

Forum: General Assembly 4

Issue: Methods to Cease Francafrique Political and Economic Neo-Colonialism

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Introduction

French president, Francois Mitterrand after the second world war stated “ Without Africa, France would have no history in the 21st century”. It is because of this continent, that France is returning to its previously held global power and massive control. In the 19th and 20th century, France gained massive control and became the largest empire in Africa at that time. However, even after independence, the colonies still remain under France. It all started with the French invasion into Algeria in the 1830s, where they slowly gained control in surrounding territories. This control spanned in countries located in northern, eastern, western and central Africa making them the largest conquerors of the continent.

By 1914, they gained control over an area 10 million square kilometers. However, eventually as the world inched further away from colonialism, by the second world war, the African countries started challenging the authorities mostly through nonviolent ways. Unfortunately countries like Algeria had an 8 year long war for independence where more than a million lives were lost. In 1960, most African countries also gained independence from France. Nevertheless, they still retained “considerable control”. So much, that they could either overthrow or rescue the president of that nation if/when required. This neocolonialism is a problem that the African continent still suffers from.

This entire situation is known as [Francafrique neocolonialism](#), where France has profuse control over its African sphere’s economy, political power and military. As of 2019, around 158 million people live under the [CEA](#) zone where control over own economy and politics are covertly denied.

Definition of Key Terms

African Union

It is a union body of the United Nations, comprised of 55 African nations that aimed in combatting the problems and barriers of growth and development of the nations in the continent.

Apartheid

It refers to the racial segregation and discrimination that started in 1948 against the non white population in South Africa by the government.

Basel Committee

It is a forum that sets a global standard for banks to follow. It is comprised of 45 members including central banks and supervisors from around 28 jurisdictions

CFA

A monetary system set up by French leader, Charles De Gaulle for the african nations under France's sphere of control. CFA being a French acronym of ' French colonies of Africa'. It is a currency that is pegged to the euro value in order to prevent devaluation of its currency. Nations using this currency have to keep a certain percentage of their funds in France's treasury

Elf Scandal

Elf Aquitaine was a French oil company that was involved in bribe payments to African and French politicians to make sure that they had unilateral access and control of oil in the local land. The company is now known as 'Total'

Foreign Currency Reserves

It is the backup currency funds and assets held in the case of where national currency values drop or become of no value. They are held as a form of liability in case of market crash and are often held in a different currency than the national currency used.

Franc-Afrique

It is the region/ territory of former french colonies that are still under France's control through covert methods.

Francophone

Population that speaks French as their native language (mainly due to the colonization of that nation by France)

HDI

Human Development Index is a tool that measures a country's social and economic standards by taking the literacy rate, health, GDP and overall standards of living into consideration. The score given ranges between 0 and 1 (0 being the worst and 1 being the highest score a country can receive)

Marginalization

The act of treating a particular group of people or population inferior than the rest.

Monetary Union

It is an agreement between two or more nations to use the same currency or nations deciding to peg their currency to same "reference" currency.

Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA)

Office of the Special Adviser on Africa is an office that focuses on communication and cooperation in order for sustainable growth of nations in the African continent. One of its roles is to support the Secretary General in this matter of the United Nations.

Ottoman Empire

One of the longest lasting empires that was founded in 1299 but was defeated in 1932 ruled in the middle eastern and north African region.

Neo-colonialism

It is the inexplicit social and economic control of a country by the previously 'in power'

nation

New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is a programme that is supervised by the African union to target and combat gender inequality, marginalization and poverty prevalent in the nations

UNDP

United Nations Development Programme is a UN organization that promotes and instigates change for a better lifestyle and improved living conditions

Key Issues

Political control of key members of African Head of States

Leaders such as David Dacko, Hubert Maga and Thomas Sankara and many others are famous names. Unfortunately, they were all assassinated for leading a journey towards monetary independence, showing France's political control over the nation. Meanwhile all those leaders who showed support and loyalty were rewarded with extravagant and luxurious lifestyles. This helped in given politicians, leaders and well establish French firms an opportunity of exclusive rights over the resources of the particular area; where they had control over the African leaders to allow this arrangement to proceed. However that being said, the slow transition into the new youth of African leaders shows hope that this neo colonialism will soon end and the continent will gain its complete independence from France by turning towards the United States of America and China to serve as a new guardian. However, France is also retaliating, not through gaining more control over finances, but through the language. Emmanuel Macron in 2018 planned to regain control strategically by spending millions of euros for opening French based educational institutes. Although this may not seem like a political strategy, it nonetheless does improve relations between the African nations and France because it is slowly widening the [francophone](#) sphere. Since French belongs to France (unlike English where many countries claim that their land is where the language originated), they have the ability and rights over this language and its government has the official diction of the language.

Control over military

As of 2014, France has strategically located 3500 troops in various parts of the African

continent; including Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad to combat extremist groups and insurgencies. However, this is not the first time that the French military have set up bases in the African continent. They have done this about 19 times already between 1962 and 1995. Unfortunately it did not end there. In this decade itself, France has interfered in issues in Mali, Chad, Ivory Coast, Libya and the Central African Republic. However, the current French president believes that they have been helping Africa “secure” themselves from unstable democracy. This is contradictory to the fact that the French military has intervened around 40 times in the African continent’s matters ever since the 1960s.

Economic Activity

The economics of a country are what keeps it running. However, as unfortunate as it is, 14 of the 12 previously colonized countries are provided with the French currency by supplying them with the ‘West African Franc’ and ‘Central African Franc’. This essentially means that the countries’ economy is controlled by the French and a large part of the income in banks in France are allegedly from the exploitation of the people in the African continent.

CFA Franc

A term used to reference this currency is known as ‘CFA Franc’. The CFA Franc monetary system was set up by French leader, Charles De Gaulle. What this did was that it helped the newly independent countries have a stable economy after their independence as the currencies were both backed by the euro, unfortunately, it also legally obliged them to put 50% of their [foreign currency reserves](#) into the French treasury in addition to the 20% financial liability, thus robbing them from complete independence and sovereignty as they only had control and access to 30% of their own income. If they wanted to access their funds from the reserves, it had to be borrowed with interest rates. This made sure that the French still had their control and power over their former colonies as well as boosted their own economy. Although they claim that all it is, is a ‘[monetary union](#)’, in reality it is the practice of neo-colonialism wide and clear. However, that being said, the African countries do obtain an interest of 0.75% on their reserves.

After the creation of this monetary, it was split into the two previously mentioned currencies; the west was for the eight countries in the west African region including: Senegal, Mali, Niger, Togo, Burkina Faso, Benin, Ivory coast, Guinea Bissau. While the central African franc was designated to the six other nations: Chad, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Republic of Congo, Gabon, Central African Republic.

France and African nations- mutual relation

It is a known fact that although France might be benefiting from this financial arrangement of funds in the treasury, the economy of these nations would be doomed if it wasn't for France's constant support. The nation has heavily invested funds into the industrial sector of the nation, to support growth towards the industrial revolution. Although there have been controversial deals made before, the french government actively endorses and accepts the reality that France would not be where they are if it weren't for Africa. The current French president has also pledged to invest around USD 2.8 billion to support economic growth of African nations through startup businesses, promoting the idea of microfinancing.

The disturbing news is that in spite of being interconnected with one of MEDC nations, the GDP of francophone countries are lacking behind. They constitute to only about 19% of the continent's GDP in comparison to the around 50% contributed by the English speaking countries. What is more appalling is that according to the [Human Development Index](#) by the [UN Development Programme](#), 7 of the 10 worst countries are those who still have ties with France.

Former French president, Jacques Chirac in 2008 also agreed to the fact that France's economy would be doomed without their francafrique relation and further stated that " Without Africa, France would slide down to the rank of a third world power". This clearly shows hoe dependent France is on its relation with the former countries and possibly suggests why they do not want to sever ties with the continent.

Access to resources

The African continent is filled with resources. A few of these valuable resources include: Uranium, Iron and Gold. However many of these countries are being exploited and are unable to seize control over their own resources due to the presence of large French companies such as 'Areva' and 'Total'; both of whom have large investments in the respective nations.

There is no doubt that there is a large presence of scandals present; the only problem is that they are becoming increasing difficult to prove and bring notice to. One of the largest scandals associated with the French continent was known as the '[Elf Scandal](#)' that took place in 1994. The scandal involved bribes made by this oil company to African leaders and politicians to maintain and ensure that France had control and rights of the local oil, keeping French politicians in the loop as well. . It has also been reported that France gets 60% of its uranium for the nuclear

industry from Africa.

Since the CFA zone do not have control over their own economy, economic growth is almost entirely dependent on the exportation of raw unprocessed materials that are low in value due to the fact that these nations did not get to set their own commercial and interest rates.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

China

The country heavily investing in Africa has led towards the youthful population of political leaders to turn towards them for support rather than France. These investments have been in the form of factories, resource mines, purchase of ports and railways to slowly expand their sphere of control. The continent is slowly moving into an industrial revolution, and China is in the frontlines with over 10000 companies, helping them reach the 5 trillion economy that was predicted by the IMF. Ever since 2005, China has invested around USD 2 trillion. However, China is majorly profiting from this investment in the form of resources such as oil, cotton and manganese. This will affect Africa in the long term as they will soon plummet into serious debt if the borrowing of money from Chinese governments continues.

France

It is no doubt that France is the leading party involved the neocolonialism issue in Francafrique region. After the fall of the [ottoman empire](#), the nation invaded different parts of Africa and became dependent on its resources. Even after independence, the former colonial ruler still controls 14 different nations in the western and central parts of Africa. Although the continent is slowly drifting away from their control, France is finding new tactics to keep them under their control through different ways. One of the prominent method is through implementing their language in the nations. The reason this is a good tactic is because nations that have the same lingual help in the promotion of a good and healthy relation and gives France the upper hand, because unlike English whose roots can be traced back to a wide range of nations, French originated from France; allowing them to have supremacy in situations where French is the language that is used.

Algeria

The French first entered Algeria in the 1830s and the African nation soon became a large part of France's development. They ruled the region until the war that took place in the 1960s.

However, France could not afford to let go of Algeria as they were an integral part of their society and hoped that Algeria would become a part of France and not just a colony with a population of 800,000 speaking French. However, Algeria wanted independence and in 1990 the official dialect became Arabic. This nation was one whose economy was sustained by France but it was a mutual relation. Algeria supplied and exported cash crops mainly to France and in return their economy was sustained by France. Today, one third of the country's GDP comes from oil and petroleum exports which has become one of their main focus after the French colonization.

African Union

The African Union is one of the bodies of the United Nations with 55 nations being members. One of the biggest goals of this organization is to promote cooperation and end the [apartheid](#) and traits of colonization that is still present. It has help end conflicts and promoted peaceful agreements, especially in West Africa. They are also active members during humanitarian crises faced by the continent, for instance the famine in Niger in 2005 and 2006. Overall, the committee aims to lead the nation into a more economically and socially developed continent to promote complete independence of the nation and this would not have been possible without the constant support of the members of the African Union.

Aid For Africa

The aid for Africa is a US based nonprofit charity organization that helps in combatting issues prevalent in the continent. It tackles issues spanning from HIV/ AIDS spread to building a sustainable community life through education. It is recorded that almost 60% of the youth aged 15 onwards do not attend school. Although, literacy rates are drastically increasing according to UNESCO, more educational systems and schools need to be built around the area to increase literacy rate which in turn will help make the economy more independent in the future. The schools built by this organization also promotes the local language rather than French. The organization is also the largest book supplier to the continent, promoting education by supplying around 30 million books to 48 different countries in Africa.

Development of Issue/Timeline

Date	Event	Outcome
1830-1912	The French colonized different parts of Africa	The fall of the Ottoman Empire lead to French colonization in African, marking the beginning of 'Francafrique'
26th December 1945	CFA Franc was created	The creation of the CFA Franc now meant that countries with this currency had to deposit 50% of their foreign reserves into the French territory
1955	Term 'Francafrique' was first used	The term was first used by the first president of Ivory coast to describe the relations that the country had with France.
20th April 2000	Announcement of considering a new currency called "ECO" in West African Countries.	This currency had new guidelines that had been revised where 50% of the foreign funds no more has to be given to the French treasury. (The use of this currency has been delayed several times and was supposed to be implemented

<p>1st July 2001</p>	<p>New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was official adopted by the African Union</p>	<p>This agency that was set up and adopted by the African Union tackles many issues that are preventing the development of African nations and are helping them become more independent by tackling prominent barriers such as : poverty, lack of education, support lasting and positive growth of the nations, marginalization, reduce gender inequality.</p>
<p>20th November 2002</p>	<p>Resolution on Office of Special Advisor on Africa was created</p>	<p>This resolution was essentially to improve coordination and help support the 'New Partnership for Africa's Development' in order to have the most effective impact on the continent.</p>
<p>1st May 2003</p>	<p>Office of Special Advisor on Africa was established (OSAA)</p>	<p>The resolution that had been passed previously led to the establishment of Office of Special Advisor on Africa was established (OSAA) and was originally authorized to increase international support in development sector of Africa. It was also responsible in assisting the UN Secretary General in improving coordination and collective effort on this matter.</p>
<p>2008 - 2009</p>	<p>2008 Financial Crisis</p>	<p>During the global financial crash, CFA members could not obtain credits as it was under the French's control .The situation was ended with France providing their own</p>

		personal wealth to help and support their former colonies.
17th December 2009	The G20 under the Basel committee announced proposals to strengthen the banks after the financial crash.	Although it was supposed to help countries in Africa, the proposal stated that developed nations should have capital buffers set up. This led to many developed nations withdrawing their funds and investments from Africa.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

Creation of New Partnership for Africa's Development

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was adopted by the African Union in 2001 and was ratified in 2002. Although the entire 'Francafrrique' region's presence of neocolonialism could not be tackled explicitly, it was done through more covert methods. One such effort was the creation of this UN Agency. It essentially helped nations in Africa to become more independent and self sufficient so that it could slowly start exiting from France's superpower. The first way they suggested in doing so was by eradicating poverty. The main reason this issue was so important to tackle, is that in today's world for a nation to be independent, they have to be financially and economically sustainable.

The creation of the agency also focused on gender equality and marginalization. However, it is evident that this solution of combatting poverty has not been successful as 41% of the continent's population is still suffering from poverty and a third of the world's hungry are in Africa.

Construction of schools

One of the other ways that the United Nations along with other nonprofit organization is through the construction of schools in order to make the future generation more independent. The UNESCO has recorded that girls education is seriously lacking in the continent with a statistic

that around 9 million girls aged between 6 to 11 will never be able to attend school and those who do attend school, by the time the age 13, 36% of them drop out due to other commitments. UNESCO has tried to combat this problem of lack of education by addressing the low numbers of teachers and helping reformulating the curriculum and including technology wherever possible. There has been significant improvement and attendance of enrolled has increased from 60% to 97% between 2005 and 2011, and there has only been positive growth ever since. This shows that as a solution, the desired effect might not be evident at the very moment, however, higher enrollment and attendance rates will eventually lead to higher literacy rates making the future of the youth stronger and lesser dependent on outside parties and support.

Possible Solutions

Diversification of products that are exported

The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) carried out a study that showed that countries that have a diverse range of products can handle situations of crisis better than those with one targeted product as an export.

This counts as a possible solution for countries in the Francophone region because it makes them more independent from France, allowing them to have various trade routes rather than one large French company such as those previously mentioned controlling all of the resources of the land making them completely dependent on the MEDC country. This not only increases independency, but also increases job opportunities in a wide range of sectors, thus also helping the economy and GDP of the nation to grow and helps the country to become economically independent.

Revision of CFA guidelines/ implementation of ECO currency

Ever since 2000, the new ECO currency has been planned to be implemented but has been delayed 5 times. The more recent implementation plan was for July 2020, however due to the global pandemic, the transition has still not taken place. Although this currency still makes the African countries dependent on France, it is a major improvement from the CFA Franc due to the mere reason that 50% of the foreign reserves do not have to be kept in the french treasury,

allowing the nation to have access to its own funds when in need, making them more economically secure.

The currency has been accepted by eight of the sixteen nations. These include: Togo, Burkina Faso, Niger, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Mali, Guinea- Bissau, Benin.

The currency will allow better trade development, promoting nations to produce goods they are specialized in and trade different goods of the same value in return; like a barter system. One of the biggest aim of this currency is financial independence from French central banks which will allow nations to access their economy and savings whenever required without alerting other nations about their internal economic activities. However the African Development Group Bank stated that the implementation of this currency will only be possible once all economic policies of the different nations involved need to be aligned to use one currency.

Convert local French based to local language of the region

As one of the tactics to retain control over the former colony, France spent millions of euros to open French speaking schools in the region to promote their language. A possible solution to reduce the neocolonialism effect in the upcoming future is to convert these schools to their local language as well as English; making into a bilingual curriculum. This will help improve their independence as the local indigenous language will be promoted and English being a universally accepted language will allow job opportunities for the youth in a wide range of areas rather than limiting it to francophone nations only.

Another problem that can be tackled by converting the language in the schools is the entire issue of slang French versus official French. Over the years the local language has influenced and modified the French used, allowing France to play with words in official documents written in French, giving the upper hand as local authorities are used to and only exposed to the local French used rather than that in the official document, leading to unfair and unjust situations due to the gap and difference in language.

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Appendix

I.Resolution to adopt the OSAA

<https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/57/7>