



# **Translating Rhetoric into Practice? The Case of French Aid to Cameroon**

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# Summary

In the late 1990s, the donor community espoused a new metanorm, poverty reduction. Against this backdrop, Lionel Jospin, elected French Prime Minister in 1997, promised a shift in French aid policy away from a paternalistic and interest-driven approach towards a more needs-focused, empowering strategy. This thesis asks, with reference to the 1997-2015 period and to the Cameroonian case, how far, how and why France's aid discourse on poverty reduction and empowerment has been translated into practice.

Our introduction sets out this research question. Our literature review demonstrates that there have been no detailed studies of French aid to Cameroon and looks more broadly at research on French *coopération*, empowerment and African agency. Chapter three identifies our methodological and theoretical framework, focusing particularly on neo-classical realism and a template of hard, soft and smart power. Chapter 4 shows how French aid structures and instruments were neo-colonial in the early post-colonial decades. It then highlights reforms under Jospin and President Jacques Chirac's second term, paying particular attention to the aid instruments deployed in Cameroon and their 'fitness for the purpose'. Chapter 5 sets out the aid promises of French Presidents Nicolas Sarkozy and François Hollande, identifying the reformist pressures they faced. Chapter 6 explains why important but ultimately limited changes took place in the French assistance programme to Cameroon. Drawing on a neoclassical realist framework, it shows how the French policy-making establishment was divided between the conservative old guard resisting and modernisers promoting aid conditionalities. Chapter 7 addresses weaknesses in the NCR framework, notably its crude definition of power and failure to include African agency. It shows how francophone Cameroonian elites facilitate or constrain the implementation of French aid. Our conclusion summarises our findings, identifies future aid trends and explores the wider significance of this research.

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## List of Abbreviations

ACOTA	Africa Contingency Operations Training Assistance
ACRI	African Crisis Response Initiative
ACU	African Currency Union
AFD	Agence Française De Développement
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
ASF	African Standby Force
ASBF	Africa Singapore Business Forum
AU	African Union
BIR	Brigade d'Intervention Rapide
BRICs	Brazil, Russia, India, China
CBF	Congo Basin Forest Fund
C2D	Contrat de Désendettement et de Développement
CCF	Centres Culturels Français
CDC	Cameroon Development Corporation
CEMAC	Central African Economic and Monetary Community

CES	Community Exchange System
CFD	Caisse Française de Développement
CICID	Comité Interministériel de la Coopération Internationale et du Développement
CIRAD	Centre International de Recherche Agronomique Pour le Développement
COMIFAC	Commission des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale
CPC	Centre Pasteur du Cameroun
CSI	Cours Supérieur Interarmées de Défense
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Affairs
CSOS	Civil Society Organisations
COSP	Conférence d'Orientation Stratégique et de Programmation
CPP	Conflict Prevention Pool
CPP	Comité Paritaire de Programmation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCP	Document Cadre Partenariat
DFID	Department for International Development
DGCID	Direction Générale De la Coopération Internationale Et Du Développement
DGMP	Directorate General for Globalisation and Partnership

DRDC	Debt Reduction Development Contract
EAP	Ecole d'Administration Publique
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECF	Extended Credit Facility
ENVRs	Ecoles Nationales à Vocation Régionale
ESAF	Economic Adjustment and Reform in Low-Income Countries
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
EUCAP SAHEL	European Union Capacity-Building mission in the Sahel
EURORECAMP	Renforcement Européen des Capacités de Maintien de la Paix
FAC	Fonds d'Aide et de Coopération
FCO	(British) Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FEA	French Equatorial Africa
FFEM	French Facility for Global Environment
FFG	Forces Françaises du Gabon
FME	Fonds Mondial de l'Environnement
FPE	Foreign Policy Executive
FSP	Forestry Sector Policy



FZ	Franc Zone
F3E	Fonds pour la Promotion des Etudes Préalables, des Etudes Transversales and Evaluations
FIDES	Fonds d'Investissement et de développement Economique et Social
HCCI	High Council for International Cooperation
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRD	Institut de Recherche pour le Développement
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
LN	League of Nations
LOLF	Loi Organique Relative aux Lois de Finance
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NCR	Neoclassical Realism
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODA	Overseas Development Agency
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

OHADA	Organisation Pour l'Harmonisation en Afrique du Droit des Affaires
OPCF	Observatoire Permanent de la Coopération Internationale
PASOC	Programme d'Appui à la Structuration de la Société Civile au Cameroun
PCPA	Programme Concerté Pluri-Acteurs
PPP	Pays Pauvres Prioritaires
PRGF	Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
PSF	Programme Sectoriel Forêts et Environnement
RECAMP	Reinforcement of African Peace-keeping Capacities
SCAC	Service de Coopération et d'Action Culturelle
SDF	Social Democratic Front
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOC	Strategic Orientation Council
SSR	Sector Security Reform
TCBP	Trade Capacity Building Programme
UDEAC	Central African Customs and Economic Union
UN	United Nations

UPC	Union des Populations du Cameroun
WB	World Bank
ZSP	Zone de Solidarité Prioritaire

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# TRANSLATING RHETORIC INTO PRACTICE? THE CASE OF FRENCH AID TO CAMEROON

## Chapter One: Introduction

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the international donor community faced an unprecedented wave of pressure to move their foreign aid or overseas development assistance (ODA) policies away from an interest-oriented strategy towards a more needs-based approach focused on poverty reduction. These pressures came from a number of sources. One of the most important was the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), the aid unit of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which published its influential report, *Shaping the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* in 1996. This led quite rapidly to the adoption by the donor community of a new metanorm, poverty reduction. The alleviation of poverty had of course long formed a major component of Northern aid programmes, particularly since the World Bank began advocating the concept of Basic Needs in the mid-1970s and subsequently called for a more systematic approach to poverty reduction in the 1990s, with its groundbreaking study entitled *World Development Report 1990: Poverty*. Even so, never before had a needs-based, poverty reducing and empowering agenda been the overarching objective of aid programmes, and of the donor community as a whole. This shift was subsequently enshrined in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals or MDGs (2000-2015): eight poverty-reducing targets which were agreed by 189 countries and the world's leading international development institutions and which had been championed by a number of donors, not least the Nordics, the UK's newly created Department for International Development (DFID) (which required all aid to be poverty reducing through the introduction of the 2002 International Development Act) and to some extent the European Union (EU).

Another key development that reinforced these pressures was the introduction of OECD High Level Forums. The first of these was in Rome 2002 which initiated a dialogue on aid effectiveness, with the second such forum giving rise to the Paris Declaration, signed in 2005. Subsequent forums took place in Accra in 2008, and

Busan in 2011, with the latter seeking to ensure that emerging donors sign up to the poverty reduction agenda and agree on best practice on aid effectiveness, while also recognising that Southern donors have their own distinctive contribution to make to international development. These high-level forums brought pressure to bear particularly on bilateral state donors to ensure greater harmonisation of their aid policies and practices. The need for donor alignment was reinforced further by developments within the EU which, in 2005, agreed the “European Consensus on Development”, which, “for the first time in fifty years of cooperation, defines the framework of common principles within which the EU and its Member States will each implement their development policies in a spirit of complementarity” (European Union Law, 2007, p.2). This Consensus helped to frame the EU’s approach known as “policy coherence for development”, which was first conceptualised in 1992 before being more fully developed in the mid-2000s as the European Commission began to look for synergies between aid and trade, migration, environmental and other policies that had implications for the achievement of the MDGs. At the same time, the EU stepped up pressure on member states to harmonise their aid practices, sign up to the EU Code of Conduct of Labour in Development Policy (2007) and to other concrete measures to enhance division of labour, not least the practice of joint programming, which requires donors to work together and implement complementary development policies (Carbone, 2007, p.30). All these measures pointed to the need for European bilateral donors to engage in greater harmonisation, avoid duplication and root out practices that were inconsistent with the goals of European development policy and the new poverty reduction metanorm.

Against this backdrop, it is hardly surprising that multilateral and bilateral donors alike have trumpeted their attachment to poverty reduction, needs-based and empowering (defined more fully below but taken for now to refer to the giving back responsibility, authority or power to Africans) approaches as well as eschewing the kind of self-interested power-seeking practices that marked much of Northern aid over the Cold War period (Schraeder, 1995). In this context, for example, the EU has claimed that “Most Commission development aid should be spent on programmes which best meet human needs, irrespective of the EU’s strategic or foreign policy priorities” (cited in Tindale, 2013, p.1). The World Bank initiated Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers from 1999 and is now a key driver behind the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the 17 targets that replaced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015 (World Bank, p.128). Even the IMF, which adopted, in 1999, the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) in 1999 and the extended credit facility (ECF) in 2015, is now

said by a former Polish prime minister, Krzysztof Bielecki, previously the IMF's top official for Europe, to be focused on needs and on "help[ing] [weakened] countries get to the other side of the river" (Davis, 2009, p.1). Equally, the UK's DFID (2014, p.1) claims that it "leads the UK's work to end extreme poverty", while, in 2003, the United States, set up the Millennium Challenge Account, the largest ever fund for tackling AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria (\$ 122 million), thereby signalling that it is helping lead the fight against global poverty (Brown, 2007, p.2).

Amidst this welter of positive aid discourse, it is perhaps unsurprising that France, despite being the OECD donor most closely associated with neo-colonial, clientelistic, power-seeking practices (Chafer, 2002<sup>a</sup>, p.345; Gagniarre, 2016, p.3) has participated in and adopted a new policy rhetoric on ODA. The nature of this discourse will be explored in chapters 4 and 5 but for now it is important to note that the first French policy-maker to make meaningful claims with regard to a new direction in development assistance policy was the Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin who promised in 1997 to move away from paternal to fraternal ties with Africa. The Jospin government (1997-2002) would move away from narrow *realpolitik* (the term was coined by Ludwig von Rochau (1853, p.20) who likened the concept to "disparaging an idealistic politics and praising the realities of power") and focus on the needs of African populations by tackling poverty, promoting accountable governments and addressing instability. France's aid programme would cease to be used as an instrument of neo-colonialism (which according to the Oxford English dictionary, refers to "the use of economic, political, cultural, or other pressures to control or influence other countries, especially former dependencies") and serve as a source of empowerment (defined more fully below but taken for now to relate to an approach that helps to lift local populations out of the poverty trap).

The rhetoric on France's presumed shift away from power-seeking approaches enshrined within *Françafrique* (the complex web of personal friendships linking French and African leaders and described by Bills (2013, p.1) as "a nefarious relationship between the French secret service and African politicians") was not only confined to the Jospin period but continued under subsequent presidencies. Thus, President Jacques Chirac, upon beginning his twelve-year period in office in 1995, claimed that "it was time to make a clean break with corrupted African heads of state" (Bourmaud, 1996, p.431). President Nicolas Sarkozy too (2007) stated that "the French government should make sure that aid aims at developing recipient countries and not financing dictatorships." He argued further that "Franco-African relationships should be based on a transparent policy of *co-développement* in the interests of the recipient countries".

According to Zinsou (2013, p.1), *co-développement* “is based on rethinking Franco-African relations which will establish a new partnership, so to speed up growth.” Significantly too, Sarkozy (2007) promised to “put an end to Franco-African underground networks and unofficial emissaries”. Sarkozy’s Former Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Henri de Raincourt (2010) (Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 2011, p.4), fleshed out France’s approach contending that, French cooperation strategy focuses on four overarching objectives, which are all designed to tackle needs and empower populations, including: fostering sustainable and equitable growth for the poorest ; combating poverty and inequality; preserving global public goods such as fresh water and clean air; and ensuring global stability and the rule of law. Finally, the current French President François Hollande stated in 2016 that “the new French policy would be based on poverty reduction and the fight against social disparities” (Ministère des Affaires Etrangères 2016, p.1)

Yet how far has this French rhetoric been translated into practice? Is France implementing its policy discourse or is French assistance practice still marked by a power-seeking approach? How well does French rhetoric stand up to the test when we drill down and look at French aid instruments and structures in a particular case study case, namely Cameroon? These questions have not, as will be demonstrated in chapter 2, been meaningfully addressed by the literature on French or indeed Northern ODA. There have, of course, been studies that provide a top down overview of the reforms of French development policy (Pilon, 1998; Cumming, 2001; Chafer, 2002<sup>a</sup>) and that review the implications of the trend towards poverty-reducing needs-based ODA strategies for donors including France (Abuzeid, 2009; Dietrich, 2011; Janus, 2012). But on the whole, the literature fails to drill down into the actual practice and evolution of French aid in specific case study countries.

This thesis aims to plug this gap in the literature. This research is significant in a number of respects. First, it uses a field-based case study approach to test French ODA policy discourse against actual practice and, by concentrating on France’s choice of aid modalities or instruments, it offers a clear empirically-based guide to what is really happening in French overseas development policy. Second, this study provides insights into the ways in which aid is operationalised at the coal face by an OECD member state, France, that has consistently been one of the top four donors in the world, that hosts the DAC and is home to a major development studies industry, whose thinking is now taken more seriously in development circles (Cumming, 2015, p.7). Third, this research provides insights into the workings of a major aid recipient country, Cameroon, which is one of the largest economies in central Africa and a member of

France's currency support mechanism south of the Sahara, the Franc Zone, which includes 14 mainly Central and West African countries and whose currency is pegged to the Euro through the intermediary of the French Treasury.<sup>1</sup> Cameroon is also a key player in the African Standby Force (2003) and a member of more than one regional economic community: a) the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS created in 1983 and ratified in 1984); b) the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC created in 1994 and ratified in 1990); c) the Central African Customs and Economic Union (UDEAC created in 1964 and ratified in 1966). Significantly too, African countries such as Cameroon are increasingly attracting the attention of emerging economies such as China (see chapter 7) and the BRICs more generally Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), while the role of established donors such as the United States, the UK and Japan appears to be on the decline.

Another significant aspect of this research is that it captures African agency and the African "voice". These are so often missing from the ODA literature which is largely Euro-or Northern-centric, and takes too little account of what Africans really want from the development process (Chukwuokolo, 2009, p.15). Most writings (Beti 1962; Handley 2009) imply that Africans, including Cameroonians, are passive actors when it comes to the implementation of aid policy. Here, an analysis of the thinking of Cameroonian officials will be undertaken, and contrary to conventional wisdom in the literature, it will be argued here that the latter have a real impact and can either facilitate or constrain ODA policy in the recipient country. This study will also make a contribution to the theoretical underpinnings of research on development policy towards Africa by deploying a neoclassical realist framework and nuancing this by using it in conjunction with a template of soft, smart and hard power (with each of these terms being defined fully in chapter 3). Finally, this research paves the way for further studies that seek to expose or bridge the gap between policy rhetoric and practice. While there is arguably more scope for this gap between discourse and policy implementation to exist in the field of aid (with instruments being deployed in distant countries and evaluations of those instruments only taking place years after they have been set up), there are no doubt other domains (such as international diplomacy, humanitarian assistance, conflict prevention and security policies) which could usefully benefit from the instrument-based approach advocated in this research.

# Research Question and Objectives

In order to make a significant contribution to the aid field, the focus of this study needs to be carefully defined. Our research question will be as follows:

In the years since Lionel Jospin's election as Prime Minister, how, to what extent and why has France translated, or failed to translate, its rhetoric on aid policy into practice, that is to say, moved away from an interest-oriented, power-seeking approach and towards a needs-based empowering, and poverty-oriented focus in the field, specifically in Cameroon.

To answer this research question, this research will need to meet the following objectives, namely to:

- (i) Set out briefly the key features of French aid policy and practice prior to the Jospin period, with reference particularly to the ODA instruments and structures deployed in Cameroon.
- (ii) Examine the degree of evolution in France's aid instruments and structures, again with reference to Cameroon, from the time of the Jospin government in 1997 to the middle of the Hollande period, specifically mid-2015, by which time the MDGs had run their course.
- (iii) Explain any evolution or lack of evolution in the above, with reference to the wider international and domestic context and to our conceptual framework (which, as discussed later, combines neoclassical realism with a template of soft, smart and hard power and which allows space for African agency).
- (iv) Examine the wider implications of these findings for French ODA and foreign policy, for African recipients of French aid and for analyses of development assistance that seek to employ a neoclassical realist framework.

## Terminology, Scope, Conceptual Framework and Context

Before proceeding, it is important to sharpen the focus of this research project by (a) defining some of the key terms employed, (b) setting out its scope, (c) briefly outlining

the research methods employed, and finally, (d) providing the historical backdrop required for a proper understanding of French post-colonial aid relations with Cameroon.

## Terminology

Turning to some of the key terms employed here, a definition is clearly required for the concepts of “policy discourse, “policy implementation” or “practice”, “aid”, “power” and “empowerment”.

To begin with policy discourse, this refers to the rhetoric used by senior French officials, politicians and ministers in speeches and public statements regarding France’s Africa policy. The definition of discourse is literally “to speak or write authoritatively about a topic” (Webster, 2016, p.4). As such, policy discourse is any written or spoken communication from the French authorities that relates to government policy, in this case, aid. This should be understood as distinctly different from policy implementation or practice. Policy implementation is the application or execution of governmental policy, on the ground, or the way in which resources are deployed, in the developing nation in question. This implementation generally involves aid “instruments”, a term that will be elucidated in chapter 3. Needless to say, there is often a disconnection between the two, a failure to translate the discourse into practice, and it is this failure or at least partial failure that will form much of the focus of this thesis.

Turning to “aid”, this is, as Cumming (2001, p.13) has observed, “an ambiguous concept and its precise definition is often glossed over by analysts on the grounds that it is the impact of this resource transfer, or the motivations behind it, that are important”.<sup>2</sup> The most commonly agreed definition is that of the OECD which describes aid, also known as “overseas development assistance” (ODA), as loans and grants allotted to developing countries (OECD, 2015, p.1).<sup>3</sup> The said resource flows must fulfil three criteria: 1) the loans and grants must come from the public sector, 2) be granted with the aim of fostering economic development, and 3) be concessional and contain a grant element of at least 25% (Ibid).<sup>4</sup> However for the purposes of this analysis, the concept of aid will be used in a broader sense than the OECD definition, which sees ODA as an instrument for international development and to some extent sustainable forms of development (such as forestry management, measures against environmental degradation etc. The current study will consider aid as a politico-cultural and strategic instrument as well as a technical tool for international development. In other words, this study includes within its focus cultural assistance (such as support for *La Francophonie*



or *Alliances Françaises*) as well as military assistance, much of which is not calculated as ODA by the OECD. Indeed, in the case of military assistance, the United States government discontinued the reporting of military aid as part of its foreign aid figures as far back as 1958 (Lancaster, 2007, p.67). Yet, in 2016, the OECD redefined foreign aid to include some military-type spending, particularly where this takes the form of peace-keeping efforts in support of humanitarian assistance in fragile states (OECD, 2016, p.1).

This study will therefore include within the remit of “aid” or rather “assistance” instruments associated with not only with economic, developmental and environmental assistance but also with security and diplomatic, political, and cultural forms of aid. These latter forms of assistance, in particular, are close to what Charles de Gaulle referred to as *coopération*, implying reciprocal favours, mutuality and generosity of spirit (Chafer, 2002<sup>a</sup>, p.347).

In adopting this approach, this research is then aligning itself to the term “cooperation” which is employed by French policy-makers, particularly when they are referring to assistance to former colonies in Africa. By contrast, outside of the countries of France’s grouping of privileged aid recipients, originally called the *champ* but now *Zone de Solidarité Prioritaire (ZSP)* and more recently narrowed down to the *pays pauvres prioritaires* (Lundsgaarde, 2012, p.138), French policy-makers have tended to refer to and focus exclusively on ODA, that is developmental forms of assistance.

At the same time, this understanding of the term aid captures the ambiguity between aid as an instrument of development and a tool of foreign policy. In effect, it situates *coopération* somewhere between the thinking of development economists and thinktanks (such as Sachs, 2005, p.4; ODI, 2012, p.6; ECPDM, 2013, p.2; Easterly, 2006, p.16; IDS, 2016, p.1), who focus on the technical and economic impact and implications of ODA, and political scientists (such as Schraeder, 1998, p.6; Burnell, 2007, p.10), who are more concerned with the use of aid to promote foreign policy objectives. The distinction between aid as a technical instrument of development and as an instrument of political change, that is to say, a form of soft or smart power (defined fully later) is one to which this study will return in chapters 3 to 6. For now, it should suffice to note that aid is functionally considered an instrument of foreign policy by Buchanan (2012, p.6), who views aid as a means of soft power and influence. By contrast, according to Shah (2012, p.10), aid is a tool for development. Needless to say, there is a distinction between, on the one hand, aid as a series of instruments to provide financial and physical support to developing countries and, on the other, aid as an arm of foreign policy, in other words a means of promoting economic diplomacy or

‘dealing with other countries, for example in matters relating to trade or defence’ (Cambridge Learner’s Dictionary, 2016). It will, nonetheless, be argued here that aid can be part, even a major element, of a nation’s foreign policy, as the Japanese case clearly demonstrates (Koppel et al., 1994, p.65).

The above interpretation of aid is clearly linked to our two remaining terms, power and empowerment. Space constraints will not allow for a detailed examination of the concept of power, which has been at the heart of seminal works in political science ranging from Machiavelli (1513) through to Dahl (1957) and Hobbes (1651). In the view of Hobbes (1651), as cited in the work of Holmes (2003, pp.134-5) “Power may be valued as an instrument for acquiring wealth or exhorting praise ... it is just another semi-comical passion with potentially anarchical consequences.”. Needless to say, power is now central to the many variants of realist theories. In layman’s terms, it is defined as “the ability or right to control people or things” (Webster, 2016, p.42) and, according to the Cambridge English dictionary, as “the amount of political control a person or group has in a country.” In line with this definition, Nye has opined that “power is the ability to influence the behaviour of others to accomplish the outcomes one wants” (Nye, 2005, p.2). As a consequence, influence may be both a by-product and an extension of power.

In the context of international development, power is often understood in terms of leverage. This is clearly the case in the 1991 seminal work by Paul Mosley on the World Bank entitled *Aid and Power*.<sup>5</sup> Power is also conceived in these terms in studies focusing on economic, political and pro-poor conditionalities (Morrisey, 2001, p.18; Stern et al., 2004, p.85). In the aid context, power is not always taken to refer to the exercise of control over recipient countries but can also be understood in terms of the relative power of donors in the international hierarchy of states; this form of power can be “increased” through the giving of aid. Both senses of the term are taken to be valid here and to be implied by our use of the term “power-seeking” when referring to France’s policies and practices as a donor in Cameroon.

The term “empowerment” involves an approach that is in many ways the opposite of a power-seeking strategy. It has itself been the subject of a vast literature in fields as diverse as gender studies and psychology (Oladipo 2009; Page 1999). According to the United Nations (2013, p.7), “Empowering has to also mean satisfying people’s basic needs: water, food, house, communications, energy, job, health”. For many commentators (Gupta 2015; Ilgaz 2014) including the Bridge-Development Center (1997, p.6), the focus is on women’s empowerment, that is “women challenging existing power structures which subordinate women”. It follows that what is seen as

empowering in one context may not be in another. Empowerment clearly does have a different meaning in different contexts. For the Oxford Dictionary (2014), to empower is “to give power or authority to ... people or to make [them] stronger and more confident, especially in controlling their life and claiming their rights.” It is therefore the process of giving an individual, or in this case a nation the means of sanctioning one’s own self-improvement. In relation to aid, an empowering agenda refers to a political and developmental approach that is designed to allow the government of a developed country to better address the needs of its population and to enable that population better to hold its government to account. When donors promote empowerment, they focus their foreign aid policies on giving back power to Africans, on making them less dependent on aid resources, on making them increasingly responsible for meeting their own needs. This should, strategically speaking, lead a developing nation, in this case Cameroon, towards economic independence and sustainable development. In other words, an empowering aid strategy is defined as one that responds to the needs of African populations. It enables them to contribute more fully to the economic and political life of the country (thanks for example to better education and healthcare) while also encouraging African states such as Cameroon to be more accountable and more responsive to the poverty reduction challenges which they are facing. Such a strategy enables governments to be held to account and focuses on the development of African society. It does not concentrate on French interests or the promotion of French influence.

As will be seen in our literature review, the studies focusing on empowerment in the aid field have homed in on the promotion of gender equality, human rights and poverty eradication. The term itself can clearly be interpreted differently in different contexts. Empowerment will be taken here not so much as a radical political concept but as a more neutral term reflecting a donor’s recognition of the needs of a recipient population and allowing for the empowerment not only of local populations but also of the aid recipient state insofar as the latter is concerned with ensuring or facilitating poverty reduction (Calvès, 2009).

## **Scope**

To sharpen the focus of this research, it is first worth reiterating that the main concern in this thesis is on the post-Jospin era that is from 1997 through to the 2015. As noted earlier, this was a period of radical change in international development circles and, at least in terms of the policy discourse, in the French aid programme. This contemporary focus does inevitably reduce the scope for discussion of the colonial and post-colonial

decades, but some attempt will nonetheless be made at the end of this chapter and at the start of chapter 4 to outline key features of French aid policy and practice prior to Jospin's promised reforms. This background material should help the reader to gauge the significance of any post-Jospin evolution of France's aid programme. Second, the emphasis of this study is not on the cost or development effectiveness of aid. Instead, this research will look at the fitness for purpose of France's assistance programme as a toolbox for promoting French power in Cameroon or for empowering the Cameroonian state in its pursuit of poverty reduction or its population in its efforts to hold that state to account. It is worth adding that the aim is not to seek to measure the extent of French power or the degree of actual empowerment but, much more modestly, to establish *a priori* whether France has opted for aid instruments that are fit for the purpose of either power-seeking or empowerment.

Third, attention here will primarily be given to bilateral state-to-state aid with a developmental, politico-cultural or strategic purpose. As such, there will be very little focus given to a number of other forms of aid, some of which will be set out below in some detail. The first is private forms of aid, many of which are channelled through NGOs, foundations, churches and increasingly private companies. The second is humanitarian assistance, which generally operates through separate units within government and according to a short-term crisis driven logic. The third is bi-multi assistance. To illustrate, at Saint Malo in December 1998, the French and British pledged to set aside past rivalries, cooperate and "harmonise their policies towards Africa" (St Malo Declaration, 1998). In effect, the focus was to be on tackling the problems of Africa rather than the pursuit of power-seeking. The scale of Africa's challenges was recognised to be too great for either France or Britain; cooperating, both jointly with each other and with the European Union in line with the emergence of Europe's Security and Defence policy (ESDP) from 2003 was now essential (Chafer and Cumming, 2010). The fourth is multilateral assistance, which is widely considered to be a less useful indicator than bilateral *coopération* of the drivers and interests underpinning donor aid programmes. Multilateral assistance is deemed to be more neutral (Hicks et al., 2008, p.30) and "altruistic" while bilateral aid is deemed to give a truer picture of the motivations, policies and practices of donor states (Maizels and Nissanke, 1984, p.15; Berthelemy, 2005, p.7). There is of course a case for saying that bilateral donors will engage in "messy multilateralism" (Chafer, 2011, p.73) whereby they use multilateral donors such as the European Commission to leverage more cash for projects which the bilateral donors want to prioritise. France is renowned for its capacity to exert influence in this way on the European Commission (Cumming, 2016).

However, the focus of this study is primarily on bilateral aid instruments, which with notable exceptions in the security field with, for example, RECAMP, which has been transformed into EURORECAMP, are quite distinct from multilateral instruments: France's bilateral debt mechanism, the C2D, and its various cultural assistance tools are illustrative in this regard. The Cameroonian case is also atypical in terms of relative funding, as France is by far the largest donor to this country. It is, in fact, a significantly larger donor than the UK, the US and even the European Commission. To illustrate, over the last five years the European Commission's total ODA net (OECD, 2015, p.2). (59.22 USD\$ in 2009; 74.22 USD\$ in 2010; 56.94 USD\$ in 2011; 99.28USD\$ in 2012; 85.56USD\$ IN 2013) towards Cameroon was significantly lower than (approximately three-fifths the size of) French total ODA net (90.59 USD\$ in 2009; 82.08USD\$ in 2010; 148.93 USD\$ in 2011; 88.51USD\$ in 2012; 174.3USD\$ in 2013) towards the same recipient country.

The final form of aid that is worth mentioning here but which will not be central to this study is *coopération décentralisée* or decentralised cooperation. This type of assistance from French local and regional governments to their counterparts in developing countries was formally initiated by the French Prime Minister in a 1985 memorandum and was officially introduced in 1992 (Gallet, 2005, p.61). The structures involved in this type of assistance have few direct channels for discussing aid with the French central state. The High Council for International Co-operation (HCCI), created in 1999, did allow for some consultation but this was disbanded by President Sarkozy in 2009 and its successor, the Strategic Orientation Council (SOC), is not proving at all effective (OECD, 2013, p.8) According to the OECD (2013, p.14), decentralised cooperation operates to a different logic and via quite separate administrative procedures from those of "regular" central state aid. Local and regional authorities work in partnership with their overseas counterparts and set up cooperation projects in cultural, educational, economic domains and sustainable development (Petiteville, 1995, p.21). There are currently more than 13000 cooperation projects which are implemented by 5000 *collectivités françaises* (Ministère des Affaires Etrangères et du Développement International, 2014, para 1).

This type of international cooperation started informally in Cameroon in 1966 with a partnership agreement between Bafoussam and Bayeux. However, it was only officially recognised and implemented in Cameroon in 1990 (Bassamagne Mougno, 2007, p.13). The current levels of assistance are not calculated or published by the OECD but in Cameroon's case they are thought to be relatively low compared to France's state-to-state aid programme (particularly its huge debt conversion scheme) (Interview 16; 7

May 2011). In 2008, the overall aid budget dedicated to *coopération décentralisée* (Référentiel A21, 2010, p.1) across the developing world was only €230 million.

Finally, it is worth noting that *coopération décentralisée* and indeed local collectivities more generally are viewed by French policy makers as quite distinct from official development assistance and central state structures. In this context, local collectivities were in fact invited to join the *Haut Conseil de Coopération*, which is otherwise solely open to non-state actors such as NGOs, trade unions, and other members of the *Fonds pour la promotion des Études préalables, des Études transversales et Évaluations* (F3E: the training federation for non-state actors involved in international development work).<sup>6</sup>

## Methodology and Conceptual Framework

In order to meet the research objectives of this thesis, this study will employ a number of research methods. These will be set out in chapter 3 where an attempt will be made to link these methods more rigorously to the objectives of this thesis. For now, it should suffice to note that a process of triangulation will be used to test the veracity of rhetorical claims by French aid policy-makers, and assess how far French *coopération* has, or has not, changed in the field in Cameroon. In line with this thinking, this thesis uses several research methods along with a theoretical framework. The first involves a review of the primary and secondary literature aimed at critically analysing previous research on French-Cameroonian relations, highlighting those writings that deal with key military, economic and political, cultural aid instruments as well as identifying the gaps in the theoretical literature that this thesis aims to fill. The second involves more than thirty detailed Interviews with relevant officials in the case study country, Cameroon, and in France (see Appendix A). These Interviews are used to shed light on the thinking behind aid discourse and identify the priorities of French policy-making elites, as well as the responses of, and strategies employed by, Cameroonian officials in response to French aid instruments. The Interview material was gathered in accordance with Cardiff University's guidelines on ethical research ([http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/socsi/resources/ethical\\_approval\\_of\\_research\\_procedures\\_and\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/socsi/resources/ethical_approval_of_research_procedures_and_guidance.pdf)).

The third concerns the case study method, with Cameroon being selected as the case in question for reasons set out fully in chapter 3. In brief, Cameroon is in many ways a representative case from which it should be possible to extrapolate about wider French aid policy. There are special factors, such as rivalry with Anglophone donors and the Chinese, but these are increasingly present elsewhere in Africa too.

Finally, a conceptual framework will be deployed here, particularly with a view to explaining the drivers behind any evolution or non-evolution of French aid. This framework uses Neo-classical Realism (NCR) (Rose, 1998). According to Lobell et al. (2009, p.10), “Neoclassical realism is an important approach to international relations. Focusing on the interaction of the international system and the internal dynamics of states, neoclassical realism seeks to explain the grand strategies of individual states as opposed to recurrent patterns of international outcomes”. It is recognised that NCR is not typically used to analyse the foreign policy of middle-ranking powers such as France vis-à-vis developing countries, let alone the policies of developing countries like Cameroon towards France. As a rule, it is deployed (effectively) to study the Cold War superpowers (Rose, 1998) and emerging superpowers like China (Sorensen, 2013), now the second biggest economy in the world. Even so, there is reason to believe that it can be meaningfully employed to explain the perceptions of French political elites (the so-called “Foreign Policy Executive”) and the resulting foreign policies of medium-sized powers such as France, whether these aim to maintain influence in former dependencies or to empower those countries to generate sustainability and self-efficiency. NCR theory should shed light on the French aid agenda vis-à-vis Cameroonian and the extent to which it has been driven by concerns over influence or empowerment. It should enable the author to explain the rationale for any evolution or non-evolution in aid policy since 1997 and should do so without requiring the author to engage in the laborious business of process tracing in order to identify the origins of, and drivers behind each individual decision and every incremental change in particular policies.

This conceptual framework (NCR) has, as will be noted in chapter 3, not been without its critics (Omar, 2013). It is for example generally thought to involve a crude definition of power, essentially attributing narrow policy actions to the grand goal of enhancing the relative power of a nation in the international hierarchy of states. This broad-brush approach is fine grained in this study through a focus on hard, soft, and smart power policy instruments. These concepts, developed by Nye (1990), will be used here to provide a more nuanced analysis of the implementation of aid instruments in Cameroon, whether in the form of military training, cultural and technical assistance or indeed debt conversion facilities (Radelet, 2006, pp.5-7). While all three dimensions (hard, soft, and smart) will be taken into account, it will be argued that French policy seeks wherever possible to pursue a smart power approach to aid in Africa. This thesis will, in effect, look at whether or not, the French approach to aid, particularly in the post-Jospin era, has reflected smart power policies to either empower the recipient

countries, or to safeguard France's own interests.

For the purposes of this analysis, clear definitions of these types of power will be required. For now, it is worth noting that hard power is defined by Nye (2003, p.80) as "the ability to use the carrots and sticks of economic and military might to make others follow your will". In practice, hard power includes the use of military might or economic resources to influence political bodies, or shape the balance of power) between nations. A hard power approach to aid involves 'taking power' by force, taking advantage of those with less military and economic power, and putting them in a position where they are coerced to act in accordance with the more powerful nation's will, as an act of self-preservation. In the "aid" context, hard power focuses on coercion, the use of military force, and some types of sanctions and conditionalities, whereas soft power relies on attraction, setting a good example, and facilitating empowerment. For Nye (2003, p.81), "when one country gets other countries to want what it wants-might be called co-optive or soft power in contrast with the hard or command power of ordering others to do what it wants". Put more simply, soft power is about attracting countries to your policy approach, or cajoling them into a form of cooperation which meets a nation's goals, rather than leveraging their weakness in order to get them to capitulate. This persuasion can be achieved through the influence of social media, the manipulation of political opinion through tactful lobbying and the use of non-political organisations to generate credibility and political power. In this context, policy-makers ("the movers and shakers") have an important role and agents often have a degree of discretion. It follows that the particular choice of French aid instruments is likely to reflect something of this persuasive mindset.

In contrast, these two forms of power, when paired together to form a more holistic and unified means of pursuing power, through a combined and highly strategic approach, may be said to constitute "smart power". This latter concept was defined by Nye (2009, p.1) as "the most effective kind of power because it actively recognises that: soft power alone cannot produce effective foreign policy". More specifically, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (2007) defines smart power as "an approach that underscores the necessity of a strong military, but also invests heavily in alliances, partnerships, and institutions of all levels to expand influence and establish legitimacy of action". Smart power can therefore be defined, for the purposes of this study, as a "combined approach to power which focuses on the most effective way to gain power, while maintaining balance in the eyes of the public, while asserting enough force to maintain course with regard to national goals". This definition is elaborated upon in the developmental context by David Booth, senior fellow at the Overseas



Development Institute (ODI), who notes that “the idea of smart aid takes on board that development challenges are typically complex, and so the wisest approach is to respond to development problems in an iterative and adaptive way” (Booth, 2015, p.1).

## Historical Context

Before, proceeding further with this analysis, however, it is worth providing some historical background on France’s relations with Cameroon. The aim of this section is to provide insights into the duration and depth of these relations. In so doing, this survey, along with the first section of chapter 4 which provides an overview of early post-colonial aid structures and policies, seeks to draw attention to the significance of any changes, even if less substantial than the rhetoric suggested, that may have taken place in the post-Jospin era. It also prepares the ground for a better understanding of the choice of aid instruments in the post-colonial era.

It is worth highlighting the fact that the analysis below draws on existing literature rather than new archival research to demonstrate some of the key features of French colonial assistance to Cameroon between the colonial era and Cameroon’s establishment of independence, in 1960. It is recognised that this overview concerns the evolution of French policy, political ties, and aid over a very long period of time, during which considerable policy and institutional evolutions inevitably took place. As such, this synopsis will provide only a brief overview of those changes that are directly relevant to France’s colonial development institutions and policy.

Over the colonial era, Cameroon fell under the direct political control of three colonial “masters”, and the indirect stewardship of the League of Nations (1919-1945) and United Nations (1945-1960).

From 1919 to 1945, both France (in the South) and the UK (in the East) were the League’s mandatory powers with effective control and real power over their respective parts of Cameroonian territory. France administered power in its part of Cameroon, formerly Kamerun, from 1919 to 1945. During this period, France was expected to treat Cameroon, and other mandated territories, in a transparent fashion, providing annual reports to the League of Nations, allowing inspections by the Labour Inspectorate, ensuring a ban on alcohol and the carrying of weapons, and other specifically assigned political policies and approaches. The idea behind the League of Nation’s system was that these territories would one day be able to “stand on their own feet” and that the mandatory power would then relinquish responsibility (Lewis, 1962). As such, France

was entrusted with the task of ensuring that Cameroon would one day self-govern. In keeping with this goal, France had to pay attention to two particularly influential groups whose decisions had repercussions for the French government in Cameroon, namely the League of Nations Assembly, or Parliament, which made the decisions, and the League of Nations Council (Boddy-Evans, 2004, p.3; Interview 7; 16 April 2011).

In line with this thinking, France did not, at least initially, include Cameroon in its regional federation, known as French Equatorial Africa (1910-1958) (FEA) (Packenham, 1991, p.42), but rather appointed a government commissioner who was assisted by an administrative legal counsel. However, like nearly all French African colonies, reflecting a trend also witnessed in British territories, French Cameroon had a two-track legal system, which prevented the growth of independence and the development of self-government. The two tracks created a scenario in which Europeans and *évolués* were subject to the laws of the mother country, while natives were subject to local customary law, although this law was usually interpreted and enforced by the colonial administration (Lee and Schultz, 2012, p.60).

In line with this legal system, French colonial rule (Suret-Canale, 1960, p.75; Gourevitch, 2006, p.25) in Cameroon and Francophone Africa generally fitted with this power-seeking model, aided in no small measure by the doctrine of “assimilation” which underpinned France’s “direct rule strategy” (Echu, 2004, p.90). The French hoped to convert and retrain the African people to live more like the French. This was all part of France’s so-called civilising mission, to improve the quality of life for those whom one former Colonial Minister, Albert Sarrault, in his famous 1923 study *La mise en valeur des colonies françaises*, referred to as “the child races of the world” (cited in Dimier, 2004, p.52). Only through strong colonial leadership could they initiate change, leading to improvement and the much-studied French assimilation of the local African population (Lewis 1962; Betts 1966; Conklin 1998). During much of the colonial period, France did openly claim to be engaged in assimilation, even if the French had to be careful not to overstate this, given that Cameroon was not technically a colony and given the evident link between assimilation and the exercise of power (Lewis 1962; Beti 1972; Dumont et al. 1963; Chipman 1989; Atangana 2008; Kamga 2011; Lee and Schlutz 2012).

France’s “exploitation” of the natural resources of its Cameroonian territory, a country known as Cameroun, was planned and executed by successive French Colonial Ministers, the best known of whom was perhaps Albert Sarrault (1920-1924 /1932-1933), whose doctrine known as the *mise en valeur* sought to enhance the profitable development of Empire. In addition, the French authorities developed a code,

*l'indigénat*, which was introduced from 1887 until 1947 when it was officially abolished and which clearly differentiated natives from the advanced or assimilated. The indigénate code allowed for forced labour and conscription, and flew in the face of the terms of the mandate (discussed above) given to France by the League of Nations (Crowder, 1964, p.489). So too did France's aim, often spelt out in official French rhetoric, to completely assimilate French speaking Africans, including Cameroonians, into the French culture and way of life. France's failure to achieve this goal ultimately had less to do with any concerns over the terms of its League of Nations mandate, and more with the fact that the French government was, as the 1901 French Finance Law stipulated, anxious to ensure that colonies should be self-financing and reluctant to provide the colossal levels of funding that assimilation would have required. In terms of infrastructure, for example, the French authorities built only the roads they needed to transport the resources from Cameroon to France (Betts, 1966). In the health and education sectors, the French administration did build showcase hospitals in Douala and Yaoundé as well as being broadly supportive of the opening of private schools run by Christian missions.<sup>7</sup> However, funding for basic healthcare was practically non-existent and state school funding was minimal, with disastrous results: only 3.2% of the pupils reached primary school certificate level, 1.01% secondary school certificate, and 0.1% the baccalaureate (Zang-Atangana, 1989, p.65).

After World War II, Cameroon became a UN Trustee Territory, and in 1946, was integrated into the French Union (*Union Française*) as an "associated territory" and, more specifically, a UN Trust territory with France remaining the tutelary power. In the post-war period, some efforts were nonetheless made to develop agriculture in French Cameroon, notably via the *Fonds d'Investissement et de Développement Economique et Social (FIDES)* which was established as a colonial development fund in 1946. This should perhaps not be surprising given France's blood debt to Africa during the war, and the fact that colonial development was a condition associated with the United States Marshall Aid Plan (1948-52). Ultimately, however, like the Maginot Loans and Treasury advances of the 1930s, the project work of FIDES, when studied closely, appears to have been primarily designed to benefit France rather than strengthening or empowering any nascent Cameroonian state or improving the lives of indigenous populations (Chafer, 2002<sup>b</sup>, p.46).

Significantly too, despite Cameroon's separate legal status in the post-war years, France continued to administer Cameroon in line with her wider administration of the FEA (Zang-Atangana, 1989, p.72). This anomalous treatment led to protests in the country and raised important questions within the UN. By the 1950s, Cameroon's first

nationalist party, the Cameroon People's Union (UPC in French) (Eyinga, 1993), led by Félix-Roland Moumié and Reuben Um Nyobé, had formulated a clear position and were demanding a radical break from their colonial European power. They undertook civil disobedience and strike action. French officials used brute force (hard power) to repress the UPC, encouraging other passive political leaders, which led to civil war and many deaths. According to Fearon and Laitin (2006, p.42) "estimates go as high as 15,000, with this figure including non-battle deaths". This fact alone underscores the importance of this territory to the French authorities but also begs questions as to how France subsequently managed to retain such a strong influence over Cameroon in the post-colonial era.

It was not until the 1 January 1960 that the French colony of Cameroon and the UK's separate Cameroon gained independent status. As will be noted in chapter 4, French Cameroun was very under-developed and under the control of a President, Ahmadou Ahidjo, favoured by, and favourable to, French interests. His political party, the Cameroon Union, supported a capitalist economy that would maintain strong ties with France (Michel, 1999, p.28). Ahidjo's pro-Western and pro-French stance was played a key role in France's maintenance of influence in this newly independent central African state, and the continued application of some of the same policies and mindsets that applied during much of the colonial period.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter began by noting the broad trend towards harmonisation across the donor community with the adoption of poverty reduction as a new metanorm and the recognition of the need for a needs-based focus. It noted how France has gone along, at least in its rhetoric, with the need for aid to be poverty reducing and empowering. It questioned, however, whether this discourse has been translated into practice, specifically in Cameroon, and in the period since Lionel Jospin's election in 1997, from a power-seeking to an empowering aid agenda. This question and the reasons for any evolution or non-evolution of French ODA policy are central to this thesis. Astonishingly they have not been dealt with in any depth in the existing literature even though they are significant and crucial to gaining an enhanced understanding of the aid programme of one of the world's leading donors as well as the responses of one of its most important ODA recipients.

This introductory chapter has then outlined the key terminology, the scope, the

methodology and conceptual framework, and the historical background to this research. It has stressed that the focus is on bilateral central state-to-state aid from France to Cameroon over the post-1997 period. It has highlighted the importance of Interviews to this research as well as underscoring the significance of our case study, Cameroon, as the most powerful Central African country belonging to *La Francophonie* as well as to the Commonwealth, the Franc Zone and African Standby Force. Equally, it has elucidated our conceptual framework involving NCR and a hard, soft, smart power template. Finally this chapter ended by providing historical background material on Franco-Cameroonian relations, which were over the colonial era marked by a power-seeking agenda by France rather than any concern with needs or empowerment of ordinary Cameroonians.

The next chapter will review the relevant literature on French aid, while chapter 3 will set out in more detail the methodological tools used to achieve the aims of the thesis. Chapter 4 questions whether or not French aid policy in Africa from Jospin to Chirac has moved towards a need-based, empowering aid programme. It looks into the way Jospin's (1997-2002) and Chirac's (1995/ 2002-2007) policies were implemented in Africa and particularly in Cameroon. An analysis of French institutions and above all instruments and reforms during that timeline is undertaken. Chapter 5 seeks to establish whether there has been continuity or a revival of Jospin's reforms under Sarkozy (2007-2012) and, more briefly, the early part of Hollande presidency. The following chapter uses NCR to identify the driving forces within the French administration that have led to the choice of instruments and institutions that will or will not secure influence in Cameroon. Chapter 7 provides an original approach to this question (so often viewed through a Euro-centric prism) by adding the perspective of Cameroonian elites, also through the prism of the NCR, and asking whether France's "smart power" approach meets with satisfaction or dissatisfaction on their part. Indeed, it questions whether they notice any difference in the French approach: is this more a case of policy discourse rather than actual policy implementation? Finally, the concluding chapter (chapter 8) explains how and why policy discourse and implementation have either been moving closer together or further apart.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

As noted in our introductory chapter, the central aim of this thesis is to test a claim that has been made by French policy-makers, namely that the French aid programme has, particularly in the post-Jospin era and in the case of Cameroon, been moving from a power-based, paternalistic approach toward a more needs-focused, fraternal approach. While there are limits to how much can be inferred from a single donor and recipient (a point to which this analysis returns in detail in our next chapter), it should be possible to tell a great deal about France's actual practice, and the extent of any gap between rhetoric and reality, from a detailed study of French aid institutions and instruments as applied in the field.

Given the significance of this topic, it is surprising that the power-seeking versus empowerment dichotomy has not attracted more explicit attention from aid scholars and practitioners. This literature review will move from the specific (French ODA to Cameroon) to the general (aid literature and empowerment more broadly) with a view to showing some of the gaps in the treatment of this topic, and more particularly the absence of any detailed instrument-focused studies of the Cameroonian case. This review will begin by noting the dearth of literature specifically relating to France's aid towards, and relations with, Cameroon, and demonstrating that while some writings, particularly in the post-Jospin era, have looked for a more needs-based approach to French assistance, the bulk of the literature has embedded, and continues to locate, French aid policy firmly within a power-seeking mindset. Given the absence of studies dealing explicitly with the power-seeking-empowerment dichotomy, this review goes on to look for insights into this question in the wider literature on France's aid and broader relations with black Africa. Next, it turns to the wider literature on Northern aid and looks briefly at how the debate on aid and power has been dealt with here. In so doing, it contextualises the French approach and links it to the broader concept of exceptionalism often associated with French policy in the cultural, economic and foreign policy domains (Chafer and Godin, 2006). Finally, it highlights the relative absence of the African voice in the debate on whether aid is influence-driven or empowering. Overall, this review seeks to show not only that there have been no studies specifically relating to the empowerment-power debate with regard to French aid to Cameroon and that this question has been underdeveloped in the wider

literature, but also that the African voice has been missing from this debate and that the whole discussion of French aid has been under-theorised and prone to a path dependency logic. In light of the above French claims to aid reforms have often not been taken seriously and analysts have not taken the trouble to test those claims in terms of a detailed instrument-focused field-study led analysis.

Before proceeding with this literature review, however, it is worth briefly distinguishing between some terms (aid policy, structures and instruments) that will recur frequently in this and subsequent chapters. The distinction between aid policy and instruments will be discussed further in chapters 4 and 5. For now, it should suffice to note that aid policy is taken to refer to government discourse and statements on international development as well as broad trends in aid and its linkages to development strategies, and to the wider foreign policy agenda. Aid instruments on the other hand, relate to economic/ developmental, politico cultural and military/ security forms of assistance, as dispensed South of the Sahara, whether in the form of aid projects, programmes, debt relief, currency support via the Franc zone, military training programmes, technical as well as cultural assistance (see appendix C1, D1). The OECD (2013, p.3) defines aid instrument as “the way donor support is channelled to the activities to be funded”. As to aid structures, these are the institutional bodies and agencies that frame a donor’s foreign assistance policy and which then channel the coordination of its aid efforts (Lawson, 2013, p.7).

## **French Aid to, and Relations with, Cameroon: A Largely Untold Story**

It will be argued here that meaningful answers to our core questions (to what extent and why has France moved away from an influence-driven aid policy and towards a more empowering aid agenda?) are not to be found in the scant literature on French aid to Cameroon. The focus of this initial section will be on studies of France’s aid to, and broader relations with, Cameroon prior to the election of Jospin, while the focus of our next section will be on the post-Jospin era.

Studies of France’s wider policies towards Cameroon will only be touched upon briefly as they are of less direct relevance to the nature of the aid programme. They do nonetheless point overwhelmingly to the idea that France’s approach to Cameroon was interest-driven. While studies of French African policy which include chapters on Cameroon (Mbembe 1996; Renou 2012) are rare, they can provide useful background

information studies, whether on France's colonial rule in Cameroon, under a League of Nations mandate (Matz 2005; Report of the Human Rights Committee 2005; Jennings 2010) and subsequently as a UN Trustee territory (Ayong Ayim 2010; Awasom 2000; Ndi 2014). Needless to say, however, these studies do not say much about colonial assistance (the precursor to ODA), not least since there was little in the way of such assistance programme prior to World War II: the 1921 Sarraut Plan for France's African empire had depended on German reparations which inflation-hit Germany could never afford to pay, while the Maginot Loans and Treasury advances were more concerned with promoting French trade and defence than with colonial development (McNiven, 1972, p.22). The above writings do, nevertheless, highlight the tension between France's desire to exert power in a former German colony, and the much less pressing concern to provide a more enlightened form of rule that would address the needs of the population and lead Cameroon towards self-government.

According to Marxist writers like the Guyanese intellectual Walter Rodney, it is France's exploitative streak that wins out. Rodney (1972, p.33) argues that the French exploited Francophone colonies for their own economic benefit and, with reference specifically to Cameroon, he notes that:

France was so impressed by the military advantages to be gained from colonial rule that when a part of Cameroon was mandated to France by the League of Nations, France insisted on the privilege of using Cameroon African troops for purposes unconnected with the defence of Cameroon.

In a similar vein, authors such as Luckham (1982, p.29) point to France's use of military power and interventions as an instrument of control, notably during the suppression of the UPC riots in the 1950s. Most scholars who focus on France's decolonisation of Cameroon also emphasise the centrality of France's quest for power. Thus, Crowder (1964, p.120), Gerbi (2010, p.206) and Michel (1999, p.430) cast a critical eye on the problematic and bloody decolonisation process in Cameroon, as well as on the establishment of a bilingual state via the Fouban agreements in 1961 (resulted from a constitutional conference held so to decide on the form of unification the Republic of Cameroon should take). These same studies also demonstrate how decolonisation produced a Cameroonian state that depended on France for development and military assistance and thence its very survival.

The literature on Franco-Cameroonian relations over the early post-colonial decades



largely supports the idea that France's approach was interest-driven. In this context, Mongo Beti's influential work *La main basse sur le Cameroun: autopsie d'une decolonisation* (1962), shows how France allowed Cameroon to remain underdeveloped and maintained a relationship with the country that was one of power mixed with clientelism. Adopting a more neutral tone, Atangana (2008, p.45) recounts the history of the relationship between France and Cameroon from the colonial to the post-independence era. He emphasises that the French placed in power people who would protect their interests, a view shared by Rousselot (2010) and Benneyworth (2011). A critical but balanced outline of Franco-Cameroonian relations, and their lack of any meaningful evolution, can also be gleaned from quarterly reports by the Economist Intelligence Unit (2008) and the Europa *World Yearbook* which provides an informative chapter annually on Cameroon.

It might be expected that the writings concerned with the post-Jospin era would point to a recalibration of Franco-Cameroonian relations. However, there is little evidence of a more enlightened relationship emerging. To illustrate, for his part, Kamga (2011, p.20) highlights a cooling off in Franco-Cameroonian relations, but attributes this to the different personalities of French President Nicolas Sarkozy (2007-2012) and Cameroonian President Paul Biya (as from 1982), who put a distance between the nations for personal, not political reasons. As such, Kamga continues to view Franco-Cameroonian relations in terms of power relations and a quest for French influence.

Turning now to the literature on French aid policies and instruments towards Cameroon, this has also taken the view that France is pursuing its own interests, even if it has not completely dismissed the possibility that French ODA (which should after all be concerned with development) might now be marked by a greater concern with need. Some of the key publications that point to France's move away from a paternalistic approach to aid are official. These studies include French government publications in the form of brochures and annual reports, such as the *2014 French Ministère des Affaires Etrangères Report on the strategy of the new French aid development policy (2012-2013)*, *Le Dispositif Français de Coopération Internationale 2004 (1998-2003)*, the AFD brochure on *shaping sustainable futures (2010-2011)*. Another set of quasi-official works by Cameroonian authors, which might be labelled "publireportage", present French aid in an even more reformist light and portray Cameroon as an equal in the aid relationship. To illustrate, M' baku et al. (1985, p.15) adopt a positive attitude towards foreign aid and praise the policies of Paul Biya, president of all Cameroonians, in their 1985 work: *The leadership challenge in Africa: Cameroon under Paul Biya*.

However, studies by independent practitioners and academics have also hinted at a

more enlightened French approach to aid towards Cameroon particularly in the post-Jospin period. Emmanuel (2008, p.38) for example, notes that Cameroon has been receiving aid from France in abundance, and contends that some clear common interests are emerging. The independent *OECD 2013 Peer Review of France: 73-75* devotes a chapter to Cameroon and praises the way France's ODA programme now increasingly respects local aid structures in Cameroon. Bainkong (2010) speaks of a French-Cameroonian partnership in forest governance, albeit recognising that this is largely based on economic interests. For their part, M'bokolo et al. (2009, p.62) review French aid policy towards Cameroon from 2001 to 2007, stressing that it has been democracy-orientated and has recently abided by the principles enshrined in the Paris Declaration (2005). It is also argued that Cameroonians seem not to understand French aid policy, which according to the scholars does not seem to be as constructive as Chinese aid towards Cameroon. In addition, the analysis concludes by underlining the need for the French and Cameroonian governments to recognise their mutual interests in order to build French aid policies that will work in conjunction with Cameroonian local policies to promote development.

Other broadly positive perspectives can be found in a book by Robert (2005) who highlights the introduction of an important new French approach to civil society building, the *Programme Concerté Pluri-Acteurs (PCPA)* procedures in Francophone countries, notably in Cameroon. For his part, Cumming (2011, 2013) traces the evolution of the PCPA, which is explicitly designed to empower Cameroonian NGOs and trade unions. Cumming emphasises this evolution in French aid policy given the French Republic's traditional concerns about supporting unelected intermediary organisations between the state and the citizen. Ultimately, however, he finds that this civil society building programme was above all designed to provide better value for money by increasing the capacity of civil society organisations (CSOs) to ensure that debt conversion monies under the *Contrat de développement et de désendettement (C2D)* (which count as part of the French aid budget) were indeed allocated towards poverty-reducing projects by the Cameroonian government. He also contends that France's support for civil society was not devoid of realist interests: French relations with Cameroon's governing elite, not least with President Biya himself, had been deteriorating since the end of the Cold War, and the *Programme concerté pluri-acteurs* (PCPA) was a way of hedging France's bets and keeping Cameroonian counter-elites on board.

In a similar vein, the evaluation entitled, *Les outils de la coopération Française avec le Cameroun 2001-2007* which the Agence Française de Développement (AFD)

published in 2010 is also ambivalent about the effectiveness of French aid instruments in Cameroon. This official report written by independent evaluators, albeit commissioned by the French government, is less critical than studies by academics and civil society actors of French aid instruments (Deltombe et al., 2010). It points to the potentially beneficial impact of the C2D on the overall French aid programme to Cameroon, and contends that the Cameroonian authorities welcome the implementation of French projects in Cameroon. Cameroonian officials prefer working with the French administration, so as to reinforce and maintain Francophone hegemony in a country, such as Cameroon, which is influenced culturally by different countries. However Cameroonian officials stress that even though they still perceive of France as a privileged partner, they have more choices now in terms of partnership. The report concludes that in terms of financial instruments, the C2D is now the most powerful in Cameroon.

These studies aside, however, the rest of the writings that deals in any way with French aid to Cameroon stress the interest-driven, power-focused and paternalistic nature of this assistance. Thus, for example, studies by pressure groups have emphasised the need to suspend aid and empower the Cameroonian people because of human rights abuses in Cameroon (Human Rights Watch Report, 2013, p.5). Agir Ici et Survie (1995) have also been critical of France's exploitative ties and aid policy in Cameroon. Equally critical, Minfenda (2005) stresses that French aid in Cameroon is self-interested and takes power away from the African state. Belomo (2008, p.60) examines French aid policy in Cameroon in relation to security issues, stressing that since Cameroon became independent, its military and security system continues to be influenced by the French government. This is despite Cameroonian and French officials avoiding reference to this in official speeches. Fokou (2014, p.37) argues that French aid policy in Cameroon continues to be based on the *Françafrique* system whose main goals are to tap into the natural resources of Cameroon and the African continent rather than to improve the development of African countries.

In concluding this first section, it can be noted that the above literature is scant, not to mention under-theorised, and with only very limited space devoted to the role of African agency in determining French aid policy outcomes. There is little discussion of empowerment versus dependency questions specifically in relation to France and Cameroon, and there is only limited treatment of French aid instruments in Cameroon. In addition, there is no attempt in the above writings to extrapolate from the Franco-Cameroonian case the wider implications for French or Northern aid, or for that matter for the empowerment agenda.

While some studies hint at possible reforms kicking in and a greater emphasis on need and empowerment, most imply that French aid to Cameroon has not been and perhaps cannot be reformed, that it is embedded within la Françafrique (Beti, 1962). The implication of many of these studies is that French policy has been based on an everlasting system and there will not be any change, at least until the death of Biya, the doyen of Africa, who currently faces a marginalised opposition.<sup>8</sup> There is a kind of fatalism present in these writings, not dissimilar to the sense of resignation that the author encountered in her Interviews in the field. The following section highlights the key elements of French aid.

## **French Aid in General: Some Key Elements**

Given that the literature on French aid to Cameroon does not take us very far towards answering our research question, it is important to look for insights into the question of power-seeking versus empowering ODA in the wider writings on French development assistance. This review will inevitably be highly selective given that there is a burgeoning literature on French ODA. This, in itself, is hardly surprising given that France has consistently been one of the world's top four donors and the largest bilateral donor to Africa. It is also unsurprising, given how much criticism France has received over the years for the presumed linkage of French aid to Françafrique. Verschave describes the term in 1994 in *La Politique de la France au Rwanda* as the tip of the iceberg that is Franco-African relations, and later in 2006 refers to the secret criminality in the upper echelons of French politics and economy, where a kind of underground Republic is hidden from view, but also the nepotistic, clientelistic, disempowering and dependency-generating relationship that this implies (Brunel 1993; Agir Ici et Survie 1995; Medard 2000; Verschave 2005).

It is worth noting at the outset that French ODA has its origins in the colonial and early post-colonial periods, which were marked by a quest for power and which also saw some early stirrings of a French desire to respond to, or at least be seen to respond to, the needs of African peoples. First, it is essential to understand how this phenomenon is tied to French colonialism in Africa. To illustrate, Andrew et al. (1978), Fieldhouse (1991) and Aldrich (1996) bring out France's leading role in the so-called 'new imperialism' stressing the scale of French conquests, emphasising France's quest for political prestige over its desire to access resources, and highlighting the justification used by France for such conquests, namely the civilising mission (Chafer,

2011, p.69). A similar debate can be discerned in the writings on French colonial rule. Most studies emphasise the importance of the French doctrine of assimilation which, according to Betts (1966), gave France the responsibility for "civilising" its colonies by absorbing them administratively and culturally (Lewis 1962; Conklin 1998; Betts 1966). This, in turn, created systematic ties between French colonial policy and the acquisition of power (Lewis 1962; Beti 1972; Dumont et al. 1963; Zang-Atangana 1989; Lee and Schlutz 2009; Chafer and Cumming 2010). These studies point to a dependency-generating policy by France, but most also recognise a later strand in colonial thinking, *association*, according to which French policy-makers acknowledged the need for a more flexible policy in which existing cultural practices were recognised and the colonised become partners with France in the colonial project. This approach had been developed by the British colonial administrator, Lord Frederick Lugard, and key figures in France such as Jules Harmond (*Domination et Colonisation*) and Marshal Lyautey. This latter doctrine, which was trumpeted in Sarraut's 1923 in *La Mise en valeur des colonies Françaises*, did not refer explicitly to empowerment but did leave space for existing needs, cultures, and traditions, thereby helping rulers to move their territory towards self-government (Suret-canale 1958; Le Vine 1964).

Once again, the question of an interest-driven as opposed to an empowerment focused agenda raises its head, albeit only implicitly, at the time of decolonisation. Thus for example, most writers covering France's decolonisation of Africa stress the fact that France, while providing large volumes of aid in support of nascent independent states, sought to stay on, retain some kind of neo-colonial control and thereby ensure a "successful decolonization" (Chafer, 2002<sup>b</sup>). All in all, understanding that France colonised Cameroon, and other areas of Africa primarily in order to expand their influence and exert power, is key to understanding aid policy today. Further, understanding that France feels a responsibility to the people of Cameroon as former (second class) citizens of *la plus grande France*, and as victims of a violent decolonisation process, is also helpful in shedding light on the French aid decision-making process.

In the post-colonial era, France has offered aid as a single, but very important, aspect of its larger foreign policy agenda. The literature on French aid has mushroomed since the 1960s and includes studies which touch upon it as part of a wider discussion of France's Africa policy (Chafer 2002<sup>a</sup>; Chipman 1989). Others focus specifically on French aid policy and processes (Brunel 1993; Marchesin 1998; Verschave 2004; Cumming 2010), some also home in on particular types of French aid such as project or programme aid (Martin 1986; Freud 1991; Bossuat 2003), debt

cancellation (Lappalainen, 2010), military assistance (which does not count as ODA for the most part: Rouvier 1994; Dumoulin 1999; Gregory 2000; and Utley 2000), monetary assistance under the Franc Zone (De Walle 1991; Lowrey 1995), and finally technical assistance and bi-multilateral assistance in the form of French contributions to Europe's various aid and trade conventions (Yaoundé, Lomé, Cotonou). A core theme running through most of this literature is that of continuity versus change, although a variant on this theme can allow for change, continuity or confusion (Bayart 2010; Cumming 2013; Roussel 2013). As a rule this dichotomy is explained in empirical rather than theoretical terms, and without reference to specific case studies. In effect, the question posed is essentially whether French aid and French African policy more generally are now less exceptional (*La fin du pacte colonial*, 2007), by which is meant less neo-colonial, paternalistic and by implication power-seeking. The link with power is sometimes made explicitly most notably in the work of Bayart (2000), Chipman (1989), Chafer (1992) and Martin (1986).

The literature on French aid (structures, policies, instruments and motives) does, moreover, bring out, often implicitly, elements of the power-seeking-empowerment dichotomy discussed in this thesis. As a rule, writings that focus on the pre-Jospin era are much less inclined to focus on any needs-based French aid agenda than those that cover the last decade and a half. They present a picture of repeated promises to reform aid policies, instruments and structures, followed by the maintenance of the *status quo*, that is a large, dependency-generating aid programme that is driven by the French *Elysée*, the French *Ministère de la Coopération* and a hydra-headed bureaucracy, often with considerable concern being shown to the wishes of francophile African autocrats such as Félix Houphouët-Boigny and indeed Cameroon's Paul Biya (Brunel 1993; Verschave 1998). However, as this review will demonstrate, very few analysts of the post-Jospin period are convinced by France's claims to have moved towards a fraternal, poverty reducing aid policy (Darracq et al., 2013).

To begin with the writings focused on the pre-Jospin period, some of these laid out explicitly France's *realpolitik*-type ambitions in Africa. Thus, the Jeanneney Report of 1964 emphasised how French aid primarily served France's interests by the regulation of commercial exchanges and the mechanisms of the Franc Zone. The Franc Zone offered privileged markets and, if substitute markets could not be found, there would be a negative impact on production in France. According to Jeanneney (1964) the machinery of the Franc Zone is advantageous to France in the following ways: Firstly, the free or partial convertibility of the currencies facilitates transactions, particularly trade. Secondly, this convertibility benefits French men and women living in Franc

Zone countries in that they can freely repatriate any money they earn there; this is of course an advantage for individuals and may not be so for France as a whole for if the balance of payments of a Franc Zone country is in deficit, the repatriation of money from it represents a charge on the French Treasury. Thirdly, insofar as this system pools the foreign exchange earnings of the Franc Zone, it allows them to be used to compensate for temporal and geographic imbalances. However, if France becomes the only country with a surplus in its balance of payments, it then bears the whole burden of this system. Similarly, Parliamentary *Rapporteurs* such as Gorse (*Rapport Gorse* in 1971) and Hessel (*Rapport Hessel* in 1989) recognised that French aid had become too focused on French interests and called for a move away from clientelistic aid policies, and for a reform of aid structures which included the need for greater transparency, the setting up of two organs to be in charge separately of French ODA policy towards Africa and French developmental assistance in general. This shows, to a certain extent, a desire to move away from an interests-based policy to more empowerment.

Other writings dealing with aid structures and instruments during the Cold War period focus on the use of aid programmes and the Franc Zone to perpetuate French power (Martin 1986; Chipman 1989). Yves Berthelot et al. (1975) call for a new type of “cooperation” between African and northern countries. Marxist critics such as René Dumont and Pierre Jalée were even more critical. Writing from a Marxist perspective (Dumont 1963; Jalée 1968; Martin 1986), they all highlight the fact that French aid policy is aimed at securing French influence, creating African dependency, and maintaining *la main basse* on Africa (Beti, 1972). Marxist authors, in particular, suggest that France has sought to retard the development of Africa, and to plunder African resources. Médard (2002, p.12) developed a theory of neo-clientelism and neo-patrimonialism, which stresses the clientelistic motives behind French aid. For his part, Guy Martin (1986, p.31) stressed that French aid was dependency-generating and emphasised the continuing willingness of France to exercise its political and economic influence in Africa, while stressing that France has a long way to go when it comes to promoting genuine democracy in Africa. Capturing many of the aforementioned points, Golan (1981, p.3) wrote an influential article explaining why French African aid policies were able to remain unchanged, largely due to *France-Afrique* and the close relations between French and African elites. Subsequently, Chaigneau (1984, p.30) focusing on Franco-African military cooperation, argued that French military assistance policy is also deeply rooted in the neo-colonialist or imperial past as well as a contemporary policy based on French geostrategic interests.

Studies of French aid dealing with the period before 1997 give little ground for optimism with regards to empowerment. These studies often portray French aid policy as part of a wider analysis of French foreign policy towards sub-Saharan Africa over the post-colonial period (Chipman 1989; Andereggen 1994; Gardinier 2000; Verschave 2000; Engel et al. 2005; Glaser and Smith 2005; Verschave et al. 2005; Pesnot 2008). Post-independence accounts, both old and new, emphasise France's neo-colonial and exploitative ties (Verschave 2005; Agir Ici et Survie 2011) and neo-colonialism, giving independence to its former subjects, to be followed by "aid" for their development (Nkrumah, 1965, p.60). Under cover of such phrases, however, it devises innumerable ways to accomplish objectives formerly achieved by naked colonialism. It is the total sum of these modern attempts to perpetuate colonialism, while at the same time talking about "freedom", which has come to be known as "*néocolonialisme Franco-Africain*" (Verschave, 2005, p.77).

In the early post Cold War era, writings began to anticipate or demand much more seriously institutional reforms as well as a change in French African aid policies towards more of a needs-based approach. Brunel (1993, p.40) condemns the wastefulness of French ODA, squandered on securing the support of African despots rather than helping the poor. Verschave and Boisgallais (1994, p.55) raise similar concerns, as does Pierre Péan (1994). Laidi (in Hewitt, 1994, p.62) stresses the neo-colonial dimension of French aid, while Naudet et al. (1995, p.36) note how France has stood aside from international development strategies such as poverty reduction (Boisdeffre, 1997, p.18), concentrating instead on using aid to maintain ties with Francophile African regions.

Andereggen (1994, p.30) homes in on the economic and cultural ties that Francophone Africa has with France, stressing the benefits French firms derive from the prolonged state of economic dependency that is occurring as a result of failing to improve the aid model. Furthermore, he emphasises France's intention to implement a more comprehensive development strategy towards Africa using, in line with Chafer's concept of "messy multilateralism", multilateral economic instruments for its own interests. De Walle (1991, p.28) likewise explains that Francophone African countries are far behind the Anglophone African countries, from an economic perspective; because the Franc Zone has closed them off from the global liberal economic system. For his part, Cumming (1996) anticipates a change towards an aid programme more focused on democracy promotion but finds that this has not happened, as it would jeopardise French links with key African leaders. Chafer too (2002<sup>a</sup>) postulates that it might be time for a change but notes in the end that France is maintaining its very



special foreign policy and aid relationship with sub-Saharan Africa, expressing the fact that French African policy has always been based on a desire to expand its cultural empire and *grandeur*. The same author notes nonetheless that France did depart from its earlier preference for unconditional aid by linking ODA, in 1993, to economic conditions via the Doctrine *Balladur* (Chafer, 2011, pp.53-62). Ultimately, the findings over the period from 1989 through to 1997 indicate that change was limited at best, with a strong focus on bilateral aid to Francophile African countries, and with the so-called Gaullist Consensus, the Left-Right consensus on prioritising aid to Francophone Africa, remaining in force, even if it was beginning to face challenges (Bourmaud, 1996, p.35). If anything, the French case is singled out, particularly over the Cold War and early post Cold War periods for being disempowering, whether through the Franc Zone (Freud, 1991, p.21), through large volumes of technical assistance (Adda and Smouts, 1989, p.55) or through substantial cultural assistance programmes (Anderegg 1994; Chipman 1989), many of which were underpinned by notions such as *EurAfrique*, which was, according to Dramé (2004, p.20), a fusion project between Europe and Africa following the Second World War in order to reset France *grandeur* in the world.

The post-Jospin period has inevitably seen even more concerted efforts to establish whether the long-promised changes in French aid policy structures and instruments were indeed going to happen. To begin with structures, Julien Meimon (2007, p.19) has shown that French aid policy structures and instruments are based on hegemonic structures insofar as they rely essentially on decisions taken by civil servants who having received their training in institutions that have emerged out of colonial traditions. The same author does nonetheless identify changes to French aid structures in the early 2000s which went beyond the original Jospin reforms. A number of Parliamentary reports also continue to call for a streamlining of French aid structures (cited in Lunsgaarde, 2012). Many studies emphasise the continuing complexity and hydra-headed nature of French aid institutions even if some (Pilon 1998; Cumming 2000) recognise that recent reforms have taken place, particularly since 1997 when streamlining occurred, interministerial committees (see chapter 4) were set up, and structures were put in place to ensure greater aid effectiveness as well as the transfer of responsibility for much aid from the old Cooperation Ministry to the more professional and technocratic AFD. On this last point, some studies emphasise the professionalisation of the institutional framework that has taken place (OECD, 2013 and 2014), not least with the transfer of most of the aid budget from the Cooperation Ministry to the Foreign Ministry in 1999, and then as from the early 2000s from the Foreign Ministry to the AFD (Barbière 2015; Cumming 2015).

On the aid policy and policy instrument front, Marc Pilon (1998) analyses the reforms, announced in 1997 and implemented by 1999. So too do various studies by the Observatoire Permanent de la Coopération Française (OPCF) (1998; 1999). In contrast, some studies of aid post-1997 are more hopeful, and point to the decline of Françafrique and to support for African empowerment broadly defined (Legrand 2010; Dibangui 2012). Mehler (2009, p.2) studies the question of French aid policy towards Africa, underlining the declared intentions of the French president Nicolas Sarkozy, when he came to power in 2007 and pointing to some movement, albeit limited, away from relationships based on implicit networks such as the Françafrique to Eurafrique (Avit, 2005), and towards a more transparent and equal partnership which would challenge the paternalistic Franco-African relationship.

Conversely Médard (2000) and Chafer (2002) focus on the influence-peddling system that has continued between Francophone African states and France since the colonial era. These works find little evidence of a shift towards a more needs-based, soft power style aid policy, but authors such as Mosley (2004, p.25) recognise that French aid is significantly less tied to the kind of tough economic conditions associated with the Doctrine Balladur, and more closely linked to more aspirational poverty reduction targets.

Most of the literature on the Chirac and Sarkozy presidential terms suggests that the move towards an empowerment agenda, even if this term is rarely used, may signal the beginning of the end of Françafrique (Banegas et al. 2007; Won Yong 2010). However, it has also been argued (Gary, 2003, p.126) that there is a warming relationship between France and Francophone Africa as a result of the changes in French African policy, which range from an era of friendship under Jacques Chirac followed by a period of path dependency under Nicolas Sarkozy (Thiam, 2008). This tendency towards top-down analyses of the evolving French discourse on aid is valuable in providing an overview of developments in the French overseas assistance programme. However, it can lead to the assumption either that policy changes have been made across the board when in fact they have been adopted selectively, or that policy discourse, because it has been so often repeated, has been translated systematically into practice in the field. In other words, it can provide a panoramic view of the forest without an understanding of how the individual trees grow and evolve within and as part of that forest.

These studies provide a mixed picture of the changes in aid policy over the post-1997 period. Some writers claim that the French aid programme has undergone substantial changes (Chataigner, 2006; Pacquement, 2010), while others suggest that

French “cooperation” remains largely unchanged (Lancaster, 1999; Moncrieff, 2012). Some authors concentrate more on the consequences of changes or continuity in aid policy. Gary (2003, p.126) argues that France is losing power because of the EU’s actions and the increasingly active role of international organisations such as the UN, in providing aid. He concludes that if France does not reform African policy in a significant way, it could lose control of its connections and interests in Francophone Africa, as well as in Cameroon. For his part Wongibe (2002, p.10) detects a change in French African policy and explains that France’s relationship with Francophone African countries is declining, and France is extending its influence in Anglophone African countries instead. The literature which focuses on the Hollande presidency highlights a continuity of Sarkozysm with a slight change of style in terms of structures being renovated. The common thread is that French African policy, has historically been, and largely continues to be, based on French self-interests (Krakoff 2012; Darracq and Melly 2013). A particularly interesting study in this context by Chafer (2014) contends that French cooperation and wider African should not longer be seen through the prism of *Françafrique* but should still be understood instead in terms of French geopolitical interests.

This view echoes the conclusion reached by most scholars who find that, just as there was little change in the wake of numerous past Parliamentary reports, from the Jeanneney report in 1964 to the Vivien and Hessel reports in 1990, very little of substance has really changed post-Jospin and there remains a serious lack of transparency in French aid policy which continues to be imbued by *Françafrique* (Bayart 2000; Marchesin 2007). For his part, Cumming (2001) identifies a process of modernisation but only within very limited parameters (the transfer of development policy from the Cooperation to the Foreign Ministry is for example counterbalanced by an extension of the Development Minister’s powers). His study highlights, moreover, the continued emphasis on France’s pursuit of *la Raison d’Etat* which is mainly based on French self interests.

Turning to aid instruments, these are sometimes considered separately and sometimes collectively. They can be broken down into the following component parts: economic/ development, political/ cultural and military/ security assistance, each of which could of course be subdivided further into individual, specific, mechanisms, tools and even institutes. These instruments include technical assistance (Sagasti 2005; Afritac 2013), military assistance (Dumoulin 1999; Utley 2000), the Franc Zone (Martin 1986; Freud 1991; Bossuat 2003), project aid and cultural institutes all of which are either a channel for or a form of aid. As noted earlier, there is a dearth of literature

seeking to drill down into actual aid instruments. This is a major gap which this thesis aims to fill.

With regard to the literature on economic/ development assistance, the writings often do not stipulate whether the focus is on project, programme, budgetary or technical assistance. Instead they look at broad trends in French ODA as an instrument of development. They tend to stress its lack of quality on the one hand, (Brunel 1993; Hugon 2010) and on the other, its considerable volume (Cumming 2001; Bossuat 2003). Many studies also look for changes in the nature and purpose of French aid since the end of the Cold War (Dunning 2004; Cumming 2011), and since the introduction of strategies such as structural adjustment (Wilson, 1993, p.5), good governance (Cumming, 2001) and poverty reduction (Naudet et al., 1995).

Focusing on the post-Jospin era, Joannidis (2003, p.25) welcomes the fact that France increased its ODA mostly to poor African countries, while at the same time easing the debt burden. Pigeaud et al. (2003, p.14) underline the commendable work France has undertaken through the 2000 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Africa with regard to improving education, fighting the spread of AIDS, and co-financing projects in African regions. The OECD (2013, p.1) notes that “France is a good donor, but must ensure that poor countries get the aid they need.” The OECD reserves its main criticism for French humanitarian assistance, which only amounts to “0.9% of French ODA ... much lower than most other donors”, thereby compromising “France’s commitment to global burden sharing” (OECD, 2013, p.4). Other authors examine project aid (Lappalainen, 2010, p.6) and debt cancellation as tools employed by France, ostensibly to empower these recipient countries. Cumming (2015) sees a shift in French aid policy under the AFD as it has adopted more innovative instruments associated with holistic evaluation techniques, not to mention innovative financing and blending (the mixing of aid and loans).

Most of the above studies points to the ways particular types of aid have been used to exert influence. The same is true of analyses of cultural assistance (Anderegg 1994; Kanu 2007), as culture represents an essential and integral part of any country’s diplomatic policy. Such studies include the work of Nyamnjoh (1988, p.29) and Andrade- Watkins (1989, p.16) who see the French use of broadcasting and cinema in terms of technical assistance as a means to expand French culture in Africa. Equally, Anderegg (1994, p.12) stresses the cultural side of this relationship through the promotion of instruments such as the *Alliances Françaises* and the *Centres Culturels Français*. Other authors have also homed in on the persistence of the cultural dimension of French aid policy (Cumming 2015; OECD 2013).

Another primary aid instrument to consider is military assistance (Vasset 1997; Gregory 2000; Hansen 2008; Bovcon 2009). There are a wealth of studies that dissect the purpose and impact of French military assistance (Dumoulin 1999; Griffin 2015; De Lespinois 2011). Some scholars (Chipman 1989; Pascallon 2004; Chaigneau 1984) stress how military interventions and training are central to maintaining African regimes and thereby bolstering French influence (Gregory 2000 and Utley 2000; Rouvier 1994). Others point to the role of French interventions in securing French linkages with African autocrats (Clapham 1996; Rahimi 2008). Some writers have seen the beginnings of a more enlightened approach to military assistance. Writing before the Jospin reforms, McKinnon (1964, p.36) states that there has been a shift in French military policy towards Africa from the bilateral to the multilateral, with a significant decrease in the military budget, although he also stresses that France remains intent on acting as a neo-colonial power in Francophone Africa. Ayissi (1999, p.8) posits that there has been a strategic shift when it comes to the different dimensions of French military and security policy from the colonial era until 1960 which dealt with domination until the 1990s, after which power shifts and military strategic adjustments marked the relationship between France and its main Francophone African national partners. Gregory (2000, p.42) is of the opinion that there has been a shift in French military policy in Africa since the Rwandan genocide in 1994, and that this shift was implemented by a new French defence policy in 1996-1997. Significantly, Dumoulin (1997) and Balmont (1998) explain that France has always had an advantage in Francophone Africa when it comes to the military dimension of power while noting that there has been a shift in French policy from bilateralism to multilateralism, and then to Africanisation. Focusing on French military interventions in the Great Lakes Region, Dumoulin (1999, p.55), however, concludes that, from a military standpoint, France is not yet close to leaving Africa.

The underlying, if implicit, assumption of the above studies is that French military support is essentially a form of “smart power”: a particularly targeted form of power based on a mix of hard and soft power and designed to bolster African regimes deemed loyal to Paris. Studies of French military and security related to post-1997 assistance continue to reflect many of the same points regarding the combined use of soft and hard power. However, there is some recognition in the literature of the growing pressures to tailor the old French approach to military assistance, to move towards a more empowering stance consistent with the oft-repeated mantra “African solutions to African problems” and essentially to encourage Africans to maintain their own peace-keeping presence independently (Utley, 2000, p.39). From a military perspective,

France has moved from a strategy of direct military intervention to one which favours African owned processes and indirect assistance (Utley, 2000, p.51). This latter scholar, and others such as Moncrieff (2012, p.8) identify a shift in French military policy towards Africa since 1997 under Lionel Jospin, highlighting the move away from maintaining a large number of military bases in Africa, to developing a much more targeted military presence.

France's ambivalence with regard to reforming her longstanding military assistance policy to Africa is also reflected in studies that cover Nicolas Sarkozy's period in office. Authors draw very different conclusions. Major and Molling (2007, p.10) argue that even though Sarkozy promoted a change to De Gaulle's military policy after his election in 2007, no major change was implemented while he was in power. Conversely, Tull (2001) and Vines and Cargill (2006) identify significant change in French policy, and especially in French military policy, including military assistance towards Africa, which seems no longer to be focused on unilateral operations as it used to be, but on reducing French involvement and increasing multilateral operations. Similarly, scholars focusing on security sector reform undertaken by France (Bagayoko-Penone, 2005, p.15) imply that France is operating a revised policy, with a nascent empowerment agenda. Chafer and Cumming (2010) and Cumming and Chafer (2011) focus on UK and French security and poverty reduction policies in Africa as part of an assessment of the extent of Anglo-French cooperation since the 1998 Anglo-French Summit in Saint Malo. They point to the continued prevalence of realist interests as the core driver of French policy. However, the same authors do recognise genuine progress in terms of security cooperation. They also stress the Europeanisation of French initiatives in training such as Reinforcement of African Peace-keeping Activities, RECAMP (1997) and efforts by France to generate African peace-keeping schools. For his part, Moncrieff (2012) highlights cutbacks in France's capacity to use military tools in pursuit of influence and *grandeur* but ultimately finds that the reforms to French aid, military and African policy will be an inevitable result not of decisions in Paris but of pressures from leaders of African and emerging countries. Chafer (2014) has also touched upon military policy and development aid reforms under President Hollande, pointing to some important but limited changes in terms of three central themes namely: security, partnership and trade. In an Interview from Hirribaren, Chafer (2015) stresses that Hollande, during his presidential campaign, did not really have a structured policy towards Africa, however, the latter claimed like his predecessor that he will put an end to la Françafrique. He further added that the main difference is that while both called for an end to clientelistic aid relations with Africa;

Hollande was much precise about what should replace these.

Much of the above literature on economic, political and military assistance instruments points to another trend, namely a degree of multilateralisation of French assistance, whether in the form of initiatives such as EURORECAMP or contributions to major multilateral funds such as GAVI (for the treatment of malaria, tuberculosis and AIDS). While space constraints do not allow for an examination of the plethora of multilateral aid instruments, it is worth underlining that multilateral assistance is widely thought to be better suited to an empowerment than to a power-seeking strategy (Stiles 1998; Gartzke et al. 2011). It is worth adding that, in this broader literature on aid structures, policies and instruments, one core question keeps coming up: has French aid moved away from the neo-colonial practices associated with *Françafrique*? This literature has produced various responses. Gounin (2013, p.36), for example, claims that French aid has been reformed and Touati (2007, p.24) that it has been “decomplexified”. Cumming (2015) has also seen signs of professionalization and leadership emerging out of the AFD. However, most authors do not believe that French “coopération” policy has been meaningfully reformed (Yates 2009; Machet 2012; Chafer 2013). There continues to be extensive literature calling for the reform of French “coopération” to make it less-dependency-generating, and this literature has tended to find that French assistance has not changed as much as might be anticipated. Indeed, these commentators rather assert that most of the old structures are still in place.

It follows that, while writings before Jospin were marked by a broad consensus that France was engaged in a power-seeking aid strategy, the literature in the post-Jospin era has show greater ambiguity, and a readiness to accept that some signs of a more enlightened, needs-based focus might be emerging. The analysts taking this view include Gounin (2011) and Cumming (2015) and are not merely drawn from semi-official bodies like the French Senate (2013), which points to a more needs-based approach, or international organisations, such as the OECD, whose 2013 report on French aid argues that French policy toward Africa is more about development and less about cultural *rayonnement* (2013, p.2).

In most of the above writings, the focus is primarily Euro-centric and/or top down. In other words, it is on French official aid discourse, as seen from Paris, and then on the broad application, or lack of application, of this discourse. With very few exceptions (Lepidi 2016; Lee et al. 2012), the question has not been asked the other way around. In other words, there has not been any concerted attempt to drill down and focus on the aid instruments in use in a particular recipient country, in this case Cameroon, and then extrapolate from any (lack of) evolution in these key instruments, whether a

change has actually taken place in wider French aid policy, and whether change is indeed empowering or just motivated by further power-seeking by France. This approach will be central to our study and is one that is greatly under-used in the existing literature. There is a need to move away from inferring that a change in French aid policy has taken place simply by looking at the general discourse and then either combining this with the overall statistics for aid to Francophone Africa and cherry-picking cases or datasets. As Cumming (2016) has shown, the tendency to misattribute particular qualities to French aid is particularly prevalent in the quantitative, large-N literature (discussed later) which tends to place French aid near the median, or at least in the category of a fairly “representative” donor on issues that are often deemed to be empowering such as poverty-reduction.

## **The Northern Aid Literature: Insights into Empowerment, Motives and the African Voice**

The first two sections have shown that studies of French aid in general, and towards Cameroon specifically point to the beginnings of a more enlightened French aid policy. Whilst recognising that France’s power-seeking focus continues to be the dominant feature. This review has been useful but it has not shed light on three aspects that are central to our research question:

- (i) what is meant by empowerment in the aid context;
- (ii) what drivers have been behind any shift towards an empowering strategy;
- (iii) what space has there been for an African voice in commenting upon, and shaping, any evolution of French aid. Each of these points will be developed in turn, with reference to selected texts drawn from the vast Northern aid literature.

### **Aid and Empowerment**

On the empowerment question (discussed briefly in the previous chapter), it should be stressed that this is quite a new concept in development circles. Empowerment has its origins in the literature on business and psychology as well as in civil rights movements (Traynor 2003; Calvès 2009). It was in the late 1970s/early 1980s that it came to be associated with international development, particularly women’s empowerment (Bina, 2010). It was subsequently mainstreamed and deradicalised by the World Bank and



OECD (World Bank 2002; Nthogo 2015) which set up their own empowerment teams and policies. Empowerment in the context of this thesis is taken in a broad sense to refer to strategies that benefit the poor, that is, the populations of developing countries like Cameroon, rather than the state elite. It is of course accepted that there may be instances where it is possible to meet the needs of both these groups and that there may be a degree of subjective judgement in deciding what is empowering and needs-focused rather than power-seeking and interest-driven. The broad literature on French and Northern aid does nonetheless provide clear indicators as to what is not empowering, notably policies linked to *Françafrique* and the promotion of narrow French geopolitical and commercial interests.

Calvès (2009, pp.735-749) portrays empowerment as a key concept in contemporary development discourse. The scholar explains that since the 2000s, the term has become the “new credo” of international development organisations on poverty reduction. She adds that the latter is now at the heart of the rhetoric of “the participation of the poor” in development and is strongly criticised today. International institutions, such as the World Bank (2015) and the UNDP (2013); NGOs such as Aid for Africa and regional bodies such as the African Union, with its 2015 year of Women’s empowerment, claim that poverty cannot be eradicated without working to achieve gender equality. According to Hirsch (2013), “Africapitalism” defined as a development model based on using private-sector instrument is the key to African self-empowerment, to stimulate growth in Africa, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, which has six of the world’s ten fastest-growing economies over the past decade. This will eventually lead to possible huge returns for investors and reduce African dependence on northern state aid, which is more and more contested.

Surprisingly perhaps the debate on empowerment has not emerged as an issue in development circles, although this topic does fit in to the wider debate on the role and purpose of aid. The latter debate has been dominated by aid theorists. The Right views ODA as discouraging self reliance, as a “dole” or “handout” (Bauer 1981; Friedmann 1995; Krauss 1997; Easterly 2006; Moyo 2009). Right Wing scholars like Bauer (1981); Friedmann (1995) and Krauss (1997) see aid as a dependency-creating distortion of market forces. On the Left, Marxists see ODA in itself as dependency generating (Baran 1957; Gunder 1966; Wallerstein 1976; Escobar 1995). Left wing theorists like Gunder (1966); Lall (1975) and Crush (2008), view aid as a way of under-developing the “Third World”. Both the Right and Left, however, from their own unique perspectives, agree that aid is seldom designed to empower Third World nations, and instead more concerned with maintaining the power of the donors.

By contrast, mainstream thinkers, notably economists at the World Bank have variously seen aid as a means of promoting growth (Rostow 1990; Ishikawa 2001), structural adjustment (Reed 1992; Bakoup 2013), good governance (World Bank, 1992 and 1994) and poverty reduction (OECD, 1996). These development economists are divided, often over more technical rather than normative issues. Political economists for their part often focus on aid as being an instrument of power. In this context, Mosley (1991) suggests that ODA is primarily an instrument of power. This is further supported by Crawford's (1997) work which stresses the implications of political conditionalities and sanctions on donor power and influence. While most Northern donors now accept the need for aid conditionality, analysts such as Zormelo (1996) question whether such conditionality (which he describes as "an exchange of money for policy action") is consistent with sovereignty. Zormelo's focus is on economic conditionality through the adjustment programmes of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Equally, Kanbur (2000, p.35) analyses aid, conditionality and debt in Africa and claims that there are dysfunctions within the aid system which lead to a strong dependency of recipient countries to Northern countries.

Developing a similar line of thought, Rehman (2004, p.40) argues that there should be a rethinking of Northern aid policy, in particular, as regards the World Bank-led Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) process, which requires developing countries to agree their poverty reduction spending plans with the Bank, their donors and, to some extent, their own populations. Indeed, according to this scholar, the PRSP is not efficient in reducing poverty, as it does not focus on strategic areas such as: access to productive assets, the inability to participate in the market economy, inequities in the provision of health and education to the poor, and the impact of governance. As such, his criticism indicates that aid is stronger if it actively works to empower the African recipient, rather than simply providing increased power for the donor state providing the aid. It has further been argued by Toye et al. (1992, p.125), focusing on the pre-PRSP era, that the World Bank would use aid, through political conditionality, to exert influence in developing countries, but seldom with a distinct interest in developing those nations in a meaningful way, that moves their development forward measurably. Another strand of this empowerment literature drills down and focuses on women's empowerment (Mayoux 1999; Duflo 2012); community empowerment by NGOs and scholars such as Laverack et al. 2001; Craig et al. 2004). At the same time, there are also many voices, such as Ibrahim (2016, p.13) that point to Africans becoming responsible for their own development.

Ultimately, the above studies tend to be top-down, focusing on giant organisations

such as the World Bank or micro-level entities such as small NGOs engaged in local empowerment strategies. There is clearly a need to test the concept of empowerment against the aid instruments of a major donor in one of its recipient countries; that is a key aim of this thesis.

## **The Drivers Behind Aid**

The debate about whether aid is primarily for the benefit of the donor or for the advantage of the recipients is, of course, a common feature of the northern aid literature. However, the narrower question about the shift from a realist, interest-driven approach to an empowering, needs-focused stance has attracted comparatively little scholarly attention in general (Gallagher 2005; Easterly 2006) and none whatsoever in relation specifically to France or Cameroon.

On the issue of aid motives, here the evidence points to Northern bilateral aid, including French ODA, being traditionally driven by self-interest, realist aims and the quest for influence (Little and McKinlay 1977; Hood 1998; Schraeder et al. 1998). The emphasis is on the national interest of donors rather than on tackling the needs of Africans. By contrast, multilateral assistance is found to be more concerned with altruistic empowering goals (Maizels and Nissanke 1984; Cumming 2008; Younas 2008).

Others adopt a more positive view, not least Lumsdaine (1993) and Haas (2012), who assign to aid more gratuities, or charitably motivated reasons for providing aid. These authors posit that an aid regime has developed whereby donors sacrifice narrow national interests by improving the quality of their aid and that they do so out of enlightened self-interest and a knowledge that others will not systematically break the “rules” of the aid game. These authors show empirically how donors collectively agree to improve the terms of their ODA, move away from commercial aid tying towards higher levels of grant aid or concessionality. Some studies (Onyebuchi 2000; Amin 2009; Cibian 2009) actually refer explicitly to aid as an instrument of empowerment that seeks to satisfy recipients’ needs. Moreover, some scholars underline the fact that northern donor policy is becoming more receptive to, or focused on, the needs of recipients (Schraeder 1998; Giffen and Judge 2010). In this respect, Holland and Mohan (2001, p.36) argue that a human rights based approach is emerging in relation to development that could help to resolve African issues. Clist (2011, p.8) likewise notes that poverty reduction now genuinely forms a major concern of most donors which also strive to safeguard their own interests.

As a rule, the comparative and other literature that homes in on France’s motives for

giving aid tend to locate this donor at the power-seeking end of the spectrum. This is particularly true of studies of the pre-Jospin era. To illustrate, Staniland (1987, p.105) emphasises France's willingness to exercise its political and economic influence in Africa, while stressing that it has a long way to go when it comes to establishing real democracy in Africa. Dumont (1963, p.327) suggests that the French loot African resources and have made countries increasingly dependent while pretending to champion international cooperation. The Marxist research centre CEDETIM challenges France, in particular, on its imperialist aid policies, which are said to be linked to the recipient countries' underdevelopment. Rodney (1972, p.91) posits that, since colonial times, the French have always exploited Francophone countries for their own economic benefits.

In a similar vein, Chipman (1989) highlights the linkages between French cultural and diplomatic support for Africa and France's quest for prestige and great power status. In the case of French aid, most donors point to Realist interests. Agir ici et Survie (1995) questions the French government's official motives in its policy towards Africa, which do not seem to be in keeping with their actions and appear to smack of *realpolitik*. Agir Ici et Survie (1994-5) also demonstrates how secret networks and interconnections between African and French officials function to bolster French economic, political/cultural, and military/security power at the expense of the wellbeing of Africans. Even studies of the post-Jospin era underline the importance of *la raison d'état* (Gegout, 2005). Thus, Gabas and Hugon (2001) highlight self-interest while Medard (2000) stresses clientelistic reasons for French aid. Significantly too, Charbonneau (2009, p.85), in his ground-breaking study, denounces official French military/security assistance, which according to him has done more harm than good in Africa, despite what the French government tends to claim. In addition, he argues that this military/security assistance is based on a French imperialistic desire to reconquer Africa.

While studies of the post-Jospin era often tone down their critique, many remain critical. To illustrate, Schraeder et al. (1998) suggest that French aid is driven by cultural and security interests rather than altruistic concerns. Touati (2007, p.62) discuss the real motives of the French aid policy towards the African continent, which they feel to be more focused on the interests of the French government than on those of African countries. Across the northern aid literature as a whole and French aid literature specifically, the study of these motives remains skeletal and significantly under-theorised. Aside from the ideological studies highlighted above, the main and most persistent divide has been between the dominant realists paradigm (Gabas and

Hugon, 2001), and the views of idealist writers like Lumsdaine (1993).

This thesis will provide a more up-to-date analysis of the question of empowerment/dependency by looking at actual instruments on the ground in the decade and a half following the emergence of a new needs-focused, poverty reducing aid strategy by northern donors including France. In so doing, it will go beyond some of the more philosophical arguments by the hard Right and Left and provide an empirically based picture. It will moreover avoid polemical approaches, sometimes adopted by development economists, such as Sachs (2005), who advocates a final, massive push towards a Marshall Aid type plan, and others such as Easterly (2006), who calls for considerable restrictions on the use of aid. Instead, the focus here will be more concrete and more case-oriented, namely on whether French aid instruments have changed in line with French official rhetoric. In other words how far and why, or why not, has the practice on the ground in the form of these instruments matched the policy discourse? This thesis will explain this evolution, not with reference to the dominant classical realist or idealistic framework, but with reference to neoclassical realism (discussed in detail in future chapters).

## **African Voice and Agency**

The last section highlighted the unresolved ideological debate over whether ODA aims at self-interest or creating dependency. The section below stresses that there is very little in the way of African voice or agency in the whole of the aid literature. The African voice is ignored or silent: what is Africa's standpoint on aid policy and the need for an empowering, needs-based focus? This is clearly important given that Africans are the ones who are supposed to be empowered by ODA and given that they should logically have a say over the form of empowerment that aid should encourage, and the type of aid instruments that will best serve their needs.

The aid literature has long been accused of being Northern/ Euro centric in its focus. This accusation still stands today. The view of Africans is not taken into account on questions of aid and the African voice has often not been heard (Nkrumah 1965; Rodney 1972; Martin 1986). There have nonetheless been important contributions to the ODA debate from African and Southern scholars. Some reflections on how intellectuals in the developing world perceive development assistance can of course be gleaned from the critical works of scholars such as Rodney (1972) who speaks up for African nations and denigrates Northern aid which according to him under-develops the

latter. Fanon (1968) claims that empowerment is vital for Africans to be entirely free. More recent African scholars include Ake (1996, p.14) who argues that African development policies should be introduced from within and not from without. In the same vein, in her *Dead Aid* study, Moyo (2009, p.5) explains why aid is not working in Africa, while putting forward some solutions. These writers see ODA as an instrument of power and their views are echoed by Bindjouli (2006, p.11) who highlights the nonsensical nature of Africans who act in favour of aid policy towards Africa as well as the nonsense of the policy itself: African countries are still importing their resources and models.

Some Africans are nonetheless more positive about the empowering potential of aid. According to Ngang, (2008, p.1) aid has significantly contributed to the current level of African economic growth but has made no significant contribution to economic development. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni (1992, p.62) calls for trade alongside aid and underlines that, with regard to international cooperation, his view is that Western countries, in particular, have a moral obligation to help the Third World economically, because in the past, they expropriated considerable resources from Africa, Asia and Latin America, and therefore are morally bound to compensate for this transfer. This view is echoed by Abbas et al. (2009, p.77).

The question then becomes whether aid to Africa is a redeemer or a coloniser. For Orijako (2000, p.159) the answer is aid is killing sub-Saharan Africa. Calderisi (2006, p.22), too, questions why ODA is not working. Authors such as Joseph et al. (2008, p.133) have tried to find new ways to help Africa, claiming that smart power will help the continent develop, while Wohlmuth et al. (1999, p.20) state that the solution is to empower Africa economically. Overall, however, there is only limited evidence of a shift in African thinking with regard to aid as a needs-based tool. In the case of French aid, there has long been scepticism in the writings of African and Southern scholars (Nkrumah 1964; Martin 1986).

Much has been written on development aid policy and particularly about the relationship between former colonies and colonisers. It is widely lamented in this literature that many parts of Africa are now poorer than they were at independence, and that countries which used to be labelled as developing countries have, despite decades of aid, now been downgraded to Highly Indebted Poor Countries (Interview 7; 16 April 2011). Mccrown (1996, p.260) urges African countries to develop and follow their own model of development, which would be more appropriate to African realities compared to the policies promoted by the Bank and International Monetary Fund. Their policies do not take into account the specific African issues which need to be tackled to

achieve economic, political, and cultural development. Jallow (2010, p.22) underlines the fact that, although Southern countries have been receiving foreign aid for the past fifty years, they are still not developed. Since the start of foreign aid policies, the former African colonies have received approximately \$5 billion between 1960 and 1997, which equates to four Marshall Plans (Ibid). As a consequence, he acknowledges that, instead of developing ex-African colonies, foreign aid has been under developing African countries. In many cases, only a few African elite have become much richer, and the lack of transparency is blocking a more effective aid policy. Jallow also focuses on the controversy raised by the MDGs through doubling aid following the findings of Burnside and Dollar (2000, p.6) who claimed that ODA has a positive impact on developing countries' GDP growth within a framework of efficient institutions and policies. Much of the contribution by these African writers has been to assume that aid is neo-colonial and should be reformulated. Unusual among these scholars is Moyo (2009, p.20) who calls for the end of the current aid architecture which she deems not to be working.

As a rule, neither African nor European scholars allot much space to the role of Africans in shaping aid policy. There are exceptions. Thus Manning (1998, p.35) urges that Africans should take part in the aid decision progress, notably the growing African diaspora. Abuzeid (2009, p.16) claims that the fact that donor countries do not completely implicate recipient countries within the foreign aid decision process has led to negative impact and lack of sustainable development. Equally, Moncrieff (2012, p.17) includes the voice of Francophone African leaders, stressing that French banks controlled 70 per cent of the zone's banking activity. Agir et Survie (2007) also raise this point but emphasise the corrupt nature of African "dinosaurs" like Omar Bongo and Félix Houphouët-Boigny.

The role of African agency can, moreover, be discerned in some case studies on aid. Thus there have been general studies of the responses of aid recipients to northern ODA (Berthélemy 2005; Moon et al. 2010). There have also been key texts analysing the attitude of recipients towards French aid (Deanboe-Martinussen et al., 1972). Authors such as Joseph et al. (2008, p.133) have tried to find new ways to help Africa, claiming that smart power will help the continent develop, while Wohlmuth et al. (1999, p.20) state that the solution is to empower Africa economically. There is clearly a major gap in the literature with regard to the Southern/African/Cameroonian perspective on ODA. Not surprisingly given the points raised above, there has been virtually no analysis of Cameroonian responses to the policies of the former colonial powers. There have, of course, been some general studies on the history and politics

of Cameroon, and these analyses do sometimes contain comment on the French approach.

Official African studies are useful in that they suggest a rather positive government attitude towards aid. Much secondary literature by Cameroonian academics reinforces this; Mbaku et al. (2003, p.15) praise the policies of Paul Biya as the president of all Cameroonians. This contrasts with the views of critical publications by Cameroonian NGOs like *Plateforme dette et développement* (2003). The bulk of the literature on this topic is produced by the Cameroonian government itself. Just as with the French official documents mentioned above, these writings are heavily biased and overly positive in relation to the French approach. However, even here, question marks arise in regard to French aid policies, and whether the influence of this former power should be curtailed or allowed to continue. This is a question which has not been meaningfully examined before, and which will constitute another original feature of this thesis.

All of the aforementioned writings have tended to focus primarily on the donor, its motives, the effectiveness of its programmes, its choice of instruments and structures. Most writings tend to ignore the African voice, the perceptions of aid on the part of actual recipients. It is an anomaly in the literature on aid for the Southern perspective to be ignored in this way. The fact is that donors make aid decisions in consultation with recipients and the role of the latter must be considered. On the whole, however, the role and perceptions of African officials is largely neglected in the literature, as is any discussion of their involvement in the aid policy-making process. A key contribution of this thesis will be to show how Cameroonian officials do indeed influence the choice of particular French aid instruments and to theorise these findings using a neoclassical realist approach applied not only to French policy-making elites but also Cameroonian elites (see chapter 6). A whole chapter (chapter 7) based on local Interviews, will be dedicated to showing that Cameroonian elites facilitate the setting up of French aid policy in Cameroon.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter began by reminding the reader of our research questions and the originality and significance of this research. It went on to explore the literature on Franco-Cameroonian relations, on French aid in general and on Northern aid policy and policy-making. These writings have highlighted many trends and pointed to numerous key moments, one of which is undoubtedly the election in 1997 of French



premier Lionel Jospin. The literature has nonetheless neglected to study the power-seeking/ empowerment aid debate, and paid only scant attention to the structures and instruments of aid policy. Furthermore, most of the scholarly writings point to the predominance of *realpolitik* interests in the case of French and Northern aid. This would suggest that aid donors and most notably France, have long been and they continue to be driven by the quest for power and influence rather than by the need to empower recipient countries. Yet this question has not been adequately examined. Has French aid policy shifted towards an empowerment and recipients' needs-based approach, as promised as by Jospin/Chirac, Sarkozy and more recently by Hollande? And if so why? And if not, why not?

Clearly, there is a need for a study on this topic. In particular, an up-to-date analysis of France's relations with one of its most important African aid recipients is required. Furthermore, there is a need to establish from this case study whether France's rhetoric on aid as a form of empowerment has any substance. If it does not in Cameroon, this does not mean that it does not apply elsewhere. But it does cast doubt over French assistance programmes across Francophone Africa. Finally, there is a need for a theoretically underpinned study that can provide new insights into empowerment versus dependency-generating strategies which can also demonstrate the workings of African agency, particularly the role of Cameroonian officials in France's determination of aid policies and instruments. It will be to these instruments and to our wider methodological framework that this thesis will now turn.

# Chapter Three: Methodology and Theoretical Framework

## Introduction

Having set out the aims of this research and demonstrated that there are indeed important gaps in the literature on France's aid policy, policy-making processes and practice with regards to Cameroon, it is time to return to the research question which is as follows: with reference to the Cameroonian case, to what extent, how and why have French governments, over the last decade and a half, moved away from a power-seeking towards an empowerment-based approach to aid? In order to respond to this question, a number of research methods will be deployed and a theoretical framework will be elaborated. This study will draw upon the following research methods: consultation of primary and secondary sources, including unpublished material not referred to in the literature review; a detailed country case study; semi-structured Interviews conducted in line with recognised codes of research ethics. This study will also make use of a theoretical framework that is based on neo-classical realism (NCR) and combined with a template / typology of different types of aid.

Each of the above research methods will be detailed in the course of this chapter. Before doing so, however, it is worth making two observations relating to the reasoning behind this approach. The first point is that the selection of this range of research methods was determined by the need to compensate for shortcomings in the use of any single technique. In effect, this study is using a process known as triangulation to cross-check the findings that are delivered through the use of particular research methods. According to Altrichter et al. (2008, p.57), triangulation "gives a more detailed and balanced picture of the situation". Furthermore, according to Cohen et al. (1986, p.79), "triangulation is an attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint". Denzin (1978) recognises four basic types of triangulation, which are: (a) data triangulation which deals with time, space, and persons; (b) investigator triangulation, which underlines numerous researchers in a piece of research; (c) theoretical triangulation, which highlights the use of more than one theoretical framework in a study; and (d)

methodological triangulation, which illustrates the use of several methodological tools, aimed at gathering data based on Interviews, observations, questionnaires, focus groups, and documents. The triangulation used here is the fourth type, with research methods complementing one another to inform the analysis and make it more authoritative. This point will be illustrated with reference to primary research material in the next section of this chapter.

The second observation relates to the selectiveness and rigour of the research methods employed, this is perhaps best illustrated with reference to one method, namely a questionnaire/survey (see appendix B), which was drawn up and undertaken in connection with this research before being set to one side. The original thinking behind this survey was to explore the “African voice”, that is, to uncover a range of Cameroonian perspectives on French policy in Cameroon. Thirty people were surveyed. They constituted a sample of Cameroonian individuals that included leading scholars, students, and members of the public, members of the Cameroonian elite in Yaoundé and some representatives of the French authorities in Yaoundé. The questionnaire was either handed directly to individuals in their offices or was handed out in the street at various points in the capital, Yaoundé (in markets, in front of shops), with informed consent and anonymity being central to the survey process throughout. Ultimately, however, the author recognised that the sample was not large enough and that resources would not allow replication of this survey outside the capital in any of the other main centres. As such, the findings were potentially skewed, based on a sample that was not socially or geographically diverse enough and difficult to use meaningfully in support of the arguments of this thesis. It follows that this survey has not been used in this thesis, even if reference is made to it in chapter 6 to point out that its findings were consonant with the Cameroonian responses to French aid elicited in the Interviews conducted for this thesis.

## **Analysis of the Primary and Secondary Literature**

Turning to the first of the research methods referred to above, this involves analysis of published and unpublished primary and secondary literature, some (but by no means all) of which has been covered in our literature review in chapter 2. Primary sources are particularly valuable in highlighting the policy discourse of French officials and government ministers and in identifying rhetorical claims to the effect that some kind of

substantive change has taken place in French aid policy over the post-Jospin period. Particular attention will be paid to the promises of French Presidents and their senior ministers in relation to aid objectives, not least their claims to be linking the French aid programmes more to a more needs-based, poverty-reducing and empowering agenda. In order to gain access to such discourse, the author will draw upon the so-called “*matière grise*” (brochures, annual reports and communiqués by government bodies and civil society organisations), as well as (often) unpublished papers and online journal articles, periodicals, academic and official reports, PhD theses, Masters Dissertations, course material, and lecture notes, not to mention blogs which feature relevant material and information that come from authoritative sources and/or can be independently verified. Such materials could only be accessed via pamphlet collections in major libraries (e.g. the London School of Economics; SOAS University of London), NGOs archives, and local Cameroonian sources, not excluding of course, extensive internet searches.

This policy rhetoric will of course not be taken at face value but will be subject to the aforementioned process of triangulation. Needless to say, the primary literature on French aid to Cameroon can present a broadly, indeed overly, positive picture of aid relations with Cameroon as well as of French motives for providing ODA. Consequently, another research method will be deployed to cross-check these findings, particularly semi-structured Interviews (discussed more fully below) with a wide range of official and non-state actors from France and Cameroon. These Interviews will be used to compensate for possible bias in the primary source material. So too will the use of internationally recognised authoritative aid data sources such as the OECD, to triangulate (Denzin, 1978) the kind of claims that are often made on official websites. By way of illustration, it can be noted that the AFD claims that it “fights against poverty and promotes development in Africa” (AFD, 2013, p.8). Similarly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development asserts that “French aid policy aims at reducing poverty and working towards sustainable development” (2015). Ministerial speeches are equally generous with their praise of ODA efforts, with Henri De Raincourt (Minister in charge of Cooperation 2010-2012) claiming on 3 April 2012 that ‘France does not intervene militarily any more ... only at the demand of local authorities’ (Directorate-General of Global Affairs, Development and Partnerships, 2011). This policy discourse is clearly important and relevant to this thesis since, if it checks out against Interview findings from a range of sources as well as aid figures and practices on the ground then it could indeed point out to a possible shift in French policy away from a power-seeking towards a more genuinely needs-based approach.

It should be added that some triangulation may also be needed in relation to secondary source material. While it may be assumed that much of this latter material is independent and, in most cases, subject to peer review, there are of course differences of opinion between academics and development practitioners as well as between academics themselves. Practitioners often have a more practice-based approach to aid which takes more account of the realities on the ground whereas academics may prefer a more top-down focus on French African policy. As noted in our literature review, academics may disagree among themselves over the extent of change in French African and “cooperation” policies, over the motives behind French aid and over the role of Africans in the aid policy-making process. Semi-structured Interviews, extended field research and an extensive review of the secondary literature have all been used to shield this study from the potential bias that may be present in any single secondary data source.

## **Case study**

Turning to the second method, the case study, it should be clear that France itself or French aid specifically is in many ways a case study, that is to say one case among the 29 OECD/ DAC donor countries. As our review in chapter 2 has shown, analysts are divided over whether, as much of the qualitative case-oriented literature suggests, (Schraeder, 1995) France is an exceptional case as a donor or whether, as the large N, variable-oriented literature implies, (Clist, 2011) it is broadly in line with wider donor trends. This research will of course seek to draw conclusions from the French case about wider developments in the international donor community and about broader trends in aid policy.

However, the main sense in which the term ‘case study’ is taken here is in terms of recipients of French aid. In other words, the focus is much more bottom-up and looks at a case study country in which French aid is disbursed and seeks to establish whether aid practice in the field confirms or invalidates claims regarding the evolution and reform of French cooperation policy. It should be possible on the basis of this instrument-based case study analysis to state whether the promised changes in aid policy have taken place and to generalise, on the basis of those findings, about the wider implications for French ODA policy and indeed the wider donor community.

The reasons for selecting Cameroon as our case will be set out below. Before doing so, however, it is worth spelling out what is meant by a “case study” and the processes

by which these should be selected. According to Thomas (2011, p.80):

Case studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods. The case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of phenomena that provides an analytical frame ... within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates.

In selecting the case study, some analysts opt for random sampling, which involves “a variety of selection techniques in which sample members are selected by chance, but with a known probability of selection” (Harter, 2008, p.32). Random sampling lends itself to large datasets and while it is true that France has many aid recipients (around 100 countries receive some form of French assistance), it is widely recognised that some recipients are a higher priority than others. This has long been the case with the 34 countries of the champ and the 54 countries of the ZSP, not to mention the lists of top twenty aid recipients provided annually by the OECD via its *Development Cooperation Report*. French aid has in fact long been concentrated on around two dozen countries, most of which are in Africa, are Francophone and former colonies. It follows that the selection of a Francophone country with links to France dating back to the colonial era will provide a clearer set of insights into French aid thinking than randomly selected ODA recipients.

In this instance, the random sampling technique will not therefore be employed. Instead, the author will use information-oriented sampling (Thomas, 2011) to select the Cameroonian case. This sampling method is more purposive in that it pre-identifies particular features that are likely to shed more light on a particular policy, actor or process. It is widely considered to be a case study selection technique which helps “to maximize the utility of information from small samples and single cases. Cases are selected on the basis of expectations about their information content”. The choice of Cameroon as a major French aid recipient, a Francophone African country and a former mandate of France, all suggests that this case will provide insights into any long-term evolution in French aid thinking. It also gives us the confidence to assume that the aid programme is large enough for separate instruments in different sectors to be identified, thereby enabling us to potentially differentiate between developments taking place in one sector or instrument from those taking place elsewhere. In other words, it paves the way for a more nuanced approach.

Information-based sampling effectively makes use of a combination of purposive sampling and snowballing (Bent et al. 2004, p.95). The former preselects certain key features that must be present in the case. The latter technique, snowballing, builds upon the existing data sources present in the original sample. In effect, it expects that the sample will produce data referring the analysts to other sources. To illustrate, the author will interview Cameroonian officials and French policy-makers working on Cameroon who will then refer the author on to other actors also dealing with Cameroon or in some cases dealing with Cameroon and other countries in central Africa.

It is important to note that there are many different categorisations of case studies. These have been undertaken by, among others, Eckstein (2009); Lipsey (1993); Thomas (2001) and Giampietro et al. (2004). At the risk of oversimplification, only the techniques by Thomas (2001) and Hague et al. (2004) will be outlined below, with the emphasis being placed on the approach advocated by the latter, which appears *a priori* the most useful in this context. To begin with Thomas (2001), he distinguishes between three types of cases, namely key cases, outliers, and local knowledge cases. A “key” case is said to be a potentially very rich source of data and attracts wide interest regarding both the topic and its wider context. Cameroon could clearly be classified in these terms, not least since it is a country of intrinsic interest in itself, with its strong Anglophone-Francophone divide and its challenging relations with its neighbour Nigeria. It is also embedded within a continent that is of growing interest not only to France but also to emerging powers such as China, and which has been dubbed by some analysts as “the last investment frontier” (Halligan 2012).

The outlier case is, according to Thomas, one that is atypical from an aid recipient perspective. It is also one which as, Yin (1993, p.76) argues, “tends to yield more information than average cases”. The extent to which the Cameroonian case is different or distinctive is a point to which this chapter returns shortly.

The last category, a local knowledge case, is one that draws heavily on the knowledge of the researcher on the topic. The author of this thesis was born in France, grew up in France and Cameroon, giving her the knowledge to pursue this research as well as affording access to senior Cameroonian policy-makers and other primary data required to conduct a thesis on the sensitive subject of aid to Cameroon. In such instances, according to Fenno, the researcher is able to “soak and poke” (1986, p.45).

It could be argued that Cameroon has elements of a key, outlier and local knowledge case insofar as it contains features of all three of the above. This should not be a major methodological problem in itself but what is perhaps more of an issue is that the various categories of case are not mutually exclusive. This for example the local

knowledge case could be an outlier or a key case. It would simply depend upon where the researcher concerned was born and acquired his or her local knowledge.

While the above categorisation is useful, it does allow for a very wide interpretation of case study types. As such, a more tightly focused approach is adopted for the purposes of this thesis, namely the typology developed by Giampetro et al. (2004) who distinguish between three categories: deviant case, that is, “an exception to the norm” (Ibid, p.81) and hence out of line with wider trends; a “representative case, that is to say, typical of the category” and hence in line with wider trends (Ibid); and a “prototypical case”, one which lays down practices and ideas that might subsequently be “expected to be typical” (Ibid).

It will be argued here that Cameroon has, in fact, elements of a deviant, representative and prototypical but that these elements are mainly discernible because this is a detailed and quite complex case study spanning different sectors and aspects of French ‘cooperation. Clearly Cameroon has many elements that are consistent with a deviant case, that is to say, one that is out of line with other French aid recipients but from which some extrapolation is possible because it is different. Cameroon is exceptional or at least distinctive, in a number of respects. Above all, it has a unique bilingual (French and English) profile on the African continent insofar as it has long been, and continues to be, the focus of Francophone and Anglophone influences, not least during the colonial era but also in the post-colonial period in the context of the World Trade Organisation, the UN Security Council (particularly at the time of the second Iraq War) and within both *La Francophonie* and the Commonwealth.<sup>9</sup> Cameroon does, moreover, exhibit deviant characteristics, even when compared to other bilingual African countries. To illustrate, Mauritius and the Seychelles were first French then UK colonies, while Rwanda and the RDC are former Belgian colonies that do not possess any shared historical background with either France or the UK. Cameroon is therefore unique insofar as it was simultaneously both a French and UK colonial mandated and trustee territory and later a country, that has continued to attract more explicit competition between the Francophone and Anglophone blocs (most notably in response to the rise of the Anglophone politician John Fru Ndi in the early 1990s) than has typically been seen in either Mauritius or the Seychelles (Assane 2010; Interview 14; 30 April 2011). It is worth adding that Canada and Cameroon are the countries most commonly recognised for having both English and French as officially spoken languages (personal communication; 5 December 2012; Schneider 2007). Another highly distinctive feature of the Cameroonian case is the fact that it was, alongside Togo (land) one of only two African mandated territories “handed



over” to both France and Britain as part of the 1919 Versailles Treaty. It could be assumed, even if this is not borne out by the facts, that the influence of France as one of two mandated powers could be significantly lower than in a former colony, where France had more prerogatives. Finally, Cameroon is unusual in that economically, it is arguably the only economically viable former French colony in central Africa and, more specifically, the Central African economic and monetary community: CEMAC (Assane 2010; Interview 14; 30 April 2011), not to mention an oil-rich state. Conversely, Cameroon is one of the most heavily indebted countries in Africa with substantial debts owed to France. This fact sits uncomfortably with another distinctive feature of the Cameroonian economy, its high level of indebtedness to France. Until the signature of the C2D in Cote d’Ivoire, Cameroon’s debt for development contract (discussed later) was by far the largest bilateral debt refinancing programme ever conceived for any African country.

At the same time, the Cameroonian case should not be seen as one-dimensional and it would be wrong to overstate its exceptionalism or uniqueness. In fact, it has many elements of a representative case, from which generalisations can be made, effectively on the basis that Cameroon has features that are typical of those present in other aid recipients. For a start, Cameroon was in many ways treated by France like any other colony (Konde, 2012) and, along with 13 other African countries, became a member of the Franc Zone (1945), which used to be directly linked to the French Franc, and is currently linked to the Euro through France. It can moreover be inferred from a brief survey of other sub-Saharan African countries that have been marked by bilingualism (Mauritius, the Seychelles, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (RDC)) that Cameroon is not a unique case. In effect, Cameroon has seen its political, economic and social landscape shaped in many of the same ways as other bilingual countries. To illustrate, Mauritius was in the hands of France until 1810, when the UK took control of it, pegging the Mauritian Rupee currency to sterling from 1934 to 1978 just as France pegged the FCFA (Central African Franc) as from 1945 to the French franc (now the euro). The colonial contact between Mauritius and France/ the UK has left marks on the educational structure, which is based on the UK system, and the judicial system which is based on English Common Law and French Civil Law. With French and English as two of the four most spoken languages, Mauritius is a member of the Commonwealth since its independence in 1968 and *Francophonie* since the creation of this organisation. Both the DFID and AFD have set up a customised Mauritian aid policy (Peter, 2005, p.31). Similar observations can be made in relation to the Seychelles, which became a member of the Commonwealth and *Francophonie* in

1976. The island was controlled by the French authorities until 1810, when the country became a crown colony; this was formalised through the Paris Treaty of 1814 and it became independent in 1976.

A rather different case is represented by Rwanda which became a member of the Commonwealth in 2009, even though this former Belgian, French-speaking colony has traditionally been associated with *La Francophonie* since 1970 and had a French presence since independence in 1962. UK influence has increased as a consequence of the 1994 genocide and of the fact that the French are widely assumed to have helped precipitate the massacre by the Hutu regime (Cumberland, 2012). The new Tutsi-led Rwandan authorities under Paul Kagame, brought up in Uganda, responded by turning their back on the French language, opting instead for English, despite "the lack of a UK colonial past or constitutional link to UK" (Orijako, 2000, p.76). The current official language is now English and not French, which has been banished from the educational system. Both DFID and the AFD have set up a customised aid policy for Rwanda. Both the DFID and the AFD (since aid resumed in 2010) have tailored their aid programme to account for bilingualism. Finally, as for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), this is a member of *La Francophonie* (1977) but not yet a member of the Commonwealth, although it is currently applying (Commonwealth 2011; *La Francophonie* 2011; Interview 14; 30 April 2011). As with Rwanda, the DRC, even though it does not have historical ties with the UK, has shifted from a Francophone to an Anglophone framework, and appears to be gradually switching from French as the official language to English.

It follows that Cameroon is not exceptional insofar as it shares similar linguistic histories and rivalries with a number of other African states, not to mention a broadly similar colonial history with Togo (a former German protectorate that also became a French League of Nations mandate in 1922 and UN trustee territory in 1946). It is also worth noting that some Francophone African states are turning away from French. Senegal for example has been turning increasingly towards the local Wolof language since 2012 (Colombant, 2012, p.22). Nigeria has agreed to make French the second language taught in schools since 2008 (Abimbola, 2016, p.1).

Finally, this case study may potentially have some prototypical features, that is to say some model elements that might be copied elsewhere in the French aid programme or even by other donors. France's approach to Cameroonian debt via the colossal and longstanding C2D in Cameroon could serve as a template for future C2Ds, notably in Ivory Coast, and for other debt reduction programmes. Similarly, France's aid to the environmental sector and its investment in regional military schools,

discussed in our later discussion of aid instruments, could equally offer lessons for future directions in international development policy. It will be interesting to see whether generalisations or wider ramifications can be gleaned from the findings that relate specifically to Cameroon. However, the potential of a single case to circumscribe the field and provide a much broader understanding of a topic is inevitably diminished by its specificity, its lack of representativeness, and by the need (inherent in most qualitative case study analysis) for a certain degree of subjectivity. At the same time, the benefits of a detailed case study should not be underestimated. Such cases require a more detailed collection of data (Word Press, 2012) and allow for thick, rich description that captures layers of complexity that are often lost in large N, variable-led studies. As Cameroon has long been a recipient country that has traditionally benefited from a wide range of instruments, it is a useful, potentially a model case study to evaluate how effective or not these instruments have been in either securing influence or empowering the country.

## **Interview analysis**

Turning to the third research method identified in our introduction, semi-structured interviews, we should perhaps start by defining what an interview is in the context of research of this kind. At its most basic, it is simply “a purposeful conversation in which one person asks prepared questions (interviewer) and the other answers them (respondent)” (Frey and Oishi, 1995, p.1). Jensen and Jankowski (1991, pp.8-9) provide a little more detail, observing that interviews are conducted to gather information on a particular topic or a particular area of research. Interviews are a useful tool which can lead to further research using other methodologies such as observation and experimentation.

Interviews enable researchers to collect the necessary data, both extensively and intensively, as well as facilitating the exchange of data and experiences relevant to the topic. According to Palena et al. (2006, p.56):

In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, programme, or situation. For example, we might ask participants, staff, and others associated with a programme

about their experiences and expectations related to the programme, the thoughts they have concerning programme operations, processes, and outcomes, and about any changes they perceive in themselves as a result of their involvement in the programme.

Interviews are important because they enable the researcher to adapt easily to each person interviewed; they can provide an effective sample of the population leading to useful results directly related to the topic.

According to Isaac & Michael (1997, p.140)

The face-to-face Interview is a particularly flexible tool that can capture verbal inflexion, gestures, and other body language. A skilled interviewer can obtain further insight into the answers provided by observing the respondent's body language.

For the purposes of this research, thirty-one semi-structured interviews were conducted in Cameroon and France, as well as ten email interviews and a smaller number of telephone interviews. The majority of interviews were semi-structured with a prearranged set of core questions backed up by a broader discussion. Some were more informal and also turned out to be useful to the author when it came to collating insightful answers from the interviewees. In the more informal interview, the author would ask "a broad range of questions, asking them in any order according to how the interview develops" (Breakwell et al. 2006, p.231). Semi-structured, in-depth interviews proved to be the most appropriate research tool for this study as they helped both the interviewer and interviewee to remain focused on the research question and to elicit a clearer understanding of the evolution of French aid policy, and the reasons for its specific trajectory throughout the time-frame chosen for the study.

Before proceeding with interviews and throughout the interview process and beyond, particular attention was given to the overarching ethical framework guiding this thesis; (see appendix E). As the research involved contact with living subjects, via interviews and field stays, there were inevitably ethical considerations. The University of Cardiff ethics committee agreed on the chosen methods of communication as regards to research interviewees (see appendices A and B). In the spirit of the Data Protection Act, anonymity was adopted as the basic principle of data collection and any departure from the rule of anonymity followed the informed consent procedure.

Anonymity was reinforced by the method, which involved using N. Vivo to code transcribed interviews. Likewise the information provided respected all aspects of confidentiality, being used only for the purposes of this research and stored in a secure location: see data management plan. Any interviewee wishing to obtain a copy of the interview transcript needed only contact the author with a request for this information. Either before or during each interview, it was made clear that research subjects had the right to withdraw their consent at any time (see attached Research Ethics Consent Form for Confidential Data in appendix E). Interviewees were asked to sign the form; however, no pressure was exerted at any time.

Before conducting these interviews, the author identified, through a process of purposive sampling and through the use of local knowledge, the groups and individuals who could give the answers needed to a largely pre-prepared set of interview questions. These incorporated different socio-professional categories such as French and Cameroonian government officials, researchers, decision-makers, diplomats and development practitioners. Interviews did not always result in the acquisition of appropriate evidence. For example, some decision-makers were suspicious that the researcher could be a spy, and this impacted on their reactions to the questions. Others provided unsatisfactory answers or were not interested in the research topic (see appendix B). Some individuals appeared to expect payment in return for information, while others wanted to impose their ideas and opinions upon the interviewer. Others still were not ready to offer compromising information on policy areas that might work in their own personal interests. These problems arose despite, or perhaps because of, the author's strict adherence to the research ethics framework as set out above. However, it should be stressed that the majority of interviewees were nonetheless receptive and very responsive. Even in these cases however, the researcher encountered some difficulties as a female interviewer.

A detailed list of the face-to face, email, and phone call interviews with Cameroonian officials and experts in Yaoundé, UN and International Organisation staff, French and European actors (British officials in particular were also interviewed in order to provide some comparative insights into French and British policies in Cameroon, particularly within chapter 7) is given in Table 1. This includes the job position of the interviewee, the date, time, duration and place of the interview.

*Table 1: List of Face-to face Interviews*

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Interview Time and Date</b>
Military Cooperation Expert	15h/40min 55sec 9/04/2011/Yaoundé
Member of The Civil Society	8h30/56min 44s 10/04/2011/Yaoundé
Ministry Public Works Head Division	17h/45min 57s-12/04/2011-/Yaoundé
Former CEO of Electricité du Cameroun (EDC)	17h/48min 14s-13/04/2011/Yaoundé
Member of the Comité Central	14h/42min-6/04/2011/Yaoundé
Colonel in charge of the Military Department within the French Embassy	19h/1h03min-13/04/2011/Yaoundé
Specialist in Franco-Cameroonian Economic/Developmental Cooperation	17h/49min 09s-16/04/2011/Yaoundé
Specialist in British-Cameroonian Diplomacy	16h30/1h01min 45sec 20/04/2011/Yaoundé
Journalist	14h30/32min 30sec-23/04/2011/Yaoundé
First Cameroonian General Officer	17h/50min-24/04/2011/Yaoundé
Director For the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights	10h/39min 45sec-24/04/2011-/Yaoundé
International Labour Organisation (ILO) Projects Coordinator	12h30/1h20min-27/04/2011-/Yaoundé
Head of the promotion of Cultural Affairs Department within the Ministry of Culture	18h/51min 20sec-27/04/2011-/Yaoundé
Head of Economic and Legal Studies within the Regional Economic Department within the French Embassy	13h/46min 46sec-30/04/2011/Yaoundé
Head of Cooperation at the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development	10h/49min 51sec-4/05/2011/Yaoundé
VHWAD IN MOFA	13h30/1h-7/05/2011/Yaoundé
Governance Programme National Coordinator within the Prime Ministry Office	8h/1h-8/05/2011/Yaoundé
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Officer for Crisis Prevention and Recovery	15h/55min-14/05/2011-/Yaoundé
United Nations Refugee Agency Coordinator	15h30/1h23min-17/05/2011-/Yaoundé
United Nations Human Resources (UNHR) Officer	17h/14min 29sec-19/05/2011-/Yaoundé
Service de Coopération et d'Action Culturelle (SCAC) Assistant Chief	16h30/25min 19sec 21/05/2011/Yaoundé
Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) Regional Director	8h45/40min-22/05/2011-/Yaoundé
Red Cross (RC) President	11h/38min-23/05/2011-/Yaoundé
British High Commission (BHC) Projects Officer	9h/1h27min-25/05/2011-/Yaoundé
British Deputy High Commission	9h/43min 56sec-28/05/2011-/Yaoundé
Ministère des Relations Extérieures Officer	11h/47min 07sec-5/06/2011-/Yaoundé
Agence Française de Développement (AFD) officer	12h30/39min 32sec 8/06/2011/Yaoundé
British Commission (BC) Officer	10h30/31min-9/06/2011/Yaoundé
French Embassy Assistant Chief of Research, Education and Development	9h/36min 51sec-10/06/2011/Yaoundé
Cultural Affairs Administrator within the Ministère de la Culture	16h/36min 13sec 10/06/2011/Yaoundé

Note: the nationality of the Ministries cited is Cameroonian unless otherwise stated.

*Table 2: List of Email and Phone Interviews (see Appendix for time, duration)*

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Interviewee Location</b>
<b>Head Of Francophonie (Regional Office, Central Africa and Great Lakes)</b>	Yaoundé
<b>DFID Official</b>	London
<b>Agence Française de Développement Official</b>	Paris
<b>British High Commission Official</b>	Yaoundé
<b>French Embassy Official</b>	Yaoundé
<b>Institut Français Official</b>	Yaoundé
<b>Specialist in African Studies</b>	London

The researcher also made use of non-standardised email “interviews” (Yaoundé, Douala, Paris) and non-standardised telephone interviews (Yaoundé, Douala, Paris). The anonymity of interviews was respected as per the research ethics section. Overall, the most common problem encountered during semi-structured and non-standard interviews was the lack of objective answers provided during interviews of the Cameroonian elite. The interviewees did not seem to always respond adequately to the interview questions and did not always fully understand or agree with the aims of the research. This is in spite of the fact that the purpose of these interviews was clearly set out, as per our research ethics section, in advance of meetings and a common schedule of precise and easy to understand questions (see Appendix B) was also distributed ahead of meetings. It was in fact made clear to all interviewees that the purpose of the interviews was to test, through a process of triangulation, the veracity of official French rhetoric on aid, and to explore the motives behind aid-giving and aid-receiving, thereby providing useful data for the NCR analysis.

Overall, thanks partly to the volume of interviews undertaken; this field research did enable the author to identify the opinions of French officials on the establishment, evolution, and objectives of their respective aid policies and instruments in Cameroon. They helped to explain how, why, and to what extent aid policy and the instruments

used by France have evolved over time. They also shed light on the attitude of Cameroonian decision-makers regarding whether the decisions they take are in the best interest of the country, or of the foreign partners. Equally, these discussions provided insights into the Cameroonian perspective on French aid policy and instruments and the perceived linkages between these instruments and the exercise of power in Cameroon. Furthermore, they were helpful in gauging the attitude of Cameroonian officials towards the interplay of influence between these foreign partners. The Interview questions were tailored to expertise and potential contribution based on initial fact-finding answers from each interviewee. Those were prepared ahead of each interview but could also be adapted in response to early answers by the interviewee. This approach was very useful as it allowed the interview to be adapted to the needs of the research. It also helped to overcome the obstacles outlined earlier and ensured that these elite interviews acted as a valuable research practice. Such interviews, whilst sometimes hard to secure, are vital in order to gauge this section of society's view on the evolving aid instruments used by the former European rulers during the time period studied.

In their responses, interviewees were often able to comment in detail on quite specific aspects of our research topic. However, the data collected indicates that Cameroonian, French and international officials could not speak authoritatively about the entire period covered, with most being familiar with a period of between one to ten years at most. There were nonetheless academics and military experts who could comment on the early post-colonial eras, and their testimonies have been particularly useful. Broadly speaking, the information which emerged from the interview-based fieldwork provided important insights into relations between France and Cameroon, during the chosen time period studied (1997 to 2015) as well as a flavour of these relations in the earlier post-colonial decades.

Drawing on fieldwork in Cameroon (Yaoundé and Douala) and in France (Paris), this thesis therefore provides a detailed analysis of a major donor, France. In addition, this study examines how this European power, through its bilateral aid programme but also with some consideration being given to its multilateral aid commitments, deploys aid instruments in Cameroon, which are either more closely associated with hard power (conditionality-coercion), soft power (scholarships for Cameroonian elites) or smart power (a mix of hard and soft power). The following section will move to a consideration of the theoretical framework used in this study.



## Neoclassical Realism

Turning to the theoretical framework employed here, it is worth reiterating that this is combines NCR theory with a template demonstrating the different dimensions of power and their links to particular aid instruments. Before selecting this theory, some consideration as given to alternative approaches. Ideological perspectives were quickly set aside, with Marxist theories suggesting that donors use aid to plunder developing countries, for their pursuit of power (Centre D'Etudes Anti-Impérialistes CEDETIM 1980, Jalée 1968), while Right-Wing theorists such as Lord Frederick Bauer claim that aid discourages self-reliance. A constructivist approach could also have been adopted and would likely have looked for ways in which French aid policy has been driven and entrapped, in any move towards empowerment, by logic of appropriateness. Liberal theories could equally have been used to shed light on the degree to which France has been pursuing value-driven approaches (democracy promotion, respect for human rights) and promoting international organisations that propound such values. Each of these theoretical approaches would be interesting but, given that France has for many years overtly stated its attachment to *la Raison d'état* (Thuau 1973; Vedrine 2000), it seems *a priori* reasonable to assume that Realist theory might be a particularly useful tool for explaining and generating hypotheses regarding French policy towards Cameroon.

As Callan (2013, p.13) has observed: "It is commonplace to remark on the relative under-theorisation of the relations of Northern states with Africa within International Relations (IR)". There are of course many realist IR theories that could be mobilised, even if most variants of Realism have certain core elements in common: the assumption of rationality and an anarchic world, as well as the emphasis on self-seeking states. Classical Realism as propounded by the likes of Morgenthau (1960) and Reinhold (1964) would be potentially valuable for this study insofar as it would shed light on the dependency of States, and above all statesmen's perceptions of power and the national interests against the backdrop of an anarchic strategic and political, economic context. Classical realism places a particular emphasis on security and economic interests, and assumes not only that statesmen are duty-bound to act in the national interest but also that they will act rationally and seek to minimise risks and maximise benefits. It does however; tend to neglect the role of the wider policy-making machinery as well as the influence of institutions and domestic variables in foreign policy-making decisions. Crucially too, it is hard to trace back any evolution in micro-

level aid instruments to grand strategies decided by statesmen or states women.

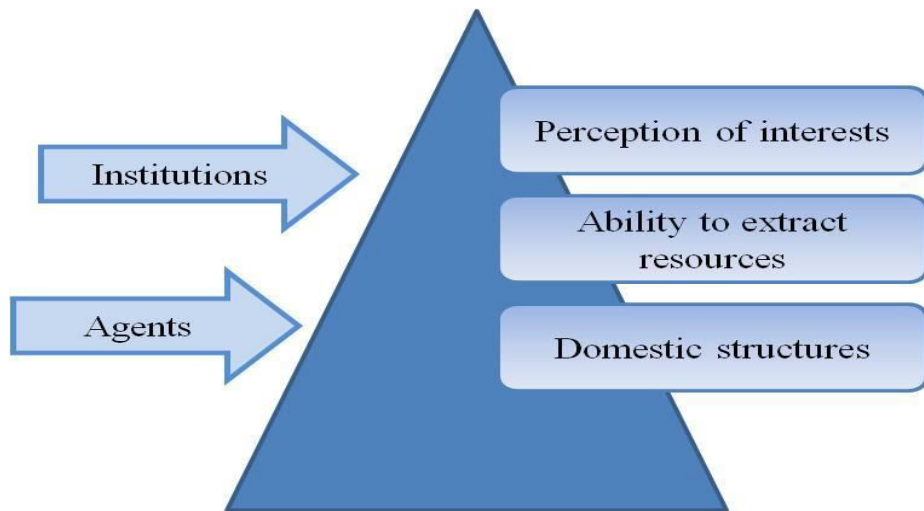
Neorealism (Waltz, 1979, p.18) is a particularly rigorous and respected variant of Realism which emphasises the importance of balancing power within the international system. It is arguably less well adapted to the study of the foreign policies of individual states, let alone French policy towards Cameroon, since this latter policy in particular does not affect the “balance of power” to any significant extent. Equally, Neorealism does not allow scope for the perceptions of elite officials to influence policy. It assumes, in effect, that the international system provides automatic signals or messages which determine the policies of states and their place in the international hierarchy of states. It is almost entirely concerned with strategic and economic interests.

Neoclassical Realism, as conceptualised by Rose (1998) has advantages over the above variants of realism at least for the purposes of this study. It draws upon the rigour of Neorealism by including relative power as the key driver of French foreign policy towards Africa. It also disaggregates the state by referring to a Foreign Policy Executive (FPE) comprising elite officials from foreign, development and defence ministries as well as from the Prime Minister’s and/ or the President’s office. As such it allows for human agency and for varied interpretations of the national interest (rather than automatic messaging from the international system). It also allows the inclusion of perceptions, ideas and even values as well as interests of officials (Schelling, 1800). These elite officials serve as an imperfect “transmission belt” (Sterling-Folker, 2002) interpreting the national interest according to the perceptions of French officials. These perceptions are linked in turn to the perceived capacity of the FPE to extract resources from and overcome domestic obstacles within the state. An example might relate to the perceived likelihood of securing support from NGOs or other domestic actors for increases or changes in aid). It follows that NCR provides a more nuanced account than neorealism of the drivers behind foreign policy. It allows consideration to be given to international power balancing as well as to domestic variables. It does not view the national interest as an unchallenged given but allows for different interpretations of the national interest. As Taliaferro et al. (2009, p.21) have made clear: “The purpose of neoclassical realists is to explain variation in the foreign policies of the same state over time and across different states facing similar external constraints” (Christensen 1996; Rose 1998; Dyson 2010).

The NCR was also chosen as the theoretical framework for this study because, although it was traditionally applied in the case of super powers, its explanatory value in relation to medium-sized powers like France and the UK has recently been recognised in the work of Chafer and Cumming (2010). The theory also has the benefit

of thick, detailed description of a country's motives.

*Figure 1: Neoclassical Realism*



*Source: Adapted on the basis of principles set out by Duncan (2010: 15)*

The original model conceived by Rose in 1998 has withstood the test of time remarkably well and is in essence replicated above. The one adaptation that has been made to this model is the inclusion of “institutions” alongside agents. Rose identified elite policy-makers as the key actors within the FPE and representative of the institutions which they served. The model above, drawing upon work by Duncan (2010) also includes institutions as a separate category. In effect, policy-makers may have a specific perception but institutions collectively may also take a particular view which may or may not correspond to the perception of the said policy-making elite. This adaptation reflects the fact that the perceptions of a group of officials, when taken together, are often hard to separate from the institution's own perspective.

It follows from Figure 1 above that the three main features of NCR theory are (a) the perception of interests by policy-making elites in the Foreign Policy Executive; (b) the ability of the state to extract and mobilise resources; (c) the domestic structures/capacities with which policy-making elites interact and which can serve as obstacles to be overcome. This framework will be applied to French aid in chapter 6 and will show that French officials may perceive that they can extract some types of “aid” resources (e.g. military assistance) quite easily because the domestic political system/structure is amenable: put bluntly, the public is rarely listened to on foreign policy and Parliament does not need to be consulted before a military intervention. However, the domestic economic context, particularly the Euro-zone crisis, also makes it harder to extract resources. It is worth stressing that if officials get it wrong, misread the interests

of the state, then ultimately the state's relative power in the overall international system will decline.

With reference to the usefulness of NCR, the theory is often criticised as being overly descriptive and simply providing a plethora of descriptive cases (thick description) rather than generating meaningful and testable hypotheses (Tang, 2009, p.17).<sup>10</sup> Other critics have also pointed out that the domestic variables have no theoretical basis but appear to have been selected at random or worse still preselected (Lobell et al., 2009, p.23). It is not the aim of this thesis to comment on the validity or otherwise of what are now widely established criteria for testing an NCR framework. It will be left to IR theorists to determine the potential theoretical limitations of variables which do nonetheless appear particularly valuable for shedding light on the motives of state actors, particularly in the aid context.

There are, however, two very important empirically grounded critiques of NCR that will be addressed in this thesis. The first is that NCR stipulates that states are primarily interested in increasing their relative power in the world but it fails to disaggregate the concept of power, or break it down into meaningful units. In this respect, it does not link up to specific institutional agents/instruments of power which will or will not increase that relative influence. The second criticism is that NCR can only tell us why and how France mobilised resources to secure influence, or not. It does not shed light on whether the recipient government facilitated or constrained the exercise of influence. Nor does it tell us how other actors in Cameroon impacted upon France's quest for influence. These are important questions that will be addressed with reference specifically to the case of French aid in chapters 6 and 7.

For now, in order to strengthen NCR as an analytical tool, it is important to set out in general terms how it will be linked to, and triangulated with, a typology of hard, soft, and smart power that is itself linked be linked (via a template: see appendix C1 and see below for a briefer variant) to particular forms of economic, military, and political, cultural assistance. The combination of NCR theory with this typology/template should strengthen its explanatory capacity and address the critique that it offers a rather crude reading of power.

## **Hard, Soft and Smart Power Template**

Turning finally to the template, this will be created with a view to linking aid instruments to the exercise of hard, soft and smart power. The choice of particular instruments

clearly reflects the donor's, in this case French policy makers', perception of the national interest, their perceived ability to extract resources, and their understanding of the domestic structures and other obstacles that may obstruct their quest for relative power.

*Table 3: Simplified Template of Aid Instruments and Power*

<b>Aid Instrument</b>	<b>Hard Power</b>	<b>Soft Power</b>	<b>Smart Power</b>
Military Training & Assistance/ Security Sector Reform	No		
Military Interventions	Yes, especially where leaders are removed from power	Yes. Focus on grooming elites, supporting francophile regimes	The combination of training and the threat of withdrawing support.
Economic/Development Assistance in general or sector specific assistance (debt/ environment)	Yes, where economic conditionalities or sanctions applied	Yes, where unconditional or conditions are soft (as with expectations on poverty reduction targets)	The combination of unconditional plus the threat of or actual application of coercion
Politico-cultural Assistance (democracy promotion, cultural <i>rayonnement</i> )	Yes, where political conditionalities or sanctions applied	Yes, where unconditional or conditions are soft (e.g. continued use of French in education system)	The combination of unconditional plus the threat of or actual application of coercion

The template above is useful in identifying France's choice of aid tools, namely economic, politico-cultural, and security instruments. It also helps shed light on the ways in which these choices are linked to France's exercise of soft/hard/ or smart power, as well as the extent to which France may be moving towards a more needs-based, empowering approach towards Cameroon. This latter approach cannot be associated with hard or soft power specifically but could be discerned in the particular mix of smart power, particularly if the aid instruments selected are more clearly designed to reduce poverty and tackle people's needs rather than promote French culture, commercial interests or the sale of military hardware. Needless to say, subjective judgement is required in the assessment of the type of power exercised. Thus military assistance can be hard where it is used to depose a head of state (Operation Barracuda against CAR President Bokassa) or where it builds up an army that then engages in external aggression. But is also soft as it involves grooming of

elites via training in French military schools. Similarly, economic assistance can be hard when it comes to conditionalities but could be taken as soft power as regards to debt reduction. Politico-cultural assistance can be hard when referring to the spreading of French culture and arts but could also be soft when it comes to French cultural institutions collaborating with local artists.

It is argued here that France has for many years undoubtedly practised “smart” power. This is perhaps not surprising given that “effective strategies in the real world are a mix of hard and soft power” (Nye, 2008, p.74) and given that “the combination of hard and soft power” is designed “to create optimal strategies in particular contexts” (Nye, 2012, p.98). It will therefore be assumed in much of the analysis in subsequent chapters that smart power is being exercised via the aid programme, not least since it is rare for hard power to be exercised against particular ODA recipients without some kind of accompanying soft power component. Thus, for example, even when development aid is cut off, humanitarian assistance continues and the channels of communication are left open. Similarly, even where military intervention takes place against or in support of a host state, it is usually accompanied by diplomatic efforts, emergency assistance and capacity-building measures such as security sector reform. Conversely, it would be naïve to think that donors such as France via, for example, the *Alliance Françaises* or indeed the UK via the British Council and Germany via the Goethe Institute are purely engaging in the exercise of soft power. There is always the threat of a reduction or cut-off of this assistance, and there is often at least an implicit link with the human rights and civil liberties context of the recipient country.

It is easier to demonstrate any shifts in the exercise of power, specifically smart power, by focusing on the opposite poles, hard and soft, of this concept, what Nye has referred to as “payment or coercion” (2008, p.32). According to Nye, with reference admittedly to superpowers, hard power instruments refer to their military, intelligence services, or economic levers (Nye, 2009, p.205); and soft power tools are concerned with “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion and payment” (Nye, 2009, p.270). According to the same author (2009, p.288):

Soft power comes from three main sources: first, the culture of a country; second, political values, which can be very attractive for other countries, from democracy to freedom of speech to opportunity; and third, the legitimacy of a country's foreign policy—meaning that if your foreign policy is considered to be legitimate by other nations, you are more persuasive. Conversely, a foreign

policy that is seen as illegitimate can destroy the persuasive power of any values and culture.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick claimed in a recent report published by the House of Lords on the 11th of March 2014 that “a country’s soft power is a national asset which can either be augmented or reduced by actions taken by the government” (UK Parliamentary Report, 2014, p.4). The above report highlights the fact that, based on major global shifts such as the rise of emerging countries as China, soft power is becoming ever more relevant to northern countries (Select Committee on Soft power and the UK’s Influence First Report, 2014), not least since it involves a much cheaper alternative to the exercise of hard military power.

It is recognised here that smart power is a contested concept in International relations. Even so, smart power, particularly when it is understood as being comprised of soft and hard power elements, is a useful tool for understanding the case of French aid. Therefore, smart, soft and hard power will be applied to the case of French aid to Cameroon in chapters 5 and 6, with a focus specifically on the period from 1997 to 2015. For reasons of space, this analysis will not, however, cover the colonial or early post-colonial periods in terms of power. It is nonetheless useful here to make a few observations relating to the type of power associated with aid instruments employed by France in the period preceding Jospin. On the face of it, hard power was used during the colonial era, with military force representing an option that was exercised by France most notably in the 1950s in the face of the UPC rebellion and, much earlier, with the imposition of the French language through the process known as assimilation. While France controlled colonial defence and security, by force where necessary, ultimately this was not smart power as France ended up losing almost all its colonies. By the post-colonial era, French cooperation policy was marked by soft power while the threat of hard power remained present. The focus of much French aid policy was on soft and smart power, attraction and persuasion, aid without conditionality, unconditional military assistance for friendly autocratic regimes. There was arguably a period in the 1970s when the focus of both French and European assistance really were on softer forms of power, notably when the Lomé Convention stressed a genuine partnership between Europe and the African Caribbean and Pacific countries. France’s European Development Commissioner Claude Cheysson was instrumental in pushing for a European aid programme without strings attached and French aid over these years was largely unconditional. By the 1980s, under Mitterrand, harder forms of power were exercised with economic and political conditionality linked to World Bank orthodoxies

albeit only loosely until the Balladur Doctrine of 1993. Furthermore, Lomés III and IV saw the new French-born European Development Commissioner Edgar Pisani, linking European aid to political dialogue and some forms of conditionality. At this point, the smart power nature of European aid was becoming clear and the French aid programme adopted much of the thinking associated with the Commission and, albeit more reluctantly, the World Bank was becoming much clearer.

However, as our later chapters will suggest, it has really been since the time of Jospin that French aid policy has come to be marked more clearly by smart power. In effect, there has been an attempt to develop more hybrid instruments and forms of aid which are more capable of matching France's declared goals of promoting democracy, stability and an end to poverty. Examples include the "contractualisation" of aid: recipients do not have to undertake reforms but if they do not they will drop out of the ZSP. Similarly, the C2D encourages Cameroon to set aside monies for poverty reducing projects but the Cameroonian state can refuse and cease to benefit from the unprecedented levels of support offered. Equally, on the security front, France is offering assistance and regional training via ENVRs but this is an empowerment strategy too, encouraging Cameroonians to take part in regional security governance issues.

While this overview is interesting and a more detailed application of this template will be used later in this thesis, it should not be forgotten that the concept of smart power is also contested. Adelman (2011, p.19) questions Nye's definition and highlights the ineffective use of smart power, and notably of soft power applying it to the American case. It has been claimed by Carpenter (2008, p.39) that the so praised smart power theory by Nye does not fit when it comes to American foreign policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the various issues encountered such as the Iraq war and the Taiwan issue. Pitsuwan (2014, p.10) similarly questions the smart power concept in his study of Indonesian foreign policy. However, other scholars have seen the value of the smart power concept even in contested cases. Thus, Nossel (2004), cited in Dimitrova (2012, p.4), compares Obama's smart power strategy which uses all instruments at disposal to Bush's hard power presidency (based on coercion). He concludes that "unlike conservatives, who rely on military power as the main tool of statecraft, liberal internationalists see trade, diplomacy, foreign aid and the spread of American values as equally important".

The next two chapters will explain respectively the main French aid structures and instruments during the period from 1997-2007 and subsequently from 2007 to 2015. They will also home in on selected French instruments which are studied in more detail



(an extended list of these economic, political, cultural and military aid instruments is included in appendix D).<sup>11</sup> Any changes that have been made to these structures and instruments will then be explained in chapter 7 in terms of the NCR framework and the typology linking particular aid instruments to hard, soft or smart power. The aim will be to provide a deeper understanding of the evolution of French aid policy, one that takes account not only of the rationale of elite policy-makers but also of their interactions with domestic institutions. It will be shown that the aid instruments applied before Jospin and shortly after his election reflected a greater readiness to display harder forms of smart power (conditionality or at least the threat of conditionality). In the later post-Jospin period, the context changed and the BRICs were offering unconditional/ soft power-oriented assistance which increased the pressure on France to lean towards softer variants of smart power. There are exceptions of course such as the C2D but ultimately this debt contract is a finite instrument.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has offered an overview of the research methods and conceptual framework deployed during this study, as well as the rationale for using each of them. These were: a review of the primary, secondary and “grey” literature, the selection of a case study, the use of over thirty interviews in Europe and Cameroon, and a neoclassical realist framework coupled with a template of aid instruments and their linkages to hard, soft and above all to smart power.

This research framework should allow us to establish whether there has been a change with reference to the French aid programme. The primary and secondary literature should prove useful insights into the gap between rhetorical claims and verified instances of actual policy changes in the field. The Cameroonian case study is expected to bring out the nuanced nature of French aid decision-making across different sectors. The interviews should elicit much-needed information concerning French and Cameroonian perspectives on French aid policy. NCR theory should serve to underline the rigour of this research (given the lack of theorisation in this field) and should provide new insights into how French foreign policy and aid instruments are set up and shaped, with particular reference to Cameroon. The template of different aid instruments and their links to hard, soft and smart power should be an effective methodological tool as it should help to explain the choices of particular aid instruments over other potential developmental tools.

The next chapter will focus on the evolution of the main French government institutions, and above all instruments over the immediate post-Jospin period (1997-2007). The type of aid instruments applied by Jospin and Chirac will be analysed in order to track whether there has been a shift from a power-seeking strategy to a development-based policy. An analysis of instruments will follow based on three main criteria: (a) the extent to which the aid instruments deployed are rooted in a bilateral or multilateral framework; (b) the intensity and size of the French instruments; and (c) how fit for purpose these French instruments are in relation to official French discourse? In terms of this last criterion, less weight will be given to what the French government is saying and more attention will be paid to what is actually happening on the ground. In other words, have aid instruments during the time period studied been primarily intended and designed to empower Cameroonians or to maintain French interests and influence in this central African country?

# **Chapter Four: Breaking with the Past: Towards a more Fraternal, Needs-Based and Empowering Aid Programme?**

## **Introduction**

The first three chapters have set out our aims, highlighted gaps in the literature and set out our methodological and theoretical framework. They have shown, in particular, that there is a need for a study that can evaluate and explain any changes in French aid since Jospin's 1997 aid reforms. As we have established, the main way in which these reforms will be explored in this thesis is through an examination of actual aid instruments in our case study country, Cameroon.

This chapter will therefore drill down and focus on how and why French aid policy and practice, particularly towards Cameroon, has undergone changes from the time of Jospin's election in 1997 to the end of Jacques Chirac's second presidential mandate in 2007. Chapter 5 will then examine how far and why French aid policy towards, and practice in, Cameroon have evolved or failed to evolve under the Presidencies of Nicolas Sarkozy (2007-2012) and President François Hollande (2012 to the present day, but with a particular focus on the period before the end of the MDGs in August 2015). It is, of course, important to acknowledge that some of the broad changes that have taken place in French aid structures, policies and instruments over the whole of the post-Jospin era may have affected the Cameroonian case more or less than other privileged French aid recipients. That said, there is no reason to suppose that Cameroon, a former mandate of France, has been treated differently from other fellow members of the Franc Zone or France's ZSP. Furthermore, it is worth noting that this chapter covers both the Jospin period when reforms were at their height and the Chirac years when some attempt was made to return to past paternalistic ties with African leaders (Chafer, 2005, p.15; Bourmaud, 1996, p.2). It is difficult to disentangle these two periods or the contextual pressures present during each. The key point to bear in mind is that the impulse and momentum towards reform did not diminish significantly during this period.

Before proceeding, it is worth providing an overview of the key features that marked French aid structures, policies and instruments in the years before Jospin's election, essentially the early post-colonial decades (1960-97). This brief discussion will form the first part of this chapter which will end with a focus on the implications of these broad features of French post-colonial aid structures and instruments specifically for French aid to Cameroon. The second part of this chapter will move to an examination of the international, regional and domestic factors that facilitated the Jospin reforms and made it necessary for Chirac, during his second Presidential term (2002-2007) to maintain the broad thrust of those reforms in place. It pays particular attention to those factors that militated in favour of a shift away from a narrow realist, paternalistic and interest-driven approach towards more poverty-focused, fraternal and empowering focus. As noted in our introductory chapter, empowerment is taken here in a broader sense than used in, for example, the literature on women's empowerment where the emphasis is on bottom-up approaches by individuals. It assumes, in line with the thinking of the World Bank, that donor states have a role to play in the empowerment process and can, in and through their aid programmes and other pressures, ensure that there is a much greater focus on the needs and development of "ordinary" Africans, on promoting a form of democracy that will benefit African peoples, on helping African citizens by enabling their states to respect the rule of law and better engage in peace-keeping efforts, and on empowering Africans by improving their access to education, health care and the means of reducing poverty. In effect, this is an agenda which contrasts with the French approach over the early post-colonial decades, which, as noted in our literature review, was underpinned by a quest for French power and influence (Chipman, 1989), a tendency to promote Francophile autocrats (Chafer, 2002<sup>a</sup>), a readiness to retain power by substituting for African military forces (Bayart, 1984) and a lack of priority accorded to poverty reduction per se (Péan 1994; MAE 2016).

The third part of this chapter is broken down into two sections. The first provides a brief overview of the key reforms undertaken under Jospin and Chirac, particularly those that may be associated with a shift towards a more needs-based approach. The second examines the ways in which the Jospin/ Chirac reforms have or have not translated into changes in the structures and above all the instruments of French aid in Cameroon and how far these instruments are now usefully explained by our three assessment criteria (bilateral/ multilateral, volume/ intensity, fitness for purpose), in other words, how far the instruments reflect a power-seeking or needs-oriented approach.

# **PART 1: France's Neo-colonial Aid Programme 1960-1997**

It will be argued here that, over the early post-colonial decades, France's aid programme, structures and instruments were marked by neo-colonial and paternalistic features, a strong interest- and influence-driven focus as well as remarkable continuity. It will further be suggested that these features emerged under, and often at the behest of, President Charles de Gaulle and that they remained largely unchanged until the election of Jospin. Finally, it will be suggested that these features left their mark on French aid structures and instruments in our case study country, Cameroon.

## **French Presidencies and Their Influence on 'Cooperation' Policy Pre-Jospin**

President Charles de Gaulle, who came to power at the height of the Algerian War and following the collapse of the French Fourth Republic (1946-58) is widely accredited with the establishment of the founding principles of the French Fifth Republic, the overarching priorities of French foreign policy and the main features of the French aid or "cooperation" programme, including with its structures and instruments. De Gaulle's thinking shaped French aid and Africa policy over the next three and a half decades and gave rise to what came to be known as the Gaullist Consensus (Bossuat, 2003). This Right-Left consensus was based on the view that cooperation and aid to Francophone Africa would shore up France's sphere of influence in this part of the world and help justify France's P5 status in the UN Security Council and her prominent position in Europe as a political power counterbalancing German economic might (Moncrieff, 2012). It would also help to maintain French national independence by portraying, at least during the Cold War, France as an alternative protector to the two Superpowers. The 1964 Jeanneney Report served as the first coherent statement of French aid policy (Cumming, 2001, p.60). The statement clearly focused on hard-nosed French interests and, while referring to "human solidarity", it also made no mention of the need to strengthen the capacity of recipient states, thereby setting the tone for French aid policy over the next three decades and establishing *la Raison d'Etat* and the quest for influence as core principles underpinning this policy (McKinnon 2008; Vedrine, 1999).

It follows that De Gaulle was instrumental in ensuring that French assistance

programmes were marked by neo-colonial features and indeed underpinned by the signature of economic, monetary, cultural, technical assistance, military and defence cooperation agreements with former colonies and ex-mandates such as Cameroon. De Gaulle also ensured that aid to Francophone Africa was large, primarily bilateral and unconditional (Cumming, 2001). Also on the economic front, De Gaulle was keen to maintain the Franc Zone which includes 14 Sub-Saharan countries, the Comoros and France. According to the Banque de France (2016, p.1), it is “[b]uilt on the close historical ties between France and African countries ... [and] stems from the common desire of these countries to maintain an institutional framework that has contributed to macroeconomic stability”. De Gaulle also oversaw the introduction of a strong cultural dimension with over 7000 technical assistants in 1960 (Martin, 1986, p.9), particularly teachers of French being dispatched to Africa. In addition, De Gaulle played a key part in ensuring that military technical assistants, 60,000 soldiers (Van Bilzen, 2015) were deployed in large numbers with exclusive access to key resources (Fenwick, 2010, p.29).

At the same time, De Gaulle oversaw the establishment of aid structures that were complex, hydra-headed and in cases such as the Cooperation Ministry (the reincarnation of the *Ministère des Colonies et Territoires d’Outre Mer*) a hangover from the colonial era. There were around a dozen Ministries and executive agencies involved in one form or another with *coopération* policy. These included the *Ministère des Affaires Etrangères*, which was responsible for aid to the countries of the *hors champ*, that is, outside France’s zone of privileged aid recipients. This arrangement singled out France’s former empire for special aid treatment but also contributed to policies deemed by some commentators to be dependency-generating (Martin 1986; Medard 2000). An agency that had a more limited role in aid policy over these years was the “Caisse” or *Caisse Centrale de Coopération Economique* (1955-1959). Created in London in 1941 (*Caisse Centrale de la France Libre*) under the auspices of De Gaulle’s Free French movement, the *Caisse Centrale de Coopération Economique*, which was concerned with loans rather than aid, was renamed in 1992 the *Caisse Française de Développement* (CFD), after which its remit became more specific , with loans and subventions, (See appendix B).<sup>12</sup> In 1998, the *Caisse Française de Développement* became the *Agence Française de Développement* (AFD), and *ipso facto* the main French aid tool, now active in well over seventy countries. This body which will be referred to as the AFD henceforth, was under the tutelage of the Foreign and Finance Ministries (and until 1999, the Cooperation Ministry) and had the status of an autonomous agency, partly financed by the public purse but also able to raise

monies on the open market. It was responsible for loans in support of private sector development and infrastructure projects and was part development bank, part aid agency. Its subsidiary, Proparco, was responsible for lending on harder terms, and to this day, has a variety of financial instruments with regard to its activities, including grants, subsidies, guarantees, loans, equity shareholdings, co-financing and local bank intermediation.<sup>13</sup>

At the top of the aid hierarchy were *Matignon* and the *Elysée*. The former, or the *Bureau du Premier Ministre* had little say over French cooperation policy due to the fact that decision making with reference to African policy fell within the realm of Presidential prerogative, that is the *domaine réservé* (which is a historical precedent rather than an article of the French Constitution).<sup>14</sup> There were, however, instances where the Prime Minister's office did exert influence, not least during times of *cohabitation*, when the President and Prime Minister were from different parties. To illustrate, Jacques Chirac reinstated the Cooperation Ministry as a full Ministry in 1986 (when he was Prime Minister to President Mitterrand: 1986-88). Similarly, Edouard Balladur introduced the *Doctrine Balladur*, linking French bilateral aid to World Bank/IMF recovery programmes in September 1993. Under Jospin, the Prime Minister and indeed Parliament would come to have a greater say over aid policy through bodies such as the HCCI, but over the pre-Jospin years, *Matignon's* influence was very limited.

The same cannot be said of the *Elysée* or French President's office, which was supported throughout these years by an Africa cell or service and based at number 2 rue de l'*Elysée*. The Africa cell, run initially by the first Mr Africa, Jacques Foccart and subsequently by a string of influential advisers including Martin Kirsch and Guy Penne, had a huge influence over cooperation policy and ensured that this was neo-colonial, focused on the preservation of close personal friendships, even family-like relationships between French and African businessmen, politicians and leaders. These networks are most closely associated with Foccart but were also forged around other Africa advisers such as Guy Penne and contributed to the impression that French African policy was corrupt, marked by *France-Afrique* or *France-à-fric*, an unhealthy set of compromises and mutual favours between French and African leaders. In effect, with the backing of successive French presidents (who all prioritised to some degree Francophone Africa), the *Elysée* and its Africa cell promoted a French aid policy that was a long way from the developmental norms propounded by the World Bank or like-minded donors and much more firmly rooted in France's colonial past, in the personal friendships that had developed between French and African leaders during the Fourth Republic (when

Africans such as Houphouët Boigny served as French Ministers of State) and in the meetings that took place in the heavy schedule of Ministerial and Presidential visits and exchanges that marked French African relations over these years.

Needless to say, these structures proved difficult to reform and were characterised by continuity. They did not lend themselves to an empowering approach but rather to an aid policy that was marked by a lack of transparency, a strong politico-cultural bias and a limited culture of evaluations. These bureaucratic arrangements allowed only limited space for French or African civil society to challenge the state and led to state-to-state contacts with African governments that also excluded counter-elites. In effect, the administrative set up encouraged clientelistic, power-seeking policies towards Africa.

Importantly from the perspective of this study, the above structures gave rise to aid instruments that seemed to be better designed to serve French influence and interests than they were to tackling poverty or needs or for that matter to empowering local populations (Boisgallais and Verschave, 1994, p.85; Brunel 2013, p.173; Péan 1994, p.8). They included economic instruments such as projects via the *Fonds d'Aide et de Coopération* (FAC) (subsequently renamed the *Fonds de Solidarité Prioritaire*), programme assistance, structural adjustment assistance and sectoral loans via the Franc Zone as well as technical assistance in the form of teachers of French (by far the largest proportion) alongside a small number of engineers. In each case, these instruments tended to be designed at least as much with influence than poverty reduction in mind. As Brunel (1993) has shown, many French projects were “cathedrals in the desert” and marked by considerable waste, including “white elephants” such as hospitals that Africans could not afford to maintain and cement factories that quickly ceased to function. In rare cases where budgetary-type assistance or structural loans were made, there was little prospect of repayment and a reasonable risk that the monies would be siphoned off (Péan 2005; Verschave 1999). In the case of technical assistance, the main critique was that France was imposing its own methods on Africans and substituting rather than building the capacity of African officials. As several authors have shown (Cumming 2001; Lumsdaine 1993), French aid was heavily tied and not very concessional, all of which increased African dependence on these instruments. The fact is moreover, that France retained considerable control over all of these types of assistance and the tendering associated with them.

As regards military/ security instruments, these included military technical assistants, military training in France (for the most part during these years), and protection offered by military bases (5 military bases in Central Africa under De Gaulle).



France used these bases to intervene militarily and defend Francophile African leaders such as Ahmadou Ahidjo in Cameroon (1960-1982); N'garta Tombalbaye in Chad (1960-1975); Leon Mba (1961-1967) and Omar Bongo in Gabon (1967-2009). France used military assistance at least partly to bolster its own defence industry and in the process secure control over African military communication systems (Anderegggen, 1994). The sale of African military equipment inevitably built in African dependence on France for future military supplies while the African bases and the presence of French soldiers in African uniform within these African armies also ensured that African states would look to France for their security, even at the expense of their own formal state sovereignty.

Finally, these structures also gave rise to politico-cultural instruments. These included *Alliances Françaises* and *médiatèques*, structures spreading French culture, and technical assistants in the teaching domain; as well as the *Francophonie* (international organisation gathering French speaking countries, associate members and observers). They leaned towards being neo-colonial, as they aimed at promoting the French language and maintaining French cultural hegemony in African countries such as Cameroon. The promotion of the French language inevitably reinforced France's claims to have a universal message and language while also facilitating business contracts between French and African countries (Anderegggen, 1994).

Turning to the evolution of France's aid programme and structures over the next three decades, this has been subject to considerable scrutiny as well as being marked by few radical changes (Chipman 1989; Cumming 2001). They will as such be treated quite briefly below. The Presidency of Georges Pompidou, De Gaulle's former Prime Minister (1962 to 1968), was particularly marked by continuity. Pompidou, sometimes referred to "*le Gaulliste*" (Turpin, 2014, p.72) solidified De Gaulle's foreign African policy, with Bossuat (2003, pp.141-42) recognising "*l'immobilisme*" of this policy during his presidency. Pompidou did affect some opening up of the aid programme, widening it beyond France's former colonies and extending the *champ* to non Francophone countries. He did also step back from the strong military assistance focus that marked the Gaullist era. But his presidency was more a consolidation of the interest-driven aid policy established by De Gaulle. To illustrate, Pompidou introduced mixed credits which according to the OECD (2013, p.1) contain an aid element, so as to provide concessional credit terms such as a lower rate of interest or a longer credit period. As a former banker, Pompidou accentuated France's earlier practice of aid tying and low levels of aid concessionality, all of which served the interests of French business at the expense of the needs of recipients. Pompidou, a personal friend of Léopold Sedar

Senghor, also retained the services of Foccart and his Africa networks and strengthened the politico-cultural dimension of French cooperation policy through the inauguration of the first Franco-African summit in 1973 and the mooted of possible *Francophonie* summits, at which large aid initiatives and debt cancellations such as Dakar I in 1989 would subsequently be announced.

President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's (VGE) election in 1974 symbolised a significant change insofar as he was not a Gaullist but from a more liberal centre-Right party, the *Union Démocratique Française*. He broke away from his predecessors' reliance on Foccart and established his own Africa cell. He hoped to move beyond France's former empire and establish a "cooperation" programme that focused less on history and more on geostrategic interests such as mineral resources. As part of this "*politique giscardienne*" (Bach, 1984, p.1), at the end of the 1970s, Giscard signed cooperation agreements with Rwanda and Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) and Libya. Giscard explained during the 1978 Paris Franco-African summit that this was implemented in order to "expand the Euro-African dialogue" (VGE, 1975). In the same spirit, at the 1976 Franco-African summit, he called on other European powers to harmonise aid mechanisms and, at the 1979 Franco-African summit, he pushed for the setting up of a fund to promote Africa, with the motto "Africa for the Africans" (Bach, 1984, pp.18-20).

In a similar reformist vein, the Giscard Presidency presided over the 1975 *Rapport Abelin*, an eighty page-report which set out "*les propositions giscardiennes*". This core document established the new orientations of French cooperation south of the Sahara (which continued to receive the highest share of French bilateral aid). In terms of the discourse at least, this was a "new policy of cooperation", which "was breaking with the post-colonial era" and displaying "an international cooperation based on mutual interests and not dependence" (Bach, 1984, pp.18-20). Equally, he reconstituted *le Ministère de la Coopération* and set up "*les missions de dialogue*", throughout Francophone Africa in 1974-1975, "*les commissions mixtes bilatérales*" (the basis of bilateral cooperation between France and the Francophone African countries). These structures have an empowering dimension by encouraging dialogue with recipients. Significantly too, he reorganised the French military apparatus in Africa: the number of French soldiers South of the Sahara was reduced by 30% (Hanley et al. 2005, p.210) and France maintained strategic military bases in Gabon, Republic of Central Africa, the Reunion Island and Senegal.

Ultimately, however, his focus remained heavily on Francophone Africa and on military assistance. Under Giscard too, the number of technical assistants teaching

French reached a peak (Bach, no date; Adda and Smouts, 1989). Equally, during his presidential mandate, Africa remained a priority, as De Guiringaud (1979) famously claimed that Africa was the sole continent where France, with 500 soldiers, was able to make such a change (cited in Bach, 1984, pp.1-2). Under Giscard, France's interventions were so frequent that the country earned the nickname *le gendarme de l'Afrique*. Indeed, France set up "the military contingent which was able to intervene in Africa quicker than any other in the world" (Bach, 1984, pp.6-7). Between 1977 and 1981 France successfully intervened in Zaire, Mauritania, Chad and Central African Republic in order to protect African presidents who were guarantors of French interests and influence (Bach, 1984, p.14). Giscard's military cooperation clearly indicated a desire to maintain the key neo-colonial, paternalistic features of French aid. It follows that French African policy under VGE focused on French interests, perhaps even more than that of his predecessors, by placing emphasis on the personalisation of relations between the French president and African presidents. These close relations are notably illustrated by the fact that the French Gabonese president Omar Bongo chose, in 1975 and 1979, the French ambassador in Gabon (Bach, 1984, pp.12-13). Giscard's overly close friendship with the CAR's emperor Jean-Bedel Bokassa was also to lead to some of the worst abuses of French aid monies.

In summary, during VGE's seven-year term of office, the official rhetoric (which included an attachment to the creation of a New International Economic Order which would redistribute global wealth and, if realised, would empower developing nations) was much grander than the actual implementation of aid. There was also more of an emphasis in practice on refocusing French interests rather than on targeting French cooperation on needs, poverty or empowerment. Indeed, as stated in the *Rapport Abelin*, French policy aimed at safeguarding French economic interests and influence abroad, most notably in sub-Saharan Africa. To illustrate, under Giscard, there was an increase in dependency-generating concessional loans towards Africa from 28.3 % to 52.3% between 1974 and 1980 (OECD, 2015). In addition, the allocation of French aid in Africa was interest-driven and dependent on the volume of an African country's mineral resource. Thence, most French aid (18% of overall ODA) was allocated to middle-income rather than least developed African countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Senegal, the Republic of the Congo and Niger (Bach, 1984, pp.22-24).

The first "socialist" president, François Mitterrand (1981-1988) promised to move away from a realist, interest-driven approach towards a more recipient focused aid programme. Elected on a platform of change (*Les 110 propositions*), Mitterrand initially sought to make aid policy more "progressive", linking it to respect for human rights,

channelling more aid beyond the former empire (including too countries such as Nicaragua) and to NGOs which were deemed to be more effective at reaching the poorest. President Mitterrand also claimed that he wanted to move away from the clientelistic *France-Afrique* towards a more empowering “*Communauté France-Afrique*” (Bayart, 1984, pp.256-258). In a similar vein, there was to be a moratorium on French military interventions south of the Sahara and a new relationship with the developing world, consistent with the ideals of *tiermondisme* (which is according to Perspective Monde (2016), a left-wing ideology which holds capital economies responsible for the developing countries pauperisation).

However, Mitterrand’s reforms stalled in the face of a major recession and by 1982, his Development Minister, Jean-Pierre Cot had resigned (following protests from African leaders such as Côte d’Ivoire’s Houphouët-Boigny). The Mitterrand administration soon resumed a power-seeking, influence driven aid approach that prioritised good relations with unelected Francophile leaders who were happy to be in France’s sphere of influence and part of her claim to great power status. Mitterrand’s cooperation policy moved squarely into line with the Gaullist Consensus, perhaps unsurprisingly given Mitterrand’s often quoted remark, ahead of France’s loss of Indo-China: “Lâchons l’Asie, prenons l’Afrique” (Reclus, 1904).

Mitterrand’s second term (1988-1995) also saw challenges to the paternalistic, unconditional approach to aid that had characterised the earlier decades. At la Baule, in June 1990, Mitterrand linked French aid in Africa to democratic progress and respect for human rights (Riding, 1990). In January 1994, the devaluation of the CFA franc also showed that France was no longer able or willing to bail African countries out in the patron-client mode (Médard, 2000, p.76) that had characterised the relationship up to that time. There were also the beginnings of capacity-building programmes: a specific bilateral programme was created the Trade Capacity Building Programme (TCBP), Programme de Renforcement des Capacités commerciales. The TCBP is co-financed by the Ministry for the Economy and Finance and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and implemented by the AFD (French Development Agency, 2013, p.2). Finally, there were continued cutbacks in technical assistants, who are often the most visible reminder of a continued neo-colonial presence.

Ultimately, however, the basic aid structures remained in place (even if there were cosmetic changes regarding the redesignation of the status of the Cooperation ministry as a junior or “delegate” Ministry, theoretically under the tutelage of the Foreign Ministry (Chafer, 2005). Equally, the same broad set of instruments was being used for the same purposes as during the Gaullist era. Mitterrand was continuing with a

*realpolitik* approach, maintaining the same policies as were implemented by his predecessors (Bayart, 2010, pp.256- 258). He contended that “France should maintain her priorities and refuse to put a stop to his ambition in Africa” (Gautier, 1999, p.2).<sup>15</sup> Mitterrand’s “African ambition” has been likened to a mix of liability and interests, which would justify French military presence in Africa (Ibid). Thus, those instruments were enabling France to have a special status in Africa, while acting as a protective shield (*le bouclier français*) for African regimes (Gautier, 1999, pp.2-3). France’s active support to African regimes under Mitterrand could be explained by the “*mitterrandienne obsession*” which involved a concern with maintaining unity in the French *précaré* (closed links with the *Métropole*) in Africa and extending French influence in the African Great Lakes region against British influence (Ibid, pp.3-4). This *obsession* is closely linked to the Fashoda syndrome, France’s excessive fear of Anglo-Saxon penetration into Francophone Africa (Ibid, p.4). In summary, Mitterrand did not take the opportunity to change French policy in Africa. This was perhaps most evident in terms of military cooperation policy and France’s much-criticised neo-colonial involvement in the Rwandan controversy (Krosiak, 2007; Prunier, 1998).<sup>16</sup> Bayart (2010, pp.256-258) refers to Mitterrand’s approach as a patrimonial policy based on left-wing ideological abdication and old French neo-colonial habits: “*le noyau dur Francophone*”: the networks of actors and Franco-African interests inspired by Foccartism (Bayart, 2010, pp.256-258).

Finally, the first two years of the Jacques Chirac Presidency (1995-97), with a Prime Minister from the Right, Jean-Pierre Raffarin, were also marked by continuity. There was a suggestion that Chirac was shocked when he learnt about abuses of the aid programme and he is rumoured to have wanted to break ties with corrupt African leaders (Verschave, 1998). However, his reappointment of Michel Dupuch as his official Africa adviser and Foccart as his unofficial Mr Africa and his visits to numerous Francophone African states with poor democratic credentials (Côte d’Ivoire, Gabon, and Congo Brazzaville) suggested that his focus was not going to be on making serious reforms to the French aid programme and structures. He did in fact consider downgrading the Cooperation Ministry and merging it into the Foreign Ministry but his Prime Minister at this point, Alain Juppé, who was calling for this reform, was unpopular, mired in scandal and beset by a wave of strikes, all of which contributed to Chirac’s disastrous decision to call early elections and precipitate a cohabitation with the reformist socialist Jospin.

Chirac’s *coopération* policy in these early years of his *septennat* remained a policy steeped in *Françafrique*, helping to confirm that Africa was still the president’s

“*domaine réservé*” (*Alternatives Economiques*, 1996). In this matter Lequesne (2007, p.3) refers to Chirac carrying on with a neo-colonial policy aimed at safeguarding the stability of African regimes and not encouraging change (Ibid, p.10).

## **French Aid to Cameroon in the Early Post-Colonial Decades**

Having set out the broad features of French aid (its structures, policies and instruments) under successive French governments before 1997, it is worth briefly noting that these same features percolated down to the field level in the case of Cameroon. The fact that Cameroon was a former mandate and UN Trustee territory did not lead to it being treated differently from other former colonies or indeed other lower middle-income members of the Franc Zone.

To begin with, this section will discuss the French aid structures dealing with Cameroon before turning to the aid instruments deployed on the ground. The Paris-based ODA institutions referred to above were all involved in one way or another in designing French aid policy towards Cameroon, as indeed was the usual suite of missions and representations in Cameroon, mainly in Yaoundé. Two Paris-based institutions not hitherto mentioned which could also have an impact upon French aid to Cameroon, were the *Ministère de l'Intérieur* and *Ministère de l'Agriculture*. Other Ministerial bodies and executive agencies were more influential. The French President's office, for example, played a key role in supporting (via various forms of *coopération*) Cameroon's first leader, Amadou Ahidjo, and in inaugurating its second, Paul Biya. The *Elysée* increased this influence through the creation of “networks” of business, political and military leaders linking Cameroon to the French state and to France's (then) state-owned oil-giant Elf. These structural links were heavily tinged by neo-colonialism and these ties were reinforced by the *Elysée*'s ability to fund aid projects and programmes in Cameroon, despite its poor record on human rights (1990), particularly in the 1990s, as reports by Amnesty International (1992) and Article 19 demonstrated. The *Elysée* had a major influence over the spending priorities of France's *Ministère de la coopération*, which was often referred to as the *Ministère* for Black Africa. Successive French Presidents enjoyed close personal relations with Presidents Ahidjo and Biya. There were, moreover, other such links which went considerably beyond institutional ties and into the realms of personal diplomacy. Subtle gifts and secret favours were often exchanged, underpinned by the so-called *Réseaux*.<sup>17</sup>In addition to the aforementioned institutions, a unit directly attached to the French

President dealt with African affairs. Cumming (2001) has referred to the “relational, even irrational” aspects of the French aid system, which allegedly funnels aid through murky channels. This system was alive and well in Cameroon over these years, despite being roundly condemned by critics, who have labelled it *Françafrique* (Pacquement, 2010, p.55).

By contrast, the Prime Minister’s office was largely sidelined under the Constitution of the French Republic, as was the French Parliament. Subsequently, the French President, together with his African cell, was able to control the broad direction of aid policy towards countries like Cameroon without consulting parliament and with minimum scrutiny. Indeed, according to one Cameroonian official “Most of the decisions concerning Africa were taken within the African cell” (Interview 4; 19 April 2011).

The other key Paris-based institutions involved in designing aid policy towards Cameroon were the Foreign Ministry, whose influence was channelled through the French Ambassador and other means discussed below, and the French Finance Ministry, which continued lending to Cameroon throughout the 1990s, thereby helping to generate over a billion Euros in debt that the French state has converted into the C2D, a debt-refinancing programme that is now a feature of the French aid landscape to Cameroon. The *Ministère des Finances* clearly retained a significant role in French development policy, as it continued to control, via the *Banque de France*, Cameroon’s monetary policy and continued to demand that Cameroon maintained its fund exchange reserves with the *Banque de France*. Crucially, the *Ministère des Finances* took the lead on budgetary assistance, structural adjustment, loans, and assistance, which were significant in the case of Cameroon, particularly in the 1990s. The *Ministère des Finances* was, in fact, responsible for at least 50% of the overall French budget (OPCF, 2002-2003).

As regards its local representations, France had an aid and cultural mission (subsequently known as the *Service de Coopération et d’Action Culturelle*: SCAC since 2007), headed up by the French Ambassador, alongside an economic mission in Yaoundé, both housed within the French embassy. There was also, within the embassy, a *mission militaire de coopération*, with close links to the French Defence Ministry. There was initially no AFD office but one was set up as from 1976, a reflection of the increasing flow of oil resources that began at this time (Interview 4; 19 April 2011).

Table 4: Main French Government aid Institutions and Instruments (1960-1997)

National level	Local level	Instruments
Elysée/Matignon Réseaux	French embassy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reciprocal favours</li> <li>• Aides de proximité</li> </ul>
Ministère de la Défense In charge of interventions	Mission militaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Military agreements</li> <li>• authorizing military schools</li> </ul>
Ministère de la coopération In charge of military assistance		Military agreements and military schools
Ministère des finances	Mission économique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic development assistance</li> <li>• Aid program</li> </ul>
Quai d'Orsay	French embassy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural bodies (AF, CC, OIF representations)</li> <li>• Technical and cultural assistance</li> </ul>

Source: Interviews and Personal Correspondence; 6/ 2011

As can be inferred from the Table above, French instruments were largely geared towards securing influence rather than empowering ordinary Africans, or even empowering the Cameroonian state to better serve the needs of the Cameroonian population. The exception is perhaps the *aide de proximité*, a modality used by the French Ambassador to fund poverty-reducing and other projects out of the embassy's own budget, albeit ultimately with an undisguised goal of extending French influence. Other forms of *coopération* were even more clearly interest-oriented. They included project aid with a strong focus on highly visible infrastructure projects, structural adjustment loans that Cameroon was never going to be able to repay and which increased Cameroonian dependency on the French state, technical assistance through the SCAC, various forms of cultural assistance via *La Francophonie* and *Alliances Françaises* (which promoted French linguistic *rayonnement* rather than a poverty-focused agenda and military cooperation which emphasised the training of African officers in Paris rather than Yaoundé or elsewhere in Cameroon.

On the military front, Cameroon was part of the jurisdiction of the *Forces Françaises*



*du Gabon* (FFG), which is based in Libreville (*Ministère de la Défense*, 2012), with France's *Ministère de la Défense* having responsibility for most aspects of French military policy in the country. There were 116 officials in the Cameroonian land army in 1962, and 58 in 1966; there were 12 officials in the Cameroonian air force in 1963, and there were 23 officials in the Cameroonian police force in the same year, 145 in 1962, and 45 in 1966 (Bieleu, 2012, p.452). Those numbers illustrate the extent of France's military influence. So too does the fact that France deployed military technical assistants to maintain influence, to control Cameroon's military system and ensure that French officers were integrated directly in the Cameroonian army. In addition to this there was cultural assistance which took the form of *Alliances Françaises*, technical assistants in the teaching domain, and *La Francophonie*. These largely neo-colonial instruments aimed at promoting French language, culture and sought to maintain French hegemony in African countries such as Cameroon.

As a rule, the French *coopération* instruments employed over these early post-colonial decades in Cameroon, tended to be marked less by the kind of hard power dimension that had characterised the colonial era (forced labour, conscription, land seizures, cultural assimilation, and military repression against the UPC) and that had involved coercion and even the use of military force. Rather France's aid tended to take the form of soft power tools and generally required a considerable, indeed an unsustainable level of financial investment by France. They were aimed at attracting Cameroonians to France as a great power, a military protector and a source of intellectual, linguistic and cultural inspiration. These forms of assistance were not marked by any hard-hitting conditions, even if a degree of economic conditionality (linking French bilateral aid to Cameroon to World Bank and IMF recovery programmes) was introduced in the 1980s and some political conditionality (tying aid to progress on human rights and democracy) was mooted as from the 1990s. Indeed, France had a habit of undermining existing conditionalities (Cumming, 2001). Thus, for example, France provided structural adjustment assistance and loans throughout the 1980s and 1990s to compensate for any economic conditionality and for the devaluation of the CFA franc. The effect of this type of non-concessional assistance was increased economic dependency on France since Cameroon was incapable of repaying the debts associated with structural adjustment lending.

Other forms of assistance included support for teachers of French, the *lycées français*, Cameroonian students studying in France and various *Alliances Françaises*. Once again, this support was unconditional and was particularly pronounced in a country where competition with the UK (via the British Council) and Germany's Goethe

Institute as particularly pronounced. As noted earlier, the nature of this competition is illustrated in some detail by the film *Afrique: Je te plumerai* (Teno, 1992).

Overall, throughout this time period, France's changing rhetoric from one presidency to the next did not translate into any meaningful or radical changes to its aid programme on the ground in Cameroon. France continued to seek, through its aid instruments, influence and power in Cameroon and throughout Francophone Africa (Deporte 1984; Actes de la Recherche en Science Sociale 2008). The shift towards soft power marked France's recognition that it would have to pay increasingly large sums in order to remain the key external power in Franco-African nations and its largest bilateral state donor (176 million in current US dollars in 1996 and 134,8 million in current USD in 1999). Indeed, France was ready and willing to pursue an aid policy that veered towards exclusivity and exceptionalism (Chafer, 2005), one that reinforced dependency and made France indispensable to the continuation in power of the Cameroonian elite.

It can moreover, be concluded here, that just as the original French government institutions and instruments were designed to maintain French power and influence during colonial times, so too were they aimed at achieving similar goals during the post-colonial years.<sup>18</sup> While it is accepted that, in keeping with official French rhetoric, France did tweak its policies over time and did use *coopération* to promote stability, development and poverty reduction to some extent during these years (1960-1997), not least in the mid-1970s with the World Bank-led promotion of a Basic Needs agenda, it can also be argued that French government institutions and instruments were primarily concerned with incorporating Cameroon into the French sphere of influence and showing support for French *grandeur* within the Cameroonian elite.<sup>19</sup>

Having outlined the evolution of the key features of French "cooperation" and looked briefly at French aid to Cameroon from 1960 to 1997, the next section will highlight the international, regional and domestic factors that enabled and militated in favour of reforms under the Jospin premiership and Chirac presidency.

## **PART II: International, Regional and Domestic Pressures for Change**

It follows from the above analysis that the core features of France's aid programme, its interest-driven, paternalistic and neo-colonial characteristics, were deeply ingrained over the early post-colonial decades and came to mark France's aid programme to

Cameroon heavily. This, in turn, begs the question as to what the pressures were that led France to promise to move a more poverty-focused, empowering approach to aid. That will be the subject of this section which will begin by examining international and African regional pressures on France to change, before turning to domestic factors that were pushing in the same direction.

The aforementioned pressures are diverse and difficult to measure. This is because it is difficult to tell whether a particular pressure or set of pressures has had a specific, immediate or long-lasting impact. Equally, it is hard to know which factors truly influence policy-makers, not least since the policy-makers themselves may not know. There is also a temporal dimension whereby factors which are salient at one point in time, can be marginal at a later point. To, at least partly, obviate the pitfalls associated with this latter point, the period of the Jospin and Chirac Presidencies has been separated from the Sarkozy / Hollande Presidencies, with the latter being overshadowed by the global financial recession.

It does seem clear, however, that certain pressures were mounting from the time of Jospin's election, which helps to explain why Jospin finally managed to effect important changes to French cooperation policy and structures, and how it was that these changes were not reversed under Chirac's second presidential mandate.

## **International Factors**

To begin with we consider pressures from the international political economy and donor community. These increased following the end of the Cold War, taken here to coincide with the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. The end of East-West rivalry paved the way for the forces of globalisation, the integration of eastern powers into the global market economy and the opening up of African economies to OECD and non-OECD donors. This new environment meant that there was more competition for Africa's mineral resources, its votes in the UN, and its readiness to act as a repository for cultural influence. This new "free-market" environment was more competitive for the French state and for French business and imposed the need for reforms in France's clientelistic aid programme if France was to hold on to her African sphere of influence and avoid being viewed as a purely neo-colonial power.

Another major change in the international politico-economic environment was the emergence of a new metanorm, poverty reduction, which, as noted in our introductory chapter, was coming to the fore around the time that Jospin was elected and which would become the overarching objective of all OECD aid programmes as from 2000. The goal of poverty reduction was not of course new, as it had been present from the

very beginnings of ODA and was concretised by the development nostrum of Basic Human Needs in the mid-1970s when the International Labour Organisation, among others, helped lead the way with alternative thinking on development strategies (UN, 2013). What was new was the fact that this goal had risen to such prominence and taken on such a universal form. While a metanorm of this kind flew in the face of France's neo-colonial aid practices, it could not be ignored. Nor could it simply be massaged into the French aid programme without major changes to structures/ and or a different type of instrument or a different perspective on existing instruments. Briefly, something had to change, and France's aid programme would have to become more poverty-focused and empowering.

A few observations are required to illustrate the extent to which various multilateral and bilateral agencies across the international donor community were pressing all donors, including France, to espouse poverty reduction as the overriding goal of their ODA programmes. One such agency was the UN, under whose auspices the Millennium Development Goals were signed in 2000.<sup>20</sup> The overall aim of the eight MDGs was to halve world poverty by 2015, with specific goals focused on human development issues such as primary education and basic healthcare (maternal and infantile mortality, under-nourishment). Since the UN MDGs framework (2000), Northern political leaders have been making statements about more aid to Africa, more aid to the LDCs, more aid in grant form or on terms, which are more concessional and hence more likely to reduce poverty, promote human development and empower African local populations. Influential economists such as Jeffrey Sachs have also supported such efforts, stressing in his 2005 book, *The End of Poverty* that aid can work if there is one last push from donor countries.

But the UN was by no means the only force for change. The OECD had been the original inspiration behind the MDGs. In 1995, a meeting of development ministers from the member countries of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) committed themselves to an intensive, year-long process of reviewing past experiences and planning policies for the next century. The May 1996 report, *Shaping the 21st Century*, which emerged from these discussions, offered "a new approach to development" (OECD, 2014, p.16). The new strategy – based on a partnership between donor and recipient – drew upon what had been learned in half-a-century of success and failure in development co-operation. At its core lay a pragmatic approach to a global community of shared interests, and the necessity of solidarity and concerted action to advance those interests in the future (OECD, 1996, p.33). This report, sometimes labelled the "Development Partnerships Strategy", envisaged a limited

number of indicators which could be monitored to assess progress towards development goals which had emerged from several UN Summits held during the early 1990s. Since 1996, many donors have tried to incorporate the principles of *Shaping the 21st Century* and development partnerships into their aid policies. The OECD itself has not, however, rested on its laurels but has, as noted in our introductory chapter, organised a series of High-Level Forums, perhaps the most famous of which was in 2005, with the signing of the Paris Declaration, whereby all major OECD donors recognised the importance of recipient ownership as well as donor harmonisation/alignment and result-based aid as unifying themes of aid policy.

Another set of pressures on France came from the World Bank and IMF. In 1999, the World Bank introduced Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers or PSRPs which constituted processes through which to steer recipients' spending priorities and guide lending to some of the world's poorest countries (Levinsohn, 2003, p.8). These were the following up on a number of World Bank reports on poverty reduction in the early 1990s. According to the IMF, it was expected that the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers would be authored by countries which had successfully used the IMF's poverty reduction and growth facility (PRGF), a facility which was itself a precondition for countries securing access to debt reduction under the 1996/ 1999 Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative (IMF, 2016). These new internationally inspired and monitored poverty reduction processes made it harder for laggard donors to slip behind in their needs-oriented agendas and raise questions about implementation of policy; they had the potential to reveal any discrepancy that could exist between official aid rhetoric and implementation, or aid activities on the ground. They militate in favour of an empowerment-based policy, even if the procedures for checking up on donors remain limited and voluntary.

Yet another factor pushing for change in French "cooperation" policy was the EU, which has played a more proactive role in promoting poverty-reducing aid to Africa in the 2000s. This is clear from the EU-Africa strategies of 2005 and 2007, which underscore the importance of a more fraternal development and security partnership and a more needs-based aid programme, as a way to meet the 2015 Millennium Development Goals (European Commission, 2008). These changes together with the 2005 European Consensus also point to the need to work together in ways that are much more recipient need-focused than the Washington Consensus (which linked aid to neoliberal reform). This consensus "defines the framework of common principles within which the EU and its Member States will each implement their development policies in a spirit of complementarities" (European Commission, 2007).

The European Union has also been active in shaping French aid policy towards Africa/ Cameroon in other ways. The EU and ACP signed the *Cotonou Accord* in 2000, thereby replacing the *Lomé Convention* (1975). Cotonou, to which France has been at times first or second contributor, has a much more empowering focus than any of its predecessors, linking aid to civil society capacity building, anti-corruption measures, good governance, human rights and democracy. Soon after the signature of Cotonou, the European Commission and the European Union, as norm entrepreneurs, launched a set of recommendations designed to set an agenda for member states like France to move away from an interest-based approach towards a target-based strategy. Equally, the European initiative at the 2002 Barcelona summit led to European-wide (except for central and Eastern Europe) commitments to aim for a 0.7% increase in targeted aid by 2015. Around the same time, the EU was, moreover, an actor pushing France to adopt a less neo-colonial, more recipient centred approach to military “cooperation”. Thus, the nascent European Security and Defence policy underwent some major developments at the 1996 NATO ministerial meeting in Berlin, which eventually led to the EU-Africa Strategy in 2005.

It was not just the EU but also fellow donors that pushed France towards significant reform. The Nordic donors have been particularly vociferous, through the group of like-minded donors and more recently the Nordic Plus group in the EU, in pushing for poverty reduction and greater recipient state accountability.<sup>21</sup> According to the OECD, “Sweden has a tradition of leadership in development co-operation” (OECD, 2005, p.11), which has set “an example for the DAC”, (OECD, 2005, p.10), and which has maintained “the momentum of development co-operation leadership”, not least as the first donor to provide one per cent of GNP in aid (OECD, 2003, p.11).<sup>22</sup> Arguably the most important fellow donor in this respect was the UK as a result of its emergence as a pioneer in development circles following the creation of DFID. The fact that the UK and France signed the 1998 St Malo Agreement, promising to collaborate more closely on Africa also ensured that the UK’s influence over France would arguably make it more significant than that of other EU donors, including Germany, whose involvement in Africa had always been secondary to France’s as well as almost completely lacking a security dimension (Chafer and Cumming, 2011).

The UK foreign policy apparatus as a whole has clearly had an impact on France’s development and military assistance programme. Britain’s creation of the DFID in 1997, Tony Blair’s prioritisation of Africa, particularly as from his second term as Prime Minister, and the government’s introduction of public service contracts designed to ensure that aid was indeed poverty-all helped to give the UK a reputation for

professionalism and innovative practice in relation to poverty reduction. The fact that the DFID and AFD signed an overarching partnership in 2009-10 also confirmed the UK's status as one of the donors that had the greatest influence over the French cooperation programme.

This influence was not confined to the poverty orientation of ODA but also included pressure to move away from neo-colonial politico-cultural forms of aid as well as from harder military style assistance towards security sector reform, conflict prevention, capacity and state-building approaches (Bagayoko-Penone, 2016). UK impact could also be discerned in a less direct way, not least in the Cameroonian case through the DFID decision, in 2004, to move away from bilateral (grant) aid provision to Cameroon and towards pooled donor arrangements on issues such as forestry preservation and climate change. In so doing, the DFID signalled that it was adopting a selective approach which other donors might wish to follow, not least since Cameroon was so corrupt and not considered to be poor enough. The DFID, in effect, gave up its potentially very influential position vis-à-vis Anglophone Cameroon and moved towards a policy where it was only sending low-level officials out to deal with Cameroon (Interview 16; 7 May 2011). Further, there has been no DFID representative in Yaoundé since 2004; this is significant because it demonstrates that a reduced presence of donor country's officials is the response that the DFID offers to a state that is unaccountable and corrupt, whereas France's aid strategy towards the same country has been to maintain the number of French aid officials, ostensibly at least to reform the Cameroonian state through a process of engagement.

International pressures on France did not of course all simply emanate from the North. They also arose out of Southern powers and the large emerging developing countries including China, India, Brazil and others which became much more prominent on the African scene and which have identified possibilities rather than problems in Africa (Nygaard and Selbervik 2006, p.23). The entry of these competitors throughout the 2000s and beyond, drove reforms of French aid policy, as will be suggested in chapter 7. While the impact of these latter pressures is hard to gauge (the emerging powers often do not respect OECD aid norms and can actually open the door to a less empowering approach by Northern donors anxious not to lose out), there are some grounds for assuming that one impact of this renewed interest of G20 and other powers has been to promote "a process of normalisation" of French ODA practices (Fondation Paul Ango Ela, 2008, p.9) while also helping to ensure that French aid volumes have been maintained to Cameroon. This has been the case, albeit largely thanks to the substantial contribution made by the C2D bilateral debt to grant conversion facility on

top of “normal” ODA flows. These C2D monies have maintained France’s position as the largest donor by far to Cameroon. Furthermore, as Cumming shows in his article “France’s approach to bilateral reduction” (forthcoming), France has helped to direct around half of C2D assistance towards key areas of human development such as primary education, basic healthcare and agriculture.

As a consequence of these multiple international pressures, we can deduce that in the post-Jospin era, normative pressures from the EU, UN and leading donors made it harder for any leading donor to be “against” poverty reduction targets or to be seen to pursue old style neo-colonial goals like aid tying and influence. These initiatives all had, to a certain extent, a common thread. Specifically, they catered to a shift towards an empowerment-based aid policy with reference to African countries. Consequently, as one of the most important northern aid donors, France had to deal with demands for aid development efficiency and effectiveness, while managing African regional and domestic pressures.

## **African/Regional Factors**

To begin with African regional factors and events, the most significant of these was probably the Rwandan *débaçle*. France’s implication in the developments leading up to the 1994 genocide, its unconditional support for the genocidal regime of Juvénal Habyarimana, its readiness to exfiltrate Rwandan elites guilty of inciting genocide, and its failure to do enough to save Tutsis and moderate Hutus, all led to France’s shaming on the international scene and unprecedented levels of criticism in domestic forum, whether from Parliament (the Quilès report), the press (e.g. Stephen Smith), academia (e.g. Gerard Prunier), pressure groups (e.g. Agir Ici and Survie or NGOs (e.g. Coordination Sud). Both the Jospin premiership and the second Chirac presidency were affected by the aftershocks created by the Rwandan genocide. France’s implication in this debacle, as a major source of international opprobrium (Boutwell and Klare 1999; Drake 2011), forced a shift away from France’s former explicit collusion with African autocrats and its automatic policy of intervening in support of Francophile regimes (Péan 2005; Verschave 1994).

Another seismic regional event pushing for a more recipient-focused approach to French aid came through the election of Nelson Mandela in 1994 as President of South Africa, which marked the end of the Apartheid. Arguably the election of a president who was a black Freedom fighter indicated a growth of African empowerment worldwide. Against this backdrop, too, another important development has been the rise of a new generation of African leaders including South Africa’s Thabo Mbeki, Ethiopia’s Meles



Zenawi and Senegal's Abdoulaye Wade, all of whom were pushing for a new relationship to former colonial powers, thereby opening the door to a real recalibration of French aid policy towards Africa, and more specifically, towards Cameroon. In traditionally Anglophone, and even in parts of Francophone Africa, notably in countries like Rwanda, this new generation of African leaders began turning away from France's monopolistic system. These African leaders were embodied in the "African renaissance", explained thus by former President John Agyekum Kufuor:

There is a new breed of leaders in Africa who even after their time at the helm of affairs of their countries are determined to be of relevance to their society and humanity

There is a new breed of leaders who do not want to be remembered by history for their notoriety, disregard for human rights and good governance but rather want to be part of the forward march towards the establishment of a better life for their people by using the expertise garnered over the years for the good of their people there is a new breed of leaders in Africa who want to establish the identity of the continent as an equal partner on the world stage and must be treated as such (2008).

The African Renaissance is embraced within Thabo Mbeki's call for an African Renaissance and his „I am an African” speech, given on May 8th 1996 to the Constitutional Assembly of South Africa (Bongmba, 2004, p.300), all of which created a context propitious to a shift towards an empowerment agenda. There was also some substance given to the idea of African empowerment by the creation of the Thabo Mbeki Foundation in 1996, which aimed at “training and developing African cadres who would dedicate themselves to the implementation of the African agenda in all its manifestations” (Bongmba, 2004, p.300). More important still was the establishment of the African peer review mechanism (APRM), as a part of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), which took effect in 2001 and through which Africans were supposed to watch out for abuses in neighbouring countries. The APRM allowed for increased assessment performance and progress in African countries, such as Cameroon, in four main fields: 1) democratic and political governance; 2) economic governance and 3) socio-economic governance (APRM, 2014).

The goal of the NEPAD itself, is to create “a blueprint for Africa's development”, according to former president John Agyekum Kufuor (2008). This organism had come

about with strong backing from France's President Jacques Chirac and UK Prime Minister Tony Blair. Their tactic was to give more aid but also to ensure that good governance and more responsibility was taken for Africa's own peace-keeping. Significantly, one of the major obstacles to more directive needs-based aid policies focused on African populations rather than African states, had long been the Organisation for African Unity, which clung tenaciously to the sovereignty argument to resist donor interference. This blockage was removed thanks to the OAU's transformation into African Union (AU) in 2002. At their meeting in 1999, the Heads of State and Government of the OAU had prepared the ground for the AU by agreeing to accelerate the process of integration of the continent to enable it to play its rightful role in the global economy while "addressing multifaceted social, economic and political problems resulting from the globalization" (former President John Agyekum Kufuor, 2008).

Thence it could be said that the gloomy "aid fatigue" perspective on Sub-Saharan Africa long held by many Northern donors was beginning to be replaced by a more hopeful one. This change of attitude, which also affected French policy-makers, was based on a number of positive changes in the way Africa was perceived during this period, including the increased importance of Africa as a provider of raw materials to the rest of the world. This new image of Africa also piqued the interest of actors other than aid bureaucrats, including international corporations, equity funds and the BRICs.

## **Domestic factors**

On the French domestic front there were also a number of factors pushing for aid reforms. It is again hard to show a direct causal connection between these pressures and actual changes in France's aid policy, and it is widely held that a country's domestic policies are shaped in the intersection between international and national concerns and pressures (Boddy-Evans 2014, p.22; Putnam 1988, p.77). It is, of course, also true that many of the sources of domestic pressures can be close to, and can in some cases actually be, the views of the decision makers who oversee shift in French state aid policy. These domestic pressures have their origins in the views of "modernisers" within the wider political establishment, notably *Enarques*, Parliament and its representatives, the press, civil society, and the African diaspora living in France.

With regard to modernising politicians (referred to as *les Modernes* by Daniel Bourmaud 1996, pp.431-442 and Yves Gounin, 2013), the election of Jospin was the catalyst for broad political as well as aid reforms, even if Jospin was by no means the

first to promise such reforms. Balladur had in fact started this process, through the 77 proposals in 2007, and Juppé carried through the modernising agenda with the *Plan Juppé* in 1996. However, Jospin's aid reforms were more significant because he took them further than his predecessor, benefiting from the fact that he was free of the Franco-African underground networks, elected on a modernising agenda and had friendships with democratic African leaders. At the same time, the right-wing, traditionally a stronger supporter of a strong French African policy based on French economic interests was in disarray with defeat in election of 1997 coming as a shock.

France's Parliament continued to produce reports criticising French aid and wider African policy and was backed up by the work of the *Haut Conseil de la Coopération Internationale* which submitted a number of reports (Hessel, 2002; Quilès, 1998) to Parliament between 1999 and 2008. As regards the press, academia and civil society, these were a number of critics of France's neo-colonial aid policies and their criticisms were becoming more severe. *Agir Ici* and *Survie* published around 15 *Dossiers Noirs* (one of which dealt specifically with Cameroon) criticising French African policy while Antoine Glaser and Stephen Smith published *Ces Messieurs Afrique I and II* (1993 and 1997).

Needless to say, Jospin could see the benefits of aid reforms in terms of increased electoral support and the potential backing of French civil society. The Jospin government could equally see the advantages of tapping in to African civil society through the partnership this enjoyed with French civil society: the emergence of the PCPA programmes, discussed later, over the 2000s reflect France's new understanding of the potential benefits of addressing concerns over the neo-colonial nature of the French ODA programme.

Another set of domestic pressures on the Jospin government, channelled through the French Treasury, came in the form of budgetary constraints. The 2001 financial tool *la Loi Organique Relative aux Lois de Finance (LOLF)* was an internal spending review designed to ensure value for money on all French public spending down to the last Euro. A more closely scrutinised aid budget was shared primarily by the *Ministère des Affaires Etrangères*, *Ministère de l'Économie et des Finances*, and the AFD (MAE, 2013). These reviews served to highlight the opportunity cost of continuing aid to Africa when other priorities seemed more pressing, not least the opportunities in emerging markets, and in eastern and central Europe. That these budgetary pressures were acute at this time and throughout the 2000s is clear from one the comment of one interviewee (Interview 41; 3 March 2011): "It is costing them too much to continue to play the regional superpower role that they had historically played in Africa for most of

the past 37 years”, even if “old habits die hard” (Whitney, 1997, p.4). Indeed, “Globalization and European integration [left] no place for France’s free spending, statist ways” (Levy, 2002, p.4). There was also the need to meet the Maastricht convergence criteria and the budgetary constraints associated with these. These served as a catalyst for Jospin’s government to adopt an economic approach that was clearly aimed at value for money and included increasing the tax burden on state-owned companies (*The Economist*, 1997). While the French authorities had to lower the deficit to 3% of the Gross National Product, the economy was relatively stable notably with the stability of the Euro and a low rate of unemployment. It was a favourable context to implement the promised changes to aid policy.

In summary, this section has focused on international, regional and domestic pressures which impacted the evolution of French “cooperation” policy during the Jospin and Chirac time periods. It should be clear that these pressures have not gone unopposed or the reforms by Jospin and others might have been expected to sail through and be taken even further. Consideration will be given to the constraints on French aid policy reform in our NCR chapter but brief mention will also be made of them in the conclusion to this chapter. For now it should simply be noted that the old guard or *anciens* were deeply opposed to reforms to French aid policy that would weaken France’s link to Francophone Africa and break with the original tenets of the Gaullist Consensus.

Needless to say, all of the above pressures had some bearing on French aid to Cameroon specifically but some were particularly pertinent. Thus, for example, France’s implication in events leading to genocide in the nearby state of Rwanda was no doubt a factor that militated in favour of a more transparent aid policy towards Cameroon that did not back unconditionally the regime in power. Similarly, the HIPC process was of particular relevance since Cameroon reached decision point in 2000 then completion point in 2006, thereby opening the door to a new aid or debt refinancing instrument, the C2D. Finally, the emergence in the early 1990s, of a new generation of African leader, John Fru Ndi, an Anglophone with a power base in the North and South Western provinces, emerged in Cameroon and was nearly elected President in 2003 (*The World Year book*, 2003-4). As such, France was well aware that cosy policies targeted at supporting unconditionally Francophile Cameroonian leaders would have to change. The fact that emerging powers such as China emerged prominently on the Cameroonian scene as from the mid-1990s and former colonial donors such as the UK largely left that same scene did, ultimately take some of the pressure off the French government to move away entirely from neo-colonial policies

towards Cameroon.

## **PART III The Promised Reforms and Their Translation into Action**

This final part is broken down into two sections. The first sets out briefly the key reforms to France's aid structures and instruments, promised and undertaken to a large extent under the Jospin government and to a lesser extent during the subsequent Chirac presidency. The second seeks to establish how far these changes have been translated into actual practice on the ground in Cameroon. In effect, it highlights the changes to France's aid structures in Cameroon post-1997, and above all explores France's use of economic, military and politico-cultural aid instruments in this period. In each case, our three assessment criteria are applied to seek to establish whether these instruments reflect a more empowering or a continued interest-driven French approach.

### **Reforms under Jospin and Chirac**

The Jospin aid reforms have been set out in some detail by other authors (Cumming 2000; Pilon 1998) and will as such be discussed quite briefly here. Subsequent reforms to aid structures did take place in the early 2000s and have also been touched upon by Meimon (2007) and the OECD in its 2013 *Peer Review* of France. Taken as a whole, Jospin's changes to aid structures, policies and instruments were designed to establish a new partnership between France and Africa based on equality, transparency and poverty eradication in Africa.

Turning to France's reforms of discourse and policy on aid, the key changes took place under Jospin can be viewed through the prism of a more poverty-focused, needs-based and empowering agenda that was intended to render the aid administration more effective in developmental terms. This would in turn facilitate higher levels of economic development in developing countries such as Cameroon. This interpretation of France's aid reforms can be drawn from Jospin's official speeches, some of whose highlights are discussed briefly later in the chapter. According to Utley (2000), Jospin signalled a shift in France's policy objectives in Africa generally and in terms of aid structures/ policies specifically. Others have argued that Jospin promised to end France's paternalistic ties, enshrined in the "networks" and through the African cell with

Africa and replace them with fraternal relations, essentially with an empowerment agenda (Le Gouriellec, 2011). The most significant reform undertaken by Jospin, the integration of the Cooperation Ministry into the Quai d'Orsay should perhaps be viewed in this light. This structural change reduced the capacity of the *Elysée* and its Africa cell to tap into the aid and military assistance budget of the Cooperation Ministry to promote political connections and ties with Francophile Africa and Cameroonian elites. Jospin also pledged a 40% reduction in French military personnel stationed in Africa while at the same time introducing new Africa-based training programmes for Africans (Utley, 2000). He also created *the Zone de Solidarité Prioritaire (ZSP)*, initially with 54 member countries (a major extension of what was once known as the *champ*) as well as a *contractualisation* of aid.<sup>23</sup> As a result, in effect, recipients had to take responsibility for their own actions as they could be dropped from the *ZSP*, the list of priority aid recipients, if they did not fulfil certain conditions (sound economic governance, political reform) (Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 2011). To a certain extent, the *ZSP* links in to the empowerment agenda because it extended French aid well beyond Francophone and Lusophone Africa and into Anglophone Africa; such a change would be necessary if France were ever to address meaningfully the MDGs and the global poverty challenge. Equally, it provided incentives to recipients, who were willing to receive French aid to be “responsible” for their actions. However, it is true that there were no instances of countries being dropped from the *ZSP* on the grounds of poor governance, even if the original (1999) list of sixty-one priority recipient countries was reduced to fifty-four countries in 2002 (Balleix, 2010).

Jospin also pledged that his government would place greater emphasis on NGOs, on parliamentary scrutiny of Africa and aid policy and on co-development, a capacity-building and potentially empowering strategy for training Africans who then return to Africa to train others. Finally, Jospin stressed the need “to do better”, in effect to be more efficient with existing aid resources in Africa, and, to this end, he created a watchdog/ advisory body, the *Haut Conseil de la Coopération Internationale* or *HCCI* (1999), to advise, *inter alia*, on ways of making French aid policy more effective. This unit was not only designed to develop ideas for better promoting African economic development and democracy but also for holding subsequent French governments to account and ensure that they did not backslide or return to their old neo-colonial aid practices. Under Jospin, poverty reduction gradually became the overarching objective of aid, particularly after France signed up to the MDGs (2000), even if it is also true that the French continued to prioritise infrastructural development, higher education as well as cultural and military assistance (Clift, 2002).

On the military *coopération* front too, the French premier promised “a new partnership with Africa” (Jospin, 1997; cited in Utley, 2000, p.136), and his government (2001) claimed that the missions of French prepositioned troops in Africa would be “preventive missions in character and with a protection and intelligence function” (Utley, 2000, p.136).<sup>24</sup> According to Jospin, the reforms undertaken “aimed particularly at promoting a more comprehensive concept of cooperation whose ends [were] no longer only military or diplomatic, but [which] would integrate[d] strategic dialogue, the preparation and support of experts, and actions for regional stability, into a new strategy of presence and influence” (cited in Utley, 2000, p.137).<sup>25</sup>

It could be claimed, based on the evidence provided by the official rhetoric, but also in terms of the adoption of broad policies towards economic and military “cooperation”, that Jospin’s promises amounted to more of an empowering agenda. The aim would be to adapt French African policy to the new international and domestic climate. Chirac’s approach was underpinned by the motto “*ni indifférence, ni ingérence*” (De Rohan 2011, p.12), that is, a refusal to abandon Africa coupled with a reluctance to intervene in domestic African affairs. This strategy was not designed to break completely with the Gaullist Consensus but was supposed to make French “cooperation” policy less overtly neo-colonial and more targeted to the actual needs of the African population than it had been in the past. Chirac’s decision not to reverse Jospin’s reforms should perhaps not be that surprising given that in 1995 he had intended to “set up an independent *Ministère de la Coopération*” (Meimon, 2007, p.1) and his 1995 French government had promised to merge the *Ministère de la Coopération* with the Quai d’Orsay in order to “better adapt French foreign policy, strengthen transparency, cohesion and efficiency” (*Le Monde*, 8 février, 1996). The continuity in Chirac’s policy was important as it served to embed Jospin’s empowerment initiatives, particularly at the rhetorical level, and thereby create a new narrative according to which France should no longer be seen through a neo-colonial prism but should now be understood from a poverty reduction perspective. Many of Jospin’s promises appear to have been matched by French action in the field, as the following section will show in terms of the aid instruments deployed.

It is worth spelling out in a little more detail here the structural changes (the Ministerial merger, the creation of the HCCI and reforms to the military apparatus) initiated by the Jospin government since they had implications for French aid structures and instruments in Cameroon. Jospin’s reforms dealt a blow to *Françafrique* and helped to improve efficiency and coherence in terms of aid policy (Banégas 2007; Marchal, 2007; Meimon, 2007).

Table 5: French government key reforms to aid institutions from 1997 to 2007

Date established	Institution
1997	Interministerial Committee for Development Assistance
1998	Caisse Française de Développement renamed Agence Française de Développement
1999	Ministry of cooperation became Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development, a division of the Foreign ministry Inter-Ministerial Committee for Development Assistance becomes Inter-Ministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development (Trésor, 2016)
2004	Directorate General of Treasury and Economic Policy

Source: Adapted from 'French aid institutions apparatus', (Cumming, 2001: 418)

As noted above, in Table 4 the most significant structural reform applied to the *Ministère de la Coopération* starting in 1997. The *Services d'état à la coopération* were reattached to the Foreign Ministry; the *Comité Interministériel de la Coopération Internationale et du Développement* (CICID) was set up in 1998 to coordinate French international cooperation (Trésor, 2016). The former Cooperation Ministry, in becoming a division of the Foreign Ministry, the *Direction Générale de la Coopération Internationale et du Développement* (DGCID), in 1999, lost overall responsibility for aid while retaining responsibility for some aspects of it, including aid for governance issues,<sup>26</sup> As well as cultural assistance, linked to *rayonnement*, and French scientific and audiovisual policy (Balleix 2010; De Rohan 2011; MAE 2013). This reform does not of course fit perfectly with the French empowering agenda, as it increased the power of an institution, the French Foreign Ministry, whose primary focus was on strengthening France's diplomatic influence in African countries such as Cameroon. It created a more centralised system of French foreign policy towards Africa, giving the *Quai d'Orsay* more scope to promote French cultural and strategic advancement. This placed a large part of the aid programme in the hands of an organisation which is ambivalent with regard to the empowerment agenda. Crucially as well, this transfer of responsibility led to a loss of expertise and institutional memory, as staff from the *Ministère de la Coopération* retired. This led to a vacuum within the *Ministère des*



*Affaires Etrangères* and created more space for one aspect of aid where the Quai d'Orsay did have expertise, namely cultural assistance and la *Francophonie*, as the Development Minister assumed responsibility for this at the same time as overseas development.

Even so, the establishment of a more streamlined aid hierarchy, headed up by a Foreign Minister represented in the “Cabinet”, did also pave the way for the advancement of a more needs-based policy in African countries such as Cameroon, not least since the *Quai d'Orsay* had always been a Ministry that had favoured the promotion of human rights, democracy and accountable government and whose Ambassadors played a key role in the C2D process as well as in the allocation of *aides de proximité*. This new institutional arrangement, coupled with so many retirements, reduced the scope for “*copinage*”, *Françafrique*, “*les valises*” and “*les caisses*” used to carry bribes electoral donations by African leaders with a view to financing closer political friendships (Glaser and Smith, 1997).

Significantly too, this Ministerial merger was a reform of huge symbolic importance since the Cooperation Ministry was often viewed as the Ministry for Black Africa. This change led to a reorganisation of the Cooperation Ministry, with the consequent retirement of many officials with experience dating back to colonial times, and was accompanied by the rise of the “development bank”, the AFD, technically under the joint tutelage of the finance and foreign ministries.<sup>27</sup> The latter became the “pivotal” aid operator in the French system and took responsibility for health and education, moving into the field of grants rather than remaining purely focused on loans, though not for cultural cooperation, democracy and governance assistance or institutional development. The AFD has since taken control of the lion's share of the French aid budget including taking responsibility for the implementation of the C2D: (worth over a billion Euros to Cameroon alone over a 17 year period as from 2006: see Cumming forthcoming).

The rise of the AFD signals a break with France's earlier paternalistic approach to “cooperation”. The AFD moved beyond its role largely as a development bank with a commercial trading arm PROPARCO (Cumming, 2015). As a highly professional aid agency, there was a move away from using aid in a secretive fashion designed to preserve friendship with elites, what Lancaster calls “*cousinage et copinage*” (Lancaster, 1999: 25). With the AFD there was more professionalism, a greater degree of accountability, and a genuine attempt at development and the empowerment of the poor (Cambon and Vantomme, 2011).

While the AFD took on aid responsibility on issues other than governance and

culture assistance, promotion of democracy, technical assistance, its expertise in areas such as health and education remained weak. The AFD willingly took responsibility for education, aid for climate change, and relations with NGOs but had little expertise in any of these areas in the early 2000s. As a consequence, there was an initial hiatus period where the AFD was not really competent to act decisively in Cameroon or elsewhere. This was bound to limit any drive towards a more poverty-focused, empowering, needs-based approach. Over the course of the 2000s, however, the AFD has acquired a reputation for developmental effectiveness that the Cooperation Ministry never enjoyed. In part this is because this low key bank came under the control of an inspirational Director General, Jean-Michel Severino (2001-2010), a former World Bank Vice-President, who was a reformist and bought into much of the poverty reduction agenda at least insofar as it related to Africa. Severino, with help from a new team of young ambitious AFD recruits, helped to turn the AFD into something more akin to a DFID style professional aid agency focused on addressing recipient country needs (Cumming, 2015).

Turning to the second major structural reform initiated by Jospin, this was the creation of the Haut Conseil de la Coopération Internationale (HCCI), a Parliamentary watchdog comprised of around 60 French NGOs, trade unions, academics and local collectivities (1999). This body produced a plethora of recommendations in regular parliamentary reports and went some way towards addressing the lack of Parliamentary accountability of the French President's office and the Africa Cell/*réseaux* under the Fifth Republic (OPCF 1998; Vie Publique 2007). This is significant in terms of our research question because it highlights, to a certain extent, a shift towards a greater aid transparency and a readiness to hold to account French government efforts to use aid to pursue naked power-seeking strategies.

The third institutional reform related to the military apparatus. This entailed the setting up of the *RECAMP* in order to empower Africans military, as well as to reduce French military involvement in Africa after the Rwandan genocide in 1994 (Vincent, 2013; OPCF 1998). This approach, discussed more fully as part of our analysis of aid instruments, signals a shift away from France's earlier tendency to substitute for the Cameroonian army and is evidence of the French ambition to facilitate the emergence of an effective, non-repressive Cameroonian national army. This could therefore be considered as a step designed to increase empowerment.

Under Jospin, the three main reforms of aid structures all seem to point towards an empowerment-based strategy with more transparency as regards to Franco-African relations. However, it remains questionable whether or not the rhetoric during this

period matched French action in the field in Cameroon (that will be the subject of the second part of this section). What can nonetheless be observed is that these aid reforms were not reversed under Chirac's second presidency, even though there was no *cohabitation* under the *quinquennat* (five-year presidential term). Under his second mandate, by contrast, there were no new major reforms (see Table 4 of French aid government institutions from 1997 to 2007). The Africa Cell, which had not been challenged by Jospin, remained intact, simply being redesignated as the Africa service. Chirac's appointment of Michel Dupuch suggested a reformist look to this service but his designation of the ageing Foccart as his unofficial Mr. Africa shows Chirac's ambivalence and desire to retain something of the old neo-colonial aid practices in Africa. Chirac's own visits to authoritarian Francophone African leaders in countries such as Togo and Cameroon in 1999 also reinforced this impression of ambivalence. So too does his failure to tackle the power of fortress Bercy, the Finance Ministry over aid policy. This Ministry had not been challenged by Jospin either, and continued to prioritise aid in pursuit of French economic interests, the smooth running of the Franc Zone and budgetary assistance.

It would be wrong to portray Chirac "the African" as a reformer but he did oversee a number of small reforms that contributed to France's move towards a more needs-based aid programme. These include his administration's efforts to improve the cost and developmental effectiveness of aid by setting up, in 2004, the *Conférence d'Orientation Stratégique et de Programmation (COSP)* in order to coordinate the activities of all the ministries concerned with aid policy. Other subtle reforms involved a degree of Europeanisation of the French aid programme, albeit only to a limited extent and often with a view to tapping into more aid monies from the European Commission for key French development priorities (Cumming, 2015) has likened this to a "multiplier effect".<sup>28</sup> To this end, for example, the Chirac administration appointed in 2004 a second *conseiller développement* (adviser on Europe) in addition to a *conseiller Afrique* (adviser on Africa) to represent France in Brussels and enhance its dialogue with the European Commission on aid issues (Balleix, 2010). In the same year, France also participated in a partnership between the EU and Africa, which aimed at empowering and supporting the cotton processing industry in Africa (Présidence Française du Conseil de l'Union Européenne, 2008). Furthermore, in 2005, an office was established within France's *Direction Générale de la Coopération Internationale et du Développement (DGCID)* with responsibility for liaising with the European Commission on overseas development policy (Balleix 2010; MAE 2013). The above reforms under Chirac suggest a move away from a neo-colonial approach to aid underpinned by

France's narrowly defined national interest towards a more open and inclusive French approach that takes greater account of the poverty-reducing priorities of the European Commission, perhaps partly out of a concern for a more needs-based policy and partly out of a realisation that alignment to the Commission serves French interests by reducing the budgetary strain imposed by PDA.

## **Translating the Reforms into Practice: Aid Structures and Instruments in Cameroon**

This section will examine whether and how far French aid promises were, over these years (1997-2005) translated into practice, particularly in terms of the instruments of "cooperation" used in Cameroon. The overarching assumption here is that if France did effect a broad shift from a power-seeking towards an empowerment-based aid policy, then evidence of that change should be found in terms of the changing nature of institutions and instruments, particularly as they are applied in the field (in Cameroon in the case of this thesis). In other words, the choice or use of these instruments should point to a shift away from France's earlier narrow realist quest for power, influence and economic return. Whether or not this has happened will be gauged by our application of three assessment criteria, namely the volume/ intensity of assistance deployed by France, the split between bilateral and multilateral assistance, and the "fitness for purpose" of French "cooperation" instruments, that is to say, the extent to which they appear *prima facie* to be geared towards promoting narrow French interests or a broader needs-based agenda. Needless to say, this last criterion is both qualitative and subjective, but it is also the most important insofar as it involves a judgement on an aid modality that rarely faces detailed scrutiny from the press, academics or even NGOs and whose alignment to Françafrique or empowerment is rarely if ever questioned.

### **Cameroonian Aid Structures**

It was posited in the introduction to this thesis that government rhetoric, and even broad reform agendas, are not always translated into practice and that the likelihood of this is decreased by the distance between the centre of power (Paris) and the field in which the change is expected to happen (Cameroon). It is imperative therefore to explore how far these reforms have translated into action in the case of France's aid structures and instruments in Cameroon.

As can be seen from the diagram below, there have been changes to the aid structures operating in Cameroon. However, many of these have been largely nominal.

Needless to say, all of the major Paris-based Ministries and aid agencies have had some form of local representation in Cameroon underscoring the importance France continued to attach to this recipient over these years (1997-2005). Thus, for example, the Foreign Ministry was represented through quite a large embassy headed up by the Ambassador, while its DGCID division was represented via the SCAC, housed within the French embassy. There was also a local *service économique* which represented the interests of the Finance Ministry and to some extent the Foreign Ministry, whose roles include economic diplomacy. The AFD in Paris also had its own agency in Cameroon with around four French staff and a number of local staff. This was set up in the late 1970s, a reflection of the fact that the 1970s were generally promising in terms of economic growth for many lower middle income African countries.

It is worth expanding upon the two key local French representations, namely the embassy and the AFD local office. The first French Embassy was set up in Cameroon in 1960, in Yaoundé, and was included an aid mission (later named the *Service de Coopération d'Action Culturelle* (SCAC) in both Yaoundé and in Douala, and a subsidised network of 4 French alliances in Bamenda, Buea, Garoua, and Dschang (Personal Correspondence; 16 May 2011). While the embassy *per se* was in charge of implementing French diplomatic and cultural activities in Cameroon, France's aid mission focused on a range of areas which included: health, agriculture, environment, culture, civil society support, research, and democracy. On the cultural front, the French embassy enjoyed close links with *UNESCO*, headquartered in Paris but with a strong interest in Africa, and with the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*, which has an office in Yaoundé. There were also French consulates in Douala and in Garoua (Fodouop, 2010, p.248).

The French Embassy in Cameroon has not experienced any obvious changes to its overall remit since 1997. Its role continues to be to update the French Government on Cameroonian domestic and external policies, to give the Cameroonian authorities information on French policy, and to promote bilateral and multilateral Franco-Cameroonian cooperation. It is composed, as highlighted in Figure 4 and Box 1 below, of: the *Chancellerie Diplomatique* (10 persons); the *Service de Défense* (13 persons; 10 in the *Poste de Défense*, and 3 in the *Direction de la Coopération Internationale*); the *Service Economique* (10 people; 5 in the *Service Economique Regional*, and 5 in the *Mission Economique UBIFRANCE Cameroun*); and the *Service d'Action et de Coopération Culturelle* (15 staff, and 40 technical assistants) (Personal Correspondence; 16 May 2011). This shows how well embedded and heavily institutionalised the French embassy is in Yaoundé. During this period, a more

significant presence in terms of *coopérants* was introduced in a more diversified implementation of French policy in Cameroon, particularly as far as French businesses are concerned. It is notable that France maintained a much larger presence in Cameroon than the UK (only one High Commission and a British Council present in the whole of Cameroon) which started to withdraw from the country at this time (French Embassy Official Interview 7; 16 April 2011).

The roles of each of the main sections of the embassy is set out in Box 1 in an analysis which suggests that, while France is endeavouring to do more to promote empowerment and a needs-based approach, it has by no means shaken off its past concern with finding ways of promoting its own political, cultural and trade interests in Cameroon.

*Box 1: French Embassy organigramme*

**The Chancellerie Diplomatique** is in charge of protecting and assisting the French community. It has a presence in the French embassy in Yaoundé. There are the Douala consulate circumscription and the General Consulate in Garoua. Its points to a continuation of an interest based approach as emphasises the desire of French authorities to be present in the whole of Cameroonians territory. 1 consulate in Douala and 1 consulate in Garoua, this extensive presence points to France's continued suggestive of an interest-based than a needs based oriented approach

**The Service Economique de l'ambassade** is in charge of the implementation of French economic instruments in Cameroon. The latter is composed since 1997 of the Service Economique Regional and of the Mission Economique-UBIFRANCE. It promotes the bilateral Franco-Cameroonian cooperation in close partnership with the AFD satellite organization based in Yaoundé

**The Service de Défense** from 1997 the former Mission militaire was renamed the Service de Défense and was divided into two entities: the poste de Défense and the Direction de la Coopération Internationale.

**The Service de Coopération et de l'Action Culturelle** used to be called Mission de la Coopération d'Action Culturelle. The latter was renamed at the end of 1990's during a through reorganisation of the group's structure and aims. It thence moved from focusing solely on promoting French culture and language to implementing all French aid projects regarding health, agriculture, civil society, support, human rights protection, anti-corruption, research and higher education studies.

*Source: Personal Correspondence; 16 May 2011*

Turning to the second main local mission, this belongs to the *Agence Française de Développement*. The AFD has a sizeable representative office in Yaoundé and is funded privately and publicly from France. It implements French aid policies for education and health as well as being charged with the execution of the C2D and the setting up of private sector loans and support through *PROPARCO* and *Mission UBIFRANCE*, and managing public loans as well as the French Environmental Fund (which finances projects in developing countries which aim at reducing climate change issues). It follows that since the late 1990s, the AFD local office has taken over responsibility for the implementation of most aid to Cameroon as well as for the debt and environmental programmes. This has meant a more professional, results-based approach to aid, one that lends itself to clearly formed objectives and evaluation via the AFD's own evaluation department and according to its own rigorous criteria. It has also meant that the *Elysée* and its Africa cell no longer have access to the kind of largesse and political forms of assistance that they enjoyed at the time when the Cooperation Ministry channelled funds via the aid mission in Yaoundé. The local office of the AFD in Cameroon has a range of expertise and financial instruments available for its activities in sectors as diverse as rural development, urban infrastructure, transportation, agriculture, education, banking and microfinance, energy, healthcare, telecommunications, mining, housing, and eco-tourism.<sup>29</sup> These instruments can take the form of grants, subsidies, guarantees, loans, equity shareholdings, co-financing, and local bank intermediation (Cambon and Vantomme, 2011). The agency back in Paris also deals with research and consultancy that can better inform development practice in the field as well as making it more needs-focused. The fact that the AFD also has numerous national, regional, and local partners across France and Africa with local authorities and municipalities, international agencies, non-governmental organisations, foundations, private companies, entrepreneurs, local banks, microfinance institutions, and capital markets also means that there is more prospect of a holistic approach to economic development than in the past (Ibid). Since 2004, the AFD, together with the French embassy, have signed a partnership framework document with Cameroon. These set out agreed priorities on development and poverty reduction, and place considerable emphasis on evaluation and results. On the face of it, these new institutional arrangements had the potential to move France away from an interest-based to a needs-based approach to Cameroon but, as will be demonstrated below, they did not do so as fully as the French government's discourse on aid promised.

It follows from the above that the main aid-related institutions in Cameroon all existed before the Jospin reforms so it is hard to claim that those reforms led to the



establishment of any new structures. This should not, however, be taken to imply that France was not shifting its emphasis to a more empowering approach in the field. Indeed, as Jospin made clear, his reforms meant that France did not have to do more but to do better, in other words make more of the limited aid resources available (Cited in Utley, 2000). It would appear that the major reforms taking place in central government (see Table 4 above) were less visible at the local level in Cameroon where broadly the same set of actors was active. The implication would appear to be not so much that France has veered towards empowerment, or remained focused on a power-seeking approach but simply that France has remained very committed to Cameroon and well represented there. This analysis suggests that France has indeed adapted its institutions in Cameroon but this could be for the purposes of better pursuing its own interests through a sizeable embassy with a strong economic mission, or it could be interpreted as a more empowering outfit, with an AFD more clearly oriented towards addressing the needs of the Cameroonian population.

## **Aid Instruments**

We will now turn to France's economic/ environmental, military/ security, and political/ cultural instruments in Cameroon. It will be argued here that these ultimately reflect the continuation of aid policies based on self-interest and the quest for influence, even if they do also show some clear evidence of the promised needs- and poverty-based agenda. These instruments or aid modalities will, as noted earlier, be examined more closely below, with reference to the three assessment criteria: the volume/ intensity of the instruments, their bilateral versus multilateral dimension, and their fitness for purpose of empowering or promoting influence. Some attention will also be given to the soft, hard or smart nature of these instruments.

## **Economic Instruments**

To begin with economic instruments, these have been highly numerous and cannot, in view of space constraints, all be examined here. A useful study in this respect is *Les Outils de la Coopération* ( M'bokolo et al. 2010) which provides an overview of the main aid tools used by France in Cameroon in the mid-2000s. This study provides a useful source of raw material but it is worth remembering that it was funded by the French government and is now quite dated. France's economic/developmental tools in Cameroon include support through the Franc Zone, often in the form of programme assistance. It is hard to know how empowering this form of support is since

commentators are divided over whether this is a dependency-generating mechanism or a stabilising and potentially beneficial tool (Grey, 1988). Project assistance is generally held to provide considerable control to donors such as the AFD (which are in charge of the tendering process) but it can of course also be empowering ends by, for example, leading to the construction of schools. The same is true of technical assistance which can either substitute for or build local capacity.

In the post-1997 period, France did continue to provide assistance in various forms including budgetary assistance to Cameroon as a member of the Franc Zone and project aid via the AFD for discreet, usually concrete activities in the field of health, education and infrastructure). Technical assistance has also continued in this period, primarily through the SCAC and often with a strong political or cultural bias. There was also environmental assistance, particularly through a wider multilateral scheme in the Congo Basin.

At the risk of glossing over the above modalities, the focus here will be confined to two instruments in the socio-economic/ environmental and debt reduction field. The link between the two can be said to sustainable development, but this link is not always evident in the Cameroonian case. The size of the environmental and debt reduction instruments examined in this chapter is sufficiently large that they can be seen as more illustrative of French practice than say a single project or sets of projects, or for that matter technical assistance to specific sectors. As will be suggested below, France's aid practice in support of the environment and the C2D is marked by ambiguity with regards to its empowering/ power seeking dimensions.

To begin with French aid modalities to tackle environmental challenges in Cameroon, these represented a relatively new development around the time of Jospin's election. The French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM) has been working to promote protection of the global environment in developing countries since it was established by the French government in 1994. It is not primarily concerned with empowerment and has more to do with global concerns and France's own desire to take the lead on the global public goods agenda which came to the fore in international development circles in the early 2000s (Kaul et al. 2003). It should be added that such programmes are not viewed as high priorities by the Cameroonian government, even if it is hard to claim that they are designed to benefit France's narrow politico-economic interests. Even so, the FFEM does have an empowering dimension, supporting research and advanced training in agro-forestry and biodiversity through the *Centre international de la recherche agronomique pour le développement*, the *Institut de recherche pour le développement*. Equally, it provides funding for Cameroonian

scientific institutes (FCFA 6.5 billion in 2010, around €10 million), which are engaged in eight projects on satellite imagery, remediation, and biodiversity (AFD, 2013, P.8). Furthermore, the French Environmental Fund, through the AFD, supports the development of communal forestry with an FCFA 853 million (€1,300,390) programme for projects including the protection of apes, and the valorisation of sustainable forestry in order to strengthen the role of the Cameroonian civil society concerning wildlife conservation. The FFEM, which disbursed 331 million Euros worldwide between 1994-2015 (FFEM, *Rapport Annuel* 2015, P.2), has continued to fund environmental projects, some of which do have a more explicitly empowering dimension. These include the small-scale initiatives programme which empowers local NGOs to ensure that forests are better managed on behalf of local populations.

The FFEM has not been France's only contribution to the environment. Other support has been channelled through the C2D to the Cameroonian government's PSFE (*Programme Sectoriel Forêts et Environnement*) established in 1999 and a political framework through which aid from a number of donors (including France, Canada, UK, Germany, World Bank and EU) is channelled. The first tranche of the C2D in Cameroon focused on vehicles, computers and uniforms as well as the construction of eight regional delegations of the Forest and Fauna, while the second tranche aimed at capacity-building and the creation of an observatory and surveillance of the forest by satellite imagery (Confidential consultancy report for the AFD, 2014). Here again, the ambiguity is clear: the benefits of a well managed forest will help many local populations across Cameroon but the drive for environmental protection seems to be more do with the AFD's quest, particularly under Severion's leadership, to head up the global agenda on public goods.

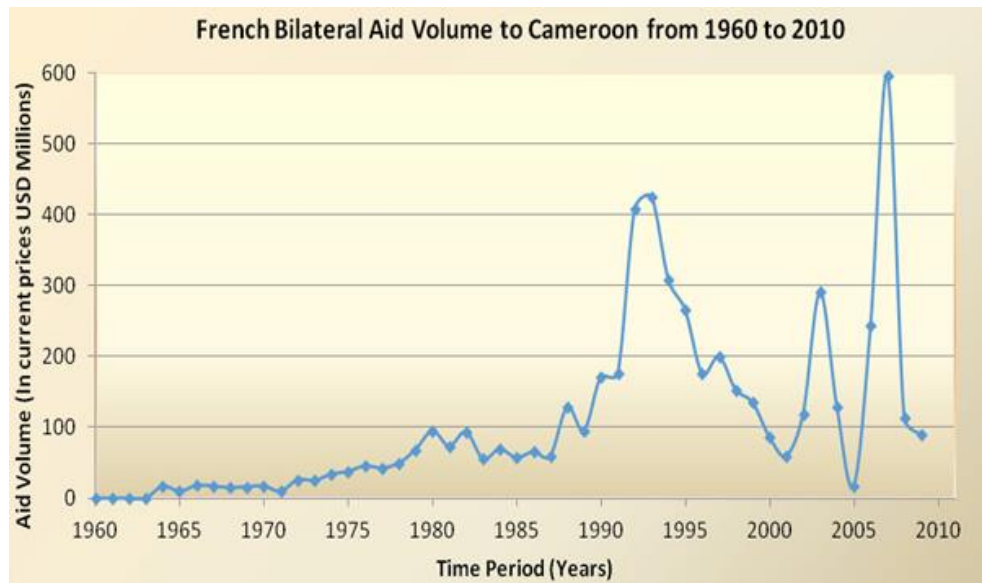
Turning to the second instrument, the C2D (*Contrats de Développement et de Désendettement*), whereby debts are repaid and then reimbursed by France for poverty-reducing projects, did not come into force until 2006 but preparatory negotiations began with Cameroon as early as 2001. The C2D has a clear capacity building dimension and builds on the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) instrument which was first introduced in 1996 as a multilateral scheme to cancel multilateral debt, most notably developing country debt owed to the leading state creditors. France has been a key player in these debt cancellations through HIPC, the Enhanced HIPC, the Economic Adjustment and Reform in Low Income Countries (ESAF) and the PRGF.

While the HIPC itself has proven to be an invaluable tool for development and economic empowerment, it will not be the focus of this analysis since it is a truly global multilateral mechanism run by the IMF and World Bank and involving most major

creditor countries, which makes it hard to track any influence or power that might accrue to creditors that contribute to the cost of multilateral debt cancellation. The same is less true of the FFEM where France has consistently been one of the top donors and where the number of OECD states involved is much smaller. It is also not true of the C2D, discussed more fully in the next chapter which focuses on the timeline after 2007 when C2D expenditures were reaching their peak. The C2D bilateral debt reduction facility was primarily focused on promoting Cameroonian infrastructure, education and health, with the former representing 40 per cent of expenditures, and the latter totalling around 30 per cent in the first tranche of the C2D (Cumming, forthcoming). Though criticised by CSOs, it has provided large sums of (arguably Cameroonian) money for poverty-reducing projects. But it has at the same time also continued to have a clear focus on the promotion of French business interests. A member of the C2D Cameroon steering committee told the author that “the C2D is based on an illegitimate debt, French interests, and *France-Afrique*. Additionally, there are serious C2D payment issues” (Interview 7; 9 October 2014). This is significant because it calls into question French claims about a needs-oriented agenda and its presumed shift from power-seeking to empowerment during the period studied.

Turning to the first of our assessment criteria, size, France has consistently been a major donor of economic assistance to Cameroon. Graph 1 shows, for example, how France donated US\$ 17.2 million in 1964 and US\$ 90.59 million in 2009. Also, in 1997, France provided total aid worth US\$ 200 million in 1997 and US\$ 98 million in 2005 compared to no bilateral aid for the UK since 2002, US\$ 40 million in 1997 and US\$ 20 million in 2005 for Germany and US\$ 102 million in 1997 and US\$ 90 million in 2005 for the USA (OECD, 2015). The size of French aid flows over these years is largely linked to the C2D, which has inflated French ODA figures, as France has long been Africa’s largest state creditor (Cumming, forthcoming). The C2D in Cameroon was the largest such facility ever in Africa. It is worth adding that the FFEM also involves a huge global environmental commitment by France that has, as noted earlier, involved over 300 million Euros in spending to date. This spending has come out of the French bilateral aid budget and has reduced the monies available for bilateral programmes to countries that are not part of France’s list of *pays pauvres prioritaires* or PPP (Ango Ela, 2013).

Graph 1: French Bilateral aid to Cameroon (1960-2010)



Source OECD.2009. French Bilateral Aid Volume to Cameroon [Online] Available at: [www.OECD.com](http://www.OECD.com) [Accessed: 1 March 2011].

However, the sizeable nature of instruments does not necessarily imply empowering goals or a strong commitment to poverty reduction. French action within the C2D and indeed the wider HIPC process emphasises its economic/developmental involvement in Cameroon (Interview 8; 20 April 2011). Against this, however, the C2D has actually led to a reduction in “normal flows” of aid to Cameroon, which may become an issue when C2D monies run out (Cumming, forthcoming). As to levels of environmental spending directly in this country, these have remained quite low with very small, local forestry management programmes being the central focus. France’s sizeable contribution to the FFEM has nonetheless facilitated “multilateral” spending on Cameroonian environmental projects, even if it is hard to calculate how much French money ended up being spent on Cameroon.

As regards the bilateral/ multilateral mix, it seems clear that French aid to the Cameroonian government is mainly bilateral. This generally represents a desire to emphasise French influence and power in Cameroon instead of either empowering the African country or responding to its needs on the field. It is broadly in line with the overall split between bilateral (around two-thirds) and multilateral aid (around one-third) across the French aid programme. This ratio has been inflated slightly by the presence of the C2D which is a bilateral debt to grant conversion facility.

France has nonetheless sought to move away from its earlier very heavy emphasis

on bilateral assistance across its aid programmes, and by applying the changing proportions of bilateral to multilateral assistance to French aid flows specifically to Cameroon, the OECD has produced the Table below. This suggested that France's multilateral share to Cameroon was, in 1997, US\$ 7.21 million. It then increased substantially to US\$ 30.72 million in 1999 before ranging from 2000 to 2005, on average, between US\$ 15-20 millions.

French funding for the *FFEM* reflects something of this growing confidence in multilateral funds, even if it is hard to disentangle France's desire to do more good from its wish to engage in gesture politics by making grand announcements at Franco-African summits. A similar observation can be made regarding France's growing voluntary contributions to the European Development Fund. France became the largest contributor to the Lomé Convention, ahead even of Germany in the 1990s, and has remained the lead donor. At the same time, France has been a strong supporter of the HIPC multilateral debt cancellation process, effectively helping to cancel 90% of the total debt owed to France from the developing world through this initiative as well as further ODA-related debt through its bilateral debt refinancing instrument element in the form of the C2D.

*Table 6: France's Multilateral Aid Contribution (1997-2009, in \$USDM)*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Aid contribution</b>
1997	7,21
1998	6,93
1999	30,72
2000	19,03
2001	15,52
2002	20,29
2003	20,07
2004	25,52
2005	16,5

*Source: OECD.2011. France Multilateral Aid Contribution [Online]. Available at: [www.oecd.com](http://www.oecd.com) [Accessed: 1March 2011].*

That said, France has not shifted all that decisively in favour of a multilateral approach to aid, whether in Cameroon or elsewhere in Africa. It has continued to prioritize bilateral aid, its own control of a bi-multi currency arrangement, the Franc Zone, which effectively makes Francophone African ex-dependencies little more than satellite “states” (Moncrieff, 2012). Besides, France’s bilateral debt reduction facility afforded its real influence over Cameroon (Interview 39; 6 October 2014). Thus according to one interviewee: “The French government chose to set up the C2D in Cameroon in order to secure the funding through subsidised loans” since 2006 (Interview 39; 6 October 2014). This enabled the French authorities to “have control over the Cameroonian economy with the AFD enjoying an *avis de non-objection* or non-objection notification, leading to its loss of sovereignty” and with France’s approach being contrasted (sometimes erroneously) with that of China “which is really wiping off Cameroonian debt” (Ibid). It could be deduced from the above that French economic/developmental instruments have been established with a view to safeguarding French interests as much as to empower the recipient country, Cameroon.

Turning to fitness for purpose, France’s economic assistance to Cameroon reflects a developmental/ empowering mindset alongside a strong continued quest for influence particularly through the C2D but also to a lesser extent through the FFEM. The latter funds projects which help local peoples better manage forest resources and promote sustainable development. However, they ultimately reflect Northern priorities with global public goods such as climate and pollution, and would not be the first priority of the Cameroonian state.

On the face of it, the C2D appears to be a soft power instrument aimed at reducing debt and poverty. But in practice it includes a hard power element (coercion) and should be viewed as a smart power instrument. It ensures control over the spending decisions made by the Cameroonian government, forcing the latter (in exchange for debt cancellation) to direct the monies saved towards poverty reducing projects. In effect, debt cancellation schemes are tightly controlled in that they are linked to poverty reduction strategy papers, which the Cameroonian government has to agree with the World Bank after a consultation exercise involving Cameroonian civil society.

The C2D’s controlling approach has, nonetheless, been justified by French policy-makers. One high-ranking AFD official expressed the view that “wiping off the whole of Cameroon debt would be nonsense” and added: “how could too much indebtedness result in the development of a country?” (Interview 9; 8 October 2014). The C2D does,

moreover, link up to an empowering civil society programme known as the *PCPA* (discussed below) that was designed to better enable Cameroonian civil society to check that the Cameroonian state was using the monies secured through debt cancellation (the Cameroonian government effectively continues repaying the debt but the money is held on an account reserved for poverty-reducing projects) towards poverty reduction and the needs of the poorest (sanitation, water, education etc).

It is hard to escape the conclusion that the French were all too aware that a by-product of the C2D would therefore be significant and tangible influence. The C2D does not respect civil society demands for "additionality" (debt cancellation monies should be in addition to the aid budget), so C2D debt cancellation is counted as being aid rather than something which is given on top. Consequently, this ability to maintain influence in Cameroon is reinforced by the involvement of France in the C2D, which is itself enhanced by France's control over the Franc zone. The Franco-Cameroonian partnership has, according to the French minister of cooperation H. De Raincourt, "never been stronger" or indeed spread across so many sectors (5th of July 2011 Speech in Cameroon at the inauguration of the second C2D:2011-2016).

To sum up, the C2D is the most recent French instrument set up in Cameroon and regarded as the most powerful. It has provided the French authorities, particularly in the late Chirac period and the years immediately following, with a larger degree of influence in Cameroon than at any period since its independence. This was thanks to three main characteristics: firstly, the C2D is an impenetrably complex and innovative French instrument, which increases French influence in the recipient country and in the global arena. Secondly, the C2D deals with economic/financial affairs, giving the French government a strong grip on the Cameroonian economy; this looks set to continue for some time to come. C2D second generation is set to run between 2011 and 2016. Thirdly, it gives as almost as much influence over debt reduction to a single donor France as the HIPC gives to the wider donor community as a whole. This allows the French government to be influential economically in both bilateral terms while retaining a strong multilateral role in the HIPC. This is relevant to our research question, because France has used this major instrument to exert and increase its influence in Cameroon. In effect, the C2D is one of the main ways in which France has ensured that it remains the leading external power in Cameroon.

## **Military/ Security Instruments**

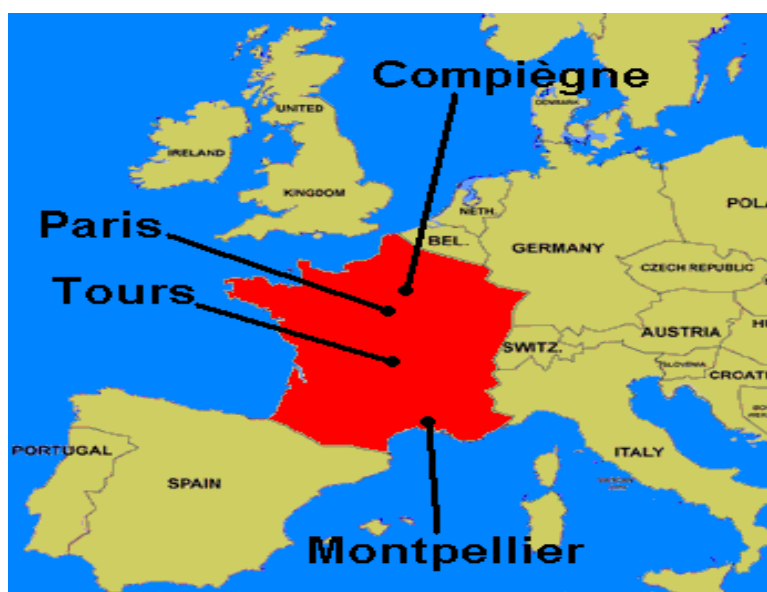
The main bilateral military/ security instrument used by France in Cameroon has been military training, whether for peace-keeping or wider security purposes. This consists of



RECAMP (*Renforcement des Capacités Africaines au Maintien de la Paix*) and *Ecoles Nationales à Vocation Régionale* (ENVRs), providing French military training and support, delivered in African countries, to improve local and national capacities. There are also multilateral tools to which France contributes financially and in terms of expertise. These include EURORECAMP: *Renforcement Européen des Capacités de Maintien de la Paix*, the APSA: African Peace Security Architecture and the ASF. The broad policy initiative within which France's new emphasis on training peacekeepers fell was RECAMP. This was set up by the French government in 1997, and finalised in 1998 at the Africa-France summit in the Louvre. RECAMP is coordinated by both the French foreign and defence ministries.

The department of peace-keeping operations and the defence and military division within the French ministry of foreign affairs collaborate with the UN department of peace-keeping operations in taking charge of individual peace-keeping training (see Figure 7). In relation to this, the French authorities deliver individual training in Africa at the training centre in Koulikouro, Mali, and in France at Paris, Compiègne, Montpellier and Tours (see Figure 6). RECAMP involves close links with the UK's African Peace-keeping Training Support Programme, which is itself subsumed within the conflict prevention pool (CPP) in 2001 and the United States via its training programme (ACRI or African Crisis Response Initiative), not to mention with the African Union.

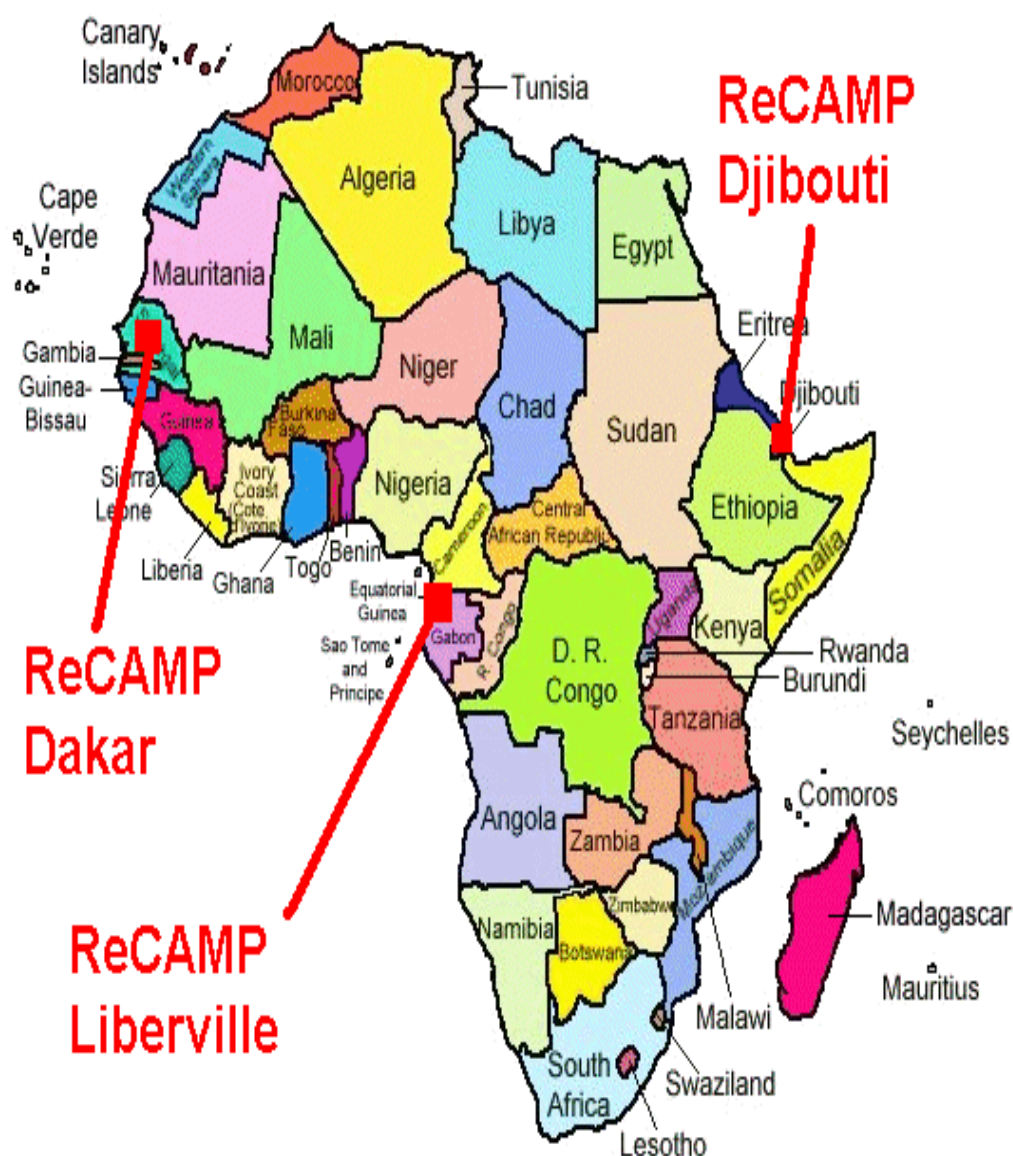
Figure 2: French military training centres in France



Source: UN. 2009. RECAMP. Available at: [www.un.int](http://www.un.int) [Accessed 20 May 2012]

In line with the spirit of RECAMP, the French participated with the UK in each other's military training exercises in Tanzania (2001) as well as in Ghana and Benin (2004). Together with the US, they established in West Africa a regional network of training centres to reduce duplication and offer a model for other regions such as Central Africa: the Kofi Annan international peace-keeping training centre in Accra, for which the UK provided substantial start-up funding, focuses on operational level training; the *Ecole de Maintien de la Paix* in Bamako undertakes tactical-level training (the UK is represented on the School's board); and the National Defence College in Abuja undertakes strategic-level training.

Figure 3: Main RECAMP Programmes in Africa



Source: UN. 2009. RECAMP [Online]. Available at: [www.un.int](http://www.un.int) [Accessed 13 March 2010].

RECAMP was then a new instrument established around the time of Jospin's election. It was potentially empowering. So too is the multilateral mechanism into which it was recast, namely EURORECAMP. In line with the thinking behind RECAMP, France established 14 ENVRs or regional training schools across Francophone Africa with a sizeable presence in Cameroon. France's influence in Cameroon and across central Africa is assured by the fact that it is the only donor which provides group training based on peace-keeping techniques, and appears to be the most significant when it comes to equipment provision. In effect, France offers group training in operational and technical domains in African countries and on site in Cameroon. There are three ENVRs located in Cameroon, including the *Cours supérieur interarmées de défense* (2005) in Yaoundé, which is for general military training, the *Pôle aéronautique national à vocation régionale* (2004) in Garoua for air military training, and the *Centre de perfectionnement aux techniques de maintien de l'ordre* (2000) in Awaé (Interview 19; 17 May 2011).

For peace-keeping and group training, France allows Cameroonian military men access to three military training peace-keeping centres, as illustrated in Figure 6: in *Compiègne*, at the Staff College, for planning and command in peace-keeping operations, in Tours, at the Logistics Academy for support skills and administration adapted to peace-keeping, and in Montpellier, at the Infantry Academy, for special operational training in peace-keeping (Interview 19; 17 May 2011).

In this context, it is worth adding that France also provides Cameroon with paramilitary training. Thus, *the Ecole Internationale d'Awaé, Centre de Perfectionnement aux Techniques de Maintien de l'Ordre* has trained about 500 officials from 20 African countries in law enforcement since 2001 (Interview 26; 5 June 2011). From 1999, the *Centre de Perfectionnement de Police Judiciaire* has trained 500 officials and under-officials in investigation methodology, and 210 for technical and scientific policing (Interview 26; 5 June 2011). The ENVRs symbolise a new instrument as well as a break with the training in military schools in France. Admittedly this has as much to do with saving money as empowerment but it is also in line with UK and US practice.

There are, in addition, other military/ security instruments or forms of support pursued by France which impact directly or indirectly on France's capacity-building role as well as its influence and status in Cameroon. A good example, as Chafer and Cumming (2010, p.1140) have shown, comes in the form of France's, and indeed Britain's, backing of AU efforts to create its own institutional framework for crisis

management. More specifically, the APSA, which was launched in 2002 and provided among other things, for the creation of a political decision-making body, the Peace and Security Council; an intelligence-gathering and analysis centre, the Continental Early Warning System; an external mediation and advisory body (the Panel of the Wise); and a military element or operational arm, the African Standby Force (ASF).

Turning now to the three assessment criteria, it is time to ask how far French post-1997 instruments, particularly its military training, fit with France's proclaimed aims at the end of the 1990s as regards to Africa and in this case Cameroon to move towards an empowering agenda. French military and paramilitary support is clearly large and intensive, with France marking itself out as by far the most important military backer of to this central African country. However, the high intensity of French military instruments does not necessarily mean that France is empowering Cameroon. It could also translate as a strengthening of French narrow realist interests. The fact that there are three ENVRs in Cameroon, which represent the only source of group training (in areas such as mine-clearing, refugee handling, civilian-military actions, etc...) as well as the sheer number of police officers being trained in Cameroon, seem to point to France's continued readiness to invest in Cameroonian security to ensure the maintenance of French influence in this country. This is all clearly linked to Jospin's drive for greater aid efficiency and budgetary savings but it is also consistent with the empowering practices of other donors and with the slogan, African solutions to African problems. It seeks to encourage Cameroonians to take charge of their own security, without which there will be no development, as well as their own enforcement of law and order, without which there may never be a properly functioning democracy. In this sense, military training on African soil is also a step forward on the empowerment front, as indeed is the support offered by France to bodies such as the AU and ASF.<sup>30</sup> It is worth noting that there is now a brigade of the ASF responsible for Central Africa to which Cameroon contributes, thanks in part to French military training.

As regards the bilateral versus multilateral split, French military training in Africa appears to give an important nod in the direction of a more multilateral approach during this period. The fact that France was instrumental in turning RECAMP into EURORECAMP (Chafer and Cumming, 2010) and that it was a major player in supporting the AU/ APSA/ the African standby force all suggest that the French were increasingly aware of the scale of the challenges facing recipient countries like Cameroon, not to mention the need to share the burden and cost of such training. Once RECAMP became EURORECAMP, France was no longer in total control. In this respect, France worked and continues to do so, within the structure in coordination with

UK and to some extent the US (Interview 28; 9 June 2011). France is particularly involved in the training cycle within EURORECAMP, (part of the defence training budget: €754,000), which is conducted in two phases (diplomatic and deployment). The EU and an African team under the EU's authority elaborated this training implemented by an international "EURORECAMP team" supported by France, working within the framework nation (Elowson, 2009).<sup>31</sup> At the same time, France retained a very strong bilateral element to its support, via the ENVRs which essentially do their training in French and initially via RECAMP itself (Interview 29; 10 June 2011). Of the €3.9 million that France dedicates for its bilateral military cooperation with Cameroon, €754,000 is devoted for defence training (with 17 full-time *coopérants* on site) and €300,000 for logistics (Kamil, 2016). This would seem to point to France's desire to maintain its influence and power in Cameroon, as bilateral aid is mainly based on the interests of the country donor (Maizels and Nissanke, 1984).

Bearing the above in mind, there is some ambiguity as regards fitness for purpose of French military "cooperation". France has signed up to an African empowerment agenda insofar as its training of peacekeepers in ENVRs and its support for the AU both suggest support for the idea of African solutions to African problems. According to Chafer and Cumming (2010, p.17), the ENVRs aim to provide training that meets "the needs of African army officers [and is] equal in quality to that provided in France while being adapted to local realities and resources. There are now 14 such schools in eight Francophone African countries". The fact that France reduced the number of military bases on the African mainland to two (Gabon and Djibouti), not to mention an informal one in nearby Chad, and planned reduction in the total number of troops to about 4,000 or so, further points to a new readiness to let Africans resolve their own security issues or new political realities in Europe (Hansen, 2008). However, at the same time, training locally and abroad is still mainly done by French military instructors and in French military schools. As a consequence, it could be said that France's largely soft power military assistance policy from 1997 to 2007, was aimed both at safeguarding French interests and at empowering Cameroon, or at least the Cameroonian state, to a certain extent. Even so, the actual practice fell well short of the rather grand French discourse and the impact of the changes on the ground on the recipient's local needs are much harder to assess.

## **Politico-cultural instruments**

As regards France's political and cultural instruments in Cameroon, these have been quite numerous, particularly in the cultural domain. Most have been bilateral and

managed by the SCAC, France's aid and cultural mission in Yaoundé. They include political assistance programs and French bilateral cooperation projects managed under the auspices of *La Francophonie*, which became the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF) in 1997 and was given its own charter in 2005.

First, the political instruments, the most important type of aid tool in this field were political assistance programmes ("positive" support for political reform in the form of money or expertise) and political conditionality (coercive tying of aid to actual democratic and other reforms). The former represented soft power and the latter hard power (Bourguignon, 2007). These political instruments first emerged in Cameroon at the start of the 1990s when France like much of the donor community, though more reluctantly than any other major donor, had suspended development aid to the Biya government. By 1997, there was widespread recognition that top-down pressures on countries such as Cameroon to democratise were not going to work and that other, generally more positive forms of support were required (Wagner, 2014). However, the downside of this was that France, like many other donors, began to concentrate bilaterally on soft power instruments and shift its hard power political instruments into multilateral forums. The most notable of these was the European Union through bodies such as the Africa Working Group on Human Right, now known as AFRA, and the European development forum: Committee on Development Cooperation (CODEV). Furthermore, other pressures could be applied multilaterally on countries such as Cameroon through the World Bank (via the PRSPs) and the European Commission via the Economic Partnership Agreements and the Cotonou agreement which made political reform, the stamping out of corruption and the promotion of civil society essential clauses on which European aid depended.

An example of political support for better governance was the *Organisation pour l'Harmonisation en Afrique du Droit des Affaires* (OHADA), a framework which harmonises the business law in Francophone African countries, guaranteeing legal/financial security to French companies in Cameroon through the disbursement of € 3 million every five years, and also through the implementation of a website called E-Regulation, in collaboration with the *ministère des PME et de l'artisanat*, to help the creation of local business enterprises (Feudjo, 2010; Personal Communication; 5 April 2011). It should be clear that this socio-economic instrument is designed to promote French economic interests and is also potentially very beneficial to Cameroon, not only by providing a safe climate for business investment but also by supporting local Cameroonian businesses.

A much more overtly political and innovative instrument adopted by France was the

*Programme concerté pluri-acteurs* or PCPA, which was introduced in 2002 in Cameroon. It was created to “strengthen participatory democracy and civil society in this former mandated territory” (Cumming, 2008, p.4). The French government set up this developing programme in order to enable the Cameroonian civil society to take part in the country’s development-debt relief process. In order to do so, a *Comité paritaire de programmation (CPP)* was set up with French and Cameroonian non-governmental actors (Plate-forme dette et développement, 2003, pp.63-69). This is significant because it reveals that French authorities try to set up initiatives, which are empowerment-based, even if they are keen to avoid jeopardising their own influence and interests in the process.

Turning to cultural instruments, some of these have been multilateral in their focus and represented clear examples of soft power. OIF projects represent the clearest example. *La Francophonie* promotes French language and culture but also welcomes non-French speaking countries and is comprised of fifty-six member states, three associate members, and nineteen observatory members from all continents. Indeed, the membership is as geographically diverse as to include Ghana and Mozambique from Africa, Sainte Lucia from the Caribbean, the United Arab Emirates from the Middle East, Thailand from Asia, and Ukraine from Europe (Provenzano, 2006). This diversity and breadth helps French authorities exert influence both in Cameroon and more widely.

The diversity of those political/cultural instruments serves once again to demonstrate the importance of Cameroon for France, and the consistent and ever stronger influence that the French government exerts over it (Anderegg 1994; Moncrieff 2012). That influence is exerted through *La Francophonie* thanks to several largely French funded instruments, which spread the French language and values.<sup>32</sup> These include: French radio, the international day of *Francophonie*, the *Francophonie* Academic Agency, Television 5 (TV5), the Senghor D’Alexandrie University, and the French-speaking Mayors international association. All of these French instruments are important when it comes to exerting and increasing French influence in Cameroon owing to the structured and efficient way in which they promote French soft power in Cameroon. The work of the OIF links French efforts in Cameroon to a broader French international cultural network, through which global French influence has been reinforced. Other cultural instruments have been much more clearly bilateral approaches linked to France’s past policy on assimilation and, perhaps more precisely, *rayonnement*. The SCAC, which manages the network of technical cultural assistants (which include, inter alia, 10 scholarships per year in food safety through the Research

and Hautes études Framework), *Instituts Français*, *Alliances Françaises*, and schools under the administration of the *Ministère de l'Éducation* have coordinated these. The *Instituts Français* have been yet another element in a renewed, French international cultural network, and under the overall direction of the *Agence pour l'Enseignement Français à l'étranger*.

There is now a French technical adviser within the Cameroonian *Ministère de la Culture* and in the national museum in Yaoundé (Interview 12; 27 April 2011). In 2006, there were numerous French programmes to promote French language and French training in Anglophone universities and linguistic Centers in Cameroon. At that time, the French education network was composed of eight subsidised schools in six provinces. Out of 2,272 students: 52% were French, and 32% Cameroonian. Therefore, around a third of the total, 727 Cameroonian students, learn and study in French (Ministère de l'Intérieur, 2013, pp.1-138). However, all of the above instruments could be used both to safeguard French interests and to develop Cameroon. The ambiguity makes firm conclusions hard, even if it is clear that the politico-cultural instruments have certainly fallen short of Jospin's rhetoric on the creation of a more fraternal, needs-based approach.

Turning to the bilateral/ multilateral mix, it has already been suggested that France has continued to prioritise bilateral channels, offloading or rather uploading harder power instruments on issues such as human rights and political reform to EU bodies such as the Africa Working Group (Cumming 2013; Moncrieff 2012). Most of the bilateral assistance has been in the form of soft and smart power instruments designed, in targeted ways, to attract and encourage elite Cameroonians to embrace the French language and culture, and in the process to favour French influence and French commerce.

As for fitness for purpose, France's political assistance is broadly in line with the empowerment agenda, albeit only when a long-term perspective is taken. Thus, France is pushing for sound governance and the building of a civil society that can hold the Cameroonian government to account, and at the same time ensure that debt cancellation funds are properly allocated (Cumming, 2008). At the same time, however, it is possible to question France's true commitment to such an approach, as the amounts of money allocated to this form of assistance have been negligible and the French state was quick to withdraw from the PCPA when the programme began failing, and the European Commission offered to take it over and integrate it into its own capacity-building mechanism, the *Programme d'Appui à la Structuration de la société civile au Cameroun (PASOC)*. Overall, the political instruments used are clearly



designed not to rock the boat, not to upset Francophone Cameroonian elites whose stability in office is linked to France's preservation of its own interests in Cameroon.

As regards French cultural assistance (which focuses on the promotion of French cultural heritage, language, values, arts, research and sciences...), this is clearly a major element of the aid programme and a good example of soft power even if it harks back to the days of forced assimilation. There is no doubt that such assistance promotes continuity of government and can serve as a unifying force for Cameroon, a country with over 220 indigenous languages. The process of cultural *rayonnement*, particularly through *La Francophonie* is also linked to the promotion of Western/ French ideas, the respect for liberty and human rights, and in that sense could be seen as empowering, even if it involves empowerment by means of a foreign language and culture (Torrent, 2013). It follows then that France has maintained complex institutional arrangements and a number of instruments which, although they promote development and help reduce poverty, are ultimately designed to demonstrate France's position as the most important external donor to Cameroon (Interview 38; 5 November 2014; Pacquement 2010).

## Conclusion

This chapter began by highlighting France's neo-colonial aid programme as a whole as well as the more specific French "cooperation" structures and instruments in Cameroon. Consideration was then given to the international, African regional and domestic factors which created a more favourable environment for aid reforms. Next the overall and Cameroon-specific aid reforms were then examined and evaluated against our three criteria.

This chapter has demonstrated how France's aid institutions and policies, or at least policy discourses, were reformed over this ten-year period (1997-2007). While these reforms were deemed limited, they were also found to be quite significant when compared to the long history of continuity in aid policy over the post-colonial decades. The reforms did move in the direction of empowerment, as can be seen notably from the merger of the Ministry of Cooperation into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the reduction of French military bases and officers in Africa, and French officials' efforts on aid efficiency based on the OECD, Paris Declaration standards. This led our study into an analysis of French aid structures and instruments specifically in Cameroon for the period 1997-2007. This analysis showed how during this period, the French aid

apparatus relating to Cameroon remained largely unchanged even if the role of the AFD changed quite dramatically. The aid administration in Cameroon did not relinquish its neo-colonial institutional culture aimed at increasing French influence in Cameroon, even if the AFD did work towards a much more human development-focused strategy.

As far as French instruments in Cameroon are concerned, these have tended to be geared more towards smart power. The implication of our findings would appear to be that these instruments are designed to be more empowering, needs-focused and poverty-reducing but that they have fallen well short of the discourse announced by Jospin in the late 1990s. The changes on the ground have been quite minor and both the structures and instruments have continued to be marked by a concern with retaining French influence in Africa and Cameroon. This was stated by an official from the AFD: “There have been no changes in policy practice whether under the left or the right wing; there has rather been continuity” (Interview 50; 14 October 2014). It could be deduced that the reforms implemented in terms of French institutions did not really translate into a dramatic shift in policy instruments. Indeed despite a few changes, the latter all remained characterized by a desire for control over Francophone Africa rather than any burning need to empower African or Cameroonian citizens. Aid volumes have increased but not significantly (except via the C2D). Bilateral aid has continued to be the main form of “cooperation” but there have been more attempts to harness European aid towards French ends notably through EURORECAMP. The evidence suggests that instruments are in theory fit for purpose but it is often less clear what purpose they are fit for. There is an empowerment dimension to all the instruments identified but each of these also has aspects that could be used to maintain French influence in Cameroon. Most instruments are marked by smart power and can, as such, be used to nudge the Cameroonian state to pay more attention to human need but stop short of more coercive attempts to ensure accountable government and poverty reduction in practice.

The Jospin period was marked by a broadly propitious context: a nascent AU, an emerging ESDP, 9/11, along with the rising importance of Africa on the international agenda, all of which favoured a development-based strategy. However it is difficult to argue that a clear shift in policy towards empowerment was implemented. It could be concluded that the French authorities were constrained by international and domestic factors militating for an African policy based on power-seeking and retaining influence, rather than positioning empowerment as a priority in their approach. The following chapter will focus on the evolution of French African policy under Presidents Sarkozy and Hollande. Having demonstrated that there were reforms of aid policies and

structures but much less reform of aid practice over the Jospin/ Chirac period, it is now time to ask whether the same findings are true of the Sarkozy and early Hollande era. It will be demonstrated in the next chapter that the pressures have increased, giving rise to new policies and reforms and creating an expectation of corresponding changes in French aid instruments towards Cameroon. It will be investigated whether these changes can in fact be detected. It will be questioned how the international, regional and domestic factors affected the shaping of French policy towards Africa and Cameroon over this timeline.

At the risk of touching upon a discussion that will be covered extensively in chapter 6, it is worth flagging up here the way in which, over the Jospin/Chirac years, France's motives behind aid policy fitted within an NCR framework. Briefly, the implication would appear to be that France under Jospin was much less concerned about the potential contribution Cameroon might make to France's "relative power" in the world, and French officials appear to have perceived that the risk of pushing a less indulgent aid programme on the Biya regime was worth taking, not least as a way of cutting costs when budgetary restrictions were so high. Also, with Jospin installed in the Prime Minister's Office, backed by reports from the HCCI and by his own determination to bring Parliament more clearly into the aid policy-making process, the obstacles to introducing the Jospin reforms were significantly reduced at this time. At the same time, however, the actual translation of policy rhetoric into practice requires an active role by the so-called Foreign Policy Executive, that is to say, elite policy makers within the French aid administration including French officials in post in Cameroon, who see the benefits of a more empowering approach and are able both to extract resources for a new policy as well as overcoming domestic obstacles to that policy. As will be seen in chapter 6, French policy-making elites have perceived real benefits to France's international image from a more poverty-focused aid programme but they have come up against an old guard intent on preserving French economic, political and strategic interests in Cameroon, whether in the form of oil, commercial contracts or French cultural *rayonnement*.

# Chapter Five: From Sarkozy to Hollande: Reviving French Aid Reforms?

## Introduction

The previous chapter focused on Prime Minister Jospin's promises of aid reforms and the translation of those promises into cooperation policy and practice in the field in Cameroon. It showed how Jospin had gone some way towards carrying out his pledge of "a new partnership with Africa" (Utley, 2000, p.136) and how President Chirac refused, during his second mandate (2002-2007), to undo these changes, and in addition sought to re-engage with Africa (Shin, 2010; Darracq and Melly, 2013). Chirac also endeavoured to ensure that Francophone African states, such as Cameroon, continued to enjoy financial and military support whether through the Franc Zone, debt cancellation or military training (Creamer 2003; Mehler 2008). Finally, chapter 4 suggested that, as from 1997, French coopération policy towards Cameroon took a new direction with a clearer emphasis on more smart power (a mixture of hard and soft power) which aimed both at maintaining influence and empowering the recipient country. While French cooperation structures and instruments vis-à-vis Cameroon were shown to have become more empowering, they continued to be marked by a strong power-seeking focus.

This chapter looks at French coopération policy under Nicolas Sarkozy's presidency (2007 to 2012), as well as part the first part of the Hollande presidency (2012 to 2015). In effect, these two administrations offer up to this analysis examples of two more attempts at reforming aid policy and making it more empowering and less power-based. The hypothesis here is that Sarkozy during his presidential term revived and sought to go beyond the key aid reforms, which were introduced by Lionel Jospin at the end of the 1990s. One year before his election, he promised once and for all to "turn the page on the complacency, secrets and ambiguities" in Franco-African relations (Sarkozy, 2006). He promised fewer unilateral military interventions and an emphasis on training African soldiers and supporting African interventions instead of putting French troops on the ground. He also pledged, during his speech in Cape Town in February 2008, to avoid direct unilateral military interventions and to help Africa

(including Cameroon) to build its own capacities.<sup>33</sup> Above all, unlike his predecessors, he guaranteed the renegotiation of defence agreements were signed at independence with former French African colonies and to review French military bases in Africa on a transparent basis (Moncrieff, 2012, pp.21-22). Those promises were significant because they came right from the very top and were made at the beginning of the Sarkozy presidency suggesting that French policy towards Africa might experience a break from past neo-colonialism. Those promises if executed would represent an official shift of French policy in Africa towards empowerment, albeit combined with a self-interested agenda. As such, they relate directly to our research question on the shift from a power-seeking towards an empowering French aid policy.

While it will be shown that most of Sarkozy's promises did not come to fruition, this did not stop, and actually may even have encouraged, François Hollande to make a broadly similar set of statements, even if Hollande was much more careful than his predecessor in his pledges during the 2012 election campaign against Sarkozy. A year ahead of the 2007 elections, Sarkozy had claimed that Franco-African relations should "not merely depend on the quality of the personal rapport between heads of state" (Cumming, 2013, p.32) and that there would be "a dialogue as equal, responsible partners". France would help Africans build democracy, "respect individual freedom and refuse *coups d'états*" (Cumming, 2013, p.32). In effect, according to Darracq and Melly (2013, p.5), Sarkozy's successor built on these promises and "sent a strong message of general principle in 2012 that countries with democratic governance will benefit from stronger support... [even if], in practice he has adopted a much more flexible and nuanced approach in dealings with individual regimes" (Darracq and Melly, 2013, p.2). As a consequence, it could be hypothesised that right from the start of his presidency, François Hollande set up a *coopération* policy which was in line with the will of Sarkozy to attempt an overhaul of the often claustrophobic alliances between selected African regimes, some senior French government and political figures and certain business interests (Darracq and Melly, 2013, p.6). In fact, a high-ranking Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT) official interviewed for this study argued that France's "cooperation" policy towards Africa from 2012 amounts to a continuation of Sarkozy's policy (Interview 43; 7 October 2014). The convergence of Sarkozy and Hollande's *coopération* policies, together with the shared backdrop of a long running global and Euro-zone recession, reinforces the importance of studying them together.

Thence this chapter will be focusing on further attempts at moving French aid away from being about French power/ interests and towards a focus on needs, poverty and empowerment, specifically with reference to the Cameroonian case. The chapter will

be broken down into three parts. The first will identify the international, African regional and domestic French pressures on the Sarkozy and Hollande governments to build upon the Jospin reforms and make French *coopération* more needs-focused. The second section examines the broad aid policy and structural reforms undertaken under the Sarkozy era and the early part of the Hollande period (up until the MDGs, a period which has set the tone for the *quinquennat*). The third explores how far French official discourse translated into changes in the institutions and instruments involved in French *coopération* practice in Cameroon over the periods 2007-2012 and 2012-2015. In other words, it will be questioned whether Sarkozy and Hollande's promises of moves away from *realpolitik* towards empowerment translated into practice institutionally, and in terms of aid modalities in the field. As in chapter 4, the instruments themselves will be tested against our three criteria, namely: size/ intensity, bilateral/ multilateral and fitness for purpose, not least in terms of the mix of hard and soft power and the move towards smart power. It seems reasonable to hypothesise that if France has, over time, adopted an empowerment agenda coupled with maintaining influence, this should be seen in changes to aid institutions. This might include greater specialisation in poverty reducing mechanisms and structures, and a growing emphasis on multilateral assistance since multilateral aid is widely considered to be better oriented towards recipient need (Maizels and Nissanke, 1984, p. 879). It would also include toning down of institutions and instruments that are less fit for the purposes of empowerment and less needs based (e.g. some cultural promotion and military instruments). Attention will be paid to the fact that aid could be used at the same time to empower the recipient country but also equally to maintain French influence (Interview 38; 5 October 2014).

## Research Parameters

Before proceeding, it is worth drawing attention to the following provisos. First, it is important to reiterate that the focus is not on every aspect of French "cooperation" (or indeed on how the French aid policy-making processes work in detail from the conceptualisation through to the formulation, implementation, evaluation and feedback stages. Instead, the aim will continue to be to work backwards from the selection of institutions and instruments, as applied in the field in Cameroon, and ascertain whether these structures and modalities confirm or call into question official aid discourses over the Sarkozy and Hollande periods, in order to find out whether these promises of moves away from *realpolitik* towards empowerment translated into practice

institutionally, and in terms of instruments particularly in terms of aid instruments in Cameroon.

A second proviso arises from our application of the three criteria. As can be seen from chapter 4, it is of course possible for aid to become larger and more bilateral while also remaining equally or becoming more focused on recipient need. In other words, the key criterion is ultimately a qualitative one, namely fitness for purpose. This requires some subjective judgment and a degree of common sense. In some cases there is ambiguity but in others, a clearer distinction can be drawn between an instrument that is being used to promote a power-seeking agenda, and one which is primarily concerned with recipient needs. A final proviso is that empowering Cameroon through an aid programme could be compatible with securing more influence.

## **PART I International, African Regional and Domestic Pressures: 2007-2015**

This first section will begin by examining pressures on “cooperation” policies, structures and instruments under the Sarkozy and early Hollande presidencies. French policy-makers were, over this period, coming under pressure to engage in a *cooperation* strategy that was more about empowerment than pure self-interest. While most commentators agree that Jospin was ideologically and morally committed to reforms of aid policy, not least due to his lack of networks and friendships with democratic African leaders, the jury is still out on Sarkozy. He, despite not having networks in Africa, was friends with some of the most influential French businessmen with links to Africa e.g. Vincent Bolloré and Martin Bouygues (Chafer, 2002<sup>a</sup>, p.359). Even so, some reforms did take place under Sarkozy, who made much of his desire to move away from underground networks to relationships that are more fraternal between France and its former African colonies such as Cameroon. As will be shown below, there were changes in the international, regional and domestic context throughout the period (2007-2015) which had an impact on the evolution or non-evolution of French development policy towards African countries such as Cameroon.

### **International Factors**

International pressures for a more empowering agenda came from the international donor community, the EU and the developing world. A key source of international

pressures was the UN via the MDGs, particularly as donors came to recognise the extent to which the MDGs were going to be missed. These goals were coming closer to the end of their term and France, like other donors was increasingly aware of the fact that more had to be done to ensure a needs-based approach to global poverty. With a strong focus on consultation through the UN General Assembly, an Open Working Group (OWG) was established in which 70 countries developed a sharing arrangement for the designated 30 “seats” for participants (Berends, 2016). The sharing arrangement broke up traditional coalitions, and the first eight meetings of the OWG were conducted as a “stocktaking” exercise, all of which allowed for fresh thinking on the Sustainable Development Goals which would replace the MDGs (Ibid). France was, of course, heavily involved in this process and was bound by its outcomes, not least the creation of the 17 Sustainable Development goals (SDGs) and 169 targets that the OWG identified. In this context too, France has supported the thematic consultation on environmental sustainability organised by UNDP and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to define post-2015 development priorities (*Ministère des Affaires Etrangères*, 2014, p.10).

Another source of peer pressure came from the World Bank and IMF, the former of which claimed to “have an approach to empowerment for economic growth and poverty” (*World Development Report 2000/2001*, p.5). Both continued to develop their thinking and use of PRSPs and PRGFs and, in the case of the World Bank, an empowerment unit has helped to mainstream empowerment as a development issue (World Bank, 2002, p.10). The World Bank has also long called for aid selectivity, whereby donors concentrate aid resources on the neediest and best performing developing countries. These calls enjoyed more resonance at the time of the global financial recession which began in late 2007, soon after Sarkozy’s assumption of office (Koeberle, 2003).

Another key actor shaping French thinking on aid was the OECD, not only through its peer reviews of France, its annual Development Cooperation reports, the work of its expert working groups and the proximity of its headquarters to the French government in Paris but also through the work of the various OECD high-level effectiveness forums (discussed briefly earlier). The first of these took place towards the end of Chirac’s second mandate and established core criteria such as donor harmonisation/ alignment, recipient ownership, mutual accountability, transparency, and results-based aid (2005 Paris Declaration (OECD, 2015, p.2). This work continued during the time that Sarkozy was president. The second high-level forum took place in Accra in Ghana and was centred specifically on aid effectiveness. The UK and Nordics were among the most



vociferous proponents of a new emphasis on effectiveness and evaluations whilst France was less directly championing these issues, not least because it had failed to harmonise its own aid evaluation arrangements with separate units in the Foreign Ministry, Finance Ministry and AFD for evaluation cooperation (Interview 41; 3 March 2011). The OECD meeting in Busan in 2011 was more influential and sought to bring in the BRIC countries and signal that another model of development was possible (Ibid). In some respects, Busan kept the pressure on donors like France to move towards a more poverty-focused aid programme, but in other respects, it relieved the pressure by accepting that the OECD did not have a monopoly on the truth, that there were other ways of doing development (involving for example South-South and trilateral cooperation) that did not necessarily involve harder forms of power such as aid conditionality designed to coerce recipient governments into tackling poverty (Cumming, 2016; Groves and Hinton, 2000).<sup>34</sup> France has, since 2012, been implementing the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation and monitoring its commitments (Cumming, 2015).

Perhaps most importantly of all, the EU stepped up, over these years, pressure on France to adhere to European norms, enshrined in the development *acquis* (colonial and post-colonial background), and to promote poverty reduction, align to the policy coherence agenda and pursue a needs-based approach to development (Carbone 2007; Cumming, 2015, p.10). The EU's acceptance of poverty reduction as the overarching goal of aid was written into its adoption of the MDGs but was taken further under Sarkozy and then Hollande. The EU sought to bind other member states to this goal through the EU code on the division of labour (2007) , joint programming each year, its rolling programme (yearly programme which identifies common priorities) and policy coherence for development (2009) (DAC, 2013, p.10; Cumming, 2015). Overall, the EU was pushing for a common response to improve the division of donor activity in a recipient country for aid to be more effective. The EU enshrined many of these principles in the *Agenda for Change* (2011) document (the basis for the EU policy), which drew on ideas from, and enjoyed a strong resonance within, French development circles. This included, as will be seen in Part II, differentiation in the approach on aid towards recipients according to needs.

The EU also exerted pressures on France's approach to the whole gamut of its "cooperation" activities. EU-Africa strategies in 2005 and 2007, and the European External Action Service, established in 2009 and fully operational by 2010, served to iron out anomalous practices linked to *Françafrique* and obliged France to align its aid practices more to European norms as well as to work more through the Africa Working

Group (AWG) on human rights and to operate more through Europe's political and security committee (PSC) on military interventions (Cumming, 2013, p.36). The PSC has been working actively to coordinate European responses to African security crises and has constrained France's earlier military cooperation practices, notably its unilateral interventions, while also providing a burden-sharing and legitimising platform for more empowering aid-funded, DAC compatible support, capacity-building and training operations in Francophone African countries such as Chad, Mali and the Central African Republic. The AWG for its part now meets weekly rather than monthly (Chafer and Cumming, 2011, p.9) and exerts implicit pressure on France to move away from its earlier clientelistic practices in aid to Africa and align more explicitly to EU efforts to promote human rights, democracy and good governance (European Union, 2007; AFG, 2015).

The above EU pressures have continued throughout Hollande's period of office, as the EAAS has now recruited its staff (mainly from DEVCO in the European Commission and from fellow member states) and as the donor harmonisation process has continued with the Fast Track code of conduct (2007), a new effort to push EU budgetary assistance (European Commission, 2015), the drive for economic partnership agreements (EPAs), the embedding of the European Consensus on Development, the extension of the use of EU joint programming to some recipient countries (European Commission, 2015). The increased power allocated to EU delegations in recipient countries, in the wake of the 2007 Lisbon Treaty, has also begun to give the EU more of a coordinating role (Delputte, 2014). The increasing assertiveness of the European Commission as a norm entrepreneur (Dany, 2014) has also ensured that donors such as France have less room to pursue self-interested aid policies, particularly where these run counter to European norms or commitments on issues such as aid tying, concessionality and volume (Cumming, 2013). In this context, the Africa-EU Partnership has helped to keep Africa high on the international agenda and made it easier for the EU to push member states on aid levels. Indeed: "In 2012 the EU (27 Member States and the European Commission combined) was once again the largest provider of development aid in the world, contributing more than half of all Official Development Assistance (ODA) worldwide"(Africa-EU Partnership, 2014). The EU also took seriously its coordinating role. Thus, the fourth Africa-EU Partnership, held on the 2-3 April 2014 in Brussels, established strategic priorities to be taken into account during the era from 2014 to 2017. These are: 1) Peace and Security; 2) Democracy, 3) Good Governance and Human Rights; 4) Human Development; 5) Sustainable and inclusive development and growth and Continental Integration; 6)

Global and emerging issues (Consilium Europa, 2014, p.4).

Alongside EU and European Commission pressures, there has of course been some “cajoling” by other European donors, not least those belonging to the Nordic Plus (the Scandinavians, the UK and Holland, Ireland). These actors have continued to press for poverty reduction, aid effectiveness and democracy promotion, and even though France is often associated more with the Mediterranean bloc of donors within the EU (the “Club Med”), the Nordic Plus donors have been more influential in shaping the overall international development agenda (Cumming, 2015). The Nordic countries, which have been at the forefront of the development effectiveness agenda, have shaped the agenda on aid implementation. As early as April 2007, the Swedish Government had given the lead by issuing a new Strategy for Multilateral Cooperation that offers guidance on how to achieve better results through this cooperation in priority areas, all aiming to reach the MDGs. In this context, the Swedish Agency for Development Evaluation (SADEV) has conducted a series of evaluations with focus on the role of Multilateral Organisations (OECD 2012, p.10) and Nordic practice of sustainable development and empowerment-based policy in Africa.

The UK has been particularly influential not least since, under Sarkozy’s administration, the overarching agreement between the AFD and DFID was signed in 2009 (Chafer and Cumming, 2013). This highlighted the value of coordinated Franco-British efforts on poverty reduction and the tackling of need. UK pressures were also exerted through annual Franco-British summits and in the regular meetings that now take place between senior officials from the DFID and AFD/ French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Chafer and Cumming, 2011). As a rule, the example set by the UK was one where power-seeking, interest-driven strategies were being replaced by needs-focused empowering approaches. To illustrate, the UK government set up in 2013 a “frontier economic strategy” based on a list of 28 selected poor countries (Killick, 2014). Furthermore, where the UK has engaged in military assistance policy, it has tended, with the exception of its militaro-humanitarian intervention in response to the recent Ebola outbreak, to operate through multilateral channels for example providing support to the EU training mission and to the French-led operation Serval in Mali in 2013 (Chafer, 2014, p.518). The implication would appear to be that British aid policy in Africa is increasingly implemented via multilateral channels, as opposed to French aid which remains mainly bilateral (Personal Correspondence; 15 May 2011). This highly provisional conclusion is interesting given that that multilateral aid is more needs-focused (Findley, 2014; Maizels and Nissanke, 1984) while bilateral aid tends to be more focused on the donor country’s self-interest.

## **African Regional Factors**

Turning to pressures from Africa and neighbouring regions, one key pressure came from events in North Africa and wider Middle East, particularly the Arab Spring, which began on 17 December 2010 in Tunisia. The revolutionary drive towards democracy that began in Tunisia and soon spread to Egypt and places like Bahrain, both in 2011, pointed to the dangers of policies of backing unelected autocrats such as Egypt's Hosni Mubarak and Tunisia's Ben Ali. While it is true that developments in Libya, Yemen, Iraq and Syria have cast a serious shadow over Northern foreign policy, notably interventions in the Near and Middle East, the fact remains that the Arab Spring provided an impetus for governments to stop neo-colonial aid practices that worked in the (short-term) political interests of the donor, and to embrace empowerment development strategies that allow a greater voice for civil society, counter-elites and the population at large.

At the same time, there has been continued pressure from a new generation of black African leaders. Some of these actors have been referred to already but it is worth adding that countries such as Ghana have begun to write into their national economic development strategies a reduced dependence on overseas aid. There is moreover an increased appetite in many of these leaders (e.g. in Rwanda) to secure budgetary assistance (which is channelled through the national budgets and over which they have effective control). Some of these leaders, such as Rwanda's Paul Kagame, were trained in Anglophone countries. Others were strongly critical of France, such as Cote d'Ivoire's Laurent Gbagbo. Most wanted to work through the AU, and sub-regional economic communities and rejected *Françafrique* and exclusive ties with France (Kwarteng, 2015). They preferred South-South cooperation with emerging countries such as China, India, Brazil, Turkey, the Gulf States (Moncrieff, 2012, p.15). Furthermore, these leaders want to see the Accra and Busan commitments translated into reality and to use less of their own limited staff capacity on individual negotiations with a whole host of competing donors and on securing new sources of finance from donors, including in the form of loans and blending (a mix of aid and loans). These African demands, combined with the fact that since Africa's youth now feels "no sense of a special relationship linking Africa to France" (Chafer, 2007, p.50), have kept up pressure on France to maintain aid levels but also to move away from its past dependency-generating culture. The ability of many of these countries, including in Francophone Africa, to turn to alternative donors such as China, have also meant that

France has had to be seen to using its aid in ways that will visibly serve the needs of African governments and populations alike.

## Domestic Factors

Turning to domestic French pressures over the period of interest, these were broadly similar under both Presidents Sarkozy and Hollande, who each claimed their African and *cooperation* policies would break from neo-colonialism and would be based on equal partnership. There were domestic legal, political and economic pressures. While these pressures were a driver for a more empowerment-based approach generally, some concerned Cameroon more directly. A good example was the Ill-Gotten Gains scandal (Harel and Hofnung , 2012) which involved legal action against the Cameroonian president himself and pointed to a climate where the kind of incrementalism and continuity that had, in the past, marked French aid to Cameroon could no longer continue unchallenged by the courts, politicians, NGOs, the press and the wider public. However, there was a threat hanging over Cameroon too even if Biya himself was not indicted. This judicial affair was opened by the NGO coalition Sherpa, in June 2007 and related to misappropriated aid monies held in France by the presidents of Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Congo-Brazzaville and Angola. At the start of the Sarkozy presidency, there were in fact other judicial cases, making it more likely that, under Sarkozy's presidency, France's independent judiciary would play its part in ensuring that France would move away from being a neo-colonial power in Africa (Interview 42; 7 October 2014). These cases included the long-running investigation into the murder of a French investigating magistrate, Bernard Borrel, in Djibouti in 1995, which implicated senior members of the Djiboutian regime (Djibouti hosts the biggest French military base on the continent). There was also the ongoing case involving Rwanda (discussed below).<sup>35</sup> Other affairs casting a cloud over Françafrique as a whole included the investigation into the death of Franco-Canadian journalist, Guy-André Kieffer, in Ivory Coast in April 2004 which appeared to implicate senior members of the former Ivorian regime; and a case involving a French soldier accused of having killed the Ivorian, Firmin Mahé, in Ivory Coast in May 2005, seemingly having benefited from the protection of his superiors (Moncrieff, 2012, p.13). These numerous judicial cases had a certain impact on the direction French coopération policy would take during this period, notably the shift towards more transparency and a less overtly power-seeking or clientelistic strategy. The exact impact of these cases is nonetheless hard to measure, given that Sarkozy himself was caught up in his own scandals linked to the funding of the *Union Pour un Mouvement Populaire* (UMP), resulting in the

Bettancourt trial (Delean, 2014, p.4).

As regards domestic political pressures, these included demands for reform over *coopération* policies from French NGOs such as OXFAM France, ONE and also from the French Parliament through parliamentary reports (Belkin, 2011, p.15). French journalists such as Antoine Glaser (until recently, editor of *La Lettre du Continent*, Stephen Smith (*Libération*) and Vincent Hugueux all wrote articles and books highlighting France's continuing clientelistic relations which were constraining reforms to French "cooperation" policies (Cumming, 2013, p.37).<sup>36</sup> Other domestic pressures came from reformists within the French government and Parliament. These included the new breed of officials initially appointed by Sarkozy. The latter chose to appoint (albeit only for a brief time) modernisers such as Jean-Marie Bockel as development minister, Bernard Kouchner as foreign minister, the reformist *Enarque* Bruno Joubert as a diplomatic adviser on Africa, as well as young immigrant women, such Rama Yade, appointed as Secretary of State for human rights and Rachida Dati appointed as *Garde des Sceaux*.<sup>37</sup>

As regards domestic economic pressures, the overriding factor weighing on policy-makers throughout this period was budgetary constraint: the EU Stability Pact (1997), the EU fiscal pact of 2012 and, above all the Euro zone crisis, which from late 2007 forced the French government to impose restrictions on French aid and military expenditure (Cumming, 2013, p.38).<sup>38</sup> In some ways, these budgetary pressures should have served to cut out duplication and waste and lead to an attitude whereby Africans/ Cameroonians would be encouraged to take more responsibility (i.e. empowerment) for their own development. Yet, as will be seen in our brief discussion of constraints towards the end of this chapter, these pressures ultimately meant cutbacks in the amount of needs-based support and a tendency to ensure that aid monies given would bring a return to the French economy, in line with the thinking espoused most vociferously by Hollande's Foreign Minister, Laurent Fabius in 2012. A good example of aid destined to ensure a positive return to the French economy is the C2D, which will be analysed in more detail in our discussion of French aid instruments in the Cameroonian context.

Overall, the pressures experienced under the time period studied might have been expected to bring about major shifts in France's approach to aid generally and to Cameroon specifically. The aid rhetoric which international organisations and bilateral state donors were adopting on poverty reduction certainly suggested that ODA policies generally were moving away from a narrow self-interest towards a more needs-focused approach. The next section will examine whether the rhetoric employed under the

Sarkozy and Hollande governments followed this pattern, or whether the actual practice did not change significantly in the unfavourable international and domestic context that framed the 2007-2015 period.

## **PART II Translating Reforms into Action**

Having set out the pressures, it is time to outline how these translated into broad reforms to French *coopération* structures and instruments under the Sarkozy and Hollande administrations between 2007-2015. Our final part will then examine how far these broad institutional and policy changes translated into reform of France's economic, military and politico-cultural *coopération* instruments and aid practice on the ground in Cameroon.

### **Sarkozy's Limited Reforms**

To begin with President Sarkozy, it is worth reminding ourselves of his promises. The President claimed that "he would renovate France's policy objectives in Africa generally". In terms of aid structures/ policies specifically, he "promised to turn the page from this indulgence, these secrets and this ambiguity' in France's relations with Africa "(cited in Moncrieff; 2012, p.11).<sup>39</sup> Sarkozy would, moreover, get rid of underground networks (World Politics Review, 2007) and ensure greater transparency and equality in Franco-African relations. His economic reforms would include more poverty-focused and results-based aid (Ibid). On the military front, he would revise and publish defence and military agreements including the military *coopération* agreement with Cameroon. Overall, as Chafer and Godin (2006, p.3) have observed, 'In May 2007 Nicolas Sarkozy was elected on a promise of "rupture" from the "French model" and a pledge to put an end to the "French exception" (Ibid).

As president (2007-2012), Nicolas Sarkozy was supposed to speed up the pace of, and complete the reforms initiated by Jospin, even if in practice his policy appears to have been marked by a certain duality between reform and continuity (Gnanguenon, 2011, p.16), ambivalence in terms of continuity (Yates, 2009), regression (Machet, 2012), continuation of French empire old habits (Gilbert, 2015) and limited reforms (Cumming, 2013).

The highly limited nature of the Sarkozy reforms will be illustrated first in relation to aid institutions then to *coopération* instruments. One of the key institutional reforms by Sarkozy was only indirectly linked to ODA and related to the creation, in 2007, of a

Ministry for Immigration and National Identity with regional quotas, DNA testing and visa restrictions (Cumming, 2013, p.32). This reform was badly received by African leaders who saw it as a way of restricting immigration, limiting scholarships to Africans, and reinforcing the semi-racist or at least unenlightened view of Africa that Sarkozy had already revealed in his infamous Dakar speech.<sup>40</sup> In 2008, Sarkozy disbanded the *Haut Conseil de la Coopération*, going further in this regard than Chirac who had merely halved the number of members of this body. This signalled a break with Sarkozy's own promises of greater transparency and parliamentary accountability but could be at least partly justified in terms of the need to make savings during the Eurozone recession. In 2009, Sarkozy renamed the DGCID as the Directorate General for Globalisation and Partnerships. (DGMP in French) This signalled a further downgrading of the status of the former Cooperation Ministry and pointed to a normalisation of French cooperation policy and structures vis-à-vis Africa. At the same time, however, it could also be interpreted as a move that might reduce African dependence on France and empower African states, not least since the DGMP was headed up by Serge Tomasi, a brilliant official who went on to be Deputy Head of the DAC.

Under Sarkozy too, more responsibilities were transferred away from the DGCID/ DGMP to the AFD, further weakening the old French neo-colonial ties with Africa. The DGCID/ DGMP has seen its staff cut and there has been a major reorganisation following the creation of the DGM (DAC, 2013; see also Annex B). The rise of the AFD is ambiguous since it is a development bank as well as the agency that is now responsible for development and poverty reduction. It contains the seeds of much of the ambiguity regarding reforms to French aid; it is profit-making, raises its funds in the money markets and has a predilection towards loans and blending. Yet it is also highly professional, rigorous and serious about achieving the MDGs/ SDGs, respecting local African procedures and following through on results-based aid. Finally, he introduced another set of institutional changes related to roles. The Africa cell or service came under the Assistant Diplomatic Adviser in charge of Africa under the supervision of the Diplomatic Adviser, and therefore became somewhat more official than in the past (Primo, 2012). The "Minister Delegate" in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs became the Secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

As regards, Sarkozy's reforms of *coopération* policies in general, here too the picture was mixed. On the economic front, Sarkozy had pledged that France would "contribute more actively to the fight against poverty in Africa" and do so "while continuing to support the achievement of the MDGs" and "maintaining its financial commitments" (Sarkozy, 2008). He had also promised to meet the 0.7% target by



2012, to make aid more poverty-focused and to double aid channelled through NGOs, deemed better at tackling extreme poverty. Yet he failed in each of these tasks (Le Gouriellec, 2001; Boisbouvier, 2012; Thiam, 2008). Where he did, however, show some pragmatism was in his recognition of the need to be seen to try to work towards aid targets and to develop a more multilateral focus to the French aid programme. Thence France increased its aid in GNP ratio from 0.38 per cent in 2007 to 0.50 per cent in 2010 (OECD, 2012) but fell back to 0.42 per cent in 2011 (Ibid). The French government raised aid to sub-Saharan Africa by 23 per cent from 284.2 million USD in 2007 to 3471.5 million USD in 2010 (OECD, 2012, p.8). The latter set up in 2011 10-years Framework Strategy, which differentiated between poor African countries, fragile states and emerging economies and which concentrated 60 per cent of French aid and 50 per cent of all grants on 14 (subsequently 17) low- income black African countries. France gave substantial sums to multilateral initiatives to back up the MDGS: between 2004 and 2011, 2.04 billion Euros to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Sarkozy pledged 1.55 billion Euros from 2009 to 2011 on food security under the Aquila Food Security Initiative (Ibid). Significantly, Cameroon was not one of those 17 key recipients in 2011 because it was a lower middle-income country rather than a *pays pauvres prioritaires* (PPP). In practice, as will be seen later, the fact that such large aid flows found their way to Cameroon via the C2D meant that it was *de facto* an even more privileged aid recipient than any of the PPP.

In terms of politico-cultural assistance, Sarkozy had pledged to promote democracy, governance and an end to secrecy in policy-making towards Africa. In this matter, the French government tried to avoid backing incumbent presidents. It did not support Senegal's Abdoulaye Wade and stayed neutral during the 2009 Gabonese presidential elections (Machet, 2012). However, as Machet (2012, p.3) argued, Sarkozy did not really reform diplomatic relations with Africa but rather made "presidential friendships, genuine or otherwise". He explained that Sarkozy continued Chirac's policy and even went beyond Francophone Africa to South Africa with Jacob Zuma, in Ethiopia with Meles Zenawi and even renewed relations with Paul Kagame's regime to a certain extent thanks to Kouchner (Cumming, 2013, p.32).

According to Sarkozy, France was already moving away from "the clichés of support for ageing dictators" and that "France has neither the intentions nor the influence that people think" (Moncrieff, 2012, p.11). However, as has been argued (Ibid, p.12), his 2007 Dakar speech in relation to colonial rule and African renaissance seems to highlight a patent ambivalence between a rhetoric of renewal and support for the old ways. A member of French civil society expressed the view that the French African

policy implemented under Sarkozy remained based on “French self-interests and Franco-African underground networks” (Interview 50; 14 October 2014). This could be further underlined by the fact that the second African president who paid a visit after the Liberian president on 28 May 2007 was President Bongo “the personification of the old style *Françafrique*” (Marquand, 2009). This continued ambivalence was also evident when the cooperation minister Jean-Marie Bockel was dismissed on 17th March 2007 at the request of President Omar Bongo and was replaced by the more conservative Alain Joyandet.<sup>41</sup> Jean-Marie Bockel was removed from his post because he claimed that African countries with high oil production, from which the population gains no benefit, should not have been receiving aid from the French government. Subsequently, this oscillation between reforms and old networks was confirmed by “policy decisions and the jockeying for position between the reformers and the old guard was evident from the very beginning of Sarkozy’s term in office” (Moncrieff, 2012, p.12).<sup>42</sup> The Hollande presidency was marked by a desire to move away from neo-colonial practices, while still being to a certain extent based on the famous French continuity as regards policy towards Africa (Chafer, 2014; Leboeuf, 2014).

In terms of military coopération, Sarkozy fared better. He oversaw the implementation phase of multilateralising RECAMP and turning it into EURORECAMP, soon after the December 2007 EU Summit in Lisbon. Based in Paris, with France as the “framework nation”, EURORECAMP has a French general as its director and a British officer as its deputy director. It is focused on building African ownership (that is to say empowerment), notably through its first training cycle, Amani Africa, launched in November 2008 (Chafer and Cumming, 2010).

Under Sarkozy too, there was a drive to europeanise military cooperation, even if this quickly backfired and led to a refusal by many EU countries to participate in future French ventures. The French President pushed for a UNSC resolution in favour of EUFOR Chad/CAR, a 14-month ESDP mission designed to “help create the security conditions necessary for reconstruction” in Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR) before handing over to a UN force, MINURCAT II. France co-sponsored the UN resolution in support of EU NAVFOR/ operation Atlanta that began in December 2008 and sought to prevent piracy off the Somali coast. The French government trained a battalion of 500 Somalis for the African Union (AU)-led AMISOM mission (2007) and supported the ECOWAS-designated peace-keeping Centre of Excellence in Bamako, as well as 14 military training schools across Francophone West and Central Africa (Chafer and Cumming, 2010, p.1139). This is significant, as it underlined more involvement of France in terms of multilateral aid in the military field. However, it did not

mean that France had stopped its bilateral military policy.

Furthermore, there was a dramatic decrease in the number of military officers in the cooperation with Africa from around 1000 in 1980s to 50 today (Cumming, 2013, pp.27-28). There was also an emphasis on training and logistical support for all four regional components of APSA: Dakar (1150 troops) and Libreville (900 troops) in the West to cover the Economic Community of Central African States, Djibouti (2900 troops) to cover East African regional organisations and Reunion (2600 troops and gendarmes) to cover the South African Development Community. Moreover, a shift towards the Middle East was experienced with the implementation of a French military base in Abu Dhabi (Moncrieff, 2012, pp.22-24). Thence the military aspect of Sarkozy policy would seem to have led to a more empowerment-based military/security policy and a reshuffle of its presence in Africa.

## **Hollande's Structural and Policy Reforms**

Turning to President Hollande, he used his first visit to Africa in October 2012 to promise, like his predecessor, "to put an end to the practices of la Françafrique" (Musterle, 2012). In his own "Dakar speech", (2012) he marked a break from both the condescending tone and the policy in coherences of the Sarkozy era. Hollande announced his intention to inaugurate a new era in Franco-African relations: "Françafrique is no more. Franco-African relationships are now based on partnership, transparency, solidarity" (Chafer; 2014, p.521). Even though Hollande, like his predecessors, officially claimed he would break away from Françafrique (Gounin, 2013, p.12); he appears to have continued in Sarkozy's footsteps. He "renovated" the *Elysée* African team (Ibid).

Thus, when Hollande became president, he reformed France's institutional aid framework with a view to normalising relations between Africa and France (Leboeuf and Quénot-Suarez, 2014, p.11). He appointed Hélène Le Gal, a career diplomat, to head up the Africa/ diplomatic cell and appointed a socialist from the AFD, Tomas Melonio, as her deputy. In so doing, he signalled a break away from neo-colonial old guard officials in favour of officials with a more reformist agenda. The *Ministre délégué au développement* has remained a *Sécrétaire d'état* since Manuel Valls became *Premier Ministre*. The role of junior minister for development and the environment was created within the Foreign Ministry, highlighting the growing importance of the global public goods agenda and the idea that development policy is increasingly a component of French diplomacy (Ibid). Consequently, the *normalisation* of Franco-African relations under Hollande cannot be discerned in any major structural reforms but in a change of

style has taken place. To illustrate, Hollande has established a much more constructive relationship with French Ambassadors (Sarkozy had been criticised in the press by the Marly group of senior diplomats) (Ibid). Hollande has also clarified the remit of the two Ministers with the most direct focus on African issues, altering their prerogatives in a cabinet reshuffle in April 2014. Thus the Foreign Minister is now clearly in charge of economic diplomacy and (together with the Defence Minister and President) military interventions while the *Ministre délégué au Développement* is in charge of sustainable development, technical and cultural assistance as well as the promotion of democratic governance (Leboeuf and Quénot-Suarez, 2014 p. 9).

Turning briefly to policy reforms under Hollande, there would appear to be a continued commitment to the MDGs and now the SDGs, but there is little evidence that France is getting closer to achieving the UN 0.7 per cent target. French aid overall remains heavily bilateral, with a strong loan element and low concessional dimension (Ibid 2016; OECD, 2016). These features do not point to a more empowering aid agenda. Rather, they suggest a re-centring of French priorities towards parts of Francophone Africa, notably the 17 *pays pauvres Africains*. Furthermore, Hollande's aid policy has been hamstrung by huge historical aid commitments to multilateral and bi-multilateral institutions which meant that France has only been able to offer a few tens of millions of Euros in aid to most priority Francophone African aid recipients (OECD, 2013).

As regards politico-cultural assistance, the Hollande presidency initially took a purist stance on dealings with autocratic African governments. Hollande himself did not hide his reluctance to attend the *Francophonie* gathering in Kinshasa in 2012. However, gradually Hollande has met most of the African "dinosaurs" and recognised the necessity of dealing with the political authorities *in situ*. He has met up with African autocrats such as Paul Biya in 2016 and Idriss Deby in 2014.

Finally, on the military front, Hollande's cooperation policy has been marked by a renewed vigour for intervention in Africa, usually with France taking the lead with a coalition of the willing including the AU, UN and EU. Space constraints will not allow for an examination of the recent high profile, French-led military operations in Mali and the Central African Republic. These have already been extensively examined by Marchal (2013), Charbonneau (2009) and Chafer (2016) (in the case of Mali) and Olsen in the case of the CAR (Barluet, 2016). Overall, these two interventions do point to a genuine concern to save former colonies from serious loss of life from hard-line forces. They also demonstrate a recognition of the need to move away from unilateral approaches and to involve Africans at the forefront of operations, as well as consulting EU and AU

partners ahead of any decision to intervene (the same was not true in the case of France's 2011 Libyan intervention, which was backed by the UK and eventually NATO). Under Hollande, France was also the driving force behind the August 2012 launch of EUCAP SAHEL Niger, a civilian ESDP operation to improve the capacity of Niger's security forces (European Council, 2012). According to De Rohan (2011, p.33) France allocated 300 million Euros in 2010-2012 to African-peace-keeping.<sup>43</sup>

## **PART III Translating Pressures and Rhetoric into Practice in the Field**

Having shown how French *coopération* structures and policies on Africa have changed slightly under Sarkozy and Hollande, it is time to ask whether those shifts were translated into actual practice in terms of aid structures and instruments in the field.

It should be noted at the outset that there were no major adjustments to French cooperation structures in Cameroon itself over this time period. The role of the Embassy, SCAC and AFD offices did not change dramatically even if there was a continued transfer of responsibilities and aid resources from the SCAC to the AFD mission over the Sarkozy/ Hollande years. The AFD developed its expertise on education and health, and as of 2015 began to take over responsibility for governance issues. The local French representations no doubt also benefited from other institutional changes back in Paris, not least the creation, in 2014, of a Conflict prevention pool in the AFD, with a more joined up approach to security and development issues, and the emergence of a Development Minister in Paris who also has responsibility for climate change (with environmental issues being a major component of the local AFD mission's responsibilities), not least thanks to Cameroon's proximity to the Congo Basin and its large forestry sector. To minimise repetition, each of the French 'cooperation' instruments deployed in Cameroon will be examined continuously for the whole of the Sarkozy/ Hollande periods. In each case, the instruments will be evaluated in line with our three assessment criteria.

### **Economic/ Environmental instruments**

The main focus here will be on one economic assistance instrument in particular, namely the C2D which has dominated and structured French aid to Cameroon (M'bokolo et al. 2010). The C2D has not, however, been the only aid instrument as

France has continued to fund technical assistance via the *Fonds de Solidarité Prioritaire*. There have also been funds channelled through the FFEM and monies given for projects in the forestry sector. To illustrate, France gave FCFA \$79 million (€120,434.72) from 2010 to 2011 to the *Commission des forêts d'Afrique centrale* in the framework of the Congo basin fund (CBF). There have even been monies funnelled to environmental projects through the C2D. Cameroon has continued to benefit from the French Treasury's guarantee of the CFA franc, the currency of the franc zone.

Another strand of French economic support to Cameroon has included loans and "subsidies". In 2008, the *AFD* set up an official loan to the Cameroonian state of €60 million for projects such as the renovation of the slip road in Douala town, and the €60 million financing of public corporations such as CAMWATER in 2009 for drinking water projects. In addition to this, the *AFD* has offered security loans, ARIZ, for investment in micro-finance institutions or small and medium size businesses. The French aid development agency also offered through PROPARCO, its subsidiary branch, private loans of €68 million between 2000 and 2009 (Personal Correspondence; 3 April 2011).

Even so, since 2006, and throughout the Sarkozy/ Hollande periods of office, the C2D has dominated the French aid landscape to Cameroon. The first tranche of the C2D was worth a total of 537 million euros and included some programmes which are poverty-reducing (health/ education projects and programmes, 60%) while others promote growth through infrastructure projects (40%) or tackle environmental challenges. The projects funded by the C2D include, in the educational domain: the training of 37,200 teachers and renovation of 1,200 teaching classrooms (AFD, 2007, p.10). As regards to infrastructures, the West and East-Douala highway was renovated. Sarkozy's government continued work on the C2D *première génération* (2006-2011) and then introduced a second one (2011-2016). In some ways, the C2D reflected France's commitment to meet the MDGs as well as Sarkozy's own desire to live up to some of his promises on reducing poverty, and helping to find, with UK support, places for 16 million schoolchildren (Cumming, 2013, P.8). The C2D second generation (€326 million) was less significant than the first (*Ambassade de France* 2008, p.5), effectively throughout almost the whole of Hollande's term of office. The next tranche is due for signature in mid- to late-2016 and should run until 2023 (Cumming, forthcoming).

When Hollande came to power therefore, his administration continued to implement the C2D second generation which is ongoing. The latter has a budget aimed officially at empowering and developing Cameroon. However, it also continues to finance French companies in the transport infrastructure sector as well as concealing the extent to which 'normal' aid flows have declined (Ibid). A French member of the C2D Cameroon-

France committee argued that “the C2D second generation has not been successful at all: the reimbursements made by the Cameroonian government have been blocked by France in a bank account within the *Banque de France* because most of projects run with the C2D budget were not given to French companies” (Interview 50; 14 October 2014). This is significant because it implies that France’s most important aid instrument in Cameroon is as concerned with the promotion of French economic interests as it is with empowering the recipient country or helping to improve the health and education of the local population.

It is hard to apply our three assessment criteria to the wide range of economic instruments that continue to be deployed in Cameroon. The use of loans and subsidies, which have become more substantial since the end of the HIPC process (Cumming, forthcoming) do point towards a trend that is likely to increase Cameroonian dependence on France, not least when it is considered that Cameroon is now borrowing from emerging countries and could quickly become highly indebted once again. In terms of France’s focus on the environment, this is again a priority for France and the North, more than it is for a Cameroonian government whose survival is likely to be more easily assured through a focus on the human development needs of urban population than through long term environmental protection work.

As regards the C2D itself, the sheer volume and intensity of this instrument was impressive: almost a billion euros over the Sarkozy/ Hollande periods. This was four or five times more than Cameroon would have received in normal years even if the C2D was not additional to ‘normal’ aid flows as promised at the 1999 G8 summit in Cologne (Cumming, forthcoming). The monies concerned were of course linked to past debts and not new flows, not least since the Cameroonian government would reimburse their debts in order for C2D aid monies to be returned on to a common French/Cameroonian account. The size of the monies has ensured that France is the biggest external power in Cameroon, even if the purpose of those monies is more ambiguous, with the C2D clearly having a strong focus on need as well as offering great opportunities for enhanced influence. Overall aid to Cameroon has remained buoyant. More specifically, figures of French aid to Cameroon: (596.23 US\$ million in 2007; 113.19 US\$ million in 2008; 90.59 US\$ million in 2009; 82.08 US\$ million in 2010; US \$148.93 million in 2011; 88.51 US\$ million in 2012; 172.04US\$ million in 2013 (OECD, 2015, p.3)).

When measuring “normal aid flows”, once the C2D is stripped out, these have generally declined. Viewed in this light, economic/ development instruments under Sarkozy and Hollande are not as substantial as the ones implemented by their predecessors. This could be explained by the Euro crisis, which obliged France to

reduce its aid to Africa.

Similar observations can be made regarding the bilateral/ multilateral split. Clearly the C2D is a bilateral instrument and, given its sheer size, it has dominated the ODA scene in Cameroon. Thus, despite the fact that France has continued to channel funds through the FFEM as well as GAVI on the AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria front, not to mention working more closely through the EU on a range of economic development issues (in line with the EU Consensus and the EU's commitment to double aid), the C2D has given a strong bilateral feel to the French aid programme. This does not of course mean that the C2D should be seen as being all about the acquisition of French influence. However, as interviewees for this project have argued, there has been a clear sense in which the C2D has been primarily about France seeking power rather than tackling need.

Turning to the fitness for purpose, it seems clear that there has been broad continuity as regards French policy objectives towards Africa/ Cameroon over the Sarkozy/ Hollande periods. It is worth recalling that the stated objectives (examined in detail at the beginning of the chapter) were to move away from old empirical habits based on maintaining French neo-colonial power notably through Franco-African underground networks, towards more equal and transparent relations with former French African colonies. On the economic development/ environmental front, there is some movement in the direction of a new, more fraternal relationship. The focus on subsidies via ARIZ provide vital support to parts of the economy that need to perform well if this country is to integrate itself into the global economy. Similarly, the focus on the environment is linked in closely to the sustainable development agenda while the C2D also has a strong focus on health and education. However, it is patent that the official rhetoric has not been fully translated into practice. Indeed, the changes that have taken place in Paris have not been fully mirrored on the ground in Cameroon either in terms of structures or instruments. Instead, the Sarkozy and Hollande administrations appear to be mixing soft power (as per ARIZ subsidies) and hard power (as per the ANO linked to the C2D) and creating a more sophisticated form of smart power, a new formula aimed at empowering the recipient country through enhancing people's access to public services, while also, and above all, increasing French military influence in Cameroon and in the region, and safeguarding the interests of important French financial and economic lobbies which maintain close ties with Sarkozy and to subsequent French governments.



## Military/Security instruments

Turning to French military/ security instruments in relation to Cameroon, most were already established by 2007, as explained in the previous chapter. The broad trend towards a more multilateral approach to these instruments continued apace under Sarkozy and Hollande. Thus, the former's government helped to oversee the transition from RECAMP to EURORECAMP. Given the training capacity offered by French military instruments, particularly ENVRs, in Cameroon, it is perhaps not surprising that in 2010-2011; there were 33 African *Officiers supérieurs* trained in the *Cours supérieur interarmées de défense* in Yaoundé, eight of whom were Cameroonians (Interview 26; 5 June 2011). There were 35 Cameroonian trainees in France: one in the *Ecole de Guerre*, seven in the *Ecole des formations des officiers*, one at the *IHEDN/FIGA*, and 20 trained in internships specialising in army matters (Ibid). Furthermore, the military/security agreements which were signed between the French and Cameroonian governments in the 1960s and 1970s were upgraded under the Sarkozy government in 2009 and now provide its own tailored legal framework to the Franco-Cameroonian military/security cooperation. According to one interviewee, the *projet Action d'état en Mer* on the *Centre Opérationnel de la Marine Camerounaise* in Douala in collaboration with the *Centre multinational de coordination et d'information de la CEEAC* was recently established in 2009 and aimed at fighting against maritime terrorism (Interview 26; 5 June 2011). Since 2011, in the reformed Franco-Cameroonian military framework, Cameroon, along with the RDC and Togo, belongs to *the Brigade Afrique Centrale*, set up in order to reinforce those African countries' capacities and maintain peace (Nguimbi, 2012). This is significant because it could highlight a possible shift of French military policy towards more empowerment-focused approach in Cameroon as well as towards more transparency in bilateral relations. In effect, by urging Cameroon to contribute to this central African brigade, France is urging it to give substance to the slogan "African solutions to African problems".

However, it is worth recalling that these military training instruments continue to be underpinned legally by various "cooperation agreements". The latter have their roots in the early post-colonial period as they were signed between the French and Cameroonian governments in the 1960s before being modified in 2009 to become more oriented towards regional and security sector reform. They are still implemented by the *Service de défense*, (see Box 1) within the French embassy in Cameroon. Franco-Cameroonian bilateral military/security cooperation, as enshrined in this agreement, is sizeable: 24 *coopérants* in all (Mission militaire, 2011). It was upgraded

with the 21<sup>st</sup> May 2009 agreement signed by the Prime Minister Francois Fillon and the Cameroonian *Ministre de la Défense* Mebe Ngo'o Edgard Alain. This agreement now focuses on regional/continental training in Cameroon and in particular within the Guinea Gulf region. The main objective of its activities, according to the French officials interviewed (Interview 29; 10 June 2011), is to help build up the Cameroonian armies through three main projects which have continued into the Sarkozy/ Hollande periods. Firstly, there is the *inter-armées* project which involves the creation of the *Cours supérieur inter-armées de défense à Vocation régionale de Garoua*. Secondly, there is the air force project which has led to the creation of the *Pôle aéronautique national à vocation régionale de Douala*. Finally, there is the Gendarmerie Project, which involves the *Centre de perfectionnement aux techniques de maintien des forces de sécurité* (Interview 29; 10 June 2011). The above does suggest that there has been a shift in terms of actual military coopération practice towards more empowerment and less power-seeking.

Similar observations can be made in the case of François Hollande since he became president in 2012. He has not made any radical changes in terms of French military instruments in Cameroon and has largely continued the work of Sarkozy in this domain. However, he has been more active on the military intervention front across Africa more generally and above all in Mali and the CAR. While Sarkozy authorised major interventions in Chad in 2008 and Libya in 2011, both of these missions were shrouded in controversy and Hollande's approach has been much more marked by a quest for renewed legitimacy alongside a strong desire for coalition-building across Europe and Africa. The focus of these interventions has not been specifically on Cameroon but the latter is no longer considered a trouble-free zone. Indeed, according to one French official 'due to the Islamic threat coming from Nigeria with Boko Haram, President Hollande has put Cameroon back at the forefront of the security agenda' (Interview 44; 7 October 2014). In this context, Hollande organised on the 6th and 7th December 2013 the *Sommet de l'Élysée pour la Paix et la Sécurité en Afrique*, to which 53 African Heads of State including Paul Biya were invited, in order to find solutions to achieve sustainable peace in Africa. This is significant because it portrays how President Hollande has been resetting France as a more enlightened "*gendarme de l'Afrique*", which is on the face of it compatible with a power-seeking agenda but which is also heavily marked by a new approach that involves Africans more in dealing with their own security dilemmas.

Table 7: Military Assistance Providers in Cameroon (2011)

Provider	Amount	Type of Assistance
France	€3.95 million US\$300,700,465	Military training Equipment Supply Military Advisory
China	US\$1 million	Military training Equipment Supply Military Advisory
Israel	No official cooperation, no amount	Punctual mission Building up and training BIR(Brigade d' Intervention Rapide)
USA	No official cooperation, no amount	Military Equipment Supply Training in US military schools

Source: Interviews; June 2011.

Turning to the three criteria, it is time to examine whether the rhetoric, as adopted by the Sarkozy and Hollande administrations, has been translated into practice in Cameroon. In terms of volume, France is officially the largest military donor to Cameroon even if there is a degree of secrecy surrounding the actual levels of support provided by some donors. For example, France's military/security cooperation in Cameroon, as illustrated in Table 6 above, amounted to €3.95million in 2011 of which €754,000 was dedicated to defence training, with 17 French full-time *coopérants* based mainly in Yaoundé (Mission militaire, 2011). In comparison, Chinese military assistance in Cameroon is only US\$ 1million (€761,267), while Israel and the USA are present in Cameroon for specific missions. Israel has assisted with the training of the *Brigade d'Intervention Rapide* (BIR) for internal security and the presidential guard while the USA is involved in Cameroon through the Africa Partnership Station and the programme Africa Contingency Operations Training Assistance (ACOTA), which is the American version of RECAMP and focuses on missions dealing with training and equipment supply (Interview 28; 9 June 2011; M' baku et al. 1985, pp.161-163). The above analysis is significant because it outlines how important Cameroon is to France through the high volume of military/security aid dedicated to Cameroon. However, in terms of our research question it could be said that the high volume of French military/security aid has not been purely been about building African military capacity but has also been about ensuring a high-profile, visible French presence in Cameroon.

In terms of the bilateral vs. multilateral split, given that security is now, particularly since the emergence of an EU Africa strategy, widely considered to be a prerequisite for development (Balleix, 2010, p.22), the implication could be that France has recognised that it can no longer afford to go it alone as the *gendarme* of Africa, and indeed that it can no longer afford to train Cameroonians in Paris. France appears to have recognised that Cameroon must be encouraged to play its part in the broader multilateral and regional framework involving the AU/ APSA security architecture, that it has a role to play in promoting stability in central Africa and that it is now a potential ally in the fight against terrorism (Interview 19; 17 May 2011).

France has at the same time focused heavily on soft and smart power instruments such as training, which is designed to promote security and thereby ensure development in Cameroon.

Another interpretation might, however, suggest that France has largely adapted her instruments to spread the costs and burden share, perhaps with a view to better maintaining French influence at less expense. In effect, France has continued to ensure that the military doctrines taught are French and that the language of instruction in ENVRs is French, and has placed a French general at the head of EURORECAMP. France has also continued to pursue an approach that emphasises military training while largely failing to advance her thinking on security sector reform, as recommended by Bagayoko-Penone (2005, p.40) in a semi-official report. Is France offering the kind of military/security support that Cameroon needs? We can no doubt legitimately wonder whether the French authorities are still primarily pursuing their own interests in Cameroon. It appears that though the French authorities officially claim French military/security action is aimed at empowering Cameroonians, which it does to a certain extent, there is also a focus, deliberate or otherwise, on maintaining Cameroonian dependence on French military expertise and equipment as well as on protecting French interests and maintaining French power in Cameroon (Belomo, 2008). In 2011, the ENVRs and French-based schools trained 25,000 Cameroonians. It is no doubt the case that France is using what we call a “smart formula”, using both bilateral/multilateral, military/security instruments which give her more power and influence in Cameroon, making it much easier to safeguard French interests, than using solely hard power (Kamil, 2014, p.19).

As regards the fitness for purpose, finally, while the forms of military training employed involve largely soft and smart power, there is a potential hard power dimension associated with them, given the tendency notably in the years 2009-2012, for the French military to be engaged in responding to coups across Francophone

Africa, not to mention helping to resolve the tensions between Gbago and Alassane Ouattara in Côte d'Ivoire in 2012. Clearly France has prioritised closed or close links with the African military across Francophone Africa and one of the key drivers behind this approach has been the desire to retain power and influence, rather than necessarily to promote development strategies (Charbonneau, 2009). Due to the fact that France is the sole country providing group training and associated equipment support in Cameroon, its military influence in the country, as well as within the Central African zone and on the African continent, has been strengthened accordingly.

## **Political/ Cultural instruments**

Despite the ongoing recession under the Sarkozy and Hollande presidencies, France maintained its focus strongly on politico-cultural instruments in Cameroon. To illustrate, since 2011, the *Instituts Français* have focused on a Franco-Cameroonian cultural programme based on plastic arts, shows, theatre, movies, French language courses, distance training, and CampusFrance, in order to promote French language and scientific culture (French Embassy, 2011; Instituts Français, 2011). This was conducted in partnership with the Cameroonian *Ministère de la Culture*, together with multilateral structures such as the OIF, UNESCO, and the European delegation in Cameroon, private sponsors, French decentralised cooperation, and the Cameroonian territorial collectivities (French Embassy, 2011; Instituts Français, 2011). This innovative network enhances the artistic exchange between Cameroon and France to promote French language and scientific culture. This has also been implemented in collaboration with the *Alliances Françaises* in Bamenda, Buea, Dschang, and Garoua (Ibid). In order to fund these programmes, debt cancellation monies were used, with the C2D contributing to the cultural budget some FCFA 429 million (€654,000) in 2011 (Interview 12; 27 April 2011).

As regards the *Instituts Français* themselves, it is worth noting that these were formed in 2011 as part of a complete renovation of French politico/cultural framework abroad, notably in Cameroon. More specifically, the previous *Centre Culturel Français* (CCF) *de Yaoundé* and CCF *de Douala* were brought together and renamed as French Institutes. There are two *Instituts Français* in Cameroon, in Yaoundé and Douala which, within the French international cultural network, working in close collaboration with the *Alliances Françaises* (AF), the *Lycées Français*, the *Ecoles Françaises*, and the OIF. This is all supervised locally by the SCAC.

In 2007, the SCAC had 63 technical assistants, two French *Lycées*, six probate French schools, two CCF, four AF, and three research institutes (CIRAD, IRD, and

CPC) (Interview 12 ; 27 April 2011). At the time this research was conducted, there were 36 individuals working in all the services of the French Embassy: 8 in the *Service militaire*, 12 in the *Service culturel*, 5 in the *Chancellerie diplomatique*, and 3 in the *Service Economique*. The diversity and innovation of the instruments demonstrate France's attachment to the extending French culture and, through this, "soft power". From 2012, under Hollande, French political/cultural instruments in Cameroon remained broadly the same.

At the same time, France continued to deploy instruments aimed at promoting governance, an issue that remained the responsibility of the SCAC until 2015. The French embassy continued to push for sound governance and the building up of a civil society that can hold the Cameroonian government to account and at the same time ensure that debt cancellation funds are properly allocated (AFD, 2011, p.7). At the same time, however, it is possible to question France's true commitment to empowerment. Thus, capacity-building assistance has been negligible and, as noted in the last chapter, the French state was quick to withdraw from the PCPA in 2009 when the programme failed and the European Commission offered to take it over and integrate it into the PASOC (Cumming, 2012). France has nonetheless persisted with form of political support that will help to preserve its influence. In this regard, 12 Cameroonian students were accorded places in 2012 in *Grandes Ecoles* in France such as the *Ecole supérieure de commerce* in Paris, the *Ecole d'Administration Publique* (EAP), the *Andencian Nantes*, the SKEMA business school (Interview 1; 9 April 2011). This is conducted through the *Service des admissions Internationales* with *Campus France*, the French Embassy and in accordance with the *Institut Français* (Ibid).

Turning to our assessment criteria, it should be clear that French political and above all cultural instruments are large and intensive (certainly by comparison with cultural assistance offered by other donors), with the two *Instituts Français* (Yaoundé and Douala) being key elements in a renewed, French international cultural network, under the overall direction of the *Agence pour l'Enseignement Français à l'étranger*, which defines French training abroad (Institut Français, 2015, p.2).

Turning to the bilateral/multilateral mix, it has already been suggested that France has continued to prioritise bilateral forms of assistance in the form of *coopérants*, *médiathèques* and language tuition, with only limited attention being given to harder power EU instruments designed to promote human rights and political reform through decisions by the EU Council or statements by the Africa Working Group (Moncrieff, 2012, p.26). Most bilateral assistance has been in the form of soft and smart power

instruments designed to attract and encourage elite Cameroonians to embrace French language and culture, and in the process to favour French influence and French commerce. The *Instituts Français* are primarily bilateral and backed up by the work of *Lycées Français*.

As for fitness for purpose, France's politico-cultural assistance is broadly in line with the empowerment agenda, albeit primarily when a long-term perspective is taken. Overall, the politico-cultural instruments used are clearly designed not to rock the boat and not to upset Francophone Cameroonian elites whose stability in office is linked to France's preservation of her own interests in Cameroon. It follows then that France has maintained complex institutional arrangements and a number of instruments which, while they help promote political reform and greater respect for human rights, are ultimately designed to show up France's position as the most important external donor to Cameroon (Interview with senior AFD official, 2010, p.8).

To sum up, the examination of French aid instruments in Cameroon suggests that the pledges by Sarkozy and Hollande have not been translated meaningfully or at least fully into practice on the ground. There are a number of reasons for this, some of which will be explored in more detail in our next chapter. They include the fact that the international pressures to move towards an empowerment agenda were not overriding. The UN, OECD and EU cannot force such an approach on France, as the latter is amongst the biggest European economies and a leading donor in its own right. Some might even argue that those international organisations serve the economic interests of the western powers at least as much as they tackle recipient needs. Furthermore, events in North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa also presented a counter argument for undertaking reforms: the Arab spring soon descended into chaos while some Francophone African leaders were pressing for a business as usual approach due to vested interests (discussed under NCR). There are also question marks over the capacity of countries such as Cameroon to effect African solutions to African problems (Moller, 2009, p.36).

Furthermore, on the domestic front, there were pressures to maintain a power-based focus from the likes of the *anciens*: Claude Guéant (Minister of the Interior), Robert Bourgi (Roccart's political adviser), business lobby (notably the Mouvement des Entreprises de France (MEDEF). Incrementalism and habit, not to mention the continued influence of the 'dinosaurs', the old African leaders (Interview 26; 5 June 2011). French rhetoric therefore seems to have been portraying a move towards an empowering agenda but many constraining factors have got in the way. This will be further discussed in the next chapter which uses Neoclassical realism and African

voice to identify the limitations on changes to French aid policy.

Crucially too, there were serious economic/ budgetary constraints. France's national debt was rising and the economy was in recession or stagnating in line with the crisis in the Euro Zone. This was clearly an impetus to avoid duplication and ensure effectiveness with reference to the allocation of French aid towards African countries such as Cameroon. Even so, it also opened the door to the "old guard" within the French establishment who wanted to maximise the economic return to France of aid to Africa. In this context, the Secretary of State for Cooperation and *Francophonie*, Alain Joyandet highlighted that France should get the most out of its aid to help French business; the AFD Director Dov Zerah also stated that France needed to use aid to help French business (Personal Correspondence; October 2014). It is clear therefore that the context was not particularly favourable to reforms and that there was pressure to go back to tied aid to French products, personalised contacts, putting people in position of power, and influencing the result of elections (for example, Omar Bongo's son benefited from his state visit to Sarkozy during the election campaign period). This highlights the fact that the French "cooperation policy" towards Africa during the period studied continued to be heavily marked by underground Franco-African "networks" and has not shifted to 'equal partnerships'. These networks, with all their potential for influence (and embarrassment) had not been dismantled and continued to help shape French development policy, leading to the dismissal of development ministers, such as Jean-Marie Bockel in 2008 after he had promised to sign the death warrant of Françafrique (angering in the process Biya, Gabon's Omar Bongo and Congo's Denis Sassou-Nguesso (Cumming, 2011, pp.309-321)).

Sarkozy and Hollande's promises of aid reform were bound to be hampered by increased competition over Africa, notably with the BRICs, and particularly in relation to Lusophone and Anglophone African countries such as South Africa, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Angola (Moncrieff, 2012, p.18). There was a still a drive from the international community donors for poverty reduction and empowerment but the 2015 deadline was getting closer, and the international community realised that it would not meet that target. European powers were moreover undergoing the worst recession since the 1930s and the longest of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The economic recession was even worse when Hollande became president. While the latter promised to reduce the budget deficit to 3% of GDP and to increase growth by 0.8% from 2012 to 2013 based on the 20 November 2013 budget, he was not able to do so (Pluyette, 2014, p.11). This is significant because it reveals that the context at that time was more favourable to a power-seeking rather than an empowerment strategy, not giving up French interests



and collecting goods overseas.

## Conclusion

This chapter has been broken down into three parts. The first underlined the impact of international, regional and domestic pressures on French “cooperation” policy. The second focused on the broad promises and policy reforms implemented by Sarkozy and Hollande between 2007 and 2015. The third looked at the fairly minor changes that have taken place in terms of France’s cooperation instruments in Cameroon. There have been some obvious constraints but a deeper understanding of French interests and Cameroonian interests is needed in chapter 6 to understand why so little has actually changed. According to Moncrieff (2012, p.6), “Some changes have resulted from policy decisions made in Paris, whereas others are part of a more general evolution in Africa and of Africa’s strategic and commercial position in world affairs” (Ibid).

The above analysis suggests that there has been certain continuity when it comes to French relations with Africa from 1960 to 1990 but also until 2015. Qualitatively, from 1990 to 2007, successive French governments attempted to reform France’s approach to Africa in their responses to changes. From 2007 to 2012, under Sarkozy, there was a reorientation of military interventions but continued ties with authoritarian regimes (namely Chad, Congo and Cameroon). Sarkozy promised radical reforms but did not deliver. His “cooperation” policy was marked more by continuity than change. It was sometimes also characterised by confusion, “freneticism” and a “piecemeal approach with no vision” (Haski, 2011, p.9).

Under Hollande since 2012, it could be noted that there has not been any major evolution or any dramatic reforms in terms of French instruments set up in Cameroon. It is worth stressing a certain continuity of the instruments which had been reformed and multilateralised during the Jospin and Sarkozy eras. However, there appears to have been something of a return to business as usual in the Hollande-Biya relations, not least thanks to the positive implication of President Biya in facilitating the release of French hostages in North Cameroon in 2014 (Personal Correspondence; October 2014). In addition, president Hollande paid a six-hour visit to Cameroon on the 6 July 2015. It was the first time a French president had visited Cameroon in sixteen years (since Chirac in 1999). The visit was marked by the signing of four conventions and preliminary documents concerning the C2D *troisième génération* in Cameroon. This

instrument worth 400 billion FCFA was signed for a period of 5 years. During Hollande's speech in Yaoundé, he claimed that "French air forces now carry out regular surveillance of the zone where Boko Haram operates". He added that France is ready to provide pictures and information about Boko Haram movements, emphasising the critical importance of sharing military intelligence (Voice of America, 2015, p.2) and the increasingly important, arguably fraternal links developing between France and Cameroon on the security front.

Having underlined the evolution of French 'cooperation' policy under Sarkozy and Hollande, the next chapter will focus on the NCR analysis and the African voice. It will also spend time explaining why French cooperation policy and practice has or has not changed. A few preliminary comments might be useful here nonetheless by way of explanation of the limited reforms to aid to Cameroon. The first can be linked to historical precedent. In the past when France has been faced with recession, as in the early 1980s under Mitterrand, the government recentred its focus back on to Francophone Africa. This translates the neo-colonial logic whereby Francophone Africa represents a guaranteed market at a time of global instability. It ensures that France will still have a voice in Cameroon, even at the time of global recession.

In that sense, there was a certain logic to retaining Cameroon as, *de facto*, one of its main remaining aid recipients (in 2011 France was giving only 100 million Euros in total to the original 14 *pays pauvres prioritaires* (AFD, 2011). The real constraint was France's huge commitments to the FFEM, GAVI and the Lomé Convention and Cotonou agreement, those latter promises and commitments coming out of the bilateral aid budget (Garvey, 2015, p.38). Another reason for limited change to French aid instruments is incrementalism. It takes time to exit from a longstanding cooperation arrangement and it is costly to set up a new aid programme in another country. In effect, it works out cheaper to keep giving to the same country. Clearly France did not have an exit strategy and did not want one, given the close and longstanding ties it has with Cameroonian elites, who can serve as a bulwark against Chinese influence. The case of Sudan is salutary in this regard. Western donors withdrew in the mid-1990s and China as well as Turkey moved in. Therefore, there is a danger that France will be replaced, creating a power vacuum, allowing ungoverned spaces. The record indicates that, under Hollande, in Northern Cameroon active terrorist groups, such as Boko Haram, have been able to establish operations and find refuge. This is another reason for France to continue to give aid, and maintain influence in Cameroon. The fact that Cameroon is oil rich and continues to offer opportunities to France, as the first economic partner (Bolloré controls the Douala harbour, CAMRAIL, Kribi; France

continues to obtain most of the markets) also worked against any sudden changes to aid instruments. So too did the historical dimension to franco-Cameroonian relations: during the Cold War France began providing assistance to Francophone African countries and UK to Anglophone African countries. Then there is an element of habit associated with that. France has always given aid to Cameroon so it is almost unthinkable to stop doing so. Clearly, France's rationale will be discussed more fully as part of the NCR analysis, which takes account of relative power and extractive resources.

# **Chapter Six: Neoclassical Realism, Policy-Making Elites and France's Aid Programme**

## **Introduction**

Chapters Four and Five demonstrated how successive French administrations from the time of Jospin's premiership through to Hollande's presidency promised reforms of aid policy and structures, while only delivering partially on their commitment to move from a power-seeking to a needs-based approach. The focus of this chapter will be on explaining why any evolution took place and why it was not more significant. In order to explain the rationale of French policy-makers and, in the next chapter, the response of Cameroonian officials, this study will use a neo-classical realist (NCR) framework.

This chapter will begin by recalling the key tenets of NCR. It will then use the NCR framework to explain and identify the driving forces behind the evolution of French aid policy over the prescribed period. Finally, it will question how fully NCR explains this evolution. In so doing, it will establish the foundations necessary for chapter seven, in which one of the key issues that are neglected by NCR, namely the African voice, will be analysed.

## **Research Parameters and the Tenets of NCR**

Before reminding ourselves of the basic tenets of NCR, it is worth stressing the limitations of applying this perspective to a single donor's aid programme to a single recipient country. It would be wrong to posit that France's relative power in the international system is dependent on its relations with Cameroon. Furthermore, aid is just one of many instruments of French foreign policy, and is not the most important instrument in use. It is, in fact, generally associated more with soft or smart power, rather than hard power. This relative softness has implications for any conclusions drawn, as they relate to France's exercise of power and capacity to influence their role in international politics via the aid programme.

Related to the above is the fact that application of NCR, in this case, must assume that the French state has a Foreign policy executive (FPE) that shares common interests and values. While it is true that French *énarques* tend to buy into an empowering reformist agenda, there are of course old guard politicians, high up in foreign policy-making circle, who do not (Interview 49; 9 October 2011).

It should also be noted that the NCR framework is being applied more as an explanatory tool than a predictive model. In other words, it is being used to explain the driving forces behind past and present French aid rather than to predict future ODA trends. There may be some attempt to look ahead while drawing conclusions but it cannot be considered primarily predictive.

Finally, NCR has traditionally been applied to great powers (USA, USSR, China UK and France) and has not commonly been used to explain the actions of medium-sized powers, let alone (as we shall see in chapter 7), African developing countries (Howorth, 2013; Olsen, 2014; Toje and Kunz, 2012). This occurs because the former are at the higher end of the hierarchy of international states and hence better placed to influence the shape of world politics. Also, long term high quality empirical data is available for these larger countries.

Overall, however, this preference for analysing the actions of the world's great powers reflects an oversight, as there is no reason to assume that middle-sized powers or for that matter developing countries do not also share an interest in enhancing the relative power of their states in the international order. It should, therefore, not be assumed that states in developing countries are deprived of power to influence the aid instruments that are deployed within those countries.

Turning now to the key tenets of NCR, it will be recalled from chapter 3 that NCR is distinguished from both classical realism and neo-realism. It focuses on the key issues concerning a state's behaviour in general, with specific regard for foreign policy-making (Callan, 2011). In effect, NCR focuses on "the foreign policy behaviour of states" (Kitchen, 2010, pp.117-143), without assuming that states are primarily seeking security and hard economic advantage. According to Rose (1998, pp.144-172), neoclassical realists hold that states seek to put an end to anarchy by actually controlling and shaping their external environment.

Neoclassical realism thus draws on the rigour of Neorealism and stresses the importance of the states' efforts to enhance their relative power within the international hierarchy of states. The enhancement of power can be economic or strategic in nature; however, neoclassical realists assume that it is the perceptions of policy-making elites which tend to determine the state's foreign policy choices. As such, policy-makers may

misread or misinterpret the signals given by the international structure, making assumptions that are in line with their own values or ideas. This can benefit a nation, in the short term, as long as they do not do so for too long, however if incorrect assumptions persist, the nation will see its relative power in the international system decline. Of course, the elite believe that this kind of strategising will ultimately benefit them. The perceptions of policy-making elites may be interest- or value-based or indeed both. They are linked to two other semi-structural factors. The first is the extractive capacity of the state, or the state's ability to mobilize resources; the second is domestic variables, like the role of parliament diaspora, and other domestic institutions. For Taliaferro (2009, p.25), "the relative ability of the state to extract and mobilize resources from domestic society shapes the types of internal balancing strategies that countries are likely to pursue". Extractive capacities and domestic variables will be taken together when analyzing the role of French aid in Cameroon.

It follows that NCR appears, *a priori*, to be a theoretical perspective, which is well suited to explaining why, France has, to some extent, pursued a value-based empowering approach to aid policy while to a much larger extent continued to pursue influence and power through its aid programme in Cameroon.

## **Part I NCR and French Aid to Cameroon**

The remainder of this chapter will use NCR to explain why France has adopted a series of important, but ultimately limited, changes to its aid instruments in Cameroon. It will focus on (i) the perceptions of French policy making elites on issues such as France's relative power on the international stage and the French national interest and (ii) the extractive capacity of those elites/ states and the domestic variables that help to shape the thinking of those same policy-makers.

As noted above, there is no reason to assume, as NCR often does, that the FPE holds a unified view of France's national interest in relation to aid to Cameroon. There is a burgeoning body of literature on the divisions between the so-called *modernes*, or reformists, and the *anciens*, or old guard, in French African policy (Bourmaud, 1996, p.431-442; Gounin, 2009; Médard, 2000, pp. 75-87; Chafer, 2007, p.50; Adebajo and Whiteman, 2012). The former tend to be *énarques* and technocrats who are keen to rebalance French ODA and foreign policy away from Africa, particularly Francophone Africa; instead shifting it more towards parts of the world that are of greater geopolitical interest, not least the Middle East, the Mediterranean and the emerging economies

(Alden, 2007). The *anciens*, on the other hand, cling to the former Gaullist consensus and hold true to the idea that France should persist in focusing aid on former African colonies out of a historical duty to those former French citizens and, above all, as a way of maintaining France's power over those nations, and in a larger sense, in the international political sphere (Bovcon, 2013). It is by these means that the nation can justify France's permanent seat on the UN Security Council allowing France to claim that it is a European power with extra-continental political influence (unlike Germany, which has much less international diplomatic influence).

While, there is no space to delineate the full argumentation deployed by these opposing camps, it is nonetheless important to note the tensions between them are central to explaining why French aid policy towards Cameroon has been reformed to some extent (as per the wishes of *les modernes*), whilst remaining largely interest-based (as per the desires of *les anciens*). The perceptions of each interest group, or party, have influenced the shaping of French aid policy, as has the *rapport de force* between these factions, which has been influenced by the views of French Prime Ministers and Presidents. For example, Jospin was clearly in the camp of *les modernes*, and this was reflected in policy passed during his term of office; whilst, Chirac's ideology aligned more closely with the position of *les anciens*, many of whom have close links to Cameroonian interests and other politicians. As such, his time in office gave Cameroon a real opportunity to influence French foreign and development policies, as will be further demonstrated later. Closely related to these issues, the conflicting priorities of France's FPE, can be demonstrated by the fact that under Chirac's first presidency there were two Mr Africas, namely Michel Dupuch and Jacques Foccart (Comarin, 2002). Equally, under Sarkozy, there was an official head of the secretariat of the *Elysée*, as well as an unofficial head, Claude Guéant who was taking advice from shadowy old guard advisors such as Robert Bourgi, thereby allowing the related party to control the governmental decision-making process with regard to aid (Moncrieff, 2012, p.11).

It should be clear that this lack of a unified FPE, particularly since the end of the Gaullist Consensus in the mid- to late-1990s (Leboeuf and Quénot-Suarez, 2014, p. 435; Moncrieff, 2012, p.11) has meant that the perceptions and extractive capacity of French policy-making elites have varied, depending upon which camp has come to power. As such, these parties have been able to interpret developments in the international and domestic context according to their own perceptions of the national interest and, to some extent, according to their own ideas and value systems.

Since Jospin's premiership, the Gaullist consensus on the importance of prioritising

aid to Francophone African countries such as Cameroon has been broken. The analysis below will therefore focus on some of the main perceptions of modernising and old guard elements within the French policy-making elite regarding the need for a more needs-based or a continued power-focused aid programme. The key points to consider are as follows: first, that the arguments of the old guard have, historically, been stronger than modern arguments for change, but that latter have enjoyed greater traction since Jospin, as they have lobbied for cutbacks to the aid programme either on the grounds that reforms have not been undertaken by Cameroon or that France's national interest is better served by investing in other parts of the developing world. Another important point to remember is that there is not always a binary divide between modernists and the old guard, because there is room for incrementalism and path dependency approaches that do not really draw their inspiration from either camp.

## **Elite Perceptions: A Modernising Perspective**

Modernisers within the French government (e.g. political figures such as Jospin, Alain Juppé, Jean-Marie Bockel and Jean-Michel Severino of the AFD) have tended to perceive Black Africa and countries such as Cameroon as contributing comparatively little to France's relative power in the world, or as representing a weak asset to French political, strategic and economic interests. Instead, *les modernes* hold that, many of France's interests lie in other parts of the developing and indeed developed world. While modernising elites recognised that Africa was rising up the international agenda in the 2000s (under the influence of the UN via the MDGs and Tony Blair via the DFID, the Gleneagles Summit and Blair Commission) they questioned whether aid should continue to be provided in the same largely unconditional way as before to unaccountable, (Francophile) African dictators like Cameroon's Paul Biya. By the time of Sarkozy's presidency, there was a new priority in the Mediterranean established via the concept of the Mediterranean Union (subsequently Union for the Mediterranean), in the Gulf (which saw the transfer of French troops to Abu Dhabi) and in the emerging economies which attracted vast amounts of AFD investment. This downplaying of the relative importance of Africa in general, and Cameroon specifically, deepened under Sarkozy. Furthermore, as we have seen, the global financial crisis (2007-2008) has also forced all Western countries to re-evaluate their aid programmes (Moncrieff, 2012; Cumming, 2013). Finally, in 2011 the Arab Spring, ensured that Africa was no longer a top priority on the international agenda, placing emphasis instead on the Middle East (Cumming, 2013, pp.24-47).

While reforming elites did not have a single coherent agenda, some of their interests



have been summed up by Moncrieff (2012, p.11). He asserts that they are keen to limit France's military engagement in Africa and to tone down French interference in African countries' internal affairs; to limit the cost of France's engagement in Africa; to make French African policy more transparent and subject to normal checks and balances built into French public administration; to forge closer working relationships with the whole of Africa; and to cooperate with other non-African powers, including the UK, US, the EU, and the UN (Ibid).

The normative agenda is clearly combined with some harder politico-economic and strategic interests. Thus, in support of their case for providing more targeted forms of aid, aligned with a focus on smart power and /or for diverting aid away from countries such as Cameroon, *les modernes* have been able to point to the potential political damage inflicted by France's overly close relations with the central African state of Cameroon, while stressing the benefits of other potential investments when making aid-based decisions. For example, they were well aware of the potential damage triggered by the impact of the rigged nature of successive elections and Biya's potential implication in the scandal of the '*biens mal acquis*' as well as in the court case associated with this scandal (Harel and Hofnung 2012).

Regarding the Cameroonian local context, French officials on the ground provided evidence in support of the case of modernisers within the French government. As the author's interviews, conducted on October 7, 9 and 14 2014 demonstrated, the Cameroonian government was not reforming enough. More specifically, as one high-ranking AFD official observed: 'the Cameroonian government itself was not willing to respond to Cameroonians "needs". At the same time, as the Anglophone "revolution" drew to a close, the human rights situation was not improving (*Cameroon Human Rights Report*, 2013). As a result of these, and other similar factors, in 1998, Cameroon was ranked as the most corrupt country in the world (Nfor Ngwa, 2014).

On the economic front, modernisers were able to take advantage, at least in a limited way, of the shift in responsibility for aid, from the Cooperation to the Foreign Ministry and then to the AFD. This latter became, in 1999, the *opérateur pivot* for developmental matters. The AFD's investment strategy clearly highlighted the new importance that was to be attached to emerging economies and failed states and the much reduced importance to be given to traditional Francophone recipients. Indeed, as noted in Chapter five, Cameroon has recently been dropped from the list of priority recipients (PPP), suggesting that Cameroon's failure to respond to aid threats and incentives may lead to it receiving significantly less aid in the future, once the C2D has run its course.

It is not only in relation to material economics, but also with regard to security, that Cameroon is deemed by modernisers to be relatively marginal to France's interests. Cameroon does not enjoy the geographic or strategic advantages of the Gulf States, nor the geo-economic potential of the Mediterranean. It also represents a fairly minimal threat in terms of pandemics and was not impacted by the recent Ebola outbreak in West Africa, or the migration of illegal immigrants which have tended to come mainly from West African states such as Mali, North Africa and the Near East. As such, there are no clear reasons to provide aid to the nation, as a priority, because it does not provide advantages in terms of France's reputation as an enlightened actor in Africa or for that matter favourable media coverage for French humanitarian efforts.

Further, the modernising elites no longer have personal ties to, or strong friendships with, African leadership, and as such, no longer buy in to arguments about the "blood debt" owed to the ex-colonies and no longer feel the same colonial responsibility or guilt as former generations of French officials. Sarkozy, in this context, talked of *la droite décomplexée* (Clavel, 2016). It is this lack of current connections that have allowed *Enarques* and other policy-makers, often backed up by French MPs and NGOs (as discussed later), to push for reforms to aid programmes in countries such as Cameroon. The above summary provides only a brief overview of the perceptions and values of modernising elites. It is worth stressing that the perceptions of these reformers have not been entirely supportive of an empowerment agenda. Rather, they have demonstrated a readiness to move away from providing aid to Cameroon altogether, and to refocusing French aid on more economically and strategically important parts of the world.

## **Elite Perceptions: the *Anciens* call for Business as Usual**

It should be clear that *les anciens* hold a very different perspective of the importance of French aid to Cameroon, which they see as a tool to be leveraged for French power and interests. The view of *les anciens*, which has often coincided with the acting position of the French state, has long been that Cameroon is important to France. As such, this was the guiding opinion during Chirac's administration. Cameroon was the most significant economy in Central Africa, and also represented part of a whole zone of Francophone countries that shared similar bonds (e.g. through the signature of cooperation agreements) to France. A long-held assumption among French policy makers has been that the loss of influence in one country could precipitate a loss of

influence in others, as was demonstrated in Rwanda in 1994 and then Zaire in 1996-97 (Chafer, 2002<sup>a</sup>). Thus, it has been key, from the perspective of *les anciens*, to maintain aid in that nation as a means of holding on to power.

The position of those who have supported the continuation of a large aid programme to Cameroon was also bolstered by events on the international scene as outlined in the two last chapters. These tended to raise Africa's position on the international agenda thanks to the work of Tony Blair, with support from US President George W. Bush on Africa and debt cancellation, the NEPAD (2000), aid rises and the emergence of the AU. The events of 9/11 also led to a shift regarding Africa in the international agenda because of its potential as a breeding ground for terrorism. Arguably too, Cameroon's importance was in some ways increased by the global recession, largely due to its oil and gas resources, not to mention by the fact that Cameroon is increasingly coveted by the Chinese for its natural resources (Jian, 2009).

As demonstrated below, *les anciens* have often enjoyed considerable influence over the direction of French policy, and have held to the position that Cameroon is still of interest to France politically, culturally, strategically and economically. Given this perspective, these French elites were reluctant to see radical reforms to French aid policy towards, or instruments on the ground in, Cameroon for fear that such changes would undermine French influence not only in Cameroon, but also in the wider Black African region. These influences have led France to accommodate the needs of Cameroonian government elites through aid instruments that could be classified as demonstrating a soft or smart power approach. These instruments include incentives and other attractive measures rather than more coercive, hard power forms of ODA like conditional aid, sanctions, and threats.

France has clear political interests in Cameroon. These can be inferred from the fact that Cameroon is still a country of the *pré-carré* (France's privileged "backyard") (Interview 49; 9 October 2011). Cameroon remains the most important country politically in Central Africa and its leader since 1982, Paul Biya, has been one of the most senior figures within franco-African complex (Krakoff, 2012). By the time Sarkozy came to power, Cameroon's president was about to become the *doyen* of African leaders after the death of Omar Bongo in 2009, and as the *doyen*, he enjoys the respect of other African leaders. At this point, Cameroon, as a stable country in a region of considerable instability, became an even more important political asset in the region, even if Biya has not risen to the challenge of being the *doyen* of Francophone Africa in the way that Gnassingbé Eyadéma or Omar Bongo did.

Turning to the linkage between French ODA and French language and culture, it is

well known that France has long supported French as a universal language (Hollier, 1989) and the conveyer of Republican and Revolutionary values (liberty, equality, fraternity, human rights). Any loss of a Francophone-speaking country, particularly if the country in question then converts to become primarily Anglophone, is traumatic for the French. More specifically, it harks back to the concept of the Fashoda syndrome. Prunier (1998, pp.105-106) refers to this syndrome as “the attitude of France in the late 1980s and 1990s towards increasing influence of Anglo-Saxons in the Great Lakes” area. The fact that Cameroon actually contains two Anglophone provinces places it on the faultline of these language concerns, and this has made it imperative for France to use soft power cultural instruments to keep Cameroon within the Francophone fold. According to one interviewee: “it is important to France to safeguard its influence in Africa even within the Anglophone zone” (Interview 44; 7 October 2014). Such cultural instruments have not been free from cutbacks but have been less severely reduced than other parts of the aid programme (e.g. technical assistance). To illustrate, there has been a reduction from 138 Alliances Françaises in 1999 across 38 countries, to 125 in 2005 spanning 36 countries (Prema, 2013). For elite policy-makers who remain attached to the Gaullist consensus, Cameroon was a test case which would show whether the French language and culture could survive in the face of English influence or international pressures, via the increasingly powerful forces of globalisation. According to one high-ranking AFD official, “France and Cameroon have rightly been maintaining long historical ties” (Interview 48; 14 October 2014).

Strategic considerations were another reason for maintaining a soft power approach to aid in Cameroon; the unconditional nature of French bilateral ODA to Cameroon. Indeed, according to one interviewed official “France had at this time and still has subsequent strategic interests in Cameroon” (Interview 46; 7 October 2015). Tactically, Cameroon’s significance probably peaked in 2002 when it held a seat on the UN Security Council and, as such, its vote was coveted by France, Germany, the US and the UK, as it related to military intervention in Iraq. Cameroon is also home to 117,378 French nationals, as recorded in 2012, representing a 4% increase since 2007 (Ministère des Affaires Etrangères et du Développement International, 2014, p.1). This is significant not only because these expatriates can vote in French elections, but also because their security needs to be guaranteed by the French state in a continent where kidnappings are on the rise.

Other strategic factors relate to geographical location and immigration. Cameroon’s central position, bordering on three Francophone countries (Congo, Gabon, and CAR) and one Anglophone (Nigeria) places it at the heart of Central Africa and on the faultline

with West Africa. Further, Cameroon is next door to Chad where France has a longstanding presence, and Gabon where France has continued to maintain a formal military base. As regards (illegal) immigration, this, together with Africa's perception as a nesting ground for terrorists, was of course among the reasons why Africa as a whole rose on the international strategic agenda in the late 1990s. The immigration question is of course as much economic as strategic. The total number of immigrants coming to France in 1998 was 155,879, of which 64,884 came from Africa (Beauchemin et al., 2012, p.2). This number increased to 215,397 in 2009, with an increased number of 105,658 coming from Africa (Ibid.). In 2006, 2.3% of Cameroonian immigrants living in Ile de France were recorded as having lived in France for five years or more (Centre de Resources Politique de la ville d'Essonne, 2012, p.30). In 2008, 13% of the 5.3 million immigrants coming to France were from Senegal, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, or Congo (Beauchemin et. al, 2012, p.4). In 2006, we observe that 2.9% of asylum seekers came from Cameroon, while, together with Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast and Gabon, Cameroon made up 10 % of the total number (50000).

Though current levels of immigration are not worryingly high, it is clearly in France's best interests to keep immigration from Cameroon at a minimum. The kidnapping of a French family in Northern Cameroon in 2012 and the spate of kidnappings in the wider region by organisations such as Boko Haram suggest that concerns over Cameroon, as it relates to terrorism, are on the rise. Indeed, whenever a country is not well governed, it creates a space for potential terrorist groupings and kidnappers, including an increased presence of terror (training camps, terrorism cells, kidnapping, extortion, and more etc...). With regard to the Cameroonian case, as the borders are porous between Nigeria and Cameroon, there is a great potential for further security issues. This demonstrates that it could be an imprudent strategy for France to abandon Cameroon (Cumming, 2013). Chirac, specifically, raised a concern about Africa becoming a breeding ground for terrorism (Gallis, 2005). While Cameroon is a relatively stable country with limited threats, there has been no adequate preparation for Biya's succession and so there is the need for France to remain engaged. There is also a strategic risk of disruption when Biya eventually dies or resigns from office (Ibid).

In economic terms, Cameroon's importance to France's position is particularly appreciated by *les anciens* and has been fully recognised by all French governments from Jospin's through to Hollande's administration. Again these economic interests have a military basis, and are weighed against an empowering strategy that could bring to power counter-elites and leaders of civil society that might be hostile to France's established interests in Cameroon. Thus, France has, since colonial times, invested

more heavily in the infrastructure and development of Cameroon than other similar developing nations, which puts them at greater risk of loss. A French official argued that this demonstrated that “the priority was the *métropole*” (Interview 41; 6 October 2014). Equally, France has long supported the Cameroonian economy via the Franc Zone, whereby the French Treasury guaranteed the CFA and provided structural adjustment loans and other forms of programme assistance that other parties would have hesitated to offer. In accounting, this kind of investment is referred to as “sunk costs” (Dijkstra and White, 2013).

Many French actors within the broader French foreign policy establishment argue that France does moreover view Cameroon as a country that will, through the Franc zone, enhance France’s relative power in many regional organisations, like the CES (Community Exchange System) and ASBF (Africa Singapore Business Forum). This ensures a tight French grip on the Franc Zone, and on the entire Cameroonian currency/ economy, thus compromising Cameroonian sovereignty (Malanda, 2008).

Cameroon is equally the most important economic player in the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) as well as having the most diversified economy. Thus Cameroon’s main export partners in 2011 included France, in fifth position with 6.5%, as well as Spain (15.1%), Netherlands (12.8%), China (9.4%), Italy (9.3%) and USA (6.4%) (African Development Bank, 2012, p.7). Cameroon’s main import partners in 2011 (Cameroon Data Portal, 2014, p.2) place France at the very top with (19.1%) closely followed by China (13.3%), Nigeria (12.4), Belgium (5.5%) and Germany (4%). As discussed below, Cameroon is above all a source of oil, vital to France, which has no domestic fuel source of its own.

When exploring a few more detailed economic statistics, it should be noted that Cameroon acts as a welcome market for French products. This is because the French authorities have historically maintained a non-productive Cameroonian economy, which is still quite dependent on French production. Illustrating the point, France is Cameroon’s number one trading partner with French imports from Cameroon composed mainly of oil, gas, banana, cacao, aluminium, wood, and petroleum. Cameroonian oil is crucial to French industry, which makes France’s total economy very strategically dependent on Cameroonian resources, which helps to explain why Cameroon was long deemed one of the most significant recipients of the French aid system. These imports totalled €290 million in 2011, an increase of 10, 3% on the year before (2010). French exports to Cameroon in the same year, totalled €632 million, representing a 5.8% increase on the year before (2010) (Ibid). As such, the Franco-Cameroonian trade surplus exceeded €341 million in 2011 (Ibid).

It is worth underscoring the fact that France is strategically dependent on Cameroonian oil for its (post) industrialized economy. Cameroon is the second largest African oil provider to France, after Democratic Republic of Congo. Cameroon is an important regional community member and, in terms of oil, the sixth largest producer in sub-Saharan Africa, responsible for 400 million barrels in January 2004 (BP Statistical Energy Survey, 2008, p.8). It also has unexploited gas reserves which were estimated at 110 billion cubic meters (bcm) in 2004 (Ibid p.24). Cameroon had 64,000 b/d oil production in 2010, and 4.7 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves in 2010 (Ibid). In 2013, Cameroon became France's number one trading partner in terms of oil import in Central Africa (Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 2016). This is significant because it outlines the fact that Cameroon is still of importance to France even under President Hollande, and has the reserves necessary to remain significant in the years to come.

On the commercial front, the French authorities control the management of the *Banque Africaine D'Afrique Centrale* (BEAC): the Central African Bank whose headquarters is in Yaoundé. Moreover, according to the French embassy ([www.ambafrance-cm.org](http://www.ambafrance-cm.org)), there are about 200 French companies and 160 subsidiaries in Cameroon, as well as many important Cameroonian companies, which are also French-owned. The latter group includes the Brasseries du Cameroon, Total Oil, Orange Telecommunications, Cameroon Railways, Sodecoton (a cotton producer), and Group PHP (banana and pineapple exporters) (Statistics Cameroon, 2014). In addition to these, there is the French company Bolloré, which is involved in the port of Douala, the railway, and the forestry sector; and the French-run Cementcom, which has a monopoly on cement production. These represent a substantial lobby pushing successive French Governments, throughout the post-colonial era, to maintain and revamp aid institutions and instruments in Cameroon (Interview 50; 14 October 2014). These institutions and instruments have, as shown in the previous chapter, successfully safeguarded France's economic/financial interests in Cameroon, which is part of the exclusive sphere of influence or *pré-carré* (Hansen, 2008).

Lastly, returning to the idea of sunk costs, France has seen its economic interests threatened over the last decade and a half, most notably by China. This has undoubtedly acted as a major constraint on France implementing any more significant changes towards a harder power approach to aid to Cameroon or indeed any moves towards potentially empowering counter-elites who may resent France's longstanding complicity with the Biya regime.

Darracq (2016, pp.799-862) includes a specific focus on China's emerging presence, which is valuable to our case study of Cameroon. According to Darracq

(2011), emerging countries in Africa bring new challenges to France. He argues that officially, French decision-makers claim to take a positive view of the presence of emerging countries in Africa, claiming that this encourages further development and reduces the burden carried by European traditional aid donors. Equally, he suggests that in response to the rise of emerging countries, particularly P5 members of the UNSC such as China, French authorities have established a protocol to seek out and neutralise the threat and build economic/commercial relations with China through UBIFRANCE-China (The French Agency International Business Development for French-Chinese cooperation).

According to the French government, UBIFRANCE comes under the aegis of France's ministry for the economy, finance and industry, to promote technologies, products, services and know-how from France, and puts French-based professionals in contact with their international counterparts. UBIFRANCE-China is represented in seven cities. Its main goal is to diversify cooperation amongst Sino-French enterprises. The French government (Embassy and Consulates) focuses in particular on (improving upon) bilateral economic/ trade cooperation and projects (UBIFRANCE, 2010).

It follows that the promotion of "norms" such as empowerment and development appeared to many French elites to work against French interests, which lay in stability and continuity in power of Francophone/ Francophile elites. Overall then, some French elites have perceived Cameroon to be important. NCR sheds light on these perceptions but does not assume that these perceptions are accurate. Thus, policy-makers could in fact perceive Cameroon to be more or less important than it really is. This explains why France, with reference to the Cameroonian case, has not moved from a power-seeking approach to an empowerment based approach to aid, and why it has been so keen to remain the main external power. Cameroon is relatively marginal to France but it is certainly not insignificant.

## **Extractive Capacity and Domestic Variables**

Having suggested above that the FPE includes a mixture of modernisers, old guard political figures, and of course more mainstream policy-makers situated along the spectrum between the two, it seems clear that these decision-makers each have a different capacity to extract resources in support of their preferred policies. This occurs either because they perceive them to be in line with the national interest of France or, in some cases, they simply think it is the "right thing" to do.

While some key distinctions can be drawn, the differences here will not be overstated since both sets of elites are interacting with variables that are at least partly



independent of their control, and that often pose similar problems/ opportunities to the modernisers and old-guard alike. To illustrate the differences, it can be stated that reformists and non-reformists view the dilemma of extracting resources through a different prism. For the former, Cameroon has to make the necessary changes to its political system, its accountability and its economy if it is to continue benefiting from conditional aid. Failure to do so will reduce the need to extract money for Cameroon and hence the problem resolves itself, to some extent, even if it is recognised that the Cameroonian people, particularly the poorest, will be the unfortunate victims of this process. This population could, of course, be helped in other ways through for example civil society capacity building programmes and through the ongoing C2D (to which monies have already been committed) and through the EU/ EDF, where again, French commitments are set in stone. By contrast the *anciens* must find a way of ensuring that aid monies are extracted in favour of Cameroon. This increases in difficulty when they have to do so at a time of global recession when France has a limited amount of bilateral aid (due to EDF commitments and aid cutbacks) and when other developing countries may have a more legitimate claim to aid, either because they are better governed, or because there are alternative, less developed, states in greater need.

Similarly, both sets of French policy-making elites may have a different take on domestic variables. Thus, for example, modernisers see reports by NGOs condemning the lack of democracy or respect for human rights in Cameroon (United States Department of State's Cameroon annual *Human Rights Report*) as grounds for reducing aid or making it more conditional. Conversely, *les anciens* could draw on evidence from NGOs and Parliamentary reports that Cameroon's poorest are getting poorer for maintaining the volume of aid to Cameroon, even if there would then be an argument over how best to deploy that aid.

The above caveat aside, it is possible to make some broader statements about the extractive capacity of the French and its foreign policy-making elites. The perceptions of elite policy-makers are of course intrinsically linked to the capacity of the state, be it France or otherwise. The French president, under the Fifth Republic, is only loosely held accountable to the French parliament. Even if the Cour des Comptes does inspect ministerial accounts and parliament does vote through the aid and wider French budget, the presidency has considerable capacity to mobilise aid resources without parliamentary scrutiny. The French government has been particularly able to mobilise debt cancellation monies through the Paris Club that the French Treasury chairs (Interview 49; 9 October 2011). It has also quickly mobilised military personnel (in recent years Africa has traditionally had up to 10,000 prepositioned troops) to

undertake military interventions and to send *coopérants* and technical assistants to countries like Cameroon. It is important to note that in these cases, military action was, specifically, taken without a vote in parliament. France's ability to extract resources is enhanced greatly by the biggest instrument that an external donor has ever set up in Cameroon: the C2D. This effectively gives France the ability to play a key role in shaping Cameroon's economic priorities.

Where the French have seen limitations on their extractive capacity has been in terms of aid volumes. Having overtaken Germany as the main donor to the Lomé Convention, the French have squeezed their capacity to dispense bilateral aid and forced their nation into a situation where it must be concerned with other major donors, and their willingness and ability to contribute funds. The ability to secure money for Cameroon strongly increased when the C2D (2006) was launched. During this time frame, the ENVRs (1997) were actively established and financing for such aid was more readily available as a result. On the other hand, France needed parliamentary approval for the allocation of funding to foreign aid endeavours. There was no *cohabitation* under Sarkozy and Chirac. Therefore, laws could be processed and come into effect more quickly. There was also the fear that instability in Chad could affect Cameroon.

This lack of actual aid money, coupled with a lack of parliamentary or press scrutiny allowed President Sarkozy to make a series of aid pledges (e.g. on places for primary school children) which he could never hope to keep, given that his extractive capacity remained limited. Domestic budgetary and international financial considerations have also imposed constraints on aid volumes. In other words, the ability of the French government to mobilise and extract resources depends on factors such as the French national debt, the European Stability Pact (1997) which has imposed a limit of 3% on the public deficit, and the 2007-08 global financial crises, and the subsequent prolonged recession in the Euro Zone.

In some ways, the extractive capacity of the French state has been helped while in other ways it has been hindered by local and domestic variables. A case in point is Cameroon's increasingly vociferous civil society. This lobby has included the *Collectif des Organisations Démocratiques et Patriotiques de la Diaspora Camerounaise* (CODE) and Cameroonian Patriots. CODE has recently called upon François Hollande to make President Biya "relinquish power" (Timchia, 2013, p.1) while occasionally urging closer ties between Cameroon and France. In addition to this, there is a large Cameroonian diaspora in France whose standpoint changes depending on the situation. This diaspora, which included 38,530 migrants in 2007 (Migration au

Cameroun Profil National, 2009, p.58), acts notably through the Union for an Active Diaspora (UAD) created in 2004 under French law. It is composed of Cameroonian expatriates in France, although the membership numbers are impossible to determine (as is the case with CODE). It has in effect accused the incumbent Cameroonian President of many offences, including embezzlement (Cameroun Mon Pays, 2008).

There are of course many domestic factors and actors that have influenced France's stance on aid to Cameroon. As noted earlier, among the most important are domestic budgetary cutbacks in France linked to the LOLF and RGIPP as well as to the Maastricht Convergence Criteria, European Stability Pact and Fiscal Pact. Among the actors involved, these include the French Parliament, which has written critical reports calling for change, the Cour des Comptes which has equally invested in international policy, and French NGOs and pressure groups which have condemned France's failure to meet its own aid volume targets, while at the same time criticising the quality and lack of poverty orientation of French aid towards Africa in particular. To illustrate NGOs such as the CCFD, Caritas and DEFAP were championing the cause of Cameroonian development (Cumming, 2013). These organisations formed the grouping Plateforme Dette et Développement in France which liaised closely with Plateforme Dette Cameroun. The aim was to build Cameroonian civil society and make the Cameroonian State more accountable, particularly in relation to its C2D expenditures.

Domestically in the late 1990s Jospin had the majority in Parliament and Chirac was a "lame-duck" president. This was a key factor in enabling a more reformist aid agenda to gain ground. The French Parliament was also strengthened by reports from the HCCI (created in 1999) which was driving forward an agenda closer to empowerment than the usual self-seeking French cooperation policy.

At the same time, more conservative forces have been at work within the domestic policy, including the actions of shadowy emissaries close to French policy makers, like Charles Debbasch, and Robert Bourgi (Gounin, 2013), and above all, the lobbying by both French and Cameroonian politicians and businessmen. The French business grouping the MEDEF and the CIAN have been particularly influential, while Cameroonian politicians such as Paul Biya and others forming part of the Franco-African nexus were also on the inside of the French domestic political machinery at the end of the 2000s. In 2008, Biya was one of three Francophone leaders who successfully demanded the resignation of Jean-Marie Bockel as development minister after the latter had promised to end Françafrique (Leymarie, 2008). Biya was tainted by recent court cases such as the trial on Ill-Gotten Gains (Ballong, 2009). This did not mean that the Cameroonian President, who spends more time in France than in

Cameroon, does not have clout in the formulation of French aid policy decisions (Pigeaud , 2011).

These are not the only reasons for political support for aid to Cameroon however. The complexity of French aid structures also created a situation in which bureaucratic inertia and instrumentalism crept in. In other words, it is hard to drastically reduce aid to a country that has been receiving substantial assistance for years. Within the French Parliament too, the Groups of Friends of Cameroon were equally a source of pressure for increased aid, and a platform demanding democratic reform.

## **Conclusion: A Useful but Incomplete Perspective on French Aid**

This chapter has applied the tenets of NCR to explaining why the French state has moved, if only to a limited extent, towards an empowerment agenda, whilst for the most part maintaining a soft/smart power approach to development assistance and harnessing an array of aid instruments to that end. It has highlighted the central role played by the perceptions of policy-making elites who interpret the French national interest but who are also informed by their own ideas, value systems and norms. It notes that, contrary to received wisdom in most NCR writings, this policy-making elite, the so-called FPE, is not unified on the role of ODA, the need to reform aid or the issue of rebalancing France's external relations away from Francophone Africa and towards other parts of the developing world.

On the one hand, modernisers have tended to push for aid to be used for poverty reduction, the tackling of needs and empowerment. But they have also supported smart power forms of aid, and a movement towards a more hard power approach, in terms of the spectrum. This means they have been quite prepared to see ODA reduced, cut off, or potentially even ended to Cameroon if the latter does not meet the conditions associated with development assistance. However, these reformists have also, in some cases, been more concerned with making the necessary cutbacks to ODA and to French foreign policy priorities than they have with pushing a needs-based approach. Ultimately, this has undermined the strength of their case.

On the other hand, the so-called *anciens* and, to a lesser extent, those decision-makers within the foreign policy executive who are inclined towards incrementalism, have adhered to path dependency approaches to policy-making, and have thus tended to push for ever larger volumes of aid to be deployed in Cameroon with few or no

strings attached. These actors have supported soft and power aid instruments and smart power instruments at the softer end of the spectrum. They have been aware of the need for cutbacks in public expenditure but have held firm to their arguments in favour of maintaining close relations with Cameroon with the help of a generous development programme. These different perceptions of what actions best serve the French national interest and different views on the significance of Cameroon in terms of France's relative power in the international order have clearly influenced the aid decision-making process. The two camps have had different extractive capacities and responded differently to domestic variables but they have had to work within the constraints of the same system where, because of aid commitments to the EU and a global recession, it was increasingly difficult to extract resources and where the calls from Parliament and NGOs have been for reforms to aid programmes rather than reductions in ODA volumes.

Overall therefore, this chapter has found that French policy-making elites have, on balance, been inclined to maintain aid to Cameroon, even if that recipient was removed from the list of priority recipients in 2012. They have recognised that Cameroon can be a means of marginally enhancing France's relative power and that it is significant in terms of French political/cultural, economic and strategic interests. The French state has been prepared to adapt and proliferate instruments and institutions of aid which enhance its ability to maintain international power. It follows that the NCR framework is useful in telling us why France has opted for the instruments it has in Cameroon. However, this approach to recognizing and rationalizing aid decisions does have its shortcomings. Some of these have already been set out in chapter three in our discussion of theory-based critiques (NCR's overly descriptive nature, its convenient emphasis on extractive capacity and domestic variables; see Rathbun 2008; Lobell et al., 2009). However, one aspect that has been overlooked is the assumption relating to unity of the FPE. It is important to challenge this assumption in the case of French aid.

The second potential shortcoming of NCR lies in the crudeness of its assumption that policy is essentially driven by the interests of donors which can be set aside temporarily while policy-makers may have a different interpretation of what France should be doing. The theory allows policy-makers to be altruistic in the short term, while assuming that interests will have an overriding influence in the medium term. The Neoclassical Realist approach appears to overemphasise interests, and not take enough account of values and norms. The latter should not be downplayed as they are built into the DNA of the policy-making elite and help to inform the 'world vision' of these actors.

A third potential blind spot is NCR's rather crude interpretation of relative power and the instruments a state should use in pursuit of this power. Clearly the NCR's assumptions about power/influence need refining in terms of soft, hard, or smart power by combining these concepts with instruments and institutions, as this study has done. In effect, NCR theory provides little insight into why policy-makers opted for hard, soft or smart power instruments. In other words, it focuses on top-down state-level concerns rather than on the precise mechanisms in the field through which influence is to be secured (Kitchen 2010). Arguably the use of hard power instruments would suggest that a donor is prepared to face the consequence, or absorb the cost of, significant risks in order to secure or maintain influence in a country (Sherr, 2013). The deployment of soft power also points to a quest for influence, but in a much more subtle and low-risk form (Trunkos, 2013). What NCR does not capture is why France has opted for a form of smart power which combines a preponderance of soft power instruments with some harder forms of power. The answer would appear to lie in the fact that the French FPE itself is divided on this question with *les anciens* pushing for softer forms of smart power and *les modernes* seeking harder forms. In both cases, there is a link to the desired result which for the *anciens* is likely to be a continued and fairly cosy aid relationship while for the modernisers it would be Cameroonian reform or French ODA suspensions.

On balance, however, most policy-making elites have accepted that France is the international power with the most substantial interests in Cameroon and have been anxious to avoid jeopardising those interests. Hence, they have preferred to opt for broad continuity in aid institutions as well as smart, soft over hard power instruments. France's preferred mode of cooperation was cultural assistance, positive political assistance and military training, with little consideration being given to political conditionality, environmental demands or the empowerment of either the people or counter-elites who could threaten Biya's Francophile regime

The threat of hard power was always there, but it was less clear who this would be used against: the Cameroonian regime, neighbouring aggressor or internal opponents of the Cameroonian political administration? It follows that the pursuit of a state's relative power in the international hierarchy could be better achieved, at least in the case of Cameroon, via soft and above all smart power, rather than hard power instruments. This in turn explains why France has not, with reference to the Cameroonian case, moved away over the last decade and a half from power-seeking towards an empowerment based approach to aid. It also takes forward our instrument-based analysis in chapters 4 and 5 as to how it did so.

Building upon this last point, it should be added that this NCR analysis does not tell us much about policy effectiveness or outcomes, above all, how France's choice of institutions and instruments actually succeeded in gaining or failed to secure influence. France appears to have been successful in exerting and maintaining influence in Cameroon (Biloua, 2003; Rousselot, 2010) through a combination of substantial smart instruments such as the C2D (2006-2011 and 2011-2016), the ENVRs (2007 and 2009) and the Instituts Français (2011). How was it that France was able to have introduce such influential aid instruments?

There appear to be several reasons for this. The first relates to the overall balance of power within the international scene, with Cameroon recognising its structural dependence on France for aid and military support. Secondly, France has been more prepared to change and upgrade its policy in Cameroon with respect to new actors like China and Brasil, all of which have decreased Cameroon dependence and given it a greater say over the way in which French aid will be deployed. The rise of China has no doubt been a game-changer. According to Kahn (2008), 2002 saw the total trade value between China and Cameroon reach US\$ 158.628 million, a decrease of 25.5% when compared with the corresponding period last year, of which the Chinese exports resulted to US\$ 43.971 million; an increase of 50% over that of last year while the imports registered US\$ 114.657 million, a reduction of 37.6 percent (Pigato, 2015). China has considerable economic interests (agricultural products, large market, and mineral resources) on the African continent. On balance, France had more than other OECD donors to lose (raw materials, financial lobbies, linguistic influence...) by leaving years of investment in Cameroon to the Chinese (Darracq, 2016).

A third reason relates to the role of the Cameroonian state, particularly elite Cameroonian policy-makers whose views are often ignored in Euro-centric analyses of northern aid policies. The ways in which this Cameroonian elite have facilitated or constrained France's aid approach will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. In so doing, this study will address a weakness in NCR theory, which can only provide a partial answer as to why France's softer version of smart power, via its ODA programme, has not changed more radically. Nor can NCR theory fully explain why France has not opted for harder variant of smart power given that it has not, at least on the face of it, in its dealings with a low-income country like Cameroon, got that much to lose. In order to understand this, it is important to examine a dimension that is not adequately covered by the NCR framework namely the interplay between Cameroonian officials and French policy-makers. In effect, the theory presumes that French policy-makers interpret the national interest without reference to the

Cameroonian political powers and governmental administrations. Such a Eurocentric view of policy discourse and actual policy implementation will be challenged in the next chapter which brings out fully the Cameroonian voice in shaping France's choice of aid structures and more particularly instruments.

Needless to say, it cannot be the case that a single recipient, namely Cameroon, can have a determining influence on the overall structure of French aid institutions and instruments. However, as argued in previous chapters, Cameroonians do have some influence and the Cameroonian case is in many ways representative of the wider Francophone African bloc so can be used to some extent to help understand the evolution and nature of structures and instruments selected by the French government over different time periods.



## **Chapter Seven: Cameroonian Elites and African Voice**

The last chapter showed how an NCR analysis can provide a strong starting point from which to explain France's readiness to make important but ultimately limited, changes to its aid programme towards Cameroon. Chapter six also explained why France is still giving aid to this Francophone country when it could turn elsewhere. It concluded with a more general observation that NCR, as a theoretical framework, when applied to aid trends, tends to be Northern/ Eurocentric and to stress the determining role of Northern/ French elites who pursue the continued support of Cameroon without taking into account the views of their interlocutors, in this case, the Cameroonian elite. This observation of the neglect of the African voice is common in the literature (Dedieu 2002; Salhi 1999). This chapter will argue that NCR can also be used to explore the voice, or position, of the Cameroonian policy-makers, in order to secure a better understanding of the role of African agency in the aid policy-making process.

It follows that this chapter will seek to provide tentative answers to the following questions: How do elite Cameroonian policy-makers view the impact of French aid on the relative power of Cameroon in the world? How do they perceive this aid and the relationship with France? How do Cameroonian elites extract/ mobilise support as a way of facilitating or constraining the deployment of French aid? Do Cameroonian policy-makers have to smooth the passage of French aid, blunting resistance from, for example, counter-elites who see aid as propping up the Biya regime, or from Anglophone Cameroonians who see French aid as biased in favour of Francophone Cameroon? Do Cameroonian elites use the threat of turning to other donors, notably China, when dealing with the French? The answers to these questions are key to a full understanding of the Cameroonian aid issue.

In addressing these questions, this chapter will draw upon the format of the NCR analysis in the last chapter without replicating it exactly. It will begin by briefly spelling out what we mean by the term Cameroonian elites and how these policy-making elites perceive French assistance. It will drill down into the perceptions of these elites with respect to specific areas of aid policy (military, economic and political), highlighting the scepticism of Cameroonian officials, coupled with their recognition of the tangible benefits of this assistance. The next section will briefly explore the extractive capacity

of Cameroonian elites and the domestic variables they face. The chapter will conclude by highlighting the added value associated with taking into account the African voice in this analysis.

## **Identifying the Cameroonian Elite**

It will be recalled from the last chapter that the FPE in France was deemed not to have a unified view on French aid. The same is true of the Cameroonian elite. Here, however, the cleavages are less clear-cut. In effect, elite perceptions of the Cameroonian national interest often blend into perceptions of personal advantage, benefits for particular government ministries or teams, advantages for specific regions or ethnic groups. There is no space to detail the different nuances of opinion here which would require a thesis in itself but it is important to be cognisant of this differentiation. It should also be borne in mind that there can be a gulf between the interests of Cameroonian policy-making elites and the needs of the Cameroonian people (M'bokolo et al. 2010). Cameroonian elites have an interest in remaining linked to France because they speak French and many were trained in France, so by ensuring that France remains important in Cameroon, the Cameroonian elites continue to justify their own, secure good jobs in the army and government.

Equally, it is possible for Cameroonian elites in the government to gain favours from France, for example, for their children to study in French Universities like the Sorbonne. This has little to do with benefits for Cameroon as a whole. Indeed, the Cameroonian elites often have a very different perception of the national interest from the one that might be perceived by a political scientist. For instance, it is in the Cameroonian people's interest to have more trained engineers, yet Cameroonian elites have long been more than content to accept France's offering of French language teachers instead. A cynical observer might conclude that the interests of Cameroonian elites have largely centred on how they can personally benefit from their relationship with France. This has led to Cameroonian elites perceive the national interest through a distorted prism. Needless to say, French policy-makers can also perceive French national interest in terms of their own, personal interests. However, their opportunities to do so are limited and the likelihood is that French policies informed by such sentiments will not last.

The above observations are clearly important but space constraints, as well as logistical and ethical issues, will not allow us to track how personal Cameroonian

interests can be correlated with French aid policy outcomes. Instead, this analysis will look for any broad understandings that are shared by Francophone Cameroonian elites, particularly those who have been trained in French instituts d'études politiques, military academies and even in the prestigious ENA school. Many, are as such, inculcated into French ways of thinking, a French view of the world, and most see the benefits to Cameroon and to themselves of retaining close links with the French. The same is of course not true of Anglophone elites in the western provinces who look more to the UK and the US but who have much less say over central government and now tend to exert influence mainly at a regional and local level, often enlisting supporting from French-speaking Bamileke business elites who share their concern over the governance of Cameroon's aid programmes and wider public policies.

Whilst it is not possible to provide personal details of all the Cameroonian elites interviewed, it should be noted that they covered a number of Ministerial departments and grades ranging from directors down to lower-ranking civil servants, not to mention MPs. Some interviewees were new to government, while others were well established officials with a career dating back to the early independence period, as indicated in the Appendix. The analysis completed in this chapter seven will draw heavily on these interviews in developing answers to the questions identified above.

## **The Big Picture: Cameroonian Elite Perceptions of French Aid as a Whole**

As noted above, the NCR analysis in chapter 6 explained why France continued to give large amounts of largely unconditional aid to Cameroon but it did not address the issue of why Cameroon is still happy to receive this aid, or whether Cameroonian elites have facilitated or constrained the French aid-policy making process or, for that matter, the deployment of ODA. The overall perspective of Cameroonian elites is that French "cooperation" brings with it problems of its own (discussed in more detail later) but that it is also essential, and its benefits greatly outweigh its costs. That the glass tends to be viewed as half full rather than half empty can be inferred from Cameroonian interpretations of the way that aid infringes sovereignty and increases dependency. Cameroonian officials are all too aware of these drawbacks but are also aware of the benefits by donors that aid is supposed to be empowering Cameroon (Interview 44; 7 October 2014). On balance, it is logical for Cameroon to receive aid.

To begin with, it should be stressed that Cameroonian elites are conscious of the

fact that they are operating in a developing country which is in desperate need of aid. It does not have a fully functioning army or police and needs military assistance, as it has not fully mastered its own security. A second justification used by Cameroonian elites for accepting aid is that it increases the legitimacy of their state. Pariah states such as Togo do not receive aid (Interview 44; 7 October 2014). A third reason why Cameroonian elites have facilitated the disbursement of French aid is the fact that France has influence within the EU and the European Commission, and can therefore deliver even higher amounts of aid via the European Commission. Fourthly, it is logical from a Cameroonian perspective, to remain close to France because it controls the Franc Zone, and provides military assistance that nobody else seems to be offering.

## **Drilling Down: Cameroonian Perceptions of French Aid Instruments**

While the above overview presents a broadly positive picture of Cameroonian perceptions of French aid, it should be clear that Cameroonians have not been duped by France and are well aware of the costs and risks associated with ODA instruments as well as the necessity of maintaining those instruments. The analysis that follows will hone in on Cameroonian reactions, particularly their readiness to facilitate or constrain military; economic and politico-cultural forms of aid.

### **Economic Aid: The ‘Pros’ Outweigh the ‘Cons’**

Turning to Cameroonian reactions to French economic/ development aid instruments, a similar picture emerges here, with Cameroonians resenting their dependence on France whilst also recognising that French aid is significant, generally unconditional and in greater supply than ODA from many other donors (see below for our discussion of “extractive capacity”). There is, once again, resentment at the Franc Zone as well as France’s overall bias towards French companies. The governing elite also feel that historically French multinationals have plundered the country.

A particular focus of this resentment has been the C2D. As one central government official explained: since 2006, ‘the main economic instrument that the French Government has been using in Cameroon is the C2D. This is implemented through the AFD, through which the French authorities control the Cameroonian economy’ (Interview 8; 24 April 2011). According to the same official, “France officially claims to

have based its aid policy on the *Document Stratégique à la réduction de la Pauvreté* and the *Document Cadre Partenariat*. However, the French authorities possess a veto power on investment via the C2D budget” (Interview 27; 8 June, 2011). In a similar vein, another interviewee commented that “Loans make us dependent on our lenders. The C2D is a French aid instrument that underlines the developed nature of the French Government’s strategy and the level of blindness of the Cameroonian state” (Interview 7, 20 April 2011). Another added that: “The mechanism demonstrates the cleverness of the French Government, which is actually stimulated by the reimbursement of the Cameroonian debt. France takes back the debt through aid projects which are all carried out by French companies at their prices” (Interview 15; 5 May 2011).

This same point can be further illustrated by a key survey, conducted by the Cameroonian Foundation called the Fondation Ango Ella at the behest of the French Embassy. The study, “Perceptions et représentations par les acteurs et les décideurs de la coopération française au Cameroun” (May, 2008) suggests that Cameroonians do not believe that the C2D is an effective instrument. Further, if we assess its effectiveness according to the Paris Declaration, which states that the African country should define its own national priorities and develop its aid programmes accordingly, the C2D does not fare well. It would appear that French aid does not deal with Cameroonian interests but rather with French concerns (Interview 19; 17 May 2011).

In this context, one central government representative argued that “Cameroon is economically dependent on France through the Franc Zone, the *Banque des Etats d’Afrique Centrale* (BEAC), and the *Banque Centrale des Etats d’Afrique d’Afrique de l’Ouest* (BCEAO), whose currencies are constructed by the French Treasury” (Ibid). This monetary framework governs the economic functioning of Francophone African countries like Cameroon. Yet this model is not adapted to the realities of those countries. This is a hangover from the colonial era when Cameroonian officials signed economic agreements which tied the country to France (Interview 8; 20 April, 2011). Furthermore, according to another central government elite official interviewed: “the French people just see Cameroon as a backyard where they can discharge everything they produce, while they see Cameroonians as consumers” (Interview 1; 9 April 2011). Consequently, the French make Cameroonians “passive”, with French economic aid said to be based on financing consumption through instruments such as the C2D, instead of financing production.

While there is Cameroonian resentment concerning French economic/developmental instruments, there is also, crucially, an appreciation of the importance of French debt cancellation and aid. One official welcomed the fact that, in response to

recent new competitors entering the Cameroon market: “French influence is notable, aimed at building up visible infrastructures through the C2D first generation” (Interview 7; 16/ April 2011). In this matter, the Cameroonian elite underlined the upgrading of French involvement, so as to give certain credibility to France’s substantial aid programme in Cameroon, upon which they rely for their own survival. Cameroonian officials also acknowledge (privately) the potential revenue-generating impact of the C2D: half of the contracts go to Cameroonian companies (Interview 7; 16 April 2011). A fact which they are not prepared to discuss openly as we have seen in earlier Interview data.

The Cameroonian government is all too aware of the fact that France has played a significant role behind-the-scenes when it comes to the writing off Cameroonian debt. Thanks to France’s lobbying, Cameroon was able to benefit from the highly indebted poor countries initiative (HIPC) in April 2006. Indeed, France has been Cameroon’s advocate for the country’s debt to the IMF to be written off (Interview 38; 26 November 2015). Reaching the HIPC completion point in April 2006 has enabled Cameroonian public external debt to decrease from 5.6 billion to 1,65 billion Euros (African Development Bank, 2012). It is worth mentioning that Cameroonian debt to France (14% of Cameroonian public external debt) has been, and will be, mainly written off via the C2D (Ibid).

At the same time, Cameroonians recognise that France is the first partner of Cameroon in terms of aid policy: 713 million Euros between 2006 and 2011 and 40 technical assistants. This shows the importance of French policy in the case study. Franco-Cameroonian cooperation is based on the *Document cadre de partenariat* (DCP), which underlines agreed aid priorities: health and the fight against HIV and AIDS, infrastructure, basic education, agriculture and food security, teaching and research, promotion of cultural diversity, observation and forecasting (AFD, 2013). In addition, the AFD also helps Cameroonians by granting sovereign loans to the state in order to implement urban development and infrastructure projects (Ibid).

## **Military Assistance: A Necessary Evil**

Overall, the reaction of Cameroonian elites within the government to French military/security assistance instruments has been marked by ambivalence. While they have recognised the necessity of this support to safeguard the country against external aggression and shore up the regime against internal violent dissent, they have long harboured reservations about the implications of these instruments for Cameroonian sovereignty and Cameroon’s identity as a nascent state. Many of these reservations

have focused on the original military assistance agreements set up at independence, and this ambivalence has not gone away with the revision of military agreements. In effect, in the military/security field, the Cameroonian elite interviewed complained about the fact that French military policy in Cameroon is still based on the 1960s and 1970s military/security agreements. Most of the former French African colonies, like Cameroon, were “forced” or rather required to sign these agreements as a “condition” of being granted “independence” (Mazrui, 1993). As a new country with no military experience: “Cameroon signed defence agreements with France in 1960, 1961, 1963, and 1974 in order to help Cameroon build up an army; [it is only recently in 2009] that those defence agreements have been upgraded” (Interview 41; 3 March 2011).

It emerged from the author’s Interviews (senior officials) that those military/security agreements with France were confined to the hard military domain, leading one interviewee to deplore the lack of French investment in security sector reform or SSR (Interview 19; 17 May 2011). In this respect, in the mind of the elite, this aid involves French military officers who instruct Cameroonian officers. In 2009 there was a change in the military agreements between France and Cameroon, but Cameroonian officials were only able to examine and sign them after the French Prime Minister left the country (Ibid). Therefore, the Cameroonian delegation did not have time to make a critical analysis of the previous fifty years of cooperation. In this matter, the same interviewee described the revision of military agreements as involving “sensitive questions”, given that “those old agreements are unacceptable for a new, independent, and modern country such as Cameroon” (Ibid).

In this context, another Cameroonian civil servant stated that, in general, defence agreements are not the result of debates between Cameroonian experts and the representatives of Cameroonians who ought to be evaluating whether the objectives have been reached, or if modifications need to be made (Interview 4; 13 April 2011). They should not merely be buying in to the discourse of the French Prime Minister François Fillon, who stressed, when, referring to the 2009 upgraded Franco-Cameroonian military/security agreements that the latter now took the rights of Africans into account. This led to the interviewee asking: “Does that mean the previous ones did not respect Africans? (Ibid).

Consequently, according to central government officials, unilaterally building up Cameroon’s military strength is not the key driver behind French aid, and this is the reason why they have started to embrace a “delocalisation” policy through programmes such as RECAMP and ECOWAS (Hugon, 2010, pp.95-113; Interview 4; 13 April 2011). These moves aim, at least on the face of it, to reduce Cameroon’s dependence on

France in military/security matters. A Cameroonian official reinforced this point, arguing that the French government sets up wide-ranging, training-led military instruments, such as RECAMP, to be present but not active in the military domain in countries like Cameroon. Following the same sentiment, another official highlighted the fact that the military/security agreements signed between the French and Cameroonian governments have maintained French influence both in Cameroon and in wider region. Indeed, they enable France to influence specifically how Cameroonian military officers, policemen, navy, and air officers are trained as well as giving them insight into their respective weaknesses and strengths (Interview 4; 13 April 2011). These remarks show clearly that the Cameroonian elite are somewhat resentful of French military/security instruments. Indeed, they perceive the latter as failing to target the needs of Cameroon, particularly in reference to SSR. Moreover, they also perceive them as being neo-colonial tools which make Cameroon entirely dependent on France and which afford France control over Cameroonian territory.

At the same time, however, this scepticism has not stopped Cameroonian elite policy-makers from recognising the necessity of such military support, the need to maintain and even to expand it. In effect, the Cameroonian elite need to be “under the French wing”, benefiting from financial aid/military protection from France (Interview 30, 10 June 2011). There was also recognition of the importance of military advice, which may come in various forms: the French Ambassador’s military advisor is in charge of this cooperation, with 22 people working on Cameroonian soil and a budget of €6 million (Ibid).

According to one central government official, all French military/security projects established in Cameroon are based on French military *savoir faire*, training and technical advice. This does not really empower Cameroonian competence in that field, but leaves them in need of further French military/security assistance. Therefore, it is not surprising that, according to the members of the elite who have been interviewed, French military cooperation is viewed as fitting within the wider “realist” framework of French policy towards Africa (Interview 30; 10 June 2011). In addition, the interviewed elites reinforced the need for French military/security assistance. Although they did not say it in so many words, it was obvious that the Cameroonian elite need French military/security assistance to keep them in power (Charbonneau, 2009). A few examples should suffice to underscore this point. The *Mission de Coopération Militaire et de Défense* manages French military cooperation in Cameroon and helps organise an annual exam for Cameroonian military men to be recruited into French military schools such as Saint Cyr, the *Ecole Nationale Marine de Toulon* or in African



countries. Once admitted to those schools, Cameroonian military officers go through a thorough training based on French know-how. In addition, senior officers can undergo tailored training.

There are also French officers who train Cameroonian counterparts locally within the Ecoles Nationales à Vocation régionale: EMIA, Ecoles de Guerre in Simbock and Mefou Akono, Cameroon army and police force in Yaoundé, Douala, Garoua and Awaé. France considers Cameroon to be a sub-regional power, and with 24 “*coopérants*” since 2010, represents the most active player in the region and the greatest source of up-to-date security training (AFD, 2013). To illustrate, on 21 and 22 October 2015, the department in charge of internal security at the French embassy (Major Hubert Montané working as the conseiller for Sureté et Immigration in Douala) in Cameroon organised training on fraud, impersonation and detection of counterfeit money; it was attended by ten police chiefs, officials and detectives from the Douala port police station (AFD, 2016). In addition to being present in ENVRs, some French officers have also trained the BIR DELTA unit in response to terrorist attacks within the Gulf of Guinea. France provides Cameroon with military equipment, notably in its fight against Boko Haram.

## **Political and Cultural Assistance: An Easier Pill to Swallow?**

Turning finally to Cameroonian responses to French political/cultural aid instruments, here ambivalence is harder to discern. Cameroonians recognise the advantages of being under France’s wing diplomatically but resent French cultural *rayonnement*. According to most of the people interviewed, Cameroonians have evolved prefabricated cultural patterns that are not based on their own authentic cultural foundation, or their everyday anthropological/political realities. As one central government elite interviewed remarked: “the independence of Cameroon is only written on paper but is not tangible. African culture is part of a political process of interests constructed by the relations between states. Western caring for Africa is just as objectifying as old-fashioned racism” (Interview 18; 14 May 2011). This sentiment is echoed by Wade (2015, p.56), who studied the relationship between Western aid providers and African recipients. Indeed, one official claimed that the African continent is the only one which pretends to have the religion, language, and culture of other people, or which actively adopts westernization, as has occurred in both Francophone and Anglophone nations, rather than maintaining their own culture and linguistic

identities. Another Cameroonian observer added that “Cameroonian elite ban their offspring from speaking their own dialects and insist that they speak English and French and more recently Chinese. Africans work with other people’s way of thinking: their science, instead of creating their own science” (Interview 22; 12 June 2011).

The above suggests that cultural assistance is an important instrument that Northern/ European countries use to maintain their influence in Africa. This fact has been recognised by the UK as well as France, according to one interlocutor who noted that UK policy had promoted indirect rule, which, did “not erase the people’s culture ..., thereby avoiding the alienation”. He regretted the fact that that “The British have completely disappeared from Cameroon” (Interview 29; 10 June 2011). Another official lamented the fact that the UK’s visa service has been transferred to Ghana. And that there is no real UK attempt to be influential politically, except for some efforts to help maintain the English language in Cameroon (Interview 9; 11 April 2011).

In direct contrast, French policy operates in a fashion which “makes white people out of Africans”(Interview 29; 10 June 2011). The French “remain a pervasive presence in their former colonies: French policy appears to have changed solely officially, but ... not in reality”, as “Cameroon is officially France’s territory” (Ibid). According to one interviewee, ‘France organises its cultural cooperation solely around its own interests; it is financing culture in order to protect its essential interests (Interview 28; 9 June 2011). Another official stressed that: “France traditionally uses the Centres Culturels Français/ Instituts Français’ which “promote French culture, while Cameroonian cultural centres are either abandoned or closed” (Interview 11; 27 April 2011). Via the SCAC and *la Francophonie*, which has its headquarters in Yaoundé, France is able to spread French culture, ways of thinking, and arts. Elites interviewed went on to say that: “French people aim at controlling culture in Cameroon because when you control culture, you control the human being, as culture is the element through which everything is spread” (Ibid). To illustrate this, they underlined the fact that “the French support homosexuals in Cameroon even though it is against the Cameroonian constitution” (Interview 22; 22 May 2011). “French cultural influence started during the time of slavery continued during imperialism and today it works through various media. These values are transmitted in order to put Cameroonians’ minds to sleep, against “the American way of life” (Interview 9; 23 April 2011).

Clearly, the Cameroonian elite do not appreciate French politico/cultural instruments, which they think are depriving Cameroonians of their own identity. At the same time, however, there is also an acknowledgement of the value of French cultural *rayonnement*. As far as French politico/cultural influence is concerned, some of the

central Cameroonian Francophone elite recognised that their power depended upon a continuing link to France, through training in French universities as well as a power base linked to *les réseaux*. As such, even though officials personally detest the continued neo-colonial focus of French political/cultural assistance, they recognise that they do not have the domestic capacity or international legitimacy at present to do without such assistance (Interview 7; 16 April 2011).

Consequently, in this regard, the core argument would be that the central Cameroonian authorities resent France's approach but realise that they still need this money/protection, and that French support is vital to their retention of power in a divided (Francophone/Anglophone) state (Hanke, 2000; Interview 46; 7 October 2015). Also, they acknowledged that France is no longer using hard power, which makes its influence more acceptable. Equally, they accepted that most established bureaucracies are incrementalist and do not like major changes. It thus appears that the prospect of breaking with donors like France is not likely.

To sum up, it should be clear from the above that Cameroonian government officials are ambivalent in their attitudes towards French aid. They have resented France's overbearing and neo-colonial aid policy with its emphasis on the maintenance of French power via military instruments and agreements, controlling economic tools such as the C2D and, of course, the emphasis on French culture, which harks back to the days of assimilation. They are all too aware that their power is not legitimated by their own population but by the ex-colonial power (Interview 19; 17 May 2011).

Overall, the majority of interviewees agreed with the view that "France intervenes in Africa, and especially on African soil, as part of a geostrategic project which is to transform Cameroon in the best way that will safeguard French interests and sphere of influence, whilst ensuring that all Cameroonian resources are exploited" (Interview 19, 17 May 2011). Most also tended to see aid as a "cover", an investment, with expected and anticipated gains. "Why would they prefer to take care of building a cloverleaf intersection in Yaoundé, while they have homeless people on their own soil? It is because they do indeed gain more economically speaking than they spend when it comes to the aid development programmes they set up in Cameroon" (Ibid). One official even compared Cameroon to "a large refuse dump to offload finished products" (Interview 26, 5 June 2011).

At the same time, and despite these severe reservations, Cameroonian officials recognised the necessity of French aid and the fact that many other donors have not stepped in to provide alternatives. They have also recognised that French aid is relatively free of conditions, and that France's strong emphasis on the French language

ultimately supports Cameroon's Francophone elites and helps them to build their own power bases. While critical therefore, the elite, despite not stating it explicitly, are in favour of Cameroon being dependent on France, as the dependency relation safeguards their positions in power. Conversely, of course, the Cameroonian population is in favour of the ending of the unequal relationship between France and Cameroon. Indeed, they are the ones who take on the negative consequences of French "plundering" and control in Cameroon. They do not want French aid to end but for it to be "cleaned up".

How then can Cameroonian reactions, that is to say, the perceptions of Cameroonian elites, be explained, in terms of the domestic variables they are facing and their ability to extract resources other than French aid? Clearly these latter factors are important here as they will either shore up or undermine the bargaining position of Cameroon vis-à-vis donors such as France and indeed the wider donor community. To begin, we discuss the domestic variables faced by Cameroonian elites; these are less constraining than such variables in northern democracies such as France or for that matter the UK. There is clearly a need to maintain some kind of Cameroonian government consensus on the position to adopt vis-à-vis donors on key issues such as military support, debt cancellation and even cultural policies. To some extent, the Cameroonian National Parliament is consulted on these matters and so too is the electorate through general, regional and local elections. It is evident, however, from all the expert literature (Fokou, 2014) that this democratic process is deeply flawed, enabling the Biya government to secure re-election in successive elections since 1982. It follows therefore that the Cameroonian government has considerable leeway in dealing with donors inasmuch as it is not accountable to its electorate, to its nascent civil society, to counter-elites or even to the Anglophone provinces.

The above should not be taken to suggest that the Cameroonian government has necessarily been dealing with France in ways in which the Cameroonian public automatically disapproves. As the Fondation Anglo Ella survey and our own short questionnaire (referred to in Chapter 3 and see Appendix C) revealed, the Cameroonian public shares its government's resentment at French neo-colonial aid policies and, insofar as it has a view, regrets the fact that other donors such as DFID are less present.

Turning to the capacity of the Cameroon government to extract alternative sources, this is, in many ways, the key to determining the degree of leverage it has over France, and indeed other donors, as well as the degree to which it feels dependent on them and hence obliged to be receptive to the aid instruments and institutions they have

introduced. The leverage enjoyed by the Cameroonian government is clearly linked to the different forms of political, economic and strategic advantages this country has to offer. The discussion below will be kept brief, as it mirrors, to a certain extent, the earlier analysis of French interests even if Cameroonian perceptions of their “unique selling points” are not always aligned to those of the French.

To begin with political leverage, this has come from the fact that Cameroon is a member not only of *La Francophonie* (1975) but also of the Commonwealth (1994). Therefore, Cameroonian elites have been able to play one side or rather one donor off against the other. Initially upon joining the Commonwealth, Cameroon was criticised by the UK and Commonwealth missions for its poor human rights record, lack of democratic accountability and corrupt practices (Pondi, 1997). At this time, Cameroon gained little leverage from Commonwealth membership. Since then, however, it has established itself clearly as a member of both organisations and has had a better ability now to “juggle” conditionalities, and it now negotiates hard in order to get the aid it needs from both institutions.

Turning to economic leverage, this has come mainly from oil resources, which have shored up the confidence and stability of the Cameroonian government in its dealings with donors. According to Daly (2012, p.1), Cameroon is West Africa’s latest “oil battleground”. In this respect, Cameroon’s oil production has gone up significantly as oil prices have, until recently, reflected higher levels of demand, and this has been accompanied by higher earnings in dollars. According to the report, *Oil and Gaz* (International Energy Agency, 2006, p.32), Cameroonian oil and gas reserves stood in 2005 at 0.7 thousand million barrels. In this respect, Cameroon is amongst the biggest oil producers in Africa. It should be noted that Cameroon itself has improved its ability to tap into its own oil wealth. Cameroon’s 2010 oil exports brought \$841 million into the Cameroonian Treasury (Energy Intelligence, 2015), simultaneously making it more attractive to donors such as France as well as making Cameroon less dependent on these donors. To this must be added, high levels of export of agricultural produce (cocoa, coffee, bananas, etc) as well as gas and rubber (Ibid). The African continent as a whole and key economies such as Cameroon’s are regularly referred as the “next investment frontier” (Investec Asset Management 2012, p.9). This gives Cameroon bargaining power. Indeed, countries which were not interested before are now interested in Cameroon, including the BRICs; China; Brasil, Russia, India (Daracq 2016; Deych, 2015).

A source of strategic leverage has come from events on the international scenes, which have provided windfall gains to Cameroon, enabling it to wring concessions out

of France and other OECD donors. In particular, the need for a second UN resolution on the Iraq war gave Cameroon considerable leverage (2003). A similar windfall gain applies thanks to Cameroon's membership of the World Trade Organisation, given that Africa now makes up 40 per cent of WTO membership, and is hence emboldened in global trade negotiations as well as in its dealings with the European Commission over economic partnership agreements. The events of 9/11 and the emergence of home-grown fundamentalist terrorism in Africa have also given Cameroon some clout. As previously mentioned, terrorism is now a daily phenomenon in northern Nigeria with the activity of Boko Haram (Cumming, 2013) and also to a lesser extent in Cameroon where a French family was recently kidnapped in 2013 in neighbouring Nigeria (France 24, 2013). This has led to Cameroon becoming more of a priority in this respect at the international level. Indeed, the borders between Nigeria and Cameroon are porous due to their ungoverned spaces (North Cameroon and Bakassi frontier). Although Cameroon under President Paul Biya is stable, there is no obvious successor waiting in the wings after his demise. Consequently, based on the interviews undertaken, this fear factor appears to give the Cameroonian government some room for manoeuvre with reference to the implementation of donors' policies in Cameroon.

Another major source of negotiating leverage on the part of Cameroon has come from its access to alternative donor resources. A distinction here may be drawn between northern and emerging donors. Northern donors other than France have long been present in Cameroon with key players including the UK, at least until 2004, Germany, the US and the European Commission. Indeed, Cameroon's top 10 donors of gross ODA have broadly retained similar rankings since 2004, namely (in US\$): France: 225 million; Germany, 201 million; IDA, 69 million; EC, 44 million; Canada, 39 million; AFDF, 37 million; Austria, 35 million; Belgium, 19 million; Japan, 18million; UK, 17 million (OECD, 2013, p.5). These alternative donors have provided some negotiating power to the Cameroonian authorities, but this has been limited since overall northern aid has been dwindling: total bilateral aid from DAC countries to Cameroon has substantially decreased, from US\$200 million in 1998 to approximately US\$ 100 million in 2010 (*World Bank indicators*, 2013, p.9)

Space constraints will not allow for a detailed analysis of the approach of the above donors, although, a couple of points can be raised: 1) aid from many of these donors has been declining over the period under review (1997- 2015) - this is particularly true of the UK and Germany (Ibid); and 2) multilateral approaches have been on the increase, hence donor strategies are often worked out within multilateral forums like the UNDP and UNEP. This has meant that Cameroon now has only a limited ability to play

off any of these northern states against or within international organisations.

Two examples of alternative donors will be drawn upon briefly here: the UK and China. The Cameroonians generally regret Britain's withdrawal from the country and welcome the fact that China offers an alternative development model. They have particularly regretted the absence of British military or SSR instruments, while recognising that other UK priorities such as environmental programmes are not at the top of the Cameroonian government's list of priorities. As one interviewee noted, "it is obvious that the UK has given up on Cameroon", as the "UK authorities have not been as much involved in Cameroon as French authorities have. Nowadays, the two European powers act in two dramatically different ways, which can be called the UK way and the French way" (interview 4; 13 April 2011). The elite would like the UK to re-establish official UK-Cameroonian bilateral cooperation (interview 18, 14 May 2011) and be much more involved than it is in all fields in Cameroon, not least since UK aid is internationally recognised in terms of its effectiveness in tackling poverty and, hence in containing dissent from the population (Meja, 2013). Also the UK's departure has meant a reduction in the overall amount of aid received and sent a negative signal to other potential or actual donors and investors.

The UK's smart power approach is generally accepted by Francophone elites and no doubt particularly desirable to Anglophone Cameroonians. The bottom line here is that the Cameroonian elite have not been able to keep the UK interested enough, thus revealing the limit of Cameroon's ability to shape what donors do and the limits of Cameroonian power in international relations. These elites no longer factor UK aid policy into their aid strategy in their country, even if it is recognised that the UK is unlikely to disappear altogether given that it has an active Cameroonian Diaspora pushing for continued close UK-Cameroonian links. They argue that, "as far as the UK is concerned, it appears ... to be following a capitalist economic policy towards Cameroon, focusing on market interests and loans that Cameroon cannot obviously afford" (Interview 6; 13 April 2011). It is this belief that has generated some disappointment and bitterness among Anglophone Cameroonians. For Francophone elites, there is little to gain from being receptive to DFID aid conditionality because the UK is not offering enough in the way of aid. In effect, some interviewees would like more money and closer alignment of UK priorities to those of the Cameroonian state.

At the same time, there is recognition, unstated for the most part, that British aid is not neutral and that it often comes with strings attached and other forms of conditionality. There is equally the recognition that the UK's non-involvement in Cameroon takes away a residual threat to the unchallenged power of Francophone

Cameroonian elites from their Anglophone provinces. The SDF's electoral success in the early 1990s will not be quickly forgotten in Cameroonian government elite circles. In this context, one Cameroonian government interviewee described the choice between French and UK policies as choosing "between the plague and cholera" (Interview 10; 12 April 2011).

By contrast, Cameroonian officials have tended to be more positive in their attitudes towards Chinese assistance and they have demonstrated a capacity to extract this alternative resource, even if precise figures are not in the public domain. They recognise that China appears to be following a unique aid policy towards Africa. The Chinese authorities do not involve themselves actively in Cameroonian internal affairs and speak of "win-win cooperation", although this may be questionable and may provide a rose-tinted view.

Cameroon can limit aid conditionality from other donors thanks to China, although this does not make it grateful to the latter either. Even so, the Cameroonian elite is broadly content with Chinese aid policy which, according to them, has been more positive in its short existence than the 50-year presence of the French/ Northern aid to their country. They recognise that China uses a different aid policy, "building visible schools, high schools, sport infrastructures towards Africa and Cameroon" (Interview 30; 10 June 2011). In addition, they feel this to be a great opportunity to multiply their partnerships and therefore reduce their dependence on France. They acknowledge the fact that the Chinese, as much as the Europeans, are not in their country to assist development. They understand that only they themselves and no one else can achieve development, as relations between states are driven by self-interest (Axtmann, 1998).

It is worth reiterating that there were no questions about China when starting the interviews, yet each interviewee referred to China in their answers. This led the project to include these responses in this chapter, thereby taking into account Chinese policy and its implications for NCR analysis. Consequently, though the overall thesis was focused on France in Cameroon, from the findings of the primary research and the statements of the interviewees, one of the inevitable conclusions is that there is a new player involved (interview 29; 10 June 2011) and this new player has affected negotiations between Cameroon and France giving additional leverage to the former, and making it all the clearer that the African voice should be included in any NCR analysis.

## **Conclusion**



The previous chapter identified shortcomings in NCR and partially addressed some of these. These included NCR's rather crude "take" on power, which was attenuated through our template of hard, soft and smart power aid instruments. One of our key findings was that France has used more soft and smart power than hard power instruments to maintain its influence.

This chapter began by focusing on another shortcoming of NCR, namely its failure to include the African voice in any explanation of the evolution of French aid. The implicit assumption within NCR theory is that a focus on the perceptions of French policy-makers and their capacity to extract resources and mobilise/ overcome domestic variables will suffice to explain policy decisions, particularly the choice of French aid institutions and instruments in relation to Cameroon. The implication would appear to be that Cameroonian state actors have no agency or very little purchase indeed on aid policy decisions made by the French government. In other words, the receptiveness or hostility of the Cameroonian authorities' policy-making elite is either an irrelevant or a marginal factor in the French aid policy-making process. This is a significant omission in this context, not least since donors such as France have regularly afforded space for recipients such as Cameroon to advise on their priorities, whether through bilateral meetings, regular consultation with the diplomats or indeed through discussion on debt cancellation within the Paris Club. France, in particular, has allowed for Cameroonian representation on the steering committee that deals with C2D debt cancellation, although there are serious question marks over how meaningful this consultation has been.

It has been demonstrated here that the perceptions of Cameroonian policy-making elites have in fact been a key factor in determining French aid policy towards this central African country throughout the post-1997 period. It is worth mentioning that Cameroonian interviews did not, as a rule, draw distinctions between the positions of different French presidencies from Chirac through to Hollande, which is a significant finding in itself. Indeed, French aid policy has been customised based on each presidency.

Having developed the key themes arising from the primary interview data, it appears obvious that the Cameroonian elite perceive France to be a neo-colonial power. They also see it as an overwhelming one, trying to maintain its influence in the country by all means, and one whose aid policy is intended to further maintain the dependence, perhaps even the "under-development", of Cameroon. At the same time, they have been reasonably receptive to France's soft and smart power instruments, including the C2D, without which Cameroon could not manage its budget. The Cameroonian

government would prefer to have more UK aid but they accept the reality that France is actually offering aid, and that it has the capacity to continue providing this ODA, and that it is not in any way threatening the existing Cameroonian regime. Equally, Cameroonian elites largely helped France to maintain a power-seeking approach and have welcomed cooperation from China.

Having undertaken extensive research based on interviews/personal correspondence/communications, we can safely return to our working question regarding French discourse on aid policy and its translation into practice in the field. It will be recalled from chapters 4 and 5 that, since 1997, France appears to have been using a policy based on smart power, aimed at both maintaining influence in, and empowering, Cameroon. Chapter 6 then showed that French aid policy is strongly influenced by the perception of French policy-making elites and their ability to extract resources. This chapter has argued that the perceptions of the Cameroonian elite also count, even if their definition of the national interest can merge with their own personal interests. Overall, these elites do facilitate French influence in Cameroon while shoring up their own positions in the process. They have helped France maintain its status as the main external power in Cameroon and have done so largely by their acceptance of France's power-seeking aid instruments, which offer more than similar tools dispensed by the UK and China (Interview 2; 10 April 2011).

It follows that the Cameroonian elite have had a substantial role in enabling France to become the major power, and in inadvertently leading the UK to withdraw from a country where the Anglophone provinces have only very limited representation (in 2012 there were only five Anglophone Ministers including the (relatively powerless) Prime Minister out of 62 within the government (Cameroonian Prime minister's office 2012). At the same time, the coming of the "dragons" such as China has introduced a new competitor with very different priorities from those of the DFID (as was clear from tendering over the Kribi bridge project) (Interview 29; 10 June 2011). This, in turn, has encouraged France to rethink its approach.

As part of the French fightback, the French authorities have started to follow Chinese policy and invest in a larger presence on Cameroonian soil in order to be more visible. According to one interviewee, "there are not really any conflicts of interest between the new competitors, China and the European countries (France in particular) because China's financing deals with specific sectors, whereas France is involved in a whole range of activities" (Interview 29; 10 June 2011). This is cold comfort to French policy-makers, who, now more than ever, need the help of Cameroonian elites to retain influence in the country.

This puts French policy-makers in an uncomfortable position in which they are at least partially dependent on their Cameroonian counterparts. According to one Cameroonian official, the latter are “playing a game” in which “they seem to simultaneously be puppets as well as pulling the strings” (Mouyabi 2006; Interview 29; 10 June 2011; Ngagoum 2014). Indeed, it appears that Cameroonian elites have an arrangement with the French state whereby the latter is granted a kind of “free pass”, allowing it to do whatever it wishes, as long as it helps to keep the said Cameroonian elites in power.

In the next chapter, final conclusions will be drawn regarding our overall findings as to the relationship between France’s aid policy and its continued control over its former African empire. It will be seen that, because this thesis is based on a sophisticated conceptual framework and unique, first-hand accounts of the current relationship between Cameroon and France, it offers several new and important conclusions.

## Chapter Eight: Conclusion

This thesis began by noting that France's relationship with its former African empire has traditionally been an uneven one. An opportunity to even up that relationship, and move from a paternalistic to a more empowerment-driven agenda arose in 1997 when Jospin was elected French Premier. Was this opportunity taken up by French leaders in relation to France's aid structures and policies and, more specifically, in relation to France's actual practice of coopération on the ground in Cameroon, a former mandated territory? Moreover, with reference to the Cameroonian case, to what extent, how and why have French governments moved away from an interest-oriented approach towards a needs-focused strategy on aid? These questions have been central to this thesis and have helped to shape the order in which the material has been presented. A summary of the key findings of this thesis is given below.

### Summary of Findings

Our introductory chapter set out the aims and focus of this thesis, homing in on the opportunity presented by Jospin's selection for France to move away from a narrow focus on realist interests in Cameroon and towards a more poverty-focused agenda. It set this key moment in its wider historical context and defined some of the terminology used in this thesis, with a particular focus on "empowerment", coopération, "instruments" and "discourse". It highlighted the originality and significance of this research (discussed fully later) and noted how Cameroon appeared to be in some ways a "deviant" case, given that it was a bilingual country and not a former French colony, and, in other ways, a "representative" case in that it was treated by France like other ex-French colonies and hence a good barometer of wider developments taking place in French coopération policy. Our introduction ended with an historical overview of French colonial institutions and instruments in relation to Cameroon.

The literature review (chapter 2) began by noting that there was a dearth of writings specifically on French assistance to Cameroon. It then looked to the wider literature on French coopération and African policies with a view to shedding light on any post-Jospin transition to a more needs-focused development strategy. These latter writings highlighted the longstanding trend whereby France's "cooperation" structures and

policies were marked by clientelism, a lack of transparency and the so-called *Françafrique*. Our review went on to look at the literature on empowerment and focus on analyses of African agency in the evolution of Northern donor programmes. It concluded that there had been no attempt to explain whether France over the time-frame of this study (1997-2015) had moved away from a strategy based on a narrow realist policy towards an empowerment agenda in the Cameroonian case. The review also showed how there had been no attempt to drill down and look at the actual instruments of French aid in practice in the field, or indeed to use this analysis to test whether policy rhetoric by government ministers in Paris had been translated into practice. It also drew attention to the dearth of theoretically underpinned studies relating to aid generally, and French aid to Cameroon specifically, as well as to the absence of studies of this topic that included the African perspective. It stressed that this thesis would address each of these points through its conceptual framework, focus on cooperation” instruments and emphasis on African voice.

In order to set out how this thesis would tackle our core research question and address the aims of this research, the main methodological tools deployed during this study, as well as the reasons for using them, were outlined in chapter 3. A number of complementary research methods and conceptual tools were chosen. These included a review of the primary, secondary and “grey” literature, the selection of a case study, over thirty interviews in Europe and Cameroon, a neoclassical realist framework as well as a template of aid instruments and their linkages to hard, soft, and above all, smart power. These tools worked together to provide a more holistic picture, enabling triangulation of seemingly contradictory findings. In this context, the interview analysis enabled us to have first-hand insights into the Cameroonian perspective, while Neoclassical Realism (NCR) provided a complementary channel through which we were able to investigate both the French and Cameroonian perspectives on aid policy. The discussion of soft, hard and smart power enabled a fine-tuning of the relatively crude assumptions of NCR regarding relative power and was also found to be a useful framework for the analysis of French coopération instruments, which were said to vary in terms of their volume/ intensity, bilateral/ multilateral split and fitness for purpose (either power-seeking or empowering).

Chapter 4 picked up from the end of chapter 1 in the sense that it examines the evolution of French government institutions and aid instruments between Jospin’s election in 1997 and the end of Chirac’s second mandate in 2007. The analysis is divided into three parts. In the first, a brief overview is given of the key features of French aid structures and policies in general and with regard to

Cameroon over the early post-colonial decades. This survey showed how French aid policy was, over these years, largely driven by realist interests, and that this was reflected in the choice of institutions and instruments. Indeed, French aid instruments were sizeable, generally bilateral and broadly fit for the purpose of pursuing French interests. This historical section illustrated the fact that France had started, from an early stage, even before Cameroon's independence, to set up and organise diversified institutional structures as well as a wide range of instruments in order not to lose its grip on Cameroon. These structures were diverse enough to encompass all the dimensions of power designated within this study's remit: military/security, economic/developmental/environmental, and political/ cultural. With these instruments, France sought to maintain, even enhance, its influence. These tools were reinforced on a legal basis with various *accords de coopération* signed between the French and Cameroonian government since the 1960s. Our analysis of aid instruments over the early post-colonial periods showed how France's chosen instruments had their roots in hard power but had since softened considerably and were mainly designed to increase French influence in Cameroon.

The second part of chapter IV then identified the international, African regional and domestic French pressures that had paved the way for the reforms undertaken by Jospin and largely continued by Chirac. It paid particular attention to UN, OECD and bilateral donor pressures on France to adopt the new metanorm, poverty reduction as well as to the demands of a new generation of African leaders and a domestic political context that was anxious to restore the legitimacy of French "cooperation" policies in the wake of the Rwandan debacle. The third part was itself divided into two sections. The first dealt in broad terms with the promises and policy reforms undertaken under Jospin and Chirac. Particular consideration was given to the merger of the Cooperation Ministry into the Foreign Ministry (and subsequent redesignations of the DGCID), changes to the Africa cell, the rise of the AFD and the adoption of poverty reduction as the overarching objective of the French aid programme. The second section focused on the changes of French aid structures and instruments over the 1997-2007 periods. It highlighted the transfer of responsibilities from the aid mission (now the SCAC) to the AFD local office, the emergence of *aides de proximité* and the use of a series of instruments linked to economic/ environmental assistance (the C2D, FFEM), military assistance (ENVRs), and politico-cultural assistance (the PCPA, the *Francophonie* office). It identified a trend towards a more needs-based orientation of French instruments but found that this trend fell well short of French rhetoric on aid reform.

Chapter 5 began by outlining some of the promises made by subsequent French

presidents, Nicolas Sarkozy and François Hollande, to carry on the process of reforming French coopération and indeed wider Africa policy. The analysis was divided into three parts. The first outlined the new context that obtained between 2007 and 2015 and homed in on the international, African regional and domestic pressures that continued to push for reforms to French “cooperation” policies. It paid particular attention to the continued peer pressure from the donor community, notably via OECD High Level forums and the various EU initiatives to harmonise donor practices, as well as to the demands of a new generation of African leaders and the domestic budgetary constraints that arose out of the global and Eurozone recession. The second section looked at the broad aid institutional and policy changes that took place under Sarkozy and Hollande, with a particular focus on economic assistance, military/ security “cooperation” and politico-cultural aid. It found that there were some structural changes (notably reforms to the DGCID and to the AFD) as well as a real drive to make poverty reduction the overarching aim of the French aid programme. The changes fell short of the rhetoric but were not negligible. The third section then homed in on French “cooperation” instruments in relation to Cameroon over this period. It focused on economic instruments, most notably the C2D, military reforms relating to EURORECAMP and capacity-building and politico-cultural assistance linked to the *Instituts Français*. There was clear evidence that these instruments had taken more account of France’s discourse on poverty reduction. Ultimately however, the structures and instruments in Cameroon have not kept pace with France’s grand rhetoric. They have tended to remain large, bilateral and fit more for the purpose of power-seeking than empowerment. That said, they are no longer underpinned purely by the kind of soft power, unconditional approach that characterised the early post-colonial decades. There is more of a smart power dimension to the assistance. The C2D is perhaps the clearest example of this since the French government has an ANO, that is to say the right to block aid projects put forward by the Cameroonian state where these are deemed to fail to promote the poverty reduction agenda or Cameroon’s commitments to the Millennium/ Sustainable Development Goals.

Chapter 6 provided a theoretical analysis using Neoclassical Realism to explain French aid policy towards Cameroon, while also highlighting the role of African agency. This chapter shed light on French motives in relation to its choice of aid instruments in Cameroon. Indeed, the NCR framework highlighted the extent to which France has seen its relations with Cameroon as enhancing its own relative power in the international hierarchy of states. It found that French elites were generally inclined to see Cameroon (as a stable Francophone member of the Franc Zone and the leading economy of

Central Africa) as important to France's status in the world. French policy-making elites not only perceived it to be in France's interest to shore up aid instruments in Cameroon but also enjoyed, albeit with some limitations, the extractive capacity to mobilise these resources and overcome domestic constraints on such mobilisation. The NCR framework was ultimately deemed to be a rather crude tool for assessing attempts to secure influence and reference was as such made to our template of hard, soft and smart power. It was found that France had moved almost entirely towards soft power and above all smart power instruments as a way of preserving her influence over the post-Jospin years. In so doing, France has signalled a readiness to accompany the Cameroonian Government even if the latter continues to eschew democratic reform and the kind of rigorous economic governance demanded by many other OECD donors.

Chapter 7 shed light on the thinking of the host Government and its influence over France's choice of aid instruments. This chapter examined Cameroonian reactions to different types of instruments and, drawing on a series of semi-structured interviews with senior government figures, found these reactions to be marked by ambivalence. Thus, Cameroonians resent the neo-colonial dimension to aid but appreciate the fact that France is willing to fill the funding gaps and that a connection with France helps to keep Cameroonian elites in power. At the same time, a brief comparative analysis was undertaken when it comes to Cameroonian reactions to France and two other substantial donors, namely Britain and China. In Britain's case, Cameroonian elites regretted the lack of UK aid but recognised that British involvement would come with strings attached and might ultimately provide succour to the Anglophone elite in Cameroon, at the expense of the privileges currently enjoyed by the Francophone majority in government. In China's case, Cameroonian officials were more receptive to this unconditional South-South "cooperation", which was delivering tangible results and providing Cameroon with leverage in its dealings with OECD donors, including France. Even so, the assistance and loans available from China were deemed to come with their own costs and above all the risk of reindebting Cameroon, a phenomenon that would undo years of efforts to reduce national debt in that central African country.

It follows from the above that France has only partly moved away, over the last two decades or so, from a power-seeking towards an empowerment based approach to aid, and this is due to the priorities of French policy makers, the choice of aid institutions and instruments as well as the fact that Cameroonian elites have facilitated French influence. This has enabled France to remain the main external power in Cameroon, with the UK largely withdrawing from the country as from 2004 and China



not publishing the extent of support it is actually providing. China is increasingly a donor which cannot be circumvented in Cameroon. But it has not overtaken France whose presence is assured, at least until 2023 by a C2D well in excess of one billion Euros.

To sum up, it could be concluded, that the rhetoric of reform/partnership/fraternal ties/empowerment rather than power-seeking has translated to a large extent into broad policy reforms and institutional changes undertaken in Paris but has been reflected much less clearly in any tangible changes in terms of institutions or policy instruments in the field in Cameroon. This field perspective is often neglected in studies which focus essentially on aid discourse and broad reforms of policy elaborated in Paris. It does of course take time to change instruments on the ground, not least since many of them are pluriannual and appreciated locally. An abrupt halt to a particular instrument can be badly perceived in recipient countries and will inevitably entail start up costs with regards to alternative instruments.

The above findings beg a number of questions: What do they tell us about the likely evolution of future French assistance policy in Cameroon and indeed about wider French African policy? What is the wider significance of this research? And what wider questions are raised by this analysis for the consideration of future researchers? Each of these questions will be examined briefly in turn.

## **Whither French Aid?**

It is of course impossible to predict the future of French aid to Cameroon. Indeed, policy-makers themselves, when interviewed, could not predict future trends, and one commentator, referring particularly to Sarkozy's period in office, simply likened that France's Africa to "opportunistic, continuous attempt to adapt policies to economic realities" (M'baye, 2007, p.615). The election of the current French socialist president, Hollande, was accompanied by promises (nothing new in French African policy) to end neo-colonial relations and put a stop to la Françafrique and the "Vincent Bolloré black empire" (Collombant 2010, p.28). There had already been a cooling of relations between Presidents Sarkozy and Biya and this coolness has continued under Hollande, even if the latter, despite his rhetoric on transparency, has not turned his back on key Francophone African states such as Cameroon. The fact that Cameroon has oil and is a member of both *La Francophonie* and the Commonwealth, at a time when many Francophone states are turning to English and the Anglophone world, means that

France is unlikely to cut aid or aid instruments to Cameroon for the foreseeable future. In addition, Franco-Cameroonian networks will help to ensure that Cameroon continues to be a priority because of commercial and personal profits gained by those close to the French and Cameroonian states. While the overall bilateral aid budget may shrink (particularly after the C2D has run its course in 2023), the share going to Francophone African countries like Cameroon may actually increase, not least as China and other BRIC economies move increasingly into Cameroon's lucrative energy market.

It seems logical to assume that a growing share of French aid will gradually go via multilateral channels given that France's bi-multi contributions to the European Development Fund are binding and eat up a great deal of the bilateral aid budget. However, there has never been any enthusiasm in French aid circles for this type of aid which does not bring much influence and does not provide a substitute to the Gaullist vision of French *grandeur* thanks to an aid programme concentrated on France's sphere of influence in Francophone Africa (Bourmaud, 1995). The fact that many multilateral institutions are associated with neo-liberal institutions such as the World Bank and IMF also ensures that French aid is likely to remain primarily bilateral. This conclusion is supported by Majumdar (2007, p.13), who stresses that "France will almost certainly do everything in its power to avoid ... marginalisation". Similarly, as Charillion (2007, p.44) has noted, "it is not easy for a country to change its foreign policy overnight as it is a diplomatic tool which is difficult to reform". This argument is backed up by Bayart (2010, p.37) who notes how African elites have an interest in maintaining the existing aid system and the benefits it brings them (through a process akin to extortion but known as *extraversion*). France's dominance in relation to debt ("the C2D is definitely a vector of French influence", according to one interviewee (19; 17 May 2011), as well as in the political-cultural and military domains, also suggests that the unequal relationship between France and Cameroon will not change in the near future.

It seems unlikely that French aid, at least in the context of Cameroon, will be greatly influenced by the UK, which was supposed to be its closest partner in Africa (according to the 1998 Saint-Malo agreement) and which was hitherto the other mandatory power. In recent years, the DFID appeared to lay down a template for fellow donors such as France, with the Conservative-led government of David Cameron legislating to ensure that the UK should work towards the UN 0.7per cent aid target and that all aid should contribute towards poverty reduction. This highly professional development agency is also known to have devised strategies for influencing multilateral aid institutions and has shown an unshakeable attachment to the MDGs. But in a context of aid selectivity,

the DFID is unlikely to wish to re-engage meaningfully in Cameroon unless serious reforms are undertaken and that is unlikely as long as Biya remains in charge.

This tough line taken by the UK has always had limited resonance for France as a model or template to be followed. This is even less attractive as a way forward in light of the recent Brexit vote. There may now be question marks over Britain's commitment to the 0.7 per cent aid target and there is likely to be a significant lessening of UK influence over European aid trends and choices of instruments: the Nordics on their own will not have the same clout. This new European reality is likely to comfort France in its aid choices vis-à-vis Cameroon and further afield. It seems likely therefore that France will retain its complex aid institutions and instruments, and will continue to use these to remain a major player in Cameroon and across black Africa, even if it is likely to be increasingly challenged by China and other emerging powers.

The key variable that could change the dynamics of aid to Cameroon, apart from the possible election of Alain Juppé as a future French President (the other contenders, Hollande and Sarkozy already have track records marked by ambivalence) relates to the succession of President Paul Biya. At the moment, there is no obvious successor. The likelihood is that the next leader will be Francophone and that the existing aid relations with France and indeed other donors (Germany, the European Commission, the US, and the UK) will continue unchanged. If the new leader is an Anglophone or a Francophone who is anglophile then there could be policy shifts and perhaps a new opening for the UK aid programme. The Cameroonian government would like the stamp of approval that the DFID brings. However, it is by no means obsessed with this question and is more concerned with other African Anglophone countries such as Nigeria, South Africa, as well as its maintenance of a positive relationship with China and the BRICs (Van de Looy, 2006). Only time will tell whether this South-South cooperation will afford higher levels of development than the Western aid model. There is, however, reason to doubt that this model will do much for the empowerment of the poorest and of civil society.

## **Significance of this Research**

This research is significant and original in a number of respects. For a start, it is the first ever detailed long-run study of French aid policy towards Cameroon. It focuses on whether French aid policy rhetoric has been translated into practice over the best part of two decades. It also includes some comparative insights into the behaviour of some

of Cameroon's other main donors, notably Britain and China. Second, this study has identified key aid instruments and linked them together in a template of hard, soft and smart power. In so doing, it has avoided the tendency towards abstraction and generalisation that is often present in the development studies literature, which assumes that changes of policy discourse in donor capitals somehow automatically percolate down to aid structures and instruments in the field. Third, this analysis is theoretically underpinned drawing on a sophisticated framework, namely neoclassical realism, and using this to drill down into the perceptions of French policy-makers towards a specific aid recipient country.

Fourth, this thesis has identified shortcomings in the NCR framework. It has noted that NCR is a crude tool which over-emphasises the importance that should be attached to the perceptions of French policy-making elites, while underestimating the significance of the recipients' perspective in shaping French thinking. Neoclassical realism is also unhelpful in distinguishing between different types of aid instruments. This thesis has sought to address these by designing a template of instruments linked to hard, soft and smart power and by providing a framework for analysing recipient views of French aid. It is clear that this template has provided a more nuanced picture of "relative power" and that it could be applied more broadly to French, British and other Northern donor aid programmes and instruments. It would in fact be interesting to compare Northern aid instruments generally with those used by BRIC countries and to evaluate the extent to which the rather different instruments developed by emerging powers are aimed at empowering Africans or promoting donor interests.

As to the analysis of Cameroonian reactions to French aid instruments, this is one of the most original aspects of this thesis. So much literature on Africa has a Euro-centric focus that it is easy to conclude that Africans are merely passive actors, lacking any agency in aid and foreign policy matters. This is clearly not the case, and there is no doubt that Cameroonian and other elites can act as facilitators or blockers of Northern and Southern aid approaches towards their country. Cameroonian policy-makers, like other African leaders, had bargaining chips during the Cold War and they have bargaining chips today, whether in the form of mineral resources or of alternative donor revenue streams. The ambivalence which Cameroonians feel towards French, and indeed UK and Chinese aid could no doubt be examined comparatively more widely across Africa and the developing world. It would be astonishing if such feelings of ambivalence were not present elsewhere. There may be a point in the future where the last vestiges of neo-colonialism will have to be phased out as they are simply unacceptable to both the African and Western publics. This is not yet the case,

however.

Finally, our case study, Cameroon, has elements of both a representative and a deviant case as well as being one from which a degree of generalisation and extrapolation is possible. Thus, while Cameroon is unusual in that it had “enjoyed” both French and British rule (not to mention German rule before that), it is not unusual in being a Franc Zone member and a bilingual African country in which France and the UK have been interested. Cameroon is a case where the linguistic and cultural as well as the geographic divide is explicit and obvious but such divides may also be implicit, latent or partly hidden in other African countries, which are wrestling with whether to remain closely attached to former colonial powers, develop closer links with emerging powers or somehow find a compromise that will best serve their future geo-political and economic ambitions. The Cameroonian case has clearly elicited different responses from donors, with France intensifying support through the C2D and retaining complex aid structures, with the UK largely withdrawing other than in the forestry sector and with China moving in with non-concessional lending and South-South cooperation that avoids the kind of hard, coercive power instruments often associated with the OECD.

It follows from the above that this study of aid to Cameroon provides a useful illustration of how donors will adapt or possibly terminate their instruments in relation to their interests and to the extent to which they perceive that recipient states are responsive to those instruments. Other cases could usefully be examined with a view to identifying how France and indeed other donors have adapted their aid programmes or for that matter other foreign policy instruments in the context of the current scramble for Africa. Other analyses could equally look for any harmonisation of such instruments given that France and Britain undertook to cooperate together under the St Malo agreement and given that the EU code of conduct and joint programming initiative, together with the various OECD High-Level forums, have been pushing for such harmonisation.

The Cameroonian case does have a number of specificities which stand in the way of generalisation. It is, for example, a lower middle income country in a desperately poor central African region. It is also a country with much faultiness: Christian south versus Muslim North as well as Anglophone West versus Francophone East/ North and Centre. Even so, some broad conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, the Cameroonian case would appear to signal a more general move away from hard to soft and, above all, to smart power. This is clear from the general donor drift away from hard conditionality towards softer conditions such as the linking of aid to poverty reduction targets or indeed a gentler form of conditionality such as the ANO, where

France has the right not to approve Cameroonian spending out of the C2D fund. Secondly, there has been a move away from bilateral towards multilateral aid in French ODA generally and, to some extent, in relation to Cameroon too. While this move suggests that France is no longer fixated on securing influence, this is also a longer-term trend which has been resisted strongly by French policy-makers and indeed by many other donor officials, particularly where the multilateral alternatives, such as the European Commission, are not deemed to offer effective alternatives to bilateral ODA channels. Thirdly, there has been a broad shift in French ODA towards a more poverty reducing approach but this has not meant relinquishing France's quest for power or its attachment to using coopération as a tool of foreign policy.

Any future study should take care not to read too much into the Cameroonian case. Thus, while this case shows how a joint mandate has fallen under the dominance of France rather than the other mandatory power, the UK, that does not mean that France has been equally "successful" elsewhere (as in Rwanda or the DRC) or indeed that UK is giving up influence in other parts of Africa (as in Rwanda and Somalia, where the UK is emerging as a leading external power). The implication would nonetheless appear to be that France sees Africa as more important generally, and as more significant in determining France relative power in the world.

## **Questions for Future Researchers**

This thesis has added to the sum of human knowledge through its original, long run, theoretically underpinned analysis of the relationship between French aid rhetoric and action. It has, of course, only scratched the surface of a vast field of research that could usefully be mined by future researchers. It opens out on to questions about the future of empires and the point at which residual colonial influence dies out. Indeed, there are instances today or former colonies being seen as the saviour of former colonial powers as are the case with oil-rich Angola and its relations with recession-struck Portugal (Vines ,2012). More specifically, this thesis prepares the way for analysts to study the decline of former great powers and the rise of emerging powers in Africa, not to mention the responses that African policy-makers have or should have to these twin developments.

Without attempting to answer these vast questions within the space constraints of this doctoral study, it is worth noting that there are obviously doubts regarding whether French influence is going to be maintained in Africa given the increasing presence on

the continent of many more emerging economies like Brazil, China, India, and Turkey. This makes it ever more difficult for France and other OECD countries, particularly those espousing aid conditionalities, to exert influence south of the Sahara. France and other European donors are bound to review their approach as the initial advantage they had is fading fast. In this respect, the world is no longer dominated by Europe or even the “West” and African countries are seeking funds from places other than the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), taking advantage of international procedures that require all aid contracts to be widely advertised. As a consequence, France is among the European powers to be losing ground in Africa, where many infrastructure projects, even in Francophone Africa, are no longer undertaken by France but by China, Korea or Morocco among others.

A good example can be drawn from the telecommunications sector in Cameroon, where in 2010 none of the four companies applying for the telephone licence was French-owned. In this contractual process, the Cameroonian government is no longer bound by questions such as the company’s country of origin (International Monetary Fund, 2014). Instead, it can pay much more attention to cost-effectiveness than to the fact that a particular company responding to a particular contract is French. This change of perspective is in turn linked to the fact that some Cameroonian government elites studied outside France, in other countries such as the USA, the UK or Germany (Personal correspondence, 2016). Indeed, this “French-focus” could become less and less important. To illustrate, China set up a car plant in Douala in 2013 while also entering the car market in the 2000s: hitherto Cameroonians were largely only using French cars, but now Japanese and Chinese vehicles are far more common. Similarly, the 2013 railway project in Yaoundé and Douala, which focuses on a modernising Cameroon’s ageing infrastructure to meet with global standards, is led by a team of foreign advisors, none of whom are French (Ministère de l’Economie, 2016). In effect, the legal adviser is an American company Patton; the mining and rail advisor is a South African company; and the financial advisor is a Chinese company (Ibid).

The above examples are designed to highlight two main points. First, Cameroon and indeed many other African countries are now enjoying the benefits of globalisation, as well as trying to cope with the strains that are coming from the globalisation process. France and other OECD donors will also have to adapt to these new realities, which have yet to be adequately teased out in the aid literature. Second, these examples underline the extent to which France and indeed other Europeans donors such as the UK are now “bit players”, and how Cameroon’s most important partners are no longer systematically France or for that matter the UK.

In this context, it would be worth mentioning some possible implications of the recent Brexit vote for European policies towards and influence within Cameroon, a former British mandate, and Africa more generally. As noted earlier, Brexit is likely to reshape the dynamics of European aid, weakening the Nordic plus bloc and strengthening the “Club-Med” group led by France, which attaches less priority to poverty reduction and a needs-based focus in aid policy. This may ironically serve to preserve European influence for the time being as conditionalities and strict demands for better governance have not always played out well with African governments, particularly those that have access to oil and mineral resources that are of interest to the rising powers of Asia and Latin America.

However, the Brexit vote will affect the global economy, as well as the member states of *Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine* (UEMOA) and of the *Communauté Economique et Monétaire de l’Afrique Centrale* (CEMAC). This is likely to be translated through greater short-term fluctuations, uncertainty, currency and commodity price weakness (*The Economist*, 2016, p.1). Will there be greater competition for influence in Cameroon now that Britain may be turning back towards the Commonwealth and is less bound by EU sense of solidarity? How will UK and European aid and trade relations with Africa be affected given that all “trade relations between the EU and Africa are defined by the Cotonou Agreement of 2000, as well as a series of so-called Economic Partnership Agreements between the EU and Regional Economic Communities (RECs)?

There are clearly other related questions for future researchers, not least about whether France and other OECD donors should continue to pursue bilateral channels or move towards more economically effective, but also problematic, approaches involving more multilateral aid and shared embassies. Analysts could also delve into the issue of whether the Chinese are likely to follow the same pattern of non-intervention in the future given that they are likely to be just as affected as the North by Africa’s poor governance arrangements. Scholars could, moreover, use the instrument-based approach adopted here to explore whether the gap between discourse and policy implementation in the field of aid (perhaps inevitable given that instruments are being deployed in distant countries and evaluations of those instruments only take place years after they have been set up), is equally evident in other domains, such as international diplomacy, humanitarian assistance, conflict prevention and security policies.

At the same time, there are also important questions to be asked relating to African agency. The literature almost always presumes that there is a need for more African



agency. However, as this study shows, there is a need to nuance this claim and home in on the type of agency. The efforts of Cameroonian elites are not always likely to lead to the “best”, most developmentally effective aid solutions. As such, the issue that arises is: how can the influence of some elites be curtailed and how can the voice of the people be better heard? It is worth highlighting that the solution to this problem is often more external intervention even though such neo-colonial solutions are increasingly unacceptable to Cameroon and more generally to Africa. There will be a need to square this circle in the future, and it is clear that key donors such as France, the UK and China could contribute meaningfully to ensuring new forms of accountability and African agency that work for the peoples of Africa, for the many and not for the few. It is only thus that “Africa [can move] towards development” (Taylor, 2005, p.28) and avoid yet “another false start” (Brown and Harman, 2013, p.40).

# Appendix

## Appendix A: Interview details (date and time)

Interview protocol form: Study title:

Translating rhetoric into practice: The case of French aid to Cameroon

### Interview 1

Time: 15:00/40min 55sec

Date: 09/04/2011

Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé

Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo

Interviewee: X

### Interview 2

Time: 08:00/56min 44s

Date: 10/04/2011

Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé

Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo

Interviewee: X

### Interview 3

Time: 17:00/45min 57s

Date: 12/04/2011

Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé

Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo

Interviewee: X

### Interview 4

Time: 17:00/48min 14s

Date: 13/04/2011

Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé

Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo

Interviewee: X

**Interview 5**

Time: 14:00/42min

Date:6/04/2011

Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé

Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo

Interviewee: X

**Interview 6**

Time: 19:00/1h03min

Date: 13/04/2011

Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé

Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo

Interviewee: X

**Interview 7**

Time: 17:00/49min 09s

Date: 16/04/2011

Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé

Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo

Interviewee: X

**Interview 8**

Time: 16:30/1h01min 45sec

Date: 20/04/2011

Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé

Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo

Interviewee: X

**Interview 9**

Time: 14:30/32min 30sec Date: 23/04/2011

Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé

Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo

Interviewee: X

**Interview 10**

Time: 17:00/50min

Date: 24/04/2011  
Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé  
Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo  
Interviewee: X

**Interview 11**

Time: 10:00/39min 45sec  
Date: 24/04/2011  
Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé  
Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo  
Interviewee: X

**Interview 12**

Time: 12:30/1h20min  
Date: 27/04/2011  
Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé  
Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo  
Interviewee: X

**Interview 13**

Time: 18:00/51min 20sec  
Date: 27/04/2011  
Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé  
Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo  
Interviewee: X

**Interview 14**

Time: 13:00/46min 46sec  
Date: 30/04/2011  
Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé  
Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo  
Interviewee: X

**Interview 15**

Time: 10:00/49min 51sec  
Date: 04/05/2011

Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé  
Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo  
Interviewee: X

**Interview 16**

Time: 13:30/1h  
Date: 07/05/2011  
Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé  
Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo  
Interviewee: X

**Interview 17**

Time: 8:00/1h  
Date: 8/05/2011  
Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé  
Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo  
Interviewee: X

**Interview 18**

Time: 15:00/55min  
Date: 14/05/2011  
Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé  
Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo  
Interviewee: X

**Interview 19**

Time: 15:30/1h23min  
Date: 17/05/2011  
Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé  
Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo  
Interviewee: X

**Interview 20**

Time: 17:00/14min 29sec  
Date: 19/05/2011  
Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé

Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo

Interviewee: X

**Interview 21**

Time: 16:30/25min 19sec

Date: 21/05/2011

Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé

Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo

Interviewee: X

**Interview 22**

Time: 8:45/40min

Date: 22/05/2011

Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé

Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo

Interviewee: X

**Interview 23**

Time: 11:00/38min

Date: 23/05/2011

Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé

Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo

Interviewee: X

**Interview 24**

Time: 9:00/1h27min

Date: 25/05/2011

Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé

Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo

Interviewee: X

**Interview 25**

Time: 9:00/43min 56sec

Date: 28/05/2011

Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé

Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo

Interviewee: X

**Interview 26**

Time: 11:00/47min 07sec

Date: 05/06/2011

Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé

Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo

Interviewee: X

**Interview 27**

Time: 12:30/39min 32sec

Date: 08/06/2011

Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé

Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo

Interviewee: X

**Interview 28**

Time: 10:30/31min

Date: 09/06/2011

Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé

Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo

Interviewee: X

**Interview 29**

Time: 9:00/36min51sec

Date: 10/06/2011

Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé

Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo

Interviewee: X

**Interview 30**

Time: 16h/36min 13sec

Date: 10/06/2011

Place: Cameroon/Yaoundé

Interviewer: Odile Bomba Nkolo

Interviewee: X

### **Cameroonian elite**

- High-ranking military officer
- Ministry of External Affairs official
- Ministry of the Economy official
- Officials in Ministries in charge of International Co-operation
- Ministry of Culture officials
- Ministry of Public Works official

### **Cameroonian Researchers**

- High-ranking Military Officers from the French military department which is attached to the French Embassy
- French Officials from the French Development Agency
- French Officials from the economic department is attached to the French Embassy
- United Nations officials
- Members of Civil Society
- Officials of the Nigerian High Commission Officials of the Red Cross
- International Civil Servants
- Officials of the British High Commission
- French officials from the Cultural and Cooperation Service
- Human rights officials
- Francophonie officials

### **British/French officials and International organisation officials**

- Specialists in Franco-Cameroonian military-security cooperation
- Specialists in Franco-Cameroonian politico-cultural cooperation
- Specialists in Franco-Cameroonian economic cooperation
- Specialists in African affairs

## **Appendix B: Interview questionnaire samples**

### **Sample 1: France and UK**

#### **General assistance**



**Q1:** To what extent, in your view, does French/ British aid seek to empower Cameroonians? Can you give examples of this approach? Is it new? Would it apply, say, to budgetary assistance; Poverty reduction programmes; reform work in the security sector?

**Q2:** How, in your view, do France and the UK seek to exert influence on Cameroon through the aid programme? Has this approach changed over time and, if so, why (e.g. due to the emergence of new players such as China and a growing role for the EU)?

**Q3:** What longstanding and new aid mechanisms do the French and UK Governments use to exert influence?

### **Economic assistance**

**Q4:** Has France/Britain moved away from, or reinforced, its use of conditionality (economic/ political/ poverty reduction)?

**Q5:** Has France/Britain moved away from a project-based approach and towards greater emphasis on budgetary assistance? Is the latter being used without conditionality?

**Q6:** Has France/Britain continued to resort to the use of debt cancellation or debt forgiveness and development contracts to exert leverage?

**Q7:** Has France/ Britain resorted to structural adjustment plans (with the help of the World Bank) to exert influence?

### **Cultural assistance**

**Q8:** How do Britain and France use cultural assistance to secure influence? Has their use of this form of aid changed over time in your view and if so how?

### **Security-related assistance**

**Q9:** How do France and the UK use military assistance to secure influence/ how has their use of this tool (bases/ assistance/ accords/ training) changed. Is this now being delivered more through multilateral programmes e.g. RECAMP/ and multilateral organizations such as ECOWAS? Does this approach reflect a desire to empower Cameroonians?

**Q10:** Do you have the impression that France/the UK now works more through multilateral organizations: EU/ UN/ World Bank? If so, is it because France/Britain are less interested in gaining influence and more interested in empowerment; or is the aim merely to save money/share the aid burden?

**Q11:** What kind of influence are France/the UK seeking; what are French/ British

interests in Cameroon? Are there any conflicting interests between France and UK when it comes to Cameroon? Are there any conflicting interests between China and European countries when it comes to Cameroon? If yes, what are they?

**Q12:** In your view does French/ British aid policy actually have an influence on the Cameroonian state? If so, how and at what level ? Can you give an example?

**Q13:** How, in your view, does the Cameroonian state seek to influence the French/UK Government: through suggesting ways of better adapting aid to the Cameroonian situation, or through making demands of their own?

**Q14:** Can you suggest any case studies of aid programmes in the economic or military/ security field which could be studied as examples of empowering policies by the UK/France, or conversely of French/British attempts to exert influence? Would you know who to have contacted about this programme?

**Q15:** How do you see the future evolution of French-Cameroonian and UK-Cameroonian relations?

**Q16:** Is there anyone else you can recommend that I should speak to?

**Q17:** Is there anything I should have asked but didn't?

## **Sample 2: UK**

### **British High Commission**

**Q1:** What were (from 1960 up to 1997)/are the aims and motives of the British government in setting up the British council, British High Commission and Commonwealth in terms of politico-cultural policy in Cameroon

**Q2:** What was (from 1960 up to 1997)/is the budget involved in the setting up of those British politico-cultural instruments in reference to Cameroon? In politico / cultural matters in Cameroon?

**Q3:** What was (from 1960 up to 1997)/is the British Government expecting from that in terms of influence? How does in respect to that the British Government see/used to see Cameroon: as priority, top, middle, low, priority Cameroon?

**Q4:** Why isn't there anymore Commonwealth representative in Cameroon, though Cameroon is a Commonwealth official member, but a Cameroonian Commonwealth Minister which is located within the Cameroonian Foreign Affairs Ministry?

### **DFID**

**Q1:** What were (from 1960 up to 1997)/are the aims and motives of the British government in setting up DFID Programs in Cameroon

**Q2:** What was (from 1960 up to 1997)/is the budget involved as far as the British economic policy is concerned in Cameroon?

**Q3:** What was (from 1960 up to 1997)/is the budget involved as far as the British environmental /human rights/democracy policies are concerned in Cameroon?

**Q4:** Was the British Government, DFID ever involved in military and security affairs/is it currently involved in a military or security policy in Cameroon?

**Q5:** What was (from 1960 up to 1997)/is the British Government expecting from that in terms of influence? How does in respect to that the British Government see/used to see Cameroon: as priority, top, middle, low, priority Cameroon?

**Q6:** Why isn't there anymore DFID representative in Cameroon, though Cameroon is a Commonwealth official member?

### **Sample 3: France**

#### **AFD**

**Q1:** What were (from 1960 up to 1997)/are the aims and motives of the French government in setting up AFD Programs in Cameroon

Quels étaient (de 1960 a 1997)/quels sont depuis 1997 les objectifs du Gouvernement Français en ce qui concerne la mise en place de programmes de l'Aide Française de Développement au Cameroun?

**Q2:** What was (from 1960 up to 1997)/is the budget involved as far as the French economic policy is concerned in Cameroon?

Quel était (de 1960 a 1997)/quel est le budget relatif à la politique économique de la France au Cameroun?

**Q3:** What was (from 1960 up to 1997)/is the budget involved as far as the French environmental /human rights/democracy policy is concerned in Cameroon?

Quel était (de 1960 à 1997) le budget relatif à la politique Française en matière d'environnement, de respect des droits de l'homme et de la démocratie au Cameroun?

**Q4:** What was (from 1960 up to 1997)/is the French Government expecting from that in terms of influence? How does in respect to that the French Government see/used to see Cameroon: as priority, top, middle, low, priority Cameroon?

A quel retour d'influence économique s'attendait la France (de 1960 à la fin des années 1990, 1997) ainsi que depuis 1997? Par conséquent le Gouvernement Français voit-il le Cameroun en termes d'intérêt économique comme une priorité culturelle mineure, moyenne ou importante?

**Q5:** Why is there a precise AFD representative structure in Cameroon?

Que pouvez-vous dire sur l'organisation précise de la structure de l'AFD au Cameroun?

### **SCAC**

**Q1:** What were (from 1960 up to 1997)/are the aims and motives of the French government in setting up the French Cultural Centres, French Embassy and Francophonie in terms of politico-cultural policy in Cameroon?

Quels étaient (de 1960 à 1997) /quels sont dorénavant les objectifs du Gouvernement Français en ce qui concerne la mise en place des Centres Culturels Français, de l'Ambassade de France, de la Francophonie au Cameroun?

**Q2:** What was the aim of setting up the French Institutes in Cameroon in 2011?

En quoi consistait la création des instituts Français en 2011 au regard de la politique Française politico-culturelle?

**Q3:** What was (from 1960 up to 1997)/is the budget involved in the setting up of those French politico-cultural instruments in reference to Cameroon? In politico/cultural matters in Cameroon?

Quel était (de 1960 à 1997)/quel est dorénavant le budget relatif a la mise en place des instruments culturels Français, de la culture Française au Cameroun?

**Q4:** What was (from 1960 up to 1997)/is the French Government expecting from that in terms of influence? How does in respect to that the French Government see/used to see Cameroon: as priority, top, middle, low, priority Cameroon?

A quel retour d'influence culturelle s'attendait la France (de 1960 à la fin des années 1990, 1997) ainsi que depuis 1997? Par conséquent le Gouvernement Français voit-il le

Cameroun en termes de véhicule culturel comme une priorité culturelle mineure, moyenne ou importante?

**Q5:** Why would be the reason for is a precise SCAC representative structure in Cameroon which works closely with the French embassy and AFD?

Que pouvez-vous dire de l'organisation structurée de l'AFD au Cameroun et de son travail en collaboration avec l'Ambassade Française ainsi qu'avec l'AFD?

## **Appendix C: Extended list of French Instruments**

Table 1: Mixed (Multilateral and Unilateral) French Instruments in Cameroon from the colonial era to 2015. "U" means unilateral instruments which are set up by France only while "M" means multilateral instruments which are set up along with other donors

<b>Economic</b>	<b>Military</b>	<b>Cultural and Political</b>
Agence Française de développement AFD/French Agency Development FAD (U)	Technical assistance (U and M)	Centres culturels Français CCF/French Cultural Centres FCC(U)
Proparco (U)	Security Sector Reform (U and M)	French African Summits(U)
C2D/DDC(U)	Security prevention Strategy(U and M)	French Alliances (U)
Debt reduction programme (U and M)	Reforms of the army (U and M)	Academic funding(U)
Debt cancellation programme (M)	Military training(U and M)	Political conditionality(U and M)
Loans (interests) (U and M)	Military advisers (U and M)	Environmental conditionality (U and M)
Monetary assistance (U)	Military interventions(U and M)	Human Rights conditionality(U and M)
Economic conditionality(U and M)	Military bases (Gabon, Chad) (U)	Governance conditionality(U and M)
Economic cross-conditionality(U and M)	Defence Agreements (U)	Cultural Assistance(U)
Aid policy(U and M)	Security Agreements (U)	Cultural Agreements(U)
Humanitarian assistance (M)	Military Regionalisation, Africanisation (U and M)	Representation overseas (U and M)
Clientelism(U)	Military trade (equipment)(U and M)	The Sarraut plan(1921)(U)
Aid projects )(U and M)	War Schools (U and M)	Plans for the development of French African colonies(Vichy government) (U)
Economic Agreements (U)	Missions militaires de coopération or MMC (U)	The Brazzaville conference(1944)(U)
The Franc Zone/ the exchange rate policies and exchange controls, interest rates, monetary policy, budget deficit, internal debt management, external debt policy (U)	Military cooperation Agreements (M)	The French Union(1946)(U)

<b>Economic</b>	<b>Military</b>	<b>Cultural and Political</b>
Fund development programmes (M)	Military aid office or mission (U)	African leaders at the Assemblée nationale (U)
PPTE/HICI (M)	College interarmées de défense (CID) (U)	The Loi cadre reforms(1956)(U)
The Maginot loans(1931)(U)	Ecoles nationales à vocation régionale (ENVR) (U)	Assimilation (U)
The treasury advances(origins)(U)	Cours supérieur interarmées de la défense au Cameroun(CISD) (U)	The first 10 year plan for the social and economic development of the colonies and of the French Union (1946)(U)
The fonds d'investissement économique et social(FIDES) (U)	Ecole de guerre interarmées et internationale(ECSGI) (U)	N/A
Development Loans from the Caisse central d'outre mer(CCFOM)(U)	Formation des officiers et sous officiers at Saint Cyre (U)	De Gaulle African policy(family)(U)
Colonial assistance(1959)(U)	Révision des accords militaires de 1974 (U)	Cultural aid missions: missions de coopération et d'action culturelle or MAC (U) De Gaulle African policy (family) (U)
Fons d'aide de coopération économique(FAC)(U)	Assistance militaire opérationnelle (U)	General secretariat for African and Malasian affairs with the African cell of advisers at Elysée(1958)(U) Cultural aid missions: missions de coopération et d'action culturelle or MAC (U)
The CCFOM became the CCE: Caisse centrale de coopération économique (1960)(U)	Accord militaire de 2007: construction de l'architecture de paix et de sécurité dans le cadre du partenariat stratégique entre l'UE et l'UA de décembre 2007 (U)	Réseau Foccart (U) General secretariat for African and Malasian affairs with the African cell of advisers at Elysée(1958) (U)
Special development fund for Africa from industrial countries (U)	2003:Chartre de l'enseignement militaire supérieure	Pompidou African policy (U) Réseau Foccart (U)
Programme solidarité à l'égard des PED (U)	N/A	Francophonie (U) Pompidou African policy (U)
Programme d'aide économique et financière au développement (U)	COMECE: 1976: compétence du commandement des Ecoles et centres d'instructions (U)	The Agence de coopération culturelle et technique(ACCT)(U) Francophonie (U)

<b>Economic</b>	<b>Military</b>	<b>Cultural and Political</b>
AFD (U)	Centre d'instruction des forces armées nationales de N'Gaoundéré(CIFAN)(U)	The Agence de coopération culturelle et technique(ACCT)(U)
FSD(U)	Centre d'instruction spécialisé des armées de YAOUNDE(CISA) (U)	The VGE African policy (U)
FFEM(U)FSD(U)	Centre de recyclage des forces armées de Koutaba (U)	CCE (U)The VGE African policy (U)
Poverty reduction and support of sustainable economic growth(PRGF) (U)FFEM(U)	Centre de formation technique des armées de YAOUNDE(CIFA) (U)	CCE (U)
PAMODEC (U)Poverty reduction and support of sustainable economic growth(PRGF) (U)	Centre d'instruction des forces armées de Djoum (U)	The Mitterrand African policy (U)
IPEC (U)PAMODEC (U)	Compagnie d'instruction des transmissions(CIT) (U)	The Mitterrand African policy (U)
IPEC (U)	Ecole militaire inter armées (EMIA) (U)	Chirac African policy (U)

<b>Economic</b>	<b>Military</b>	<b>Cultural and Political</b>
Partenariat public privé (U)	Ecole de gendarmerie d'Awae (U)	Chirac African policy (U)
Guaranties ARIZ and ACEP (U)Partenariat public privé (U)	Pôle aéronautique à vocation régionale de Garoua(PANVR) (M)	Cooperation Agreements (U)
Guaranties ARIZ and ACEP (U)	RECAMP(M)	Political, human rights conditionality (U and M)Cooperation Agreements (U)
Economical and Financial Agreements (U)	ACRI(M)RECAMP(M)	Political, human rights conditionality (U and M)Cooperation Agreements (U)
Air Transport Agreements (U)Economical and Financial Agreements (U)	ACOTA(M)ACRI(M)RECAMP(M)	1982 Assistance free (U)Political, human rights conditionality (U and M)
French companies(PMUC,ORANGE, MTN, multinational strategies) (U)Air Transport Agreements (U)	Union Africaine et Malgache de défense(UAMD) (M)ACOTA(M)ACRI(M)	The NGO Community (M)1982 Assistance free (U)



<b>Economic</b>	<b>Military</b>	<b>Cultural and Political</b>
France à fric (U) French companies (PMUC, ORANGE, MTN, multinational strategies) (U)	COPEX (M) Union Africaine et Malgache de défense (UAMD) (M) ACOTA (M)	Intern training (U) The NGO Community (M) 1982 Assistance free (U)
Trade (U) France à fric (U)	MARAC (M) COPEX (M) Union Africaine et Malgache de défense (UAMD) (M)	Elite training (U) Intern training (U) The NGO Community (M)
Trade (U)	Convention en matière du maintien de l'ordre (U) MARAC (M) COPEX (M)	La Communauté Elite training (U) Intern training (U)
Appui aux collectivités locales (U)	forces armées allies de la communauté (FAAC) (U) Convention en matière du maintien de l'ordre (U) MARAC (M)	Contribution internationale prélevée sur les billets d'avion (M) La Communauté Elite training (U)
Blocage des projets d'investissement (U) Appui aux collectivités locales (U)	CEMAC (U) forces armées allies de la communauté (FAAC) (U) Convention en matière du maintien de l'ordre (U)	La loi Oudin-Santini (U) Contribution internationale prélevée sur les billets d'avion (M) La Communauté
PESC (M) Blocage des projets d'investissement (U)	FOMUC (U) CEMAC (U) forces armées allies de la communauté (FAAC) (U)	Document cadre de partenariat (U) La loi Oudin-Santini (U) Contribution internationale prélevée sur les billets d'avion (M)
International power (U) PESC (M)	Conseil de paix et de sécurité (CPS) (M) FOMUC (U) CEMAC (U)	Projets santé et éducation (U) Document cadre de partenariat (U) La loi Oudin-Santini (U)
PAC (U) International power (U)	CMCA: Commission de médiation, de conciliation et d'arbitrage (M) Conseil de paix et de sécurité (CPS) (M) FOMUC (U)	Projets d'infrastructure urbaine (U) Projets santé et éducation (U) Document cadre de partenariat (U)
France exclusive rights over the political and economical affairs, major Cameroonian companies: SONARA, CAM Airlines, SONEL, SNEC, Banking industry, monetary system (U)	CEEAC (U) ICEDEAO (U) CEDEAO (U)	Projets eau potable (U) Projets forêt et environnement (U) Projets de transport et de développement rural (U)

<b>Economic</b>	<b>Military</b>	<b>Cultural and Political</b>
Monetary system tied to the French system (U) France exclusive rights over the political and economical affairs, major Cameroonian companies: SONARA, CAM Airlines, SONEL, SNEC, Banking industry, monetary system (U)	IGADCEEAC(U) ICEDEAO(U)	Coopération France-BIT(M) Projets eau potable(U) Projets foret et environnement (U)
SODECOTON(U) Monetary system tied to the French system (U)	SADCIGADCEEAC(U)	Programme d'appui a la promotion de l'emploi et de réduction de la pauvreté(APERP)(U) Coopération France-BIT(M) Projets eau potable(U)
MEDEF (U) SODECOTON(U)	2009 Military and Migration flows Agreements(U) SADCIGAD	Teachers recruitment programme (U) Programme d'appui a la promotion de l'emploi et de réduction de la pauvreté(APERP)(U) Coopération France-BIT(M)
CAFCAM (U) MEDEF (U)	SDECE: Service de documentation extérieure et du contre espionnage (U) 2009 Military and Migration flows Agreements(U) SADC	Forest and environment sector programme(PSFE)(M) Teachers recruitment programme (U) Programme d'appui a la promotion de l'emploi et de réduction de la pauvreté(APERP)(U)
CFCE (U) CAFCAM (U)	Arms trade(U) SDECE: Service de documentation extérieure et du contre espionnage (U) 2009 Military and Migration flows Agreements(U)	OHADA(U) Forest and environment sector programme(PSFE)(M) Teachers recruitment programme (U)
Urbifrance (U) CFCE (U)	Military technological transfert (U) Arms trade(U) SDECE: Service de documentation extérieure et du contre espionnage (U)	COMIFAC (U) OHADA(U) Forest and environment sector programme(PSFE)(M)
ADC (U) Urbifrance (U)	Common institutions(U) Military technological transfert (U) Arms trade(U)	FRPC(U) COMIFAC (U) OHADA(U)

<b>Economic</b>	<b>Military</b>	<b>Cultural and Political</b>
CAMRAIL(U)ADC (U)	Secret military agreements(U)Common institutions)(U)Military technological transfert (U)	SCAC(U)FRPC(U)COMIFAC(U)
ALUCAM(U)CAMRAIL (U)	CPPJ(U)Secret military agreements(U)Common institutions)(U)	DGCID(U) SCAC(U)FRPC(U)
CIMENCAM(U)ALUCAM (U)	COPALCO(U)CPPJ(U)Secret military agreements(U)	Déclaration de Paris(U and M)DGCID(U)SCAC(U)
Subventions(U)CIMENCAM(U)	CPTMOCOPALCO(U)CPPJ(U)	ANO:Avis de non objection (U) Déclaration de Paris(U and M)DGCID(U)
AFD loans (U) Subventions(U)	SCTIPCPTMOCOPALCO(U)	ANO: Avis de non objection (U) Déclaration de Paris(U and M)
Prêts concessionnels(U) AFD loans(U)	ESIRSCTIPCPTMO	ANO: Avis de non objection (U)
Prêts non souverains(U) Prêts concessionnels(U)	Military repression(U) “ in the nature of serving France’s interests, Bruno Charbonneau, 2008”ESIRSCTIP	Justice Agreements(U)

<b>Economic</b>	<b>Military</b>	<b>Cultural and Political</b>
Prêts souverains(U)Prêts non souverains(U)	Military repression(U) “ in the nature of serving France’s interests, Bruno Charbonneau, 2008”ESIR	International advocate(U)Justice Agreements(U)
Fonds propres: fonds FISEA(U)Prêts souverains(U)	Military repression(U) “ in the nature of serving France’s interests, Bruno Charbonneau, 2008”	Consular convention (U)International advocate(U)Justice Agreements(U)
Elf(U)Fonds propres: fonds FISEA(U)	N/A	Consular convention (U)International advocate(U)Justice Agreements(U)
Total(U)Elf(U)	N/A	IRAD (U)Consular convention (U)International advocate(U)
Areva(U)Total(U)	N/A	Françafrique(U)IRAD (U)Consular convention (U)International advocate(U)
Bouygues(U)Areva(U)	N/A	Official visits(U)Françafrique(U)IRAD (U)Consular convention (U)

<b>Economic</b>	<b>Military</b>	<b>Cultural and Political</b>
N/A	N/A	Bilateral-multilateral L'AUPELF-UREF(M) Organisation rénovée des pays du champ d'aide: 1994(M) ENSPF(M) Galleries d'art(M)
N/A	N/A	Centre Pasteur du cameroon: CPC(U) Bilateral- multilateral L'AUPELF-UREF(M) Organisation rénovée des pays du champ d'aide: 1994(M) ENSPF(M)
N/A	N/A	Centre Pasteur du Cameroun: CPC(U) Bilateral- multilateral L'AUPELF-UREF(M) Organisation rénovée des pays du champ d'aide: 1994(M)
N/A	N/A	Latitude France(U) Centre Pasteur du Cameroun: CPC(U) Bilateral-multilateral L'AUPELF- UREF(M)
N/A	N/A	IEDOM(U) Latitude France(U) Centre Pasteur du Cameroun: CPC(U) Bilateral-multilateral
N/A	N/A	The FFGEF(U) IEDOM(U) Latitude France(U) Centre Pasteur du cameroon: CPC(U)

*Source: Interview and personal communication; 5/10, 2012.*

## **Appendix D: Research Ethics Consent Form for Confidential Data**

Translating Rhetoric into Practice: the case of French aid to Cameroon

### **Research Ethics Consent Form for Confidential Data**

I understand that I am participating in this PhD project which seeks to shed light on the evolution of French and UK policy in Cameroon from 1960 to 2012 and in particular from the post-1997 period. I will be asked specific questions which are related to this thesis and not intended for wider distribution. They relate in particular to French, British and Cameroonian perspectives on aid policies towards Cameroon.

I understand that participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.

I understand that I am free to ask any questions at any time. If for any reason I experience discomfort during participation in this project, I am free to withdraw.

I understand that the information provided by me will be held totally anonymously, so that it is impossible to trace this information back to me individually. I understand that, in accordance with the Data Protection Act, this information may be retained indefinitely.

**Interviewee Declaration**

I consent to participate in the study conducted by *Odile Bomba Nkolo*.  
 Cardiff School of European Languages  
 Translation and Politics.

Signature:

Name: Odile Bomba Nkolo.....Date: 16-09-2016.....

**Appendix F: Tables**

**Table 1: Main French Colonial Physical Agents: Central Level**

Presidents	Networks	Government institutions' figures
Raymond Poincaré (1913-1920)	Françafrique: Jacques Foccart (1959-1974) - Chief adviser of African policy	First Secretary of the Cooperation: Robert Lacourt (1933-1936)  Prime Minister: Albert Sarraut (1933-1936)/Petain (1934)
Charles De Gaulle (1959-1969)	Freemasonry: Victor Schoelcher (1848-1851)- Secretary of the Navy	Member of Parliament: Jean-Felix Tchicaya (1945)  Treasury: Vincent Auriol (1936-1937)/Leon Blum (1938)/Robert Schuman (1947)

Source: Interview and Personal Communication; 5/10, 2012.

**Table 2: Main French Aid Physical Agents: Central level**

Presidents	Networks	Government institutions' figures
Giscard D'Estaing (1974-1981)  François Mitterrand (1981-1995)	Françafrique: Chief advisers of African policy Jacques Foccart (1959-1974)/ Rene Journiac (1974-1980)/ M.Kirch (1980-1981)/ Guy Penne (1981-1986)/  Mitterrand and networks: Jean-Christophe Mitterrand (1986-1992)  Freemasonry: African leaders themselves	Vice diplomatic adviser in charge of African affairs: Andre Parant (2009-2012)

Source: Interviews and Personal Correspondence; 6/2011.

**Table 3: Main French Government aid Institutions and Institutional Agents (1960-1997)**

National level	Local level	Instruments
Ministère de la Défense /Ministère de la Coopération	Mission Militaire	Military agreements authorizing military schools  Military agreements and military schools
Ministère des Finances	Mission Economique	Economic development assistance  ' programme' /aid
Quai D'Orsay/ Ministère de la Coopération	SCAC	Cultural bodies (AF, CC, OIF representations)(other technical and cultural assistance)  Technical assistance

Source: Interviews and Personal Correspondence; 6/ 2011.

**Table 4: Main UK colonial institutional Agents and Local Government Institutions (1919- 1960)**

<b>National level</b>	<b>Local level</b>	<b>Instruments</b>
Ministry of Defence / Foreign and Commonwealth Office	Lagos Administration	British troops in British Cameroons
Treasury	Lagos Administration	Cameroon Development Corporation, Infrastructures and Rubber Exploitation  Budgetary Support
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	Lagos Administration	Indirect Rule

Source: Interviews and Personal Correspondence; 4/2011.

**Table 5: Main UK Government aid Institutions and Institutional Agents (1960 to 1997)**

<b>National level</b>	<b>Local level</b>	<b>Instruments</b>
DFID	N/A	Military agreements
DFID	British High Commission Economic Department	Environmental development assistance programme/aid
DFID	British High Commission	Cultural bodies (British Council, Commonwealth representations) (other technical and cultural assistance) Technical assistance

Source: Interviews and Personal Communication; 4/2011.



**Table 6: French Aid Government Institutions and Institutional Agents (1997-2012)**

National level	Local level	Instruments
Ministère de la Défense /Ministère des Affaires Etrangères et Européennes (Ministre chargé de la Coopération)	Mission Militaire	Military agreements authorizing military schools. Accords Militaires et de Sécurité (2009) Military Training Programme and military schools: ENVR Renforcement des Capacités Africaines au Maintien de la Paix
Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances	Mission Economique	Economic development assistance: Pays Pauvres Très Endettés (PPTE) 'programme', Project Assistance/aid: Contrats de Désendettement et de Développement Economic and Financial Agreements
Quai D'Orsay/ Ministère des Affaires Etrangères et Européennes (Ministre chargé de la Coopération)	SCAC	Cultural bodies (AF, CC, OIF representations) (other technical and cultural assistance): Instituts Français(2011) Technical Cultural assistance

Source: Interviews and personal communication; 4/2011.

**Table 7: UK government aid institutions and institutional agents (1997-2012)**

National level	Local level	Instruments
Ministry of Defence / DFID	N/A	Military Training Programme and military schools: African peacekeeping programme RECAMP/EUROCAMP
Finance Ministry	British High Commission/ Political and public affairs department	Economic development assistance: HIPC/ MDGs 'programme', Project Assistance/aid: Environmental Programme Congo Basin Fund
British Foreign and Commonwealth Office/ DFID	British High Commission	Cultural bodies (BC, C, OIF representations) (other technical and cultural assistance) Technical assistance

Source: Interview and Personal Communication; 5/2011.

**Table 8: Main French Bilateral and Multilateral Institutional Agents/ Aid Instruments and Local Government Institutions (1997-2012)**

<b>National level</b>	<b>Local level</b>	<b>Instruments</b>
Ministère de la Défense /Ministère des Affaires Etrangères et Européennes (Ministre chargé de la Coopération)	Mission Militaire	Renforcement des Capacités Africaines au Maintien de la Paix /EURO CAMP
Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances	Mission Economique	C2D: bilateral debt swap for poverty reduction ostensibly linked to empowerment agenda. Top AFD priority.
Quai D'Orsay/ Ministère des Affaires Etrangères et Européennes (Ministre chargé de la Coopération)	SCAC	Alliances Françaises/ Instituts Français/ Francophonie

Source: Material from Interviews/ Personal communication, June 2011.

**Table 9: Main UK Bilateral and Multilateral Aid Instruments, and Local Government Institutions (1997-2012)**

<b>National level</b>	<b>Local level</b>	<b>Instruments</b>
Ministry of Defence /British Foreign and Commonwealth Office/DFID	N/A	RECAMP/EURO CAMP
Finance Ministry/DFID	British High Commission	No Economic developmental programme but bilateral and multilateral Environment programme linked to empowerment. Top DFID priority: Forestry sector programme and Congo Basin Fund
British Foreign and Commonwealth Office/DFID	British High Commission	British Council/British High Commission/ Commonwealth

Source: Material from Interviews and Personal Communication, April 2011.

**Table 10: Instruments from Interviews**

<b>Key Dimensions of power</b>	<b>France</b>
<b>Military/security</b>	French military training, technical advice and equipment supply and a lack of Sector Security Reform to maintain the Cameroonian military/security structure dependent on France
<b>Economic/ developmental</b>	C2D, FZ, French multinationals as forms of Neoclassical power
<b>Politico-cultural</b>	Resentment of French continuation of Cultural Grandeur and Rayonnement based on Réseaux

Source: Material from Interviews, June 2011.

**Table 11: Reflections on Instruments (Based on Interviews)**

<b>Key Dimensions of power</b>	<b>UK</b>
<b>Military/security power</b>	Some regret regarding the lack of significant UK involvement in Cameroon, especially Anglophones
<b>Economic/ developmental power</b>	Recognition of DFID's field of expertise and regret that the UK ended bilateral cooperation  Hopes for a UK bilateral aid reduction programme
<b>Politico-cultural power</b>	Recognition of the important spreading of English and cultural support  Wishes for greater British involvement in bilateral aid policy

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<sup>1</sup> Comoros uses the CFA franc at a different exchange rate.

<sup>2</sup>Cumming (2001, p.13) has offered significant insight into this perspective: The problems surrounding the definition of aid have been around since the time of the Marshall Plan. Some scholars have embraced a wider definition and included all resource flows which are of developmental benefit. On these grounds, Ryrie (1995, p.14) has argued that even non-concessional lending at market rates from organisations such as the non-profit-making affiliate of the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation, should be counted as aid. There is also disagreement among official bodies. This has arisen partly because the UN sets international aid targets but leaves it to the Development Assistance Committee to agree on a definition of aid and to compile its own separate estimates of resource flows to developing countries.

<sup>3</sup>Included in this definition are activities including projects and programmes, cash transfers, deliveries of goods, training courses, research projects, debt relief operations, and contributions to non-governmental organizations (OECD glossary of statistical terms 2005, p.42).

<sup>4</sup> Levels of concessionality on loans and the way in which concessional lending has changed have recently been amended by the DAC High-Level forum (OECD 2014, p.1).

<sup>5</sup> Mosely goes beyond the work of Lukes (1974, p.37) which states that “the concept of power’ involves ‘saying that A exercises power over B and A affects B in a manner contrary to B’s interests”.

<sup>6</sup>The F3E itself was created in 1994 by NGOs and French authorities that together wished to create a system that strengthens and pools methodological skills for evaluating and analysing NGOs practices and that establishes an internal forum for joint dialogue. F3E later opened up to other actors: local and regional authorities (LRAs) and hospitals’ (Evaluation portal 2015).

<sup>7</sup> *Afrique je te plumerai*. 1992. Directed by Jean-Marie Teno [DVD]. Paris. IMDB.

<sup>8</sup> See, in this context, *The “Mission d’information sur la stabilité et le développement de l’Afrique Francophone” report* presented at the Assembly on the 14 April 2015).

<sup>9</sup>Under the Charter, the Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It has 15 Members, and each Member has one vote. Under the Charter, all Member States are obligated to comply with Council decisions, which also influence their role within the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (UN 2012).

<sup>10</sup>Other scholars have proposed useful theoretical approaches for this analysis. For example, Goguet (1988) show Realism explains the approaches of Europe and honors to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), while Cumming and Chafer (2011) use Neoclassical Realism to account for the broad shift in French and UK policy towards Africa.

<sup>11</sup>Tangible and intangible instruments are not used in the thesis but defined in the appendix.

<sup>12</sup>This draws on the Central Economic Co-operation Fund (1958)- Central Overseas France Fund (1944)- Central Free France Fund (1941). This refers to the French Development Fund.

<sup>13</sup>PROPARCO is the French Investment and Promotion Company for Economic Cooperation (Proparco, 2012).

<sup>14</sup> This refers to the Prime Minister Office.



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<sup>15</sup>François Mitterrand's speech: 18th Franco-African summit in Biarritz on the 8th November 1994.

<sup>16</sup>The cooperation between Paris and Bujumbura prior to the Tutsi genocide was questioned as well as the fact that the Opération Turquoise only starts on the 22nd June 1994, two months and a half after the beginning of the massacres.

<sup>17</sup>Namely the nexus of close ties between French and Cameroonian politicians, businessmen, and military officers.

<sup>18</sup>This is reinforced by the 1965 Jeanneney Report under De Gaulle, which appears to stress French neo-colonial objectives.

<sup>19</sup>This is highlighted by Charles De Gaulle (1959-1969), who clearly stated during his presidential term that the objective of French African policy was to safeguard French power, status, and interests in Africa (Roland 1990, p.339). As Figure x highlights, there is a clear hierarchical structure when it comes to French Government aid institutions from 1960 to 1997.

<sup>20</sup>The MDGs set eight goals to achieve by 2015: (1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (2) Achieve universal primary education; (3) Promote gender equality and empower women; (4) Reduce child mortality; (5) Improve maternal health; (6) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; (6) Ensure environmental sustainability; (7) and (8) develop a global partnership for development (UNDP 2013).

<sup>21</sup> Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Sweden, the UK and the Netherlands.

<sup>22</sup>On the question: is there a Nordic Exceptionalism in Development Assistance, see Nygaard and Selbervik (2006).

<sup>23</sup>The ZSP aims at mutualising the financial risk between numerous countries and sectors of activity. This increased the AFD's geographical remit, which also encompasses big emerging countries.

<sup>24</sup>Jospin, L. la politique de défense de la France. Défense Nationale 53 (11), pp.3-14. Boucheron, J.M. 2000. Rapport d'information sur les forces Françaises de Djibouti. Paris: Assemblée Nationale.

<sup>25</sup>Jospin, L. 1998. Evolution générale de la politique de défense de la France. Défense Nationale 54 (11), pp.5-20.

<sup>26</sup>Decree n.98-1124:10th December 1998. The DGCID was replaced by the Direction Générale de la Mondialisation (DGM) in 2009 (MAE 2013).

<sup>27</sup>The AFD is a public development financial institution which has been working in developing countries and the French Overseas Communities for more than sixty years. This development aid body implements the French Government's development aid policies and has offices in more than fifty countries. It is part of the bilateral development framework financed by the French Agency, created in 1941, which represents French authorities, dealing mainly with financing aid assistance according to French foreign policies. The AFD has a range of financial instruments available for its activities in sectors as diverse as rural development, urban infrastructure, transportation, agriculture, education, banking and microfinance, energy, healthcare, telecommunications, mining, housing, and eco-tourism. These many activities thus help to bolster French influence thanks to aid assistance. The partnership framework document lies at the core of the aid relationship between France and Cameroon. The new changes place great emphasis on

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evaluation and results. In 2012, there were 64 people working within all the services of the French Embassy, and 23 people in AFD Yaoundé. Of these, 3 work at AFD Proparco in Douala. The government institutions' structure is streamlined, but the Elysée is still not amendable to the Parliament. On the face of it, these new institutional arrangements had the potential to move France away from an interest-based to a needs-based approach to Cameroon but, as will be demonstrated below, they did not do so.

<sup>28</sup>Indeed, French public opinion reproached the French government for being too close to autocratic regimes (Balleix 2010; MAE 2013).

<sup>29</sup>The French development agency allocates a)Loans: Sovereign loans, Non sovereign loans, Soft loans, Market-rate loans; b)Subsidies: Grants, Guarantees: the ARIZ Fund, the DOM Fund, the FASEP Fund; C) C2Ds:Debt reduction and development contracts; d)Private equity: the FISEA through PROPARCO.

<sup>30</sup>There are 25 French military instructors across 12 projects elsewhere in Africa in French military schools. These projects have €300,000 as a budget for logistics and comprise 25,000 Cameroonians trained in 7 Missions de Renfort within which 35 are located in France and 26 in the ENVR in Africa.

<sup>31</sup>France uses both RECAMP (8% of the overall French budget in 2010) and EUROCAMP 30.9% of €14.6millions in 2010.

<sup>32</sup>From 2011 onwards the Instituts Français have been the sole French cultural instrument, assuming the roles of the cultural centres and the French Embassy's cultural department. As explained by the current French High Commissioner to Cameroon, Bruno Gain, 'due to the evolving world, [the aim is] to renew French cultural diplomacy...to make the French influence - rayonnement -more visible abroad' (French embassy 2011). After 1997, efforts were made to increase the international influence of the Francophonie (Cameroon has been a member since 1991). Nonetheless it appears to have lost some influence due to the increase of multilateral international power. In addition to this, some French authors, such as Milhaud (2006) have criticised the organisation, labelling it a post-colonial instrument. According to Ardain Isma (2008) the Francophonie is a 'linguistic and cultural entity participating in a project designed to establish a cultural and geostrategic hegemony' (<http://csmsmagazine.org>, 2008).

<sup>33</sup> The will to train African peacekeepers was also common across the UK and the US.

<sup>34</sup> According to the United Nations: Trilateral cooperation offers a unique approach to development where multiple actors join hands in promoting new innovative solutions.. under a common goal of reducing poverty and enhancing mutual development benefits (UN, 2016).

<sup>35</sup> The arms sales affair involving Angola known as "Angolagate" was largely resolved when Sarkozy came to power.

<sup>36</sup>See Glaser and Smith 2008 and Hugueux 2007.

<sup>37</sup> Was not reporting to the president as previous Messieurs Afrique had done but to Jean-David Levitte the Elysée's overall adviser on foreign policy. However there were two parallel diplomacies in the Elysée. One led by the official adviser Joubert with two technical advisers and the other headed by Guéant with his shadowy evening visitors (Cumming, 2012, pp.27-28).

<sup>38</sup>Necessitated by the French Comprehensive Spending Review.

<sup>39</sup>Speech by Nicolas Sarkozy in Cotonou, Benin on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2006.

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<sup>40</sup> Sarkozy tried to limit the damage. In 2008, he made another important speech in Cape Town, expressing the radical shift of French African policy at the start of the presidency before the recession in France became worse along with the budgetary deficit.

<sup>41</sup>Omar Bongo used his Gaullist networks to dismiss Jean-Marie Bockel.

<sup>42</sup>Closer inspection reveals that, as far back as 1981, Jean-Pierre Cot President François Mitterrand's first Minister of cooperation, floated reformist ideas only to get sacked for his pains a fate that was also to befall Jean-Marie Bockel, Sarkozy's first cooperation Minister, after he had declared the end of *Françafrique* (Darracq and Melly 2013, p.7).

<sup>43</sup>Through the African Peace Facility to support the African Peace and Security architecture and its five regional bodies.