



Pacific Connections Seminar Series

Self-determination and Governance in an Age of Globalization

Join us each month throughout the semester for scholarly presentations from Hawai'i and Tahiti using videoconference technology. These presentations are given by faculty at the University of French Polynesia, the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, and the East-West Center.

Wednesday, 20 November 2013

12:00 – 1:15 pm

John A. Burns Hall, Room 3015/19, East-West Center

French Presence in Oceania, 1945–2013

Jean-Marc Regnault

This seminar will be conducted in French with translation provided by Louis Bousquet, UHM French Program.

Dr Regnault will trace the ways that France has imposed itself in Oceania, describing how it has alternated in the period 1945–2013 between a forceful presence (primarily under De Gaulle) and one driven by wavering policies. He will also address doubts about France's continued presence in the region.

In the 1980s, the image of the French Republic was marred when the tragic story of the *Rainbow Warrior* was disclosed and France refused to sign the Treaty of Rarotonga that established a nuclear-free zone. Relationships with Pacific countries began to improve with the end of nuclear tests in French Polynesia in 1996, and with the signing of the Matignon-Oudinot Accord of 1988 and the Noumea Accord of 1998, which improved France's image in terms of its policies in New Caledonia. When the worsening political and economic situation of Island states and territories stirred tensions, which Australia and New Zealand tried to but could not fix, the French presence was welcomed as helping to provide stability, security, and financial assistance. Yet domestic crises in French Polynesia and New Caledonia, France's financial woes, and its policy makers' misperceptions about the region have served to offset its improved image in the region.

Regnault will assess the rationale as well as the opportunities afforded by France's recent approaches to overseas territories and regional powers, paying special attention to the change of government in Paris in 2012, which has helped revive interest in the Pacific.

Dr Jean-Marc Regnault is a member of University of French Polynesia's Gouvernance et développement insulaire and an independent researcher.

