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*Explaining the Gradual Decline and Probable End of
History of France's Traditional Policy in Africa in this
New Era of Globalization*

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Abstract

This paper proposes to briefly explain why the gradual decline and probable end of history of France's traditional policy in Africa in this new era of globalization. The gradual decline of France's traditional policy in Africa is simply understood as the progressive decadence, in the path towards the end of history of France's evolving neo-colonial policy—of metamorphic French neo-colonialism, on the African continent and in its sub-Saharan bosom in particular, passing from libertinage and coercive prescriber gendarme to “peacekeeper” and reserves; from collusion to the pronounced appearance of arm-wrestling and criticism; from tacit legitimacy to pronounced fed up; switches to the progressive breakdown of privileges, monopolies and abusive dominations; and from the open sky to hypocrisy, taboo and sacrilege. By using Central African Republic and Mali as specific cases of concrete illustrations, the results that emerge from this paper show that the rise of soft engagement and the decline of hard engagement, the pronounced exposure of win-lose results of the said policy, the rise of new anti-neocolonial public opinion and the retreat of French power on the African continent and in its sub-Saharan bosom in particular are the main root causes of the gradual decline of France's traditional policy in Africa and towards its probable end of history in this new era of globalization. To conclude, this paper has noted the need for further in-depth studies in the sense of identifying and seeing the results and implications of the decline of the said policy

in this new era of globalization.

Keywords: France-Africa Relations, African Politics, Neocolonial, New Era of Globalization

This paper presents part of the results of our doctoral thesis (Makengo, 2022). By using Central African Republic and Mali as specific cases of concrete illustrations, it proposes to briefly explain why the gradual decline and probable end of history of France's traditional policy in Africa in this new era of globalization—extends from 2000 to 2022. It is part of the eschatological dimension and starts from a logic that we have called “structural-effect”, combining structural logic and its possible effects (Makengo, 2022). France's traditional policy in Africa—usually called “Françafrique” (Verschave, 1998) — refers here to the evolving neo-colonial policy of France on the African continent and in its sub-Saharan bosom in particular, taking on several dimensions at once: economic-financial, political, security, socio-cultural... In the context of this paper, the gradual decline of the said policy is simply viewed as its progressive decadence, in the path towards its probable end of history on the African continent and in its sub-Saharan bosom in particular, passing from libertinage and coercive prescriber gendarme to “peacekeeper” and reserves; from collusion to the pronounced appearance of arm-wrestling and criticism; from tacit legitimacy to pronounced fed up; switches to the progressive breakdown of privileges, monopolies and abusive dominations; and from the open sky to hypocrisy, taboo and sacrilege. (Badie & Vidal, 2021; Mbembe, 2021; Makengo, 2022; Glaser, 2014; Glaser & Airault, 2021).

A good number of the causal routes—that we grouped here to four (4), better explaining the gradual decline and probable end of history of the so-called France's traditional policy in Africa in this new era of globalization—an era of great transformations, intense competition, new opportunities and complex. The first is the rise of “soft engagement” and the decline of “hard engagement”: The point here is that the said policy, which excels in the logic of “hard engagement”, is no longer able to position itself well due to the rise of the logic of “soft engagement” on the African continent in this new era of globalization, ostensibly boosted by the rise of BRICS, China's engagement in particular and other powers of the European, American and Asian continents in particular: Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Turkey, United States, Canada, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates... since the beginning of this twenty-first century on the African continent and in France's sub-Saharan bosom in particular, thus resulting in its gradual debacle (COFACE, 2018; Badie & Vidal, 2021; Mbembe, 2021; Makengo, 2020). The second is that of pronounced exposure of win-lose results: The said policy, seen largely worked in favor of France [especially to the time seen as its golden age] to the detriment of the African continent and France's sub-Saharan bosom in particular, is becoming more and

more subject to fierce rejection, via the natural comparison of its positive externalities with those of the policies of other partners of the continent, notably: China, Russia... thus resulting to its gradual debacle in this new era of globalization (Badie & Vidal, 2021; Mbembe, 2021; Verschave, 1998). The third is that of the rise of new anti-neocolonial public opinion: the said policy, indexed as neo-colonial policy, is increasingly at odds with the new anti-neocolonial public opinion—seen being quite clear, conscious, uninhibited, aggressive, and constantly on the street—that is constantly rising on the African continent and in France’s sub-Saharan bosom in particular, thus resulting to its gradual debacle in this new era of globalization (Badie & Vidal, 2021). And the fourth and last one is the one of the retreat of French power: The said policy, having France’s power as its springboard, to the retreat more and more of this one [France’s power] — losing its competitiveness, weight and influence both at the global level and on the African continent and in its sub-Saharan bosom in particular, sees itself more and more in loss of speed, so results to its gradual debacle in this new era of globalization (COFACE, 2018; Badie & Vidal, 2021; Hugon, 2010; De La Sablière, 2014).

The Central African Republic and Mali serve well as specific cases of concrete illustrations following the negative impacts and fiascoes of Barkhane [2014-] in the Sahel, Sangaris [2013-2016] in Central Africa Republic, Harmattan [March 2011] in Libya (Erforth, 2020; Badie & Vidal, 2021; Mbembe, 2021). As we can see in this twenty-first century how the policies of China and Russia are constantly gaining ground in these countries to the detriment of this so-called traditional policy of France in Africa (COFACE, 2018; IFF, 2020; Paczyńska, 2020). France’s power continues to be seen in considerable decline in these two countries in favor of the Chinese and Russian powers in particular (COFACE, 2018; Badie & Vidal, 2021; Mbembe, 2021; IFF, 2020; Paczyńska, 2020). Similarly, another interesting observation is that the strong protest wind in these two countries that passes through the creation of various movements of struggle to the so-called Pan-African causes both within the African continent and at the level of the diaspora, to mention here only: The Group of Patriots of Mali [GPM], Urgences Panafricanistes led by Kémi Seba, Frapp-France Dégage, the Balai Citoyen,... All these movements declare to be fighting against what they consider corruption, human rights violations, constitutional violations, but above all against the interests of the former colonial powers in Africa—against neo-colonialism, of the said France’s traditional policy in Africa in particular (Badie & Vidal, 2021; Mbembe, 2021; Makengo, 2022).

Conclusion

The objective of this paper was to briefly explain the reasons behind the gradual decline and probable end of history of France’s so-called traditional policy in Africa in this new era of

globalization—an era of great transformations, intense competition, new opportunities and complex. We have identified four (4) major explanation causal routes. The first is the rise of soft engagement and the decline of hard engagement: The point here is that the said policy, which excels in the logic of hard engagement, is no longer able to position itself well due to the rise of the logic of soft engagement on the African continent in this new era of globalization, thus resulting in its gradual debacle. The second is that of pronounced exposure of win-lose results: The said policy, seen largely worked in favor of France to the detriment of the African continent and France's sub-Saharan bosom in particular, is becoming more and more subject to fierce rejection, thus resulting to its gradual debacle in this new era of globalization. The third is that of the rise of new anti-neocolonial public opinion: the said policy, indexed as neo-colonial policy, is increasingly at odds with the new anti-neocolonial public opinion that is constantly rising on the African continent and in France's sub-Saharan bosom in particular, thus resulting to its gradual debacle in this new era of globalization. And the fourth and last one is the one of the retreat of French power: The said policy, having France's power as its springboard, to the retreat more and more of this one [France's power], sees itself more and more in loss of speed, so results to its gradual debacle in this new era of globalization. Thus, after this brief explanatory exercise, we believe that further studies are necessary to identify and see the results and implications of the decline of the said policy.

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