



The Influence of post-World War II Decolonization Efforts on the Ideological Relationship and Identity Politics between Former Colonies and their ex-Colonizers

Anais Magner

Master's student, International Relations Department, Tsinghua University

Abstract

Post-World War II decolonization had profound effects on the ideological relationships and identity politics between former colonies and their ex-colonizers, with a focus on British and French empires. By analyzing the decolonization processes in Africa and Oceania, this study examines the divergent approaches of these two colonial powers—Britain's pragmatic and gradual decolonization versus France's resistance and cultural assimilation. Through postcolonial theory and identity politics, the research highlights how these strategies shaped national identities, political systems, and ongoing socio-economic challenges in former colonies. The legacies of colonial rule, including artificial borders, economic dependency, and cultural suppression, continue to influence political dynamics in these regions. The continued relevance of these colonial legacies underscores the importance of fostering inclusive national identities and recognizing Indigenous perspectives.

Keywords: Postcolonial theory, decolonization, identity politics, British Empire, French Empire, colonial legacies.

Introduction

The period of decolonization that unfolded in the wake of World War II stands as a pivotal moment in global history, reshaping the political, social, and economic landscapes of both the former colonies and their colonizers. From 1945 to 1975, we witnessed the independence of over 80 countries from European colonial powers, heralding a dramatic shift in global power dynamics.¹ This research paper delves into the profound influence of post-World War II decolonization efforts on the ideological relationship and identity politics between former colonies and their ex-colonizers. By scrutinizing the decolonization experiences of the British and French in Africa and Oceania, this study aims to unravel the unique and shared challenges these regions confronted, the strategies adopted by colonial powers, and the lasting impacts on national identity and socio-political structures.

The decision to focus on the British and French empires is a deliberate choice, given their extensive colonial histories and their starkly contrasting approaches to decolonization. The British Empire, renowned for its pragmatic and often gradual approach, starkly contrasts the French Empire's initial resistance and emphasis on cultural assimilation through the *mission civilisatrice*. These divergent strategies have profoundly imprinted former colonies' post-colonial identities and ideologies.² By examining these two empires, we can gain deeper insights into how diverse colonial policies molded the formation of national identities, influenced socio-political dynamics, and left lasting legacies that continue to shape former colonies today.

English Colonisation

British colonization gained momentum in the late 19th century during the Scramble for Africa, characterized by diverse administrative practices and policies.³ These were designed to exploit the continent's resources and integrate its territories into the Europe-dominated global economic system. From establishing settler colonies in Southern Africa to implementing indirect rule in West Africa, the British colonial administration strived to maintain control through economic dominance and sociopolitical manipulation.⁴

In Oceania, British colonization followed a different pattern, marked by the establishment of penal colonies in Australia in 1788 and settler colonies in New Zealand in 1840.⁵ The Indigenous Māori population in New Zealand, like many other Indigenous peoples in Oceania, faced significant disruptions to their traditional ways of life, leading to disease outbreaks, lack of access to fresh water and food sources, homelessness, and violent tribe-on-tribe wars for the remaining resources and land. This, unfortunately, led to an estimated population drop from about 100,000 in 1769 to around 40,000 by the late 19th century.⁶ The colonization process in Oceania was often brutal, leading to lasting social and cultural impacts on indigenous communities.

¹ United Nations. "About Decolonization." United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. <https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/about>.

² Darwin, John. 1988. *Britain and Decolonisation: The Retreat from Empire in the Post-War World*. Palgrave Macmillan.; Betts, Raymond F. 1991. *France and Decolonisation, 1900-1960*. Palgrave Macmillan.

³ Hyam, Ronald. 2006. *Britain's Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonisation, 1918-1968*. Cambridge University Press.

⁴ Darwin, John. 1988. *Britain and Decolonisation: The Retreat from Empire in the Post-War World*. Palgrave Macmillan.

⁵ Reynolds, Henry. 1987. *The Law of the Land*. Penguin Books.; Orange, Claudia. 1987. *The Treaty of Waitangi*. Bridget Williams Books.

⁶ Pool, Ian. 1991. *Te Iwi Maori: A New Zealand Population, Past, Present & Projected*. Auckland University Press.

French Colonisation

French colonization was driven by *mission civilisatrice*, or civilizing mission, which aimed to assimilate African societies into French culture and political systems.⁷ French colonial policies were more centralized and uniform compared to the British approach, with a strong emphasis on direct administration.⁸ Notable colonies included Algeria, Senegal, and the Ivory Coast. Algeria, in particular, was seen as an integral part of France, leading to a prolonged and violent struggle for independence that lasted from 1954 to 1962, resulting in over a million casualties.⁹

French colonization in Oceania, particularly in territories like New Caledonia and French Polynesia, was also characterized by similar efforts to assimilate Indigenous populations into French culture.¹⁰ Establishing settler colonies and exploiting natural resources were central to French colonial strategies. Unlike the British, France has maintained a significant presence in Oceania, with several territories still under French control. New Caledonia and French Polynesia, for instance, remain French territories to this day. Despite movements for greater autonomy and independence, such as the *Matignon Agreements of 1988* and the *Nouméa Accord of 1998* in New Caledonia, France continues to exert considerable influence over these territories.¹¹

Theory Framework

This paper utilizes postcolonial theory as a primary lens to examine the decolonization processes and their impacts. Postcolonial theory focuses on colonialism's legacy and influence on former colonies, particularly regarding identity, power dynamics, and cultural hybridity. The theory posits that colonialism has lasting impacts on former colonies' cultural and political structures, shaping their post-independence trajectories and continuing to influence their interactions with former colonizers.¹²

Identity politics is another crucial framework employed in this study. Identity politics examines how various social and political identities—such as race, ethnicity, and nationality—are constructed and mobilized within political contexts.¹³ In the post-colonial setting, identity politics becomes particularly relevant as newly independent states navigate the process of nation-building and the redefinition of their national identities. This involves addressing the legacies of colonial rule, which often imposed arbitrary borders and shoehorned diverse groups within single national entities, leading to complex socio-political dynamics.

By integrating post-colonial theory with identity politics, this paper will analyze how decolonization has influenced the ideological relationships between former colonies and their ex-colonizers, and how these processes have shaped identity politics within the newly independent states. This dual theoretical approach provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the multifaceted impacts of decolonization.

British Decolonization Post World War II

Following World War II, the British Empire faced immense pressure to decolonize, driven by economic constraints, international pressure from organizations like the United

⁷ Betts, Raymond F. 1991. *France and Decolonisation, 1900-1960*. Palgrave Macmillan.

⁸ Thomas, Martin. 2005. *The French Empire Between the Wars: Imperialism, Politics and Society*. Manchester University Press.

⁹ Evans, Martin. 2012. *Algeria: France's Undeclared War*. Oxford University Press.

¹⁰ Aldrich, Robert. 1993. *France and the South Pacific Since 1940*. University of Hawaii Press.

¹¹ Chappell, David. 2013. *The Kanak Awakening: The Rise of Nationalism in New Caledonia*. University of Hawaii Press.

¹² Loomba, Ania. 2015. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. Routledge.

¹³ Appiah, Kwame Anthony. 2005. *The Ethics of Identity*. Princeton University Press.

Nations, and the rising tide of nationalist movements within the colonies.¹⁴ The British government adopted a pragmatic approach to decolonization to ensure a gradual and controlled transition to independence. This approach involved negotiations with colonial leaders, constitutional reforms, and establishing democratic institutions in the colonies. The Labour government, under Clement Attlee (1945-1951), played a crucial role in initiating decolonization, recognizing the unsustainable nature of maintaining the empire in the post-war context.¹⁵

A key aspect of British decolonization was the creation and evolution of the Commonwealth of Nations, a political association of former British colonies. Established formally in 1949, the Commonwealth aims to maintain a sense of unity and cooperation among member states, promoting democratic values, economic development, and cultural exchange.¹⁶ The Commonwealth has influenced the identity of former colonies by providing a platform for continued engagement with the British Crown and fostering a shared heritage. For Britain, the Commonwealth represents a legacy of the empire and a symbol of continued influence and diplomatic relations with former colonies.

Africa

Africa's decolonization process was unique due to the continent's diverse ethnic, cultural, and linguistic landscape. Like other regions, African colonies experienced a surge in nationalist movements demanding independence and self-determination. The process was marked by varying degrees of resistance and violence, influenced by the specific colonial policies and local contexts. For example, the Mau Mau Uprising in Kenya (1952-1960) was a significant anti-colonial movement highlighting violent resistance to British rule.¹⁷

The emergence of new political leaders, such as Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana and Jomo Kenyatta in Kenya, signaled a shift towards African self-governance.¹⁸ These leaders often had to navigate the legacy of colonial administrative structures and socio-economic inequalities. The establishment of new political institutions aimed at fostering democracy and stability, though internal conflicts and power struggles frequently challenged these efforts. For instance, Ghana, the first African country to gain independence in 1957, quickly became a model for other African nations seeking self-rule.¹⁹

The formation of new national identities was a central aspect of Africa's decolonization. Colonial rule had often suppressed indigenous cultures and languages, leading to a revival of cultural pride and heritage in the post-independence period. Countries like Nigeria and Kenya undertook efforts to promote national unity amidst ethnic diversity, although this process was fraught with challenges.²⁰ Nigeria, for example, declared independence in 1960, but its diverse ethnic composition led to tensions that eventually resulted in the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970).²¹

The enduring effects of British colonization in Africa are evident in the socio-political and economic structures of the post-colonial states. Issues such as ethnic tensions, economic

¹⁴ Hyam, Ronald. 2006. *Britain's Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonisation, 1918-1968*. Cambridge University Press.

¹⁵ Darwin, John. 1988. *Britain and Decolonisation: The Retreat from Empire in the Post-War World*. Palgrave Macmillan

¹⁶ McIntyre, W. David. 1977. *The Commonwealth of Nations: Origins and Impact, 1869-1971*. University of Minnesota Press.

¹⁷ Elkins, Caroline. 2005. *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya*. Henry Holt and Co.

¹⁸ Cooper, Frederick. 2002. *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present*. Cambridge University Press.

¹⁹ Nkrumah, Kwame. 1971. *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah*. International Publishers.

²⁰ Osaghae, Eghosa E. 1998. *Crippled Giant: Nigeria Since Independence*. Indiana University Press. ; Elkins, Caroline. 2005. *Britain's Gulag in Kenya*. Henry Holt and Co.

²¹ Osaghae, Eghosa E. 1998. *Crippled Giant: Nigeria Since Independence*. Indiana University Press.

dependency, and the legacy of colonial borders continue to affect these countries. Additionally, the economic focus on cash crops and resource extraction established during colonial rule has persisted, impacting economic development and diversification efforts. In Kenya, the post-independence period saw significant land reforms aimed at redistributing land from colonial settlers to Indigenous Kenyans.²² However, these efforts were met with varying degrees of success and controversy.

Oceania

Unlike Africa, Oceania's decolonization involved smaller, often island nations with distinct indigenous populations. Nevertheless, similar to other regions, these nations experienced nationalist movements and demands for self-determination. The process was generally less violent compared to Africa, with a greater emphasis on negotiations and constitutional reforms.²³ For example, Samoa became the first Polynesian nation to gain independence in 1962, through constitutional negotiations with New Zealand, culminating in a Compact of Free Association that allowed for a continuing cooperative relationship. Similarly, Fiji's independence in 1970 was achieved through a series of negotiations between local leaders and Britain, focusing on establishing a democratic framework that balanced indigenous Fijian interests with those of the Indo-Fijian population. Moreover, Papua New Guinea's transition to independence in 1975 involved extensive constitutional reforms led by Australia to ensure the country was politically and administratively prepared for sovereignty, avoiding the violent upheavals seen in other regions.²⁴

In Australia and New Zealand, the decolonization process was distinct, involving a gradual shift towards full sovereignty within the framework of the British Commonwealth. Australia and New Zealand gained legislative independence with the Australia Act in 1986 and the New Zealand Constitution Act in the same year, achieving complete legislative independence.²⁵ Both countries experienced significant European settlements, resulting in large populations of European descent that have profoundly influenced their identity politics. As of the latest census data, around 70% of Australia's population identifies as being of European descent, while in New Zealand, approximately 74% identify as European descendants.²⁶ This demographic shift led to complex dynamics between the European settlers and the indigenous populations—the Māori of New Zealand and the Aboriginal Australians—shaping the socio-political landscape and the ongoing discourse around reconciliation and indigenous rights.

The decolonization process led to the establishment of new political systems and institutions. Countries like Fiji and Papua New Guinea transitioned to independence with new constitutions that sought to balance traditional governance structures with modern democratic principles. However, integrating Indigenous governance systems into the new political frameworks posed challenges, particularly regarding representation and political participation. For instance, Papua New Guinea's constitution, adopted in 1975, aimed to incorporate

²² Elkins, Caroline. 2005. *Britain's Gulag in Kenya*. Henry Holt and Co.

²³ Denoon, Donald. 1983. *Settler Capitalism: The Dynamics of Dependent Development in the Southern Hemisphere*. Clarendon Press.

²⁴ Davidson, J. W. 1967. *Samoa mo Samoa: The Emergence of the Independent State of Western Samoa*. Oxford University Press. ; Firth, Stewart, and Jon Fraenkel. 2009. *The Fiji Islands: Towards a United Future*. ANU E Press. ; Moore, Clive. 2003. *New Guinea: Crossing Boundaries and History*. University of Hawaii Press.

²⁵ Adams, David. 1992. *Australian Colonies: A History of Colonial Australia from 1788 to 1901*. Viking. ; Orange, Claudia. 1987. *The Treaty of Waitangi*. Bridget Williams Books.

²⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2016. "2016 Census QuickStats." <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2016>. ; Statistics New Zealand. 2018. "2018 Census Data." <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/2018-census-population-and-dwelling-counts>.

traditional forms of governance alongside a parliamentary system.²⁷ In Australia and New Zealand, the socio-political landscape was shaped by policies aimed at reconciling with the Indigenous populations, such as the Māori Renaissance in New Zealand and the Native Title Act of 1993 in Australia, which recognizes Indigenous land rights.²⁸

The creation of new national identities in Oceania involved a dynamic interplay between indigenous cultures and colonial legacies. Efforts to revive and promote indigenous languages, customs, and traditions were central to the nation-building process. For example, in Papua New Guinea, the promotion of Tok Pisin, an English-based pidgin language originating from plantations in the late 19th century, as a lingua franca aimed to foster national unity while respecting cultural diversity.²⁹ The challenge was to create a sense of national identity encompassing indigenous heritage and colonial history's influences. In Fiji, the post-independence period saw efforts to balance the interests of the Indigenous Fijian population and the Indo-Fijian community, leading to multifaceted identity politics.³⁰ In Australia and New Zealand, national identity has been shaped by both the European heritage and the efforts to recognize and integrate Indigenous cultures. In New Zealand, the Maori Language Act of 1987 recognized Te Reo Māori as an official language of New Zealand and established the Maori Language Commission, whose ethos is tasked with “promoting te reo as a living language and an ordinary means of communication.”³¹ Unlike New Zealand, Australia has not recognized any Aboriginal languages as an official language but instead has instituted “closing the Gap,” a policy framework designed to close the gap between Aboriginals and European Australians in health, education and economic opportunities.³²

Issues such as land rights, cultural preservation, and economic dependency continue to shape these nations. In countries like Fiji, the legacy of colonial land policies has led to ongoing conflicts over land ownership and usage rights. Additionally, the reliance on primary industries established during colonial rule has posed economic diversification and development challenges. For example, Fiji's economy has remained heavily dependent on sugar production and tourism, industries established and promoted during the colonial period.³³ In Australia and New Zealand, the legacy of colonization continues to influence identity politics and socio-economic conditions. The presence of a significant European-descended population has resulted in a bicultural or multicultural national identity. Both countries continue to grapple with issues related to indigenous rights, land claims, and cultural preservation, reflecting the enduring impacts of their colonial pasts. The integration of indigenous perspectives and histories into the national narrative remains a central aspect of their post-colonial identities.

French Decolonization Post World War II

The French approach to decolonization was markedly different from that of the British. France initially resisted decolonization more vehemently, driven by a strong attachment to its

²⁷ Moore, Clive. 2003. *New Guinea: Crossing Boundaries and History*. University of Hawaii Press.

²⁸ Mead, Hirini Moko. 2015. *Tikanga Maori: Living by Maori Values*. Huia Publishers, 2003. ; Brennan, Sean, Megan Davis, Brendan Edgeworth, and Leon Terrill, eds. *Native Title from Mabo to Akiba: A Vehicle for Change and Empowerment?*. Federation Press.

²⁹ Smith, Geoffrey. 2002. *Growing Up with Tok Pisin: Contact, Creolization, and Change in Papua New Guinea's National Language*. Battlebridge Publications.

³⁰ Firth, Stewart, and Jon Fraenkel. 2009. *The Fiji Islands: Towards a United Future*. ANU E Press.

³¹ Pool, Ian. 1991. *Te Iwi Maori: A New Zealand Population, Past, Present & Projected*. Auckland University Press.

³² Australian Human Rights Commission. 2022. "Close the Gap: Indigenous Health Campaign." <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-social-justice/projects/close-gap-indigenous-health>.

³³ Firth, Stewart, and Jon Fraenkel. 2009. *The Fiji Islands: Towards a United Future*. ANU E Press.

overseas territories and a belief in the civilizing mission.³⁴ This resistance was especially evident in Algeria, where France engaged in a protracted and brutal conflict to retain control. However, economic pressures, international condemnation, and the rise of powerful independence movements eventually compelled France to grant independence to its colonies. Key events in this process include the independence of Morocco and Tunisia in 1956, and the establishment of the French Community in 1958, which allowed for a more structured transition to independence for many African colonies.³⁵

Africa

French colonization in Africa, particularly in North and West Africa, was characterized by direct rule and the imposition of French cultural, political, and legal systems.³⁶ This approach created a unique legacy of assimilation, where the French language and culture profoundly influenced the colonies. However, similar to British colonies, African colonies under French rule experienced a surge of nationalist movements post-World War II. The struggle for independence in French colonies often involved a combination of negotiation and violent conflict, reflecting both the determination of local populations and the reluctance of the French government to relinquish control. The Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962) remains a poignant example of the lasting scars of French colonial rule, with over a million Algerians losing their lives in the conflict.³⁷

Leaders such as Félix Houphouët-Boigny in Ivory Coast and Léopold Sédar Senghor in Senegal emerged as prominent figures advocating for independence.³⁸ These leaders were often educated in France and maintained complex relationships with the former colonial power. The transition involved establishing new political institutions that balanced traditional governance structures with modern democratic principles. The independence of Guinea in 1958, led by Ahmed Sékou Touré, marked a significant moment when Guinea opted for immediate independence rather than joining the French Community, setting a precedent for other colonies.³⁹

The policy of assimilation deeply influenced the formation of new national identities in French African colonies. Post-independence, these nations had to navigate the legacy of French cultural dominance while reviving indigenous languages and traditions. Senegal, which gained independence in 1960 under Senghor's leadership, embraced a cultural renaissance to blend African traditions with modernity, a concept Senghor termed "Negritude."⁴⁰

The enduring effects of French colonization in Africa are evident in the continued use of the French language and the influence of French legal and educational systems. Countries like Ivory Coast and Senegal have maintained strong economic and political ties with France, a relationship often referred to as *Françafrique*.⁴¹ These ties have both facilitated development and perpetuated economic dependency. Additionally, the borders drawn during the colonial period have continued influencing political and ethnic tensions in post-colonial Africa.

³⁴ Betts, Raymond F. 1991. *France and Decolonisation, 1900-1960*. Palgrave Macmillan.

³⁵ Betts, Raymond F. 1991. *France and Decolonisation, 1900-1960*. Palgrave Macmillan. ; Chafer, Tony. 2002. *The End of Empire in French West Africa: France's Successful Decolonization?*. Berg

³⁶ Chafer, Tony. 2002. *The End of Empire in French West Africa: France's Successful Decolonization?*. Berg,

³⁷ Evans, Martin. 2012. *Algeria: France's Undeclared War*. Oxford University Press.

³⁸ Cooper, Frederick. 2002. *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present*. Cambridge University Press.

³⁹ Chafer, Tony. 2002. *The End of Empire in French West Africa: France's Successful Decolonization?*. Berg.

⁴⁰ Senghor, Léopold Sédar. 1987. *Liberty 5: Negritude and African Socialism*. University of Massachusetts Press.

⁴¹ Chafer, Tony. 2002. *The End of Empire in French West Africa: France's Successful Decolonization?*. Berg.

Oceania

French colonization in Oceania was also characterized by efforts to assimilate indigenous populations into French culture. Establishing settler colonies and exploiting natural resources were central to French colonial strategies.⁴² Unlike the British, France has maintained a significant presence in Oceania, with several territories still under French control. New Caledonia and French Polynesia, for instance, remain French territories to this day compared to Britain whose only remaining territory is the Pitcairn Islands with a population of only 35 people.⁴³ Despite movements for greater autonomy and independence, France continues to exert considerable influence over these territories.

In Oceania, the socio-political landscape was shaped by efforts to balance indigenous governance systems with French administrative structures. The establishment of the Territorial Assembly in French Polynesia in 1945 marked the beginning of local self-governance.⁴⁴ In New Caledonia, the *Matignon Agreements of 1988* and the *Nouméa Accord of 1998* were significant steps towards greater autonomy, addressing the demands of the Indigenous Kanak population for more political power and recognition.⁴⁵ However, recent political unrest in New Caledonia has highlighted ongoing tensions. In December 2021, a third and final referendum on independence resulted in a majority voting to remain part of France.⁴⁶ Still, the vote was boycotted by pro-independence groups, leading to significant political unrest and calls for renewed dialogue on the territory's future status.

The creation of new national identities in French Oceanic territories involved recognizing and promoting indigenous cultures while navigating the legacy of French influence. For example, the Kanak cultural renaissance in New Caledonia sought to revive traditional practices and assert Kanak's identity within the framework of an autonomous territory. Promoting Polynesian culture and language has been central to identity politics in French Polynesia, with efforts to integrate these elements into the broader national narrative.

The enduring effects of French colonization in Oceania include continued political ties with France and economic dependency on French support and investment. The cultural landscape of these territories remains a blend of indigenous traditions and French influences. For instance, New Caledonia's economy is heavily reliant on nickel mining, an industry established and developed under French rule. The political status of these territories remains a contentious issue, with debates over complete independence versus maintaining a close relationship with France continuing to shape local politics. The recent political unrest following the 2021 referendum in New Caledonia underscores the ongoing tensions surrounding decolonization and self-determination.

Analysis

Decolonization profoundly influenced the ideological relationships between former colonies and their ex-colonizers. British and French colonial policies left enduring legacies, shaping how these nations interacted with their former rulers. The British Commonwealth

⁴² Henningham, Stephen. 1992. *France and the South Pacific: A Contemporary History*. Allen & Unwin.

⁴³ Maclellan, Nic. 2006. "After the Nouméa Accord: Political Legacies, Impacts on Kanak Culture and Identities." In *New Caledonia: Governance and Indigenous Rights*, edited by Stéphanie Lagoutte and Edward Dommen, 45-63. Routledge. ; Immigration Pitcairn Islands. "Life on Pitcairn Island." . <https://www.immigration.pn/life-on-pitcairn-island>.

⁴⁴ Wesley-Smith, Terence, and Jon Goss. 2010. *Remaking Area Studies: Teaching and Research Beyond Borders*. University of Hawaii Press.

⁴⁵ Henningham, Stephen. 1992. *France and the South Pacific: A Contemporary History*. Allen & Unwin. ; Wesley-Smith, Terence, and Jon Goss. 2010. *Remaking Area Studies: Teaching and Research Beyond Borders*. University of Hawaii Press.

⁴⁶ Peltier, Elian. 2024. "French Leader Heads to Pacific Outpost Gripped by Deadly Unrest." *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/22/world/asia/france-macron-new-caledonia.html?searchResultPosition=5>.

facilitates a sense of continued unity and cooperation, whereas the French approach maintains strong economic and political ties through *Françafrique*. These relationships are characterized by a mix of cooperation, dependency, and tension, reflecting the complicated legacies of colonial rule.

The Commonwealth of Nations plays a crucial role in maintaining diplomatic and economic ties among former British colonies. This organization promotes democratic values, economic cooperation, and cultural exchange, fostering a sense of shared heritage. As mentioned earlier, for the UK, the Commonwealth represents a legacy of the empire and a symbol of continued influence and diplomatic relations with former colonies. This continued engagement has influenced the political ideologies of former colonies, embedding Westminster-style democracies and legal systems.

In contrast, the French approach to maintaining influence over former colonies is characterized by the *Françafrique* network. Strong economic ties, political alliances, and cultural influence mark this relationship. France's continued presence in its former colonies has shaped the ideological relationship, with former colonies trying to develop while navigating economic dependency and cultural dominance. The persistence of the French language and educational systems in these countries underscores the enduring impact of French colonial policies.

Impact on Identity Politics

The decolonization process heavily shaped identity politics in post-colonial states. The formation and mobilization of national identities have been influenced by the need to reconcile colonial histories with modern national narratives. In Africa, the revival of indigenous cultures and languages was central to nation-building efforts. These borders, established with little regard for ethnic, linguistic, or cultural continuities, have been a source of ongoing conflict and instability. The struggle to create cohesive national identities amidst such diversity has been a defining feature of post-colonial Africa.⁴⁷

The division of Africa drawn by European powers at the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 has continued to influence African identities.⁴⁸ The casually drawn borders frequently split ethnic groups between different countries or force rival groups to coexist within the exact political boundaries. For instance, in Nigeria, the amalgamation of diverse ethnic groups, such as the Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo, has led to persistent ethnic tensions and conflicts, including the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970).⁴⁹ Similarly, in Sudan, the division between the predominantly Arab Muslim north and the non-Arab Christian and Animist south led to decades of civil war, culminating in the secession of South Sudan in 2011.⁵⁰

The lack of coherence within these arbitrarily drawn borders has often resulted in fragile state structures and political instability. Many African countries have struggled with coups, dictatorships, and weak governance systems as they attempt to manage the diverse and often conflicting interests of their populations. The Democratic Republic of Congo has faced ongoing conflict and instability since gaining independence, exacerbated by the presence of numerous ethnic groups and the contestation over natural resources.⁵¹ Post-independence, many African states have continued to face challenges in achieving economic integration and development.

⁴⁷ Mamdani, Mahmood. 1996. *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Princeton University Press.

⁴⁸ Chamberlain, Muriel Evelyn. 2010. *The Scramble for Africa*. Longman.

⁴⁹ Osaghae, Eghosa E. 1998. *Crippled Giant: Nigeria Since Independence*. Indiana University Press.

⁵⁰ Copnall, James. 2014. *A Poisonous Thorn in Our Hearts: Sudan and South Sudan's Bitter and Incomplete Divorce*. Hurst.

⁵¹ Turner, Thomas. 2007. *The Congo Wars: Conflict, Myth and Reality*. Zed Books.

The reliance on cash crops and resource extraction—often established during colonial rule—has created economies vulnerable to global market fluctuations and lacking diversification.

In Oceania, the integration of indigenous cultures into national identities was crucial. Countries like Fiji and Papua New Guinea, as previously discussed, balanced traditional governance with modern democratic principles. In contrast, Australia and New Zealand have been relatively unsuccessful; efforts to recognize and integrate Indigenous perspectives, such as the multiple petitions to change New Zealand's name to "Aotearoa New Zealand," incorporating the Maori name of the country, as well as attempts to amend the Australian constitution to recognize Aboriginals by establishing an advisory body have been ineffective.⁵²

European colonization in these regions, however, was also marked by policies aimed at assimilating Indigenous peoples into Western culture, often at the expense of their identities. In Australia, the Stolen Generations saw Aboriginal children forcibly removed from their families to be raised in institutions or by non-indigenous families, intending to erase their cultural identities.⁵³ In New Zealand, efforts to suppress the Māori language and customs had long-lasting effects, though significant revitalization efforts have occurred in recent decades.

Another aspect of the legacy of colonization is the substantial health and socio-economic disparities between the European-descended populations and indigenous peoples. In Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples face lower life expectancy, higher rates of infant mortality, and greater incidence of chronic diseases compared to non-indigenous Australians.⁵⁴ In New Zealand, Māori communities experience higher rates of poverty, unemployment, and health issues than their European-descended counterparts.⁵⁵ These disparities are indicative of the systemic inequities entrenched during the colonial period.

Additionally, the significant European-descended populations have perpetuated systems of racial discrimination and social exclusion. Indigenous peoples in both countries have faced systemic racism and prejudice, affecting their access to education, employment, and justice. Efforts to address these issues have included policy reforms and public awareness campaigns, but challenges remain. The dominant European-descended narratives have often overshadowed Indigenous histories and contributions. However, movements like the blossoming Te Reo Māori publication industry and the growing recognition of Aboriginal history in Australia are reshaping national narratives.

Hence, the enduring effects of colonial rule continue to shape identity politics as former colonies navigate the intricate interplay between indigenous heritage and colonial legacies. In French Territories like New Caledonia, the ongoing involvement of former colonizers in political and economic spheres underscores the ongoing challenges of decolonization and self-determination.

Conclusion

The decolonization process following World War II fundamentally reshaped global dynamics, altering the political, social, and economic landscapes of both former colonies and their colonizers. This study has explored the profound influence of British and French

⁵² Small, Zane. 2019. "Using 'Aotearoa' and 'New Zealand' Together 'as It Should Be' – Jacinda Ardern." Newshub. <https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/politics/2019/12/using-aotearoa-and-new-zealand-together-as-it-should-be-jacinda-ardern.html>. ; Buchanan, Kelly. 2023. "Australia: Proposed 'Voice' for Indigenous People Rejected in Referendum." *Global Legal Monitor*. Law Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/global-legal-monitor/2023-10-23/australia-proposed-voice-for-indigenous-people-rejected-in-referendum/>.

⁵³ Brennan, Sean, Megan Davis, Brendan Edgeworth, and Leon Terrill, eds. 2015. *Native Title from Mabo to Akiba: A Vehicle for Change and Empowerment?*. Federation Press.

⁵⁴ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. "Australia's Health 2020: In Brief." <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/australias-health-2020-in-brief/contents/indigenous-health-and-wellbeing>.

⁵⁵ Statistics New Zealand. "Tauranga Umanga Māori 2020: Māori Business Statistics." <https://www.stats.govt.nz/reports/tauranga-umanga-maori-2020-maori-business-statistics>.

decolonization efforts in Africa and Oceania, highlighting the unique and shared challenges these regions faced, the strategies employed by colonial powers, and the lasting impacts on national identity and socio-political structures.

The contrasting approaches of the British and French empires—Britain's pragmatic and gradual strategy versus France's initial resistance and emphasis on cultural assimilation—have left enduring legacies on former colonies' post-colonial identities and ideologies. The British Commonwealth fosters connections and cooperation among former colonies, embedding Westminster-style democracies and legal systems. In contrast, the French *Françafrique* network maintained strong economic and cultural ties, perpetuating economic dependency and cultural dominance.

The haphazardly drawn borders during the colonial period in Africa resulted in ethnic conflicts, political instability, and economic challenges, which continue to hinder nation-building and integration. . These borders frequently split ethnic groups between different countries or forced rival groups to coexist within the same political boundaries, resulting in fragile state structures and disrupted traditional trade routes. The legacy of these borders continues to hinder nation-building efforts and economic integration in post-colonial Africa.

In Oceania, indigenous populations have struggled against systemic inequities entrenched during colonization, while initiatives like the Māori Renaissance in New Zealand and the Native Title Act in Australia signify progress toward integrating Indigenous perspectives into national identities. However, disparities and challenges persist globally. Colonial legacies also influence contemporary political and economic relationships, as exemplified by the Commonwealth of Nations and *Françafrique*, which maintain diplomatic and economic ties while perpetuating economic dependency and cultural dominance.

Addressing these historical injustices of colonialism is crucial for fostering inclusive and equitable societies. Recognizing and integrating Indigenous perspectives, promoting a cultural revival, and addressing economic dependency are essential steps for overcoming colonial legacies. Future research should explore decolonization's psychological and socio-cultural impacts, providing a deeper understanding of its long-term effects on global politics and identity dynamics. By engaging with these histories, societies can better address contemporary socio-political challenges and work toward more inclusive national identities.

Bibliography

Adams, David. 1992. *Australian Colonies: A History of Colonial Australia from 1788 to 1901*. Viking.

Aldrich, Robert. 1993. *France and the South Pacific Since 1940*. University of Hawaii Press

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. 2005. *The Ethics of Identity*. Princeton University Press.

Australian Bureau of Statistics. "2016 Census QuickStats." <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2016>.

Australian Human Rights Commission. 2022. "Close the Gap: Indigenous Health Campaign." <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-social-justice/projects/close-gap-indigenous-health>.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. "Australia's Health 2020: In Brief." <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/australias-health-2020-in-brief/contents/indigenous-health-and-wellbeing>.

Betts, Raymond F. 1991. *France and Decolonisation, 1900-1960*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Brennan, Sean, Megan Davis, Brendan Edgeworth, and Leon Terrill, eds. 2015. *Native Title from Mabo to Akiba: A Vehicle for Change and Empowerment?*. Federation Press.

Buchanan, Kelly. 2023. "Australia: Proposed 'Voice' for Indigenous People Rejected in Referendum." *Global Legal Monitor*. Law Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/global-legal-monitor/2023-10-23/australia-proposed-voice-for-indigenous-people-rejected-in-referendum/>.

Chamberlain, Muriel Evelyn. 2010. *The Scramble for Africa*. Longman.

Chappell, David. 2013. *The Kanak Awakening: The Rise of Nationalism in New Caledonia*. University of Hawaii Press.

Chafer, Tony. 2002. *The End of Empire in French West Africa: France's Successful Decolonization?*. Berg.

Cooper, Frederick. 2002. *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present*. Cambridge University Press.

Copnall, James. 2014. *A Poisonous Thorn in Our Hearts: Sudan and South Sudan's Bitter and Incomplete Divorce*. Hurst.

Darwin, John. 1988. *Britain and Decolonisation: The Retreat from Empire in the Post-War World*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Davidson, J. W. 1967. *Samoa mo Samoa: The Emergence of the Independent State of Western Samoa*. Oxford University Press.

- Denoon, Donald. 1983. *Settler Capitalism: The Dynamics of Dependent Development in the Southern Hemisphere*. Clarendon Press.
- Elkins, Caroline. 2005. *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya*. Henry Holt and Co.
- Evans, Martin. 2012. *Algeria: France's Undeclared War*. Oxford University Press.
- Firth, Stewart, and Jon Fraenkel. 2009. *The Fiji Islands: Towards a United Future*. ANU E Press.
- Henningham, Stephen. 1992. *France and the South Pacific: A Contemporary History*. Allen & Unwin.
- Howe, K. R. 1977. *Race Relations Australia and New Zealand: A Comparative Survey 1770s-1970s*. Methuen.
- Hyam, Ronald. 2006. *Britain's Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonisation, 1918-1968*. Cambridge University Press.
- Immigration Pitcairn Islands. "Life on Pitcairn Island." <https://www.immigration.pn/life-on-pitcairn-island>.
- Loomba, Ania. 2015. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. Routledge.
- Maclellan, Nic. , 2006. "After the Nouméa Accord: Political Legacies, Impacts on Kanak Culture and Identities." In *New Caledonia: Governance and Indigenous Rights*, edited by Stéphanie Lagoutte and Edward Dommen, 45-63. Routledge.
- Mamdani, Mahmood. 1996. *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Princeton University Press, 1996.
- McIntyre, W. David. 1977. *The Commonwealth of Nations: Origins and Impact, 1869-1971*. University of Minnesota Press, 1977.
- Mead, Hirini Moko. 2003. *Tikanga Maori: Living by Maori Values*. Huia Publishers.
- Moore, Clive. 2003. *New Guinea: Crossing Boundaries and History*. University of Hawaii Press.
- Nkrumah, Kwame. 1971. *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah*. International Publishers.
- Orange, Claudia. 1987. *The Treaty of Waitangi*. Bridget Williams Books,
- Osaghae, Eghosa E. 1998. *Crippled Giant: Nigeria Since Independence*. Indiana University Press.

Peltier, Elian. 2024. "French Leader Heads to Pacific Outpost Gripped by Deadly Unrest." *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/22/world/asia/france-macron-new-caledonia.html?searchResultPosition=5>.

Pool, Ian. 1991. *Te Iwi Maori: A New Zealand Population, Past, Present & Projected*. Auckland University Press.

Reynolds, Henry. 1987. *The Law of the Land*. Penguin Books.

Senghor, Léopold Sédar. 1987. *Liberty 5: Negritude and African Socialism*. University of Massachusetts Press.

Small, Zane. 2019. "Using 'Aotearoa' and 'New Zealand' Together 'as It Should Be' – Jacinda Ardern." Newshub. <https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/politics/2019/12/using-aotearoa-and-new-zealand-together-as-it-should-be-jacinda-ardern.html>.

Smith, Geoffrey. 2002. *Growing Up with Tok Pisin: Contact, Creolization, and Change in Papua New Guinea's National Language*. Battlebridge Publications.

Statistics New Zealand. "2018 Census Data." <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/2018-census-population-and-dwelling-counts>.

Statistics New Zealand. "Tatauranga Umanga Māori 2020: Māori Business Statistics." <https://www.stats.govt.nz/reports/tatauranga-umanga-maori-2020-maori-business-statistics>.

Thomas, Martin. 2005. *The French Empire Between the Wars: Imperialism, Politics and Society*. Manchester University Press.

Turner, Thomas. 2007. *The Congo Wars: Conflict, Myth and Reality*. Zed Books.

United Nations. "About Decolonization." United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. <https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/about>.

Wesley-Smith, Terence, and Jon Goss. 2010. *Remaking Area Studies: Teaching and Research Beyond Borders*. University of Hawaii Press.