A CRITIQUE OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF FRANCE TOWARDS AFRICA: CASE STUDIES OF CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC AND IVORY COAST, 2007-2014.

by

Mmapitsi Grateful Raphala

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

International Politics

in the

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

(School of Social Sciences)

at the

University of Limpopo

Supervisor: Dr K.B. Shai

Co-Supervisor: Mr M Vunza

2017

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Declaration

I, **Mmapitsi Grateful Raphala**, hereby declare that the dissertation for Master of Arts in International Politics at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus), hereby submitted by me, has not been submitted for a degree at this or any other university, and that it is my own work in design and execution and that all reference material contained has been duly acknowledged.

Signature_____   **Date**____/____/____

Acknowledgements

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my family for their love and devoted support for success in my life.

Abbreviations

AFDB	African Development Bank
ASF	African Standby Force
AU	African Union
BUNICA	United Nations Integrated Peace Building Office in the CAR
CAR	Central African Republic
CFA	Communauté Financière Africaine
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECCAS	Economic Community for Central African States
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community for Western African States
EU	European Union
EUFORRCA	European Union Force République Centrafricaine
FOMAC	Force Multinationale de l'Afrique Centrale
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MICOPAX	Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in Central African Republic
MISCA	Mission Internationale de Soutien à la Centrafrique sous Conduite Africain
MUNISCA	Multidimensional Integrated Mission of the United Nations for Stabilisation in the Central African Republic

R2P	Responsibility to Protect
RECAMP	Reinforcement of African Capacity to Maintain Peace
SANDF	South African National Defence Force
SAP	Structural Adjustment Policies
TREC	Turfloop Research and Ethics Committee
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOCI	The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republic

Abstract

Many Western and Central African countries were colonised by France from the early 17th century until the early 1960s. However, Africa has continued to be the private hunting ground for France in the post-independence period. This is because France still needs African resources, particularly its oil. In fact, Africa holds a strategic position for French foreign policy. Therefore, when France gave independence to its African colonies, it did not really mean it was completely disengaging from Africa. In essence, a package was imposed on Francophone African countries which tied them to the revitalised African states to preserve French colonial status. Moreover, France's heavy involvement in African countries has earned it a perception of being a police officer of the continent. Within this premise, due to protracted conflicts in French African countries, Francophone Africans bank their hope on France to assist in offering just and lasting solutions to the complex challenges facing their countries. This should be understood within the context that France maintained a significant colonial empire in the continent for almost a century and a half. Nevertheless, France attempts to uphold hegemonic foothold in Francophone Africa through political, economic and cultural connections while the security of Africans is threatened. With this in mind, this study critiques the French foreign policy towards Africa and it uses Ivory Coast and Central African Republic as case studies. These two countries are chosen given their recent conflicts and their assistance in critiquing the French position in African complex challenges. This study also adopted the use of document review and interviews to generate data.

KEYWORDS: France, Africa, foreign policy, Francafrique, Ivory Coast, Central African Republic

Chapter one: Background to the study

1.1 Introduction

Africa occupies a strategic position in the foreign policies of certain major Western European powers such as Britain, France, Portugal and Belgium, among others. This is borne out of a complex web of both historical and contemporary ties that those countries had and continue to have with the continent. France colonised a number of African countries, particularly in the West and Central Africa. The history of France and such African states dates back to the early 17th century. This is when France gained access to African raw materials, executed forced labour and spread French civilisation, language and Catholic religion (Bennyworth, 2011). However, Francophone Africa acquired independence in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Since then, Francophone Africa has remained *chasse gardée* (private hunting ground) of France.

According to Houngnikpo (2005), independence did not really alter uneven relations France established with its former colonies. This web of connections and agreements enabled France to grant independence that continues to haunt these states. This suggests that independence has failed to bring about sustainable development in much of West Africa. Instead, it allowed France to exploit its former colonies. In this regard, Médard (2005) states that when France granted independence to its African colonies, it did not mean that it was going to leave Africa. Post-colonialism has taken the form of neo-colonialism. Touati (2007) maintains that the colonial empire enabled France to claim a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). It is worth noting that during the late 1950s and early 1960s, at the time of official decolonisation, former France President General De Gaulle imposed a package which appropriated that France should provide technical, financial and military assistance to its former colonies. In return, the countries involved would back France's international policies. This package tied France to newly established African states to ensure that they would remain under Paris' protection. In return, former colonies undertook to support France's international policies.

France still needed Africa's natural resources, particularly its oil. In contrast, Africa needs French investment. This dependence allowed France to position itself as the guardian of its former colonies. The former colonial power has gone as far as waging coups and assassinations to rigged elections and embezzlement of funds in order to satisfy its thirst for energy resources (Touati, 2007).

Recent geo-political events in Africa have necessitated a realignment of French foreign policy from being too Afro-centric, yet old habits die hard when French interests are involved around energy resources and other forms of raw materials. This situation can be attributable to the fact that France has sought to maintain its interests by influencing African internal affairs. France's propensity to intervene in Africa's internal affairs has earned that it a perception of being and acting as the *gendarme* (a police officer) of Francophone Africa (Bennyworth, 2011). French permanent military bases are found in Ivory Coast, Senegal, Chad, Djibouti, Gabon, Cameroon and Central African Republic (CAR). During the Cold War, the responsibility to arrest communism in Africa dovetailed with French interests in maintaining a neo-colonial relationship. As such, this study assumes that France has successfully used its security presence in Africa since the decolonisation era to exert influence in countries where it has interests. Among others, such efforts entailed maintaining its vision of order and stability. Furthermore, French policy towards Africa has never been driven by the quest to resolve African challenges and problems. Rather, there is no doubt that French policy has always been determined by narrowish and selfish French national interests. This assumptions leads to a question of what drives France's foreign policy towards African countries. As such, this study looks at the two chosen case studies to determine the key drivers of France's position in Africa.

Williams (2009) asserts that France's strategic interests demand that it should scale down her exposure to the continent. This is further necessitated by disagreeable French public opinion and recent initiatives by the African Union (AU). AU initiatives include the

African Standby Force (ASF), which was created in 2003 to intervene in the internal affairs of any member state with a view to restore peace and security (Rannenyeni, 2009). According to Benazeraf (2014), this loss of power in Africa by France led to some Africans calling it reverse colonisation and others calling it independence. This is because the focus of African countries is shifting and therefore, may not need France's assistance as much as in the past. Although France's control over its former colonies is weakening, the former colonies still need French investors. This reliance allows some networks to continue today. In contrast, France definitely needs African countries for its own economic growth and development.

Flowing from competing scholarly and popular reports of the influence of Paris (capital city of France) on the recent *coup d'état* in CAR and the militant ousting of former President of Ivory Coast, President Laurent Gbagbo in 2011, it is evident that France's bilateral relations with African states are of strategic nature. It also goes without saying that French foreign policy towards Africa necessitates a serious and robust attention by scholars of International Politics and its sister disciplines.

It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to critically evaluate France's foreign policy towards Africa and its position within the chosen test cases, CAR and Ivory Coast. The year 2007 is used as a starting point for this research because it marked the inauguration of Nicholas Sarkozy's administration in France which vowed to do away with Francafrique network. This research ends in the year 2014, a third year of office of the presidency of François Hollande. Contextually, CAR and Ivory Coast are used in this research as case studies for control purposes. Furthermore, they were chosen because French military activism in CAR and Ivory Coast put Paris's intervention under scrutiny in terms of whether or not it is continuing with its paternalistic tendencies towards the continent, especially its former colonies. This means that the use of these two countries emerging from violent conflicts provides a leeway to establish similar or different patterns of France's engagement in African countries.

1.2 Problem statement

Since decolonisation, Africa has been facing complex challenges both economically and politically and former French colonies continue to experience protracted intra-state conflicts. As a result, Francophone Africans bank their hope on their former coloniser because almost a century and a half France maintained a substantial colonial empire in the continent, stretching from Maghreb through to the sub-Saharan regions (Bennyworth, 2011).

However, the problem is that while the security of Africans especially those from Francophone Africa, is threatened, Paris, through political security, economic and cultural connection, attempts to maintain hegemonic foothold in the region. This step is meant to serve the interests of France, and to maintain a last mainstay of status associated with a legacy of the past superiority. This basically implies that France is pursuing a neo-colonial policy in Africa. Furthermore, it is continuing with Francafrique network. Francafrique is a term coined to describe the country's relationship with its former African colonies. In this context, Paris supported unpopular African politicians who were friendly to France in order to advance and protect its economic interests. It is worth noting that during his visit to Dakar (capital city of Senegal), President François Hollande declared the end of the Francafrique era. However, a claim as to whether this network is over is far-fetched, given the fact that Paris still maintains its position in Africa in order to remain strong in the international system.

1.3 Operational definitions

The definition of concepts in International Politics and Social Sciences as a whole is not a straightforward exercise (Shai, 2016). It is on this basis that this section of the study operationalises the key concepts for this study: foreign policy, Francafrique and Francophone.

1.3.1 Foreign policy

For the purpose of this study, foreign policy is defined as principles and values which govern how countries interact in the international system. Furthermore, foreign policy acts as a bridge between a state's domestic and international environments for a state to project its own interests and values (Barber and Vickers, 2001).

1.3.2 Francafrique

This study embraces Touati's (2007) conception of Francafrique, which is understood as a network that has been created between the French and African elite, where-by French policy-making is developed within this network. It consists of politicians, state officials and heads of oil, weapons firms and members of the African elite.

1.3.3 Francophone

Francophone is defined as a person or population using French as a native language or sometimes as a second language. It also refers to governments, non-governmental and governing officials that share the use of French in their work exchange (Judge, 1999; Mason, 1999).

1.4 Theoretical framework: Post-Colonial Theory

This study adopts Post-Colonial theory, which was founded and propounded by Aime Cesaire, Frantz Fanon, Ngugi Wa Thiongo, Edward Said and Bill Ashcroft, among others. Post-Colonial theory also borrows from the works of Shrikant Sawant and Ganeshwar Rai. In general, their works explore the ways of representations and mode of perceptions that are used as fundamental weapons of colonial power to keep colonised people subservient to colonial rule. The tenets of Post-Colonial theory include the effects of colonisation on cultures and societies, matters of economics, power,

politics and religion. Moreover, this theory looks at the deconstruction of the artery discourse of the West and provides the foreground for the former colonies to re-identify themselves (Geng and Qixue, 2006). Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2007) note that Post-Colonial theory includes statements about the exploitation of the resources of the colonised, the political status accruing to colonising powers, the importance to domestic politics of the development of an empire and the system of knowledge and beliefs about the world within which acts of colonisation take place. Post-Colonial theory criticises the fact that the world is dissected into first, second, third and fourth world. This is because this type of system intensifies the dominant positions of the Western cultures and further perpetuating first world status (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2007). Hamadi (2014) notes that Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* believes that the outcomes of colonialism are still persisting in a form of chaos, coups, corruption, civil wars, bloodshed which permeates many former colonies. Additionally, ex-colonisers imposed a language and culture whereas histories, norms and values of the former colonies have been ignored by the colonialists in their pursuit to subjugate the colonies and exploit their wealth in the name of enlighten, civilising and humanising them (Hamadi, 2014). Arguably, the ex-colonial powers continue to impose their own norms and values on the former colonies so that they remain internalised.

According to Sawant (2012), although the colonial country achieved political freedom, the colonial values do not disappear with its independence. This suggests that when African countries gained independence, the colonial powers ensured that they leave them economically crippled so that the former colonies can proceed to be heavily dependent on the former colonial powers. Essentially, Post-Colonial theory seeks emancipation from all types of subjugation (Rai, 2005). Contextually, this theory is used in this study because looking at Africa and its heavy reliance on the former colonial powers, it is evident that the continent is in a new version of colonial rule which is known as the "new scramble for Africa" (Velempini and Solomon, 2007). The value of Post-Colonial theory in this research is its ability to overshadow the limitations of the conventional and state-centric theories of International Politics (Realism, Idealism and

Marxism) and to rebrand the knowledge of reality about the colonial project from the perspective of the "colonised".

1.5 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1.5.1 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to critique France's foreign policy towards Africa, particularly in CAR and Ivory Coast (2007-2014).

1.5.2 Objectives of the study

- To identify key drivers of France's foreign policy towards Africa.
- To examine changes and continuities in France's foreign policy towards its former colonies, especially CAR and Ivory Coast.
- To explain geo-economic and geo-political considerations of France's foreign policy towards CAR and Ivory Coast.
- To appraise the influence of the Presidencies of Nicholas Sarkozy and François Hollande on France's foreign policy towards CAR and Ivory Coast.
- To compare and contrast France's foreign policy towards CAR and Ivory Coast.

1.5.3 Major research questions

The central questions of this study are as follows:

- What are key drivers of France's foreign policy towards African colonies?
- Are there any changes and/or continuities of France's foreign policy towards its former African colonies, especially CAR and Ivory Coast?
- What are geo-economic and geo-political considerations of France's foreign policy towards CAR and Ivory Coast?
- To what extent does the Presidencies of Nicholas Sarkozy and François Hollande influenced France's foreign policy towards CAR and Ivory Coast?
- How does the foreign policy of France towards CAR and Ivory Coast converge or diverge?

1.6 Significance of the study

This study enriches the existing body of knowledge or expertise on France's foreign policy towards African states, particularly, CAR and Ivory Coast. It also provides refreshing scholarly perspectives by deepening the academic and policy debate on Paris' reaction, in light of the challenges facing its former colonies. The combination of all of the above add to a better understanding of the major political and economic challenges that Francophone Africa faces and France's position to such debacle.

1.7 Limitations of the study

Given the reluctance of scholars and diplomats to participate in this study, the researcher ended up interviewing five willing participants. The researcher looked at any available diplomats at political desks who are working in the countries under study. However, French and Ivorian diplomats based in Pretoria did not respond to emails requesting their participation. Telephonic follow-ups were also made by the researcher but in vain. Moreover, two CAR diplomats agreed to participate; but they backed out on the set date of the interview indicating the following: *"We have just moved to new premises. Therefore, the documents that contain facts are not in the new buildings. It is for this reason that we would not be able to answer your questions because our responses will just be based on opinions and not facts".*

The researcher also sent emails to researchers of International Relations, particularly Foreign Policy Analysis, and asked for responses of whether or not they would participate in the study. Many failed to respond and those who responded to the emails said the following:

"Your research sounds incredibly interesting. I am the first to admit that I am not an expert in your specific topic/subject area" [Participant from University of Pretoria].

"I am currently on sabbatical and conducting field research and therefore unfortunately I will be unable to assist" [Participant from University of Johannesburg].

It is worth noting that those who had agreed to participate would back out at the last minute and when contacted, they would not respond. For this reason, the researcher ended up with five respondents in this study.

1.8 Chapter breakdown

Chapter one: Background to the study

This chapter provides an orientation of the study. It covers the research aim and objectives of the study, problem statement, theoretical framework, main research questions and the significance of the study.

Chapter two: Literature Review

This chapter provides an overview of the existing body of literature concerning the crises in Ivory Coast, CAR and France's foreign policy towards Africa in general.

Chapter three: Research Methodology

This chapter highlights the research methods used to conduct this study.

Chapter four: France-African Policy: General Perspective

This chapter provides general perspectives on France's foreign policy towards Africa.

Chapter five: France's Reaction Towards the 2010-2011 Ivorian Crisis

This chapter gives a critical analysis of France's reaction towards the 2010-2011 Ivory Coast crisis.

Chapter six: France's involvement in Africa: CAR case study

This chapter provides a post-colonial critique of France's position in the recent CAR conflict.

Chapter seven: General conclusion, Findings and Recommendations

This chapter closes with general concluding remarks, sums up the research findings and gives recommendations.

As guided by the above chapter breakdown, the next chapter provides an overview of the existing body of literature concerning the crises in Ivory Coast, CAR and France's foreign policy towards Africa in general.

Chapter two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Africa is of strategic importance to France. Due to colonial links, Africa is tied to France economically, politically and diplomatically. For decades the continent has been part of French prestige. Historical wars such as the Second World War considerably weakened France. As a result, close relations with its colonies seemed to offer one way of restoring its image as a great power. Basically, the end of the Cold War sparked inquiry among International Relations scholars about a shift in French African policy. There were events which stoked observations that Paris is taking a new shape of policy towards Africa. In relation to this, Martin (2000) argues that French policy was no longer shaped by politico-diplomatic and geo-political factors. Instead, economic and financial considerations became the key pillars which define France's foreign policy. This saw France extending its co-operation beyond Francophone Africa to include the entire continent, especially South Africa and Angola (Martin, 2000). Hugon (2003) echoed the same sentiment that France has closer relations with major non-franc zone countries in Africa than with franc zone countries.

Although French policy was shifting to economic and financial direction, it is important to note that it still maintained its colonial character. For example, it preserves its military bases in countries considered to be of strategic importance for the perpetration of French political, economic and strategic influence (Saiia, 2005). Moreover, France intends to remain faithful and close to its traditional African allies. Against this backdrop, this chapter seeks to provide an overview of the existing literature on France foreign policy practice in Africa. It does so by highlighting the Francafrique network and the Colonial Pact between France and Africa, particularly its former colonies.

This chapter also touches on the myths and realities of Africa's position in France's foreign policy domain. Finally, it examines Paris' response to CAR and Ivory Coast

intra-state conflicts. Central to the importance of this chapter is to sharpen the theoretical framework of the current study and to avoid the duplication of efforts (Shai, 2016). This exercise includes critical review of works of scholars such as Martin (2002), Touati (2007), Koutonin (2008), Bovcon (2013) and Francis (2013), inter alia. It is important to note that this section has been structured thematically, but not necessarily sensitive of the chronology of the year of publications cited and reviewed.

2.2 France in Africa: La Francafrique

Touati (2007) stresses that Francafrique is a grey zone of diplomacy where the interests of the population are rarely included in decision-making. Having stated that, President Hollande claims that the end of the Francafrique has been declared. Touati argues that the reality is that the logic of neo-colonial Francafrique continues to function even when officials claim it has been abandoned. Furthermore, Touati indicates that the main challenge of this network is that for Francophone Africa to obtain international donor funds, they have to respect the International Monetary Fund (IMF) criteria of free competition. This came after European partners initially refused to accept the Communauté Financière Africaine (CFA) franc in the Euro Zone. Instead, European companies have developed their own direct contacts with African states. Ex-French president Nicholas Sarkozy also vowed to end Francafrique network because unlike his predecessors, he did not have vital personal links to Francophone African leaders. However, he was not untouched by the Gaullist party's strong relations with African leaders (Moncrieff, 2012).

On the other hand, Bovcon (2011) claims that several scandals involving Paris' support for autocratic, corrupt and covert financing of French political parties through official public aid allocated to sub-Saharan African states stained the idyllic image of Francafrique. It is worth noting that the invention of Francafrique came after the first Ivory Coast President Felix Houphouet- Boigny considered relations with France to be very special. As such, Bovcon considers Ivory Coast as an epitome of Francafrique

network. Francafrique should be understood primarily as an ideological discourse that organises Franco-African relations and makes them resilient to change; it still resonates in some sections of the French population and political elite.

Francis (2013) argues that the French intervention in Africa, particularly the rapid action in Mali shows that Paris is not about to end its long history of military intervention in Africa. Hence, such moves are often dictated by imperatives of national security and strategic interests. French penetration of Africa is also largely formed by an opaque Francafrique tradition. Moreover, it is fair enough to state that Hollande, as a socialist president preoccupied with domestic economic issues, inevitably found his foreign policy placed under scrutiny by the Malian crisis in 2012. This was mainly because such intervention in Mali is seen as a departure from his election manifesto in which he committed his government to ending the Francafrique tradition, thereby reducing France's military presence in Africa.

In his article titled "A Major Obstacle to African Unity: The New Franco-American Cold War on the Continent", Renou (2000) articulates three major objectives of French foreign policy since the 1960s. Firstly, he argues that France uses its influence on African countries to secure its international status as a medium power. Secondly, it seeks to secure raw materials and energy resources for its high-technology industries. To this end, France still needs to maintain close ties with African suppliers. Finally, it aims to defend its monopoly of African markets. Arguably, it can be observed that all these objectives are a way of robbing Africa. This came after the signing of the colonial pact between France and its former colonies.

2.3 France in Africa: The Colonial Pact

During decolonisation, France made a pact with former colonies in Africa to ensure that its domination in the continent continues. According to Koutonin (2008), the colonial

pact gives France a dominant and privileged position over Francophone Africa. In short, the colonial pact has created a legal mechanism under which France obtains a special place in the political and economic life of its former colonies. Koutonin went as far as to claim that Francophone Africa is not independent because France is choking it. This situation exacerbates Francophone Africa's level of poverty and retarded levels of infrastructural development. In fact, Francis (2012) shares the same argument that the French colonial pact and devastating political, economic and military dominance that it has created in Francophone Africa is at the centre of the recurring political instability, civil wars and fundamental grievances in its former colonies.

This study argues that Koutonin's analysis above dismisses the central provisions of one of the international relations theories: modernisation. Modernists contend that traditional countries can be brought to development in the same manner more industrialised countries have. Essentially, this theory maintains that African countries will develop as they adopt more modern practices (Chazan, 1988). Though this may sound invalid in the Pan-Africanism context, the theory's provisions implies that developing countries can have sustainable development if they heavily depend on industrialised countries and practice their development paths.

2.4 The myths and realities of Africa's position in France's foreign policy domain

France's policy towards the continent has been full of ambiguities. For example, Paris' African policy showed uncertainties when it rapidly concluded that the 2012 Malian crisis posed a fundamental threat to French national interests. In the case of the CAR crisis, it generally declined to intervene to protect President François Bozize. Over time, ambiguities of this nature have caused resentment towards France (Melly and Darracq, 2013). Melly and Darracq (2013) asserts that while former President Sarkozy was still a Minister of Interior, during his visit to Mali in 2006, he declared that France, economically, did not need Africa and that trade with Africa represented only two percent of its international trade. However, it can be argued that at the time, Sarkozy

had probably not fully understood the complexities of France's economic relations with Africa, both formal and informal. Furthermore, Sarkozy may have also not realised how crucial Africa actually was for French economic interests. Essentially, Sarkozy has been unable to accomplish the rupture from Francafrique that he promised to put to an end. Instead, he seemed to have become a prisoner of its influence, especially as he understood that France cannot truly maintain its economic as well as geostrategic standing in the world without Africa.

Africa is the continent plagued by internal conflicts. Almost half of its population lives in poverty. Whereas the demise of the Cold War in the late 1980s and early 1990s was expected to bring peace, unity and prosperity in the continent, the realities on the ground dictates the opposite. Nevertheless, Medard (2005) argues that after the Cold War, the African economic crisis fuelled a political crisis involving democratic transition in a number of countries. It is worth noting that this economic crisis caused debates that France was detaching itself from Africa. Moreover, the 1994 Rwandan genocide and the death of Felix Houphouet-Boigny (a proponent for the term Francafrique) have emerged as a policy gap for Paris. In the 1990s there were clear signs of dire attempts to change the France-African special relations. This was from a necessity than from a strong desire within the French elite that the right-wing government started (Medard, 2005). Additionally, as part of the changing nature of France African policy in the post-Cold War era, Paris has also revised its military institutions dealing with Africa, and has shifted its military co-operation to allow African countries to assume responsibility for the continent's security (Vallin, 2015). Essentially, this came in a form of Reinforcement of African Capacity to Maintain Peace (RECAMP), a regional and cooperative peacekeeping initiative designed to provide training and equipment to allow African states to ensure security and stability on the continent (Vallin, 2015).

In fact, it can be argued that the military policy will remain one key pillar for Paris African policy for as long as the geo-economic and political threats prevail. This is because the

combination of Paris' defence and foreign policy has catapulted France as gendarme in Francophone Africa (Ogunmola, 2009). Furthermore, some African leaders rely on France's protection in terms of the security dimension. They trust France as a guarantor of regional security than their own array. However, Dolek (2008) asserts that Paris policy shift was defined by the transformation of relations with the former colonies from one that inevitably makes France the *gendarme* to one that foresees softer and isolated involvement of the country.

Basically, France aimed to utilise multilateral frameworks for the conflicts of African countries in order to decrease the costs and risks of its unilateral involvement. Marine (2014) argues that behind Paris' reiteration of adhering to multilateralism lies its desire to demonstrate to the international community that it broke off with its old habit of being Francophone African *gendarme*. Moreover, France's justification for its intervention in African countries that the goal is to save civilians is always subjected to controversy. This justification has been used previously by France's post-colonial presidents such as Jacques Chirac and Nicholas Sarkozy, and is still being used. This shows continuity rather than change in French African policy.

It can be argued that over time, Paris' intervention in African affairs undermines the continent's activities to solve its own problems. According to Francis (2012), this prevents the emergence and the maturity of the continent's political institutions and indigenous organisations with the capacity to deal with African problems. As a result, Africa's image is portrayed as a continent that is hopeless and unable to solve its problems without external support.

Renou (2000) asserts that France is the first partner in terms of aid and military cooperation of its former African countries. Through colonial pact, Francophone Africa now has a common currency (CFA franc) which demands that each of the 14 CFA

member countries must deposit 65 percent of their foreign exchange reserves in an operations account at the French treasury in Paris. In addition, colonial pact demands that France has the first right to buy or reject any natural resources found in the land of Francophone countries. Even if African countries could get better prices elsewhere, they cannot sell to anybody until France states that it does not want to buy those natural resources. For instance, in Abidjan (capital city of Ivory Coast), before the 2010 polls, former President Laurent Gbagbo's government wanted to build a third major bridge to link the central business district called Platequ to the rest of the city, from which it is separated by a lagoon. However, due to the colonial pact tradition, the contract belonged to a French company, which incidentally was exorbitant. In Ivory Coast, the jewel of the former French possessions in Africa, the French are overly dominant (Azikiwe, 2009). The colonial pact has created a legal mechanism under which France obtains a special place in the political and economic life of its former colonies.

2.5 Grappling with changes and continuities of France's policy towards Africa

Martin (2002) wrote a very informative paper titled "Africa in World Politics: A Pan-African Perspective" which investigated whether or not France's African policy is old-style neo-colonial or patrimonial. He argues that a number of symbolic events clearly show that a new French African policy is currently taking shape, leading to a progressive divorce between France and Africa. In fact, his paper points out that Paris' African policy is truly at a transitional stage in which clear signs of change and new orientations co-exist with old habits and status quo policies.

Martin concludes that the extent to which real change shall take place in Franco-African relations depends on Africa's new leadership tendency to exclude France and favour purely "African solutions to African problems". This impression that France is disengaging from Africa was strengthened after the 1994 devaluation of CFA franc following the adoption of Abidjan Doctrine, which subordinated French economic aid to the Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) of Bretton woods institutions: the World Bank

and the IMF. According to Moncrieff (2012), this was a clear sign that Paris could not protect Africa from pressures of the world economy. On the other hand, the African political elite dilute French presence in the continent by developing alliances with other countries from the East. Therefore, it can be argued that France's waning relations with Africa are caused by China's influence and presence in the continent. Cisse (2012) argues that the predominant feeling among Africans seems to be that Francafrique's strong links of have degenerated because of the political trends in France. As such, the ex-metropolis has lost a bit of its footprint in the former colonies.

Although it seemed possible back then that France was disengaging from Africa under President Chirac's administration (1995-2007), it is still not clear whether Francafrique has been dissolved. This is because President Sarkozy's (Chirac's successor) apparent determination to do away with this network was tested by a number of situations which developed during his presidency. Among these were crisis in Chad, which threatened to bring down the regime of an important ally, and the aggravation of the crisis in Ivory Coast (N'Diaye, 2013). In this context, Sarkozy's response towards these situations was not far from previous interventions under President Chirac's watch. In addition, it can be argued that even if Africa can have a new leadership tendency which excludes France, it must be kept in mind that despite open summitry between French and African leaders, personal ties and political networks count more than anything else. This basically implies that African leaders would not exclude France in their international relations given the fact that should there be any rebellion attacks against them, they will have a military backing from Paris.

2.6 French's engagement in Central African Republic (CAR) and Ivory Coast intra-state conflicts

French military intervention has been most decisive in ending conflicts in its former colonies. For decades, France has been the only country able or willing to intervene militarily in Francophone Africa. It has opened military bases, stationed troops in several

Francophone countries and signed numerous military agreements with its former African colonies. These agreements gave France the opportunity to keep military bases in countries such as Senegal, Ivory Coast, Gabon, the CAR and Chad. However, by the year 2000, Paris' military presence had been reduced by twenty five percent. According to Médard (2005), these agreements were intended not only to be used for French military reasons but also in order to guarantee the security of African countries against external and internal threats. In justifying France's interventions, President Hollande stated that France has no alternative but to intervene in order to prevent the emergence of terrorist states that would have serious security repercussions for France and the West. He mentioned this with regard to the collapse of the Malian state and the inability of the armed forces to defend the country and stop the advances of separatist rebels and their Islamist allies. Therefore, France is forced to act unilaterally in the continent since there is a failure of deployment of troops from African countries (Francis, 2013).

Francis' article entitled "The Regional Impact of the Armed Conflict and French Intervention in Mali", failed to point out that although France's intervention has been the most decisive in ending conflicts in Francophone Africa, Paris always appear to undertake direct military intervention in pursuit of its national security and strategic interests. For instance, France acted quickly with regard to the Malian conflict in 2012 when several insurgent groups began fighting a campaign against the Malian government for independence of a northern area known as Azawad. This was mainly because a threat which was posed in Mali could lead to the emergence of a terrorist state and its negative impact on France's goals and objectives in that country. Another reason was that France did not want the conflict in Mali to spill over into neighbouring Niger because the implosion of that country would have devastating impact on French economic interests there.

Moncrieff (2012) contends that France should reduce military presence in Africa, offer clearer support for democracy and political reform and co-operate fully and

transparently with other powers and African regional bodies rather than act as a gendarme of Africa. Under Sarkozy's administration, French military reform was at the centre of Paris' policy ambition. Sarkozy vowed to reduce French unilateral interventions in Africa and promised to act based on multilateral cooperation. He made this promise during his visit to South Africa in 2008. According to Moncrieff (2012), this was meant to emphasise the building of African capacity and the training of African soldiers. Furthermore, he noted that these were commitments made by Sarkozy's predecessor, Jacques Chirac. However, French troops refusal to act under UNSC command is sometimes seen as compromising multilateralism. This proves inconsistencies in French African policy because in the absence of commercial interests, Paris reiterates its adherence to multilateralism; yet, it acts differently (unilaterally) where the interests are perceived to be at risk.

Arguably, France's emphasis to embrace multilateralism is a recurring rhetoric among its leaders. Firstly, Jacques Chirac emphasised that France would no longer intervene in the internal affairs of African countries and alternatively, it would act in accordance with UNSC mandates. Yet, he did not significantly reduce France's military presence on the continent, particularly former French colonies (Moncrieff, 2012). As already mentioned, his successor, Nicholas Sarkozy continued with this emphasis. Nevertheless, his actions in Ivory Coast proved otherwise. Following the election of Alassane Ouattara as a leader in 2011, the expected withdrawal of French troops from Ivory Coast was deferred. This was to stabilise Oauttara's regime as relations between Gbagbo and Paris had already sunk. François Hollande's rhetoric came in the form of the rupture of Francafrique network. In fact, Hollande stressed the need to have a partnership with Africa as an equal actor and to build a more respectful relationship. Melly and Darracq (2013) indicates that Hollande signalled in 2013 with the Malian question that he will continue with his predecessors' policies. This is an unequivocal indication of a gap between rhetoric and practice in French African policy.

Arieff (2014) discusses the crisis in CAR and analyses the international community's intervention. A concerned international community through UNSC Resolution 2127 of 2013 authorised the French military to intervene. It is worth noting that France declined to intervene to protect President Bozize against Seleka rebels in March 2013. Nevertheless, Paris' approach began to shift in August 2013 with reports of rising Seleka-led attacks against civilians. The decision to intervene may have been driven, in part, by concerns that ethno-religious violence could destabilise neighbouring states such as Chad and Cameroon that maintain close commercial and security ties with France. Arguably, Paris has sought to differentiate France's actions in CAR from earlier French interventions in Africa that were widely viewed as shoring up dictatorial or corrupt regimes in order to preserve French influence and commercial access (Arieff, 2014). President Hollande has therefore stated that French intervention in CAR sought to restore security, prevent more massacres and permit humanitarian aid. According to Marine (2014) Responsibility to Protect (R2P), the duty of France to help as an ex-metropolis of CAR and the legitimacy of its mission (through UNSC resolution 2127) are elements justifying French intervention in CAR.

France has always supported François Bozize when there were attempted coups against him, particularly in 2006 and 2007. The sudden change of heart by France after a decade of meddling in CAR's support might have led to the demise of Bozize's regime (Bahr, 2013). In this context, Bahr points out that Paris' disinterest in CAR became clearer after considering its economic stakes in the country. He further argues that the Areva Uranium mine which was the most vital asset in the country before 2011 has mothballed in light of the post–Fukishima fall in global uranium price. Moreover, the deepening China-CAR relations might have sparked France's unwillingness to intervene in support of Bozize. Interestingly, it can be argued that France's late intervention in its former colony was also driven by its desire to counter China's growing economic and diplomatic influence in Africa. To a larger extent, French interventionism is determined by its motive to preserve France's sphere of influence from emerging countries such as China, Brazil and India that are currently investing significantly in Africa (Marine, 2014).

Paris is struggling with its operation in CAR and its intervention was partly humanitarian and partly a strategic effort to avoid the collapse of the landlocked, mineral rich state. The lack of interest to intervene in CAR at the beginning of the crisis is because it is internal and is unlikely to spill-over into neighbouring countries (Marine, 2014). Against this context, it can be argued that CAR conflict can have an impact on neighbouring countries due to geographical proximity in the form of the influx of refugees.

Paris' refusal to assist Bozize could also be seen as a first step to ending Francafrique and not to support the authoritarian regimes. Nevertheless, France's intervention indicated its failure to shake off old habits and put to an end to Francafrique (Marine, 2014). Marine went on arguing that France has no major interests in CAR and risking the lives, money and reputation with no interests at stake indicates that France is entrenched in a path-dependence that is irreversible. This means that the post-colonial agreements signed by France and former African colonies force Paris to act regardless of (un)availability of geo-political and economic threats. This can be understood within the context that France seeks to maintain good relations with ex-colonies, and failure to intervene in their conflicts would be a breach of the defence agreement. Additionally, France cannot leave African states in difficult challenges given its status as a former colonial power, which means that its paternalistic behaviour still exists (Vallin, 2015).

The 2010-2011 Ivory Coast crisis took a turn for the worse because President Laurent Gbagbo refused to accept defeat after the presidential elections which the United Nations (UN) certified free and credible. Those elections were won by Allassane Ouattara, Gbagbo's rival (N'Diaye, 2013). President Sarkozy persuaded the UNSC to draw a resolution mandating its Licorne force (a French peacekeeping force in Ivory Coast) to use force to protect civilians and prevent the use of heavy weapons. As a result, one cannot escape the conclusion that France intervened the old fashion way to carry out its will. This suggests that, though foreign policy making depend on an

individual's psychological and sociological behaviour, President Sarkozy did not depart from the trend of previous interventions ordered by his predecessors.

According to N'Diaye (2013), French intervention in the 2010-2011 Ivorian crisis shattered all claims that its role in Ivory Coast was to protect the population from harm. It is worth noting that Ivory Coast is rich in cocoa and other minerals such as gold, diamond and palm oil crops. These resources are attractive to France's economic development. Former President Gbagbo has in the past worked closely with Paris. He has whipped up ethnic and communal hostilities in an attempt to remain in power, targeting immigrant labourers who came to Ivory Coast from neighbouring Burkina Faso in the 1960s and 1970s as a scapegoat for the declining economy. However, Gbagbo's relations with France deteriorated when he blocked French attempts to impose a power-sharing regime that would include northerners to end the civil war. It is worth noting that Ivory Coast was divided into North (rebel controlled) and South (government controlled). Moncrieff (2012) asserts that the relations between Paris and Gbagbo waned after the latter used anti-imperialist rhetoric to try to weaken African opposition to his attempt to stay in power. Subsequently, France pushed for diplomatic isolation of the Gbagbo regime including through European sanctions regime. Arguably, the long-standing friendship between Ouattara and Sarkozy might have contributed to Paris favouring the former in his conflict with Gbagbo over the presidency seat.

Ivory Coast and France were in good relations until Gbagbo took power. This came after Gbagbo's attempt to abandon the CFA and to institute a new regional Pan-African gold–backed currency (Lehmann, 2012). This posed a dire threat to Paris as it feared other CFA countries would wish to do the same. Having stated this, France's backing of Ouattara in 2011 came as no surprise because Paris finds him easier to deal with given his earlier position as Prime Minister under Felix Houphouët-Boigny, a man who was France's close ally. Furthermore, the intervention in Ivory Coast to impose democracy,

and the restoration of Ouattara as the legitimate president, was primarily aimed at securing and protecting French interests (Francis, 2012).

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted that the end of the Cold War was a game changer for French African policy because Paris realised that its foreign policy was not sustainable anymore after decades of close links with African countries. Moreover, France's interest in sub-Saharan Africa has diminished. However, Africa still remains a key strategic focus for France. It was also indicated that France cannot disengage itself from Africa regardless of waning interests in the continent because of the agreements signed during the 1960s. Additionally, without Africa France does not really have lots of power and it cannot leave African countries in distress given its role as a gendarme of the continent.

This chapter further pointed out that Paris seeks to preserve its sphere of influence from emerging countries such as China and India, which have invested significantly in Africa. It was also stressed that through cooperation and multilateralism action rather than unilateralism, France remains an indispensable military actor in Africa. Nevertheless, this study argued that Paris' reiteration of adhering to multilateral co-operation is a recurring rhetoric among French leaders. This is because when it comes to practice, there is no willingness to act multilaterally especially where strategic interests are perceived to be threatened. In addition, it was highlighted that France's intervention in Africa prevents the emergence and maturity of the continent's political institutions and indigenous organisations with the capacity to deal with African problems.

The next chapter is an exposition of the research methods used to conduct this study.

Chapter three: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The knowledge enterprise is made up of two main research paradigms, namely: qualitative and quantitative approaches. In this study, qualitative research approach was chosen. The choice of qualitative research follows its ability to generate a rich data within the context of limited respondents (Shai, 2016). This approach involves the use of secondary sources and the collection of a variety of empirical materials (case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interviews, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts) that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals' life (Davies and Dodd, 2002). Furthermore, qualitative approach brought a deep and in-depth understanding within a broader context using a variety of data sources. Additionally, this research approach is concerned with non-statistical methods and small purposively selected samples. Unlike a quantitative approach which seeks to confirm hypothesis about a phenomenon, qualitative research approach seeks to explore the phenomenon. Moreover, it allows the researcher to utilise in-depth interviews, focus groups and participant observations. However, for the purpose of this research, semi-structured interviews were conducted. Qualitative research is also used to uncover trends in thoughts and opinions, thereby dipping deeper into the problem. This enabled the researcher to unpack a deeper analysis on France's foreign policy behaviour in Africa and delved deeper into the identified research problem.

Within this background, this chapter provides methods adopted in this study to critically analyse France's foreign policy towards the African continent. The first section outlines the instruments used to gather data and gives a full description of the population of the study and sampling selection and size. The ensuing part enunciates how data was analysed. Furthermore, this chapter describes the type of research design that has been chosen in this study. The final section demonstrates how the trustworthiness of this study was ensured.

3.2 Research Design

Comparative case study design was chosen in this study in order to compare France's foreign policy towards the CAR and Ivory Coast. Case study design investigates a contemporary event within its real life context, and involves the use of a variety of data collection methods, predominantly interviews and project document review (Yin, 2003). The value of this method in this study was to explore differences within and between the chosen cases. This enabled the researcher to produce less generalisable knowledge about France's foreign policy behaviour towards the two case studies. Furthermore, comparative case study design was chosen because it involves an analysis and synthesis of the similarities, differences and patterns across two or more cases that share a common focus or goal. Therefore, the comparison between CAR and Ivory Coast case studies was vital in establishing the analytical framework of French foreign policy towards Africa. Goodrick (2014) states that comparative case studies may be chosen when there is a need to understand and explain how features within the context influence the success of a programme or policy initiative. As such, comparing the successes and failures of France's intervention in the two case studies' recent conflicts enabled the researcher to give an in-depth analysis of factors defining Paris' African policy.

3.3 Data Collection

Data collection is defined as a process by which the researcher collects information needed to answer the central research questions of a particular study (Nalzaro, 2012). There are multiple ways of collecting data. According to Morse and Richards (2002) qualitative data comes from many sources. These sources include written documents, interviews, field notes and observations and in many forms such as, texts, photographs, audio-and videotape. For the purpose of this study, both document review and interviews were used to gather data. Since document review is a way of gathering data by studying existing documents, the appraisal of books, research reports, published articles, newspapers, political magazines, statements, policy documents and speeches

made by foreign ministers and presidents of countries involved was done in order to generate both primary and secondary data.

Bowen (2009) asserts that document review is often used in combination with other qualitative research methods as a means of triangulation. Triangulation refers to the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon. Furthermore, the qualitative researcher is expected to draw upon multiple (at least two) sources of evidence in order to converge and corroborate the use of different data sources and methods. As such, interviews were conducted to supplement document review in this study. The use of interviews involves structured, semi-structured or unstructured verbal communication between the researcher and the participant during which information is obtained for a study (Nalzaro, 2012). However, for the purpose of this study, semi-structured interviews were used because they are more conversational and allowed the researcher flexibility in questioning the subject. This implies that the researcher could ask the participants to elaborate further on their answers, to extract in-depth information and to elicit their complete knowledge related to the topic. According to Klenke (2008), semi-structured interviews are conducted to dig deep beneath the surface of superficial responses to obtain primary data without any limitation but with a focus. Within this context, a researcher can ask more complex questions in an interview since it provides him with an opportunity to ask for clarity if there is any confusion. These types of interviews were chosen because they are more or less casual than other methods of interviews and this allows the participants to answer openly, frankly and give as much details as possible (Kajornboon, 2005). The researcher started off by asking the participants questions that are laid out in the research interview guide (see annexure 2) and made follow ups thereof.

Elmusharaf (2012) notes that answers to questions asked during interviews can be written down, tape-recorded or a combination of both. In this study, tape-recording was chosen as an instrument to record the participants' responses. However, given the

possibility of diplomats' (Foreign Service officers) rejection of tape-recorders, the researcher opted for field notes. Collecting data through these two different methods enables the researcher to converge evidence that breeds credibility. The use of a single method of data collection reduced the impact of prospective biases. Moreover, when there is a convergence of information from different sources, readers of the research report usually have greater confidence in the trustworthiness of the findings (Bowen, 2009).

3.4 Population and Sampling

3.4.1 Population of the study

The population of this study included established and knowledgeable International Relations scholars with an understanding of French foreign policy towards African countries and foreign policy at large, as their area of expertise. Preference was given to scholars who are based in Limpopo and Gauteng Provinces, South Africa. The choice of the location of the respondents was informed by reasons of proximity and convenience. The scholarly respondents were complemented by Pretoria-based diplomats of France, CAR and Ivory Coast since the subject of this research is aligned to their areas of expertise.

3.4.2 Sampling selection and size

Based on the unfeasibility to studying the entire population, researchers often use sampling to select participants in their studies. Polit and Hungler (1995) state that sampling refers to a subset of population selected to participate in a study. This refers to the reflection of sample from a population in order to generate information concerning a phenomenon in a way that represents the population of interest (Brink, 1996). The most commonly used sampling methods in qualitative research include: snowball sampling, quota sampling, and purposive sampling which form part of non-probability sampling. However, for the purposes of this study, the population was sampled purposively given

the fact that qualitative researchers purposefully select individuals, groups and settings for this phase that increases an understanding of a phenomenon. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), purposive sampling is based on the assumption that the researcher seeks to discover, understand and gain insight, and therefore, should select a sample from which a lot can be learned. Based on this premise, this type of sampling was used because the participants of this study are knowledgeable and have an experience on foreign policy analysis. This is also supported by Brink's (1996) assertion that purposive sampling requires selecting participants who are knowledgeable about the issue in question. In short, this type of sampling allows the researcher to select participants who have experience or in-depth knowledge of the issue being addressed (Oppong, 2013).

Latham (2007) indicates that the researcher studies a small subset of a larger population in which many members of the subset are easily identified but enumeration of all is nearly impossible. Within this context, the researcher interviewed five willing participants. Moreover, the researcher looked at any available diplomats at political desks who are working in the countries under study. However, the researcher came across some limitations (explained in Chapter one) that resulted in the study having only five participants. Subsequently, the researcher sent a letter of consent (see annexure 3) to those who agreed to participate.

Table 1: Summary of the sample

Academics (5)	Total (5)
Gauteng (2)	
Limpopo (3)	

3.5 Data Analysis

Marshall (2006) states that the use of document review often entails a specialised analytical approach called content analysis. In fact, the materials relating to content

analysis may take any form of communication, usually written materials in the form of text books, newspapers and political speeches, among others. Moreover, documents used for assessment are subjected to content analysis typically using one of two methods: thematic analysis wherein the researcher codes content into themes, and rubric analysis wherein the researcher grades or scores a document according to pre-determined criteria (Goldman, Baldasare and Meyers, 2011). However, this study adopted thematic content analysis and conversation analysis which are well-known qualitative methods. Data generated from document review and interviews was analysed and arranged thematically.

Bless, Smith and Kagee (2006: 163) assert that content analysis is a reflexive analysis of documents and understanding of the meaning, in order to verify theoretical relationships. Within this context, this study used this method of analysis because documents such as foreign policy documents, books, newspapers, articles and reports were used to analyse the gathered data. Written texts were coded into manageable content categories on a variety of levels consisting of patterns that are indicative of the research question. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) performing thematic content analysis requires the researcher to familiarise himself with data, generate initial codes, search for themes among codes, review themes, define and name themes and produce a final report. Based on this premise, the researcher in this study transcribed the interview data into written form and arranged it into themes, subthemes and finally drawn conclusions.

3.6 Credibility, Dependability and Confirmability

Credibility refers to trustworthiness of findings in qualitative research. It is involved in ensuring that the results of the research are believable. According to Serfontein (2006), credibility in qualitative research depends more on the richness of the information gathered. There are techniques to measure the accuracy of the findings, including data triangulation and triangulation through multiple analysts and 'member checks'.

On the other hand, dependability ensures the consistency of the research findings and if they can be repeated. This means that qualitative researchers describe in detail the exact methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation so that the study can be auditable to describe the situation and for another researcher to follow the study (Collier-Reed et al, 2009). Therefore, the triangulation of both primary and secondary sources of information enhanced the dependability and credibility of the findings of this study.

Confirmability indicates the objectivity and neutrality of the data, such that there is a potential congruence between two or more independent people about the data's relevance, meaning and accuracy (Polit and Beck, 2004). As such, the inclusion of academics as respondents in this study had a potential to neutralize or dilute the level of bias that may have gloomed the self-interested and narrowish responses of the diplomats that are often meant to advance a particular political course.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Van Vuuren (2010) indicated the ethical guidelines or principles which the researcher has to take into consideration. These are permission to conduct the study, confidentiality and anonymity, informed consent and voluntary participation.

3.7.1 Permission to conduct the study

Research ethics begin with a desire to protect human subjects involved in research projects. Therefore, the researcher sought permission from Turfloop Research and Ethics Committee (TREC), University of Limpopo in order to operationalise this study. Consequently, an ethical clearance certificate was granted (see annexure 4).

3.7.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

As part of ethical considerations, privacy or confidentiality has become an increasingly valued right (Kamat, 2006). As such, the researcher asked the participants if they wanted to remain anonymous or had their identities known during any stage of the research including the write up of the report. This was because the participants had to be assured that the data would be held in strict confidence to protect their anonymity. The researcher ensured that the findings of this study are not harmful and deceiving in any way. Moreover, the integrity of the participants and sources would be protected.

3.7.3 Informed consent

The researcher ensured that participants are protected and given full consent to participate. Furthermore, it was important to ensure that potential participants have complete understanding of the purpose and methods to be used and the demands placed upon them as participants. Above all, any potential benefits to be derived by the researcher or any concerned party were made explicit with the respondents.

3.7.4 Voluntary participation

The participants were also informed of their right to participate or not to participate in this study. This explanation was extended to their right to withdraw from the study at any time.

3.8 Inaccessibility of diplomats

Given the possibility of some of the diplomats not being available to participate in this study due to the sensitive nature of diplomacy, their inaccessibility was respected and observed.

3.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, the research approach, data collection, population and sampling strategy, data analysis, research design and demonstration of trustworthiness were described in detail and the reason for their choice have been explained. In sum, this study used a qualitative research approach and both document review and interviews were used to gather data. Population included Limpopo and Gauteng scholars of International Relations who specialise in France's foreign policy towards Africa and foreign policy in general. The population was sampled purposively. Thematic content analysis was chosen to analyse the data collected for this study. The study adopted a comparative case study design because it compares France's foreign policy behaviour with two of the chosen case studies (CAR and Ivory Coast). Finally, to demonstrate trustworthiness, triangulation of primary and secondary sources of data enhanced the credibility and dependability of the study.

The next chapter provides France's foreign policy towards Africa. What informs this chapter is the assumption that France's foreign policy towards individual African nation states can best be understood when located within a broader continental context.

Chapter four: France-African Policy: General Perspective

4.1 Introduction

Despite independence of Francophone African states from colonial powers, France maintained significant and unequal relations with its former colonies. In other words, France retained its traditional policy of *domaine réservé* (reserved domain) and *chasse gardée* (private hunting ground) towards Africa (Martin, 2000). Essentially, areas such as defence, foreign affairs, economy, monetary and strategic mineral policies were crucial for France's continued control. According to Martin (2000), through a linkage established between the accession to international sovereignty and the signing of the model cooperation agreements, France managed to institutionalise its political, economic, monetary and cultural pre-eminence over its former colonies. As such, closely tied to post-colonial perspective, Bennyworth (2011) argues that because political, security, economic and cultural relations between France and Francophone Africa still remain, decolonisation did not mark an end but rather a restructuring of the imperial relationship. France has laid a solid basis for the maintenance of French presence in Francophone Africa (Chafer, 2016). This includes the package imposed by General De Gaulle in 1960 that still legitimises France's presence in Africa. Therefore, France has been successful in protecting and promoting its interests in the continent after formal colonisation. Basically, this means that decolonisation did not really die but revitalised the imperial relationship. Furthermore, the withdrawal of France from Africa means lowering the flag of the French policy and the decline of French economy as a result of separating it away from its natural resources and main markets (Azim, 2014). This means that France continues its influence in Africa to perpetuate its status as a great power.

Due to these colonial links, France exerts a significant influence in its former African colonies that it cannot command anywhere else globally. In crisis situations, it still seems as a key source of diplomatic, military or even financial supporter for some of the countries in continent, particularly the Francophone Africa (Melly and Darracq, 2013).

This is because military conflicts still continue to characterise large areas of Africa. In fact, this has enhanced France to become known as *gendarme* (police officer) of Africa. Moreover, French permanent military bases in some parts of Africa meant that France had a responsibility to defend the region and this conflated with French interests in maintaining regional hegemony. Basically, France plays a big-brother role in the defence domain because defence agreements are legal mechanisms that bind France to intervene where there is a conflict in particular, its ex-colonies. On the contrary, Melly and Darracq (2013) argue that due to budgetary concerns and a change in strategic climate, Paris adopted a new multilateral approach. Structural changes to the armed forces which encompassed, among others, the reduction in the size of the military and base closures between 1997 and 2002 meant that France could no longer maintain the dominance it had. Arguably, France's rapid intervention in Mali and its late intervention in CAR meant that it still maintains its military influence in Africa. Nevertheless, strategic interests dictate Paris' intervention behaviour in the African conflicts. Utley (2002) states that France facilitates intervention in the domestic affairs where friendly regimes were threatened, as well as action when the former colonies faced external threats.

Martin (2000) argues that one of the most striking features of France's African policy is its continuity throughout various political regimes in Paris. This means that there is a permanent traditional African policy which makes the idea of the death of Francafrique a bit far-fetched. It is worth noting that French African policy solely falls under the control of the Élysée Palace (Presidential palace). This basically denotes that French president is the chief architect of foreign policy making as enshrined in Article 12 and 14 of the French Constitution. Within this context, the rupture with past African policy (that is, Francafrique's opaque and informal connections) was a key theme of Sarkozy's and Hollande's election campaigns in 2007 and 2012, respectively. Conversely, in reality there seems to be a gap between policy and practice. This indicates continuity rather than change in their African policy.

Against this backdrop, this chapter seeks to analyse France's foreign policy towards Africa. It does so by highlighting what defines French African policy. Moreover, it provides whether or not France has disengaged itself from Africa given its refocus of policy beyond the borders of the continent. This chapter also looks at factors that legitimise France's presence in Africa. Lastly, given that presidents are very much influential in foreign policy making, this chapter provides hindsight of whether there is a continuity or change in both presidencies of Nicholas Sarkozy and François Hollande.

4.2 Defining France's foreign policy objectives towards Africa

France's foreign policy towards Africa is defined by a variety of factors. Among other factors, is the cooperation agreements signed in the 1960s (post-colonial era). This was to ensure close and amicable ties between France and former African colonies. However, these relations continue to indicate disparities because Francafrique can be construed as France's "sphere of influence or Africa as a *pré carré* (backyard)" which presupposes the hierarchical order of anarchical international system. As such, this denotes that state's survival and power precede ethical concerns such as equality of states. Within this context, it can be argued that France's policy position in Africa is driven by egoist motives (Mills, 2015).

4.2.1 Cooperation agreements that define post-colonial French-African relations

During the 1960s, when France gave independence, *Accords de Coopération* (Cooperation agreements) were established. These cooperation agreements are comprehensive bilateral treaties on crucial issues such as security, defence, diplomatic consultation and cultural, economic and political matters (Schmidt, 2013). Dolek (2008) states that the underlying discourse used by France was that it signed these agreements with its equal partners in Africa based on cooperation and interdependence. Arguably, through these bilateral agreements, African countries continued to survive under the dominance of France on economic, political, social,

cultural and military grounds (Dolek, 2008). This means that they did not show cooperation based on equality but on the narrow French national interests regardless of African needs and problems. Moreover, in reality, these agreements perpetuated French dominance. For Moshoeshoe (2016), the cooperation arrangements that Paris introduced to Africa came primarily as part of the deal to secure France's foothold in the continent that is commonly considered as the extension of France's sphere of influence (France's overseas territories). Therefore, France's foreign policy in Africa from the colonial period to date has been defined by Paris' geo-strategic interests more than by anything else (Moshoeshoe, 2016).

At the economic front, the accords guaranteed French markets for exports and privileged access to Africa's raw materials which are crucial to French aeronautical, nuclear energy and armaments industries (Schmidt, 2013). Francophone African countries agreed to limit their imports from other countries. As such, France remained the dominant supplier of goods and services. In addition, France is still a major economic and political partner for its former African colonies and many French multinationals have set up businesses in Africa (Cisse, 2012). It was also agreed that any major infrastructural projects on the continent should firstly be handed over to French businesses (Check, 2016). According to Schmidt (2013), economic cooperation agreements were complemented by the monetary accords. This is because fourteen former African colonies joined the CFA or Franc zone (a monetary union whose participants shared a common currency). The CFA franc is guaranteed by the *Banque de France* (Bank of France). This means that monetary and financial regulation is determined in Paris. Check (2016) argues that African countries are told by Paris that they can pull out of this monetary union at any time. However, at a practical level, when these countries attempt to renegotiate the monetary accords, France shows its ugly side by using its economic muscle to devastate these African countries economically. For instance, France would cut aid and influence the international financial institutions to withheld financial assistance to African countries. This should also be understood within the context that France has major shares in international financial institutions such as

the World Bank, the IMF and the African Development Bank (AFDB), and is a major investor and trade partner in the continent. Therefore, if any African country pulls out of the monetary cooperation, it is likely to be punished at the international level. Consequently, this has conditioned African people, particularly those of francophone origin, not to be able to survive without France. For example, Guinea-Conakry suffered economic consequences in the form of capital flight, aid cut and devastation of infrastructure when it sought disengagement from France by rejecting to be part of the cooperation agreements.

Another crucial cooperation agreement is within security or defence dimension. These agreements were designed to counter internal and external threats in Francophone African countries (Dolek, 2008). In essence, these agreements gave France a leeway for permanent involvement in the domestic affairs of its ex-colonies. To add, signatories to defence agreements were asked to buy French weapons and equipment and hire French military and technical advisors (Schmidt, 2013). This also gave France permission to maintain military bases in Africa. Arguably, these agreements created legal mechanisms that allowed France to control and intervene in the internal affairs of Africa because they dictate that no security threat should be entertained in the Francophone and if there is any conflict in these countries, France can automatically intervene. Essentially, the French army carried out over 30 military interventions since Africa's independence in the late 1950s and early 1960s. These military interventions were legitimised under the framework of the existing defence agreements (Dolek, 2008).

According to Gregory (2000) through the defence agreements, France pursued goals of protecting French nationals, conquering rebellions and shoring up the African elite, that is, pro-France including, autocratic individuals in the post-colonial African history. In return of propping up these regimes, France is guaranteed ample access to strategic raw materials in Africa (Schmidt, 2013). These included natural gas, uranium and oil.

Furthermore, in the global system, Francophone Africa supports France in international forums (that is in the UN and other international organisations). Notably, any African leader that aims to take his/her country towards a particular direction which is not favourable to France is likely to receive a warning or reprisal from Paris that the direction does not speak to the 1960s cooperation agreements (Check, 2016). This means that relations between France and Africa are not on an equal footing. Hence, Paris dictates the terms in which these relations are managed (Mabizela, 2016; Moabelo, 2016).

In sum, these cooperation agreements define France's African policy and perpetuate French dominance in African countries, and because they are binding, they serve as a legal mechanism that economically, politically and diplomatically attaches African countries to France. As such, they legitimise France's presence in the domestic affairs of Africa.

4.3 Re-shaping France's African policy

To ensure ample access to African resources (oil, gas, gold and uranium), it is Aljazeera's (2014) well-considered view that France employed policies and actions to maintain control in the former colonies. Moreover, General De Gaulle established an African unit that reported directly to him (that is a developed network of French and African political leaders and businessmen). France supported lavish lifestyles of African dictators (who perpetuated French interests) while their people endured extreme poverty. For instance, Gabon became the epicentre of France's oil economy, thus then President of the Western African country, Leon M'ba, supported France's interests and in return, Paris supported his presidency (Bills, 2014). Furthermore, when M'ba died, his successor (Omar Bongo) also became an unpopular ruler who Paris supported in exchange for access to Gabon's oil and he became one of the wealthiest men through rampant corruption while his people lived in poverty (Bills, 2014).

France gradually began to lose power after 1994 in its former African colonies that it once had (Aljazeera, 2014). Firstly, France has been under pressure from a sudden evolution of international environment and changing domestic policies. Furthermore, with the Cold War coming to an end in the late 1980s and early 1990s, French foreign policy makers had to shift African policy to match the new realities of the post-Cold War era. Notably, during the Cold-War period, Francophone Africa was perceived as belonging to French sphere of influence due to historical ties and off limits to other foreign powers (Martin, 2002). This was also possible because France was able to present itself as the guarantor of the Western interests in Africa thereby preserving the continent from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) influence. Vallin (2015) asserts that Western states' decision makers then perceived France as the sole European power able and willing to act in sub-Saharan Africa in order to maintain those territories inside the Western capitalist bloc led by the United States of America (USA). As such, France acted as a representative of the Western bloc in Africa. According to Chafer (2002) the new global environment has put constraints on French African policy but has also presented France with new opportunities to pursue its national interests in Africa in terms of globalisation and international liberalism. Regardless of the global evolution, special relationships remained. For instance, multilateralism contributed to the re-legitimisation of the French military posture in Francophone Africa that still allowed for frequent interventions under the justification of multilateralism (Vallin, 2015).

Secondly, France preferred to reshape its action and assistance to the former Soviet Union countries. Additionally, France redirected its focus towards European integration when the construction of a strong and more integrated European Union (EU) was on-going. Lastly, one of the major factors that made France to reassess its African policy was the 1994 Rwandan genocide. This is because France was accused to be responsible in the ethnic cleansing of the Tutsis by the Hutus (Marine, 2014). Consequently, Paris decided to re-shape its policy strategy towards Africa.

In terms of Marine's (2014) assertion, France's new policy has been to repatriate the majority of French soldiers present on the African ground and to close most of the military bases in its former colonies. This move was a strong signal because the military presence was the most overt aspect of the favoured links between France and Africa. However, it is worth noting that France still maintains military bases in some African countries, notably in Djibouti, Senegal, Gabon and Ivory Coast. France also redirected its policy towards supporting the UN mandates with French forces and would follow UN's decisions regarding operations in Africa. This means that France sought to halt its old behaviour of conducting unilateral military operations in its former African colonies. Consequently, it repositioned its policy towards multilateralism. Within this context, Mabizela (2016) and Check (2016) argue that because France is a permanent member at the UNSC, it might exploit its veto power to intervene in African affairs. Touati (2007) avers that in the post-Cold War era, multilateralism became a political buzzword, and that shift combined with a new generation of French politicians claiming to herald a fresh approach suggested a change in France's foreign policy towards Africa. Essentially, multilateralism serves as a justification for France's role in Africa. It legitimises French military posture in Africa along with the relevance of its pre-positioned forces in the post-Cold War world (Vallin, 2015). In addition, France seeks multilateralism to ensure individual interventions in Africa and prevent accusations of neo-colonialism.

According to Vallin (2015), the song of multilateralism allowed France to intervene 30 times in Africa between 1997 -2001 through actions ranging from mere mobilisation of troops to sizeable military deployments or airstrikes. Worth noting is that only eight interventions were multilateral and the rest were unilateral. Furthermore, Paris justifies its intervention by arguing that it protects Western nationals, the French in particular. This should be seen within the understanding that France's responsibility is to protect all its nationals regardless of their geographic locations. France's membership of the EU and other multilateral forums in the West obligates Paris with a shared responsibility for the safety and security of all Westerners. However, the partnership remains

asymmetrical because France still owns almost exclusive means to use military force in Africa.

As part of the foreign policy shift in Africa, France also tied its development aid to the promotion of democracy and human rights. This came in a form of Abidjan Doctrine and La Baule Doctrine which require good governance, respect for human rights and democracy from African recipients to receive funds. Marine (2014) indicates that this took into account European integration and cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which did not allow France to maintain an independent line for its foreign policy. Nevertheless, it can be argued that Paris proves to be inconsistent in this line of policy because where security and democracy are conflictual, France tends to prioritise security (Moabelo, 2016). This means that France backs up the African authoritarian and corrupt regimes to ensure stability in the interest of France to be secured. For instance, during the 1996 military coup in Niger, France broke ranks with the EU (which reacted to the military takeover that interrupted the process of democratisation of the Lomé Convention launched in 1993) by continuing its bilateral aid co-operation with Niger which included both civilian and military assistance plus budgetary aid (Olsen, 2007). This move was also criticised by other EU member states such as Germany and Denmark arguing that accepting military takeover in Niger and resuming aid would be a wrong signal to other African countries and prospective dictators. However, Paris justified its move by arguing that Niger was an atypical case and had to be treated as such. Moreover, it argued that Niger was highly unstable and France could not allow the state apparatus to break down and fall apart. This should be understood within the context that Niger is very crucial for France's energy sector. In essence, France has been heavily dependent on the import of uranium from Niger and this Western African country remains an important contractor of uranium to France (Olsen, 2007).

Despite the Abidjan Doctrine and La Baule Doctrine, regimes favourable to French interests and influence, regardless of whether they were truly committed to democratic changes, continued to receive French aid and military support (Villan, 2015). In short, Paris refused to assist the democratically elected authorities and worked with the new military regime of colonel Ibrahim Bare Mainassara in Niger.

4.4 Is France disengaging itself from Africa?

With Paris re-shaping its Africa policy and focusing on European integration and searching for new markets in the entire developing world, some observers have suggested that France is disengaging from Africa. According to Martin (2000), France integrated special relationship with Africa into the wider European context. In fact, Paris sought its interaction with Africa to be seen in line with new EU's co-ordinated foreign policy under which France bilateral African policy must be subsumed. Moreover, Melly and Darracq (2013) argue that African security should be a key interest for the EU as a whole, and should, therefore, share the burden of supporting the development of sub-Saharan security structures rather than France only. As such, Paris pushed for the emergence of a rather modest international actor in Africa in the early 2000s, and this saw the EU deploying several military operations in Francophone Africa starting with Operation Artemis in 2003 in the DRC (Vallin, 2015).

The Rwandan genocide in 1994 also contributed to the debate that France was becoming disinterested in Africa. Marine (2014) asserts that France showed less readiness to intervene militarily on the African continent. Basically, Paris overtly showed where its loyalties lay during the Rwandan genocide which saw 800 000 Tutsis slaughtered by Hutus armed forces. This is because France engineered the delivery of millions of dollars' worth of weapons to the Hutu regime from Egypt and South Africa (Uchehara, 2014). Interestingly, in 1998, the French parliament admitted that the then administration of François Mitterrand was blinded by the supposed French interest in the region into siding with Hutu groups (Uchehara, 2014). Actually, France for the first

time admitted that its own actions had contributed to the calamity. This attests to the fact that France prioritises security over democracy if these two are conflicting. Therefore, France's actions were less approved by the international community and the European Economic Community (now the EU). The reduction of France's military presence in Africa in 2005 also caused many observers to think that Francafrique was taking its last breath. Mengara (2010) states that this reduction included the withdrawal of few thousands of troops out of the 10000 that France had positioned on the continent. The maintenance of French military bases in Africa meant that France remains the gendarme of the continent. As such, its announcement of closing the bases indicated a desire by France to do away with the image of *gendarme de l'Afrique* (Africa's policeman) (Mengara, 2010).

According to Chafer (2016), a sign of French disengagement from Africa was sparked by the reduction in the number of French *coopérants* (that is technical advisors, teachers, administrators, doctors etc.) working in Africa since the 1980s. This should be understood within the context that the deployment of French *coopérants* represented what has sometimes been termed "second colonial occupation". Some of the institutions and structures of French African policy have changed or been reformed (Chafer, 2016). This is because French-African summits established in the early 1970s as a gathering of French political leader and ex-African colonies' leaders have slowly been extended to encompass increasing number of representatives of non-francophone countries. In essence, France's economic links have started to transcend the parameters of Franco-African region stretching them to Nigeria and South Africa which are now major trading partners. Furthermore, the Ministry for cooperation, which has in effect traditionally been the Ministry for Francophone Africa, has been restructured and changed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in France (Chafer, 2016).

Against the above backdrop, French disengagement from Africa seems unlikely because the invincibility of Francafrique was also proven by the African elite as they still

need France. On the other hand, France has a great deal invested politically, economically and emotionally in Francophone African relationship. According to Check (2016) attempts to break away from Francafrique relations failed because the political elite in France and Africa have formed strong lobbying groups. They have invested so much in Francafrique links in such a way that they have decided that such relations should remain. This should be understood within the context that these links are motivated by mutual interests, which African leaders see as life insurance. As a result, these Francafrique relations continue to hinder Africa's sustainable development thus perpetuating a dependency syndrome of African states on France (Check, 2016; Mabizela, 2016). Notably, the post-colonial leaders of independent Francophone African countries had been ministers and parliament members in the National Assembly in France and friends of Paris. As such, the African governing elite have played a key role in ensuring that France does not withdraw from Africa in the post-colonial period (Chafer, 2016; Moabelo, 2016). Chafer goes on indicating that Ivory Coast's case can illustrate this fact. This is because Ivory Coast is one of the former colonies that had the economic potential to break away from France. However, Houphouet-Boigny decided to maintain close relations with the former metropolis. Boigny was also a *depute* (a representative) in French National Assembly from 1946 until 1959.

Moreover, the reform of a French African policy is only driven as much by Africans themselves and politicians and officials in Paris. As indicated, France still needs Africa just as much for projection of French power and prestige. Nevertheless, Chafer (2016) and Moabelo (2016) argue that although this may be the case, the political opportunity to do this, to the extent that it meant justifying propping-up unsavoury regimes in Africa with poor human rights records, is now greatly reduced. As such, this led Paris to reconfigure its African policy. France has invested a lot in its projection of power and prestige globally, that it cannot afford to withdraw from Africa. In the same vein, France's overt renewed interests in Africa are its two military interventions in the former colonies in less than one year (2013). This was in Mali and CAR. This indicated France's desire to reinforce economic relations with Francophone Africa and to

strengthen its influence and interests in the region. In the same vein, Riba (2016) states that what has changed is that France has intensified its links with Africa with the aim of downplaying the role that China is playing in the continent.

4.5 Change and Continuity in France African policy
4.5.1 Nicholas Sarkozy's term in office

In France, foreign and military affairs have been left to the president, and Africa is one of the priorities in the policy of the French presidents. Within this context, it is important to highlight whether there are changes and continuities between the precedencies of Nicholas Sarkozy and François Hollande. These presidents are chief architects of foreign policy making. When Sarkozy took office in 2007, he announced that his African policy will be based on transparency, accountability, calculation of interests and a dialogue among equals (Uchehara, 2014). In fact, when he assumed office, many hoped for much awaited reform in Africa policy. Sarkozy sought to strip relations of what he perceived as "sentimental and historical relics of the colonial era, which had stifled relations and fostered an unhealthy cycle of dependency and paternalism". It is worth noting that the rupture of past politics was a key theme of Sarkozy's election campaign in 2007. According to Melly and Darracq (2013) this signalled that after colonialism and forty years of strong influence over post-independence Africa, the policy would no longer be determined by Francafrique's opaque and informal connections, which and for decades provided unique networking possibility for influencing policy and trade deals.

In 2008, Sarkozy delivered a speech in Cape Town (South Africa) whereby he made proposals to change France's Africa policy. He proposed the re-creation of bilateral relations on the principles of transparency, making Europe a crucial partner regarding peace and security, dialogue with African states to adopt old cooperation agreements and utilising French military presence in Africa to assist Africans to establish their own collective security system (Yates, 2012). Sarkozy also argued that he should not be caught up in the controversies of his predecessor. For instance, when he came into

office, Rwanda had broken diplomatic relations with France. However, he restored diplomatic relations between the two countries in 2009. With that being said, Moncrief (2012) argues that although that may have been the case, in the final years of Sarkozy's presidency some of the shine was taken off this rapprochement as hostility between Sarkozy's new Prime Minister Alain Juppe and the Rwandan regime resulted in the recall of the French ambassador to Rwanda. Notably, the rapprochement between Paris and Rwanda was sought by France because without Rwanda it would not have influence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to further its interests in its rich oil, especially uranium (Van Herpen, 2010). Within this context, it can be argued that France's relationship with its ex-colonies is still far from being transparent. There are still residues of decades of close French presence in the continent. In the same vein, Melly and Darracq (2013) argue that in the 2008 Cape Town speech, Sarkozy's African policy had already been strongly shaped by the impact of visits to the continent in July 2007. All the African countries he visited were important Francophone African allies. These included Senegal, Algeria, Tunisia and Gabon. Interestingly, Sarkozy's African policy ambitions were compromised when he prioritised relations with traditional partners with a questionable record on governance and human rights such as the Bongo regime in Gabon and Idris Derby of Chad (Melly and Darracq, 2013). This means that Sarkozy did not break from the past practices of support for undemocratic leaders.

Following Sarkozy's entrance into presidential office, the African elite such as Bongo visited him and subsequently, he visited Gabon in 2007 and 2008. This indicated or personified the old ways. Moncrieff (2012) asserts that even though Sarkozy and his officials worked to change French actions on the continent, many politicians, private individuals and French officials sought to maintain privileged relations with despotic regimes because such links are regarded as of vital commercial importance. Check (2016) shares the same sentiments that when Sarkozy became president, he tried to change the way France-African relations are structured. However, the African political elite unwelcomed Sarkozy's change in policy because most of them were trained in Paris and deployed in Africa to preserve French interests in the continent. Instead, the

African elite proposed that Sarkozy must reinforce the Francafrique relations (Riba, 2016; Check, 2016).

Paris has become embroiled in a transition through crises in Africa and it was perceived as propping up continued authoritarian rule in the continent, particularly in Gabon (Moncrief, 2012). To add, in terms of the position of authoritarian leaders in the special relationship between France and Africa, the death of President Omar Bongo of Gabon in 2009 was of a particular importance in the five years of Sarkozy in power. This is because Bongo had strong influence in Paris' policy circles and had utilised Gabon's oil resources to form crucial networks of influence in the sub-region. Sarkozy and his inner circle defended his policy in Africa, arguing that the old ways and the backroom deals should stop, pointing to the reform of France's military presence. However, Moncrief (2012) argues that French military continues to intervene in a variety of settings and will remain present in at least large bases on the continent. In the same vein, Paris' Francafrique policy has proved to be invincible. Hence, France does not have its own primary sector. Therefore, Africa is a place where the French can extract natural resources in order to maintain its international economic status (Riba, 2016; Moshoeshoe, 2016).

The reform of French military presence in Africa was also at the heart of Sarkozy's policy ambitions. He promised to decrease unilateral interventions, and that France would move towards multilateral cooperation. This meant that all defence agreements with Africans and military bases in the continent would be reviewed and/or renegotiated. The move to multilateralism was construed as a legitimisation of French intervention in Ivory Coast and Chad under Sarkozy. On a positive note, under Sarkozy, new agreements and existing defence and military cooperation agreements were all negotiated between 2009 and 2012. This reform has made the situation more transparent and healthy and may represent Sarkozy's lasting legacy, distinguishing his regime from previous government agreements (Cumming, 2013).

Other Africans saw Sarkozy as a symbol of France's ever-hardening immigration laws (Marchal, 2007). This is because when Sarkozy was still an Interior Minister under Chirac, he had ensured increased securitisation of immigration policy where in police tracked down illegal immigrants and deported them back to Africa. Consequently, this made many Africans to fear that Sarkozy represented a parochial and xenophobic France (Moncrief, 2012). Indeed, throughout Sarkozy's candidacy, he maintained that his foreign policy objectives in Africa would also revolve around immigration and trade. Sarkozy's immigration bill sought to put an end to uncontrolled flow of immigrants into France, and allowed Paris to choose which migrants it needed (those that are educated, skilled and with great potential to benefit France) (Check, 2016). Cumming (2013) argues that Sarkozy reeled off unrealisable promises, misunderstood the complex problems of the Sahel and pursued an immigration policy that betrayed his discourse on equal partnership with Africa. This means that Sarkozy did not deliver on his promises of radical reform in African policy. As such, his policy towards Africa represented continuity rather than change.

4.5.2 France's African policy under François Hollande

Hollande forged his personal reputation in the domestic political arena (Melly and Darracq, 2013). When he came into office, his expectations were less that he would be a foreign policy president. Melly and Darracq argue that Hollande came to a realisation that although France seeks to normalise links with the sub-Saharan world, Africa remains a continent that cannot be pushed to the margins of political, economic and diplomatic action. This is because the traditional web of business and political connections ties the occupant of the Élysée Palace to give significant time to African issues.

Since Hollande's entrance into presidential office in 2012 coincided with the Malian crisis, the French leader viewed the crisis as the biggest foreign policy challenge outside Europe. According to Darnis (2012), Hollande's African strategy was designed

to reshape France's broader political approach towards the continent, and make a distinct break from the policy priorities of the Sarkozy era. Interestingly, Hollande preached an equal partnership with Africa, and specifically criticised the prejudiced tone of Sarkozy's 2007 Dakar speech (that which Sarkozy uttered words such as "The tragedy of Africa is that Africans have not fully entered into history and they have never really launched themselves into the future"). It must also be kept in mind that during his campaign, Hollande called for greater transparency putting an end to corruption and shadow diplomacy in French-African relations (Darnis, 2012). Moncrief (2012) posits that Hollande has almost no experience of sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, this should leave him free to implement the remaining elements of the reform agenda within the constraints of commercial interests. However, Hollande's Socialist Party does have links through the controversial legacies of the François Mitterrand era. With that in mind and due to direct economic interests in Mali, Hollande reversed his low key image and decided to actively intervene in the continent (Uchehara, 2014). This move brought back memories of the African gendarme which is France's colonial status. This is because French troops in Mali were greeted by most Malians as liberators as they were making their way towards Islamists northerner's positions. Uchehara (2014: 39) states that France justified its move, saying that it was requested by the government of Mali. Nevertheless, the same request came from the CAR government (which also faced an offensive from rebels) but failed to get assistance due to strategic considerations. On a lighter note, when Hollande surprisingly rejected President Bozize's request in 2012, some observers even declared that he passed the first test of his new African policy in CAR that was aimed at putting an end to Francafrique.

Siradag (2014) argues that the Malian crisis was a test for Hollande. As such, French intervention in the crisis demonstrated that France has continued to pursue its economic and strategic interests in Africa. Moreover, it also showed that continuity has been one of the most crucial foreign policy principles in French policy towards Africa. In contrast, Hollande stated that France collaborated with the international community (for example, UNSC with its resolution plan of 2085 which legitimised French involvement in Mali and

regional actors). Nevertheless, it can be argued that France utilised its global power (also its status in the UNSC) to strengthen its economic, political and strategic interests by cooperating with international and regional organisations during its operation in Mali (Siradag, 2014; Mabizela, 2016). This also suggests that Hollande's African policy continues to develop French economic, political and strategic interests. To this end, the French intervention in Mali indicates that the ex-metropolis continues to be involved in Africa militarily when French security and strategic interests are threatened. It should be understood that Mali has significant oil, gas and mineral resources which are very crucial for French technological industries.

It is worth noting that even though French President Hollande aimed at ending Francafrique networks, Africa and France still need each other. Marine (2014) states that France has lots of difficulties internally and at the EU level. This means that it does not have the power to influence as much as wanted in the decisions taken in the EU. As such, Paris realised that the African continent was on an on-going process of development and it took the decision to consolidate its links and to regain its importance in Africa with the aim of gaining back power on the international stage. However, fast developing countries such as China and India have become crucial economic partners of African countries. It is for this reason that France utilises all means at its disposal to consolidate its relations with the former French colonies and Africa at large. Furthermore, France seeks to remain present in Africa to maintain its monopoly (Moncrief, 2012).

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter showed that France's foreign policy in Africa is defined by various factors. Among other factors are cooperation agreements which inform France's close and amicable relations with Africa, particularly its former African colonies. France's support for corrupt and autocratic governments and its secret financing of French political

parties through public aid are among contributing factors that compromise and damage the image of Francafrique links.

It was established that the *Accord de Coopération* were formed in the areas of security, defence, diplomatic consultation, cultural, economic and political matters. The underlying discourse of these agreements was that they were signed based on cooperation and interdependence. Nevertheless, it was argued that they showed no equality but the perpetuation of France's presence in the continent. Hence, African states continue to survive under the subjugation of France on economic, political, social, cultural and military grounds. As such, this denotes an unhealthy cycle of dependency syndrome.

On the economic grounds, Francafrique links guaranteed France markets for exports and privileged access to Africa's raw materials and the continent concurred to limit their imports from other countries. This allowed the ex-metropolis to remain major suppliers of goods and services. Any major infrastructural projects are firstly handed over to French contractors. Moreover, the currency (CFA franc) of the Francophone Africa is guaranteed and controlled by the bank of France. On the security front, France was given a leeway for permanent involvement in the internal affairs of its ex-colonies. This is because the defence agreement enabled France to automatically intervene if there is a conflict in one of the signatories of the pact. Therefore, this made France to be the policeman of Africa.

This chapter also observed that these defence agreements dictate that signatories should purchase French weapons and equipment, and hire French military and technical advisors. African countries are also meant to support France's international policies. Because of these agreements, France continues to dominate and since they

are binding, they serve as a legal mechanism that attaches Africa to France economically, politically and diplomatically.

After 1994, Paris made a policy shift in Africa. This was because of pressure from the evolution of international environment. Therefore, France had to make a policy shift to match realities of the post-Cold War era. However, it was argued that regardless of the global evolution, special relationships remained. As part of the new policy, France repatriated the majority of its troops in Africa and closed some of the military bases. France also redirected its policy towards supporting the UN mandates and would follow the UN's decisions concerning operations in Africa. Furthermore, it tied economic assistance to the promotion of human rights and democracy. This is provided in the Abidjan Doctrine and the La Baule Doctrine which require respect for human rights, democracy and good governance. Because France was reshaping its policy, many have suggested that it was breaking away from Francafrique. Nevertheless, this chapter has indicated that special links between France and Africa continued. It was argued that even though Paris was restructuring its African policy, Francafrique persisted because the African and French elite have a great deal invested politically, economically and emotionally in Francafrique relationship. As such, the African governing and political elite in France ensured that France does not withdraw from Africa.

Given that French presidents are chief architects of foreign policy making, this chapter pointed out changes and continuities in the presidencies of Sarkozy and Hollande. Sarkozy called for a new and more equal relationship with African countries and did not want to be caught up in the controversies of his predecessors. However, these policy ambitions were compromised when he prioritised links with traditional partners with questionable records on governance and human rights such as Omar Bongo and Idris Derby. Moreover, during his term in office, France became embroiled in a transition through crises in Africa and it was perceived as supporting continued authoritarian rule in the continent. It was also indicated that Sarkozy reeled off unrealisable promises,

misunderstood complex problems of the Sahel and pursued an immigration policy that betrayed his discourse on an equal partnership with Africa. For this reason, it was argued that he did not deliver on his promises of changing Africa policy and this represented continuity rather than change.

Hollande also aimed at reshaping France's broader political approach towards the continent, and to make a distinct break from the policy priorities of Francafrique. Given that Hollande had almost no experience of sub-Saharan Africa, he was free to implement the elements of the reform agenda. However, it was argued that Hollande's Socialist Party have links through the controversial legacies of François Mitterrand. As a result, since the Malian crisis was a big test for his foreign policy, Hollande reversed his low key image and decided to actively intervene in Africa. This brought back memories of France being a gendarme of Africa. Furthermore, this move indicated that continuity has been one of the most crucial foreign policy principles in French policy towards Africa.

The next chapter provides a critical analysis of France's reaction towards the 2010-2011 Ivory Coast crisis.

Chapter five: France's Reaction Towards the 2010-2011 Ivorian Crisis.

5.1 Introduction

In many West African countries, serious threats to security of their people still persist. These threats come in many forms, including military interventions in the political arena, religious intolerance, constitutional or electoral manipulation, international criminal networks and communal violence. According to Zounmenou and Loua (2011), many of these threats interact with each other. Ivory Coast is no stranger to these threats that are facing much of West Africa. In fact, it provides a good illustration of West Africa's complex political crises.

Ivory Coast has experienced one of the region's robust and difficult crises even though for many decades it enjoyed a socio-economic and political stability on the foundations laid by Felix Houphouet-Boigny. President Boigny was the first Ivorian president. He ruled the country (Ivory Coast) for more than thirty years. However, his death, the failure of his successors to achieve a coherent political transition and the waning living conditions led the Western African country into a protracted conflict and violence (Zounmenou and Loua, 2011). Since 2002 rebellion in Ivory Coast, the country was divided in two parts with the North controlled by rebels (Forces Nouvelles), which supported Allasane Ouattara, and the South controlled by Gbagbo-led government. According to Mbeki (2011), in protracted negotiations from 2002, the Ivorian people agreed no presidential elections will be held until various conditions had been met. Among other things, these conditions encompassed the reunification of the country, the disarmament of rebels, and, militias and their integration in the national security machinery and the restoration of the national administration to all parts of the Ivorian territory (Mbeki, 2011). However, the presidential elections went ahead in 2010 without honouring these conditions. As a result, the country was plunged into violence, with Gbagbo and Ouattara supporters conflicting over the election results. Ivory Coast has also provided the most dramatic crisis in France's relations with Africa. This is because

the mixture of commercial, personal interests, military and diplomatic interventions guaranteed that Ivory Coast remained a controversial and complex policy issue in Paris.

Against this background, this chapter seeks to provide a post-colonial critique of the French reaction to the recent Ivorian debacle. It does so by highlighting the causes of the Ivorian crisis, which saw Laurent Gbagbo out of office. It also explains bilateral and multilateral responses to the Ivorian crisis. Furthermore, the chapter gives a critical account of French's position of the conflict in Ivory Coast.

5.2 The root causes of Ivorian crisis: The downfall of former President Laurent Gbagbo

Ivory Coast's crisis is grounded in its geography and history (Bah, 2012). Felix Houphouet-Boigny advocated for proper use of land by all residents in Ivory Coast no matter what origins or nationality they had. This ensured social stability and provided the country with the labour force needed to achieve considerable economic prosperity. As such, the economy of Ivory Coast doubled in size between 1960 and 1980. According to Bah (2012), this progressive accumulation of wealth promoted improved communication and urbanisation. However, the situation took a U-turn after the death of Boigny in 1993. Tensions began to build up over who would be the suitable successor as head of state. These tensions led to growing corruption and the economy that suffered a significant drop. Henrie Konan Bedie, the former National Assembly speaker, prevailed over Allasane Ouattara, who was the Prime Minister during Boigny's administration. To garner support and exclude Ouattara in the 1995 elections, Berdie introduced the concept of Ivoirite. Primarily, this concept was instituted as a strategy to prohibit politicians, particularly, Ouattara from standing as a presidential candidate during elections. On the contrary, Berdie claimed that *Ivoirite* aimed at creating a sense of cultural unity among the people of Ivory Coast (Ogwang, 2011). This concept basically entails that anyone whose parents were not born in Ivory Coast is a foreigner if they had not lived in the country for the preceding five years. Looking at Ouattara's

biological background, his father is said to have been born in the neighbouring Burkina Faso and that Ouattara presented himself as a Burkinabe citizen earlier in his career at the IMF. Moreover, owing to his duties in his position in the IMF, he had not stayed in Ivory Coast for five years (1990-1995). The concept of *Ivoirite* thus led to social squabbles and instabilities.

In 1999, Berdie was ousted by a group of military officers after he rejected their demand to increase their pay. General Robert Guei was appointed to lead the transition. Nevertheless, Zounmenou and Loua (2011) argued that he also failed to set Ivory Coast's democratisation process in motion. In the following year, Guei attempted to legitimise his stay in office by holding elections. Even so, he came second in these elections, which led him to declare the polls invalid and himself as triumphant (Bah, 2012). As a result, protests and attacks on the presidential palace emerged which forced Guei to flee the country. This left Laurent Gbagbo as a president because he was a major candidate since other candidates such as Ouattara were discredited over questions regarding their parents' citizenship.

In 2002, there was an attempted coup against Laurent Gbagbo, which resulted in a civil war. This aggravated a split in Ivory Coast into North (rebel controlled) and South (government controlled). Nevertheless, Gbagbo remained the president as negotiations for peace agreements were undergoing. This included, among others, the France-led Lina-Marcoussis agreement of 2003-2004. According to Zounmenou and Loua (2011), the Lina-Marcoussis agreement in 2003, and the UN involvement were no less successful because Gbagbo suspected a "neo-colonial agenda". Gbagbo's suspicion partly explained why the international community-led mediation process could not achieve the breakthrough necessary for the normalisation of the political situation in Ivory Coast. Since 2002 the country has suffered explosive mix of ethnic, religious, and land rivalries. Following logistical challenges and voter eligibility disputes, the 2005 elections, which were supposed to mark the end of Gbagbo's term in office, were

delayed. The delays enabled Gbagbo to stay in power for five more years until the 2010 elections.

5.2.1 The 2010-2011 election dispute

The year 2010 saw the Ivorian nationals finally going to the polls to elect the new president (the first election since 2000). The main objective was to settle the leadership constitution that has defined the Ivorian political history in the past decades, to set the country on the path to rapprochement and to medicate the country's economic ills (Check, 2011). Given the county's split into North and South, Gbagbo's supporters were concentrated in the South, and those of Ouattara were primarily Muslims based in the North. As such, the 2010 election was a political solution to Ivorian challenges. There were two rounds of elections and the first poll which took place in a generally peaceful environment did not yield the winner. However, in the second round of the election, the outcomes were unexpected as there were two versions of the results. The Ivory Coast's Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) pronounced Allasane Ouattara as triumphant. The IEC showed that Ouattara won the election with a 54.1% share of votes, against 45.9% for Gbagbo. Contrary to the IEC's declaration of Ouattara's victory, the Constitutional Council (allegedly comprising of Gbagbo's allies) declared Gbagbo as the winner because the IEC missed the deadline of the 1st of December 2010 (by midnight) for providing the results.

According to Bah (2012), elections are the means through which power in a democratic society is authorised and legitimated by autonomous state institutions such as the electoral commission and the constitutional courts. Lack of independence of these institutions is a root cause of political violence and instability. This is primarily because the politicisation of the IEC was evident in its reluctance to address challenges to securely distribute electoral materials, to collect ballots and to announce election results in a timely manner (Bah, 2012). Moreover, Constitutional Council comprising of Gbagbo allies might have influenced their decision in changing the election result pronounced by

the IEC. These are the uncertainties that have led to violence that engulfed Ivory Coast to settle the election disputes.

Nevertheless, Allasane Ouattara was also recognised by the international community as the victor following the run-off elections. Thus, Gbagbo refused to step down, and this sparked tensions as the country was plunged into a fierce conflict that left an estimated 3000 people dead and displaced a million others. According to Ogwang (2011), the 2010-2011 conflict in Ivory Coast was a by-product of deep-seated cleavages revolving around ethnicity, nationality and religion. He argues that on the surface, the conflict appears to be a squabble over election result. In reality, the election dispute is a manifestation of deep divisions that are underlined by ethnicity, nationality, religion and fragmentation among Ivorian society along geographical lines. In the same vein, politicians tapped into these differences to consolidate their monopoly on power and in the process, pushed the country towards civil war. In early 2011, Gbagbo was ultimately arrested by Ouattara's forces with the assistance of the French and UN forces. This left Ouattara as the president of the Ivory Coast. Following Gbagbo's humiliating capture, the conflict died down and Ivory Coast is now working towards maintaining security and public order, economic recovery and political reconciliation and reunification.

5.2.2 Impact of the 2010-2011 Ivorian conflict.

War is a brutal, nasty and an unpredictable act (Monyane, Molapo, Twala and Sibawu, 2014). As such, the political crisis in Ivory Coast has had major diplomatic, financial, economic and social repercussions on the population. It is worth noting that this election was supposed to open a more positive chapter in Ivory Coast's history. Instead, it provoked a violent crisis that left a considerable number of people killed. In fact, the electoral crisis caused a decline in security, threatened regional stability and caused gross human rights violations against civilians. Economically, the crisis has had a dire impact on the daily lives of Ivorian households, causing prices of essential products to rise sharply (D'Almedia, 2011). D'Almedia further states that market prices soared so

much that some essential products such as oil, sugar and meat were difficult to obtain. Moreover, basic service providers such as teachers, health workers and social workers were not paid their salaries during the political violence. The conflict also had an effect on electrical power in the Northern part of the country following state military operations targeting rebel-held areas. This power cut crippled hospital operations and caused residents to use water from unsafe sources (Cook, 2011). Then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon reported that over 1000 civilians had died as a result of clashes and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) indicated that more than 500,000 Ivoirians were forcibly displaced with 94,000 reported to have fled to neighbouring Liberia (ICRtoP, 2011). These impacts tasked Ouattara to foster peace and reconciliation in Ivory Coast. According to Ogwang (2011), Ouattara has inherited deeply dissected country. As such, sustainable peace will largely depend on how he approaches the process of bridging the differences in Ivorian society.

5.3 Bilateral and multilateral responses to Ivorian crisis

The Ivorian political stalemate caught the attention of the international community. Hence, the security of ordinary citizens was threatened. This concerned international parties included the Economic Community for Western African States (ECOWAS), African Union (AU), UN and other foreign powers with huge stakes in Ivory Coast. The Ivorian political crisis threatened long-standing global efforts to prop-up a transition to peace, democratic governance and political stability in the Western African country. Notably, these global efforts are imperatives for sustainable and long-term socio-economic growth in Ivory Coast. However, the international intervention in Ivory Coast was not welcomed by Gbagbo and his supporters. This was mainly because the IEC's announcement of the run-off election results recognising Ouattara as a victor was widely certified by the international community and major powers. As a result, the infuriated Gbagbo asserted that the international community's rejection of the Constitutional Council's decision and efforts to force him to concede the presidency infringed on Ivorian national sovereignty and the constitutional rule of law (Cook, 2011). Alternative actions by Gbagbo included negotiated solution to the crisis in which he

called on Ouattara to sit down with him and discuss a way out of the crisis. Arguably, this was just a strategy that would allow Gbagbo to remain a major government official even after he gave up presidential power. In the same vein, the outcome of the negotiations would have encompassed an inclusive government where-in Ouattara and Gbagbo would share power. However, the international community, including ECOWAS, rejected such an outcome. Moreover, the international organisations and other major governments rejected Gbagbo's proposal that a committee of evaluation on the post-election crisis in Ivory Coast should be welcomed (Cook, 2011). The motivation for their rejection was that such an evaluation was done by the IEC and through the UN certification process.

Following the inaugurations of both Ouattara and Gbagbo on the 4th of December 2010, the AU deployed a mediation team led by the former South African President Thabo Mbeki. This was aimed at achieving a peaceful outcome to the dispute between Ouattara and Gbagbo. Thus, this effort failed to alter the stance of both men, and Mbeki left after making a generic call for peace and democracy (Cook, 2011). This was because Mbeki did not combine efforts with ECOWAS. Additionally, South Africa appeared as a peacemaker that often opted for a pro-government approach. As a result, its impartiality was questionable. After Mbeki led a fruitless mission, the AU Commission reiterated its position that it recognised Ouattara as a president, and that Gbagbo should step aside to avert conflict and loss of life. This indicated a shrinking of space for diplomatic manoeuvre for Gbagbo, and allowed the Central Bank of West African States to cut off Gbagbo's money supply. This development ultimately waned his standing with his own military and the civilian government (Basset and Straus, 2011).

The diverging positions between the AU member states compromised the continental bloc to develop collective decisive solution to the Ivorian crisis. For instance, Gambia and Uganda opposed military intervention and differed with the certification of Ouattara

as a victor. These two countries argued that one candidate cannot be declared a winner while the election is contested instead of investigating thoroughly. Diverging positions emerged when other AU member states such as South Africa, Angola, Zimbabwe, Cape Verde, Uganda and Togo argued that the AU should approach the Ivorian crisis diplomatically. Additionally, these countries were open to the rhetoric of the Gbagbo camp, which accused the international community of being manipulated by a neo-colonial France. This implicitly hinted that these countries had not recognised Ouattara as a president. In fact, this hint reflected in the comments by the South African International Relations and Cooperation Minister, Maite Nkoana Mashabane who called the election results inconclusive, and repeatedly refused to state who South Africa believed won (Cook, 2011). Allegedly, Ouattara's camp claimed that South Africa had stationed a naval warship off the coast to prevent an ECOWAS intervention (African Briefing Report, 2011). However, Pretoria (the administrative capital of South Africa) denied the allegations. As it turned out, South African naval presence formed part of a mutual military exercise between Ivory Coast and South Africa. On the other hand, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Senegal and Sierra Leone called for a military intervention and eventually forced Gbagbo out of office. According to Wyss (2014), this was because Abuja (administrative capital of Nigeria), as the main advocate for Western African peacekeeping force, hoped to strengthen the international position of Nigeria. Burkina Faso feared for the sudden and uncontrolled return of the Burkinabe nationals. Furthermore, Senegal saw the economic interests of the Senegalese diaspora in Ivory Coast threatened by Gbagbo. Sierra Leone concerned itself with the promotion of democracy. The Ivorian experience indicated that the AU does not speak with a united voice. In fact, where national interests prevail, supra-nationalism comes to a holt (African Briefing Report, 2011).

The international response was aimed at forcing Gbagbo to hand over power to Ouattara. As such, the international community pursued a range of coordinated, bilateral and multilateral efforts to force Gbagbo to abide by the election results. These efforts came in the form of targeted sanctions (financial freeze and travel ban) against

Gbagbo and his cronies, diplomatic isolation and military action to enforce the electoral results.

5.3.1 Targeted sanctions

As part of a strategy to put pressure on Gbagbo, the UN and the EU imposed sanctions on him and his associates. The UNSC adopted Resolution 1946 in 2010 to renew an arms embargo that has been in effect since 2004 and inflicted financial asset freeze and travel restrictions on Gbagbo's inner circle. These restrictive measures were in place until the political situation remained stalled. In supplementing UN sanctions on Gbagbo and his associates, the EU extended the travel ban list by adding fifty nine other persons who were obstructing the peace process in Ivory Coast and jeopardising the proper outcome of the electoral process (Cook, 2011). However, the EU has lifted the restrictions on some of the entities subject to assets freeze for the purpose of the country's economic recovery. Moreover, remaining entities and individuals under EU sanctions will be lifted in close consultation with government to support the Ivorian economic recovery and the national reconciliation process. A number of multilateral financial institutions have also taken steps to stop the flow of credit and official assistance to Gbagbo's government. This was to remove his ability to maintain the loyalty of the military and civil services by paying their salaries.

5.3.2 Diplomatic isolation

As part of the diplomatic isolation, regional actors (AU and ECOWAS) suspended Ivory Coast's participation in the organisations until Gbagbo could abide by the election results, allowing Ouattara assume state power. This was also welcomed by the UNSC by calling on all stakeholders in the Western African country to respect the outcome of the election (Cook, 2011). Furthermore, the UN General Assembly recognised diplomats sent by Ouattara to be the country's official representatives. Various governments have also isolated Gbagbo by bilaterally dropping recognition of his

administration. Vogl (2011) indicated that France, United Kingdom of Britain (UK), Canada and the EU member states only accepted ambassadors named by Ouattara. Essentially, this came after protesters in his favour occupied the Ivorian embassy in France, Paris taking note of the dismissal of Gbagbo's designated ambassador, and pledging to recognise a team of High-commissioners named by Ouattara. This diplomatic isolation primarily served as non-recognition of the Gbagbo regime.

5.3.3 Military action to enforce Ouattara's victory

In late December 2010 and early January 2011, the Western African regional actor (ECOWAS) sent representatives to deliver a joint ECOWAS ultimatum to Gbagbo, demanding that he concedes power or be forced out militarily. However, ECOWAS' military intervention never materialised. Cook (2011) states that it was not clear as to how ECOWAS' intervention was going to operate particularly with the French and UN forces (The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire-UNOCI) already present on the ground. Arguably, ECOWAS' military option could have had dramatic and unforeseen consequences for Ivory Coast and the region (Mouterdel, 2011). This was because major Gbagbo backers had elucidated that they would respond to any attempt to oust Gbagbo by force of arms, and such an attempt would have sparked war. Furthermore, it was a dangerous alternative because Gbagbo was not hanging by a thin thread as he had well organised military machine and a substantial portion of the population supporting him (Monterdel, 2011). This would have been an unprecedented military intervention given that ECOWAS' military wing, The Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), intervened in 1989-1996 Liberian civil war. Therefore, ECOWAS had capabilities and means to carry out a military intervention.

At a later stage of the conflict, ECOWAS proved to be handicapped to take Ivory Coast out of its debacle. This scenario had created a vacuum that France was willing to fill. In fact, this type of weakness in African organisations is becoming the new vehicles for

external influence. For Zondi (2011), African institutions, particularly ECOWAS, should be adequately prudent to recognise the interests of the world powers in Africa and constructively engage with external actors so as to align their respective interests. To add, then Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga also expressed that African institutions should develop teeth to bite instead of lamenting only. With this in mind, Mbeki's (2011) sentiments concur with those of Zondi and Odinga, that tragic events in Ivory Coast have confirmed the marginalisation of the AU and ECOWAS in their abilities to resolve the most important African challenges. This paves the way for major powers to intervene in resolving the African challenges by using their various capacities to legitimise their actions. They execute this by exhorting the UN to authorise their self-serving interventions. As such, the Ivorian conflict has indicated an urgent need to reinvigorate African institutions in ensuring peace and security in the continent. Ultimately, French Special Forces captured Gbagbo in his presidential residence and handed him over to Allasane Ouattara's backed rebels assembled and armed by France (Ebrahim, 2016).

5.4 France's bilateral relations with the Ivory Coast

Ivory Coast is of a strategic and economic importance to France. In fact, in the post-colonial period, Ivory Coast enjoyed close political and economic relations with France. Economically, Felix Houphouet-Boigny transformed Ivory Coast into an agricultural export power and the financial and services hub of West Africa through a close economic partnership with French interests. Ivory Coast also tied its CFA franc currency to the French franc and later the Euro. According to Melly (2011), following the death of Boigny in 1993, the partnership lost a degree of political momentum. However, French involvement remained profound and privatisation opened new doors to French investors in key sectors. To this end, France is the most significant foreign investor in Ivory Coast. In fact, among forty seven priority countries for French foreign trades, Ivory Coast is a primary trading partner in the franc zone and the fourth largest trading partner in sub-Saharan Africa taking after Nigeria, South Africa and Angola. According to Mbeki (2011), France utilised its privileged place in UNSC to position itself to play a crucial role

in determining the future of Ivory Coast in which it has significant economic interests. He went on arguing that Paris in collaboration with the UN ensured that Ouattara emerged triumphant in the Ivorian conflict. This addressed the national interests of France which are consistent with its Francafrique policies.

In the security front, Ivory Coast and France have always had military bonds. The first Ivorian President Boigny, was one of the closest allies of France. Their military links resulted in the conclusion of a defence agreement between the two countries and in the establishment of a French permanent military base in Abidjan (Piccolino, 2011). Furthermore, this military link resulted in Ivory Coast's traditional reliance on France for its defence. As a result, France's impartiality was neither acceptable nor credible for Gbagbo and his supporters. This was because France's decision not to activate the defence agreements between the two countries amounted to betrayal (Piccolino, 2011). This came after France kept a low diplomatic profile following the escalation of gun battles in Abidjan over the election results.

5.4.1 Paris' relations with Ivory Coast under Gbagbo.

One of the major reasons driving French interventions in Africa is that personal relationship between France and African leaders plays a significant role in enhancing state relations (Moncrief, 2012). As such, if there is any leader who appears to be a threat to French national interests he/she is bound to be a victim of regime change. According to Check (2011) and Moabelo (2016), France has so much at stake in Ivory Coast that any leader who was perceived to be threatening the status quo, as did Gbagbo, was bound to be a victim of regime change masterminded by Paris. Check went on arguing that the determination of Laurent Gbagbo to halt and reverse decades of French hegemony and economic strangulation of Ivory Coast constitutes the single most crucial factor that accounts for conflict in the Western African country. This should be understood within the context that during Gbagbo's term in office, there was a lot of misunderstandings and distrusts between him and Paris. Notably, Gbagbo had sought

to loosen France's control over Ivory Coast. Therefore, he became a dire threat to France's dominance not only in Ivory Coast but in the entire region. This was because his attempts to untie French micro-management of Ivorian economy could easily be replicated by other Western African countries. According to Ebrahim (2016), Gbagbo's series of threats to French influence in Ivory Coast led Paris to allegedly orchestrate five coups against him, all of which failed. However, France eventually dropped a heavy ordinance on his presidential dwelling by means of French Special Forces to apprehend him and his wife. Nevertheless, the former metropolis has denied allegations that the arrest was carried out by the French military backed by UN forces.

The rationale behind Paris' need to neutralise Gbagbo was his determination to relax France's control over transport, cocoa trading, banking, insurance and energy policy in Ivory Coast (Ebrahim, 2016). As the cooperation agreements between France and its former colonies dictate, French companies have a first preference to buy raw materials from its former colonies. However, Gbagbo breached the pact when he awarded a contract to build a bridge in the capital (Abidjan) to China for a cheap price. Within this context, it can be asserted that Paris' call for Gbagbo to relinquish power was bound up with France's commercial interests, especially considering the rising competition with China for influence in Africa. Ira (2011) states that Gbagbo developed relations with Beijing (capital city of China), leading to the waning relations between him and France. Moreover, trade between Ivory Coast and China have increased from 50 million Euros in 2002 to 500 million Euros in 2009. From Ira's standpoint, Paris saw France's eviction by China in Ivory Coast as an intolerable geo-political snub. As such, Gbagbo's ousting was one of France's strategic priorities. According to Check (2016), one of the other contributing factors that waned links between Paris and Gbagbo was his defiance of the terms of the 2003 Linas-Marcoussis Agreement which aimed at restoring confidence and overcoming the crisis in Ivory Coast. In essence, Gbagbo had failed to respect and implement the outcomes of the peace accord. As such, Paris had to take sides in Ivory Coast and insisted on the UN to be deployed in order to protect Oauttara and his supporters in 2011.

Paris' lead role in convincing Gbagbo to concede power infuriated his supporters, who accused France of neo-colonialism. Nevertheless, the majority of the youth welcomed Gbagbo's capture extending their gratitude to Paris for having "liberated them" (Ira, 2011). Furthermore, Ouattara made his visit to Paris as a head of state to personally thank Nicholas Sarkozy and his government for France's intervention. For this reason, Laurent Gbagbo and his camp accused Ouattara of being a foreign stooge in the service of French neo-colonial interests. To them, the 2010-2011 political crisis was "war of second independence" against France and its Western and African allies (Wyss, 2014: 139).

5.4.2 Response to the Ivorian Conflict

In Ivory Coast's political electoral crisis, France deployed its vast diplomatic network at all levels and influenced the international, European and African positions for the recognition of Ouattara and sanctions against Gbagbo (Wyss, 2014). Following Gbagbo's refusal to heed Nicholas Sarkozy and other international powers' call to relinquish power, Paris, together with European and African allies, and the United States of America (USA), pushed a resolution through the UNSC that prolonged French and UN mandates. Initially, Nicholas Sarkozy emphasised Paris' adherence to multilateralism and preferred an "African solution" to the conflict through AU and ECOWAS (Wyss, 2014: 140). As indicated that African peacekeeping institution proved to be handicapped to rescuing Ivorians out of the conflict, Sarkozy's initial preference shifted as he began to prepare the ground for military intervention.

The UNSC adopted Resolution 1975, which gave authority to France's force (Licorne Force) and The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), to utilise all necessary measures to protect civilians and halt the use of heavy weapons against population. The French and UN forces did not limit themselves to protecting civilians, but extended their support to pro-Ouattara forces. Wyss (2014) states that this French role received a lot of criticism from mainly Russia and other African states for having

transcended their mandate by supporting Ouattara's force instead of protecting civilians. In fact, in the words of former South African President Thabo Mbeki, "France's behaviour in the Ivorian conflict was consistent with its Francafrique policies which perpetuate a particular relationship with its former African colonies" (Mbeki, 2011: 4). To add, it can be argued that Paris is inconsistent in its intervention policy because it is dictated by its national strategic interests. For instance, in 2009 Gabonese President Ali Bongo Ondimba proclaimed himself the winner of the elections, but France and the international community raised no concern about the contestation by opposition leader Mba Obame (Popoh, 2011). This is because when African leaders entertain close and privileged relations with Western powers, they are highly favoured to stay in power. Popoh (2011) indicates that French support for Ouattara was an unequivocal response to Gbagbo's diversion from French interests. It is worth noting that there are factors which earned Ouattara support from France and other Western states. These include his credentials as a long-standing economist at the IMF, his amicable relations with Nicolas Sarkozy and his nuptial to a French woman, Dominique Folloroux-Ouattara. According to Moshoeshoe (2016), the marriage of white French women by Francophone African leaders is a trend that has always been encouraged by France during the colonial period. He further states that through this pattern, France still maintains a considerable influence in Francophone Africa through these leaders. Therefore, this indicates some sort of a "state capture" mechanism. Furthermore, France would support any political acts that closely share Western values and interests.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter indicated that tensions in Ivory Coast began to build up after the death of the first Ivorian president Felix Houphouet-Boigny over who will succeed him as the head of state. Due to these tensions, corruption grew and the economy dropped dismally. Social squabbles and instabilities emerged following the concept of *Ivoirite* introduced by Boigny's successors, which was basically aimed at prohibiting prospective politicians such as Ouattara from running as president in elections given their biological background. It was also indicated that Laurent Gbagbo became

president in 2000. However, in 2002 there was an attempt to oust him, and that resulted into a civil war. Because of this, the country was divided into North (rebel controlled) and South (government controlled). Since then, Ivory Coast has suffered from explosive mix of ethnic, religious and land rivalries. The 2005, polls which were supposed to end Gbagbo's term in office, were delayed until 2010 due to logistical challenges and voter eligibility disputes.

In 2010 the Ivorian nationals ultimately went to the polls to elect the new leader. These elections were aimed at setting the country on the road of rapprochement in order to heal Ivorian economic pains. Nevertheless, there were two versions of results with the IEC certifying Ouattara as the victor, and the Constitutional Court declaring Gbagbo the winner. This plunged Ivory Coast into aggressive conflict that saw Ivorian people getting displaced and even killed.

This catastrophic violence did not go unnoticed by the international community because it threatened global efforts to support transition to peace, democratic governance and political stability in Ivory Coast. As such, African regional blocs (ECOWAS and AU), the UN and other foreign powers, particularly France, responded to the crisis. Firstly, this chapter has showed that ECOWAS, together with the AU, the UN and France certified Ouattara's victory as announced by the IEC. Therefore, because Gbagbo refused to relinquish power, ECOWAS and the AU sought to use military force to oust him. However, given the diverging positions of member states, this approach never materialised. This created a vacuum that France was willing to fill. Secondly, the UN took coordinated, bilateral and multilateral efforts to force Gbagbo out of office. It was indicated that these efforts included restrictive measures and diplomatic isolation against Gbagbo and his cohorts. Furthermore, these efforts were also supplemented by the EU and other major European powers.

Given the importance of Ivory Coast to France, Paris could not turn a blind eye to the Ivorian crisis. It was noted that there was a lot of misunderstandings and distrusts between Gbagbo and Paris during his administration. This was because Gbagbo sought to halt and reverse decades of French hegemony. Consequently, this threat led France's special force to capture him and his wife from his presidential palace and handed him over to Ouattara's forces. In addition, Paris' position in the Ivorian crisis was bound up with French commercial interests considering forged relations between Gbagbo and Beijing. This showed that France's behaviour in the Ivory Coast's conflict was consistent with its Francafrique policies, which prolong a particular relationship with its former African colonies. In the final analysis, it is apparent from the above that the primary focus of this study is the post-2007 era. But reference has also been made to critical political developments that date back to the 1960s because history is the laboratory of International Politics (Shai, 2016).

The next chapter provides a post-colonial critique of France's position in the recent CAR conflict.

Chapter six: France's involvement in Africa: CAR case study

6.1 Introduction

Like many African countries facing a series of internal violations, CAR saw itself plunged into a violent coup in 2013. This internal conflict ousted former President François Bozize after ten years in power, and led to the installation of a self-proclaimed President, Michael Djotodia (A leader of the Seleka rebels). Moreover, the crisis left CAR in the midst of a deepening humanitarian and economic crisis aggravated by violence and widespread human rights violations. The legacy of coups and past conflicts in CAR are perceived to be driving the country into its current conflict (Hebert, Dukhan and Debos, 2013). It is worth noting that CAR had only one peaceful transfer of power in 1993 since it gained independence from France in 1960. As such, arms have persisted as key to political success.

As in the case of Ivory Coast, a wide range of actors were deployed in CAR. These included the UN, the AU and the regional actor Economic Community for Central African States (ECCAS). According to Herbert, Dukhan and Debos (2013), regional powers such as Congo-Brazzaville, Chad, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea were also involved in attempts to broker peace, which resulted in the 2013 Libreville agreement that was signed under the auspices of ECCAS. Because CAR is one of the francophone countries, one cannot avoid France's position in the Central African country's conflict. Notably, Paris propped up Bozize in his successful coup in 2003. In fact, French support for Bozize was a major factor in his maintenance of power. Although French troops do not engage the rebels, they intervened in favour of Bozize in 2006 and attacked CAR rebel coalition allowing his government to retake towns captured by rebels (Mupenzi, 2015). However, France acted differently when it did not intervene in CAR in 2013 to stop the Seleka rebels. This is an indication that France was distancing itself significantly from CAR under Bozize.

Given this backdrop, this chapter seeks to provide an overview of the conflict in CAR and France's position in this crisis. It does so by highlighting the root causes of the CAR conflict in 2013. Furthermore, it provides how the international community, including regional actors and other global powers, bilaterally and multilaterally responded to CAR's violent conflict. Lastly, it provides bilateral relations between CAR and its former metropolis, France. In doing so, it also attempts to bring refreshing scholarly perspectives on the reason why France initially distanced itself in 2013 from stopping the Seleka rebels and protecting French citizens in CAR.

6.2 The root causes of the CAR conflict

Coup d'états in independent CAR have been common, have caused political instability which hampered economic and social progress and have largely allowed the 2013 conflict to materialise (Wetzler, 2014). The conflict in CAR was mainly driven by politics of exclusion. This basically denotes that CAR presidency has given favours to specific ethnic groups throughout the Central African country. It is worth noting that CAR is a heterogeneous country, comprising of multiple ethnic groups. Seleka rebels who led the coup in 2013 consist mostly of Muslim members. In addition, religious tension has also sparked the continued conflict in CAR. However, Zounmenou (2014) argues that religion is not at the centre of the conflict. Instead, the conflict was compounded by the political and economic dispensation that Bozize put in place. This is because, the population in large parts of the country felt forsaken by the government in the capital as they lacked basic service provisions such as health care, education and security. According to Ingerstad (2014), these grievances have created breeding ground for recruitment to different rebel groups. Ingerstad further went on elucidating that lack of security by the police and the military resulted in the formation of self-defence militias and rebel groups.

Lack of economic opportunities in the North also sparked the beginning of CAR conflict because this pushed the population to participate in rebels' operations. This

participation is viewed widely by the Northerners as a job opportunity. Ingerstad (2014) claimed that the instabilities in neighbouring Sudan (Darfur) and Chad have influenced the conflict in CAR. This is mainly because individuals from these countries have also joined CAR rebel groups since the beginning of 2000 and the governments of these countries have also had a direct role in the CAR conflict by supporting the Seleka rebels. This means that the Northern part of the country is marginalised. As such, due to the limited territorial reach of state authority and lack of control over border and remote areas, CAR's instability has allowed the country to become a stronghold for ex-soldiers, mercenaries and armed groups from neighbouring countries (Meyer, 2015).

Initially, the Seleka rebels launched a series of attacks on civilians in which the Christian part of the population felt targeted. As a reaction to atrocities committed by the Seleka rebels, the Anti-Balaka militia was formed and vented its anger on Muslim civilians, resulting in ethnic cleansing of the Muslim population in large parts of the country (Ingerstad, 2014). With the Anti-Balaka launching attacks on the Muslim population, it can be argued that religion has clearly taken over what emerged as political instability and absence of credible state institutions in CAR (Zounmenou, 2014). In sum, CAR's security, civilian protection, economic disparities, complex regional conflict and political dispensation are the main sources of CAR's conflict.

6.2.1 Impact of the conflict

The conflict in CAR has devastated a population that is already fragile. The crisis has internally displaced more than 800 000 people and has seen an estimated 100 000 refugees crossing into neighbouring countries. This is because the security situation has worsened, and has become volatile and fragile, especially in the Northern part of the country. The conflict has also caused collapse in basic services. The need for medical care, food security and other basic services has increased. The population is exposed to diseases because of the systematic shortage of medicine. Moreover, the population fight, looting of agricultural inputs, seeds and other sources of livelihoods have resulted

in a significant reduction in agricultural production in CAR (Disaster Needs Analysis, 2014). It should be borne in mind that virtually all the population of CAR depends on the agricultural sector. Arief and Husted (2015) state that since 2013, the flight of the Muslim communities who previously dominated trade networks in much of the country has contributed to economic demise. In a nutshell, the crisis in CAR has caused a humanitarian disaster, provoked the flight of Muslims in Bangui and destroyed an already declining economy (Check, 2014).

6.3 Regional and international response to CAR conflict

To prevent the crisis in CAR, regional and international organisations (ECCAS, AU and UN) played a role in responding to the conflict by mediating peace agreements, deploying forces and influencing the selection of CAR's political leadership. The regional body (ECCAS) has taken the lead in seeking a way out of the CAR crisis. However, no possible lasting solution for CAR would be found with crucial involvement of ECCAS and its member states in terms of stabilising the security situation and reinforcing the CAR's security sector. This is because ECCAS' internal rivalries, divergent interests among regional heads of states and a lack of capacity have undermined some international stabilisation efforts (Arief and Husted, 2015). This came after Chad withdrew its troops from the African-led International Support Mission in the CAR (MISCA) after they were allegedly accused of committing crimes against civilians and helping the Seleka rebels. Initially, Chadian president (Idris Derby) was close to Bozize. Nevertheless, Derby became dissatisfied with Bozize. According to Meyer (2015: 5) Bozize received massive support in 2003 from the Chadian regime when he rebelled against his predecessor's regime (Ange-Felix Patasse). N'Djamena (capital city of Chad) provided refuge, arms and mercenaries for Bozize. However, in 2013 Derby withdrew his confidence in Bozize, opening the way for the Seleka rebels, who toppled him successfully.

ECCAS was in CAR from 2008 to 2013 with the Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in Central African Republic (MICOPAX), which has replaced the multinational force known as *Force Multinationale de l'Afrique Centrale* (FOMAC). From this context, the escalation of the conflict in CAR propelled the AU and the UN to take over from ECCAS. Furthermore, the AU was operating an international support mission (MISCA) from December 2013 to September 2014. Even so, the Multidimensional Integrated Mission of the United Nations for Stabilisation in the Central African Republic (MUNISCA) has been deployed in parallel with the on-going French Operation Sangaris since 2013 (Meyer, 2015).

Following MICOPAX's failure to stabilise the situation and to protect civilians due to insufficient resources, the AU authorised the deployment of MISCA to take over from MICOPAX (Cinq-Mars, 2015). This force was envisaged to consist of over 3000 personnel and would be able to draw from a wider pool of African troops and police contributors (African Union, 2013). Nevertheless, the AU and ECCAS competed over responsibility within MISCA because Chad, which was the main troop contributor to MICOPAX, sought to maintain influence over the AU-led operation (Cinq-Mars, 2015). Within this context, it can be contended that the diverging interests in the regional organisations hinder the collective decision-making that would halt the grave situation in conflicting countries. This is because collective regional engagement was absent in preventive efforts in CAR. Cinq-Mars (2015) states that Chad and Senegal played a negative role by allegedly supporting the Seleka rebellion during the initial stage of the crisis. As a result, regional peacekeeping efforts in CAR were unable to end the crisis, and this led to UN-led mission (MUNISCA).

According to Zifcak (2015), the UNSC has shown its grave concern about the compromised security situation in CAR. However, the preventative actions that it took were too little and too late to halt the human catastrophes that unfolded in CAR. This is mainly because even with their peacekeeping and monitoring mission in CAR, the

violence continued unabated. With the deteriorating situation involving extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearance, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, sexual violence and the mutilation of children, the UNSC adopted Resolution 2127, which allowed the MISCA and French-backed peacekeeping force (Operation Sangaris) to put an end to the violence (Zifcak, 2015). It should be taken into cognisance that Resolution 2127 also imposed restrictive measures in the form of arms embargo, which restricted the sale and supply of arms to CAR. With these efforts from the international community, the conflict still continued to intensify. This escalating conflict in CAR has raised concerns that the international community was slow in its response. In 2014 Navi Pillay (UN High Commissioner for Human Rights) stressed that even though CAR received international attention, that attention is far from commensurate with the need, by comparison with other situations where international interventions have proven largely successful. In fact, the international community seems to have forgotten some of the lessons it learned in Rwanda (Pillay, 2014).

Pillay also stressed that if CAR was not a poor country hidden away in the centre of Africa, the continuing sorry events would have stimulated a much stronger and more dynamic reaction by the outside world. In the same vein, the failure of conflict prevention in CAR may have been mainly because of shared pessimistic views of CAR coupled with the lack of interest in and misunderstanding of the country's internal dynamics (Akasaki, Ballestraz and Sow, 2015). With this in mind, for the international community to have successful conflict prevention in Africa, it should make a considerable effort to comprehend their diverse politics, economics, ethnicities and cultures (Zifcak, 2015). In fact, CAR mattered to international community only because its internal challenges affected the stability of the central African region. As such, the intervention came as prevention to the spill-over effects of the conflict in CAR's neighbouring countries that are deemed to be of greater importance to the Western powers. The conflict in CAR could lead to more criminal activities in the region. According to Craeyvelt (2014), criminal groups that could not operate in CAR anymore because of the conflict could move their operations elsewhere. Moreover, the influx of

refugees into neighbouring countries could destabilise them even further, and trigger migration movement towards Europe.

To prevent this spill-over, the UNSC adopted Resolution 2134 in January 2014, which renewed the UN Integrated Peace building Office in the CAR (BUNICA) for a period of 12 months. Primarily, this resolution sought to provide support for the nascent traditional process, to facilitate conflict prevention and humanitarian assistance, to support the stabilisation of the security situation by advising the security sector governance, to monitor and investigate human rights abuses and to establish appropriate coordination between BINUCA, MISCA and French Operation Sangaris (Zifcak, 2015). However, Resolution 2134 set nothing concrete on the ground besides authorising the deployment of small European Union Force République Centrafricaine (EUFORRCA). Nevertheless, the ethnic cleansing continued with the Anti-balaka attacking the Muslim communities. This, therefore, led to the adoption of Resolution 2149, which provided for the establishment of the UN's MUNISCA (UNSC, 2014). MUNISCA was made up of combination of BUNICA and MISCA which comprised up to 10 000 military personnel, including 240 observers and 1 800 police. Zifcak (2015) asserts that a five-month transfer window allowed the crimes against humanity, war crimes and ethnic cleansing to continue without cease. This was because MUNISCA was supposed to assume responsibility from MISCA and BUNICA after five months (April-September 2014) of its formation. Arguably, the arrival of the UN peacekeeping force to deal with the catastrophic situation in CAR was too late as tens of thousands of people were injured, displaced and killed. Additionally, the growing conflict in CAR proved that the UN's response is insignificant at all levels. According to Cinq-Mars (2015), peace building and diplomacy from the international community were inadequate as they lacked the capacity to halt armed violence against civilians. This was partly because the UN was also faced with crises in Syria, Ukraine and Iraq in 2013. Therefore, CAR crisis was not a priority until the conflict worsened.

Despite the obvious warnings of the threat of atrocities due to a growing armed conflict, the international community struggled in its ability to translate early warning into timely and effective response (Cinq-Mars, 2015). This means that the UN's failure to confront the conflict at its emerging stage serves as an impediment to a decisive response to CAR's situation. This is because by the time it intervened, the conflict had already reached a turning point. Furthermore, the UN-led mission (MUNISCA) also suffers from shortcomings experienced by ECCAS' MICOPAX and AU's MISCA, which are personnel and logistical. Furthermore, the troops have been implicated in a number of cases of sexual abuses and exploitation.

6.4 France's position in the CAR conflict

The continued political, economic and military presence of France in CAR meant that the France was in a better position to intervene in Central African country than any other major power. Economically, France remains the leading foreign investor in CAR. Despite the difficult situation in CAR, France formed partnerships in manufacturing, business services and commerce and banking services. Among French businesses that are present in CAR include; Castel (beverage and sugar), Total (petroleum products) and CFAO (auto mobile distribution). Moreover, France remains the most significant donor in CAR. However, in terms of trade relations, France is CAR's third largest trading partner after Belgium-Luxembourg and China. In this way, it may be seen that France does not have major economic interests in CAR. It is, therefore, unlikely that France's intervention in CAR was driven by any major economic interests. Nevertheless, given CAR's economic potentials, France's economic interests might become more substantial (Craeyvelt, 2014). This should be understood within the context that at the time of CAR's conflict, France might not have had any strategic interests there. However, the strategic importance of African countries to France is not static because it changes with circumstances in time (Moshoeshoe, 2016). On the contrary, Villan (2015) argues that CAR has lost a lot of importance for France. This is because political changes in African states have brought to power new generations of the elite that are less willing to nourish former colonial ties. Ousted CAR President François Bozize is an

example of these African elite who have forged new partnerships. A case in point is China, given that it is a military co-operator and a strong political and economic player in CAR. In fact, approximately forty military officers go to China for training annually, and fifteen are sent to France (O'Connor, 2013). Furthermore, infrastructure and cultural projects by China in CAR have proven the deepening relationship under Bozize. As a result, the Chinese have undoubtedly discovered the CAR's economic potential and with the French influence in decline, the Chinese positioned themselves as CAR's primary benefactor in return for ample access to CAR's gold, iron and diamonds. In the same vein, Marine (2014) posits that France had only minor interests in CAR even if the country has numerous valuable resources. Therefore, French intervention would risk the nation's reputation, the lives of its soldiers and lots of money just in order to save another, country which is not even a close ally. In addition, Hollande stated that France and CAR had a common past. In this sense, Marine (2014) avers that the behaviour of the state is driven by its self-interests more than the will to assist its friends or allies.

When the crisis in CAR broke out, Bozize called on the international community, especially France to intervene in his favour to stop the Seleka rebels. However, the French refused to do so. Notably, Bozize relied on French support to maintain power in CAR. As much as French troops do not engage rebels on the ground, in 2006 and 2007 they launched air strikes and ground attacks on rebel militias to erode their threatened takeover of CAR's capital city Bangui and overthrow of the government (O'Connor, 2013). Nevertheless, Paris refused to back him against the Seleka rebels when he made his call for assistance from the major powers. It was only South Africa which heeded Bozize's call and prolonged its military deployment in CAR without consulting ECCAS. As a result, fourteen South African National Defence Force (SANDF) soldiers were killed by the Seleka rebels. It is worth noting that Bozize's developed relations with South Africa also contributed to Paris' disinterest in his administration in CAR (Mabizela, 2016; Agger, 2014). Herbert, Dukhan and Debos (2013) state that South Africa increasingly became involved in CAR in 2007 when it deployed military contingent and entered into bilateral agreement and provided training and personal protection to

Bozize. In fact, this was seen as a South African move to counter French military influence in the Francophone region, to protect its mining companies which were contracted under Bozize's government and to strengthen its support for "African solutions to the African problems" strategy (Herbert, Dukhan and Debos, 2013).

Following Paris' refusal to intervene in his favour, Bozize claimed that the French were behind the crisis because of the oil exploration contract to the Chinese corporations. According to O'Connor (2013), Bozize went on claiming that "before giving oil to the Chinese, I met with French oil company (Total) in Paris and told them to take the oil. However, nothing happened and I gave oil to the Chinese and it became a problem". With this in mind, it can be concluded that Paris' refusal to intervene in favour of Bozize may have primarily been driven by his developed economic, political and security ties with China. This should be soon within the context that China has become the West's nightmare because of the extent to which they, especially the French in the Francophone Africa, were losing influence to Beijing. Moreover, Paris' ultimate intervention may have been driven by France's aim to reassert control over its former resource rich-colony to counter China's growing economic and diplomatic influence (O'Connor, 2013).

In December 2013, the UNSC adopted a resolution which authorised the deployment of French force to take all necessary measures to protect civilians. Consequently, France deployed 1 600 troops under the auspices of Operation Sangaris. The French force operated alongside the AU-led MISCA, and the tactics employed by these peacekeeping forces often worsened inter-communal violence in CAR (Nadin, 2014). This was because they focused on disarming the Seleka rebels which gave the Anti-balaka military superiority.

Beardsley (2013) indicates that France had no choice but to intervene in CAR. This is because refusal to so would have been a big humiliation for Chad, a country of a strategic importance to France. It is worth noting that Chad has been involved in the domestic politics of CAR mainly for security and economic reasons, which led the former to be considered as a backyard of the latter. According to Douglas-Bowers (2015), Chad is drilling oil from the border region, which is a shared oilfield with CAR, and Chad has high interest in keeping tight control over the area. As such, N'Djamena seeks to keep a close eye on CAR. Furthermore, the relationship between France and Chad is defined by joint operation in Mali. As a result, Paris feared that bandits and militants operating in CAR will end up destabilising neighbouring countries, particularly Chad where it has long-term strategic interests. Additionally, another driving force behind Paris' intervention in CAR was to circumvent a replication of the Rwandan situation where major killings occurred while French troops stood by (Georgian, 2013).

The reasons given about why France intervened in CAR may serve as a prima facie evidence suggesting that Paris seeks to restructure its power in Africa in order to secure its sphere of influence. According to Safwan (2014), the fact that France still maintains military bases in countries such as Chad, Mali, Ivory Coast and CAR proves that Paris continues to exert influence on its former colonies. Before deploying 1,600 French troops, France already had 400 troops on the ground in CAR. Safwan went on arguing that intervention in CAR offers France an opportunity to increase its influence over its former colony and to protect other neighbouring former colonies from possible spill-over of violence. In light of this, France's intervention in CAR may not have been for humanitarian purposes, but to exert neo-colonial influence. However, it should be recognised that France's intervention was widely welcomed by the local population because no other country was willing to intervene given the fact that CAR has nothing to offer them. This shows the extent to which Africans are banking their hopes on France. For instance, where there is destruction and France does not intervene, demonstrations on the streets emerge, questioning why France is not helping. From this perspective, it can be argued that France's role as a gendarme of Africa still continues unabated.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has indicated that the 2013 violent coup in CAR was defined by the legacy of coups and past conflicts. Contextually, it has been established that CAR only had one peaceful handover of power in 1993 since independence. It was also argued that the conflict was caused by political exclusions. Civilians in most parts of the country felt abandoned because of lack of basic service provisions. The rare economic opportunities in the North sparked the beginning of CAR's conflict as it pushed population to participate in rebel operations, widely seen as a job opportunity. As the series of attacks by the Seleka rebels continued, Christians felt targeted. As such, the Anti-balaka (Christian dominated) was formed and launched attacks on the Muslim population. In this context, it can be concluded that from what emerged, CAR's conflict turned into a religious fight because of political instability and the absence of credible state institutions. It was also shown that the violence in CAR devastated the already fragile population. The crisis left over 800 000 people displaced, who fled to neighbouring countries. Moreover, the conflict caused the need for medical care, food security and other basic services to increase.

The role played by ECCAS, the AU, the UN and France in preventing the crisis was also discussed. It was indicated that ECCAS' peacekeeping efforts failed because of internal rivalries and divergent interests among regional heads of state. Following ECCAS's failure to resolve the conflict, the AU and UN took over. The continental body, the AU authorised the deployment of its support mission (MISCA). However, the AU's efforts also failed to bring CAR out of its crisis. This is because collective regional engagement was absent in preventive efforts in CAR. This led to the UN-led mission (MUNISCA). The UNSC initially adopted Resolution 2127, which authorised the AU-led mission MISCA and the French Operation Sangaris to put an end to the violence. As the conflict continued, the UNSC adopted Resolution 2134, which sought to provide support for the promising traditional process in order to facilitate conflict prevention and humanitarian assistance; to support the stabilisation of the security situation by advising the security sector governance; to monitor and investigate human rights abuses and to establish

appropriate coordination between BINUCA, MISCA and French Operation Sangaris. Nevertheless, this resolution set nothing concrete in place besides authorising the deployment of small European troops (EUFORRCA). As such, the conflict continued to escalate with the Anti-balaka attacking the Muslim population. This led the UNSC to adopt Resolution 2149, which authorised the establishment of the UN-led mission (MUNISCA). Despite the UN's serious concern and efforts in CAR, the preventative actions it took were too late because tens of thousands of people were already injured, displaced and killed. It was also argued that the UN's efforts were insufficient because they lacked the capacity to halt violence against the population. Furthermore, the UN-led mission MUNISCA suffered from logistical and personnel shortcomings experienced by ECCAS's MICOPAX and the AU's MISCA.

In this chapter, it was also highlighted that because of the political, economic and military presence in CAR, France was destined to intervene in the Central African country than any other major power. However, at the initial stage of the crisis, Paris did not heed Bozize's call to intervene and stop the Seleka rebels. It was argued that this might have been driven in part by Bozize's reluctance to nourish ties with the former metropolis. CAR and Bozize's regime in particular, had lost a lot of importance for France. Ultimately, Paris intervened and focused on disarming the Seleka rebels, and this provided the Anti-balaka a military superiority. Thus, this worsened inter-communal violence in CAR.

It was also indicated that there are factors that defined France's intervention in CAR either than humanitarian. Firstly, Paris' position in CAR was fuelled by its determination to restructure its power in Africa and secure its sphere of influence. Notably, China had positioned itself as a military co-operator and a strong political and economic player in CAR. As such, CAR became the focus of an effort by Paris to resuscitate its influence in Africa where its former clout had been challenged by the growing domination of the Chinese. Secondly, the driving force behind France's intervention was to avoid what

happened in the 1994 Rwandan genocide while French troops stood by. Thirdly, Paris intervened to circumvent a huge humiliation for Chad; a country of a strategic importance for France. This is because Chad maintains high stakes in CAR and is, therefore, considered as a "backyard". Lastly, France went to CAR to prevent a spill-over of the conflict, given the fact that rebels operating in CAR would end up destabilising neighbouring countries which are deemed too essential to France.

The next chapter presents the general conclusions and sums up the findings.

Chapter seven: General Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

From the post-colonial perspective, this study sought to analyse France's foreign policy towards Africa. It used Ivory Coast and CAR as case studies to determine trends and patterns of France's engagement with African countries. Furthermore, these two cases were chosen given their recent conflicts where French intervention came under scrutiny in terms of whether or not it is proceeding with its colonial status of paternalism towards the continent.

7.2 Summary of findings

7.2.1 Key drivers of France's foreign policy towards Africa

This research found that the foreign policy of France towards Africa is determined by a number of factors. These include cooperation agreements which represented France's close relations with the continent especially its ex-colonies. Basically, the agreements are within the cycles of economy, politics, diplomacy, security, defence and culture. Based on this premise, it was discovered that France supporting corrupt and autocratic regimes and financing political parties covertly compromise and destroy the image of France-African relations. In line with the general perspectives of the Post-Colonial theory, the researcher found that these accords display disparities and continuation of France's involvement in Africa. This is because France continues to micro-manage the continent economically, diplomatically and politically.

7.2.2 Changes and/or continuities of France's foreign policy towards its former African colonies, especially CAR and Ivory Coast

The researcher also learnt that after 1994, Paris revisited its foreign African policy given the pressure of the evolution of the international environment. This shift came in the form of repatriation of the majority of its troops in Africa, closing some of the military

bases, redirecting its policy towards multilateralism and tying its economic assistance with democratic and human rights promotion. As a result, some observers argued that France was disengaging from Africa. However, the study found that regardless of France reshaping its African policy, Francafrique persisted because the African and French elite invested significantly in French-African relations. As such, special relations remain.

7.2.3 The geo-economic and the geo-political considerations of France's foreign policy towards CAR and Ivory Coast

This research found that privatisation paved a way for French investors in strategic sectors. To this end, France remains a significant foreign investor in Ivory Coast and the Western African country continues to be a major trading partner in the franc zone for France. This indicates that geo-economic considerations determine France's engagement with Ivory Coast. It was also shown that Ivory Coast and France have always enjoyed bilateral military links and this resulted in the establishment of defence agreements. Additionally, the French and Ivory Coast political elite have enjoyed good relations for as long as they served French interests. Failure to so by the Francophone African elite, a regime change is likely to happen. Based on this premise, this study showed that Gbagbo's ties with Paris were compromised given his determination to halt and reverse years of French dominance in Ivory Coast and the entire region.

This study has further indicated that France does not have significant economic interests in CAR even though it has several crucial resources. As such, France's involvement in CAR's domestic violence would risk the lives of its troops, lots of money and its nation's reputation. Nonetheless, France intervened given that it sought to counter new Eastern partners' growing economic and diplomatic influence and to prevent a spill-over of the conflict into neighbouring countries deemed to be important.

7.2.4 To what extent are the Presidencies of Nicholas Sarkozy and François Hollande influencing France's foreign policy towards CAR and Ivory Coast?

It was also discovered that since the president is the main determinant of foreign policy, Nicholas Sarkozy called for equality, transparency and accountability in his African policy. Nonetheless, the researcher argued that Sarkozy's prioritisation of links with traditional African partners with questionable human rights and governance record compromised his policy ambitions. Moreover, his pursued immigration policy betrayed his discourse on equal partnership. Therefore, it was argued that Sarkozy's policy represented continuity rather than change. Similarly, François Hollande also aimed at making a distinct break from policy priorities of Francafrique. With this in mind, the researcher learnt that Hollande had almost no experience of sub-Saharan Africa; consequently, he was in a good position to implement the elements of the reform agenda. Nevertheless, it was argued that given the coincidence of his entry in the Élysée Palace and the Malian crisis, Hollande reversed his low key image and actively intervened in Mali. This indicated that continuity in French African policy is still a crucial issue.

7.2.5 How does the foreign policy of France towards CAR and Ivory Coast converge or diverge?

This research indicated that Ivory Coast plunged into aggressive conflict that saw citizens being killed and displaced. This conflict was caused by the 2010 election results where both Laurent Gbagbo and Allasane Ouattara were declared as victors. Paris responded to the crisis given the importance of Ivory Coast to France. It was also discovered that French military advanced to the presidential palace in Ivory Coast and captured Gbagbo and his wife and handed him over to Ouattara's forces. This is because during Gbagbo's administration, there was a lot of mistrust and misunderstanding between him and Paris. Furthermore, Gbagbo wanted to combat and reverse decades of French hegemony. Consequently, France's position in the Ivory Coast debacle was bound up with its commercial interests, that is, to a certain degree.

This research also showed that CAR experienced a *coup d'etat* in 2013, which was defined by the legacy of coups and past conflicts. Moreover, the conflict was mainly caused by political exclusions whereby citizens in most parts of the country felt abandoned due to lack of basic service provisions. Because of economic, political and military presence in CAR, France was fated to intervene than any other major power. It was indicated that France refused to intervene in favour of François Bozize to stop the Seleka rebels given the reluctance of Bozize to nourish relations with France. It was also found that China has become a strong political and economic player in CAR. As a result, France's position in CAR was also fuelled by its determination to restructure its power in Africa and to preserve its sphere of influence. Additionally, Paris sought to circumvent the spill-over of the conflict to neighbouring countries that are deemed too crucial for France.

In the final analysis, this research found that Africa remains a key strategic focus for France, and a number of agreements between Paris and the continent continue to tie them together. As such, the heavy dependence on France by Africa, especially its former colonies, represents French colonial status of *gendarme*.

7.3 Implications for theory and practice

The findings of this study make a meaningful contribution in International Politics, especially on France's foreign policy towards Africa. To add, the significance of this study indicates France's relations with individual African states and how Paris engages with them at a practical level. The use of Post-colonial theory also helped in understanding France-African relations. It also shifted a way of thinking from the traditional and state-centric theories of International Politics. As such, Post-colonial theory has been seen as a framework that rebrands the knowledge of reality about France's engagement with its former colonies.

7.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings summed up above, this study recommends that France and Africa should reform their cooperation agreements. This is because these accords strangle most African economies since they show inequality in France-African relations and perpetuate France's interference in the domestic affairs of Africa. As such, it is suggested that these relations be based on equality and transparency. Moreover, Africa should assume the responsibility of addressing its challenges. This will combat France's colonial status as a *gendarme* of the continent.

The gap between rhetoric and practice should also be bridged in France's foreign policy towards Africa. This must be understood within the context that Francafrique continues to persist even though French presidents have reiterated that Paris would do away with unpopular African relations. Therefore, consistency should serve as a crucial element in France's foreign policy towards Africa and offer just assistance without maintaining its hegemonic foothold in the continent. This might automatically make many African states adhere to democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law. Additionally, African leaders serve the interests of ordinary Africans instead of advancing and preserving French interests in the continent. In the same vein, this will lead to the decrease in rebellions against African leaders as a result of political and economic exclusions.

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Annexure 1: List of Interviewees

Check, A. Research Specialist, Human Science Research Council, Pretoria, 26 July

2016.

Mabizela, D. Lecturer, University of Limpopo, Sovenga, 15 August 2016.

Moabelo, Z. Scholar of International Relations, University of Limpopo, Sovenga, 24

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Moshoeshoe, M. Lecturer, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 12 April
2016.

Riba, I. Scholar of Political Science, University of Limpopo, Sovenga, 29 April 2016.

Annexure 2: Research interview guide

My name is Mmapitsi Grateful Raphala. I am a Master of Arts (International Politics) student at the University of Limpopo, Turfloop Campus. I am carrying out a research under the topic: **A critique of the foreign policy of France towards Africa: case studies of Central African Republic (CAR) and Ivory Coast, 2007-2014**. My work is purely academic and there will be no financial benefits for the researcher after the completion of this study. Please explain your answers to the questions asked in detail.

1. Interview details

i.   Name (optional)……………………………..
ii.   Date…………………………………………
iii.   Place………………………………………..
iv.   Name of Institution/Union/organisation………

2. Research questions

2.1 What informs the French foreign policy towards Africa?

2.2 Do you think former President Nicholas Sarkozy's foreign policy towards Africa is a continuation of his predecessor Jacques Chirac?

2.3 Are there any (dis)continuities in France foreign policy towards Africa under President François Hollande?

2.4 Is France's African policy behaviour a driving force behind the intractable conflicts in Francophone Africa?

2.5 Do you think it will ever be possible for France to disengage itself from Africa?

2.6 Do you think without Africa, France would be weak in the international system?

2.7 Do you think the colonial pact between France and its former colonies is holding francophone Africa backwards in terms of sustainable development?

2.8 What are the differences and/ or similarities (if there is any) of the French foreign policy towards CAR and Ivory Coast?

2.9 Do you think France's intervention had any geo-economic interests in CAR and

Ivory Coast's recent conflicts?

2.10   Without France's unilateral military intervention and its foreign policy objectives towards Africa, do you think CAR and Ivory Coast would have had different results from their intra-state conflicts? Briefly explain.

Annexure 3: Letter of consent

I_____ consent to participation in the study titled: **A Critique of the Foreign Policy of France towards Africa: Case Studies of Central African Republic and Ivory Coast, 2007-2014.**

I understand that participation in this study is voluntary. I may choose not to participate and may withdraw my consent to participate at any time. I will not be penalised in any way should I decide not to participate or to withdraw from this study. I will be asked to answer questions on France's foreign policy towards Africa; particularly CAR and Ivory Coast.

I therefore, consent to participate in this study.

Signatures

Participant_____   **Date**____/___/_____

Witness_____   **Date**____/___/_____

Researcher_____   **Date**____/___/_____

Annexure 4: Ethical clearance certificate

University of Limpopo
Department of Research Administration and Development
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 2212, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email:noko.monene@ul.ac.za

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TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS
COMMITTEE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

MEETING: 05 November 2015

PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/184/2015: PG

PROJECT:

Title: A critique of the foreign policy of France towards Africa: Case
                     Studies of Central African Republic and Ivory Coast, 2007-2014
Researcher: Mr MG Raphala
Supervisor: Mr KB Shai
Co-Supervisor: Mr M Vunza
Department: Cultural and Political Studies
School: Social Sciences
Degree: Masters in International Politics

PROF TAB MASHEGO
CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics
Council, Registration Number: **REC-0310111-031**

Note:
i)   Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the
       researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee.
ii)   The budget for the research will be considered separately from the protocol.
       PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

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