large injections of capital should necessarily generate economic growth. Although this approach had probably helped western industrialized economies emerge from the Great Depression, African economies were functioning under drastically different circumstances. While seeming to encourage industrial production with its openness to industrial products, the Yaoundé Convention proved unable to spur industrial



development in African countries. The Treaty also largely ignored the need for vast improvements not only to their physical infrastructures and quality of human resources but also to their political processes. Indeed, Yaoundé involved the granting of large amounts of development aid without requiring even a measure of good governance. In fact, it permitted open dealing with such notorious despots as the “Cannibal Emperor” Jean-Bédél Bokassa and Zaire’s kleptocratic Mobutu Sese Seko, helping to bolster their hold on power by providing them with a great deal of international legitimacy.

Despite the fact that early EC policy appeared to favour francophone African countries by granting them privileged access to certain areas of its market, the reality was that EC associationism either created or maintained harmful market distortions within many African economies and led to increased social suffering at the micro-economic level. For example, the restriction of certain agricultural products through high tariff barriers, which helped to bolster the CAP and ultimately benefit France, undermined food security in many African countries. The switch to labour-intensive cash crops such as peanuts, cacao, or tobacco, destined for European markets, occurred in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as part of France’s colonial policy; it was this shift, which the EC preserved, that signalled the dramatic decline in local subsistence agriculture and hurt natives’ ability to live off the land. O’Toole comments,

The transition from valuable food crops to a non-nutritional starchy root crop began . . . when the forced production of cotton and coffee for export took away the time needed to grow better food crops. . . . This continues today in spite of the strong likelihood that the manioc,

incompletely cooked over fires fed by hard-to-gather wood, deposits cyanide poisons in humans . . . causing a variety of grave ills. (115)

Brown argues that development aid from the EC continued to reflect French colonial patterns, with most aid contracts going to French firms already active in the regions of investment (41). In fact, the Yaoundé Convention's strong emphasis upon tied aid in some ways strengthened the highly unequal nature of North-South relations that decolonization was meant to undo. The EC (as well as individual member states, naturally) often gave many loans and grants with strong conditions attached, including the requirement that a country spend all or part of the money it received on goods from the donor's market (in the French case, often arms or luxury goods) (Fabre 225; Renou 11). This weakened any positive effects this aid could have had upon the African economies by manipulating their import patterns and forcing them to divert the money from essential needs such as health care or education. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the elite ruling classes of many of these regimes wasted aid money on luxury consumption even when the aid money they were receiving was not tied, and so the EC is only partially to blame for the poor economic choices that African governments made.

In sum, the EC's early orientation towards France's geopolitical needs was evident in its blatant preservation of French colonial trade patterns with francophone Africa. The main vehicle of this neo-colonialist policy transfer was its guiding principle of "associationism" with Africa, enshrined in the Treaty of Rome and the Yaoundé Conventions. Yaoundé's reciprocal trade arrangements with francophone Africa particularly illustrate its inequities, with African countries being forced to accept

European industrial imports on a preferential basis while many of their own key agricultural exports were blocked by European tariff barriers. As France became an increasingly embedded member of the EC and its capacity for Francization of EC institutional arrangements fell, Lomé I dropped associationism as a guideline for European North-South relations (though naturally it remained in the original Treaty of Rome articles). The notion of "cooperation partnership," however, persisted as France continued to emphasize its "solidarity" with its African "family," thus Europeanizing the concept. Nevertheless, as the EC began to develop a distinct "European" identity, France's identity also began to evolve in response, leading to the "bi-directional" dynamics of Europeanization.

## **Chapter 4 – The Europeanization of Africa Policy: The Strengthening of National Adaptation**

### **Evolutions in Trade and Development Policy**

Profound changes to France's dealings with Africa and the EC's capacity to act in the region characterized the period between 1975 and 2000. The EU-African relationship progressed from being highly exceptionalist and subject to strong projection of French power, a process of Francization, to a significant reversal of influence with marked identity reconstruction and national adaptation occurring within the French polity. This was coupled with a gradual and partial regularization in EU-African relations. Although this trend has been somewhat inconsistent in nature, shaped by a broad range of complicating factors, and only evident in certain areas of French and EU interactions with Africa, it is nonetheless proof of a concrete move on the part of France towards a more European-oriented, multilateral Africa policy. I will first explore this reorientation through the French and EU trade and development policies, and will examine the transformation of French power projection into the more muted national projection of an EC-embedded state; I will then attempt to demonstrate that with this change, the EC developed a stronger trade and development identity, stimulating national policy adaptation within this sector in France. Next I will discuss the political discourse in the 1980s that surrounded France's move from instrumentalism to identity reconstruction in its engagement with the EC. I will subsequently trace the changed nature of France's military and political interventions in Africa and pay special attention to the changes triggered by the end of the Cold War that furthered France's involvement in the EC's security framework. Finally, to assess tangible changes in policy, I will analyze change

within political institutions and focus particularly on French institutions that have managed the Franco-African relationship, such as the CFA franc, the Ministry of Cooperation, and the military.

Since African decolonization, France has maintained a high level of spending on development aid to sub-Saharan Africa. In fact, according to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), out of the 1,520 billion euros that were spent on development aid in the forty years preceding the 2003 study, 13.15% or 200 billion euros represented France's contributions to African countries (Gourévitch 312). Nevertheless, France's constantly-rising levels of aid finally reached a plateau and began to drop in the mid-1990s, a development that can be attributed to a number of causes, chief among them being the financial burden of debt-forgiveness and the increase in multilateral giving (Ibid 313-4). Despite this drop in its overall levels of aid, the proportion of aid that it presently gives multilaterally through such agencies such as the EDF, the UNDP, the World Bank, an assortment of NGOs, and so on, is rapidly rising. In 1994, France devoted 75.6% of its foreign aid to bilateral channels, most of which were directed to sub-Saharan Africa. In 2000, however, this number fell to 64.7%; at the same time, France's giving to the EDF nearly doubled between 1998 and 2000 (Chafer, "Franco-African Relations" 352). Furthermore, in 2003 France announced a rise of fifty percent over five years in aid to Africa, most of which would be channelled through multilateral agencies (Mupuchi). This multilateralism has its roots in the creation of the EDF, but EC development aid arguably did not become truly multilateral until the Lomé Convention, the first Africa-EC agreement not entirely dominated by French interests.

The first Lomé Convention, signed in 1975, signalled an important move away from the French-inspired particularism that had hitherto defined the EC's Africa policy. The inclusion of Great Britain in a newly-expanded EC enlarged the group of developing preferential trading partners from those of francophone Africa to those of the ACP, which comprised many of Britain and Portugal's poorest former colonies. Britain's inclusion also allowed it—together with Denmark, the Netherlands, and West Germany—to form an effective counterweight to France and Belgium on matters relating to Africa. With Britain pushing for a more equitable relationship with the ACP (a position that was already reflected in Britain's more laissez-faire approach to "association," as demonstrated by its Commonwealth), France was forced to accept an expansion to its special "area of interest" while francophone African countries reluctantly agreed to a dilution of their "privileges."

Lomé's great innovation was its policy of non-reciprocity, with the EU providing guaranteed minimum prices for its imports from ACP countries while not requiring preferential treatment for the EU's exports in return (Holland 36); this helped break the pattern of trade favouring French imports that had existed between France and Africa since colonial times. Kaye Whiteman points out that at the time of its signing, the first Lomé Treaty was seen as containing some extremely generous concessions on the part of the EU (31). By guaranteeing quantities and prices of certain commodities, the EU appeared to be benefiting ACP countries in a time of strong commodities markets. It is important to note, however, that Lomé was negotiated in the wake of the global energy crisis of 1974 and that at this time African countries' large quantities of natural resources

appeared to give them a permanent advantage over European countries (Montana 84).

Whiteman writes:

[The signing of Lomé and creation of the ACP] was the period of commodity politics when producer power was the rage and when anyone with a raw material to sell fondly thought they [sic] were on to a winner. In fact, it did not last beyond 1979, but at the time there were fears of a permanent global power shift. (31)

Placing Lomé I within this historical context helps illuminate its truly radical departure from previous EC-African relations under the Yaoundé Convention. The disequilibrium resulting from the first oil shock seemed to herald a "New International Economic Order" (Whiteman 31; Montana 84-5).

The importance of Lomé I was that it released France's stranglehold on the EC's North-South relations, pushing the zone of privilege beyond francophone boundaries, discarding burdensome reciprocity requirements, and opening African markets to a greater range of non-French companies. Nevertheless, although a beginning, it was not the perfect answer to Africa's many woes, nor was it devoid of a neo-colonialist agenda. What the EU (and, indeed, most of the rest of the world) did not perceive at the time of Lomé's signing was that the increase in the bargaining power of the ACP countries brought about by the energy crisis would be temporary and merely due to the turbulences in the world's economy. As global markets regained equilibrium with the restabilizing of world energy supplies and the adjustment of developed economies to much higher energy prices, the ACP's bargaining position weakened dramatically (Whiteman 31; Bretherton & Vogler, "EU as Development" 121). With this correction came a paradigm shift that

even more subjugated ACP countries to European (and American) ones, underlining the fact that the theoretically equal footing of the ACP with the EC did not translate into practice. The 1980s ushered in what many have termed Africa's "lost decade," during which Thatcher and Reagan-style structural adjustment programs (SAPs) were implemented with increasing vigour (Brown 77-8; Whiteman 32-3). Because the programs were often linked to aid, the ACP countries found themselves in an ever-weaker position to resist them. These forced economic reforms, together with damage from the 1981 recession, crushing debts, and the worldwide collapse in commodities prices, left central and western African countries worse off at the end of the decade on nearly every scale (Brown 75; Whiteman 32-3).

By placing a great deal of weight on the primary commodities the EC badly needed (such as peanuts, cacao, tobacco, nickel, and, of course, oil and uranium), African countries found it difficult to diversify their economies, thus perpetuating the French-installed, colonial economic patterns favouring cash crops. Despite the EC's introduction of half-measures to try to protect ACP economies, their single or dual-commodity markets exposed them to the fickle nature of the world's economy, hindering their ability to withstand global shocks. This structure emphasized North-South inequalities by giving developed economies another strong advantage over those of the ACP (Brown 63). While industrial products tended to rise constantly in export value, primary commodities either fluctuated or sank in value, according to demand in the developed world. This demand was in turn driven by market cycles in rich countries, with the prices for primary commodities falling during recessions. This pattern made the economies of the ACP highly dependent upon the EU (Harshe 203-204).



The introduction in Lomé II (1979) of STABEX (Stabilization of Export Earnings) and SYSMIN (System for Stabilizing Minerals), also called MINEX (Mineral Exports), was intended to protect ACP countries from the more volatile movements in commodities markets through a system of interest-free loans granted once the earnings from a given commodity dipped below 7.5% of their reference level (Brown 60). Countries only qualified for these loans if their economies could be considered “dependent” on a commodity, which was interpreted as a country relying on the commodity for at least 7.5% of its export earnings. However, because the European Commission did not allocate sufficient resources to the project, it was largely ineffective; Brown writes, “[A]lthough the system was designed to reflect ACP and wider Third World worries over their exposure to unstable export markets, it proved inadequate compared to the scale of the problem faced” (60). Furthermore, since these loans had to be paid back once export earnings revived, STABEX and SYSMIN simply added to ACP countries’ already crushing debt burden (albeit without the debt servicing) and did not help improve their long-term financial picture even when they did receive aid through one of the programs. Rajen Harshe writes, “The scheme of STABEX came under attack for its arbitrariness, lopsidedness, and discriminatory application in the eighties. Similarly, it was observed that minerals advantageous to European industry received privileged treatment in the MINEX scheme” (204). While the Lomé Convention and STABEX/SYSMIN had been hailed at their inception as a virtual panacea to Africa's multitude of woes, it was clear by the 1990s that they had spectacularly failed Africa. Despite their lack of success, however, these schemes were embraced by France, which

fought for their reform, as opposed to their abolishment, upon the expiration of Lomé IV (PCRC-ECSIEP 6).

During the Lomé IV, which expired in 2000 and was the final Lomé Convention, serious debate arose in both the scholarly and governmental realms about whether the ACP-EU preferential relationship had a future. Some felt that the Lomé Convention should be merely revised and thus carried through to a Lomé V; others felt that there should be a new Convention; and still others believed that the concept of a preferential relationship with former colonies of EU Member States was out-dated and should be scrapped (Lister, New Perspectives 143-4). In 1996, Joas de Deus Pinheiro, the European Commissioner for dealings with ACP countries, declared: "Lomé IV is the last of the conventions as we have come to know them" (ECDPM 1-5). A researcher for the EU think tank, the European Centre for Development Policy Management, dismissed the Lomé Conventions as a "symbol of a period of colonialism that Europe would prefer to forget" (Ibid 1-5). Some of the principle concerns that had arisen in relation to the Lomé Convention were related to trade practices and governance—there was a particularly strong desire to incorporate ACP economies into the global mainstream by removing the artificial barriers that existed under Lomé.

The resulting Cotonou Convention, which came into force in 2000 and is active for twenty years (with revisions every five years), is a further move away from the French particularism that had characterized early EC North-South relations (Ravenhill 130-1) while retaining their essential elements of trade facilitation, development aid, and "partnership." In an effort not only to open up ACP economies and make them more competitive but also to bring trade relations with the ACP countries more in line with

WTO regulations, the agreement put an end to the STABEX and SYSMIN price control mechanisms (Ravenhill 131; Brown 194). It also made aid contingent on several domestic factors, including the tackling of political problems such as human rights abuses and corruption, the implementing of economic structural reform, and the creating of a viable, long-term plan for development (Le Monde Diplomatique). Additionally, Cotonou contains provisions that allow for civil society to play a greater role in African political development (Bretherton & Vogler, "EU as Development" 122). An important focus of the Convention is poverty reduction, which seeks to tackle poverty in a manner that incorporates "economic, social, cultural and institutional dimensions" ("Development" 4-5) while allowing for varying approaches (called "differentiation") to countries with varying levels of economic, political, and social development (Bretherton & Vogler, "EU as Development" 122). Further, a year before Cotonou came into effect, the Commission moved the competence for EU-ACP trade policy from DG Development to DG Trade, a further signal that the EU is moving away from exceptionalism in its Africa policy (Ravenhill 130).

Significantly, France's modern Africa policy displays many of the values contained in Cotonou. Independently of the EU, France began during the latter years of Lomé to emphasize structural reform in an effort to open up African economies to competition. Furthermore, at the la Baule Summit in 1990, Mitterrand declared (and carried through, to a degree) France's attaching of political conditionality to future bilateral aid (Chafer, "Franco-African Relations" 360; Gourévitch 372), making democratization and good governance essential ingredients in its relations with African countries. The fact that both of these policy changes mirrored clauses that had already

appeared in Lomé IV and that figured even more prominently in Cotonou serves as strong evidence that France's Africa policy was being increasingly influenced by developments within the EU polity. As an embedded member of an ever-expanding EU, France was no longer able to project its influence onto the EU in a significant way but had instead begun to adapt its Africa policy to EU norms and values.

### **National Political Discourse**

To understand France's strengthening orientation towards the EC as an expression of its external relations as it adapts to supranational norms through a process of identity reconstruction, we must trace the evolution of its political discourse in its role within the EC throughout the 1980s. Owing to France's tradition of strong executive power under the statist model, the most relevant approach to understanding this discourse is through top decision-makers (Irondelle 212). Jeffrey Checkel writes, "In the statist structure . . . , learning by elite decision-makers plays a much more dominant role [than does societal pressure] in the process through which global norms first reach the domestic agenda" (479). Cole and Drake point out further that while France's interaction with the EC has been considered, since its inception, the domaine réservé of French presidents, other top political actors are also instrumental (28). Examining the actions and rhetoric of François Mitterrand and other key political and military officials during this time thus sheds important light on the reorientation and Europeanization of France's Africa policy.

During the period leading up to the Treaty of Maastricht (1992), France's conception of European Community went from being dominated by a neo-Gaullist, instrumentalist view to a view that saw Europe as an expression of France, in which

“France and Europe seemed to meet together in an organic relationship” (Larsen 96).

The first view, which predominated from the beginning of the decade until 1983/4, initially developed under de Gaulle and contended that the EC was merely a collection of states led by a France that was “the first among equals” (Ibid 97). From this perspective, the EC should serve as an instrument aiding France to assert itself as an independent world power. Essentially, the EC was meant to be used as a medium for France’s pursuit of its own “interests.” While both Pompidou and Giscard-d’Estaing maintained the view of the EC-French relationship (Giscard would often speak of Europe as a “multiplicateur de pouvoir”), Giscard’s rhetoric in his latter years as president began to cater to the growing Europeanist sentiments in the Assemblée nationale. Nevertheless, an instrumentalist view prevailed and was nurtured under Mitterrand in the first few years of Parti socialiste (PS) rule as he accommodated the left-wing of his party, which was strongly supportive of instrumentalism (Ibid 98).

By 1984, however, France’s social discourse had become deeply concerned with “le déclin” (Hoffman 312). France began to see embracing Europe through the EC as a fundamental expression of its identity (rather than simply a mechanism for the exertion of French power) and as the solution to France’s supposed decline in its confrontation with economically booming and increasingly assertive countries such as Spain and Italy, the intrusion of an American cultural and economic hegemony, the economic might of Japan and south-east Asia, and, according particularly by the FN, the undermining of French “enlightenment values” by the country’s growing domestic Islamic presence (Larsen 102-3). This reorientation first manifested itself in a push for greater European competitiveness in the industrial and technological sectors but rapidly began to make

itself felt in many sectors of society; by 1990, the fall of the Berlin wall and the ending of the Cold War precipitated a further move towards Europe as Mitterrand began to speak of confederation and “European citizenship” (Ibid 100,108). The 1980s and the early 1990s were thus a time of serious institutional adaptation in France. Cole and Drake argue:

The extent of France’s economic and institutional interdependence was fully driven home by the integrationist agenda of the 1980s and early 1990s, when Europeanization came to be regarded by economic and administrative modernizers as an opportunity to help modernize an ossified French administration, an overprotected economy and a conservative society. In 1989 even the Council of State—the most prestigious of the grands corps—gave up its resistance to the primacy of EU law. (29)

It was also around 1984 that France began to seriously pursue a building up of European institutions under the “direction” of a special Franco-German kinship (Hoffman 308). Its relinquishing of national sovereignty in key areas coupled with what was to become a long-term commitment to political alliance with Germany demonstrate that France was moving politically in a new, European-oriented direction.

In the time preceding and directly following the Treaty of Maastricht, French society entered into a discourse surrounding the role of “state” and patrie. Larsen points out that Mitterrand suggested France’s identity was moving closer to the latter concept, which entailed an emotional and cultural national affinity as opposed to a legal one, when he declared in 1988: “La France est notre patrie, l’Europe est notre avenir” (109). The possibility that France could be characterized primarily as a patrie as opposed to a “state”

(with the role of state being pushed up to the European level) allowed a re-evaluation of foreign policy as the exclusive domain of the nation-state. A patrie does not concern itself with external matters: that is the responsibility of the state.

This disconnect took on a more tangible form in the Treaty of Maastricht. Cole and Drake write, "The idea of European citizenship enshrined in the Maastricht Treaty broke the organic link between national and legal citizenship in the French Jacobin tradition" (29). Irondelle highlights this event as a significant identity reconstruction when he observes: "The transformation of French security and defence policy was so radical that one can assimilate it to a shift in nation-state identity meaning the Europeanization of French exceptionalism. . . . The 1996 military reform was indeed an 'identity transformation'" (215). With the EC having much earlier taken limited control of some aspects of external relations such as foreign development and trade, many French, including Mitterrand and particularly some of his closest advisors, seemed willing to examine the possibility of further devolution of an external matter closer to one of the nation's core concerns, foreign intervention (Utley 129, 131).

### **Military Intervention in the post-Cold War Era**

Although the ending of the Cold War triggered far-reaching changes in France's military policies and lead to the "professionalization" of the French armed forces in 1996 and the ending of popular conscription (Irondelle 208), this does not preclude these changes from being due to the forces of Europeanization. Indeed, the pressures of Europeanization in the military sector were present well before 1989, but due to the constrained state of international relations during the Cold War, the forces of

Europeanization were hamstrung, nullifying attempts at creating an EC security identity such as EDC/EPC. Indeed, Arnand Menon writes in reference to NATO, which could just as easily apply to the EC's development of a unified foreign and military policy, "During the Cold War, European security institutions remained frozen, rigidified by years of monotonous superpower conflict" (22).

Out of this restructuring of global power came, most important, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), which was born out of the Treaty of Maastricht. Although existing under a separate pillar of the EU and being, for now, an intergovernmental (as opposed to institutionally-based) venture reliant on either NATO or a lead Member State for its missions, the CFSP has provided a channel through which France has begun to engage Africa militarily on a multilateral basis through its proliferating policing, security, justice, border assistance, and military missions (Council of the European Union). Indeed, with the end of the Cold War, France's role as gendarme in Africa no longer made sense; maintaining dictatorial regimes as a bulwark against the spread of communism in the region and attempting to add a third option for superpower affiliation to the choices of the United States or the Soviet Union was no longer either necessary or relevant (Irondelle 219; Chafer, "Franco-African Relations" 353-4). Moreover, the growth of democratic movements across the continent necessitated a radical change to France's Africa policy (Renou 18). To focus on Cold War politics, however, is to tell only part of the story. France had already been gravitating towards a deepening of its engagement with the EU in many non-military areas, as we have already considered in the previous section, and it was inevitable that this would eventually lead to change in its security and defence identity (Irondelle 218).



Furthermore, CFSP also opened the door to the possibility for foreign-policy convergence and a gradual and partial regularization of France's Africa policy through policy adaptation at the national level. The Treaty of Maastricht, being followed up with the most drastic restructuring and reorientation of France's military in decades, therefore signalled a turning point for French military policy.

The 1994 White Paper on defence and security, the first published in France since 1972, stresses "the growing gap between the richer and poorer sectors of the earth, and the regional conflicts that are therefore expected to multiply" (Valls-Russell 9); at the same time, it clearly endorses a greater French commitment to multilateralism in military matters, both through NATO and the UN (Ibid 9). Most importantly, the Paper emphasizes the greatly-increased significance of the EU as both a context and a guide for French military activity. Edouard Balladur, the prime minister at the time and chief sponsor of the Paper, makes the French military's new-found "European-ness" clear in the paper's preamble:

Notre politique de défense doit en effet contribuer, avec l'entrée en vigueur du Traité sur l'Union Européenne, à édifier peu à peu une défense commune européenne. L'identité politique de l'Union Européenne doit à terme s'exprimer et s'affirmer dans le domaine de la défense. Ce choix, qui vise à consolider à l'ouest de l'Europe un pôle d'intégration et de stabilité, constitue un objectif stratégique et politique majeur. Ses effets seront lents, Nous ne saurions, d'ici là, nous en remettre à d'autres pour notre protection. Nous devons, pour y parvenir, consentir aux efforts

nécessaires, grâce auxquels la France joue un rôle majeur dans ce projet européen. (La Documentation française 4)

Written at the same time as France's disastrous Operation Turquoise in Rwanda and against a backdrop of proliferating conflicts throughout the African continent (Utlely 132), the White Paper's looking to the EU, NATO, and the UN to take the pressure off France's African commitments was an obvious solution. Nevertheless, the Paper is also evidence of a deeper change within a French political establishment that saw as increasingly anachronistic de Gaulle's vision of France as an independent military power. Even Jacques Chirac, who came into power as President one year after the White Paper was published, oversaw, despite his neo-Gaullist credentials, many of the changes proposed by the Paper.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, France's military interventions under his watch have been more restrained than under any other president and have mainly consisted of evacuating or protecting French and other European nationals (Congo-Brazzaville in 1997, Congo-Kinshasa in 1998, Côte d'Ivoire in 2002), providing basic security in a non-partisan manner (Central African Republic in 1996-97, Djibouti in 1999, Chad in 2006), and participating in limited intervention of a multilateral nature (Congo-Kinshasa in 2003) (Le Monde "Les Interventions").

France's growing reluctance to intervene militarily in African crises has been matched by a dramatic claw-back of its military presence on the continent. From 1962 to 1996, France engaged in full-scale military interventions in Africa twenty-one times (La documentation française). Since 1996, however, the French military has been gradually withdrawing from the region, and French military interventions in African countries have

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<sup>7</sup> Rachel Utlely argues that Chirac's cohabitation with the Socialist Lionel Jospin as of 1997 added impetus to the revision of France's Africa Policy (135).

become much smaller in scale and more limited in mandate (Ibid). In 1997, the French government closed two large military bases in Central African Republic and a small one in Cameroon and, over the next few years, reduced its troops by forty percent (BBC News 8). The government has also watered down its military cooperation agreements with scores of African countries (Utley 137). Although France framed these cut-backs as a restructuring for greater efficiency (arguing, for instance, that a professional armed force was more mobile and thus more rapidly deployable) rather than as a withdrawal, many African states saw the changes as the latter and greatly resented this diminishing of French presence (Ibid 137).

France's traditional role as political arbitrator in African political and security crises has also largely been taken over by the EU Commission. Its disinclination to become involved in the internal affairs of francophone African countries became clear in 1999 during that year's four coups d'Etat in Niger, Guinea-Bissau, Comoros, and Côte d'Ivoire. France asked the EU to engage in dialogue with these countries (Embassy of France), appealing to section 2c of what is now Article 96 in the Cotonou Convention, which states "If measures are taken in cases of special urgency, they shall be immediately notified to [sic] the other Party and the Council of Ministers. At the request of the Party concerned, consultations may then be called in order to examine the situation thoroughly and, if possible, find solutions" (ACPSEC). Even in cases of current French military intervention in Chad and Côte d'Ivoire, France has left the arbitration process to the EU, the UN, and the countries' neighbours while still playing a limited role in attempts to resolve the conflicts (Tete 42). (Presently in Côte d'Ivoire, France is maintaining a line of demarcation between northern rebels and the southern government without even

covertly supporting either side (Ibid 41); its engagement with Chad is principally to contain unrest in the eastern region (along Chad's border with Darfur in Sudan) in order to prevent the conflict's spreading to Central African Republic (The Economist.) In addition to the multilateralization of dialogue, France has recently invited military forces in other European countries to share their African bases with them; in reaction, Brigadier General Dominique Trinquand, France's representative to the UN's Military Staff Committee, commented that French military operations in Africa were becoming "Europeanized" (Hansen).

### **Institutional Change**

Adding to the aforementioned transformations that occurred in the EC's trade and development institutions, France has also experienced institutional change in ways that deeply affect its Africa policy. In the past twenty years, the number of French expatriates living in francophone Africa has fallen from 140,500 to 102,350 while the number of Alliances françaises has also been slowly dropping (Le Monde "La présence française"). The strength of the traditional réseaux françafricains, the strong, family-like networks of French and African political actors, also began to decline rapidly throughout the 1990s with the deaths of such important figures as Jacques Foccart, François Mitterrand, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, Mobutu Sese Seko, and Léopold Sédar Senghor. In the wake of this decline has come a broad diversification in French diplomatic and economic relations with important non-francophone countries such as Nigeria, Angola, and South Africa. France's devaluation of the CFA franc by over fifty percent in 1994 was seen as further evidence of its withdrawing from Africa and preparing to assume a role in the region akin

to a normal European country whose primary concerns are economic and not rooted in history.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, Chafer writes that the devaluation “[aligned] French aid policy towards Black Africa with the neo-liberal approach to economic policy and structural adjustment of the Bretton Woods institutions” (“Franco-African Relations” 347-8). Perhaps the most dramatic change, however, has been the decommissioning of the Ministry of Cooperation in 1998 (BBC News 8), which, since decolonization, had been France’s main conduit for its preferential dealings with francophone Africa. Significantly, the competences previously enjoyed by this Ministry were merged with those of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Chafer, “Franco-African Relations” 351), a strong signal to many observers that Africa was no longer the strategic priority it had once been for France (Renou 22). This move also put France’s Africa policy more in line with other European countries<sup>9</sup> (Chafer, “Franco-African Relations” 352).

Finally, France’s military restructuring, downsizing, and troop withdrawals were also reflective of its lessening direct engagement with African political processes; as already discussed, it is increasingly channelling its involvement in African politics through the EU Commission. Nevertheless, the French government insists these changes do not mark their intention fully to withdraw from Africa. Its Africa policy paper states,

Our country . . . intends to have a global approach to Africa and is favouring a multilateral approach to security issues on the African continent. . . . France is maintaining her defence agreements with a number of countries which allow her forces to fulfill a useful stabilizing role. So bases will be maintained but, as and where necessary and with

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<sup>8</sup> Indeed, it is rumoured that another devaluation of the CFA franc is impending (Boisvert 2007).

<sup>9</sup> Britain being a notable exception, having decided around the same time to create a special government office to deal with African issues (Chafer, “Chirac and la Françafrique” 17).

our partners' agreement, we are making adjustments. . . . So this new approach signals no intention to pull out of Africa. (Embassy of France)

Chafer highlights the remarkable developments in Franco-British cooperation on defence issues since the 1990s, starting with the Saint-Malo summit, at which they declared they would "work together on international issues in every forum, including the European Union [while noting] the special role and the responsibility which the United Kingdom and France . . . have in Africa" ("Franco-African Relations" 350) and then furthered through such multilateral initiatives as RECAMP (Renforcement des capacités africaines de maintien de la paix, an initiative under the umbrella of the UN that trains African soldiers to help maintain regional stability) (Glaser & Smith 113). The fact that France is turning to its former competitor in the region to be its chief strategic partner in Africa is strong evidence it is rebuilding its military and political institutions as they relate to Africa within the framework of the European Union. Nevertheless, most scholars agree that France has not formally "disengaged" from Africa<sup>10</sup>—indeed, the Europeanization of its Africa Policies is very likely what allows France to remain a presence in the region since this grants its post-Cold War activities a degree of international legitimacy.

In conclusion, although France claims that it remains committed to Africa and that these changes simply allow it to streamline its Africa operations (Embassy of France), France has clearly become increasingly involved in the European project; it has been gradually modifying its approach by regularizing aspects of its relationship with Africa. Important events mark this evolution and appear as turning points in France's Africa policy, including Lomé I in 1975; the election of Mitterrand in 1981 and the PS

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<sup>10</sup> Among these, Tony Chafer ("Franco-African Relations" 363), Antoine Glaser & Stephen Smith (113-4), Xavier Renou (21-22), Guy Martin ("Continuity and Change" 18), Norman Bowen (114)

government's subsequent reconception of France as European in 1983/1984; the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 with the dramatic military and economic restructuring that followed, leading to the White Paper on Defence of 1994 and the ensuing partial military withdrawal from Africa; a devaluation of the CFA franc in 1994; the absorption of the Ministry of Cooperation by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1998; and, finally, the Cotonou Convention of 2000.

The end of the Cold War, however, is the major vehicle for Europeanization of France's Africa policy. Until that point, developments such as the successive Lomé Conventions and the expansion of the EC served merely to undermine France's position of power within the EC and to increasingly circumscribe France's ability to lift its interests up to the EC level. Since 1990, however, these events have exposed France-Africa relations to increasing Europeanization through national adaptation of EU norms and identity reconstruction that affects France's self-perceived role within the EU. The end of the Cold War is therefore the principle catalyst for Europeanization of French Africa policy, rather than its sole cause.

## Conclusion

In many ways, today's Cotonou Agreement is an anachronism. The ACP states it embraces range from countries with relatively high Human Development Index (HDI) scores—the Bahamas, Fiji, Mauritius, or Trinidad & Tobago—to the world's poorest countries—Chad, Haiti, Congo-Kinshasa, or Mali—whose HDI scores are exceptionally low (Bretherton & Vogler, "EU as Development" 116-7). It is becoming increasingly difficult for the EU to justify its granting of special access to its markets to the first group while denying this access to poorer and more deserving countries, such as Bolivia, Bangladesh, or Yemen. At the same time, countries that fall into the Least Developed Countries (LDC) grouping benefit from a new, expanded category of trade preferences with the EU under the EBA initiative, which draws from ACP and non-ACP countries alike. The vestigial ACP group is thus evidence of continued exceptionalism in the EU's foreign policy identity, which, over time, has been Europeanized by France's desire to maintain special access to its strategic areas of interest.

Nevertheless, the EU's Africa policy has undergone significant evolution since the Yaoundé Conventions. Not only does it now cater less to its own short-term, trade-related needs, which can be seen especially in its steady reduction of tariff barriers on major agricultural exports from ACP countries, it has also dropped some of its more blatantly neo-colonial language, such as its policy of "association," that referred to French colonial-era policy where Africans were "pupils" that France must "teach" (Betts 108). Further to these changes, the EU's development aid regime has both modernized and greatly expanded since Yaoundé; EU aid no longer comes tied but is dependent on a country's efforts towards good governance, democratization, and anti-corruption



(Bretherton & Vogler, "EU as Development" 121-2). With the creation of the ESDP, the EU now has the capacity for limited, intergovernmental military intervention, including in Africa where it intervened in Congo-Kinshasa in 2003. Significantly, with the exception of the ESDP, these changes began to occur well before the end of the Cold War, which attests to Europeanization's powerful role in reshaping norms at the national level.

Thus while the EU's concept of itself as an international actor is expanding into areas traditionally occupied by nation-states, the latter respond to changing international norms by adjusting their policies through "national adaptation" and their political cultures through "identity reconstruction." As the EU developed its identity with regards to North-South relations, and as France became an embedded state within the EU, the French were more and more institutionally constrained and thus unable to engage in blatant power projection or "Francization." Indeed, as with the Council of the EU, where Member States quickly learned they could not use the presidency to achieve national goals without undermining its interregional mandate, France was no longer able to impose its interests on EC-ACP relations because it now had a stake in its integrity as a representative, supranational institution. France's Africa policy has therefore experienced far-reaching changes, which are most evident in the institutional framework that concerns the country's relations with francophone Africa. Not only has its number of expatriates and cultural missions dropped in Africa, thus lowering levels of cultural exchange, but its traditional, family-like political links have also greatly diminished with the deaths of key members of the réseaux. France also allowed the CFA franc's devaluation in 1994 and signalled the lessening of Africa's importance by merging the

Ministry of Cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1998. Even more dramatically, France has overhauled its military, greatly lessening its commitments to Africa and refraining from the type of engagement that characterized its African activities in earlier times. Finally, its involvement with Africa in both the military and development aid sectors has become increasingly multilateralized in recent years.

Most importantly, France seems to be revising its fundamental national priorities. Many of its institutional changes in the past fifteen years have not appeared to be driven by its traditional motivation of besoin de rayonnement. Indeed, though the realist school might argue that such a change is impossible, it is hard to see how a multilateralization of French aid and military intervention could contribute to the nation's "glory."

Accordingly, contemporary French Africa policy is now caught between two competing forces within the French polity: its older, declining Cold-War style mentality, which seeks to maximize French power and influence within its traditional pré-carré, and an emerging, European-centred approach, which is the outgrowth of a strengthening European foreign-relations identity.

The profound consequences of early Francization of the EC provoke questions as to whether a Member State could ever again exert as much influence within the realm of European foreign policy. In response to this, I argue that the French case was unique because the power vacuum that existed at the EC's inception will never again be present within the EU. France was the sole powerful country among the original six, and the EC had not yet developed an identity as an actor in the field of foreign relations. Today, the EU is becoming increasingly assertive in world affairs, and with its expansion to twenty-seven members in 2007 (including six powerful members: Great Britain, France,

Germany, Spain, Italy, and Poland) and the prospect of even greater growth, it is extremely unlikely that a single member's vested interests will in future dominate the EU's development agenda.

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