Framing ‘Cooperation’: the Discursive Justification of French Military Interventions in Chad in the French Press and Foreign Policy, 1960-2014

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Abstract

Chad has been central to French military operations in Africa since the colonial period. Yet the France-Chad relationship is under-researched in academic scholarship. This thesis critically analyses the longevity of French military interventionism in Chad as a key component of the relationship after Chadian independence in 1960. It does so by examining the role of French foreign policy and journalistic texts in shaping French military interventionism in Chad post-1960. Through the case study of French military operation Epervier (1986-2014), I trace the development of interventionist discourses in the language of the French press and policy.

Central to this thesis is the notion of discourse as a social practice, with the power to shape events. I use Critical Discourse Analysis-Discourse Historical Approach and framing to reveal underlying ideologies within discourses of the French press and policy documents. There are two main findings. Firstly, the discourse of French policy documents, forming the legal foundation of Operation Epervier, redefined the nature of the France-Chad relationship from colonialism to ‘cooperation’ post-1960. Secondly, analysis of news articles in the mainstream French press (*Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *Libération*) on Operation Epervier demonstrates discursive collusion between the French press and state.

The discursive shift from colonialism to ‘cooperation’ positioned Chad as dependent on French assistance, justifying French military presence. Yet, the ongoing economic and geostrategic benefits of Operation Epervier to France, at the expense of Chad, reproduced power inequalities rooted in a neocolonial system. I argue that by discursively justifying military operations, the policy and journalistic texts reinforced a neocolonial discourse and set of practices, based on ideological assertions and a process of naturalisation of a power imbalance between France and Chad. This thesis contributes to the broader picture of French military presence in central Africa and the naturalisation of French neocolonial ideology and practices.

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# Glossary

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| AFD | Agence Française de Développement (French Development Agency) |
| AU | African Union |
| BBC | British Broadcasting Corporation |
| CCIJP | Conseil de Carte d’Identité de Journaliste Professionnel (Professional Journalists' Identity Card Commission) |
| CDA | Critical Discourse Analysis |
| CDA-DHA | Critical Discourse Analysis-Discourse Historical Approach |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer |
| CFA | Colonies Française d’Afrique/Communauté Française d’Afrique/Communauté Financière Africaine |
| CICID | Le Comité interministériel de la coopération internationale et du développement (The Interministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development) |
| CNT | Concorde nationale du Tchad (Chad National Concord) |
| COGEMA | La Compagnie Générale des Matières Nucléaires (General Nuclear Material Company) |
| COMINAK | Compagnie Minière d’Akouta (Akouta Mining Company) |
| CSCE | Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe |
| DGCID | La Direction Générale de la Coopération Internationale et du Développement (The Directorate General of International Cooperation and Development) |
| EADS | European Aeronautic Defence and Space |
| EDF | Electricité de France |
| ELF | Essence Lubricant France |
| EU | European Union |
| EUFOR | European Force |
| FANT | Forces Armées Nationales Tchadiennes (Chadian National Armed Forces) |
| FAP | Forces Armées Populaires (People’s Armed Forces) |
| FROLINAT | Front de Libération Nationale du Tchad (National Liberation Front of Chad) |
| GUNT | Gouvernement d'Union Nationale de Transition (Chadian Transitional Government of National Unity) |
| IFI | International Financial Institutions |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| LPM | Lois de Programmation Militaire (Military Programming Laws) |
| MINURCAT | Mission des Nations Unies en République Centrafricaine et au Tchad (United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad) |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organisation |
| OAU | Organisation of African Unity |
| OPEX | Opération Extérieure (Overseas Operation) |
| R2P | Right to Protect |
| RECAMP | Renforcement des Capacités Africaine de Maintien de la Paix (Reinforcement of African Peacekeeping Capacities) |
| RFC | Rassemblement des Forces pour le Changement (Rally of Forces for Change) |
| SABCA | Société Anonyme Belge de Constructions Aéronautiques |
| SAP | Structural Adjustment Programme |
| UFDD | Union des Forces pour la Démocratie et le Développement (Union of Forces for Democracy and Development) |
| UFDD-F | Union des Forces pour la Démocratie et le développement-Fondamentale (The Union of Forces for Democracy and Development–Fundamental) |
| UMP | Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (Union for a Popular Movement) |
| UN | United Nations |
| US | United States |
| USA | United States of America |
| ZSP | Zone de Solidarité Prioritaire (Priority Solidarity Zones) |
| WEU | Western European Union |
| WWII | World War II |

# Introduction

In 1981, an article published by journalist Tamar Golan (1981) questioned the ongoing ‘special relationship’ between France and its former colonies in Africa in the two decades following independence. According to Golan, there was ‘a certain mystery’ behind this ‘neocolonial’ relationship: ‘*How can France do everything that it does in Africa – and get away with it?’* (p. 3). Today, this is still a pertinent question. To what extent are France’s former colonies in Africa truly independent in the face of extensive French governmental involvement? How is it acceptable for the French state to remain engaged in African countries after the latter’s independence? In this thesis, I argue that the answer to the question of the longevity of French involvement in its former colonies in Africa can be located in the *discourses* that developed throughout the relationship between France and west and central Africa in the aftermath of formal colonialism.

During the colonial period, from the 1800s to the mid-twentieth century, the French colonial administration employed direct rule in its colonies in Africa. The French state exerted control over economic, political and cultural aspects of life in its colonies. Following World War II, the French state was weakened, and wars of independence broke out in some of its colonies. French President Charles de Gaulle tried to hold on to the French colonial empire by granting limited self-governance to the colonised administrative zones in west and central Africa through the development of a ‘French Community’. However, this failed, and in 1960, the majority of France’s African colonies became independent.[[1]](#footnote-1) Yet this independence did not mark the end of French involvement on the African continent.

Since 1960, the French military has intervened over 50 times in the countries of Africa that were formerly colonised by France. In the two decades following 1960, successive French governments[[2]](#footnote-2) signed an array of ‘defence’, ‘assistance’ and ‘cooperation’ agreements with the newly independent African countries, enabling the French state to maintain military, as well as political, cultural and economic ties with the former colonies. The ‘defence’ agreements, signed in the immediate aftermath of independence, were largely replaced with ‘cooperation’ agreements in the 1970s, focusing on French ‘technical military’ assistance to the African signatories. In the 1970s, the formal relationship of ‘cooperation’ extended to countries in Africa that were not former French colonies, such as Rwanda, previously administered by Germany and then Belgium. These agreements enabled the French military to retain military bases on the African continent.

French military presence was vital in order to protect French economic interests in its former colonies. Crucial to French military presence in Africa was Chad, the country in which and from which the French state has launched most of its military operations (Debos and Powell, 2017, p. 221). This is due to Chad’s geographical position in central Africa, offering ease of access to Chad’s neighbouring countries: Libya to the north, Sudan to the east, Central African Republic and Cameroon to the south and southwest, and Nigeria and Niger to the west. These countries were and still are of economic or geostrategic interest to the French state. For example, the French state-owned nuclear company Areva operated mines in Niger and Central African Republic, where there are important uranium reserves.[[3]](#footnote-3)

In this thesis, I focus on one specific French military operation in Chad,[[4]](#footnote-4) Operation Epervier.[[5]](#footnote-5) Spanning across four decades, Operation Epervier was the longest-running French military operation to take place on the African continent post-1960.[[6]](#footnote-6) The objectives of the operation changed multiple times throughout its deployment. The French government initially launched Operation Epervier in 1986 to fight ongoing Libyan occupation in the north of Chad. The operation had reached its objectives by 1987, but Epervier forces remained in Chad to consolidate French military bases. In 1996, they oversaw the election of Chadian leader Idriss Déby. In 2006 and 2008 Epervier forces intervened to protect Déby from opponents. These forces also supported the European Union mission EUFOR (2008-2009) as well as French military operations Sangaris (in Central African Republic) and Serval (in Mali) between 2009 and 2014. Operation Epervier was therefore very diverse; it had multiple aims and offered assistance to multiple forces. It is a particularly pertinent case study, as it enables us to see the development of French foreign policy in Africa and the changes and continuities in the relationship between France and Chad over a long period (1986-2014). I chose this case study based on its longevity, as well as its economic, political and societal implications for west and central Africa more widely. This is vital for understanding the longevity of the post-independence relationship between Chad and France and the discourses that shaped this relationship, which continue today.

## The Policy of ‘Cooperation’ and French Military Interventionism

As mentioned above, the ‘cooperation’ agreements signed between France and its former colonies post-1960 provided the legal foundation of unilateral French military operations, including Epervier. France and Chad signed a Technical Military Cooperation agreement in 1976. These agreements created new modalities within which the relationship between France and its former colonies could continue to operate once formal colonialism was over, for example, through military assistance. This new approach was labelled in French foreign policy documents as ‘cooperation’. Colonialism had been established on the economic, military, political and cultural subjugation of African countries by the French state through violent means (from which the newly independent African countries had nominally broken free). However, ‘cooperation’ was supposedly based on notions of consent, collaboration and assistance; under the terms of the ‘cooperation’ agreements, the French military was only permitted to intervene militarily at the request of the government of the country in which it intervened and only in a limited manner. Yet, the ‘cooperation’ agreements also indirectly enabled the French state to maintain influence in the economic, military, political and cultural affairs of African countries. Therefore, a change in discourse signified continuity in practice. I argue that by discursively analysing the language of French foreign policy, through investigation of the documents that formed these policies, such as the ‘cooperation’ agreements, White Papers on Defence and presidential speeches, it is possible to understand the development and longevity of the relationship between France and its former colonies. These types of policy documents form one of my two source bases, the other being news articles published in the mainstream French press.

French foreign policy, based on a relationship of ‘cooperation’, did not remain static throughout the period of analysis of this thesis, from 1960 to 2014. There were major changes to French foreign policy from 1990 onwards. In the aftermath of WWII and the Cold War, there were global changes that saw the rise of neoliberal institutions (e.g., the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank), which became involved in African affairs. The involvement of these institutions threatened the French state’s monopoly and influence in west and central Africa, its former colonial sphere of influence. Moreover, French military involvement came under scrutiny internationally and domestically after its support of the Rwandan government during the Genocide of the Tutsis in 1994. In response to these occurrences, French foreign policy shifted to focus on the multilateralisation of its military presence in Africa, as well as on vocalising support for democratisation in its former African colonies. However, despite these changes, the old ‘cooperation’ agreements remained in place: although multilateralisation was taking place, unilateral French military interventions continued; and despite the French government’s nominal support of democratisation, it also continued to support allies such as Chadian dictator Idriss Déby. Therefore, despite a shift in policies in response to post-Cold War global and domestic changes, the practice of French military interventions remained in place.

There are two main approaches within the scholarship on France-Chad and France-Africa relations. One prominent scholarly position sees French military involvement in Africa as positive and motivated by a desire to assist African countries. Another approach, adopted both by scholars and within grey literature produced by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), critiques French military involvement in Africa as benefitting the French state at the expense of African states. Regarding the first approach, Keese (2007) argues that in the aftermath of independence, the French government was motivated by ‘friendship’ rather than ‘economic’ gain (p. 605). Similarly, Chafer (2014) believes that by the 2000s, French military interventions were taking place within the context of ‘humanitarian’ interventions, moved by a sense of duty, and reflecting the French government’s dedication to the ‘universal’ values of ‘protecting populations’ (p. 524). These types of studies do not critique the right of the French military to intervene in its former colonies. Furthermore, they tend not to foreground the benefits of the policies of ‘cooperation’ for the French government. Without this crucial critique, analysis of France-Africa relations lacks insight into the fundamental elements pertaining to its longevity.

In contrast, a body of literature exists which focuses on the self-interested motives of the French government with regard to its policy of ‘cooperation’. As early as 1972, N’Dongo was critiquing French military ‘cooperation’ as a way of exerting control over the newly independent African countries. Furthermore, Schmidt (2013, p. 177) has called ‘cooperation’ one of the ‘pillars of the postcolonial system’ of dominance. Similarly, Granvaud (2009, p. 39) states that the ‘cooperation agreements’ ensured French 'military domination'.[[7]](#footnote-7) Moreover, literature produced by NGOs such as *Survie* and Human Rights Watch (2016) is extremely critical of French military presence in Africa. The researchers of *Survie* (Verschave, 2000; Granvaud, 2014) have developed a framework within which they seek to expose exploitative and neocolonial relations between France and African countries, labelled *Françafrique*. I draw on this second body of literature in order to understand the post-1960 France-Chad relationship. I position my thesis within a scholarship that critiques French military presence on the African continent. This type of research shows the mechanisms of continued French military dominance through the policies of ‘cooperation’, such as military interventions. Analysis of the economic, political and legal mechanisms of control enable us to look at the wider context of French military involvement in its former colonies and describe more accurately the current relationship between France and its former colonies, which has been developing since 1960. These studies contextualise the relationship within the framework of neocolonial practices, originating on the eve of independence, adopted by the French government in order to maintain control in several countries in west and central Africa, and how they are still in use today. They are therefore more useful in addressing the historical and political context that has contributed to the longevity of French military presence in Chad than the less critical literature.

However, in trying to answer the question of *how* French military interventions were justified or how this system was able to have such longevity, I believe that another mechanism is also at play, which is often not addressed in the literature, that of discourse. I argue that by discursively reformulating the relationship between France and African countries as ‘cooperation’, it has been possible to justify continued French military interventions on the African continent. This is because, as CDA-DHA analysts argue, discourse is a form of social practice with the power to influence actions and events. Therefore, the launch of Operation Epervier relies on the way in which the discourses surrounding it are articulated by those who decide the course of events (such as French governmental officials) and those who disseminate information on these events to the wider public (such as the French press and journalists). The launch of French military operations in France's former colonies was often reliant on the way in which discourses were articulated and justified. The importance of language is stated in the literature, although it is often not developed further. For example, Chafer’s (2005, p. 10) earlier work states that the 'newly coined concept of *coopération*' was a way of justifying French foreign policy in Africa after 1960. Yates (2018) also remarks on the contradictory nature of the use of the word 'cooperation' by French officials as the terms of its policies served the interests of France (p. 101). Charbonneau (2019, p. 310) too references the importance of the ‘discursive’ aspects of French military interventions. Despite highlighting the importance of language, these studies do not conduct in-depth discursive analyses of the language used by French policymakers or other actors. Therefore, although the literature identifies an important area of study, there is a lack of research in this area. I aim to address this gap in the literature through my thesis. This is important because analysis of the discourse of official actors is vital in revealing the ideologies that informed French military interventions, contributing to the longevity of the involvement of the state in the newly independent African countries. By doing so, I will explore the question of *how* French military interventions were able to persist as a neocolonial practice.

A second gap in the literature concerns the way in which the academic scholarship tends to conduct research focused on official governmental actors and sources. There is less research analysing non-governmental actors. Exceptions include Debos’ (2016) book, which focuses on the perspective of combatants in Chad, and Robinet’s (2016) study on French news media representations of conflicts involving the French military in Africa (1994-2011). My thesis analyses sources produced both by official governmental actors (foreign policy documents and presidential speeches) and by non-governmental French press actors (through analysis of journalistic texts published in the French news outlets *Le Monde*, *Libération* and *Le Figaro*) in order to address this gap in the literature. This approach enables my study to focus on the perspectives of both official political actors and the press and to understand the interaction between the two in relation to the events of French military interventions in Chad. It offers a multifaceted angle, enabling us to look both at how official discourses were shaped and how they were communicated to the public.

## The Role of the French Press

The French mainstream written press was one of the main ways through which the events of the French military operations abroad were communicated to the public within France during the deployment of Operation Epervier (1986-2014). The French press was influential not only due to its readership levels but because of its significance in French culture; *Le Monde* in particular carried weight as a publication during this time due to the elite actors attached to it. For example, it has been described as the ‘brainchild’ of French President Charles de Gaulle (Benson, 2004, p. 109). The press had the ability to inform and influence public opinion on the subject of French military interventions, and a positive public opinion was very important for the French state and military, as demonstrated by the proximity between the state actors and news media owners, with millions of euro spent by the state to subsidise the press. Consequently, the French press has played a vital role in the shaping of the relationship between France and Chad.

The most in-depth study of the French press’s reporting on French military interventions is Robinet’s (2016) content analytical study on French news media representations of conflict in Africa from 1994 to 2011. His findings are useful to this study, as they reveal that across the French news media (written, televised and radio) and regardless of political position, representations of French military presence in Africa are very similar. Robinet (2013, p. 99) argues that there therefore exists a homogenised and ‘transmediatic discourse’[[8]](#footnote-8). However, Robinet’s study does not analyse the implications and underlying ideologies in the discourse of French news media, which this study aims to address through discursive analysis. As mentioned above, I argue that discourse is key to understanding *how* French military interventions on the African continent were legitimised through the language of French policy and press. Therefore, I believe that a discursive analysis is essential to this understanding.

In order to comprehend the significance of the role of the French press during Operation Epervier, it is useful to analyse theories on the role of the news media and journalists during conflict and the relationship between the news media and the government and other institutions. The news media can be seen simply as gathering and disseminating news (Stephens, 1988), mirroring reality (Zelizer, 2004), or as a tool for propaganda (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). Drawing on some of these theories, this thesis understands the role of the press neither as simply an active mouthpiece for the government, which transmits the messages of the government to the public, nor as a passive instrument of information. This thesis insists on the role of the press in constructing meaning through discourse and framing, to its audiences. It adopts the definition of discourse outlined by theorists of Critical Discourse Analysis-Discourse Historical Approach (CDA-DHA), which sees discourse as a form of social practice. In other words, the discourse of the press both shapes events and is shaped by them. Moreover, the press’s ability to contribute to the shaping of public perceptions means ‘the audience will have a bearing on the position taking of elites’, who will want public opinion on their side (Chong et al., 2007, p. 117). Consequently, if the discourse and framing of the press contributes to shaping meaning for the French public, it becomes an actor in the events. In other words, the press becomes an institution which possesses the ability both to transform events and to maintain the status quo, thereby playing a vital role in the maintenance of neocolonial practices in the form of French military interventions in Chad.

## Theoretical framework

In order to analyse neocolonial practices, I draw on neocolonial theory, which sheds light on the relationship between France and Chad during my period of analysis (1960-2014). Neocolonial theory explains the extent to which the practice of French military intervention was informed by a neocolonial ideology, which justified the continuation of French military presence in Chad and other former French colonies. This ideology is embedded within the discourse of the French press and policy, legitimising its practices. Using neocolonial theory, I demonstrate that the practice of French military interventions reflects an aim of the French government to maintain influence in its former colonies and that the relationship between France and Chad, based on ‘cooperation’, reflects new forms of neocolonial exploitation and control (N’Dongo, 1972).

The theory of neocolonialism developed during the waves of independences in the 1960s and 1970s across the globe. Ghanaian leader Kwame Nkrumah (1965) developed a theory through which it was possible to critique the continued economic and political exploitation of newly independent, former colonial states by former colonising states. Nkrumah (1965, p. ix) writes, ‘the essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside’. In other words, despite nominal independence, a power imbalance based on the dependence of the former colonised nation on the former colonising nation continues. Discussing the French context in a legal sense, N’Dongo (1972) argues that the system of neocolonialism was inscribed within the constitution of the newly independent states and was therefore a fundamental part of their existence. Neocolonialism was therefore established from the very genesis of independence.

Closely related to the theory of neocolonialism is the idea of *Françafrique*, developed by NGO *Survie* under the leadership of founder François-Xavier Verschave. The focus of *Françafrique* is specifically to uncover the mechanisms of the post-independence relationship between France and Africa through the signing of the ‘cooperation’ agreements, continuous military interventions, personal networks between governing elites and the ‘Africa cell’ (the President and presidential advisors) and monetary control.

## Sources

The first of my two source bases is made up of policy documents upon which French military interventions were legally based. These agreements were signed in the immediate aftermath of independence and in some cases *before* a country was formally independent (Granvaud, 2014, p. 196). The Chadian government signed a ‘defence’ agreement (*Accord de défense*) with France on 11 August 1960, the day of Chadian independence. This agreement was replaced on 6 March 1976 with a Technical Military Cooperation Agreement (*Accord de coopération militaire technique*). These agreements set the tone of the relationship between France and its former colonies economically, culturally, politically and militarily. I also analyse French White Papers on Defence (*Livre blanc sur la défense*). The first White Paper on Defence was published in 1972, outlining and recording French foreign policy. These documents outlined the nature of the relationship which continued between Chad and France once formal colonialism had ended. The fact that they were drawn up at the time of decolonisation by the same French government which had formerly been in charge of governing the colonies demonstrates the link between the colonial and post-independence period. Finally, I analyse presidential speeches given at the quasi-annual France-Africa summits. In these speeches, French presidents outlined their France-Africa policies in an informal way. Through a discursive analysis of these policy documents, I explore the role they played in the discursive justification of French military presence in Chad and the extent to which these documents were characterised by neocolonial ideologies.

My second source base is the articles published in *Le Monde*, *Libération* and *Le Figaro* on Operation Epervier during two mediatised conflicts involving Chad, occurring in 1986-7 and 2008-9*.* Analysis of the news articles reveals which aspects of French military presence in Chad were disseminated and communicated to the French public and how the role of the French military was portrayed to the French public. As mentioned above, the mainstream French press was influential in reporting French military presence in Chad and this thesis will focus on three mainstream newspapers on the political centre (*Le Monde*), left (*Libération*) and right (*Le Figaro*). *Le Monde* in particular was highly influential as one of the most widely read daily newspapers throughout the period of analysis. It was considered an authoritative newspaper of record. Communication of these events to the public via these news media was important because public approval of French military interventions was crucial in order for the French government to justify its continued presence in Africa. The military interventions in Chad in the 1980s were heavily covered in the French press, and mediatisation of Operation Epervier continued throughout the 1990s and 2000s with moments of intensified reporting.

Analysis of the discourse of policy documents reveals the underlying ideologies which informed the events and practices of the French military in Chad. However, it was the press which disseminated and communicated these events to the public. Through its discourse, the press could support or oppose the actions of the French military in Chad. It thereby had influence in normalising French military presence in Africa to the French public and had the ability to contribute to the justification or legitimisation of French military presence, further prolonging it. The two source bases therefore work together: analysis of the official documents reveals the underlying ideologies which informed French governmental decisions to intervene in Chad. Analysis of the news articles reveals how these events were communicated to the public and how they constructed a normalised image of the presence of the French military in Chad. Comparison of the discourses of policy and journalistic texts reveals the degree of proximity in the discourses of French politicians and the news media. This is particularly important as discourse is a social practice and has implications on the actions of governmental decision makers.

## Methodological framework

In this thesis, I argue that the discourses that developed post-1960 in the language of French foreign policy documents and the French mainstream press, discursively justified French military presence in Africa. In order to analyse these discourses, I draw on methodological tools offered primarily by Critical Discourse Analysis – Discourse Historical Approach (CDA-DHA) and journalistic framing analysis.[[9]](#footnote-9) The definition of discourse according to Critical Discourse analysts such as Wodak and Meyer (2009) and Reisigl (2017) is based on the concept of discourse as a form of social practice with the ability to create meaning and shape events. One of the ways in which texts have the ability to shape events is through embedded ideologies. CDA draws on Gramsci's concept of ‘hegemony’ to assert the existence of dominant ideologies that obscure ‘alternatives to the status quo’ (Wodak and Meyer, 2013, p. xxvi). In other words, ideologies become so embedded in discourses that they are no longer questioned but taken for granted in the societies and contexts in which they operate. The news media can be the site of the construction of these discourses and the normalisation of practices through the assertion of ideology. Framing analysts identify these taken-for-granted aspects or assumptions and CDA analysts uncover and demystify the underlying ideologies embedded within discourses, with the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) emphasising the historical context of those discourses. The discursive shift from colonialism to ‘cooperation’ with regard to the Chad-France relationship meant that the French government was able to create new discursive conditions which would enable the maintenance of the status quo in its former colonies and continue to profit economically and geostrategically from Chad.

As well as CDA-DHA, I use journalistic framing analysis (Entman, 1993). Framing is both a theoretical framework for understanding how journalistic texts construct meaning for their audiences as well as the process undertaken by the producers of those texts in the selection or omission of information. Framing analysis enables me to analyse articles on a larger scale, and also to understand how messages in the news were framed for the audience of the news outlets. Framing therefore complements my discursive analysis with CDA-DHA. My combined methodology enables me to reveal the extent to which a deceitful aspect of the neocolonial ideology resides within discourse and framing. Through the language of officials and the news media, the post-independence relationship appears as positive but in practice it consists of a set of tools catering to neocolonial French governmental control. My case study of French military intervention in Chad shows the centrality of discourse as an element in the establishment of this new form of control.

Framing analysis and CDA-DHA work to dismantle and demystify the assumptions and naturalisation of the post-independence relationship. This is at the core of my study, and the reason for which I take the approach of critique to analyse the relationship between France and Chad post-1960. It is also the reason for which I criticise scholarly approaches that refuse to question the role of the French military in Chad post-1960, themselves contributing to the naturalisation of this relationship. By going back to neocolonial ideology and referring to Golan’s question, posed in 1981, I wish to reignite a neocolonial critique of French military involvement in its former colonies and as a researcher, to take part in ‘politically engaged scholarship’[[10]](#footnote-10) (Bourdieu, 2001, pp. 35-41).

By utilising neocolonial theory, developed by African scholars, such as Nkrumah and N’Dongo, I wish to move away from a Eurocentric narrative on the post-independence relationship between former colonisers and formerly colonised countries. The arguments and scholars of neocolonial theory are often overlooked or dismissed in scholarship on this topic, for example, in the work of Chafer (2014). I choose to re-centre scholars speaking from decolonial perspectives, such as N’Dongo (1972) and Nkrumah (1965). Neocolonial scholars of the 1960s and 1970s were explicit in their political project of pan-Africanism, anti-colonialism and liberation. The end goal of neocolonial theory is the decolonisation of narratives and knowledge concerning the power imbalances between former colonies and colonisers. To Nkrumah’s analysis of the political and economic conditions of neocolonial control and N’Dongo’s focus on the legal basis of neocolonial practices, I add the discursive aspects which inform the continuation of exploitation. I identify the neocolonial ideology which is embedded in the discourses of policy and journalistic texts and the extent to which these discourses normalise French military involvement in Chad and prolong the imbalance of power.

Through analysis of discursive devices apparent in the language of the policy documents and news articles, I demonstrate that the discourse of ‘cooperation’ depends on a neocolonial ideology which sees Chad as dependent on French military assistance. These discursive devices contribute to the discursive justification of French military intervention. Combining CDA-DHA with neocolonial theory, I identify three aspects of the neocolonial discourse: 1) the assertion of a power imbalance between the former colonised countries and former colonisers based on racialised ideologies (Fanon, 1952/2008) which assume the victimisation of Africans as actors in need of assistance and the valorisation of dominant powers as saviours; 2) the negative portrayal of opponents of the dominant power (Nkrumah, 1965) and the delegitimisation of their actions; 3) discursive divide and rule or ‘semantic balkanisation’ (Martin, 1985) whereby African actors are categorised according to difference and division. I argue that where there is a shift in policy and language from colonialism to ‘cooperation’, the ideology of neocolonialism emerges. I also argue that analysis of this discourse is key to understanding the longevity of neocolonial French military practices in Chad post-1960. Through analysis of the patterns that exist in both the language of policy and the press, I contribute to the creation of a framework of analysis that can apply to French military interventions taking place during this period, based on the combination of two methodological approaches, CDA-DHA and journalistic framing analysis.

## Research Questions

In this thesis, I explore the extent to which French journalistic and governmental discourses contribute to shaping the development of the relationship between Chad and France after Chadian independence in 1960. I do this by discursively analysing policy documents and French mainstream news articles on French military operation Epervier in Chad (1986-2014). Operation Epervier reflects the longevity of French military activity in Chad and the extent to which the relationship between the two countries was based on French military presence. I develop three major research questions, outlined below.

1. How did the official French governmental discourse around the relationship between France and Chad develop after Chadian independence in 1960? After the end of formal colonialism, the relationship between France and its former colonies continued through the signing of ‘cooperation’ agreements. To what extent did the new relationship between Chad and France reflect a break with the old relationship based on colonialism?
2. How did the mainstream French press frame Operation Epervier and discursively construct the actors involved in its military interventions, their actions and the relationships between them? The mainstream French press was influential and played a role in the shaping of public opinion in its communication of the events of French military interventions to the French public. How did journalistic discourses differ from that of the French government?
3. To what extent did these discourses shape the relationship between the two countries and to what extent were they rooted in ideologies inherited from the colonial period? I argue that the shift in discourse from ‘colonialism’ to ‘cooperation’ in both the policy documents and the news articles, enabled the French military to continue its military presence in Chad. It was able to do this because the notion of ‘cooperation’ was rooted in the discourse of colonialism, normalising and justifying French presence in Chad based on the assertion of Chadian dependence on the French state.

## Chapter Overview

In Chapter 1, I outline the theoretical and methodological framework of this thesis: neocolonial theory and *Françafrique* as well as CDA-DHA and framing analysis. I also discuss the historical context of post-independence relations between Chad and France and present my case study of Operation Epervier (1986-2014). This case study was carefully chosen as it exemplifies French military presence on the African continent post-1960 and demonstrates how the approach of ‘cooperation’ between France and Chad was part of a larger neocolonial framework of control post-independence. In this chapter, I assert that analysis of my two source bases benefits from a multidisciplinary approach, combining Critical Discourse Analysis, historical analysis and journalistic analysis as these approaches work together to uncover ideologies and critique the practices stemming from them.

In Chapter 2, I analyse the ‘defence’, ‘assistance’ and ‘cooperation’ agreements signed between France and its former colonies in the aftermath of the latter’s independence, the White Papers on Defence and presidential speeches held at the France-Africa Summits. Chapter 2 is divided into two parts, the first looking at the discourse of the policies published during the Cold War period between 1960 and 1989 and the second analysing the policies relevant to the post-Cold War period, from 1990 until the end of Operation Epervier in 2014. I trace the development of ‘cooperation’ across this period.

Chapters 3 and 4 are concerned with the dissemination and communication of the consequences of French foreign policy in Africa, i.e., French military interventions in the form of Operation Epervier, to the French public. In Chapter 3, I discursively analyse the way in which *Le Monde* framed Operation Epervier when it was launched in 1986 during a conflict between Chad and Libya, ending in 1987. I compare the discourse of *Le Monde*’s articles to that of the policy documents analysed in Chapter 2. In Chapter 4, I discursively analyse the framing of Operation Epervier and EUFOR during a conflict between Chad and Sudan, between 2008 and 2009, in *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *Libération*. I compare the language of the three newspapers and once again contrast it against the language of the policy documents, discussed in Chapter 2.

# Chapter 1: Historical Context, Theory and Methods

In this chapter, I present the historical context and the theoretical and methodological approaches of this thesis. The chapter will be divided into four sections, with the first focusing on the historical context, the second on the theoretical framework, the third on the methodological processes, and the fourth on the case study for this thesis. The historical context section looks at the relationship between France and Chad during the colonial period and post-independence period. The theoretical framework is based on neocolonial theory and the approach of *Françafrique* as well as Critical Discourse Analysis – Discourse Historical Approach (CDA-DHA) combined with framing analysis. The methodological basis of this study is CDA-DHA combined with framing analysis, providing the tools with which to discursively analyse my two source bases: French foreign policy documents and news articles published in the French mainstream press (*Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, *Libération*). In this section, I describe my source base and analytical process. Finally, I present the case study of Operation Epervier and address the limitations of this thesis.

## Historical Context I: The Colonial Period

France’s colonisation of Africa began in the 1800s in northern Africa. By the early twentieth century, the French government had formally colonised much of central and western Africa. The French colonial government exerted direct rule in its African colonies, which were seen by French officials as an extension of France. The countries of western and central Africa were divided into two federations, ‘French West Africa’[[11]](#footnote-11) and ‘French Equatorial Africa’.[[12]](#footnote-12) These two administrative zones were made up of separate smaller countries but united by French administration in a strategy which divided the continent of Africa, but which brought many of its countries together under French rule. The French colonial administration exerted political control (through direct rule as well as divide and rule), economic control (through control of currency, industry, natural resources and human labour), cultural control (through education and language policy) and military control (through the establishment of military bases on African soil).

Colonial expansion took place during the French Third Republic (1871-1940).[[13]](#footnote-13) French colonialism was characterised by three interrelated component parts: 1) the civilising mission, 2) paternalism, 3) French *grandeur*. Firstly, colonisation was discursively justified as a ‘civilising mission’ according to French officials. The civilising mission was the official French Republican colonial ideology from 1895. It asserted the racialised idea of an intrinsic inferiority of the colonised people (Bancel, Blanchard and Vergès, 2003). French Prime Minister Jules Ferry (1885) argued at the time of the French Third Republic that colonialism was an economic necessity but also had a ‘humanitarian and civilising side’.[[14]](#footnote-14) According to Ferry, this was based on the ‘inferiority’ of colonised people and the ‘superiority’ of colonisers: ‘the superior races have a right vis-à-vis the inferior races’.[[15]](#footnote-15) Jules Maigne, a fellow politician opposed Ferry by saying, ‘you dare to say that in the country where the rights of man were proclaimed!’[[16]](#footnote-16) Maigne highlighted the question of sovereignty and consent in African countries, stating, ‘Do these populations of an inferior race not have as many rights as you? Are they not masters of their own home? Do they call you?’.[[17]](#footnote-17) However, Ferry’s position was that France had ‘the duty to civilise the inferior races’.[[18]](#footnote-18) Therefore, according to Ferry, the *duty* to civilise trumped the ‘rights of man’.[[19]](#footnote-19) Secondly, this ‘duty’ was based on a paternalistic notion whereby French officials discursively qualified colonisers as superior and more advanced as opposed to the colonised who were perceived as infantile and inferior. This notion of superiority also influenced the final aspect of the civilising mission, the idea of French *grandeur*. *Grandeur* followed the notion of *rayonnement* or the projection of French ideology and values abroad. In 1885, Ferry asserted that ‘in [the Republican Party's] policy of colonial expansion [...] there was the sentiment of the greatness of France.’[[20]](#footnote-20) France was therefore perceived as a great nation with the right to spread its influence abroad.

In order to expand, France first invaded Chad in the late 1800s and Chad became a formal French colony in 1900 through French military domination. To assert this dominance, the French colonialists built a military base in the designated capital city, which they named Fort Lamy (now N’Djamena).[[21]](#footnote-21) The relationship was therefore defined by military presence from the beginning. There was resistance to French colonial rule, especially by the Muslim population in the north, who held most of the political power in Chad before French colonisation. Azevedo (2005, p. 242) describes how the Chadian northerners ‘fiercely resisted French intrusion and did not give up until they were overpowered militarily’, and only after many French fatalities. The French military lost more soldiers in Chad than in any of France’s other colonies during the period of formal colonialism (Azevedo, 2005). In response, French administrators adopted a policy of divide and rule by ‘appeasing the north and developing the south’, as the south had more fertile land and French colonialists were able to exploit southerners through forced labour (Azevedo, 2005, p. 242). French colonialists exploited cotton cultivation in the south and referred to southern Chad as ‘Useful Chad’ (‘le Tchad Utile’) (Azevedo, 2005, p. 242).[[22]](#footnote-22) When Chad became independent in 1960, French administrators handed administrative control to the south while continuing the military occupation of the north until 1965 (Arditi, 1993) and maintaining their military base, which continued to be called ‘Fort Lamy’, despite Chadians having renamed the capital N’Djamena. Symbolically and discursively, a place named Fort Lamy continued to exist in N’Djamena, marking continuity with the colonial period. Politically, despite Chadian independence, formal and direct French administrative rule continued in the north, reflecting the incomplete nature of independence from the very beginning.

### The French Community

After WWII, France was weakened, and multiple wars of independence broke out in a number of its colonies, namely Indochina (1946-1954), Madagascar (1947) and Algeria (1954-1962). In May 1958, a political crisis, caused by the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962), led to the collapse of the French Fourth Republic. A new constitution, which included the creation of the French Community, was drawn up and put to referendum in France and its colonies. Membership of the French Community guaranteed internal self-government for the colonies, but with governors appointed by the French government (Rivlin, 1959). Vaïsse (2009, p. v) points out that under the proposal member states had ‘internal autonomy but foreign policy, currency, defence, economic and financial policy, higher education, justice etc., depend[ed] on the organs of the Community’, which was to be led by France. De Gaulle clearly did not mean for there to be a choice in the referendum. He threatened territories considering independence by saying ‘one cannot conceive of an independent territory and a France that continues to aid it. The [independent] government will bear the consequences, economic and otherwise, that are entailed in the manifestation of such a will’ (de Gaulle quoted in Schmidt, 2013, p. 174). All French colonies, apart from Guinea, voted to retain links with France and to be part of the French Community.[[23]](#footnote-23) Guinea therefore became independent in 1958.

In 1959, the de Gaulle administration set up the Ministry of Cooperation in order to deal with France’s colonies. The ministry was also responsible for coordinating military activity in Africa. According to Chafer (1992) the Ministry of Cooperation was ‘essentially a Ministry for francophone black Africa’ (p. 39).[[24]](#footnote-24) The French Community was therefore an attempt by the French government to maintain unity across the French colonial empire during a time of turmoil. However, the resistance of Madagascar in 1947, Cameroon in 1955 and Guinea in 1958, and the violent reaction of France to this resistance led to the failure of the French Community and the majority of France’s African colonies became independent in 1960 (Schmidt, 2013). The French Community persisted until 16 March 1961 when it suddenly ceased to exist following a short letter written by French Prime Minister Michel Debré (Débre, 1961).

## Historical Context II: Independence and ‘Cooperation’

When it was clear that France’s colonies were going to fight for and gain independence, another solution was sought by de Gaulle’s government in order to maintain influence in France’s former colonial sphere of influence. French administrators broke up the federations of French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa into smaller countries, as part of an approach of divide and rule. Then, the French government signed ‘defence’ agreements with the newly independent countries, maintaining military, economic, cultural and trade relations beyond formal colonialism. These agreements were often signed on the day of independence. For example, the first post-independence agreement between France and Chad was signed on 11 August 1960, the day of Chadian independence. Further, a quadripartite accord was signed on 15 August 1960 between Central African Republic, Congo, Chad and France.[[25]](#footnote-25) Defence agreements signed between Chad, Congo, Benin, Niger, Senegal and France were repealed, mainly in the 1970s and replaced with 'technical cooperation' agreements. Chad and France signed a ‘cooperation’ agreement on 6 March 1976. Like the relationship under the French Community, the relationship of ‘cooperation’ linked France to its former colonies through control of currency, trade, defence, language policy etc. It can therefore be argued that this relationship was neocolonial, as it marked continuity between practices during the colonial period and those and those post-independence.

At a time when the international norm was non-interventionism (Kinacioglu, 2005), the agreements allowed the French government to intervene militarily in the independent countries of Africa. Because the French government was economically weakened after WWII, access to African territory and its natural resources was vital for it to remain a nuclear power during the Cold War. France exploited uranium reserves in central and west Africa and retained military access to the region via its bases in Chad. The French policy of nuclear deterrence, which required the development of nuclear energy and nuclear testing, was a major part of the French government's foreign policy during the 1960s and 1970s. Bossuat (2003) explains that 'de Gaulle wanted to hold on to the Saharan sites for testing France's nuclear strike capability and to keep an eye on the exploitation of Sahara oil discovered and financed by French companies' (p. 446).

The 1961 Defence agreement between Côte d'Ivoire, Dahomey (now Benin), France and Niger guaranteed the French government access to hydrocarbons, uranium, thorium, lithium and beryllium in Niger as part of the ‘cooperation’ between the two countries. The document states, ‘in order to secure their mutual defence interests, the contracting parties agree to cooperate in the domain of defence materials’[[26]](#footnote-26) (Annex II, Article 1, p. 3). It also prioritised French access to these resources, stating that when required, the Nigerien government must ‘limit or prohibit their export to other countries’[[27]](#footnote-27) (Annexe II, Article 4, p. 4) and ‘reserve their sale in priority to the French Republic’[[28]](#footnote-28) (Annex II, Article 5, p. 4). The 1961 Defence agreement was replaced in 1977 with a Technical Military Cooperation agreement with Niger. But exploitation of natural resources continued in countries such as Gabon, Mali and Niger through the General Nuclear Material Company (La Compagnie générale des matières nucléaires or COGEMA), created in 1976. Furthermore, almost the same wording is used in the 1960 quadripartite agreement signed by Central African Republic, Congo and Chad, regarding the following raw materials: ‘liquid or gaseous hydrocarbons; uranium, thorium, lithium, beryllium; helium, their ores and compounds’.[[29]](#footnote-29) These agreements show the importance of such natural resources to France and demonstrate how they relate to the 1972 White Paper on Defence and France’s policy during the Cold War, even if no reference is made to the uranium- or beryllium-producing countries or to the fact that these materials are required for France to develop its nuclear deterrence programme. It reveals the links between French military ‘cooperation’ and France’s economic needs in its former African colonies. It also explains why Chad, positioned in central Africa, was vital to the French state geostrategically.

There was no reciprocal access for the African states to natural resources in France. The agreements restricted their trade with other countries and therefore restricted the economic autonomy of the African signatories. They also enabled French state ownership of important natural resources on the African continent. The stated benefit of these agreements for the African signatories was assistance from the French military in terms of personnel, training, materials and equipment (1960 Quadripartite Agreement, Act II C, p. 6; 1976 Technical Military Cooperation agreement, Article 16, pp. 8-9). This resulted in the presence of French military bases and armies in the African states, which would be used to protect French economic and material interests. The relationship of ‘cooperation’ was therefore an unbalanced one that disproportionately benefited the French state at the expense of the African signatories.

### Post-Cold War

In the aftermath of the Cold War, there were many global changes which impacted the role of the French state and its position in the world. In response to these changes, a new White Paper on Defence was published in 1994. The aim of the White Paper was to outline the main concerns for the French state and to address these problems through the development of foreign policy positions. Despite the end of hostilities between the Cold War power blocs, the 1994 White Paper was heavily concerned with global ‘security’ and ‘stability’. Consequently, policy changes that emerged during this period reflected the perceived necessity, on the part of policymakers, of ensuring stability and security globally.

Another significant development to French foreign policy in Africa was multilateralisation. Very broadly, multilateralisation involves participating or collaborating with other nations or organisations when acting with regard to economic or military matters (Ruggie, 1992). In 1995, the French state made a partial return to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), fully re-joining in 2009, under Sarkozy’s presidentship. Furthermore, there was collaboration between the French government and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank as well as international organisations such as the United Nations (UN), the European Community (and later the European Union) and the African Union (AU) in the matters of foreign policy regarding military or economic interventions in Africa.

The two policy shifts of democratisation and multilateralisation fed into the 1998 legal reforms to the approach of ‘cooperation’ during Jacques Chirac’s presidency (1995-2007). These reforms saw the dissolution of the Ministry of Cooperation, although the post of the Minister of Cooperation continued.[[30]](#footnote-30) The reforms had two main implications: firstly, the development of new institutional structures based on development aid, and secondly, the dissolution of a ministry dealing exclusively with France’s former colonies. An article in *Le Monde* described the dissolution of the Ministry of Cooperation as an upheaval to ‘decades of relations’[[31]](#footnote-31) between France and Africa and a ‘political signal to African leaders, whose rue Monsieur[[32]](#footnote-32) was the traditional interlocutor’ (Babette, 1998).[[33]](#footnote-33) This suggests that those African leaders no longer had a ministry designed to deal with their needs and that the unique status of the relationship between France and its former colonies was lost. It implies that this change marked a monumental shift in French foreign policy in Africa.

However, in this thesis, I argue that despite these reforms, for successive French governments, these policy shifts were a way of adapting to changes while continuing to retain influence in Africa. One of the main aspects of ‘cooperation’ that continued was the use of the Technical Military Cooperation agreements. Alongside this was the high number of troops which remained in French bases in Africa, particularly Chad. These policy shifts will be analysed in depth in Chapter 2. By the 2000s, French military interventions in Africa had intensified and by 2008, the French military was involved in multilateral intervention in Chad involving a conflict with Sudan (analysed in Chapter 4).

### The Question of Continuity

The way in which French foreign policy is implemented and approached more broadly is worth analysing. Bozo (2016) argues that ‘African policy became the most important [presidential] *domaine réservé[[34]](#footnote-34)* of foreign policy under the Fifth Republic, to the point that it would largely lie outside the authority of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs’ (p. 46). In other words, ‘the former colonial possessions in Africa that France in many ways still regarded as its own “private estate”, and over which it sought to exercise exclusive influence’. (Bozo, 2016, p. 104). This influence was characterised by military interventions. Referring to these interventions under Giscard d’Estaing, Bozo (2016) writes that the interventions in Zaire, Mauritania and Chad took place ‘in support of regimes it sought to protect, or quite simply to defend its own interests’ (p. 105). The idea of the *domaine réservé* or exclusive presidential domain was a characteristic of de Gaulle’s presidency but continued throughout the period of analysis of this thesis across his successors. De Gaulle sought a continued relationship with Africa after independence and saw NATO as detracting from what he believed were France’s ‘indivisible responsibilities’ in Africa, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific (Bozo, 2016, p. 47). Socialist French President François Mitterrand too created a presidential *domaine réservé*, which ‘very quickly showed signs of continuity that surprised those who had hoped for change just as much as it did those who had feared it.’ (Bozo, 2016, p. 118).

This continuity was evident in the post-Cold War years too. Once Chirac became president, his decision to remove the Ministry of Cooperation and to multilateralise relations with France's former colonies in Africa signalled some change on the surface. However, Bozo (2016) points out that these differences only existed 'in tone' and continuity prevailed (p. 163). Sarkozy's decision to return to NATO in 2008 marked a break with or 'betrayal' of the position, established by de Gaulle, of independence following withdrawal from NATO (Bozo, 2016, p. 179). However, military interventionism in Africa continued under Sarkozy, including the 2011 military operation in Côte d'Ivoire, not to mention the continuation of Operation Epervier, launched by Mitterrand in 1986. Finally, despite Socialist President François Hollande's presidential campaign being characterised by a 'rejection of Sarkozy', his foreign policy was 'devoid of major announcements' and was only different in form rather than substance (Bozo, 2016, pp. 185-6). Under Hollande, France became potentially even more interventionist in terms of its foreign policy. Bozo (2016. 189) writes, 'nowhere has France’s new interventionism been more visible since the beginning of Hollande’s presidency than in Africa' particularly due to the launch of Operation Serval in Mali with the help of Operation Epervier, both of which were incorporated into that massive military operation Barkhane in 2014. Largescale operation Sangaris in Central African Republic was also launched by Hollande's government in 2013. Sustained influence through military involvement in France’s former colonies was therefore characteristic of the governments under de Gaulle beyond. This reflects the reasons for which Chad, geographically positioned in central Africa and serving as a military base for the French military, was a priority for French governments during this period of analysis.

## Theoretical Framework

Above, I positioned my thesis within the historical context of the post-1960 relationship between France and Chad. In order to analyse this relationship, I utilise theories developed during this period in order to deal with the complexities of the world once formal colonialism had ended. My theoretical framework has two interconnected aspects that bring together method and theory: neocolonial theory, which incorporates the *Françafrique* position, and CDA-DHA with framing analysis, the theoretical aspects of which inform how it is used as a methodological approach.

I draw on neocolonial theory as a critique of French economic and political interests in Africa, many aspects of which marked continuity with pre-1960 colonial practices. I include elements of the notion of *Françafrique*, which developed in the 1990s, specifically as a critique of French foreign policy positions in France's ‘sphere of influence’ in Africa. I demonstrate that shifts in the governmental and journalistic discourses from the period of colonialism to neocolonialism enabled the French state to continue its military interventions in Chad post-1960 and thereby to continue exerting control over the independent country of Chad. The power imbalance between France and Chad can be analysed through my chosen methodological approaches. CDA-DHA is concerned with analysis of the underlying ideologies of texts and uncovering power imbalances embedded within their discourses. This relates both to the news articles and the policy documents, which were pivotal in the shaping of French foreign policies and practices in Chad. Framing analysis is concerned with how messages are framed by journalists through analysis of what is included and omitted in journalistic texts and how these frames contribute to shaping audience perceptions. Framing analysis relates to the news articles, which were vital in communicating the events of the French military operation in Chad to the French public.

The relationship between policy and press is contentious and there are debates in Journalism studies as to which influences the other. For theorists of the ‘CNN effect’, such as (Robinson, 2002), news media shape government policy. This happens in response to 24-hour news coverage of crises which need an immediate policy response, such as conflicts. The CNN effect positions journalists within a 'watchdog' role, holding the government to account. Opposing this view are theorists of the ‘propaganda model’, put forth by Herman and Chomsky (1988), who argue that journalists and news organisations act as mouthpieces for the state, their advertisers and their owners. However, for Reese (2010), the process is not one-way but part of an ongoing construction. He suggests that it is important to look at ‘how social actors participate in the creation and maintenance of certain frames and the ongoing construction of the discursive environment, and the interests that are served in the process’ (Reese, 2010, p. 22). Adopting this dialectical view, I argue that policymakers and news organisations mutually reinforce pro-interventionist discourses in relation to French military operations in Chad. The relationship between policy and journalism is central to this thesis. Throughout my study I will analyse the proximity in discourse between the two entities.

### Neocolonial Theory

The theory of neocolonialism emerged as many African countries were becoming independent in the 1960s and 1970s, in response to what was perceived as the risk of continued exploitation of the former colonies by the former colonial powers. The Third All-African People’s Conference in Cairo in March 1961 asserted,

neo-colonialism, which is the survival of the colonial system in spite of formal recognition of political independence in emerging countries which become the victims of an indirect and subtle form of domination by *political*, *economic*, *social*, *military or technical means*, is the greatest threat to African countries that have newly won their independence or those approaching this status (quoted in Woddis, 1967, p. 61).

The notion of neocolonialism was developed by Ghanaian leader Kwame Nkrumah, who led Ghana to independence in 1957. Nkrumah’s (1965) treatise, *Neocolonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* is a work of reference when discussing neocolonial theory. In its analysis of the economic exploitation of newly independent former colonies, Nkrumah's theoretical approach draws from Marxism. However, his work also has a strong political perspective, whereby control of the economic system is directly linked to a lack of agency regarding political decisions in the newly independent countries. This political emphasis is based on a pan-Africanist approach, which emphasises the need for African unity to counter the exploitation and influence of other power blocs. Neocolonial theory is therefore the result of both academic thought and political action, with an engaged and activist cause.

The context of the 1960s was one of a wave of independences. The majority of France's African colonies became independent in 1960. Algeria became independent in 1962 after a violent armed conflict with France. Many of Britain's colonies in Africa also became independent in the 1960s. The theory of neocolonialism therefore developed during a period of apparent ‘decolonisation’ and at a time when new relationships were being forged between the newly independent states and the former colonisers. In the wake of these independence movements, Nkrumah's concept of neocolonialism critiqued the continued economic and political exploitation of newly independent, former colonial states by former colonising states. Nkrumah (1965, p. ix) writes, ‘the essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside’. Neocolonialism therefore describes a system where a country is nominally independent economically, politically and militarily, but in reality is controlled externally.

In order for neocolonialism to be successful from the perspective of the former colonisers, ‘the Western powers realised that they would have to find allies within the new states who would cooperate with the West, and allow their countries to remain within the orbit of Western influence – economically, politically, militarily and ideologically’ (Woddis, 1967, p, 55). In other words, former colonisers needed to form partnerships with African elites in order to continue exerting influence on the continent. This can be seen as a form of co-option. Langan (2018, p. 5) explains that ‘Nkrumah notably underscored the co-optive role of foreign governments as aid donors, as well as the role of foreign corporations investing capital into African economies’. Keese (2009) believes that the reason for France’s ‘cooperation’[[35]](#footnote-35) with African leaders in its colonies pre-independence was to ‘co-opt African leaders vulnerable to swing to the extreme left’. I will revisit the notion of co-option in the *Françafrique* section below.

Sally N’Dongo adds an important angle to the theory of neocolonialism by demonstrating the extent to which the system of neocolonialism was inscribed within the constitution of the newly independent states and has therefore been a fundamental part of their existence. N’Dongo (1972, pp. 20-21) writes, ‘with the [French] Community first and then independence, de Gaulle only continued, by accelerating, the process of the creation of neocolonial states, which had already begun with the *loi-cadre Deferre*’.[[36]](#footnote-36) N’Dongo thus argues that independence itself was part of the development of neocolonialism. Upon becoming independent, often on the very day of independence, each of France’s newly sovereign former African colonies signed agreements with France affording the French government a myriad of benefits including exclusive access to natural resources, the continued presence of military bases and personnel, the right to intervene militarily and control of currency. Therefore, despite independence, the French state remained heavily involved in its former colonies. Furthermore, the agreements legally justified this involvement, and the discourse of the agreements naturalised external influence in the affairs of independent African countries as a form of ‘cooperation’. These agreements are therefore central to understanding the neocolonial relationship between France and Chad as well as its longevity.

The notion of neocolonialism was adopted or further developed in the two decades following the wave of independences in the 1960s by scholars such as Jack Woddis[[37]](#footnote-37) (1967) who analysed economic, political, military and ideological neocolonial control; French journalist Claude Wauthier’s (1972) analysis of neocolonialism in the form of financial aid used by France and other powers, such as the USSR, China and the USA, to keep African, Asian and South American countries dependent on them; Richard Joseph’s (1976) study of Gaullist neocolonialism through the ‘system of cooperation’ (p. 12); and Rajen Harshe’s (1980) study on the French neocolonial aspects of the ‘defence’, ‘assistance’ and ‘cooperation’ agreements. These studies demonstrate that neocolonialism has been used as a concept in multiple fields: Politics, International Relations, History, Cultural Studies, Geography, and recently even in the natural sciences.[[38]](#footnote-38) It is therefore a useful theory across disciplines, enabling us to understand the power relations between former colonising and former colonised countries, relevant to this thesis.

Scholars of 'decoloniality' such as Quijano and Mignolo also study the exploitative relations that have continued beyond formal colonialism. Writing in the 1990s, Peruvian scholar, Quijano (2007) explains that the 'coloniality of power', defined as an imbalance of power based on 'old ideas of superiority of the dominant and inferiority of the dominated under European colonialism', continued to exist after the period of formal colonialism through biological and structural ideas of superiority and inferiority (p. 171). Quijano (2007) writes, ‘Eurocentred coloniality of power has proved to be longer lasting than Eurocentred colonialism’ (p. 171). According to him, the project of decolonial thinkers is ‘to liberate the production of knowledge, reflection, and communication from the pitfalls of European rationality/modernity’ (Quijano, 2007, p. 177). Mignolo and Walsh (2018) state that ‘decolonial thinking and doing aim to delink from the epistemic assumptions common to all the areas of knowledge established in the Western world since the European Renaissance and through the European Enlightenment’ (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018, p. 106). Neocolonial theory enables us to carry out this delinking, having been developed by African scholars and activists such as Nkrumah and N'Dongo, in places living through so-called decolonisation, while being subject to continued colonial forms of violence and control. I argue that revisiting and reigniting the arguments made in the 1960s and 1970s is vital, as they enable us to understand the longevity of French military presence in its former colonies. Operation Epervier, cast under this light, can be seen as a neocolonial operation.

The theoretical basis of this thesis draws on the works of thinkers such as Nkrumah and N’Dongo who played a role both as activists in the struggle against colonialism as well as theorists writing about the dangers of colonial continuities in the form of neocolonialism. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013, p. 27) describes the project of pan-Africanism, led by activists such as Nkrumah, as 'a counterforce to the hegemonic global imperial designs in place since the time of conquest' (p. 48) which was part of 'decolonial horizons' involving African subjectivity as opposed to European hegemony (p. 57). The multifarious nature of Nkrumah and N’Dongo’s experiences, as both theorists and practitioners, meant that their theories were rooted in an activist approach. Embedded in this approach is therefore a form of decoloniality, as the aim of neocolonial theorists was and continues to be the fight against the persistence of colonialism. The fact that Nkrumah’s theories draw on Marxism enables us to understand European colonialism through the European economic lens of Marxism while at the same time combatting it through theories developed within the context of activism born of anti-colonial struggle. In this thesis, I combine the decolonial neocolonial theoretical approach with CDA-DHA as a tool of criticism that enables us to adapt the methodological approach of discourse analysis to the decolonial project of this thesis. This methodological approach is complemented by framing analysis as a critique of objectivity that enables me to critically analyse the reporting of French journalists on the subject of the French neocolonial practices reflected in French military intervention in Chad.

#### Intentionality and Deception

Above, we saw the extent to which scholars of neocolonialism in the 1960s and 1970s formed their theories on the economic and political exploitation of newly independent states by former colonising states. However, there is also an important discursive element to neocolonial theory, upon which I centre my study. As well as the economic, political and legal aspects of neocolonial control, the logic of neocolonialism was embedded within the discourses of policy and journalistic texts. Throughout this thesis, I argue that the shift from colonialism to neocolonialism also happened discursively through the reformulation of the relationship between France and its former African colonies from colonialism to the notion of ‘cooperation’. I show that this reformulation depended on the French government and news media’s portrayal of the relationship between France and its former colonies as positive rather than negative. There was therefore a vital element of discursive deception involved in the language used in the French official and journalistic texts.

There are debates in the scholarship on the extent to which neocolonialism is an intentional system of exploitation or a remnant feature of colonialism. This is a debate that re-emerges throughout the thesis within the literature in relation to the role of French military intervention in Chad. Arguing the latter, Taiwo (2019) believes that neocolonialism ‘represents the actions and effects of certain remnant features and agents of the colonial era in a given society’. This idea is repeated by Chafer and Sackur (2002) who suggest that where France still holds power, this is a ‘remnant’ of past colonialism. They write, ‘besides the fact that France still possesses scattered territorial remnants of the empire, it also has close, if sometimes uncomfortable or embarrassing, relations with many of its former colonies’ (Chafer and Sackur, 2002, p. 198). Here, the physical remnant of the French empire is presented a result of former colonialism and not as a new relationship in the form of neocolonialism. For Moïsi, in 1984, the continuation of French military interventions in independent former colonies was *not* a remnant of colonialism but a response to ‘Soviet imperialistic ambitions’ (Moïsi, 1984, quoted in McNulty, 1999, p. 142). Moïsi thereby argues against the claim that colonial continuities are ‘remnants’ of colonialism and argues instead that they represent a transformation. Along these lines, scholars in the 1960s and 1970s had been taking a radical position, arguing that neocolonialism was more of an intentional endeavour. Woddis (1967, p.50) argues that neocolonialism ‘can only be understood as a strategy’. It is therefore planned. Ghana’s Foreign Minister, Alex Quaison-Sackey suggests that as well as intentional, neocolonialism is deceptive (Uzoigwe, 2019). He explains that neocolonialism is ‘the practice of granting a sort of independence with the concealed intention of making the liberated country a client-state, and controlling it effectively by means other than political ones’ (quoted in Uzoigwe, 2019, p. 62).

The idea of deception is also apparent in the First Afro-Asian-Latin American People’s Solidarity Conference in Havana, which took place in 1966. At the conference, it was asserted that the pretext and justification for neocolonial domination was a sort of altruism,

to guarantee its domination, imperialism tries to destroy the national, cultural and spiritual values of each countries [sic], and forms an apparatus of domination which includes national armed forces docile to their policy, the establishment of military bases, the creation of organs of repression, with technical advisers from imperialist countries, the signing of secret military pacts, the formation of regional and international warmongering alliance. It encourages and carries out coups d’état and political assassinations to ensure puppet governments; at the same time, in the economic field it resorts to deceptive formulas, such as the so-called Alliance for Progress, Food for Peace and other similar forms, while using international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for the Reconstruction and Development to reinforce its economic domination (In Woddis, 1967, p. 62).

As well as repeating the intentional strategies of asserting dominance in a wide variety of forms, the 1966 First Afro-Asian-Latin American People’s Solidarity Conference in Havana highlighted the covert aspects of neocolonialism. These secretive features include, firstly, ‘the signing of secret military pacts’, where Woddis (1969) also mentions the signing of ‘deceptive “treaties” imposed on local leaders’ (para 2). Secondly, the conference mention initiatives such as alliances, and international organisations (i.e. the International Monetary Fund) that ‘deceive’ the countries that are dominated under neocolonialism. This suggests the existence of deceptive positive actions (development aid, peace efforts) that cover up negative actions (repression, domination). This idea is prominent throughout my analysis, through discursive devices such as Positive Self, where, viewed from the position of the dominant force, France, we see how discourses of assistance and altruism are put forth and obscure negative consequences for Chad, such as unequal distributions of wealth and ongoing conflicts. It is therefore through this discursive deception in the language of French officials and the press, who frame negative practices as positive actions, that neocolonial ideology is discursively justified to the public and able to operate.

Neocolonial theorists tend to agree that neocolonialism is ‘subtle’, which is a clue as to how it is able to operate discursively. The Third All-African People's Conference in Cairo (1961) describes an ‘indirect and subtle form of domination’ (quoted in Woddis, 1967, p. 61). Nkrumah (1965) calls it ‘subtle and varied’. N'Dongo (1976, p. 7) describes it as ‘more subtle, more muted’[[39]](#footnote-39) than colonialism, yet ‘just as efficient’.[[40]](#footnote-40) The answer to the degree of intentionality of neocolonialism may therefore be located in its subtlety. However, it can be argued that the ideologies which inform neocolonial practices are so embedded that it is no longer a question of whether they are intentional or not but the extent to which they are naturalised. In this case, the work of CDA-DHA and framing is to uncover these embedded ideologies in order to reveal their mechanisms.

Unlike the argument made by Chafer and Sackur (2002) that the French state has ‘close, if sometimes uncomfortable or embarrassing, relations with many of its former colonies’ (p. 198), I argue that the exploitative nature of the relationship is a feature of neocolonialism and depends on the discursive reformulation of the relationship as positive, consensual cooperation. It is an example of what Frith (2015, p. 218) calls the ability of the French state to ‘revise and rewrite’ the narrative of its relationship with its former colonies. The positive discursive narrative contributes to the longevity of the post-independence relationship between France and Chad. Below I will discuss the interaction between neocolonial theory, ideology and discourse.

#### Neocolonialism, Ideology and Discourse

The ideological and discursive elements of neocolonial theory are a key part of this thesis. In terms of ideology, Frantz Fanon’s approach enables us to consider the significance of the colonial period and its racialised ideologies on the populations of the newly independent countries. Fanon (1952) wrote *Black Skin, White Masks* before the wave of independences in the 1960s. However, his work is valuable in the analysis of neocolonialism and has been used by neocolonial theorists. Fanon (1952) asserts that during the colonial period, there existed a psychological state of inferiority of colonised people and its opposite in colonisers, a sense of superiority. He believed that in order for the colonies to be liberated from the power of the colonisers, they would have to break free from the racialised binaries that kept them in a psychological state of inferiority. He wrote, 'the Negro enslaved by his inferiority, the white man enslaved by his superiority alike behave in accordance with a neurotic orientation' (Fanon, 1952/2008, pp. 42-3). This notion is reiterated by scholar Thomas Gladwin, who argued in 1980 that neocolonialism was so pervasive ‘that it intrudes not only into all the institutions and policies of the countries it affects but also into the minds of the people who govern and lead these countries’ (quoted in Uzoigwe, 2019, p. 66). According to Uzoigwe (2019), this notion of inferiority and superiority fuels European diplomacy, which rests on ‘the belief of superpowers that they have the right to play demigod with states they consider to be their inferior in power in pursuit of national interests’ (p. 70). As we shall see, this ideological notion of inferiority and superiority pervades the discourse of French news articles and policy documents in relation to French military involvement in Chad.

This discourse is key to analysing the extent to which French policy and journalistic texts are able to justify and legitimise neocolonial practices in newly independent, sovereign nations and helps to explain their longevity. Discursive analysis helps us to address these questions. The initial theories of neocolonialism, developed in the 1960s and 1970s, did not centre the discursive aspects of neocolonial practice. There were some brief mentions of the language of neocolonialism. For example, Nkrumah (1965) states that a former colonial power may claim to be ‘“giving” independence to its former subjects, to be followed by “aid” for their development’ (p. 239), which are seen as ‘modern attempts to perpetuate colonialism while at the same time talking about “freedom”’ (p. 239). Nkrumah therefore suggests that former colonial powers perpetuate colonial practices, creating dependence, yet discursively reframe these practices as ‘freedom’. He also points out a power imbalance in the idea that colonists ‘gave’ independence to the colonised, ignoring the fact that gaining independence was a result of wars of independence (and the multiple French defeats, in the case of French colonies) and action on the part of colonised actors. It can therefore be argued that the role of the colonial powers is discursively constructed as positive, while causing negative outcomes for the former colonies of ‘subjects’. Nkrumah also discusses the framing of independence struggles in the news media of the ‘West’, where nationalists fighting imperialists are referred to as ‘rebels, terrorists, or frequently, “communist terrorists”’ (p. 247). Once again, Nkrumah is talking about the discursive construction of actors who were antagonistic to the former colonisers and were subsequently portrayed negatively. These passages demonstrate the importance of language and framing in the discursive justification of neocolonial practices. Although the majority of works on neocolonialism focus on economics and politics as well as a minority on ideology, I argue that discourse plays an essential role in the theory of neocolonialism because it is through discourse that actions are justified and become a set of practices.

The way in which neocolonialism informs discursive analysis means that we are able to critique the way in which communicating texts discuss former colonial countries. For example, Uzoigwe (2019) is critical of the terms ‘Sub-Saharan’, ‘Middle East’, ‘Eura-Africa’ and ‘tribalism’ (p. 70) because they are intended to be divisive in the face of potential unity. Martin (1985, p. 192) refers to this as ‘semantic balkanisation’:

In what amounts to a ‘semantic balkanisation’, they usually partition Africa into a multiplicity of component parts. Hence, the common reference to ‘Black Africa’ or to ‘Africa South of the Sahara’ in opposition to the ‘White’ Maghreb; the distinction between the states of Africa and the islands of the Indian Ocean, as if the latter were not part of the continent; the well-known division between ‘francophone’, ‘anglophone’, and ‘lusophone’ Africa, as if the official foreign languages constituted a major and permanent distinctive criteria; and the more recent categorisation based on economic criteria: ‘oil-exporting’, ‘high’, or ‘middle-income’ versus ‘oil-importing’, ‘low-income’, ‘poor’, ‘least developed’ states (the latter being generally ‘Sahelian’ and ‘drought-stricken’). (Martin, 1985, p. 192)

Martin (1985) demonstrates how discourse is a form of social practice. The language and terminology used in policy, the press and even by academics can reinforce a system of division, with roots in the colonial system of divide and rule, sustaining the status quo of power imbalance. This type of analysis is employed throughout this thesis in order to demonstrate where discriminatory ideology is embedded in French news articles and policy documents on the topic of French military involvement in Chad. Through analysis of the theories of neocolonialism discussed above, we can identify three aspects of the neocolonial discourse: 1) the assumption of a power imbalance based on inferiority and superiority (Fanon, 1952) leading to the discursive victimisation of Africans as actors in need of assistance and the discursive valorisation of dominant powers as saviours; 2) the negative portrayal of opponents of the dominant power (Nkrumah, 1965) and delegitimisation of their actions; 3) discursive divide and rule or ‘semantic balkanisation’ (Martin, 1985) whereby African actors are categorised according to difference and division. As I will explore throughout this thesis, these three points contribute to the discursive legitimisation of French military operations in Chad by normalising France’s presence on African soil.

#### Criticism

I will discuss two major criticisms of neocolonial theory in the academic literature: firstly, that it is associated with African dictators and secondly, that neocolonial theory denies African agency. By the 1980s, the theory of neocolonialism was becoming less fashionable. Uzoigwe (2019, pp. 60-61) argues that the problems that the newly independent countries had to deal with such as ethnic conflict, military coups, corruption as well as the arrest or murder of vocal anti-imperialist individuals, the fleeing of some and the corruption others, had led to scholars abandoning the topic of neocolonialism by the 1980s.[[41]](#footnote-41) Langan (2018) also argues that one of the reasons for the decline of neocolonial theory was that it was negatively associated with tyrants such as Zimbabwean leader Robert Mugabe. This corresponded with the rise of the theories and practices of neoliberalism and the Washington Consensus[[42]](#footnote-42), the idea of a self-regulating market and the need for aid from rich countries to poor countries, that removed the role played by decision-making actors in newly independent states. In other words, the dependence and exploitation of the newly independent countries by the former colonial powers, which neocolonial theorists had feared, were becoming a reality. The discourse of the governments of former colonising nations therefore moved from sovereignty and independence to aid and assistance. The optimism of Nkrumah and Woddis in the 1960s of pan-African resistance to neocolonial control was replaced with what Langan argues was ‘the (Afro)pessimism of the neo-patrimonialist literature’ (Langan, 2018, p. 17).[[43]](#footnote-43)

Regarding the argument on African agency, Keese (2007) claims that neocolonial theorists interpret the relationship between France and its former colonies as a ‘sinister manipulation of rather passive African populations’ (p. 593). He understands this relationship more as ‘a complex and highly emotional interplay of relations with African leaders’ (p. 593). Placing emphasis on the agency of the African political elite, ​​Luckham (1982) states that, in general, African leaders invited the French state to intervene in order to hold on to power, pointing to the manipulative role played by the former. Meanwhile, Constantin (1995) emphasises the congruence between French and African elites by claiming that the relationship between France and ‘Francophone’ countries ‘evolved out of years of shared experiences in the metropolitan parliament and government and party-political alliances’ (p. 184). In these arguments, African leaders are active agents and request the involvement of former colonisers. Unlike neocolonial theorists who argue that this is a relationship of exploitation, the above theorists argue that it is one of convenience.

Countering these arguments, I wanted to firstly draw attention to the fact that, as we saw above, the theory of neocolonialism was a reaction against exploitation and manipulation. It developed out of conferences organised by former colonies and through the works of African and Caribbean scholars, focusing on unity (such as pan-African unity) as a solution to these problems. Neocolonial theory therefore does not view African populations as ‘passive’ but centres their voices. Secondly, regarding the role of African actors in the system that developed after the end of formal colonialism, Nolutshungu (1996, p. 11) shows that in the case of Chad, Chadian leaders have not always been submissive to the French and have manipulated their dependence on France by being protected by France. However, he points out ‘to manipulate dependence is still to be weak’. In other words, the experience of African leaders and French leaders is not a ‘shared’ one but an ‘asymmetrical interdependence’ (Nolutshungu, 1996, p. 11). As we shall see in the following chapters, highlighting the agency of African leaders as a demonstrable form of sovereignty itself formed part of the neocolonial discourse, which relied on arguing that the relationship between France and its former colonies was consensual. Therefore, this narrative must be critiqued in academic scholarship.

Questioning the power of former colonies, Styan (2013) argues,

the notion of a “neo-colonial” puppet-master is of little analytical use, not least because French interests are multifaceted, have changed over time, and have more often than not been beset with internal uncertainties as to what policy to adopt when faced with successive Chadian leaders, phases of civil war and regional threats.

However, I argue that there has been remarkable continuity in French military and economic practices in Chad and the continuous French military operations launched in Chad. Interestingly, Styan (2013) shows the existence of such neocolonial ties. In analysing the events of the 50th anniversary of Chadian independence in 2010, Styan (2013) notes that the parade-ground constructed for the purposes of the anniversary was ‘built literally on the foundations of Gaullist France’s enduring historical ties with Chad’: a demolished military garrison ‘which had served first French then Chadian troops throughout the twentieth century’. He goes on to demonstrate the continuation of arrangements between the colonial period and the post-independence period by stating that Chad was used as ‘the launch-pad for the first combat operations against the Italians at Koufra in Libya in 1940/41’ and later as ‘a springboard for interventions elsewhere’ (p. 244). Therefore, during the colonial period, Chad was used as a geostrategic base for France in order to have access to other African territories. This continued to be the case post-independence and was still true at the time when Styan was writing; in his article, he points out that ‘these ties and anniversaries continue to be maintained and renewed’ (p. 237). He thereby demonstrates the extent to which neocolonial practices are embedded in French military presence in Chad.

It is useful to note that although neocolonialism was ‘a major political phenomenon in the newly independent countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa in the decades of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s’, many politicians and scholars in ‘the West’ rejected the concept (Uzoigwe, 2019, p. 60). Neocolonial theory is highly critical of the actions of ‘the West’ in Africa, Asia and South America. Despite criticisms of neocolonial theory and the fact that the study of neocolonialism was at its height in the 1960s and 1970s and fell out of favour in academia from the 1980s onwards, multiple scholars have reasserted the relevance of neocolonial theory when analysing the relationship between former African colonies and former colonisers. The 2010s onwards saw a resurgence of the use of neocolonial theory by scholars such as Campbell (2013); Rahaman, Yeazdani and Mahmud (2017); Langan (2018); Uzoigwe (2019); Taiwo (2019); Taylor (2019) and Akinrinde and Oyewole (2021). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) describes the decolonial epistemologies that were born of 'marginalised but persistent movements that merged from struggles against the slave trade, imperialism, colonialism, apartheid, neocolonialism, and underdevelopment' (p. 485) and describes this as the re-emergence of the movement in the 2010s. This demonstrates the extent to which it is useful to revive neocolonial theory when dealing with the matter of colonial continuities in the twentieth and twenty first centuries.

### Françafrique

As we saw above, theories of neocolonialism waned after the 1980s, however, there was a revival of interest in these theories in non-academic circles in France in the 1990s, after French military involvement in the Genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994. Neocolonialism and *Françafrique* are very closely linked theoretically. Like the neocolonial theorists, the theorists of *Françafrique* focus on the reformulation of relations between France and its former colonies in the aftermath of independence. This revival of neocolonial thought occurred mainly through the investigative journalism and activism of NGO *Survie*, led by François Xavier-Verschave, who was its president between 1995 and 2005. *Survie*’s reporters include Raphaël Granvaud, Samuël Foutoyet, Boubacar Boris Diop and Odile Tobner among others.

*Survie* was co-founded in 1984 by François-Xavier Verschave. Initially its aim was to secure French government aid to combat world hunger. However, the NGO became aware of the misappropriation of French development aid and its role in 'the perpetuation of a system of colonial exploitation of the [African] continent in the name of the defence of France's diplomatic and economic interests in its former colonies' (Survie, 2008, para 1). In the aftermath of the Genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994 the focus of the organisation turned to exposing the corrupt nature of the French state’s presence in Africa. Verschave re-appropriated the term *Françafrique*, originally coined by Ivorian President Félix Houphouët-Boigny in the 1950s to describe the positive relationship between France and Africa, to describe instead the corrupt and negative nature of a relationship, which Verschave argued was not just exploitative but corrupt to the point of illegality (Verschave, 2006).

*Survie*’s approach takes into consideration both the economic relationship between France and Africa and explores the personal relationships between elites and clientelist networks linking politicians, public institutions, media organisations, private organisations and intelligence services to their involvement in the exploitation of African countries. This is particularly useful to my study, which seeks to bring together multiple actors; the press, the state and the military, in order to explore French neocolonial relations with Chad. The focus of *Françafrique* theoryis specifically to expose the inner workings of the post-independence relationship between France and Africa. Its theorists focus not only on France’s relationship with its former African colonies but also other African countries with which the French government has formed a relationship in the aftermath of independence, such as Rwanda, formerly administered by Germany then Belgium. The theorists of *Françafrique* develop a framework for the analysis of post-1960 France-Africa relations. They demonstrate the similar strategies of continued influence and conduct across Africa. This suggests that looking at the case study of one country, such as Chad, allows us to understand the wider relationship between France and Africa.

*Survie* has three main aims quoted from its website (Survie.org, 2008, para 1-3):

* The reform of France’s policy of cooperation

Survie campaigns for the dismantlement of "Françafrique" (this term refers to the hidden face of French policy in Africa but can also be read as France-à-fric[[44]](#footnote-44)) and the establishment of fair, transparent and democratic Franco-African relations.

* The fight against impunity and the trivialisation of genocide

Survie campaigns in particular for the whole truth to be revealed about France’s involvement in the Tutsi genocide in Rwanda.

* The promotion of global public goods

Survie campaigns for universal access, in both the Northern and Southern hemispheres, to public goods (health, education, legal system, etc.).

Like neocolonial theory, the theory of *Françafrique* exposes the exploitation of former colonies by former colonisers and wishes to counter the policies that create these power imbalances. It therefore has an activist cause and has been developed by journalists and NGO workers rather than academics. Initially, the theory of *Françafrique* was heavilyfeatured in the scholarship of academic Tony Chafer, however, he later rejected the notion, as we shall see below. Although it remains largely separate from academic research, I believe that it contributes valuable analysis to the study of France-Africa relations through the connections it creates between the French government, news media and industrialists. One of its main attributes is its research on the policy of ‘cooperation’, which is central to this thesis and will be explored below. There are four main characteristics of *Françafrique* through which neocolonial relations between France and Africa are maintained: 1) the ‘Africa cell’, 2) a clientelist network, 3) the Franc zone and 4) ‘cooperation’. The focus of this thesis is the role of ‘cooperation’ in reinforcing neocolonial relations between France and Africa.

#### The Africa Cell

The ‘Africa Cell’ refers to the French elite actors who made decisions regarding intervention in Africa, the responsibility for which fell to the President of France and his advisors. African affairs were regarded as within the French President’s exclusive domain.[[45]](#footnote-45) Describing the French networks operating in Africa, Chafer’s (1992) earlier work states,

Every president of the Fifth Republic has had his own adviser on African affairs. Throughout De Gaulle’s period in office it was the legendary Jacques Foccart; from 1981-6 it was Mitterrand’s former dentist, Guy Penne, since when he has been replaced by Mitterrand’s own son Jean-Christophe…The appointment of the President’s own son in recent years has simply served to reinforce his control over African policy, thus ensuring that black Africa is even more part of the presidential *domaine réservé* (pp. 38-9).

Chafer (1992) also points out the number of agencies and institutions in France with a stake in Africa as the reason for which they prefer to maintain the status quo.[[46]](#footnote-46) This shows how the president had executive power in decision-making with regards to French foreign policy in Africa and the extent to which multiple state actors had a direct stake in events taking place in Africa.[[47]](#footnote-47) An example of the operations of the Africa cell in Chad can be found in the French intervention that took place between 1969 and 1971. Under de Gaulle, the French military intervened in Chad to protect President Tombalbaye against FROLINAT rebels (Operation Bison) and de Gaulle took the decision to intervene alone (Buijtenhuijs, 1995), demonstrating the executive power of the president.

#### The Clientelist Network

The establishment of a clientelist network was mainly the work of Jacques Foccart, a French governmental advisor and Africa expert also known as ‘Mr Africa’. Foccart held many positions under different presidents: he was the Secretary-General for African and Malagasy Affairs for Charles de Gaulle from 1960. He was employed in the same role under Georges Pompidou from 1969 to 1974 and worked as an advisor under Jacques Chirac until his death in 1997. Foccart’s strategy consisted of helping to install leaders who were favourable to France (many of those Foccart favoured were trained at military schools in France, such as Chadian president Idriss Déby) and eliminating those who were not (Foutoyet, 2009). He employed the use of military agreements and currency in order to ensure French economic dominance (Foutoyet, 2009). His strength lay in his network of informers and the French government’s responses to the needs of friends[[48]](#footnote-48) (Chandar, 2017). Keese (2009) demonstrates how African leaders were protected by France if they were seen as ‘friends’ (p. 600).

Yet, Keese (2009) also claims that Foccart’s influence has been overstated and that he was a ‘boaster’ with a ‘rudimentary informer network’ in the 1960s (p. 594). Schmidt (2013) opposes Keese, she writes,

Foccart had enormous power in making or breaking African governments. Successive French presidents and heads of the Africa Cell cultivated close personal ties with the leaders of Francophone African states and established pacts that stressed loyalty and reciprocity. Until the early 1990s, the personalisation of politics bound France to its African clients, even after the extent of their corrupt, repressive, and authoritarian practices had been exposed. Personal ties were strengthened by annual Franco-African summits that included French presidents and their Francophone African counterparts (p. 176).

Having worked for successive French presidents after his appointment by de Gaulle and until his death at the age of 84 in 1997, it is possible to assert that Foccart and his system had a significant role in influencing African affairs.

#### The Franc Zone

Another major way in which the French government continued to exert control in its former colonies after independence, according to *Françafrique* theory, was through the continued control of the currency of those former colonies. During the colonial period the countries of west and central Africa used the currency of CFA franc, regulated by the French Treasury. At this time the currency was known as the franc of the 'Colonies françaises d'Afrique' (French Colonies in Africa) becoming the franc of the 'Communauté française d'Afrique' (French Community in Africa) in 1958. In 1960 two different currencies emerged: the west African franc, named the franc of the 'Communauté financière africaine' (African Financial Community) and the central African franc, named the franc of the 'coopération financière en Afrique centrale' (Financial Cooperation in Central Africa). This currency continued to be used once formal colonialism was over and is still in use today.

Thiery (2020) explains that the CFA franc caused former colonies of France in Africa to remain dependent on the former colonial power and was 'a key obstacle to economic and financial independence' for those countries (pp. 89-90). This dependency was a result of French control over 'devaluations or amendments to the currency' and 'minimal influence from African states' (pp. 89-90). Moreover, the French state benefited economically from this control because countries in the franc zone were required to deposit a minimum of 50% of their national reserves in the French treasury, subsidising the French national budget (Thiery, 2020, pp. 89-90). For these reasons, Sylla argues that the Franc CFA was an ‘instrument of monetary financial domination formally set up for France’s African colonies’ on 26 December 1945 by Charles de Gaulle (Sylla, 2018, para 1), the mechanisms of which ‘remain essentially unchanged’ (para 3). The French state’s exertion of control in its former colonies in Africa, characterised by military interventions, were a way of ensuring this continued monetary power. Sylla (2018) points to African leaders who rejected the CFA franc and were subsequently removed from power, including Sekou Touré (Guinea) in 1960, Sylvano Olympio (Togo) in 1962, Laurent Gbagbo (Côte d'Ivoire) in 2011. Moreover, Sylla (2018) points out that Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi was critical of the CFA franc and was removed from power with the help of French forces in 2011. Control over the franc zone therefore continued to be a significant way in which the French government has been able to exert influence in its former colonies through economic control.

#### ‘Cooperation’

Regarding ‘cooperation’, Chafer (2005) argues that from the mid-1990s, French governments ‘developed a distinctive discourse on Africa to justify their policy to public opinion both at home and abroad. This centred on the newly coined concept of *coopération*’ (p. 10). Chafer (2005) describes *coopération* as 'untranslatable into English' as it is 'something specifically French' (p. 10). He says that it is 'linked to the spread of French influence across the world' such as 'projecting French grandeur'. He states that it is a recognition that this influence 'could no longer be achieved within a colonial context' and incorporates 'a sense of France's ongoing historic responsibility to promote the development of its former colonial "family", but based henceforth on the idea of a partnership between sovereign states for their mutual benefit' (p. 10).

Within the discourse of cooperation, which is present throughout this thesis, I argue that colonial continuities are reformulated in the post-independence policy documents as a collaboration between two partners; as ‘cooperation’ rather than colonialism. The notion of ‘cooperation’ thereby downplays the power imbalance. However, through discursive analysis, I wish to demonstrate the extent to which the power imbalance is in place, and how the notion of ‘cooperation’ perpetuates neocolonialism and the continuation of an exploitative relationship, with roots in the formal colonial system of the past. By constructing the relationship between France and Chad as ‘cooperation’ rather than neocolonial in nature, the authors of the policy documents and news articles present the relationship as positive and desirable, and omit the negative aspects of the relationship. In doing so, the authors present ‘cooperation’ as a solution to the problems taking place in Chad, such as Libyan occupation or civil unrest. ‘Cooperation’ is therefore a powerful discursive tool, which is able to reformulate negative colonial continuities as beneficial and detached from the colonial past. Neocolonial theorists, on the other hand, aim to bring colonial continuities to light in the present.

### Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis is both a theoretical approach to the study of discourse and a methodological tool of analysis. The theoretical basis of CDA relies on its concepts of power, ideology and critique (Wodak and Meyer, 2009, p. 1). CDA draws on concepts developed in the study of Linguistics, Cognitive Psychology, Philosophy, and Literature as well as Foucault’s concept of discourse, Bourdieu’s notion of social practice and the political and philosophical theories of Gramsci, Marx and Althusser. It is therefore an interdisciplinary approach that can be used in many fields of study. I use CDA to analyse both of my source bases: news articles and policy documents.

The theoretical aims of CDA are to explore ‘the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context’ (Van Dijk, 2015, p. 466). Critical Discourse analysts aim to ‘understand, expose and ultimately challenge social inequality’ (Van Dijk, 2015, p. 466). This approach developed in response to the ‘struggles and contradictions [that] characterise our modern world and Western societies’ and ‘the challenges of globalisation and neo-liberalist economies and ideologies’ (Wodak, 2015, pp. 63-4). This fits neatly into the context of my own study, which looks at the neocolonial context of the relationship between France and Chad and the power struggles that emerged from the attempts to decolonise in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

CDA developed out of ‘Critical Linguistics’, put forth through the work of Fowler, Hodge, Hess and Trew (1979), which focused on the ideological aspects of language, and how it can be used by those in power to reinforce certain views. CDA developed as an approach in the 1990s through the work of Teun van Dijk, Norman Fairclough, Gunther Kress, Theo van Leeuwen and Ruth Wodak. By virtue of their personal and academic backgrounds, these academics developed their theories based mainly on a limited range of languages and cultures, including German, Dutch and English language texts. Like Critical Linguistics before it, CDA is concerned with the importance of power and ideology in texts. Yet, unlike traditional linguistic analysis, which focuses on text-internal aspects of language, CDA looks outwards as well as inwards, analysing text-external aspects of a text such as context and the relationship between texts (intertextuality), and a meso-level analysis which considers institutional contexts. Institutional and intertextual analyses are crucial to my study, which looks at the relationship between French foreign policy and the French press.

With the publication of Fairclough's *Language and Power* in (1989), the above scholars moved away from discourse analysis and the ‘predominantly descriptive orientation within (socio)linguistics, towards an interpretative mode of enquiry with explicit explanatory ambitions’ (Slembrouck, 2001, pp. 35-6). CDA departed from traditional positivism that saw language use as ‘a reflection of static social variables’ (Slembrouck, 2001, p. 36). It instead sees language as dynamic and shaping and being shaped within specific contexts. One of CDA’s most distinctive features is its definition of discourse, quoted at length,

CDA sees discourse – language use in speech and writing – as a form of ‘social practice’. Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), which frame it: The discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them. That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned – it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. Since discourse is so socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of power. Discursive practices may have major ideological effects – that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people. (Fairclough et al., 1997, p. 258).

In other words, social practices exist in and through discourse, and therefore, discourse has practical consequences. Discourse has the power to sustain the status quo and also to transform it, (re)producing inequalities. This is particularly useful for my study, which seeks to uncover inequalities in neocolonial power between the French state and the Chadian state, and the extent to which this power imbalance is reproduced and reinforced in French foreign policy documents and the French mainstream press. CDA theory suggests that through a discursive analysis of these texts, it is possible to uncover the ideologies which contribute to the maintenance of the status quo, such as neocolonialism, and can therefore help us to understand the longevity of French interventionist practices.

The transformative nature of discourse, as defined by CDA analysts, is important to my study as this thesis traces the development of the French foreign policies and the different forms the discourse of these policies took after the end of formal colonialism. My period of analysis takes place during a changing global political climate, which moved from the Cold War to globalised neoliberalism. Throughout the thesis, I use the theoretical arguments of CDA to analyse the extent to which the discourse of powerful French actors, the French government and the French press, had real consequences in the development of France-Chad relations and wider France-Africa relations. It is through discourse that decisions are explained, justified and enacted.

Many critical discourse analysts have centred their analysis on media and journalistic discourse and there is therefore a strong body of scholarship demonstrating the power of the news media as an institution with the ability to shape events and be shaped by them. Early studies that contributed to the development of this approach include Fairclough’s 1989 publication, *Language and Power*. As mentioned above, this was a seminal text in the development of CDA. It explores the role of language in shaping power relations and explores the ‘hidden power’ of news media with regard to the notion of discourse (p. 78). In *Media Discourse*, Fairclough (1995) continued building on his innovative work within CDA, specifically focusing on developing an approach to the analysis of media texts, including the English-language news media. Furthermore, there are wide-ranging subjects covered in Anglophone scholarship. For example, Brookes (1995) uncovers racist discourses relating to Africa in the British news media and the extent to which they discursively construct a sense of political cohesion in the UK and, in turn, discursively justify British governmental action in African countries. Poorebrahim and Zarei (2013) demonstrate the extent to which Muslims are viewed as an inferior ‘other’ in the United States’ (US) press, negatively shaping public perceptions of Muslim people in the US. Similarly, Khosravinik’s (2014) article analyses the role of the British news media in 'othering' immigrants and producing moral panic about immigration among the British public. Kim’s (2014) analysis of US news media reporting on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea reveals the proximity between the discourse of the press and the state in discursively constructing the Korean state as an enemy, thereby contributing to its negative status on the global stage. It is therefore possible to see that CDA can be applied to many different topics where power imbalance is at stake.

With regard to CDA and the analysis of policy documents, as we shall see below, Wodak’s (1990) work on the 1986 Austrian presidential elections contributed to the creation of a new approach in CDA: the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA). CDA is therefore intimately linked with political discourses. Fairclough (2013) discusses the contribution of CDA to critical policy studies, particularly with regard to analysis of argumentation. Linked to Fairclough’s study is Montesano Montessori, Farrelly and Mulderrig's (2019) edited volume, which provides a series of policy case studies analysed using a combination of CDA with critical policy analysis. Furthermore, Cummings, De Haan and Seferiadis (2020) suggest guidelines for the use of CDA for policymaking professionals. They argue that CDA allows analysts to reveal the 'hidden preoccupations' within policy texts (p. 100). CDA can therefore contribute to our understanding of policy documents with regard to the underlying ideologies of policymakers and the uncovering of the arguments and devices used in policy texts.

As we have seen, there is a dominant focus in CDA studies on English, German and Dutch language texts, despite the fact that the theoretical framework of discourse analysis was heavily influenced by French theorists, such as Foucault and Bourdieu. CDA is rarely applied to French texts, with a few exceptions such as Watt's (2010) study on the discursive construction of minority identities in Third Republic France and Paveau’s (2000) article which discursively analyses a French military journal. Due to its French theoretical origins, CDA is well-suited to the study of French language texts, which form my two source bases.

#### The Discourse Historical Approach

There are different approaches within CDA, such as the sociocognitive approach developed by van Dijk, which combines sociolinguistics and cognitive psychology and is based on the 'mental models' of social actors (2008, p. viii); and the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) developed by Wodak. In this thesis, I use the DHA to analyse my source bases. Critical Discourse Analysis – Discourse Historical Approach is a history-oriented approach to CDA. Its main distinctive feature when compared to other types of CDA is the extent to which it ‘puts weight on historical subjects and on the historical anchoring, change and echo of specific discourses more than other CDA approaches’ (Reisigl, 2017, p. 49). It contends that discourse must always be placed within a spatial and temporal context.

CDA-DHA has four levels of analysis based on the principle of triangulation, which corroborates findings using both primary and secondary sources (Wodak, 2015, p. 65):

1. ‘the immediate, language, or text internal context’ (e.g. the language of news articles, policy documents)
2. ‘the intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between discourses’ (the relationship between policy and news discourses and the links between different discursive events and texts e.g. reference to other conflicts familiar to readers)
3. ‘the extralinguistic social variables and institutional frames of a specific context or situation’ (e.g. the parameters set by the institutions, the government and the news media, within which actors operate)
4. ‘the broader sociopolitical and historical context, which discursive practices are embedded in and related to’ (e.g. neocolonialism).

The DHA developed through the work of Wodak et al (1990), who analysed antisemitism in public discourses (media reports, speeches, hearings) around Austrian presidential candidate Kurt Waldheim's campaign in 1986. Wodak continued developing CDA-DHA throughout the 1990s, exploring racial discrimination (Matouschek, Wodak and Januschek, 1995) and the discursive construction of national identity (Wodak et al 1998). From the 2000s CDA-DHA has been used to analyse topics such as the interaction between doctors and patients (Reisigl, 2011), immigration discourses (Khosravinik, 2014) and neoliberal discourses (Krzyżanowski, 2020). The wide range of studies which use the DHA as a theoretical and methodological framework demonstrates its interdisciplinarity and concern with discrimination, policy, identity and media. In this thesis, I position my analysis within a neocolonial historical context. The contextual aspects of the DHA are hugely important to my study, as it spans a period of change across six decades, from 1960 to 2014.

### Critique

The ‘critical’ aspect of CDA initially referred to ‘the political meaning of social critique’ as ‘political critique means to judge the status quo’ (Reisigl, 2017, p. 50). The DHA is specifically focused on contextualising discourse and embraces three aspects of social critique (Reisigl, 2017, p. 50):

* 1. Text or discourse immanent critique to discover inconsistencies in text/discourse-internal structures
  2. Socio-diagnostic critique to demystify the persuasive or manipulative character of discursive practices
  3. Prognostic critique to transform and improve communication by elaborating guidelines (e.g. for public institutions) (Wodak, 2015, pp. 64-5).

Firstly, text or discourse immanent critique relates to text-internal structures, in other words, critique at the level of the text. This involves analysis of rhetoric, argumentation, cohesion, and assessing the contradictions or inconsistencies present in the text. Secondly, socio-diagnostic critique explores the relationship between discursive and other social practices as a form of control. It is based on ‘social, historical and political background knowledge’ (Reisigl, 2017, p. 51). In other words, it relates to a wider context and ideology within a text. Thirdly, prognostic critique is practical and offers solutions to improve ‘communication within public institutions by elaborating proposals and guidelines on the basis of careful fieldwork’ (Reisigl, 2017, p. 51).

Within the limited scope of a thesis, I am primarily concerned with the first and second aspects of social critique. I argue that by critiquing texts and uncovering or demystifying the assumptions and ideologies that inform policy decisions (such as interventionist practices) and the communication of these actions to the public (through news articles), it will be possible to understand how these events have been produced and reproduced. Rather than offering a prognostic critique and practical solutions for the actors involved in decision-making roles within elite institutions, I focus on uncovering the existence of power imbalances embedded in discourse and hope that the knowledge produced within my thesis can expose what is often hidden from sight. With this knowledge, it may be possible to create the conditions of dialogue or debate, which can address the dangers of the status quo (the continued French military presence in Chad). In other words, the practical or transformative power of critique can be located in dialogue and debate. In terms of its theoretical framework, through CDA-DHA, this thesis argues that neocolonial ideologies establish and maintain unequal power relations by constructing a logic of interventionist practices which appears common-sensical and legitimate (Fairclough, 2013). In other words, the power of discourse lies in the effect of naturalisation or normalisation. Through critique, I seek to uncover the neocolonial ideologies which have become normalised through a process of demystification by identifying the discursive strategies used to discursively justify Operation Epervier.

### Ideology

As a major aim of this thesis is to uncover the underlying ideology embedded in discourse, it is important to discuss how Critical Discourse analysts define ‘ideology’ and how it will be used in this thesis. CDA is ‘primarily interested in the latent type of everyday beliefs, frequently appearing disguised as conceptual metaphors and analogies’ (Wodak and Meyer, 2013, p. xxvi). In other words, these everyday beliefs may be hidden or obscured and can be revealed through analysis of the use of language. Wodak (2009, p. 4) defines ideology as an ‘(often) one-sided perspective or world view composed of related mental representations, convictions, opinions, attitudes and evaluations, which is shared by members of a specific social group’. CDA draws on Gramsci's concept of ‘hegemony’ to assert the existence of dominant narratives that obscure the ‘alternatives to the status quo’ (Wodak and Meyer, 2013, p. xxvi). CDA also applies Gramsci’s concept of ‘common sense’ in order to explain how ideology functions through ‘naturalisation’. Fairclough (2013) claims that by giving ‘particular ideological representations the status of common sense’, these representations become ‘opaque, i.e. no longer visible as ideologies’ (p. 44). This theoretical position informs CDA’s methodological approach (discussed in depth below). One of the main discursive devices that CDA points to as a tool of methodological analysis is the concept of *topoi* – commonplaces that can be used to form arguments. As Crowley and Hawhee explain, ‘commonplaces are intimately related to ideologies. They become a body of belief that helps us make sense of the world while simultaneously suggesting that others have made sense of the world in the same way’ (quoted in Pepper, 2013, p. 2).

Pan and Kosicki (1993, p. 57) describe ideologies in relation to news discourse specifically,

The domain in which news discourse operates consists of shared beliefs about a society. These beliefs, despite the elusive nature of their content, are known to and accepted by a majority of the society as common sense or conventional wisdom…they are pervasive and are often taken for granted. They set the parameters of a broad framework within which news discourse is constructed, transmitted and developed.

Similarly, Ahmad (2020, p. 572) argues that narratives in the news are communicated effectively when they are ‘internalised and understood by the wider population’ and when they obscure ‘alternative interpretations’ (p. 573). In other words, certain narratives and beliefs become so embedded in discourse that they are no longer questioned by actors in the societies and contexts in which they operate. The role of CDA analysts is to uncover and demystify the common sense aspect of texts; to return the status of an ‘ideology’ to them. In this thesis, I argue that ideologies which developed from the colonial period, and persisted through neocolonial practices, shape the relationship between France and its former colonies. It is therefore necessary to locate and uncover these ideologies in order to understand the persistence of French neocolonial practices in Chad.

### Framing

I combine CDA-DHA with journalistic framing when analysing my news source base in Chapters 3 and 4. Framing is both a theoretical framework for understanding how journalistic texts construct meaning for their audiences as well as the process undertaken by the producers of those texts in the selection or omission of information. Entman (1993, p. 52) offers the following definition: ‘framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text’. In other words, the result of framing, i.e. the frame, is the manner in which information is (re)presented to the audience, which in turn can influence their understanding of a given topic. Incorporating framing into my methodological approach provides two advantages over using CDA-DHA alone. Firstly, it enables me to approach my news source base on a larger macro scale by identifying the overarching narratives through which news stories were presented in the French press. Secondly, it enables me to analyse how messages in the news were framed to the audiences of the news outlets and how the producers of the news articles (*Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, *Libération*) create meaning for their audiences, thereby contributing to shaping their understanding of the events of Operation Epervier. I use framing theory to analyse news articles published in the French mainstream press on Operation Epervier during two periods of history, 1986-1987, analysed in Chapter 3 and 2008-2009 analysed in Chapter 4.

Framing theory has two main approaches, cognitive and sociological, but also contains elements of discourse theory and is largely constructivist in nature. Firstly, framing is based on a cognitive approach, which looks at the way in which individuals ‘make judgments and perceive the world within certain frames of reference’ (Jennings, Thompson and Finklea, 2012, p. 101). Drawing on theories of schemata developed in psychology and the cognitive sciences, theorists of framing argue that communicating texts, such as news articles in this case, construct a dominant meaning that appeals to or influences an audience, suggesting ‘a particular framing of the situation that is most heavily supported by the text and is congruent with the most common audience schema’ (Entman, 1993, p. 56). Examples of this cognitive approach can be found in studies conducted by Lee, McLeod and Shah (2008) on audience judgement and Chong and Druckman (2007) on public opinion. These studies help us to understand how audiences interact with texts, based on cognition and perception. A useful finding in Chong and Druckman’s (2007) study is that ‘frames are chosen with audience in mind, so the preferences of the audience will have a bearing on the position taking of elites’ (Chong and Druckman, 2007, p. 117).

Secondly, framing is grounded in a sociological or political approach, which looks at how ‘socially shared meanings’ are created (Jennings, Thompson and Finklea, 2012, p. 101). The ‘socially shared meanings’ of framing correspond to the notion of ideology within the theory of CDA, discussed above, whereby beliefs are built on shared ideas and ‘common sense’. CDA too adopts a sociological and political angle, as it aims to ‘understand, expose and ultimately challenge social inequality’ (van Dijk, 2015, p. 466). Additionally, discursive framing studies enable us to analyse how meaning is constructed within language. Examples of this approach include Reese’s (2010) study on the ‘war on Terror’ and Gitlin’s (1980) classic text on twentieth century anti-war movements in the USA, which adopts an approach of language analysis. This perspective helps us to analyse how a socio-political context contributes to the understanding of texts.

Regarding the discursive methods in framing analysis, Pan and Kosicki’s (1993) study ‘conceptualise[s] news content as a form of discourse’ (p. 56). The authors suggest that framing can be seen as a ‘strategy of constructing and processing news discourse’ (p. 57). In their discourse-centred version of framing, Pan and Kosicki (1993, p. 70) argue that the choices of words in news articles 'hold great power in setting the context for debate, defining issues under consideration, summoning a variety of mental representations, and providing the basic tools to discuss the issues at hand.' (p. 70). For Gamson and Modigliani (1989) analysis of the structure of texts is integral to the framing method, which focuses on ‘symbolic devices’ of which there are five: ‘metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions, and visual images’ (quoted in Pan and Kosicki, 1993, p. 56). Gitlin’s 1980 book also focuses on the importance of discourse, quoted in D’Angelo (2019), Gitlin says, ‘media frames are persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organise discourse, whether verbal or visual” (p. 18). Therefore, for Gitlin, frames are produced through discourse. The work of Gamson and Modigliani, Pan and Kosicki, and Gitlin demonstrates the efforts in the 1980s and 1990s to analyse frames discursively.

Despite the usefulness of discursive framing analysis, studies of framing analysis tend to combine with content analysis to conduct research, with fewer studies combining framing analysis with CDA. One example is Budd, Kelsey, Mueller and Whittle (2019), who bring together framing analysis with CDA in their study on media discourse of payday loans. They show that events are framed both through the selection and omission of content as well as through the construction of meaning in the language, thus demonstrating the successful combination of CDA and framing. Furthermore, Tannen (1993), Wagner and Payne (2017), Baden (2018) and Ahmad (2020) combine multiple approaches from sociological, cognitive and discursive perspectives. The discursive aspects of framing are particularly pertinent for this study, because I believe that a discursive analysis of texts and the way in which they are framed enables a deep understanding of their role in the creation of meaning for audiences. A combination of the two approaches reveals the power of the news in communicating events and creating meaning for the audience, which, within the context of French military operations, can play a role in discursively justifying the actions of the French military in Chad.

#### Frames

In terms of a working definition of a frame, Gamson and Modigliani (quoted in Pan and Kosicki, 1993, p. 55) write, ‘a frame is a “central organising idea or story line that provides meaning” to events related to an issue’. Related to Gamson and Modigliani’s definition regarding organisation is Tuchman’s 1978 definition that ‘“the news frame organises everyday reality’ (Scheufele, 1999, p. 106). Similarly, Gitlin (1980, pp. 6-7) puts forth that 'frames are principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters [...] we frame reality in order to negotiate it, manage it, comprehend it, and choose appropriate repertories of cognition and action'. Frames thereby construct a version of reality. Based on these definitions, I follow that frames are the outcome of the way in which journalists organise information through selection and omission and in turn, create meaning for their audiences.

An important aspect of framing theory is how frames function according to theorists. Based on the literature, it is possible to argue that in order to be effective, frames must be communicable, naturalised and dominant. Firstly, a frame needs to be communicable ‘by constructing the various subjects, objects and identities contained within it via manifest framing devices’ (e.g., keywords, metaphors, descriptive and evaluative attributes, visual symbols or imagery and subject positions). In other words, the frames need to be communicated to the audience through language. Secondly, frames need to be naturalised, in other words, they need to be ‘internalised and understood by the wider population’ (Ahmad, 2020, p. 572) and to be viewed as ‘non-ideological common sense’ (Fairclough, 2013, p. 30). Reese (2010) suggests that the ‘naturalisation’ of ideologies, which become taken-for-granted aspects of everyday life, play a role in the creation and maintenance of frames. Finally, frames function by ‘obscuring alternative interpretations or “counter-frames”’ (Ahmad, 2020, p. 573). Therefore, in the framing process, ‘a single frame dominates above all others, thus ensuring frame dominance’ (Ahmad, 2020, p. 573). Overall, in order for a frame to function effectively in its communication to the audience and creation of meaning, it needs to be communicable, naturalised and dominant. As one of the central aims of this thesis is to uncover the extent to which ideologies are embedded in language and play a role in reinforcing the status quo, the communicable, naturalised and dominant nature of frames provide a clue as to how the discursive justification of ongoing neocolonial practices can be effective through the news articles.

### CDA-DHA and Framing

There are many overlaps between CDA-DHA and framing analysis. Because my main approach is CDA-DHA, I mainly adopt the terminology of CDA-DHA when discussing the overlapping features.[[49]](#footnote-49) Both frameworks share a constructivist approach to the concepts of critique and ideology that bring framing theory and CDA together. Another major overlap is in their approach to ideology. The role of framing analysts is to demonstrate the extent to which frames construct and reflect ‘shared beliefs’ (Pan and Kosicki, 1993, p. 57). Therefore, in both CDA and framing, ideology plays a key role in the maintenance of the status quo, and it is through the analytical tools offered by these two approaches that analysts can uncover power imbalances embedded and reinforced within discourse.

There are also similarities in both approaches to the notion of critique. As with critique in CDA, critique in framing takes a political form in its subversion of the established notion that journalistic texts should be objective (discussed below). Framing critiques the idea that objectivity can exist in news reporting due to its ontological constructivist approach that argues that the producers of communicating texts construct a version of reality. Reese (2010, p. 22) states that ‘social actors participate in the creation and maintenance of certain frames and the ongoing construction of the discursive environment, and the interests that are served in the process’. Adding to this, Roslyng and Dindler (2023, p. 13) claim that in framing theory, frames ‘consist of elements that taken together, tacitly, construct and offer an edited social reality’. Therefore, framing theorists critique the notion that objectivity can be reached within a news text. In this way, ‘framing and discourse theories are bridged in their effort to provide critical media analysis: To identify frames or discourses is to be critical, not only of the idea that media convey events in a neutral manner, but also of the powerful role played by media’ (Roslyng and Dindler, 2023, p. 17). Therefore, critique enables this thesis to address the role played by powerful actors in shaping events.

Overall, the theoretical approach of framing enables us to analyse the way in which an event, such as Operation Epervier, is communicated to the public via the news media. It allows us to see the way in which journalists and news organisations select some aspects of the event and omit others, presenting a narrative that is communicable, naturalised and dominant, thereby creating meaning for their audience. For the purposes of this study, framing enables me to analyse the news reporting of Operation Epervier on a macro scale, demonstrating the bigger picture, in terms of an overarching narrative. The bigger picture is particularly useful in demonstrating the shifting narratives in the French press during the periods of analysis between 1986 and 2014. The change in the frame demonstrates the development and evolution of the matter, as Pan and Kosicki (1993) point out, ‘the ways of talking about the issue [in the news] are related to the evolution of the issue in political debates’ (p. 65).

However, this thesis is concerned with discourse, and although, as I demonstrated above, framing analysis does contain some discursive aspects, it does not offer sufficient tools to go into analytical depth with regard to the smaller discursive components. CDA allows me to conduct this study on another level of analysis, at the level of discourse. CDA offers a systematic analysis of the smaller components or discursive devices that contribute to the larger frame. CDA-DHA provides the theoretical and analytical tools to analyse the discourse of both the news articles and policy documents that form the source bases of this thesis. Through analysis of the discursive devices that appear in the two source bases, I am able to uncover the underlying ideologies that contribute to the reproduction of power imbalances in the relationship between France and Chad. However, CDA-DHA is limited in making visible the bigger picture. This has two negative effects, firstly, it does not allow us to see the shifting nature of the narrative on ‘cooperation’, which framing allows by focusing on the dominant narrative during the long period of analysis. Secondly, it does not allow us to see the bigger picture in terms of the end product of the discursive construction, in other words, the frame through which the news articles are communicated to the audience, via the French press. Analysis of this larger frame is possible through framing analysis. Therefore, a combination of both approaches enables a broader analysis of the two source bases in this thesis.

## Methodological Processes

I combine elements of framing and CDA-DHA to form the basis of my methodological approach. I apply framing analysis, as developed in Journalism studies, to my news article source base. I apply CDA-DHA to both my news article and policy source bases. I use mainly qualitative research methods through in-depth textual and contextual analysis. I also include some quantitative methods such as word frequency analysis, in order to reinforce findings in a simple and measurable way. All French sources are translated into English and all translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

Above, I presented the theoretical framework of this thesis. I demonstrated that both framing analysis and CDA-DHA adopt a constructivist approach to analysis. Using this approach, I argue that communicating texts construct meaning through the discursive construction of events and actors, thereby naturalising French military interventions in Chad and reinforcing the status quo. These constructions are ideologically driven and embedded within the discourse. My methodological approach reflects my theoretical position: I aim to uncover the ideologies embedded in discourse in order to show how French military interventions were discursively justified both in the news articles and in the policy documents. In this section, I will begin by explaining my methodological process. Firstly, I will present my source base of policy documents and news articles and explain the selection process. Secondly, I will discuss the frames and discursive devices that make up the analytical components of my analysis. Thirdly, I present the stages of analysis. Finally, I present my case study, Operation Epervier and the aspects of the operation which I analyse throughout the thesis: the policy of ‘cooperation’ and the three news outlets, *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *Libération*.

### Source base 1: Policy documents

My first source base consists of documents relating to French foreign policy in Chad and covers the period between 1960 and 2014. These documents can be divided into three groups: 1) ‘defence’, ‘assistance’ and ‘cooperation’ agreements signed between France and Chad that form the legal basis of military operations launched in Chad; 2) White Papers on Defence that outline official French foreign policy; 3) presidential speeches given at the France-Africa summits, which unofficially announced new French foreign policy changes in Africa. I also analyse one document which pertains to the reforms to the policy of cooperation forming the legal basis of reforms to French foreign policy. I will go into more detail about these sources in Chapter 2. All quoted French language policy sources are translated into English, with the original French in the footnotes, and all translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

### Source base 2: News articles

My second source base consists of 277 articles published in *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *Libération* on the topic of Operation Epervier over two time periods between 1986 and 2009 [see appendices 1-4]. In Chapter 3, I analyse 129 articles published in *Le Monde* duringthe French intervention in Chad (1986-7). In Chapter 4, I analyse 148 articles published in *Le Monde*, *Libération* and *Le Figaro* during the French and European Union military intervention in Chad (2008-9).[[50]](#footnote-50) I will go into more detail about these sources in Chapters 3 and 4. Once again, all quoted French language news sources are translated into English and all translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

I selected the three newspapers, *Le Monde, Le Figaro* and *Libération*, based on their high readership levels, status as established French news outlets, and political position: covering left, right and centre. I will go into more detail about this in the 'Case Study' section below. I accessed the news articles on their websites (lemonde.fr, lefigaro.fr, liberation.fr). I selected the period of analysis based on two major French military interventions that took place during two major conflicts. The start date of the first period of analysis marks the launch of Operation Epervier, 13/14 February 1986. The end date marks the end of fighting, 11 September 1987. The start date of the second period of analysis marks the date of a Chadian 'rebel' attack during which the French military may or may not have intervened and which was highly mediatised, 2 February 2008. The end date marks the withdrawal of EUFOR troops, 15 March 2009.

### Frames

I adopt a discursive approach to framing analysis. There are three levels of analysis in framing 1) at the level of the text, 2) at the level of the institution, 3) at the level of the culture. In order to identify the frames using framing analysis, I followed the analytical steps detailed below:

Firstly, I analyse the news articles at the level of the text by considering the aspects of a frame that involve selection and salience. I analyse *what* and *who* is included in the news articles on Operation Epervier. I identify the following aspects of the articles: 1) who are the actors, 2) what are their actions and the events, 3) what are the patterns in the language, including keywords, as well as discursive devices (discussed below) that are used to portray the actors, their actions and the events (Ahmad, 2020). Secondly, I identify what is omitted from the articles. Similar to the above step, I look at *what* and *who* is excluded from the news articles.

Thirdly, after identifying the frame, I analyse the 'underlying assumptions' in the frame (University of Vermont, 2009, para 2). In order to do this, I analyse the institutional context of the news organisations, *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *Libération*, such as their owners and readership. This enables me to analyse the frames at the level of the institution. I also analyse the cultural and societal context in which the frames were constructed, which shifts throughout my analysis of the news articles from 1986 to 2009. I ask the following questions,

1. What assumptions does the frame make?
2. What do the frames exclude from discussion?
3. What theories or ideologies do the frames reproduce or reinforce?

Throughout, I analyse the extent to which frames are communicable (textual analysis), naturalised (linked to ideology) and dominant (linked to culture/society). Gitlin (1980) provides a series of questions that must be asked in order to analyse a news text through framing:

1. What is the frame here?
2. Why this frame and not another?
3. What patterns are shared by the frames clamped over this event and the frames clamped over that one, by frames in different media in different places at different moments?
4. How does the news-reporting institution regulate these regularities?
5. What difference do the frames make for the larger world? (p. 7)

These questions enable me to view the frames through analysis of the manifest content of the news texts as well as what is omitted from them, analysis of the historical and geographical context, the institutional context and the cultural/societal level in which the frames were constructed. When analysing the frame at the level of the text, I use discursive devices, borrowed from CDA, discussed below.

### Discursive Devices

A major part of my analytical approach is the identification of discursive devices. These devices help us to uncover the underlying ideologies embedded in the discourse of the communicating texts. Discursive strategies are practices which help to construct meaning in discourse. Reisigl and Wodak (2009, p. 94) describe them as a ‘more or less intentional plan of practices adopted to achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic goal’ (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009, p. 94). Although the DHA is the main form of CDA which will be adopted for this thesis, elements of van Dijk’s (2011) CDA approach will also be applied in order to expand our understanding of the formation of discursive strategies. Below is a table of discursive strategies based on the definitions by Reisigl and Wodak (2009) and van Dijk (2011):

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Discursive Strategy | Definition | Discursive Devices (selected examples) | Objectives or purpose (selected examples) |
| Nomination/Denomination | -Nomination: categorisation and identification of actors, objects, events, actions  -Denomination: categorisation and identification actors, objects, events, actions as *others* | Metaphors, metonymies, synecdoche | Discursive construction of actors, objects, events, actions in a negative or positive way |
| Predication | Assertions which attribute certain characteristics to actors, objects, events, actions | Stereotypes, positive/negative traits, comparisons, presuppositions; rhetorical devices (*ethos*, *pathos*, *logos*) | Discursive qualification or judgement of actors, objects, events, actions |
| Argumentation | Justification of claims of truth | Topoi (recurring themes/topics which justify an argument) | Presentation and justification of arguments |
| Perspectivisation | Positioning of speaker’s point of view | Quotation marks, direct or indirect speech | Making the perspective of the speaker apparent |
| Intensification/ Mitigation | Modification (by making it more or less) of the force of actors, objects, events, actions | Diminutives, augmentatives, hyperbole | Emphasising agency of an *other* as active, regarding negative acts (intensification) and de-emphasising agency of the self, regarding negative acts, through passivisation (mitigating) (van Dijk, 2011 (pp. 397-9). |

**Table 1. A Selection of Discursive Strategies. Adapted from Wodak (2009, p. 8)**

Each analytical chapter (Chapters 2-4) will contain tables such as the one above, detailing which discursive devices appear, with a column including specific examples from the texts analysed. For example, in Chapter 3, the dominant frame is ‘technical military assistance’. One way of framing the operation as ‘technical’ rather than human-led is through the discursive strategy of mitigation, which removes human agency. The principal discursive device used in order to achieve this strategy is ‘passivisation’, in other words, use of the passive grammatical construction. For example, the phrase ‘a raid launched by French Jaguars’[[51]](#footnote-51) removes agency from the French military who committed the act, and disconnects the act from its actors, thereby mitigating the effect of their actions.

Using Table 2, below, I will demonstrate how I locate discursive devices using the approach of CDA-DHA. The table outlines which questions to ask to approach discursive features, which discursive categories these questions correspond to, and the purpose of the discursive strategies.

​​

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Questions to approach discursive features | Discursive strategies | Purpose |
| How are persons, objects, phenomena, events, processes and actions named and referred to linguistically in the discourse in question? | nomination | discursive construction of social actors  discursive construction of objects, phenomena, events  discursive construction of processes and actions |
| What characteristics or qualities are attributed to social actors, objects, phenomena, events, processes and actions mentioned in the discourse? | predication | discursive characterisation of social actors, objects, phenomena, events, processes and actions (e.g., positively or negatively) |
| What arguments are employed in discourse? | argumentation | persuading addressees of the validity of specific claims of truth and normative rightness |
| From what perspective are these nominations, attributions, arguments expressed? | perspectivisation | positioning the speaker's or writer's point of view and expressing involvement or distance |
| Are the respective utterances articulated overtly, are they intensified or mitigated? | mitigation and intensification | modifying the illocutionary force of utterances in respect to their epistemic or deontic status |

**Table 2. Discursive Strategies in the DHA. Reprinted from Reisigl (2017, p. 52)**

Reisigl (2017, p. 52) states that ‘in order to approach various discursive features and strategies, discourse-historical analyses systematically go through five simple questions’ (see Table 2). Reisigl (2017, pp. 52-3) suggests that ‘the discourse-analytical categories are not completely fixed, but have, at least partially, to be modified, adapted and newly developed for each research object.’ (Reisigl, 2017, pp. 52-3). Using Table 2, I established discursive devices in the texts, and as mentioned above, in each analytical chapter I will provide a table of discursive strategies, having systematically analysed the texts, in order to present my specific findings. Further definitions will be looked at in more detail within each analytical chapter.

### Analysing the Policy Source Base

In the first stage of analysis of the policy documents, I identified 1) the main policies outlined by the policymakers, 2) the actors or nations involved in policy decision making, 3) the discursive qualification of those actors. As the documents detail French foreign policy in Africa, one of the most important aspects of analysis is the discursive construction of the relationship between Africa and France or, where relevant, France and Chad specifically. In the second stage of analysis, I created coding categories based on the discursive devices outlined in CDA-DHA by identifying patterns in grammatical structures, rhetorical devices and keywords. I then applied these coding categories to the policy texts.

### Analysing the News Source Base

As the source base of news articles was quite large (277 articles), I used Nvivo, a software designed for qualitative analysis. The news articles were imported to Nvivo and I used software tools to analyse the texts. In the first stage of analysis, I read through the articles, taking into account grammatical structures, keywords, rhetorical devices, which appeared in the text. I established categories based on 1) sources cited in the articles (e.g. official (governmental and intergovernmental), non-official, military), 2) the description or qualification of actors or events (e.g. positive, negative, passive, humanitarian), 3) keywords (e.g. ‘security’, ‘assistance’). The coding categories enabled me to identify patterns in the text. I used the findings from these coding categories to generate statistical data on dominant sources and keywords.

In the second stage of analysis, I used the patterns I identified through the coding process to carry out in-depth qualitative analysis. For each period, I firstly identify the dominant frame. In Chapter 3, I identify 'Technical Military Assistance' as the dominant frame. In Chapter 4, I identify 'Multilateral Security' as the dominant frame. Secondly, I identified the discursive construction of actors within this frame. In Chapter 3, the main actors are the French government and military, the Chadian government and military, the Chadian ‘rebels’ and the Libyan government and military. In Chapter 4, the main actors are the French government and military, the Sudanese government and military, the Chadian government and military, the ‘rebels’ and the Sudanese government and military. Finally, I identified the main discursive strategies that appear in the news articles. In the final stage of analysis, I compared the news articles to other texts, in order to analyse the intertextual and contextual elements of the text.

## Case Study: Operation Epervier

The case study for this thesis is Operation Epervier, a French military operation in Chad that was launched in 1986 and ended in 2014. The French government launched this operation as part of a conflict between Chad and Libya during which the Libyan military was occupying northern Chad. Its aim was to support the Chadian military against the Libyan forces, within the remit of the 1976 Technical Military Cooperation Agreement. By 1987, the French military had reached this objective, however, Operation Epervier remained active in Chad. Although the original mandate of the operation was redundant, the role of Epervier troops diversified and involved overseeing the election of Chadian coup leader Idriss Déby in 1996, supporting President Déby during a coup attempt in 2006 and once again supporting his government against Chadian and Sudanese adversaries in 2008. In 2013, Operation Epervier supported Operation Serval in Mali and Operation Sangaris in Central African Republic (AFP, 2014). In 2014, the French government replaced Operation Eperiver with Operation Barkhane, which was active across Chad, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Mali and Niger, ending in 2022.

It is widely accepted in the scholarship that French military interventions play a huge role in the continued relationship between the French state and African states, and in particular Chad, which is central to French military presence in Africa. French military interventions in Africa have been the subject of many studies as France has intervened over 50 times in Africa since 1960. Yet, the relationship between the French and Chadian states remains under-researched, despite Chad being at the centre of French military operations in Africa.

Operation Epervier was a significant French military operation. It was the longest running French military operation to take place in Africa post-1960, lasting over 28 years. It is also significant because it enabled the French military to establish a permanent military presence in Chad, with the troops and equipment in its Chadian bases serving other operations taking place in Africa.[[52]](#footnote-52) Operation Epervier therefore had implications not only for Chad but the African continent more widely.

Operation Epervier falls into the category of an OPEX (Opération Extérieure, or Overseas Operation) (cheminsdememoire.gouv.fr). There is no official definition of an OPEX however, Colonel Frédéric Garnier, Head of Sub-Saharan Africa at the Directorate General of International Relations and Strategy at the Ministry of the Armed Forces, defines OPEX as the dispatch/marshalling of French military forces abroad for three reasons: 1) at the request of legal authorities in a country under external threat, 2) to protect or evacuate French citizens, 3) at the request of the UN security council (RFI, 2018). Another way to which Operation Epervier is referred, is as a *dispositif*. The terms *dispositif* (mission or plan) and *intervention* (intervention) appear in the 1972 White Paper on Defence to describe French military action. However, this thesis will use the term military ‘intervention’ to describe French military action taking place outside of France. I will adopt the definition of ‘intervention’ provided by Pearson and Baumann (1988, p. 173), who describe international military intervention as ‘the movement of troops or forces of one country into the territory or territorial waters of another country, or military action by troops already stationed by one country inside another, in the context of some political issue or dispute’. Further, for Bon and Mingst (1980) intervention has the goal of affecting the state of affairs in a country. They also see the possibility or threat of intervention as a way of affecting the affairs of another state.

Because not all military interventions take place as part of an operation, it is important to differentiate between an operation and an intervention. Multiple interventions may take place as part of one military operation: for example, during Operation Epervier, French troops intervened on multiple occasions (the conflict between Chad and Libya or Chad and Sudan or providing security during Chadian Presidential elections) and for different reasons (protecting French citizens, defending Chad’s territorial integrity). There is also a distinction between OPEX and another type of military deployment called *forces de presence*, which are troops strategically positioned outside of France. These forces are only present in Africa and are tasked with protecting French economic interests and only intervene when necessary (FranceTVinfo 2013). The French Ministry of Defence also mentions *les forces prépositionnées* (‘pre-positioned forces’). These forces have a permanent presence in certain zones outside of France and have four functions: protecting French citizens, the territory of France and its interests; acting as reserves, maintaining stability in ‘sensitive’ regions; and contributing to regional operations (Ministère de la Défense, 2016, p. 4).

According to Nolutshungu’s (1996) book on Chad, military intervention is most likely when ‘there is no fear of counter-intervention and when there appears to be widespread agreement on democracy and human rights as criteria of international legitimacy’ (p. 3). Intervention is also supposed to be ‘limited and brief’ (Nolutshungu, 1996, p. 3). Nolutshungu (1996) continues, ‘each intervenor sees itself as seeking to promote a just outcome with minimal use of force, particularly against the noncombatant population, without provocation to other states’ (p. 9). He adds, ‘intervention quickly loses domestic support if it produces humiliating defeats, imposes economic burdens or results in a heavy toll of dead and injured for the intervening power’ (Nolutshungu, 1996, p. 9). Public support is therefore an important aspect of a military intervention.

Operation Epervier forms a major part of the relationship between France and Chad. As a case study, it is both unique and typical. The relationship between the two countries is typical because Chad was a colony of France which, like many other French African colonies became independent in 1960.[[53]](#footnote-53) In 1958, along with most of France’s colonies,[[54]](#footnote-54) Chad joined the French community and after independence it maintained ties with France diplomatically, economically, linguistically and defensively. However, it is also unique when compared to other former colonies. Chad’s natural resources are not significant compared to other African nations with which France has economic, political and military ties.[[55]](#footnote-55) More important is Chad’s geostrategic use to France. Chad is positioned in central Africa and borders Libya, Sudan, Central African Republic, Cameroon, Nigeria and Niger. From the north, Chad borders northern Africa, significant due to its proximity with southern Europe. Its western and southern borders are shared with Niger and Central African Republic, two countries that are rich in uranium, which the French government exploits for its nuclear power programme. Moreover, a pipeline runs beneath Chad and its neighbour, Cameroon, through which oil is transported to the sea. Chad also contains Lake Chad, which sustains 20 million people in the surrounding countries (Ayangafac, 2009, p. 3). Chad’s central position therefore offers access to much of the rest of the continent and its resources, where the French military’s permanent presence offers ease of access to France’s other military bases and operations.[[56]](#footnote-56)

### The Policy of ‘Cooperation’

Analysis of ‘cooperation’ forms the basis of Chapter 2 of this thesis. The policy of 'cooperation' refers to the official policy approach that the French government adopted in the aftermath of independence in France's African colonies. 'Cooperation' thereby characterises the relationship between France and its former colonies post-1960. The ‘defence’, ‘assistance’ and ‘cooperation’ agreements signed by France and the newly independent African states formalised this relationship, creating economic, political, linguistic and defence links between the signatories. The French government also established this policy formally, through White Papers on Defence published by the Ministry of Defence, and informally, at the annual France-Africa summits, which were annual meetings of French and African elites to discuss French foreign policy in Africa.

The policy of cooperation is key to understanding the relationship between France and its former colonies once formal colonialism has ended. In effect, 'cooperation' replaced colonialism as the main policy approach of France in Africa. I argue that as well as being a policy, 'cooperation' was a way of discursively reformulating the relationship between France and Africa. Policymakers and politicians established this discourse discursively through the policy documents and speeches. This thesis traces the development of the policy of cooperation and how the discourse of 'cooperation' discursively justified French military interventions in Chad.

### The Role of the Press

As I established in the theoretical framework section above, the communicating texts of the press are instrumental in shaping ideologies and creating meaning within their societies through framing and discourse. In order to understand the role of the French press in shaping the relationship between France and Chad post-1960, it is useful to look at the function and purpose of the press more generally. News media are a valuable source of information for the public (Zelizer, 2004), especially during conflict, as information is limited (Freedman, 2017).[[57]](#footnote-57) One of the main ways through which the French public was able to have access to information about French military activity in Chad during the period of analysis was through the news media. There are discussions in the literature in Journalism studies as to the function of journalism. Analysing these debates enables us to understand the role and significance of the press on the interventionist practices of the French government during this period.

There are three major approaches regarding the role of journalists and the news media. Firstly, in the 'watchdog' role journalists are described as acting independently of external influence and placing checks on power. Historian of the French news media, Raymond Kuhn (2013, p. 123) defines the watchdog role as ‘the capacity of the media to influence the functioning of the executive' and 'to hold relevant governmental actors to account, to expose errors, malpractice and scandal on the part of executive politicians and officials...and to exert an influence on the formulation and implementation of public policy'. Secondly, in the ‘informative’ role, journalists are described as transmitting information to the public. This is linked to ‘objectivity’ in news reporting, which suggests that there is or must be separation between journalists’ values and the facts they report. Schudson (1978) describes objectivity as ‘the belief that one can and should separate facts from values’ (p. 5); it ‘means that a person's statements about the world can be trusted if they are submitted to established rules deemed legitimate by a professional community. Facts here are not aspects of the world, but consensually validated statements about it’ (p. 7). Thirdly, in the ‘propagandist’ role, journalists are described as serving the interests of the state, reflecting a low level of autonomy in the journalistic field. Journalists in this role position themselves as ‘loyal’ to power and are 'defensive of authorities, routinely engaging in self-censorship, and serving as a mouth of the government' (Hanitzsch, 2007, p. 374). Similarly, Ramonet (2003) suggests that the news media can become the 'ideological arm' of elites.

A fourth approach, which is less often discussed in Journalism studies, is the role that journalists and the press play in the construction of meaning for audiences through their use of language. Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch (p. 3) argue that the news has the ability to shape ‘the way we see the world, ourselves and each other’ and, news stories are able to ‘construct and maintain our shared realities’. Building on this approach, through framing analysis and using the notion of discourse in CDA, I locate the construction of ‘shared realities' within discourse. As I explored in the theoretical framework section above, there is an argument that the news media ‘set the parameters of a broad framework within which news discourse is constructed, transmitted and developed’ (Pan and Kosicki, 1993, p. 57). News narratives are effective because they are ‘understood by the wider population’ (Ahmad, 2020, p. 573) and reflect ‘common sense or conventional wisdom’ (Pan and Kosicki, 1993, p. 57). For Critical Discourse analysts, these ‘shared realities’ are described as ideologies, which are embedded in the discourses of news texts. In this thesis, I argue that these ideologies are neocolonial in nature and reflect a power imbalance in the relationship between France and Chad. Because of the power of journalists in shaping meaning, they play an important role in communicating the events of Operation Epervier to the French public and giving them meaning.

### The French Press

Across Chapters 3 and 4, I analyse how *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *Libération* reported on Operation Epervier. I analyse the articles published in these three news outlets as texts which communicated the events of Operation Epervier and French military involvement in Chad to the French public. As mentioned above, I analyse French news articles during two periods of analysis. The first is the launch of Operation Epervier during a conflict between Chad and Libya, 1986-1987. The second is the intervention of Operation Epervier and European Union force, EUFOR during a conflict between Chad and Sudan, 2008-2009. Across these two periods, social media was not prominent at all: only *Le Figaro* had a Twitter account and it had only 25 followers in 2008. I therefore do not conduct social media analysis. TV and radio news are also prominent journalistic methods of communication however, I chose to focus on the French press due to its status. During this period the written form had an established status, carrying a high degree of credibility, and the three newspapers which form the corpus of this study had the status of institutions in French society (Thogmartin, 1998). As Robinet (2016, p. 17) points out, the written press’s long history as a medium, reinforces its legitimacy, having developed out of the ‘intellectual dominance of Paris literary culture’ (Benson, 2004, p. 11). Between 2006 and 2010, which covers my second period of analysis, advertising revenue was highest from the press and second highest from TV (vie-publique.fr, 2022). This demonstrates the importance of the press in French society throughout this period. Kuhn (2011, p. 35) describes the contemporary French press; made up of three ‘quality’ newspapers (*Le Monde, Le Figaro, Libération*), two popular titles (*France-Soir, Le Parisien/Aujourd’hui en France*), three ‘opinion’ titles (*La Croix, L’Humanité, Présent*), two financial titles (*Les Echos, La Tribune*), one sports daily (*L’Equipe*) and 57 daily regional dailies. This is largely unchanged today, with the exception of regional dailies. I will analyse the context of my three chosen newspapers in more detail across chapters 3 and 4.

Regarding the importance of favourable public opinion when launching a military operation, Nolutshungu (1996, p. 3) discusses the need to convince people that military intervention is necessary: he argues that even when a state is inspired by ‘self-serving motives’, intervention is justified though the necessity ‘to save lives, to put an end to oppression, or to save a state from external subversion’. In this thesis I argue that the language of ‘cooperation’ is a means through which the French state reframed exploitative neocolonial practices of French military intervention as a positive form of collaboration, rather than exploitation. Journalists’ reinforcement of the official narrative through the French news media and the consensus among news outlets (Robinet’s (2016) ‘transmediatic’ narrative) communicates this position to the French public and has the ability to shape public opinion in favour of these neocolonial practices.

#### Le Monde

*Le Monde* was founded in 1944 at the request of Charles de Gaulle. *Le Monde* describes itself as a ‘newspaper of record’[[58]](#footnote-58) and the ‘compass’[[59]](#footnote-59) which provides direction for the public (Fottorino, 2009). It describes its editorial stance as objective: not partisan or ideological[[60]](#footnote-60) (ibid.). International news is central to the reputation of *Le Monde* (Benson, 2004). *Le Monde*’s former chief editor, Yves Agnès argues that although the publication no longer has the ‘moral rigour’ of the past,[[61]](#footnote-61) *Le Monde* ‘remains a symbol’ of high-quality journalism (The Connexion, 2010).

The 1990s saw the commercialisation of *Le Monde* under Jean-Marie Colombani. In the early 2000s, there was a disagreement in *Le Monde* between Jean-Marie Colombani (the director) and Edwy Plenel (the editor) on its commercialisation, which Colombani was in favour of, leading to the sale of *Le Monde* to Pierre Bergé, Mathieu Pigasse and Xavier Niel (Colombani, 2007). This led to the departure of Plenel and his launch of digital investigative news outlet, *Mediapart* in 2008. *Le Monde* received 295 million francs through its new shareholders in order to make it more profitable, while continuing to receive state subsidies on top of funding from its new owners. In 2008, media industrialist group Lagardère purchased shares in *Le Monde* (Acrimed, 2003): *17*.3% of *Le Monde Group* and 34% of *Le Monde Interactif* (FranceTVinfo, 2010) and remained involved with the publication until 2011. CEO of Lagardère, Arnaud Lagardère, was also Chairman of the Board of Directors of defence company EADS (European Aeronautic Defence and Space) from 2007 until 2013 (Lagardère, 2007).

#### Le Figaro

*Le Figaro* is the oldest surviving daily newspaper in France. It was founded in 1854 and became daily in 1866. Before WWII, *Le Figaro* was known for its literary prose and conservative literary criticism. (Thogmartin, 1998). In the 1970s Hersant acquired *Le Figaro*. It has been owned by the Dassault group since 2008 (BBC News, 2006). While alive, founder Serge Dassault owned 70 newspapers, Dassault also owns defence companies, SABCA (Société anonyme belge de constructions aéronautiques) and Dassault Aviation 62.25%. Furthermore, from 2004 to 2017, Serge Dassault was also a representative of the political party, the UMP.

#### Libération

*Libération* was founded in 1973 by Jean-Paul Sartre and Serge July. The newspaper is left leaning and had communist tendencies to begin with. In 2005, after facing financial difficulties, *Libération* was acquired by banking group Groupe Rothschild & Cie (droits-finances.com, 2019). Upon arrival, Edouard de Rothschild exercised direct control over the newspaper by asking the directors Louis Dreyfus and Serge July to leave.

#### The French Press and State

Proximity with the state is seen as a defining feature of the French news media: researchers tend to agree that the French media have maintained a close interrelationship with the state since the early days of French journalism (Kuhn, 1995; Laville, 2013; Robinet, 2016; Benson and Hallin, 2007).[[62]](#footnote-62) Laville (2013) describes a French tradition which differs from ‘Anglo-Saxon media’, with the latter being more hostile to state involvement (p. 88).[[63]](#footnote-63) In terms of accreditation. Leteinturier (2013) points out that the French state legitimises journalists through the functioning of the Conseil de Carte d’Identité de Journaliste Professionnel (CCIJP).[[64]](#footnote-64) The CCIJP is tasked with deciding who is a professional journalist by issuing journalist ID cards (Carte d’identité de journaliste professionnel or Professional journalist identity card). According to Leteinturier (2013) the processes of the CCIJP are internalised by journalists in terms of what is censored, what is not, and what may be seen as out of the ordinary.

Furthermore, the state is a major provider of sources for the news media. The influence of official sources is disputed in the literature. Benson and Hallin (2007) claim that official sources are used as they are seen as a trustworthy source. Laville (2013) shows that due to their proximity with the state, ] AFP tended to play an almost diplomatic role which she describes as ‘un journalisme d’enregistrement’, with ‘enregistrement’ meaning ‘recording’, reflecting a sort of verbatim journalism whereby journalists reproduced entire de Gaulle speeches in their reports (p. 86). *Le Monde* has also produced presidential speeches in their entirety, such as French president Nicolas Sarkozy’s speech in Dakar in 2007.[[65]](#footnote-65) Cottle (2004, p. 16) points out that because of the credibility of official sources and their ‘presumed “objective” knowledge’, journalists are able to ward off criticism.

Moreover, the state funds the press. This has been the case since the 1800s as a way of 'encouraging the free communication of thoughts between citizens'[[66]](#footnote-66) (Fontenelle, 2014, subheading).[[67]](#footnote-67) State aid to newspapers was 5.6 billion francs in 1984 and there was also indirect aid to newspapers in the form of reduced VAT rate, exemption from professional tax and preferential postal rates (Fontenelle, 2014, para 4). Fontenelle (2014) writes, ‘the survival of most general and political news titles already depends closely on maintaining this infusion of public money’[[68]](#footnote-68) (para 4). Between 2009 and 2011, Fontenelle (2014) writes, '5 billion euros were swallowed up in the sector, or an average of 1.6 billion per year. This amount represents almost 15% of the industry's turnover — a situation similar to that of the mid-1980s.'[[69]](#footnote-69) (para 9). For Herman and Chomsky (1988), due to its financial help, the state is one of the powers which exerts control over the media. One of the ‘filters’ placed on the media is its reliance ‘on information provided by government, business, and “experts” funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power’ (Herman and Chomsky, 1988, p. 29). It is therefore possible to argue that the state wishes to exert control over which newspapers have access to aid and who has access to newspapers. Other researchers have tried to show that overreliance on official sources can delegitimise the media: Kuhn (1995) shows that at the time that he was writing, the majority of citizens polled believed that journalists were not independent of political pressures. However, Charon (1995) claims that the high occurrence of official sources does not mean the authors of those sources have an influential voice. Adding to this, Benson and Hallin (2007) argue that despite the high usage and increase in use (between 1960 and 1990) of official sources, the French press remain critical of the government and use of official sources only increases legitimacy. Laville (2013) supports this by showing that while the government had full control over the AFP, its journalists were subject to criticism from other media agencies and were considered a communication arm of the state. These debates demonstrate the importance of analysing the proximity between the state and the press, which I do through my discursive analysis of policy documents in comparison to news articles, in order to reveal the degree of proximity in discourse and the potential co-construction of narratives in the news media reporting on Operation Epervier

## Limitations

Regarding the limitations of my case study, firstly, it is limited to one French military operation, Epervier, which took place in one country, Chad. It can therefore be argued that it does not provide a complete picture of French military involvement in all of its former African colonies, or that it is not relevant to other countries on the continent. However, Operation Epervier was a significant operation as it was the longest French military operation in Africa post-1960 in terms of duration. Furthermore, Operation Epervier’s presence in Chad throughout its deployment between 1986 and 2014 involved multiple countries (such as Libya, Sudan, countries of the European Union, the USA) and had implications for west and central Africa and its resources more widely, due to the French military’s permanent base in Chad. The tactics and approaches tested during this operation also had wide-ranging implications (Cooper, Grandolini and Delalande, 2015), informing US military practices in Afghanistan for example (Granvaud, 2014, p. 208). Analysis of Operation Epervier therefore reflects a set of practices which were developed by the French military during this time and employed in other countries. They reflect practices that are visible across all of France’s ‘sphere of influence’ in west and central Africa. Therefore, although I analyse one military operation, it has had wide implications for the relationship between France and its former colonies in Africa and the independence of African countries in which France was involved.

In terms of source bases, this study is limited to three newspapers. However, they represent the political left, centre and right, reflecting supposedly varied political positions, this allows us to see the extent to which there are similarities and differences between their new reports. Moreover, the three newspapers were influential not only because of their readership but their status in French society. Furthermore, put into conversation with policy documents, the news articles enable an inter-textual analysis which reveals the extent to which dominant narratives on how French military interventions in Chad were able to develop and normalise French military presence on the African continent. Through analysis of the patterns that exist in both the language of policy and the press, it is possible to create a framework of analysis that can apply to news coverage of French military interventions taking place in other African countries during this period. It would be interesting to expand this analysis to other types of texts, such as TV or radio news, literature, film and advertising, in order to see the extent to which neocolonial discourses exist beyond governmental texts.

Regarding the limitations of CDA as a methodological approach, Slembrouk (2001, p. 42) argues that one problem with the approach is that ‘the language user – as an inevitable entity in research and as a “target” of intervention – has largely been left out of the social-theoretical discussions and dialogues which CDA has engaged in so far’. This is a serious criticism of CDA. However, I believe that combining CDA with framing, which is fundamentally focused on the producers of frames, such as news organisations, and how they frame messages for their audiences, means that my analysis takes into account the language user. In my study, I discuss the context of the news articles and policy documents and therefore address, to a certain extent, the production of those texts. Another criticism of conducting CDA comes from Billig (2008, p. 783), who warns that Critical Discourse analysts 'tend to use, and thereby instantiate, the very forms of language whose ideological potentiality they are warning against'. This is a serious risk. However, I believe that CDA’s focus on critique and the reflexive approach to researcher positionality that is promoted by this critique means that analysts remain aware of their role and use of language as researchers within the research context.

Regarding criticisms of framing analysis, Jack Lule highlights the fact that whereas earlier framing studies, such as Gitlin (1980), focused on the language of the frames, more recent analyses tend to ignore the role of language. Lule writes, 'the attention to language [in Gitlin’s study] is striking. It is more striking when considered in the light of much present-day framing research. To me, the largest weakness of current framing scholarship is the disinterest and inattention to the particular language, visuals, and actions purportedly under study' (D’Angelo et al, 2019, p. 17). Addressing this concern, I bring in framing analysis alongside CDA-DHA, centring analysis of language throughout my study. Another problem in framing analysis, according to Lule, is that 'students and scholars [...] gravitate more to quantitative analysis rather than qualitative, computation rather than interpretation [of language]' (D'Angelo et al, 2019, p. 19). I address this by favouring qualitative analysis, with quantitative analysis brought in to strengthen my findings. I believe that the findings in this thesis are supported by the use of mixed methods.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I reviewed the historical context, theoretical framework, methodological processes and case study of this thesis, bringing together the fields of Critical Discourse Analysis, History and Journalism studies. I began by placing this study within its historical context. I examined the development of the relationship between Chad and France from the period of formal colonialism to the development of the relationship of ‘cooperation’ and the post-Cold War French policy changes. I then moved on to the theoretical framework of the study, discussing the theory of neocolonialism, which critiques the continued economic, political, military and cultural relationship between former colonisers and former colonies. Additionally, I brought in the theory of *Françafrique*, specific to the neocolonial and exploitative nature of the relationship between France and its 'sphere of influence' in west and central Africa. These theories demonstrate the extent to which a power imbalance exists between France and its former colonies that enables the continuation of French military presence in the independent state of Chad. I demonstrated that the focus of neocolonial theory primarily on economic and political analyses means that a key element to the longevity of French military practices in Chad is missing, that of discourse. Although neocolonial theorists point to its importance, they do not analyse it in depth.

I then turned my focus to the theoretical origins of Critical Discourse Analysis, which aims to uncover the underlying ideologies which produce and reproduce those power imbalances through discourse. CDA-DHA roots textual analysis within its historical and intertextual context, revealing the extent to which language can be used to shape events, such as French military operations in Chad. I brought in elements of framing analysis from Journalism studies in order to analyse the news articles and understand how the events of Operation Epervier are framed by journalists in *Le Monde*, *Libération* and *Le Figaro* and how these frames contribute to the creation of meaning for the audiences of the three news outlets. I then discussed how CDA-DHA and framing can be combined to analyse my source base of policy documents and news articles between 1960 and 2014. I introduced my case study of the French military operation Epervier (1986-2014), its relevance and the extent to which it has had wide implications for France-Africa relations, making it a pertinent case study for this thesis. Through this methodological approach and my case study, I aim to reveal patterns in the discourses of policy and the press, and provide a framework of analysis, applicable to post-1960 French military interventions in west and central Africa. In Chapter 2, I analyse the policy documents which formed the legal basis of a continued relationship between France and Chad. It is upon these policy documents that the legal basis of French military interventions is formed. Within these documents, I argue that the relationship of ‘cooperation’ is discursively constructed on the basis of a neocolonial ideology.

# Chapter 2. The Development of the Policy of Cooperation, 1960-2014

‘Cooperation’ was the label given by French governmental officials to the French African policy approach adopted after the independence of the majority of France’s African colonies in 1960.[[70]](#footnote-70) The policy approach of ‘cooperation’ enabled successive French governments to maintain military, cultural and economic presence in France’s former colonies once the latter were independent. This continued relationship between France and its former colonies was formalised through the signing of ‘defence’, ‘assistance’ and ‘cooperation’ agreements in the 1960s and 1970s. The agreements formed the theoretical and legal foundation of French military interventions in Africa, including Operation Epervier in Chad (1986-2014), which is the case study of this thesis. This chapter asks, *to what extent did the documents, which formed the policy of cooperation, discursively justify a neocolonial relationship between France and Chad post-1960?* This question will be posed across two time periods: the first, after independence and during the Cold War, from 1960 to 1989; the second, after the Cold War and up to the end of Operation Epervier, from 1990 to 2014.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Chad has been central to French military operations in Africa since the colonial period due to its geographical position in central Africa and has been labelled the ‘aircraft carrier’[[71]](#footnote-71) of France (Ayangafac, 2009, p. 8). Maintaining military bases in Chad has enabled the French military ease of access to neighbouring countries. The first three French military operations in Chad (in 1968, 1969-1971,[[72]](#footnote-72) 1978-1980[[73]](#footnote-73)) had the aim of protecting the Chadian government against a newly formed anti-imperialist nationalist group called FROLINAT (Front de libération nationale du Tchad, National Liberation Front of Chad). The fourth French military operation in Chad was a response to Libyan troops entering Chad in 1980 under the command of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, leading to the launch of the huge military operation Manta, between 1982 and 1983, with a force of 3500 troops. Operation Manta was unsuccessful, resulting in embarrassment for Socialist French President François Mitterrand’s government. However, Mitterrand launched Operation Epervier in 1986 and had defeated the Libyan military by 1987.[[74]](#footnote-74) Yet French forces did not withdraw after this success; Operation Epervier was maintained by successive French governments. Following this operation, French military presence became permanent.

The maintenance of French military bases and the repeated French military interventions in central and western African countries, particularly Chad, marked continuity between the French governmental and military practices of the colonial period and the post-independence period. From 1960, French presidents of differing political parties and positions governed France, yet French military presence in Chad remained constant. This continuity, which resulted in a power imbalance between France and Chad, can be seen as a neocolonial in nature, as per the theory of neocolonialism, explored in Chapter 1. In this chapter, I analyse the extent to which the documents that formed the policy approach of ‘cooperation’ discursively justified French military presence in France’s former colonies post-1960, with particular reference to Chad. In order to do so, I analyse a series of official documents published after 1960, which enables us to trace the origins and development of the policy approach of ‘cooperation’.

Exploration of the notion of ‘cooperation’ within the documents is therefore at the heart of this analysis. I argue that, in the period between 1960 and 1989, the official documents discursively justified neocolonial practices in two ways: firstly, by arguing that France’s former colonies were independent and free to enter into agreements with France while also dependent on France for their independence; and secondly, by arguing that the French government had a duty to aid its former colonies, based on the notion of a ‘special’ relationship between France and Africa. I argue that the official documents discursively justified and therefore, enabled French neocolonial practices on the African continent.

The situation changed after the Cold War. Although the French government established ‘cooperation’ as the main policy approach to African countries in the 1960-1980s, global and local changes taking place in the 1990s led the French government to re-examine its foreign policy. I demonstrate that after 1990, in the aftermath of the Cold War, there were two significant changes to French foreign policy, which fed into reforms to the policy of ‘cooperation’. Firstly, the French government’s assistance to African countries became based on the condition of the latter’s democratisation. Secondly, unilateral French military interventions developed into multilateral interventions (coordinating with foreign militaries, International Financial Institutions and intergovernmental organisations). I demonstrate that these policy changes were linked to the perceived problem of insecurity and instability in the post-Cold War world. In the second part of this chapter, I therefore analyse the extent to which these post-Cold War policy shifts led successive French governments of varying political positions to maintain influence in France’s former colonies in Africa and to discursively justify this continued presence in Chad. I argue that the French government’s ability to discursively adapt the policy of ‘cooperation’ served to reinforce the established neocolonial practice of French military intervention in Chad. French neocolonial practices in Chad were a large part of a system of the French state’s continued dominance in central and west Africa more broadly at the expense of the latter.

Following this introduction, I describe this chapter’s source base, which primarily includes ‘defence’ and ‘cooperation’ agreements, White Papers on Defence, documents on the reform to cooperation and presidential speeches. The chapter will then be split into two parts. In the first part, I analyse the development of the policy of ‘cooperation’ relevant to the period from independence to the end of the Cold War, 1960-1989, and the themes of independence and duty. In the second part, I analyse the reforms to the policy of ‘cooperation’ in the aftermath of the Cold War, 1990-2014, and the themes of democratisation and multilateralisation. My conclusion reflects on the extent to which the policy documents on ‘cooperation’ discursively justified French military interventions in Chad during this period of analysis.

## Description of Sources

There are four main types of documents analysed as sources in this chapter: 1) ‘defence’, ‘assistance’ and ‘cooperation’ agreements that form the legal basis of French military operations launched in Chad, 2) the White Papers on Defence that outline official French foreign policy, 3) documents on the reform to the policy of ‘cooperation’, which formed the legal basis of reforms to French foreign policy, and which were formalised in 1998, 4) French presidential speeches given at France-Africa summits, which unofficially introduced new French foreign policy changes in Africa. In order to analyse these documents, I will use CDA-DHA, introduced in Chapter 1.

### The ‘Defence’, ‘Assistance’ and ‘Cooperation’ Agreements

There are three main agreements that will be analysed in this chapter: 1) The 1960 Technical Military Assistance agreement signed by the governments of France and Chad,[[75]](#footnote-75) 2) The 1960 quadripartite agreement signed by the governments of France, Central African Republic (CAR), Congo and Chad, 3) The 1976 Technical Military Cooperation agreement signed by the governments of France and Chad. The ‘defence’, ‘assistance’ and ‘cooperation’ agreements were hugely significant as they were the legal basis upon which French economic, cultural, educational and military influence was able to continue. The first two of these were the 1960 Technical Military Assistance agreement and the 1960 quadripartite agreement. Both were signed on 11 August 1960 with Chad, on the day of Chadian independence from France. They were based on mutual defence and reciprocal relations. These two agreements were replaced in 1976 with the Technical Military Cooperation agreement. This agreement was based solely on technical assistance rather than mutual defence. The agreements that were signed in the 1960s formed the legal basis of the French military interventions in Chad up until 1976, when they were replaced with the Technical Military Cooperation agreement.

All unilateral French military interventions in Chad since 1976, including Operation Epervier, have been launched on the basis of the 1976 Technical Military Cooperation agreement. Granvaud (2009, p. 58) asserts that many of its clauses were secret. The former French Minister of Defence from 1991-1993, Pierre Joxe claims he was unable to access the entirety of the agreements (Biano, 2015). Although the agreements of the 1960s were no longer in force due to pressure from the Chadian government, after the 1970s, many of the ideas developed in those agreements continued to exist within the ‘cooperation’ agreement and some remain until today. Therefore, it is important to analyse these texts in order to understand how the policy of ‘cooperation’ developed and evolved.

### The White Papers on Defence

The objective of the White Papers on Defence was to 'outline the major strategic guidelines for French defence' (Vie Publique, 2022, para 3).[[76]](#footnote-76) A total of four White Papers on Defence were published in the following years: 1972, 1994, 2008 and 2013. My analysis will focus firstly on the 1972 White Paper, relevant to the launch of Operation Epervier and its involvement in the Chad-Libya conflict from 1986-1987 (analysed in Chapter 3), and secondly, the 1994 White Paper on Defence, relevant to Operation Epervier’s involvement in the Chad-Sudan conflict with EUFOR, launched in early 2008 (analysed in Chapter 4). Although my focus is on the above two White Papers, I will also briefly analyse the 2008 and 2013 White Papers in the outro of this chapter.

Emmanuel Macron’s administration replaced the White Paper on Defence with the Defence Strategy Review (*Revue Stratégique de Défense*). The first was published in 2017 and the second in 2022. The White Papers (as well as the Defence Strategy Reviews) precede the Military Programming Laws (*Lois de programmation militaire* or LPM), which outline the military budget for periods of four to seven years based on the policies outlined in the White Paper. Buffotot (2016, p. 5) describes the White Paper as 'a theoretical exercise that presents a strategic framework of various options that must be taken into account in the LPM'.[[77]](#footnote-77) The White Papers are available to the public. Between 1972 and 1994 there was only one White Paper published; however, the increased frequency with which they have been published since 1994 shows that successive French governments felt it necessary to formalise the changes to French foreign policy in the form of the White Paper.

#### The 1972 White Paper on Defence

The 1972 White Paper on Defence, published by the French Ministry of Defence, was the first of its kind in France. The authors of this White Paper are not named. It was published 10 years after the Algerian War within the context of a new air force and the development of the French atomic weapon (Lecoq, 2021). The context was therefore that of the loss of France’s colonial empire. The first White Paper on Defence was published after the departure of de Gaulle, during the government of Georges Pompidou and at the initiative of Michel Debré, Minister of State, in charge of National Defence.[[78]](#footnote-78) The 1972 White Paper is quite concise (15 pages, c. 55, 836 words). It is mainly focused on France’s role as a non-aligned middle power with nuclear deterrent capacity during the Cold War. Despite the context of decolonisation in which this White Paper was published, the passages on France’s relationship with Africa are brief. However, the passages that are included, as well as the information that is excluded, are extremely valuable in revealing the attitude of decision-makers towards France’s former colonies. It is useful to analyse because it was the main document on France’s foreign policy approaches until the end of the Cold War and therefore sheds light on the nature of the formal relationship between France and Chad during this period. Furthermore, it serves as a useful record of how the French government wished to communicate its policy positions to the French public, who had access to this document.

#### The 1994 White Paper on Defence

The 1994 White Paper on Defence was published by the Ministry of Defence and was commissioned and written in response to post-Cold War global changes including democratisation in Central and Eastern Europe. The reasons for the publication of the 1994 White Paper are stated in the following passage by Edouard Balladur, then Prime Minister of France,

The events that have occurred since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the disappearance of the Warsaw Pact, the accelerated changes in our European and international environment, technological progress or economic life, have prompted me, with the agreement of the President of the Republic, to make the publication of a new white paper a government priority.[[79]](#footnote-79)

The 1994 White Paper on Defence is different to the 1972 White Paper in that it was commissioned by the Prime Minister rather than the Minister of Defence. It is also much longer than the 1972 White Paper on Defence at 163 pages as opposed to 15 pages. Furthermore, 30 people in various ministerial departments (such as Defence, Budget, Foreign Affairs) are named in the 1994 White Paper as having contributed as part of 'the White Paper Commission'.[[80]](#footnote-80) This shows that it was potentially a more collaborative publication than the first White Paper.

The 1994 White Paper is divided into four parts. 1) the context of the White Paper and the threats to which French defence policy must respond; 2) defence strategy; 3) analysis of resources; 4) the relationship between defence and society. This structure was presented in paperback format,[[81]](#footnote-81) which Paveau (1996, p. 72) argues appears to aim at ‘facilitating information and documentation for citizens’.[[82]](#footnote-82) Darriet and Droff (2021) argue that the White Papers are not simply informative in nature but also aim to convince and persuade the reader. Paveau (1996) demonstrates this in her analysis of the 1994 White Paper, in which she writes that based on a linguistic analysis, it seems that the White Paper has two intentions, ‘to explain and to inform of course, but also, and this is less explicitly signalled, to convince and to persuade’[[83]](#footnote-83) (Paveau, 1996, p. 73).

Like the 1972 White Paper, the 1994 White Paper tends to focus on France’s relationship with Europe, however, its passages on France-Africa relations are very useful for this thesis as they reveal the French state’s position in relation to the African continent in the aftermath of the Cold War. The 1994 White Paper is also still concerned with France’s nuclear force, like the 1972 White Paper.

#### Documents on Reforms to the Policy of Cooperation

I will also include analysis of the Reforms to the Policy of Cooperation, 1998-2004[[84]](#footnote-84) by the Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development.[[85]](#footnote-85) These documents include notes from meetings, letters and decrees written by the Interministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development (Le Comité interministériel de la coopération internationale et du développement or CICID) and the Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (La Direction générale de la coopération internationale et du développement or DGCID).

### Presidential Speeches at France-Africa or Africa-France Summits

The France-Africa summits (renamed Africa-France Summits in 2010) started as quasi-annual, later becoming annual, events hosted in turn either by a city in France or a city in a ‘Francophone’ African country and would involve French and African leaders. The need for ‘a periodic conference of Heads of State’ is stipulated in the agreements, such as the 1960 quadripartite agreement (Act II, pp. 4-5). The summits were, and still are, funded by the French government. The first France-Africa summit was held in 1973 in response to the ‘crisis of cooperation’ in the 1970s whereby several African governments criticised the bilateral cooperation agreements signed with France (Nwokedi, 1982, p. 478). The first summit was thereby a method of facilitating the relationship of ‘cooperation’ between France and Africa. Nwokedi (1982, p. 479) states that the summits were ‘both a sounding board for France’s African diplomatic initiatives and an assembly for legitimising them’. This reflected a power dynamic in which the French government presented or dictated its policies in relation to Africa but not vice versa.

According to Nwokedi (1982, p. 481), the summits had a ‘quasi-judicial role’ and were therefore vital in the implementation of policies. As well as the practical role outlined above, the summits played a symbolic role, emphasising the continued close relationship between France and its former colonies. The summits highlighted ‘France’s role “as a privileged partner with most of Africa”’ (Cumming, 2003, p. 204) by excluding other European countries. In 1975, Léopold Senghor, president of Senegal (1960-1980) labelled the summit as a ‘family gathering’ (Le Monde, 1975),[[86]](#footnote-86) further emphasising the extent to which the summits were reflective of a close relationship between France and its former colonies. The close relationship displayed through the annual summits is one of the pillars of *Françafrique* according to *Asssociation Survie*, as we saw in Chapter 1.

I analyse a series of speeches outlined in the table below,

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| President | Summit, Location and Date |
| François Mitterrand | 16th France-Africa Summit, La Baule, France, 1990 |
| François Mitterrand | 18th France-Africa Summit, Biarritz, France, 1994 |
| Jacques Chirac | 24th France-Africa Summit, Cannes, France, 2007 |

I also include two speeches that were made during French presidential visits to Africa: Jacques Chirac’s speech during a visit to Yaoundé, Cameroon in 2001 and Nicolas Sarkozy’s speech during his visit to Cheikh-Anta-Diop University in Dakar, Senegal in 2007. The speeches I have selected are from the post-Cold War period, in order to balance my analysis more evenly across the period of study, as the agreements were signed during the Cold War period.

## Part I: The Development of the Policy of Cooperation, 1960-1989

In 1960, the majority of France’s African colonies became independent. Upon independence, all of the new African states signed ‘defence’, ‘assistance’ and ‘cooperation’ agreements with France. These agreements covered arrangements on vast areas of public life in France’s former colonies such as defence, education, currency, trade. They formed the foundation of the French foreign policy approach in Africa as well as the relationship between France and its former African colonies post-1960. This section looks at the development of the policy of ‘cooperation’ and the way in which French officials discursively reformulated the relationship between France and its former colonies in Africa post-independence. This section deals with the period 1960-1989. As mentioned above, 1960 marked the year in which the majority of France’s African colonies became independent and the moment at which the policy of ‘cooperation’ became formalised through the signing of the agreements. 1989 marked the end of the Cold War, after which the policy of ‘cooperation’ underwent reform. I will cover the period following the Cold War in the second part of this chapter.

As the focus of this thesis is France-Chad relations and the case study of Operation Epervier, I will highlight the aspects of the relationship of ‘cooperation’ which relate to my thesis. As mentioned above, Chad had geostrategic importance to France due its location in central Africa. Central Africa was important to France due to its raw materials (including uranium) and its geographical position which allowed ease of access to other parts of the continent for the French military air force. Therefore, although ‘cooperation’ took many forms, including cultural and educational cooperation, this chapter will focus on the economic and defence aspects of the relationship.

### Definitions

As a general, dictionary definition, the French noun *coopération* means the ‘act of cooperating, participating in a common task, collaboration, participation’ (Larousse.fr).[[87]](#footnote-87) However, when applied to policy, its definition changes to ‘economic, technical and financial aid from developed countries to developing countries’ (Larousse.fr).[[88]](#footnote-88) In the second definition, the participatory or collaborative aspect of cooperation changes to unidirectional assistance or ‘aid’. As we shall see below, this double meaning of ‘cooperation’ is present in the shifting discourse of the official documents. The notion of cooperation is defined throughout the policy documents selected for analysis in this chapter: the ‘defence’, ‘assistance’ and ‘cooperation’ agreements, the White Papers on Defence and the presidential speeches. Below, I analyse how the term ‘cooperation’ is used to discursively construct the nature of the relationship between France and its former African colonies in these documents.

According to the 1960 quadripartite agreement there are multiple forms of cooperation. For example, ‘monetary cooperation’[[89]](#footnote-89) (p. 3) refers to ‘membership of the monetary union’[[90]](#footnote-90) of the Franc Zone. ‘Cultural cooperation’[[91]](#footnote-91) refers to the establishment of a ‘French-style education’[[92]](#footnote-92) in Chad, Congo and Central African Republic (p. 7). Regarding ‘defence cooperation’,[[93]](#footnote-93) the African signatories ‘agree to organise a common system with the French Republic in order to prepare and ensure their defence and that of the community to which they belong’[[94]](#footnote-94) (Annex p.3). In these examples, the term ‘cooperation’ refers to a structure in which the signatories organise along the lines of a French system. Cooperation primarily consists, therefore, of incorporating Chad, Congo and Central African Republic within structures involving France, based on the continuation of the French-dominated system. Therefore, although the document states that Chad, Congo and Central African Republic are part of a ‘community’ with France, the structure of this community is solely French and therefore contradicts the notion of commonality and creates a power imbalance.

According to the 1976 Technical Military Cooperation agreement with Chad, technical military cooperation involves the French state’s provision of ‘personnel, training, supplies of materials and equipment, transit and stopover facilities’[[95]](#footnote-95) to Chad (p. 9). The Technical Military Cooperation agreement is therefore less concerned with the creation of a community or reciprocal relations and more with unidirectional provisions. It states,

This basic provision makes it easy to grasp the fundamental difference between the text submitted to us and those of 1960: the notion of mutual participation in the military defence of the contracting parties disappears; only that of technical military cooperation in the limited sense remains.[[96]](#footnote-96) (p. 4)

In other words, the technical military cooperation agreement defines ‘cooperation’ as French assistance to Chad rather than a collaborative effort, reflecting the second dictionary definition of ‘cooperation’.

The definition of cooperation can also be located in speeches made by French leaders. For them, there is an idea of ‘friendship’ within the notion of ‘cooperation’. In 1960, French President Charles de Gaulle stated, ‘France [is changing] from the outdated colonial system to a system of fruitful and friendly co-operation’ (quoted in Bossuat, 2003, p. 433). Similarly, in 1978, French President Giscard d’Estaing stated, ‘the African states and France have decided to develop entirely new ties, based on respect for the sovereignty and equality of the parties’ (Giscard d’Estaing, 1978, para 3).[[97]](#footnote-97) Giscard d’Estaing states that ‘respect for the sovereignty and equality’ of ‘African states and France’ is the basis of a ‘new’ relationship between the two parties and that it was therefore part of a mutual decision. By stating that a new relationship has replaced the old relationship, in other words, the colonial relationship, which did not respect sovereignty and equality, he suggests that a positive relationship has replaced a negative one. Furthermore, by emphasising the extent to which the new relationship was decided by the parties also suggests that decolonisation was simply a mutual decision. This feeds into a narrative which omits the active resistance to French colonialism in France’s colonies. These supposed friendly relations are also described by Mitterrand (1994), who discusses ‘friendship’ as something that Africa gives France: ‘[Africa] gives [France] a lot of friendship’ (para 28).[[98]](#footnote-98) The theme of Chirac's speech in Yaoundé, Cameroon, in 2001 was 'friendship' (para 1).[[99]](#footnote-99) Similarly, Sarkozy defines the relationship between France and Senegal as one of friendship at the beginning of his speech in Dakar, Senegal, in 2007: ‘Between Senegal and France, history has woven the bonds of friendship that no one can undo. This friendship is strong and true’ (para 3).[[100]](#footnote-100) Therefore, cooperation in these agreements has two competing meanings, firstly, reciprocal and friendly relations between all parties, and secondly, unidirectional aid from France to the other signatories. These two potentially clashing definitions shape the French foreign policy approach in Africa.

This language of ‘friendship’ within the approach of ‘cooperation’ forms part of the neocolonial discourse. As we shall see, the creation of a discursive bond between countries based on ‘friendship’ meant that this link between France and the African states or ‘friends of France’[[101]](#footnote-101) was conjured by French officials when the French military intervened in its former colonies to protect a government against threat (Powell, 2016, p. 2). Furthermore, it was the ‘friendly regimes’[[102]](#footnote-102) that were part of Jacques Foccart’s network of informants in Africa, forming one of the pillars of *Françafrique* as discussed in Chapter 1 (Guennon, 2009, para 4). The notion of ‘friendship’ within the approach of ‘cooperation’ was therefore essential to the discursive justification of French military involvement in Chad.

### Debates in the Literature

There are two major debates in the literature about the nature of the policy of ‘cooperation’. The first concerns the extent to which the policy of ‘cooperation’ was neocolonial in character. The second regards the extent to which any continuities in colonial practices post-1960 were intentional or unplanned. Arguing that ‘cooperation’ signalled continuity, Claeys (2004, p. 121) asserts that ‘it has often been said that the French organisation of cooperation with Africa settled by de Gaulle’s administration at the time of decolonisation was a means to leave in order better to stay’. This is supported by N’Dongo (1972, p. 19) who argued,

Political independence has not changed the nature of the relations between the colonised African countries and the colonising European countries. The present tendencies of the policy of the French bourgeoisie in Africa are basically the same as before 1959, even if its forms have changed. Such permanence can only come from the very nature of the economies in question, in particular from the nature of capitalist economies.[[103]](#footnote-103)

Granvaud (2014) reiterates this position by stating that the significance of the ‘cooperation’ agreements signed in 1960 was that it prolonged colonialism, ‘the cooperants [were] omnipresent at all levels of the new states, prolonging the colonial administration, and, for some of them, actually running the country’.[[104]](#footnote-104)

Charbonneau (2008) also links the approach of ‘cooperation’ to the neocolonial relationship between France and its former colonies. He writes,

de Gaulle and Foccart engineered the independence of African states in such a way as to guarantee the sustainability of French hegemony. The new neocolonial system of (one-sided) “cooperation” could be defined as the “survival of the colonial system in spite of formal recognition of political independence in emerging countries which [thereafter became] the victims of an indirect and subtle form of domination by political, economic, social, military or technical means” (S. Gregory 2000, 435). The very word “cooperation” disguised the actual implications of the new agreements. France continued to provide various “aid,” but in return the newly independent nations were to remain loyal and favour the “special” relationship.

Charbonneau (2008) also believes that ‘cooperation’ was both neocolonial and an intentional or ‘engineered’ system of control. He outlines the mechanisms of ‘cooperation’ both in practical terms through ‘political, economic, social, military and technical means’ but also discursively, through ‘the very word “cooperation”’, which ‘disguised’ the reality of the relationship. Although Charbonneau does not offer a discursive analysis of the policies formed under ‘cooperation’, he highlights its importance as a neocolonial practice.

Countering this position, Keese (2007) argues that the nature of the relationship between African and French officials was not neocolonial but a ‘complex and highly emotional interplay of relations’ from 1955 until the end of the 1960s (p. 593). He states that de Gaulle in particular believed in the ‘emotional bond’ with Africa (p. 596). ‘Cooperation’ for de Gaulle was ‘personal cooperation with African leaders who adored him’ (p. 596). In other words, Keese argues that the relationship between France and Africa was not based on neocolonialism or colonial continuities in the domains of economy, trade and defence. In fact, Keese (2007) argues that economic factors were not a motivation for French foreign policy in the 1960s, stating, ‘until 1970 French troops did not intervene to protect economic interests’ and that French politics was focused instead on its ‘political role in Europe and reduced relations to African countries to questions of aid policy’ (p. 605). Keese (2007) goes on to add that ‘there are no records of discussions about the strategic economic role of this or that African country in case of crisis’ (p. 605).

Granvaud (2014), on the other hand, argues the exact opposite, stating, ‘these interests, inherited from the colonial period, are primarily economic’[[105]](#footnote-105) and ‘ensure French energy independence’[[106]](#footnote-106) (p. 192). This is confirmed, as we saw above, in the examples of the agreements signed with Central African Republic, Chad, the Republic of Congo, Niger, Benin (Dahomey) and Côte d’Ivoire in the 1960s. As the 1961 agreement between Côte d'Ivoire, Benin (Dahomey), Niger and France states, the signatories were made to ‘reserve their sale in priority to the French Republic’ (Annex II, Article 5, p. 4). In prioritising access to natural resources for France, we see that this was a vital part of the relationship of ‘cooperation’. This contradicts Keese (2007) who states that ‘there is no reason to believe that this was an underlying motive for intervention’ (p. 605). In contrast to Keese (2007, p. 605), I argue that the agreements can be seen as ‘records of discussions’ about the economic interests of France in its former African colonies and the neocolonial practices of the French government.

A second debate in the literature concerns the extent to which the policies that emerged after independence in 1960 were an intentional (or even manipulative) attempt, on the part of French decisionmakers, to reassert the exploitative nature of the colonial relationship in the post-independence period, or whether French foreign policy in Africa post-1960 was unplanned. Chafer (2001) disputes the argument that the French foreign policy approach was planned, he writes, ‘although it was largely reacting to events outside its control, France was successful in pursuing its national interests, but in an incremental way and without any grand design’ (p. 172). However, Chafer (2001) contradicts himself by demonstrating the ways in which successive French governments designed and built the basis of a continued relationship between France and its former colonies, which benefited France economically, politically and militarily. He writes,

Symbolically, the Ministry for Overseas France (the former Ministry for the Colonies) was renamed the Ministry for Co-operation and an array of bilateral accords between France and its former Black African colonies, together with the personal relations forged between French governing elites and African political leaders under the Fourth Republic, laid the foundations for the maintenance of a strong French presence in Africa after independence (p. 172).

He thereby draws a direct line from the colonial period during the Fourth Republic and the post-independence period during the Fifth Republic, demonstrating the continuation of the neocolonial relationship between France and Africa. He also explains how this was possible: firstly, the Ministry for the Colonies was symbolically renamed, thereby indicating that the Ministry for Cooperation continued the work of the former ministry; secondly, the bilateral agreements laid the legal foundation for ties between France and its former colonies; and finally, personal relations ensured the continuity of ties between French and African elites. Therefore, although the French government of de Gaulle was reacting to events taking place in the colonies in the 1950s, such as wars of independence, this does not mean that the policies formed in reaction were not part of a design. Chafer (2001) also states that by passing the *loi-Cadre Defferre*, which granted African leaders some extra powers to govern while still under colonial rule, the government ‘was pursuing France’s national interest by seeking to redefine the colonial relationship so as to allow France better to remain’ (p. 172). He goes on to argue that it was successful and ‘set the shape for Franco-African relations in the post-colonial period by ensuring that French decolonisation in Black Africa did not mean, as it had in Indochina and Algeria, French departure’ (p. 172). I argue that this demonstrates that there did exist a plan or design to prevent the loss of influence in Africa.

Keese (2007) also argues that French foreign policy was reactive rather than intentional. He says that the French government’s effort to ‘co-opt’ African elites as part of the *loi-Cadre Defferre* was ‘unsystematically planned’ (p. 595). Yet Keese (2007) also demonstrates that at the same time as the implementation of the *loi-Cadre*, in 1956, Pierre Messmer, who became governor-general of French West Africa, was trialling partnership with African leaders as part of de Gaulle’s plan. Keese (2007) writes that Messmer, “tested” such cooperation with Ivory Coast leader Félix Houphouët-Boigny’ (p. 596). This shows that there was a plan to move from a colonial relationship to a relationship based on ‘cooperation’. The fact that this type of relationship was ‘tested’ demonstrates the extent to which it was systematically planned.

I argue that French administrators did plan to retain neocolonial links and the discourse of officials demonstrates the efforts to discursively justify French military intervention on the basis of ‘cooperation’. I suggest that the policy of ‘cooperation’ was developed as a neocolonial attempt to enable the reformulation of French colonial practices in Africa, in particular French military operations in Chad. As we shall see, the policy of ‘cooperation’ discursively re-presented colonial continuities as a new mutually beneficial relationship.

### (In)dependence

In this section, I demonstrate that after the formal independence of France's former colonies, the official documents contradictorily argue that African countries continue to be dependent on France in order to guarantee their independence, thereby necessitating a relationship of 'cooperation' and discursively justifying French interventionism. Furthermore, the official documents omit the dependence of France on African countries for its own 'energy independence', demonstrating the one-sided nature of the relationship of 'cooperation' in the discourse of officials.

#### Consent, Commonality and Reciprocity

After the majority of France’s colonies became independent, the French state had to deal with the newly independent African states as sovereign nations. As mentioned above, the ‘defence’, ‘assistance’ and ‘cooperation’ agreements meant that the French government was able to maintain neocolonial influence in its former colonies in Africa. However, because the African signatories were independent, it was important that they appeared to consent to the continued relationship with France. I demonstrate that in the official documents, the authors use the notion of ‘consent’ to argue that French interventionism was legitimate. Furthermore, I show how the documents highlight the reciprocal nature of the relationship between France and its former colonies, and this is the second way in which they discursively legitimise the continued relationship. Finally, using the notion of ‘commonality’, the authors argue that France and its former colonies were acting as part of a wider community, which meant that the relationship was one of cooperation between two parties and was mutual, rather than beneficial only to one side. Therefore, through the arguments of ‘consent’ and ‘reciprocity’, the French government could assert that as nominally sovereign and independent countries, Chad and other former colonies were freely choosing to deal with France, and that France and its former colonies were part of a larger coordinated community, thereby discursively legitimising France’s continued presence in Africa.

In order to demonstrate the extent to which the policy position of ‘cooperation’ was communicated to the French and, in the case of certain sources, African, public, I analyse the discursive devices used in the official texts. Below is a table of discursive devices, detailing their purpose and providing examples.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Discursive Device | Purpose | Example |
| Topos of Consent | Argument that if an actor/entity consents to an action, the action is legitimate. | ‘…cooperation that has been freely consented to.’ (1960 quadripartite agreement, p. 1) |
| Topos of Reciprocity | Argument that if an action is based on reciprocal relations, the action is legitimate and benefits both parties. | ‘The States concerned gain full sovereignty and deal with France on a footing of perfect equality.’ (1960 quadripartite agreement, p. 1) |
| Topos of Commonality | Argument that if an action is taking part within a larger community, the action is legitimate and members of the community must work together. | ‘The Republic of Chad has expressed the wish to cooperate with the French Republic within the Community of which it is a member.’ (1960 Technical Military Assistance, p. 123) |

**Table 3. Discursive Devices**

The three topoi, or topics/themes of argumentation, outlined in Table 3 are interlinked and work together within the documents. The authors of the texts argue that the relationship between France and Chad is legitimate because it is consensual, reciprocal and based on commonality or community. This is particularly evident in the documents published in the 1960s, which tend to emphasise the independence and sovereignty of the newly independent African countries, and thus their degree of free consent. The above topoi demonstrate the necessity of consent as the legal basis of dealing with a nominally sovereign and independent country.

The notion of independence is evident from the opening paragraphs of the 1960 quadripartite agreement. In the ‘explanatory memorandum’ the authors assert,

The States concerned gain full sovereignty and deal with France on a footing of perfect equality. They also form, with France and other States, a community which includes cooperation that has been freely consented to, the pursuit of concerted policies and the aid, in various fields, of the French Republic to the less privileged states (p. 1).[[107]](#footnote-107)

In this passage, it is possible to identify the topoi of Commonality, Reciprocity and Consent. The topos of Commonality is communicated through the terms ‘community’, ‘concerted’, and ‘perfect equality’. The topos of Reciprocity is communicated through the term ‘cooperation’. The topos of Consent is communicated through the term ‘freely consented’. It is made clear that it is on the basis of the African signatories’ independence or ‘sovereignty’ that the ‘cooperation’ agreement is able to be consensual and reciprocal. Emphasis on the sovereignty of Chad, Central African Republic and Congo is key to this passage. In the aftermath of independence, French officials claimed to deal with the new nations on ‘a footing of perfect equality’. This is how, through the three aforementioned topoi, the authors of the documents assert that the continuation of the relationship is legitimate. Firstly, the topos of Commonality places the four countries within a ‘community’, justifying the involvement of the French state in its former colonies on the basis of membership to this discursively constructed community. Secondly, the topos of Reciprocity highlights the equality between the two countries and the mutual benefits of the agreement. Thirdly, the topos of Consent highlights the idea that the newly independent countries have agreed to the continuation of a relationship with France after the end of formal colonialism, thereby legitimising continued French involvement in the sovereign states of Chad, Central African Republic and Congo.

Similarly, the 1960 Technical Military Assistance agreement states in its introduction that ‘the Republic of Chad has expressed the wish to cooperate with the French Republic within the Community of which it is a member’ (p. 123). Once again, we see the topos of Consent and the topos of Commonality through the idea that Chad ‘wishes’ to be part of a ‘community’ with France. The importance of consent appears in the 1976 Technical Military Cooperation agreement signed by the governments of France and Chad, which replaced the agreements signed in the 1960s. Article 1 of the 1976 Cooperation Agreement begins,

At the request of the Government of the Republic of Chad, the Government of the French Republic provides, within the limits of its possibilities, the assistance of French military personnel which it needs for the organisation and training of the armed forces of Chad.[[108]](#footnote-108) (p. 5)

Article 13 repeats the idea of a ‘request’ from the Chadian government and thereby the idea of consent,

The Government of the French Republic provides, within measure of its resources and at the request of the Government of the Republic of Chad, the training and further training of the personnel of the Chadian armed forces (p. 8).[[109]](#footnote-109)

The idea of a request reinforces the notion of consent. The French military only intervenes if it is invited to do so by the government of Chad. For the French government, this invitation or request to intervene addressed the problem raised by Jules Maigne in the 1885 debate with Prime Minister Jules Ferry in which he asked on behalf of colonised people, ‘do they call you?’[[110]](#footnote-110), referring to French imperial intervention in Africa. It can be argued that this ‘call’ or request by African elites, outlined in the agreements with France, finally discursively legitimised French military interventions in France’s former colonies.

Belonging to a community also reinforces the notion of consent. The official documents highlight the idea of commonality between France and its former colonies in order to reinforce the consensual nature of the relationship. In the 1960 quadripartite agreement, the terms ‘common’[[111]](#footnote-111) and ‘community’[[112]](#footnote-112) appear on 32 of 34 pages of the agreement.[[113]](#footnote-113) The document states,

These national armed forces participate, with the French armed forces, under a single command, in the common defence system organised by this agreement.[[114]](#footnote-114) (Annex, p. 3)

The French Republic, the Central African Republic, the Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Chad carry out regular consultations, in particular within the Conference of Heads of State and Government and the Defence Council, on the policy they are to follow in the field of strategic raw materials and products, taking into account in particular the general needs of common defence, the development of resources in the Member States of the Community and the situation on the world market.[[115]](#footnote-115) (Annex, p. 4)

The incorporation of the signatories into a ‘single command’ or ‘common defence system’ or ‘community’ demonstrates the topos of Commonality, arguing that the French state and its former colonies belong to a wider community in which they work together to achieve common aims.

As we saw above, this idea of a community had already been approached by President de Gaulle with the establishment of the French Community in 1958. The French Community ceded some autonomy to the colonies of France in return for continued French colonial involvement in Africa. The topos of Commonality is evident in de Gaulle’s speech about the genesis of the French Community two years prior to independence, in 1958. In the speech, de Gaulle highlights the shared needs of France and Africa,

I believe it, I hope it, we are going to form this Franco-African Community which seems to me essential to our common political power, to our common economic development, to our cultural development and, if necessary, to our defence, because everyone is aware that there are great dangers latent in the world, great threats hanging over our heads, and in particular great threats hanging over Africa.[[116]](#footnote-116)

The repetition of the adjective ‘common’[[117]](#footnote-117) and possessive pronoun ‘our’[[118]](#footnote-118) in de Gaulle’s speech emphasises similarities and commonalities between France and Africa. It suggests that France and its former colonies share the same goals and must work together to achieve them. This legitimises French presence in those countries on the basis that they are part of a wider community. Furthermore, this quote reveals the continuities in discourse between the aims of the French Community, during the colonial period and the policy of ‘cooperation’, post-independence.

#### Independence or Dependence?

The official documents, which I analysed above, highlight the nominal independence and sovereignty through arguments about the reciprocal, common and consensual nature of post-independence relationship between France and Chad. In this section, I demonstrate that discursively qualifying the Chadian state as *dependent* on France is equally important in the documents in order to legitimise French military interventions and continued French presence in Chad. I argue that after 1970, the official documents came to rely more on arguments about the dependence of Chad on France. Through the topos of Dependence the authors of the documents discursively qualify Chad as reliant on French military presence, thereby necessitating this presence. Furthermore, the discursive device of ‘positive self’ is adopted as a way of discursively qualifying French actions as positive or altruistic and thereby rendering their presence in Chad desirable. Table 4, below, shows the discursive devices which appear in this section, along with a description of their purpose and examples.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Discursive Device | Purpose | Example |
| Topos of Dependence | Argument that if an actor/entity is dependent on another, the latter is in need of assistance from the former. | ‘Our support still appears as a condition of their [‘Francophone’ Africa’s] independence.’ (1972 White Paper on Defence, p. 4) |
| Positive Self | Discursively constructing France’s actions as positive or altruistic. | ‘…these people saw with pleasure and relief the Whites, we the French…’ (Lacaze, 1993, p. 378) |

**Table 4. Discursive Devices**

The 1972 White Paper on Defence focuses more on French ‘assistance’ to Africa than ‘reciprocity’ when discussing ‘cooperation’. This reflects the second dictionary definition of ‘cooperation’ as ‘assistance’, which we saw above. One way in which the authors of the White Paper argue for the necessity of French assistance in Africa is through the topos of Dependence. In its discussion of ‘Francophone African’[[119]](#footnote-119) countries (p. 4),[[120]](#footnote-120) the 1972 White Paper does not name individual African countries, apart from Madagascar.[[121]](#footnote-121) Instead, it clusters these countries together and defines them by their ‘Francophone’ characteristics. The division of Africa by its ‘francophone’ nature and the separation of Madagascar from the rest of the African continent reflects Martin’s (1985) notion of ‘semantic balkanisation’, discussed in Chapter 1. They are therefore defined in relation to France and dependent on their ‘Frenchness’ (in this case, the French language) in order to be defined. In fact, the authors of the document state that the very existence of these African countries is dependent on the French state because they were ‘forged’ by French culture and laws. This shows the extent to which French decision-makers saw France’s former colonies as still a part of France and therefore, neither independent nor sovereign but dependent on France. This is made further evident as the authors write that ‘our support still appears as a condition of their [‘Francophone’ Africa’s] independence’ (p. 4).[[122]](#footnote-122) Therefore, although the authors of the White Paper acknowledge that these countries are independent from France, they state that their independence is in fact dependent on French support. This confirms the suspicions of neocolonial theorists that despite nominal independence, former colonial states are not truly sovereign. In arguing that the continuation of a relationship between African countries and France is necessary for the benefit of their sovereignty, the continued relationship is constructed as positive for Africa and a condition of their very existence.

Mitterand (1986b) repeats a similar idea about the existence of African countries in a publication on his speeches and reflections. He claims that France ‘without boasting any particular mission, represents economically, politically, culturally, for a large part of the African continent, an incomparable element of balance and progress, and that veritable treaties of military alliance unite it with several Francophone states’[[123]](#footnote-123). He therefore argues that in order to progress and develop, ‘a large part of the African continent’ is dependent on France (Mitterrand, 1986b). This suggests that African countries do not have the capability to develop on their own. This lack of capability and dependence is stressed further in the following passage from a press conference with Mitterrand,

As for the speeches which consist of telling our African friends "you are adults", they have been that way for a long time. They gained their independence, they manage themselves, they exercise their sovereignty. They have needs that they cannot meet on their own. They need to be understood and helped by international society. France, which has historical experience of the needs of these peoples, is at the forefront of those who respond to them.[[124]](#footnote-124) (Mitterrand, 1986, para 5)

Here, we see the topos of Dependence and the discursive device of Positive Self at play. Mitterrand highlights both the ‘needs’ of African countries for external ‘help’ and the role of France as the country that can respond to these needs. Mitterrand also positions France within an ‘international society’ that can ‘help’ the ‘Francophone states’; he embeds France within a larger group of which they are at the ‘forefront’. France is therefore positioned as the most important country in relation to the ‘Francophone states’. Furthermore, by mentioning the ‘historical experience’ of France as a euphemism for colonialism, he omits the negative connotations of the relationship between France and Africa and instead re-writes it as positive. Moreover, by stating that France’s ‘African friends’ have been ‘adults’ for a long time, Mitterrand uses paternalistic and condescending language to discursively link independence to development.

Similarly, General Jeannou Lacaze’s comments on Chad reiterate the fact that French officials regarded France’s former colonies in Africa as continuously dependent on France. Lacaze, who led Operation Manta in Chad (1983-1984) states,

In these countries, the poverty is so appalling that if you take away from these people the little they have. . . all that is left for them, in the primary sense of the term, is to “starve to death”. This is why these people saw with pleasure and relief the Whites, we the French, “occupying” the country. And when the withdrawal of our troops was announced and began, each time it was the same terrible and upsetting scenes, which made me think of the end of the Algerian war. Because these men and women understood that the departure of our soldiers was going to place them back in a world of insecurity and poverty. And they all wanted to leave with us.[[125]](#footnote-125) (1993, p. 378).

Lacaze further suggests that Chadians cannot govern themselves and without French presence, they are placed ‘back in a world of insecurity and poverty’. Lacaze’s discursive construction of Chadian dependence on France is comparable to the language used during the colonial period by French Prime Minister Jules Ferry in 1885, more than 100 years before Lacaze’s comments. Ferry is quoted in parliament as having said, ‘is it possible to deny that it is good fortune for these unfortunate populations of equatorial Africa to fall under the protectorate of the French nation or the English nation?’[[126]](#footnote-126) Like Lacaze, Ferry’s statement suggests that French (and ‘English’) presence signified ‘good fortune’ for the otherwise ‘unfortunate’ central Africans. Both Lacaze and Ferry discursively construct French actors as beneficial for African states through the discursive device of Positive Self, as they bring ‘good fortune’ or ‘relief’. Meanwhile, through the topos of Dependence, African actors are discursively constructed as weak. A sense of superiority is exerted by Lacaze which contrasts with the discursive construction of inferiority of Chadians. The similarities in the language of Lacaze and Ferry demonstrates the continuity in discourse from the colonial period to the post-independence period and the arguments which legitimised continued French military presence in Africa.

#### Omission of the Dependence of France on Africa

Having analysed the extent to which the continuation of France-Chad relations is discursively justified on the basis of both Chadian ‘consent’ and sovereignty and Chadian dependence on France, we now turn to the discursive construction of the role of France within the relationship. We saw above that during the period of analysis, 1960-1989, the French state was reliant on strategic access to many African countries for economic and geostrategic purposes. The ‘defence’, ‘assistance’ and ‘cooperation’ agreements guaranteed the French military access to its former colonies for these purposes. Yet analysis of the documents shows that what is omitted from these texts is the extent to which the French state benefited from the continued relationship and was dependent on its links with these African countries.[[127]](#footnote-127) Instead, the texts reverse this dynamic and emphasise the extent and importance of French *independence*. The discursive devices therefore include Omission and Reversal. Table 5 outlines these two discursive devices.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Discursive Device | Purpose |
| Omission | Denying the dependence of France on Africa in order to detach French military presence with self-centred interests in Africa. |
| Reversal | Reversing the dependence of France on Africa as independence in order to detach French military presence with self-centred interests in Africa. |

**Table 5. Discursive Devices**

The above discursive devices that are used to downplay the dependence of France on Chad and its other former African colonies firstly, through Omission of the forms of dependence (economic, geostrategic) of France and Chad and secondly, through Reversal, by insisting that it is Chad that is dependent on France rather than the reverse.

In a subsection of the 1972 White Paper named, ‘Action outside of Europe,’[[128]](#footnote-128) the authors state that ‘France, a modern and industrialised country, cannot live without economic links with the rest of the world being established, maintained, developed, protected’ (p. 13).[[129]](#footnote-129) This is one of the few instances in which there is acknowledgement of the potential for dependence of France on countries outside of Europe. However, the statement is very vague, it does not specifically mention the African continent, and it does not detail the ways in which France benefits from those ‘economic links’. Therefore, despite admitting a need for economic links, the authors omit the French state’s dependence on African resources.

Omission also appears in the form of downplaying French dependence on natural resources. In the historical context section above, I explored the extent to which the French state depended on and benefited from natural resources in central Africa (such as hydrocarbons, uranium, thorium, lithium and beryllium and helium), particularly for its nuclear energy programme. France prioritised its own access to these resources in the ‘defence’, ‘assistance’ and ‘cooperation’ agreements signed in the 1960s and 1970s, such as the 1960 quadripartite agreement signed by Central African Republic, Congo and Chad. French access to these natural resources is included in the annexes of the agreements rather than in the main body. This means that although both parts of the agreement (main body and annex) carry the same amount of legal weight, the economic benefits of the agreement to France are omitted from the main body and therefore, are only visible in one part of the document.

Not only is this dependence omitted but highlighting and guaranteeing the continued *independence* of France appears instead as a concern across the policy documents analysed in this chapter. The 1972 White Paper on Defence discusses France’s policy strategy within the context of the Cold War during which France wishes to play a significant role as a self-defined middle power. The French state attempted to play such a role in the following three ways: 1) by developing its own nuclear deterrent, 2) by remaining outside of NATO as an independent military power, 3) by expanding its defensive space in Africa. The emphasis in this document is therefore on the independence of France and the country’s role within the Cold War context. The 1972 White Paper emphasises the importance of the independence of France by stating that ‘the existence, independence and strength of France are the starting point of a policy that naturally relies on the feeling of the nation and the desire for its development’ (p. 2).[[130]](#footnote-130) Similarly, according to the 1984-1988 Military Programming Law, the aim of French policy is to guarantee the security of France, which in turn is the ‘foundation of its independence and freedom of action’ (p. 2115).[[131]](#footnote-131) Both of these documents place great importance on the notion of independence as a basis (‘foundation’ or ‘starting point’) of French foreign policy. Therefore, the authors discursively construct independence rather than dependence as the driving force behind policy decisions, despite the fact that French foreign policy in Africa was closely tied to economic control and trade links, as demonstrated by the bilateral and quadrilateral agreements discussed above.

This ‘independence’ is further demonstrated in the 1972 White Paper’s discussion of self-sufficiency. In response to the nuclear threat present during the Cold War, the 1972 White Paper suggests that the French state is able to ‘adopt for itself a strategy of deterrence based on national nuclear capacity’.[[132]](#footnote-132) It is able to do this because ‘its position as a middle power allows it to aim for a level of armament that does not need to be comparable to that of the greatest powers, a level for which its technical, industrial and financial resources precisely give it the means.’[[133]](#footnote-133) This suggests that France is independent from other nations, able to adopt its own strategy apart from them and self-sufficient in terms of its nuclear power which is based on its ‘industrial and financial technical resources’ founded on ‘national nuclear capacity’. It therefore suggests that France has the ability to respond to nuclear threat because of its ‘national’ capacity. The White Paper reiterates that ‘deterrence is exclusively national’.[[134]](#footnote-134) It does not mention the French government’s reliance on natural resources, such as uranium, primarily from central Africa (especially Niger), which it needs in order to create nuclear power in the first place. Therefore, what occurs is that at the same time as discursively constructing African countries as dependent on France and unable to govern themselves and therefore not truly independent; the documents argue that France is independent and omit the reality of the dependence of France on Africa and exclude the role of Africans in France’s capacity for power.

### Duty

This section looks at the discursive justification of French military interventionism in Chad based on a notion of ‘duty’. Within this notion is also contained an idea of the ‘exceptionalism’ of France, necessitating French military intervention in its former colonies. France is discursively constructed in the documents as the country best placed to intervene in its former colonies due to the ‘special relationship’ based on ‘historic links’. Based on this argument, there are three discursive devices which appear in this subsection, described in Table 6 below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Discursive Device | Purpose | Example |
| Topos of Duty | Argument that if France’s former colonies require French aid or assistance, France has a duty to intervene. | ‘we must be able to assert, even outside the Western world to which we belong, our economic and cultural influence: this influence which translates into interests and from which duties may arise is ultimately part of our national definition.’ (1972 White Paper on Defence, p. 3) |
| Topos of History | Argument that France should act according to the historic links created between France and its former colonies. | ‘here, it is a question, if necessary by military aid, of supporting the independence of certain states of francophone culture to which we are linked both by history and by our present commitments’ (1972 White Paper on Defence, p. 3) |
| Topos of Exceptionalism | Argument that France is an exceptional state and/or that there is a special relationship between France and its former colonies. | ‘the first to forge its political unity’ (1972 White Paper on Defence, p. 1) |

**Table 6. Discursive Devices**

The discourse of ‘duty’ can be traced back to the colonial ‘civilising mission’ which discursively justified French colonial presence and conquest in Africa during the colonial period. As we saw above, Jules Ferry (1885) argued at the time of the French Third Republic, that colonialism was an economic necessity, but he also argued for the ‘humanitarian and civilising side’[[135]](#footnote-135) of the colonial project. Powell (2020) points out that ‘in 1964, [French] Foreign Minister Maurice Couve de Murville tellingly described “cooperation” in imperial terms as “the means for the colonial power to pursue the work of civilisation and development, whose benefit is admitted wholeheartedly as soon as it was no longer imposed from the outside.”’ (p. 15). This shows the extent to which even after independence, French politicians saw their role in France’s former colonies as ‘the work of civilisation’. In other words, they saw the French state as civilisationally superior to the newly independent states.

The 1972 White Paper describes the duty towards ‘francophone’ countries based on ‘historic links’: ‘here, it is a question, if necessary by military aid, of supporting the independence of certain states of francophone culture to which we are linked both by history and by our present commitments’.[[136]](#footnote-136) It states that the shared history between France and ‘francophone’ countries is what necessitates French military support. However, there is an omission of the origin of these ‘historical links’ as rooted in colonialism. Moreover, the document states that the duty of the French government and military duty abroad is not shaped by their own interests but by a sense of responsibility:

If its vital interests are located mainly on its soil and its major interests in Europe, it also assumes responsibilities, undoubtedly of unequal importance, in the Mediterranean, in the Atlantic, in its overseas departments and territories, in Francophone Africa and, more generally, wherever its presence or intervention is or would be useful for the maintenance or restoration of peace.[[137]](#footnote-137) (p. 7)

Although France's ‘vital interests’ are linked to the French territory and not to other countries, its ‘responsibilities’ lie in ‘Francophone Africa’ as well as the Mediterranean and Atlantic. This suggests that it does not have those same ‘vital interests’ in Africa. In other words, it does not benefit from presence in Africa, instead it is Africa that benefits from France’s sense of responsibility or duty to it. The 1972 White Paper states,

‘we must be able to assert, even outside the Western world to which we belong, our economic and cultural influence: this influence which translates into interests and from which duties may arise is ultimately part of our national definition.’[[138]](#footnote-138)

The notion of ‘responsibility’ once again harks back to Ferry’s ideology, concerning the civilising mission of France in Africa. The fact that the 1972 White Paper credits France with having ‘forged’ these African countries means that intervening in and influencing African countries falls on France as a duty. Once again, we see the attempt at discursively constructing French involvement as positive and altruistic rather than exploitative. Moreover, we see the discursive device of Reversal, introduced above, whereby the dependence of Africa on France is asserted, and the reverse is omitted.

Despite no longer being colonies of France in 1972, the African countries the document refers to are brought back within the French domain. The independence of ‘Francophone African’ countries is seen to be dependent on French support and this becomes a reason for which French ‘economic and cultural influence’ can or must be exerted in Africa. Consequently, according to these documents, France must play a role in the service of ‘peace, justice and freedom.’[[139]](#footnote-139) With regard to French military intervention, Mitterrand described Operation Manta (1983-4), the French military operation in Chad against Libya, as a ‘duty’: ‘France did what it had to and will continue to do so’[[140]](#footnote-140) (Mitterrand, 1986, p. 3). Ultimately, this duty gives France the right to intervene in the affairs of African countries and the document even advocates permanent French military presence abroad in order to achieve these aims.

#### Exceptionalism

The notion of a duty of the French state to intervene in Africa is closely linked to the idea that the French state was exceptional and that the relationship between the French state and its former colonies was ‘special’. This ‘special relationship’ is the basis of the theory of *Françafrique* developed by François Xavier-Verschave, discussed in Chapter 1. Golan (1981) expressed her surprise about 'the special relationship' between France and its former African colonies. She writes, 'it came into being during the last period of colonial rule and was aimed at allowing a certain continuity rather than a complete break with the colonial past. The amazing thing, however, is that today, two decades after independence, this "special relationship' is still alive' (p. 3). Golan links the 'special relationship' to the idea of paternalism, 'Father and son: de Gaulle and his Francophone children', and traces it to the colonial period (p. 5).

These colonial links are evident as the ‘exceptionalism’ of the French state can be traced back to the discourse of the colonial period. Ferry (1885) writes that France,

cannot simply be a free country […] it must also be a great country exercising over the destinies of Europe all the influence that belongs to it, that it must spread this influence across the world, and carry wherever it can its language, its customs, its flag, its weapons, its genius.[[141]](#footnote-141)

Therefore, according to Ferry, because France is ‘great’, the French state has a duty to spread its culture and influence beyond its borders. The 1972 White Paper on Defence highlights the discursive exceptionalism of France by stating that it is ‘one of the oldest nations in Western Europe’[[142]](#footnote-142) and ‘the first to forge its political unity’[[143]](#footnote-143). By describing France using superlatives such as ‘one of the oldest’ and ‘first’ to become a unified entity, the authors highlight the exceptional attributes of the French nation, making it appear as an advanced and leading country in Europe. Additionally, this discursive construction of France gives credibility to the actions of the French government and to French decisionmakers, namely those writing the White Paper. It also detaches the French authors of the White Paper from the country of their nationality by referring to France’s unity using the possessive pronoun ‘its’ rather than ‘ours’. This makes the descriptions of France appear more objective rather than subjective. This results in the personalisation and subjectification of ‘France’ as a subject with the ability to assert itself (‘forge its political unity’), attributing power and agency to the inanimate object, ‘France’. Therefore, the term ‘forged’ is used in this scenario to describe how France created its own unity. The authors use an active grammatical construction to describe the action of ‘France’ in forging its political unity. In turn, it appears as though the policies of the White Paper are aimed at fulfilling the destiny of a nation rather than reflecting the ideologies of the policymakers.

This is opposed to the second instance of the use of the verb ‘forged’, where it is used to describe how Francophone African states were ‘forged’ by French culture and laws. Here, the authors use a passive grammatical construction to describe the creation of ‘Francophone African states’. Although it is true that the borders of the ‘Francophone African states’ were often drawn up by French and other European colonialists, the authors of the White Paper extend the role of the colonialists to culture and laws, not just geographical boundaries, thereby disregarding the culture and laws in Africa which preceded the colonial period. ‘Forged’ also has connotations of the forging of metal used in building constructions, which can either refer to the physical constructions of buildings or the metaphorical construction of civilisation during the colonial period. Once again, this discursively constructs France as a superior nation, able to forge its own destiny as well as that of others.

## Part II: Policy Changes and Reforms to the Policy of Cooperation, 1989-2014

In the aftermath of the Cold War, France’s position in the world shifted. The main focus of French foreign policy became the perceived problems of insecurity and instability. There were two main changes in French foreign policy in Africa to address these problems: firstly, democratisation as a condition of French assistance to African countries and secondly, multilateralisation of French military interventions and decision-making in west and central Africa. I analyse the extent to which these two policy shifts enabled successive French governments to maintain influence in France’s former colonies in Africa in the face of global changes. I do this by analysing the extent to which continued French military involvement in Chad and other former French colonies was discursively justified in response to these changes in the official documents from which the new policies emerged. In other words, I explore the extent to which shifts in policy were a way for successive French governments to establish neocolonial relations with France’s former colonies and the extent to which they discursively justified neocolonial practices.

### The Problem of Instability/Insecurity

As discussed in Chapter 1, the perceived problems of instability and insecurity were a major concern for the authors of the 1994 White Paper on Defence. Here, I analyse the implications of this concern in the creation of new French foreign policy positions in Africa after the Cold War. In terms of a definition, stability and security are often defined in opposition to the notion of ‘crisis’. They are used interchangeably in the official documents. Linking crises and security, the programming bill on military equipment and defence personnel, 1992-1994, published in 1992, states that contributing to security is to 'prevent crises or conduct limited peace-making operations, or even to deal with larger conflicts where we should engage alongside our allies' (annexe 2).[[144]](#footnote-144) Mitterrand (1994) also states that it is by 'putting out fires'[[145]](#footnote-145) that collective security can be achieved (para 11).

However, Friedman (2022) does not take the definition of security at face value. He argues that securitisation is not simply about ‘making the world a more secure place’ instead it is ‘a field of discursive, legal and political actions that amplify insecurity to the benefit of political actors that are empowered by the expansion of security policies’. In other words, the discourse and action of ‘securitisation’ serve an ulterior motive. He argues that ‘security’ can appear as a ‘speech act’ that has the ability to ‘facilitate the use of “emergency measures”, undertaken to counter this constructed threat’ (p. 45). In other words, Friedman argues that the notion of ‘security’ discursively justifies (re)actions against a ‘constructed threat’. A threat, he argues, that does not necessarily have a basis in reality. It is therefore only discursively constructed. Taking this further, Charbonneau (2006) argues that 'the discourse of French military cooperation obscures the fact that the practice of French hegemony creates directly and indirectly the insecurity that French military cooperation formally aims to defeat' (Charbonneau, 2006, p. 236). It 'produces insecurity by sustaining and defending social conditions and social forces that often cause, contribute and exacerbate conflict and violence' (Ibid). Therefore, not only is the language of ‘security’ used to discursively justify French military interventions, it also obscures the role of French actors in creating that insecurity in the first place. Like Friedman and Charbonneau, I analyse the discursive nature of the problem of insecurity and instability. I argue that the way in which the authors of the documents discursively establish the problem of instability and insecurity is through the topos of Permanent Threat. The topos of Permanent Threat is discussed in Table 7 below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Discursive Device | Purpose | Example |
| Topos of Permanent Threat | If there is an ongoing threat to security that may affect France, then France must respond. | ‘Our safety is no less exposed, whether risks appear, whether we sense new ones, or whether we fear the reappearance of dangers that we might have believed for a moment to be remote’ (1994 White Paper, p. 4). |

**Table 7. Discursive Devices**

The documents published post-Cold War, particularly the 1994 White Paper on Defence, argue that although the threat of the Cold War is gone, a permanent threat to France remains nonetheless. French foreign policy was thus shaped around this perceived permanent threat. The 1994 White Paper asserts that post-Cold War, there was no longer an immediate threat to France’s borders but instead, the threat had shifted and developed into a *potential* threat of crises which needed to be defended against. In its introduction, French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur writes,

The defence of France is no longer immediately at its borders. It depends on the maintenance of international stability, the prevention of crises, in Europe or outside Europe, which, deteriorating, would jeopardise our interests and our security. We must therefore advance the specific ability of our traditional means to predict, prevent, act, often at a distance from the national territory. To this end, it is necessary to have capabilities that allow us at any time to join our allies, and to actively prepare a future European capability.[[146]](#footnote-146)

Use of the present participle of the verb ‘deteriorating’[[147]](#footnote-147), in reference to international stability, indicates that the threat of a crisis is not in the past or future but permanently in the present. It therefore becomes hard to pinpoint temporally. Because of this, Balladur suggests that the nature of the threat makes it ‘necessary to have capabilities that allow us at any time to join our allies, and to actively prepare a future European capability’. The threat is also spatially hard to pinpoint, Balladur writes that it may be ‘in Europe or outside of Europe’ and ‘often far from the national territory’. This gives the threat an unpredictable character and suggests that, although it may be far from France, is able to ‘imperil our interests and our security’. Therefore, Balladur argues that defensively, French forces need to be both spatially omnipresent and permanently ready to combat this elusive and constant potential threat. Discursively, Balladur links instability ‘far from the national territory’ with instability closer to France. This shows that from the outset, the White Paper establishes a topos of Permanent Threat and suggests that the role of defence policy is to actively prevent this potential instability. For Balladur, the threat discursively justifies a military response, which may take place outside of France.

Following on, Defence Minister François Léotard warns that nations should not let their guard down,

The temptation is still strong, despite the painful experiences following the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the Warsaw Pact; to now pay less attention to our defence. To let our guard down. The history of our country teaches us, however, like the ancient Latin wisdom, that it is peace that is a dividend of defence, not the other way around.[[148]](#footnote-148)

Once again, there is the idea that an unknown threat may fall on France. Furthermore, by comparing his attitude to that of ‘ancient Latin wisdom’, Léotard once again gives a timeless character to the threat and detaches the perceived threat from its context.

Building on the idea that security remains an issue after the Cold War, the following passage suggests that the threat of conflict actually *increased* after the Cold War,

…France finds itself in the unfamiliar situation, where its borders no longer seem immediately and directly threatened. Rarely, however, since the war, has an often diffuse feeling of insecurity been felt so strongly. The precise and identified threat is no longer embodied in an adversary, a space, or a Pact. Our safety is no less exposed, whether risks appear, whether we sense new ones, or whether we fear the reappearance of dangers that we might have believed for a moment to be remote.[[149]](#footnote-149) (1994 White Paper, p. 4)

By stating that the threat is no longer ‘embodied’ in an adversary, place or pact, the authors of the 1994 White Paper once again give the impression of an elusive and disembodied threat which cannot be pinpointed. Yet despite the lack of certainty around the form of the threat, the threat itself is firmly stated through comparatives: the threat is rarely ‘felt so strongly’ and security is ‘no less exposed’ than in this post-war state.

### Democratisation

In 1990, following the fall of the Berlin Wall the previous year, French President François Mitterrand gave a speech at the 16th France-Africa summit at La Baule, France, outlining new French foreign policy aims in Africa. The main policy shift outlined in this speech was the need for democratisation in Africa and how French financial aid would be favourable to African countries that democratised. Mitterrand’s speech focused on the need for democratisation, pluralism and free press in Africa. In his speech, Mitterrand says,

France will link all its efforts to the contribution of efforts that will be made to move towards greater freedom; there will be regular aid from France for African countries, but it is obvious that this aid will be more lukewarm towards those who behave in an authoritarian manner, and more enthusiastic towards those who courageously take this step towards democratisation…[[150]](#footnote-150)

The 1994 White Paper on Defence also discusses democratisation but focuses on the role of France within it. The authors of the White Paper position the problem of democratisation within the context of post-Cold War global changes leading to the collapse of the Soviet Union and democratisation in the central and eastern European countries that had been a part of it. This will be analysed in more detail in Chapter 2.

Later, in 2007, at his speech at Dakar University, right-wing French president Nicolas Sarkozy, reiterated Socialist President Mitterrand’s policy, ‘if you choose democracy, freedom, justice and law, then France will join forces [associate] with you to build them’[[151]](#footnote-151) (Sarkozy, 2007). This shows that 17 years after Mitterrand’s speech, Sarkozy also saw democratisation as a condition of French cooperation or ‘association’. However, Sarkozy positions democracy alongside ‘freedom’ as a French value as well as a neoliberal value, in relation to free markets. Justice and law are also discursively constructed as values for France by Sarkozy: ‘It is to appropriate human rights, democracy, freedom, equality, justice as the common heritage of all civilisations and all men’.[[152]](#footnote-152) This shows the continuity in discourse from Socialist President Mitterrand to right wing President Sarkozy with regard to the policy of democratisation. The fact that it continued to be a concern in 2007, also shows how the ideal of ‘democracy’ had not yet been achieved in France’s former colonies despite its adoption as a French foreign policy approach towards Africa in the 1990s.

An aim of French foreign policy, stated in the 1994 White Paper on Defence, was to help Africa to develop, modernise and democratise, using development models conceived by IFIs, as well as the cooperation agreements signed in the 1960s and 1970s. As we shall see, the authors consistently discursively link the country of France to the notion or virtue of democracy and thereby place it in an ideal position to aid democratisation in African countries, in turn legitimising French neocolonial practices in its former colonies. I argue that this is achieved through the discursive device of Positive Self, Negative Other, described in Table 8 below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Positive Self, Negative Other | Discursively constructing the actions of France as positive and the actions of others as negative. | ‘The defence of our values, our ideals, in new circumstances, in places far from the national territory, will often constitute the first line of our security’ (Balladur, 1994 White Paper, Preface section) |

**Table 8. Discursive Devices**

A technical definition of democracy is offered by the website of the French Interior and Overseas Ministry,[[153]](#footnote-153) which states that France is a ‘representative democracy’ (elections.interieur.gouv.fr, para 10).[[154]](#footnote-154) A representative democracy, in the context of the French political system, ‘recognises the right of a restricted assembly to represent the French people and to take decisions concerning them’ (elections.interieur.gouv.fr, para 10).[[155]](#footnote-155) There are three levels of institutional power in the French government: executive, legislative and judiciary. Universal suffrage means that the public elects the representatives of these institutions, with the exception of the judiciary. In turn, elections expressing the ‘popular will’[[156]](#footnote-156) legitimise these representatives. This reflects in Article 3 of the Constitution of the Fifth Republic, which states that ‘national sovereignty belongs to the people who exercise it through their representatives and through referendum’.[[157]](#footnote-157) Therefore, democracy, according to the French constitution, is a system of government based on popular elections. On a more theoretical level, the French government also associates democracy with French philosophical and ideological thought. The website of the French Interior and Overseas Ministry links the notion of democracy to the French Revolution of 1789 and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, theorised by French political philosopher, Montesquieu in 1748 (elections.interieur.gouv.fr, para 1). Democracy is therefore seen as a French ideal. This is explored in more detail below.

#### The Discursive Link between Democracy and France

The French state is discursively linked to the value of ‘democracy’ in the official documents I analyse. Democracy appears as an ideal that is embodied by the French Republic, but which is universal and must be spread. Naomi Schor (2001) states that 'French national discourse has for centuries claimed that France is the capital of universalism' (p. 43). This can be linked to the ideas of the French ‘rights of man’ which emerged during the French Revolution in 1789. Schor (2001) claims it can be traced even further back to religious universalism under Catholicism and linguistic universalism in the 17th Century. Hazareesingh (1994) writes that ‘this sense of universality was projected internally but also externally as it 'inspired a messianic attempt to spread the principles of the Revolution to the rest of the world' some of which was 'forcibly expressed' regardless of 'regional, social, cultural, religious or political' circumstances (p. 72). Bricmont (2007) refers to this universalism with regard to foreign intervention, he states that France’s ‘“universal values” give us [the French] the right and even the duty to intervene elsewhere’ (p. 10). Democratisation therefore ends up reflecting a kind of ‘civilising mission’. This idea is accepted by some scholars. Chafer (2014) writes,

The mission civilisatrice encapsulates the notion of France as a promoter of universal values and a force for good in the world that has formed part of the mind-set—the geopolitical imagination—of French political leaders for much of the past 200 years. When the president of Mali requested French support, it was in the name of these values—expressed in the context of the twenty-first century as the commitment to human rights, good governance, the rule of law and protecting populations —that President Hollande proclaimed that it was France’s duty to intervene (p. 525).

In this passage, Chafer does not denounce the ‘civilising mission’, instead he draws a line between the civilising mission and the ‘values’ of ‘human rights, good governance and the rule of law and protecting populations’. He even states that it is what the President of Mali requested in 2012, suggesting that these values were lacking in Mali and needed to be implemented or brought over by France. This repeats the language used by Sarkozy (2007) in Dakar in which he asserts that the French state will assist Senegal to build ‘democracy, freedom, justice and law’[[158]](#footnote-158). Similarly, Scottish-American Historian Niall Ferguson writes about US military interventions that before 'spreading Anglo-Saxon civilisation' was labelled the 'white man's burden' and today it is 'spreading democracy and defending human rights' (Foster and McChesney, 2003). For him, it is a continuation which he calls the 'idealistic impulse' (Foster and McChesney, 2003, para 22). Therefore, there is an idea that French ‘ideals’ are universal and must be spread abroad, especially in countries which are seen as civilisationally less advanced. An idea that appears to be accepted by some academics.

For the authors of the 1994 White Paper, the end of the Cold War presented an opportunity for France to shape the world. Balladur compares the changes which took place in the 1960s, leading to the publication of the first White Paper on Defence in 1972 and the changes which led to a new White Paper in 1994. Balladur describes the context of the 1972 White Paper on Defence as ‘the painful period of decolonisation’,[[159]](#footnote-159) whereas the fall of the Berlin Wall, which led to the publication of the second White Paper in 1994, is seen as an opportunity to shape the world democratically. Balladur writes,

In the post-Cold War context, it is up to democracies to combine forces in the service of peace and thus guard against the fragility that is natural to them. The defence of our values, our ideals, in new circumstances, in places far from the national territory, will often constitute the first line of our security.[[160]](#footnote-160) (Preface section)

In this quote, Balladur discursively links democracy to French values and the defence of those values to security. By juxtaposing French values (‘our ideals’) against ‘places far from the national territory’, we see the discursive devices of Positive Self, Negative Other. Balladur places value on ‘our ideals’ against perceived attack from an *other* who is ‘far’ away. Furthermore, Balladur suggests that France may have a role to play in places ‘far from the national territory’, thereby discursively justifying a role for France outside of its own borders. It is ironic that Balladur does not compare the fall of the French empire with the fall of the Soviet Union and does not compare the independence of African countries from France in the 1960s with the independence of European countries from the Soviet Union in the 1990s. Instead, he sees the end of the Cold War as an opportunity for France to promote its own values and extend its influence even further.

For Mitterrand, democratic ideals are intrinsically linked to French Republican ideals stemming from the French Revolution of 1789:

We need to talk about democracy. It is a universal principle which has just appeared to the peoples of central Europe as absolutely obvious to the point that in the space of a few weeks, the regimes, considered to be the strongest, have been overturned. The people were in the streets, in the squares and the old power, sensing its fragility, ceased all resistance as if it had already, and for a long time, been emptied of substance and that it knew it. And this revolution of the people, the most important that we have known since the French Revolution of 1789, will continue.[[161]](#footnote-161)

Discussing democratisation in Europe, Mitterrand describes democracy as a ‘universal principle’ which he discursively links to the French revolution. Therefore, once again, France is seen as embodying democratic ideals. Furthermore, these supposedly French ideals are discursively constructed as ‘universal’ and therefore, there is a suggestion that they should not be contained within France but spread outside of France, just as the French governments in the 1800s aimed to do through the ‘civilising mission’ of the colonial period.

The idea of promoting democracy is also stated in the 1994 White Paper,

A permanent member of the Security Council, it ‘must contribute actively, probably more than others, to the maintenance of peace in the world and respect for international law. Attached to the values of democracy, France has all the more ambition to promote them and, when necessary, to defend them, since in its eyes they constitute a guarantee of stability and international security.’[[162]](#footnote-162) (1994 White Paper, p. 24)

Here, the discursive construction of the role of the French state in promoting democracy is linked to its position within a larger multilateral organisation, the UN Security Council. We also see the extent to which the authors of the 1994 White Paper position democracy as a solution to instability and insecurity. Moreover, France is portrayed as an exceptional case; one of a minority of countries that can solve the problem of instability. The authors state, ‘France is one of the few countries that can have an impact on stability in the world’ (1994 White Paper, p. 26).[[163]](#footnote-163) This idea also appears in another passage,

The values we stand for - democracy, rule of law, human rights are not universally shared. France is part of a minority of privileged countries, whose ideals that underlie the spirit of defence must be forcefully reaffirmed.[[164]](#footnote-164) (1994 White Paper, p. 160)

This discursively links democratisation to French ideals and therefore places France as the foremost country to intervene in order to create stability in the world. Bricmont interprets this as a ‘feeling of superiority that… imperialism has implanted in the Western mind’. This reflects what Frith and Hodgson (2015) describe as the 'nostalgia for a past when France was perceived as a prominent leader in human rights and when colonialism was connected with a “civilising” mission' (p. 19).

Taking this link further, Sarkozy’s 2007 speech in Dakar, made 13 years after the 1994 White Paper, goes beyond discursively connecting democracy and human rights to French values and positions as part of the benefits of colonialism, 'Muslim civilisation, Christianity, colonisation, beyond the crimes and faults which were committed in their name and which are not excusable, have opened African hearts and mentalities to the universal and to history.'[[165]](#footnote-165) Sarkozy suggests that African countries are dependent on external forces in order to reach universal values. It is also striking as Sarkozy (2007) is the only source analysed in this chapter which openly praises colonialism. It is important to note that Sarkozy was widely criticised for this speech.

Democratisation as a policy position taken by France with regard to its ‘sphere of influence’ in Africa was first discussed in detail in 1990 by Mitterrand at La Baule in France. Since then, the notion of democracy has developed to become less overt as a policy and more an embodiment of French values, linked to universalism and French Republicanism. From the 2000s, democracy became synonymous with progress and development, as seen in Sarkozy’s Dakar speech, but continued to be linked to the notion of a ‘civilising’ role for the French state in its former colonies. Overall, democratisation may have been a new French foreign policy approach but its neocolonial discourse draws on the ideologies of the colonial period of the civilising mission and paternalistic attitudes towards people in central and western Africa.

#### The Failure of ‘Democratisation’

Discussing the success of democracy in Africa, four years after his speech at la Baule in 1990, Mitterrand (1994, para 5) states that democracy is present and reflected in multipartyism, general elections, referendums, legislative elections and presidential elections. Reiterating that apparent success 13 years later, Chirac remarks that ‘democracy is taking hold’,[[166]](#footnote-166) as a result of ‘free elections’[[167]](#footnote-167) and ‘regular elections’[[168]](#footnote-168) (Chirac, 2007, para 10-11). For both Chirac and Mitterrand, the presence of elections therefore reflects democratisation in African countries. But they also link the so-called successes and the nature of democratisation to French thought. In the 1994 France-Africa Summit, Mitterrand reminds the audience of his speech on democratisation at La Baule in 1990, ‘Remember, four years ago, in La Baule, I stressed the need to closely link democracy and development, and the ground covered since then is considerable.’[[169]](#footnote-169) Mitterrand thereby links democracy to French foreign policy outlined in his speech in 1990. Furthermore, he states that this democratisation in Africa demonstrates the extent to which ‘the Francophone countries of Africa suddenly behave like faithful disciplines of Montesquieu’.[[170]](#footnote-170) Therefore, as well as describing the attributes of democracy that he has witnessed in Africa, Mitterrand links this success to the involvement of French action (his own) and French thought (that of Montesquieu). For Mitterrand, democracy in France’s former African colonies therefore reflects the success of French foreign policy in Africa.[[171]](#footnote-171)

As demonstrated above, Mitterrand and Chirac applaud the existence of elections and referendums in African countries as reflective of democratisation. Yet they omit problems with the ‘democratic’ systems in place. There were many barriers to democracy during elections in France’s former colonies. For example, the 1995 Ivorian election was boycotted by opposition parties (Amnesty International, 1996). Elsewhere, during the 1993 Togolese presidential elections, protesters were shot and political opponents were persecuted (Koutonin, 2020). In the 1998 Togolese presidential election, incumbent, Eyadema Gnassingbé cut telecommunication lines. Furthermore, the Togolese constitution was amended in 2003, allowing Gnassingbé to run again (Koutonin, 2020). Eyadema was consequently in power from 1967 until his death in 2005. Similarly in Chad, Déby's government changed the constitution in 2005 to allow him to run as president again. Therefore, it is possible to see that the existence of elections, as a limited definition of democracy, did not reflect a democratic system. The omission of these facts made it possible to discursively construct democratisation in Africa, as a result of French involvement, as a success, when in fact, it was fraught with problems.

Moreover, in reality, Mitterrand’s government continued to support dictators throughout the African continent whom they saw as allies, such as Mobutu Sese Seko in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Paul Biya in Cameroon. Regarding the coup against Chadian President Hissène Habré, which saw Idriss Déby come to power in 1990, Nolutshungu (1996, p. 242) says of Déby’s seizure of power, ‘for all the talk of democracy and human rights surrounding Habré’s ouster, Paris looked for another strongman and found one among the military dissidents.’ Nolutshungu explains that Habré was dismissive of the French government’s promotion of democracy (1996, p. 243), arguing that in order to achieve democracy, Chad would first need ‘peace, stability and security’ (Habré quoted in Nolutshungu, p. 231). Conversely, future president Déby was more receptive to the idea of democratisation, claiming to have been inspired by the French Revolution and announcing that he was in favour of ‘pluralist democracy’ after (undemocratically) seizing power in 1990 (Nolushungu, p. 246). The elections which brought Déby to power were described by *Survie* (1990) as ‘farcical’ (p. 3). Campaigners at *Survie* argued that the only way in which Déby was able to stay in power was through the force of the army and militias backed by a few thousand Epervier troops (Survie, Dossier Noir 13, 1999, p. 31).

Therefore, it can be questioned whether democratisation was indeed an attempt, on the part of the French government, to ensure that African dictatorships became democracies. Support for democratisation aimed to improve the image of France both internally and externally by positioning France on the side of democratisation in Europe following the end of the Cold War as well as in response to criticism of French military involvement during the Genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda. Discursively, the official documents I have analysed argue that democracy is linked to ‘universal’ French ideals. Yet it is apparent that the French policy position of democratisation itself was a farce. Successive French governments’ vocal support of democratisation alongside their overt support of dictators, as seen above, reflects the arguments of the theorists of *Françafrique* who demonstrate the extent to which the French government supports its allies in Africa in order to maintain neocolonial dominance in its former colonies.

### Multilateralisation

The policy of multilateralisation consisted of collaboration between France and other countries or international organisations as part of its foreign policy approach in mainly central and west Africa. IFIs became involved in Africa after the Cold War through the imposition of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs). The IMF had already imposed SAPs in Chad starting in 1987 and they intensified in 1994.[[172]](#footnote-172) In 1994, IFIs imposed the devaluation of the CFA Franc across France’s former colonies in Africa.[[173]](#footnote-173) The influence of the IMF and World Bank demonstrated the increased involvement of international institutions in Chad and elsewhere across France’s former colonies (such as Côte d’Ivoire) and the decline of France as the main or sole influencing power in the region. In response, the French government incorporated IMF and World Bank policies within its own policies and supported them through public institutions.[[174]](#footnote-174) In September 1993, French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur announced that aid to Franc Zone countries would be dependent on agreements signed with the IMF and World Bank.[[175]](#footnote-175) This meant that the French government was able to maintain influence in Africa despite the presence of competing powers. Multilateralisation was thus a way to acknowledge other competing powers and the rise of neoliberalism while continuing to maintain France’s economic relations with its former colonies in Africa by collaborating with these institutions.

Beyond collaboration with IFIs, Chirac’s government sought to multilateralise its foreign policy with African organisations. In 1997 RECAMP (Reinforcement des capacités Africaine de maintien de la paix or Reinforcement of African Peacekeeping Capacities) was launched. This was a peacekeeping initiative led by France which encouraged African nations to take responsibility for peacekeeping missions in Africa. This type of multilateralisation involving French and African actors was labelled ‘Africanisation’ (Charbonneau, 2006, p. 216). These reforms also led to the creation of a new category of country which would receive French development aid called the *Zone de Solidarité Prioritaire* (ZSPs, Priority Solidarity Zones) in 1999 which extended beyond France’s former colonies, including countries such as such as Uganda, Ghana, Sierra Leone, the Dominican Republic.[[176]](#footnote-176) Claeys (2004) argues that the ZSPs were created ‘to enlarge the traditional privileged *champ*’, France’s formerly colonial sphere of influence. In doing so, the French government wanted to ‘lose the image of post-colonial paternalism which [had] characterised Franco-African relations and influenced the European development policy’ (p. 127). In other words, multilateralisation had the benefit of making the French government’s relationship with African countries appear less neocolonial while also extending its influence beyond its former colonies to other countries in Africa.

Finally, multilateralisation extended to partnerships with other European countries. In December 1998 France and Britain signed a joint declaration on cooperation in Africa at the Saint-Malo Summit. This declaration aimed to 'give the European Union (EU) the capacity for autonomous decision-making and action, backed up by credible military forces, in order to respond to international crises when the Atlantic Alliance is not involved' (1998).

One reason for increased multilateralisation may have been in response to criticism of French foreign policy in Africa. Chafer (2002, p. 358) states, ‘international criticism of the French military role in Rwanda has undoubtedly been a central consideration’ of French policy change. Following the Genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994, NGOs such as *Survie* and the *Observatoire Permanent de la Coopération Française* became more active, criticising French presence in Africa. Chafer (2002, p. 359) argues that ‘public awareness of the corrupt practices that have been a feature of French African policy has increased’. Gouteux (1998, 2001) revealed the extent to which *Le Monde* was complicit in omitting the details of the French military’s involvement during the genocide. One of the few journalists who reported on the French government’s role in the genocide was *Le Figaro*’s Patrick de Saint-Exupéry. Furthermore, an Amnesty International report published in 1996 criticised French tolerance of human rights violations in Chad specifically. Criticism of French military presence in Africa came from within Africa too: there were mutinies in the Central African Republic’s armed forces, leading to the closure of French military bases in 1997. Chafer (2002, p. 358) argues that some African states had ‘become more critical of what they see as an increasingly anachronistic military presence’.[[177]](#footnote-177)

It can therefore be argued that multilateralisation of military interventions helped to ‘avoid the danger of France becoming militarily and diplomatically isolated and, in the case of a decision to intervene militarily, it shared the responsibilities, risks and financial burden of military intervention’ (Chafer, 2002, p. 349). The French military response to the conflict between Chad and Sudan in 2008 through EUFOR is an example of this multilateralisation in which the financial responsibilities and risks were shared by multiple European actors but in which French troops made up the majority of the intervening forces and in which the French government took the leading initiative to launch the operation. Multilateralisation therefore reflected a common military practice in the post-Cold War era that combined neocolonialism and neoliberalism within a globalised context.

I begin by analysing how the policy was discursively constructed in the texts. As with the policy position of democratisation, the documents portray multilateralisation as a solution to the problem of insecurity in the aftermath of the Cold War. French military intervention therefore became incorporated as part of a wider effort to tackle instability and insecurity.

In his speech in 2007, Chirac discusses the position of France within a larger community. He states,

Where Africa and the international community demand it, [France] will continue to take all responsibilities. Whether preventing crises or dealing with conflicts, it will act within the legitimate framework of the mandates of the United Nations or the African Union.[[178]](#footnote-178) (Chirac, 2007).

In this quote, Chirac suggests that the responsibility of France in Africa is no longer linked to the consent of individual African elites but the requests of the ‘Africa and the international community’. Furthermore, according to Chirac, French action takes place within the ‘legitimate frameworks’ of the UN and African Union (AU) mandates. Firstly, this suggests that French official action rests on the ‘demands’ of the international community, it was no longer a role that the French government had carved out for itself, but a responsibility bestowed upon it by a larger body. This suggests that the French military is an important part of a larger whole. Secondly, the emphasis on legitimacy is key because after the criticism of French unilateral military involvement in Rwanda, multilateralisation gave legitimacy to French military actions.

The importance of the task of the French military internationally is further stressed in the 1994 White Paper. Discussing peacekeeping operations, the authors state,

The French contribution to the settlement of such situations is only envisaged in an international political framework (UN, CSCE,[[179]](#footnote-179) etc.) and in a multinational military context (NATO, WEU,[[180]](#footnote-180) coalitions). The difficulty of apprehending and managing a crisis, of conducting low-intensity operations, in environments of latent or open conflict, of guerrilla warfare, especially urban, should not be underestimated, as the military power of the belligerents can be very flexible.[[181]](#footnote-181) (p. 69)

Once again, the work of French state is positioned within a larger framework of multinational and multilateral operations. The fact that France is ‘contributing’ in a multinational context, discursively constructs the role of the French military as helpful and positive. This makes the work of the French military and government appear even more important. It reflects the development of a French foreign policy approach based on the idea of a ‘community’ in which France and its former colonies belong. It thereby legitimises French military presence in those countries, through multilateralisation and acting within a larger community to intervene militarily in those countries. We saw above how the idea of belonging to a larger community has been part of France’s foreign policy approach since 1960.

Overall, the discourse around multilateralisation creates an ‘in’ and an ‘out’ group: the international community, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations, NATO are all part of a wider framework of which France is a part and Chad is not. Chad was not a member of the UN Security Council during this period. Being part of this larger community or framework strengthens France’s position in the face of its loss of dominance in Africa in the globalised neoliberal world. Discursively, the documents position France within a global framework of powers. But they also highlight French exceptionalism and the ‘special relationship’ between France and Chad and its former colonies and beyond. This argument is made in the documents to reassert the importance of French military presence in the region in a globalised world where the French state has lost influence.

### Outro: The 2008 and 2013 White Papers on Defence

Although in this chapter I focused mainly on the 1972 and 1994 White Papers on Defence as they are most relevant to the two periods of conflict I analyse in this thesis, the first between 1987 and 1987 and the second between 2008 and 2009, it is useful to look at how French foreign policy developed within the last two White Papers on Defence, published in 2008 and 2013 as Operation Epervier continued until 2014. Below I re-approach the themes analysed above in order to demonstrate the changes and continuities which took place within the latter two White Papers.

#### ​​Stability and Security

In the 2008 and 2013 White Papers, the preoccupation with instability and insecurity continued. In the 2008 White Paper, this takes the form of the risk of ‘strong migratory surges, including towards Europe’ due to developmental problems in Africa (p. 45). ‘France and Europe’ are presented as the solution to these problems:

Security in Africa suffers first from living conditions linked to increasing urbanisation, the absence of appropriate healthcare facilities, and the scarcity of local food supplies. Global warming is worsening this situation. France and Europe must contribute to the fight against the deterioration of these conditions, in order to curb migratory movements driven by economic and social distress. (p. 44)

Similarly, the 2013 White Paper claims that ‘Sub-Saharan Africa is also an area of great fragility’[[182]](#footnote-182) (p. 41). The solution offered by its authors involving the approach of ‘cooperation’ is ‘support to the creation of a collective security structure in Africa is a priority of France’s cooperation and development policy’[[183]](#footnote-183) (p. 55). In both examples, France or France and Europe are portrayed as solutions to the problem of insecurity and instability in Africa. This reflects the neocolonial discourse of inferiority and superiority in which Africa is portrayed as ‘suffering’, having developmental problems and ‘deterioration’ in contrast to France and Europe, which are able to ‘contribute’ and ‘support’ security and development in Africa, discursively legitimising French involvement on the African continent.

The role of France in ‘democratisation’ is no longer an overtly stated policy approach in the 2008 and 2013 White Papers, which focus more on security, stability and ‘development’ in Africa. The involvement of the French state is related to helping African countries to ‘develop’. The 2008 White Paper states,

‘Sub-Saharan Africa has continued to be marked by endemic wars. Certain conflicts (Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Darfur), due to their regional dimension, can even affect the security of the continent. Africa aspires to have its own capacities for dispute resolution, crisis prevention and peacekeeping. France and Europe have a major interest in contributing to the establishment of these means. (2008 White Paper, p. 44)

Self-rule for African countries, in terms of ‘dispute resolution, crisis prevention and peacekeeping’ is discursively constructed as just an ‘aspiration’. Once again, we see the idea that African countries cannot govern themselves. Just as the 1972 White Paper stated, the development of African countries is constructed as dependent on French assistance.

#### Multilateralisation

In terms of ‘multilateralisation’, the authors of the 2008 and 2013 White Papers emphasise the role of France within Europe. ‘France and Europe’ are positioned together once again in the 2008 White Paper. The authors discursively place France within the framework of a wider continent. Furthermore, the 2013 White Paper positions France within a European framework in terms of its values, ‘A founding member of the European Union, France belongs to a group of 500 million citizens united by common values of democracy, justice and peace’[[184]](#footnote-184) (2013 White Paper, p. 16). Here, we see the extent to which democracy is embedded within the values of France and the EU. The language of the 2013 White Paper is similar to that of Sarkozy’s speech in Dakar, in which he says that the French state will assist Senegal to build ‘democracy, freedom, justice and law’, despite having been published under Hollande’s presidency. This demonstrates the extent to which there was continuity in terms of French foreign policy in successive French governments.

Despite multilateralisation, France’s bilateral ‘cooperation’ agreements continue to hold importance. The 2013 White Paper states,

As a complement to eight defence partnership agreements (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Comoros, Ivory Coast, Djibouti, Gabon, Senegal, Togo) and sixteen technical cooperation agreements support African states in taking ownership and control of their security. These agreements also offer our armed forces foresight and reaction capacities.[[185]](#footnote-185) (2013 White Paper, p. 55)

This demonstrates the continued importance of the Technical Military Cooperation agreements. New agreements were signed with Cameroon, Central African Republic, Comoros, Ivory Coast, Djibouti, Gabon, Senegal, Togo in the 2000s. However, the Technical Military Cooperation Agreement signed with Chad in 1976 remained in place. The idea of ‘African states taking ownership of their security’ reflects the ideas of RECAMP and multilateralisation. Therefore, despite the persistence of bilateral agreements, which positioned the African signatories as depend on French military assistance, discursively, they highlighted the notion of autonomy.

Furthermore, French exceptionalism continued to be a feature of the discourse of the 2008 White Paper which states that France aims to ‘defend the values of the republican pact which binds all French people to the State: the principles of democracy, particularly individual and collective freedoms, respect for human dignity, solidarity and justice.' (2008 White Paper, p. 62). Like the 1972 and 1994 White Papers, the 2008 White Paper discursively links democracy to the French state and suggests that it is intrinsically a French value. Therefore, in the same way that underdevelopment is presented as a characteristic of ‘Africa’, ‘the principles of democracy, particularly individual and collective freedoms, respect for human dignity, solidarity and justice’ are presented as characteristics of ‘France’. Once again, this reinforces the neocolonial discourse of perceived inferiority and superiority, discursively legitimising French military, political, economic and cultural intervention in its former African colonies.

#### Changes

There are some changes between the 1994 White Paper and the 2008 and 2013 White Papers. The biggest difference is the new focus on terrorism. ‘The fight against terrorism’[[186]](#footnote-186) is a subsection of the 2013 White Paper (p. 104). This translates to France’s mission in west and central Africa when Operation Epervier is replaced with Operation Barkhane in 2014. Until 2022, France’s presence in the ‘Sahel’ region was discursively justified as anti-terrorism, demonstrating the emergence of new discursive approaches to interventionism on the African continent.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I traced the development and discourse of the French foreign policies of ‘cooperation’ which emerged in the aftermath of colonialism in 1960. In the first part of this chapter, I demonstrated that once it was clear that France was not able to exert direct colonial rule in west and central Africa any longer due to resistance in the colonies, the relationship between France and its former colonies continued after independence through the signing of defence, assistance and cooperation agreements. The notion of 'cooperation' entailed 'friendship' or a 'special relationship' between France and its former African colonies. This had the effect of denying resistance which had taken place in the colonies and discursively arguing that the relationship between France and the newly independent African countries was consensual, reciprocal and based on shared community and historical ties.

But the agreements were also discursively argued to be based on French assistance and suggesting that the countries of west and central Africa were dependent on France. This reinforced the narrative that had developed in the colonial period, of inferiority/superiority and the civilising mission, while at the same time, omitting the continued dependence of France on Africa for natural resources. There is disagreement among scholars on the extent to which the relationship was neocolonial and reflecting intentional exploitation. I argued that it was indeed an intentional system of control, which ensured the French state continued to access to natural resources in Africa, using Chad as a geostrategic base in central Africa through which to reach neighbouring countries.

In the second part of the chapter, I demonstrated that in the aftermath of the Cold War and with the rise of globalisation, as well as the involvement of the French military in the genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda, French foreign policy shifted. The French state began vocalising support for democratisation in the countries of Africa with which it had maintained a relationship and moved towards multilateralisation of its presence there. These new policy positions were developed in response to a perceived rise in insecurity and instability outlined in the policy documents following the Cold War. However, I argue that this threat was discursively constructed as a means of continuing French military presence on the African continent. I showed that democratisation in Africa reflected a neocolonial version of the civilising mission by discursively linking the value of democracy with French republican values. Multilateralisation on the other hand discursively justified continued French involvement, in the face of criticism, within a larger common international framework. By 2014, the policy had shifted once again to fighting terrorism, leading to the launch of Operation Barkhane, enabling the French military to maintain its presence in the region.

In the final two chapters of this thesis, I analyse how Operation Epervier was framed in the French mainstream press and the extent to which the discourses developed in the French foreign policy documents, discussed in this chapter, informed the news media reporting of French military interventions.

# Chapter 3. Framing Operation Epervier in *Le Monde*, 1986-7

In Chapter 2, I analysed the establishment of the policy approach of ‘cooperation’ in French foreign policy documents published after Chadian independence in 1960. By analysing the policy documents published during the Cold War (from 1960 to 1990), I demonstrated that the French government discursively justified the continuation of a relationship between France and its former African colonies based on the ‘dependence’ of Chad and other former African colonies on France and the ‘duty’ of France to those countries. Furthermore, analysis of the 1976 Technical Military Cooperation agreement demonstrated that French military presence was legally justified and limited to technical military ‘cooperation’. This chapter shifts to look at how the policy of ‘cooperation’ in practice, through the actions of the French military as part of Operation Epervier, was framed in the French mainstream newspaper, *Le Monde*. I focus on the launch of Operation Epervier in 1986 and its involvement in a conflict between Chad and Libya, which ended in 1987. It is useful to analyse the events of Operation Epervier in *Le Monde* because the news media were one of the main ways through which French military activity in African countries was communicated to the French public. Moreover, it was necessary for the French government to have popular support when launching expensive and risky military operations abroad. Nolutshungu (1996) argues that a military intervention ‘quickly loses domestic support if it produces humiliating defeats, imposes economic burdens or results in a heavy toll of dead and injured for the intervening power’ (p. 9). Only analysing the policy documents would not allow us to understand the policy of ‘cooperation’ *in practice* or how it was framed to the wider French public, this is why it is useful to analyse the events of Operation Epervier and how it was reported on in a mainstream French newspaper, *Le Monde*.

In this chapter, I address three questions: 1) *How did* Le Monde *frame Operation Epervier?* 2) *To what extent did this frame reproduce the discourse of the official policy documents seen in Chapter 2?* 3) *To what extent did the frame discursively justify neocolonial practices?* In order to answer these questions, I combine framing analysis with Critical Discourse Analysis - Discourse Historical Approach (CDA-DHA), which I outlined in Chapter 1. This mixed method enables me to uncover the underlying ideologies embedded in the discourse of the news articles and how the events of the conflict were framed to the French public through those ideologies. I argue that during Operation Epervier’s intervention in Chad between 1986 and 1987, *Le Monde* framed Operation Epervier through a ‘technical military assistance’ frame. I demonstrate that the frame of ‘technical military assistance’ had the effect of discursively justifying Operation Epervier and French military presence in Chad. I argue that the *actions* of the French military were justified in *Le Monde* through their legality based on the ‘technical’ aspect of the operation. The *aims* of the French government were justified in *Le Monde* through the ‘assistance’ aspect of the operation. The chapter begins by briefly analysing the historical background of the launch of Operation Epervier and the secondary literature on this topic, it then describes the source base, before analysing the news articles using framing analysis and CDA-DHA. It ends with a conclusion, which addresses the three research questions posed above.

## Context

Operation Epervier was launched on the night of 13/14 February 1986 and ended on 1 August 2014. This chapter focuses on the launch of the operation and its role in fighting alongside the Chadian government against the Libyan government and Chadian opponents, ending on 11 September 1987. Therefore, this chapter looks at a period spanning 13 February 1986 to 11 September 1987. The French government, under Socialist President François Mitterrand, launched the operation with the official aim of assisting the Chadian National Armed Forces (Forces Armées Nationales Tchadiennes or FANT) to fight against Libyan troops and the forces of the Chadian Transitional Government of National Unity (Gouvernement d'Union Nationale de Transition or GUNT) in northern Chad, a section of which the Libyan state had occupied since 1973. Its official aim was to re-establish the ‘territorial integrity’[[187]](#footnote-187) of Chad (defense.gouv.fr, no date, subheading section).

During Operation Epervier’s intervention in Chad between 1986 and 1987, the main opponents of Chadian President Habré’s government were the GUNT and the People’s Armed Forces (Forces Armées Populaires or FAP), a component of the GUNT, led by Goukouni Oueddei. The GUNT was formed in 1979 in order to bring different Chadian parties together in reconciliation. Oueddei was its president, with Hissène Habré also forming part of the government. Oueddei relied on Libyan backing and in December 1980, Libyan troops entered Chad following a request for support from Oueddei. As Habré was hostile to Libyan forces, he was forced into exile. On 6 January 1981 Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Gaddafi announced the unification of Chad with Libya. In response, in November, the intergovernmental Organisation of African Unity’s (OAU) peacekeeping force intervened, and Libyan troops withdrew. Following on, Habré led a coup against Oueddei and took N'Djamena on 7 August 1982, becoming president with the help of Bob Denard, a French mercenary working alongside French intelligence services (Human Rights Watch, 2016, p. 2).[[188]](#footnote-188) Consequently, Oueddei rebelled against Habré, reinstated the GUNT and was armed by the Libyan government. This provoked the French government and led to the French government’s launch of Operation Manta in 1983 and subsequently, the launch of Operation Epervier in 1986, to support Habré’s government.

Operation Epervier’s predecessor, Operation Manta (1983-4) had failed to expel Libyan troops from Chad. Furthermore, its launch by Mitterrand’s Socialist government was unpopular among the French left (Lemoine, 1997). It was also unpopular among the French public due to the deaths of 13 French soldiers,[[189]](#footnote-189) caused mainly by accident (Ngansop, 1986, p. 154).[[190]](#footnote-190) Operation Epervier, on the other hand, was successful in its aims. During the conflict, there were two periods of fighting, the first between February and March 1986 when 1500 French troops were deployed as part of Operation Epervier (HRW, 2016, p. 127) and the second between January and April 1987 when there was a ‘partial redeployment’[[191]](#footnote-191) of Epervier troops (Le Monde, 07/04/1987). After a ceasefire on 11 September 1987, Libyan troops began to withdraw from Chad.

As mentioned above, Operation Epervier was officially launched in order to provide ‘technical military assistance’ to the FANT in order to help Habré’s government defeat Libyan troops and the GUNT/FAP. However, the scholarship is divided on the French government’s motivations for intervening militarily in Chad during the 1980s, with some scholars arguing that the French government intervened to protect Chadians and others arguing that the French government acted in self-interest. Styan (2013) upholds the official reasons and argues that Operations Manta and Epervier were launched in order to ‘defend the territorial integrity of Chad’ (p. 244) and ‘defend those in power against both domestic rebellions and Libyan incursions’ (Styan, 2013, p. 233). Similarly, Foltz (1987) argues that the role of the French military was to ‘protect the principal population centres’ and ‘protect the area south of the sixteenth parallel[[192]](#footnote-192) from Libyan air power’. Like French governmental officials, the above scholars argue that the role of the French military during the conflict was to protect Chad.

However, Ngansop (1986) argues that a determining factor in French intervention was the risk of losing influence in the region. As I demonstrated in Chapters 1 and 2, Chad was geostrategically important to the French government because of its location in central Africa. French military presence in Chad ensured that the French military could have access to neighbouring countries easily. These countries were economically important to France due to their natural resources and trade with the French government. During Operation Epervier’s intervention from 1986 to 1987, the French government was threatened both by the influence of Libya and the USA. The Libyan military was occupying northern Chad and Libyan leader Gaddafi’s pan-African ideologies threatened French economic, political and cultural influence in France’s ‘sphere of influence’. Gaddafi believed this should happen without ‘western’ influence (Isilow, 2021). It was therefore a direct threat to French influence in its former African colonies. Concerning the USA, Ngansop (1986) argues that the US government under President Reagan became involved because it believed that the French military was not seizing the opportunity to remove Gaddafi from power. Reagan’s government therefore decided to respond to Habré’s pleas for help by sending 10 million dollars in aid to Chad which, Ngansop (1986) argues contributed to the decision by the French state to launch Operation Manta.

Moreover, during this period, the US government’s interest in Chad had increased due to plans to exploit oil reserves there. In 1988, a consortium of oil firms, Esso (US), Shell (British and Dutch) and Chevron (US) signed a convention for an oil pipeline project in Chad called the *Convention de recherches, d’exploitaiton et de transport des hydrocarbures entre la République du Tchad et Le Consortium Esso – Shell – Chevron*.[[193]](#footnote-193) As Thiery (2020) explains, the convention 'granted the consortium the rights to produce, transport, and market the oil from the Doba fields, and was signed by President Habré before he was deposed in 1990' (p. 141). France was not part of this consortium. Furthermore, the convention 'granted the Consortium the right to overrule Chadian law passed by the current government or any government of the future' (Thiery, 2020, p. 142). Therefore, the consortium had considerable influence in Chadian affairs without the presence of the French state. This made it even more pressing for the French state to reassert its influence in Chad during this period.

I argue that a clue to understanding the French government’s motivations during this period can be found in what the French government did once it had defeated the Libyan military. Firstly, it set up a permanent military base in Chad in 1990 by adding an additional protocol to the 1976 Technical Military Cooperation Agreement.[[194]](#footnote-194) Secondly, the French military stopped offering assistance to Habré, who preferred dealing with the USA, which saw him overthrown in a coup by Idriss Déby. Nolutshungu (1996) argues that, ‘Paris’s option for nonintervention in this case [amounted] to the same thing as intervention’ (p. 13). This is because withdrawal of support for Habré resulted in a coup. Consequently, once the conflict was over, French governmental influence remained in place. I therefore argue that the French government acted in self-interest to protect its influence in Chad and is therefore an example of neocolonialism in practice.

## Literature

The main secondary literature on Operation Epervier is written by historians focusing on military and diplomatic perspectives. Nolutshungu’s (1996) detailed account of Chadian history focuses on the Chadian perspective and critically analyses Chad-France relations, including the motivations behind the actions of elite actors and political decision-makers. Ngansop (1986), Foltz (1987), Rouvez (1994), Lemoine (1997), Pollack (2002), Stapleton (2013) and Cooper, Grandolini and Delalande (2015; 2016) write historical and military accounts of the conflict and are mainly focused on the actions of elite actors and decision-makers, diplomatic relations, military battles and outcomes. Azevedo’s (2005) history of Chad and Buijtenhuijs’s (1987) study of Chadian anti-imperialist group FROLINAT also provide context for the events of Operation Epervier. (Chafer, 1992, 1996, 2002, 2005, 2019) has written on the relationship between France and Chad throughout the twentieth and twenty first centuries in his work on France-Africa relations more widely. These sources are useful in providing context and in order to piece together the major events and changes which took place during the Operation Epervier.

More specifically, the literature on France-Chad relations during this period enables us to understand how the French government was able to assert dominance through military control, strategic military operations, advanced weaponry, and diplomatic negotiations. To a certain extent, they also enable us to understand why the French military exerted power in Chad, such as the geostrategic and economic importance of Chad to France. For example, Cooper, Grandolini and Delalande (2016) explain that French governmental officials believed that the Aouzou Strip, the disputed territory in northern Chad, was rich in uranium.[[195]](#footnote-195) Therefore, it is possible to argue that potential economic profits were at stake for the French state. Moreover, Human Rights Watch (2016) is critical of France’s role in Chad during the conflict with Libya as they argue that it was clear that France stood to gain from the conflict as its military was fighting to ensure that Chad remained in its ‘foreign policy sphere’[[196]](#footnote-196) (p. 1). The scholarship therefore demonstrates the scale and importance of Operation Epervier to France and the extent of the involvement of the French military benefitted the French government.

Overall, the secondary literature on France-Chad relations is useful in providing a historical context for the events of Operation Epervier and in demonstrating the significance of the operation, along with the benefits to the French state. However, the literature discussed above tends to focus on political actors. There is therefore a gap in the literature which I aim to address in this chapter. By analysing the role of the governmental elite *and* journalistic actors, through my focus on *Le Monde*’s reporting on Operation Epervier, I hope to offer a multifaceted analysis. This can help us to understand how the events of the operation were framed and communicated to the French public via French journalists and the mainstream French press. Furthermore, most of the literature discussed above offers a historical and political analysis of the events of French military involvement in Chad. My analysis therefore addresses a second gap by adding a discursive element to the analysis, which can help us to uncover the underlying ideologies that shaped France-Chad relations. I also offer a critical analysis of French military involvement in Chad. Like the critical literature above (Nolutshungu, 1996; Human Rights Watch, 2016), I argue that French military involvement in Chad with Operation Epervier between 1986 and 1987 was beneficial to the French state. I argue that Operation Epervier is an example of a French neocolonial practice and therefore, beneficial to the French state at the expense of the Chadian state.

## Description of Sources

My source base comprises 129 news articles published in *Le Monde* during Operation Epervier’s intervention between 13 February 1986 and 11 September 1987 (see Appendix 1). As mentioned above, 13 February 1986 marks the launch of Operation Epervier and 11 September 1987 marks the end of the conflict. The conflict involving Chad and Libya can be traced back to the 1970s, however, I chose to focus on the part of the conflict that included the involvement of Operation Epervier due to its significance to the relationship between France and Chad and its consequences for France-Africa relations more widely. In order to locate the articles published on this topic, I conducted a keyword search of ‘Epervier’ in *Le Monde*’s online archive (lemonde.fr). I then did a second keyword search using ‘Tchad’ (Chad) to identify articles published on the operation that had not used the operation’s name. I selected all 129 relevant articles for analysis. Figure 1, below, shows the frequency of the articles.

A graph with a line going up

Description automatically generated

**Figure 1 Frequency of news articles published in *Le Monde***

*Le Monde*’s news articles on Operation Epervier are concentrated during two periods which reflect the two periods of fighting. February marks the launch of Operation Epervier and December marks its partial redeployment. The summer months mark the rainy season in Chad when fighting generally ceases. September 1987 marks the end of the conflict. The average length of each article is 528 words.

After reading every article once, I identified the sources, framing patterns, keywords and grammatical structures used to construct actors and events and their aims and motivation in the contents of each article. I gathered quantitative data on the frequency of sources, keywords, and grammatical structures. Then, using qualitative analysis through my methodologies of CDA-DHA and framing, I identified one dominant frame, the ‘technical military assistance’ frame, as well as several discursive devices that make up the components of the frame. As discussed in Chapter 2, frames function as a result of their communicability, familiarity and dominance. These three elements are identified through the discourse that the journalists use to convey meaning to their audience. A frame’s communicability, familiarity and dominance are evident through the discursive devices that appear in the news texts. These discursive devices also demonstrate the extent to which the frames reinforce or oppose the narrative established by other actors and in other texts related to the events (such as the foreign policy documents, discussed in Chapter 2).

In the table below, I list the authors of the *Le Monde* articles and the number of articles attributed to those authors:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Author/Journalist** | **Number of Articles** |
| ‘Le Monde’ | 88 |
| News Agencies (AFP, AP, Reuters or a combination) | 16 |
| Laurent Zecchini | 16 |
| Jean-Claude Pomonti | 5 |
| Jacques Amalric | 2 |
| Jean de la Guérivière | 1 |

**Table 9. Authors of the *Le Monde* Articles**

As we can see, the majority of articles (88/129) are attributed to ‘Le Monde’. It is therefore unclear who wrote those articles. Therefore, I will only name the author when it is available. I will provide a brief background of the journalists who are named. Between 1983 and 1987 Laurent Zecchini’s work for *Le Monde* focused on Africa. Zecchini worked for 35 years at *Le Mond*e, leaving in 2014. He also worked for right-wing news outlet *Le Figaro* in his early career, covering French politics. This shows that he worked across news outlets of varying political positions, with *Le Monde* positioning itself on the centre of the political spectrum. Zecchini was *Le Monde*’s defence specialist from 2005-2008. Jean-Claude Pomonti was a specialist in South-East Asia and covered the Vietnam War for *Le Monde* between 1968 and 1974 (Pomonti and Raymond, 2022). Jacques Amalric was head of *Le Monde*’s foreign service desk (Chef du service étranger) during this period.

Between 1986-1988, *Le Monde* was an independently owned newspaper although, like all national daily newspapers, it did receive subsidies from the state (see Chapter 1). *Le Monde* supported Mitterrand's candidature in the 1981 presidential elections and close relations between the president and the paper had put into question *Le Monde*'s credibility according to Benson (2004). However, Benson (2004) also asserts that *Le Monde*’s investigation and allegations against the Mitterrand government’s involvement in the sinking of the Greenpeace fleet, Rainbow Warrior in 1985 (Greenpeace.org, no date) helped recover some of *Le Monde*’s credibility. This happened under the direction of new director, André Fontaine. Journalist Daniel Vernet, who became *Le Monde*’s editor-in-chief in 1989, wrote on the topic of the Mitterrand government’s cover up of the sinking of the Rainbow Warrior. This therefore was an editorial line that broke with the pro-Mitterrand position of the newspaper during the 1981 French presidential election which saw Mitterrand elected for his first term as president.

André Fontaine took over from André Laurens, under whom *Le Monde* had entered financial difficulty. Fontaine believed that *Le Monde* was aimed too much at specialists and lacked emotion and humour. A few years prior, the news daily *Libération* had launched. *Libération* co-founder and director Serge July had had a vision of different writing style for *Libération* when compared to other established newspapers by saying that he wanted a newspaper 'that will shock me, surprise me, shake me'[[197]](#footnote-197) (July, 1978, p. 23). Fontaine’s changes reflected a similar type of departure from the status quo of news writing as that of *Libération*. Additionally, in order to address the financial problems, Fontaine decided to cut staff salaries by 20% and to launch a supplement in order to appeal to a younger audience (FranceInfo and AFP, 2013). In terms of style, Benson (2004) asserts that *Le Monde*'s style had indeed become less austere in the mid-1980s than it had been at its beginnings. However, this chapter finds that the tone of the reporting on Operation Epervier still largely lack emotion or *pathos*, as it was rarely conducted from the perspective of the victims of the conflict or civilians, instead focusing heavily on elite actors such as politicians and military personnel.

Because of the way in which *Le Monde*’s articles have been digitised, it is not possible to know what page the article was printed on or which column it featured in. As I did not have access to facsimiles, it is also difficult to know whether the headlines correspond to those which were published in the print version, especially as there are some inaccuracies, which may have occurred during the digitisation process. Because of this, I do not conduct headline analysis.

## The ‘Technical Military Assistance’ Frame

Through my analysis, I determine that a dominant frame emerges through the news articles, the ‘technical military assistance’ frame. I demonstrate that this frame has two aspects. Firstly, a technical aspect, which relates to the actions of the French military, which are framed in *Le Monde* as technical only. In other words, relating to support offered by military equipment, such as radar systems, aircraft, weapons. This is a limitation outlined by the 1976 Technical Military Cooperation agreement. Secondly, the assistance aspect, which relates to the aim of Operation Epervier, which, officially, is the French military’s assistance to the Chadian military to help to defeat the Libyan troops and the GUNT forces. I argue that discursive analysis of the ‘technical military assistance’ frame reveals that the effect of the frame is to justify Operation Epervier firstly by arguing for its legality, and secondly by discursively constructing a role for the actors involved in the conflict.

## Discursive Devices

As discussed in Chapter 1, my methodology combines Critical Discourse Analysis – Discourse Historical Approach and framing analysis. As part of my approach, I analyse discursive devices in order to demonstrate how the frame of ‘technical military assistance’ was formed and how it was vital in the communication of the events of Operation Epervier to the readers of *Le Monde*. Discursive devices, on the other hand, are strategies used in speech and text to communicate meaning to audiences, they make up the components of the larger frame of ‘technical military assistance’ (discussed in Chapter 1). In Table 10, below, I list the discursive devices which I identify across the 129 *Le Monde* articles I analysed and provide definitions and examples of these discursive devices.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Discursive Device | Purpose | Example |
| Topos of Consent | Argument that if the Chadian government requests French military intervention then it is legitimate. | ‘it is obvious that the OAU can hardly condemn the French military intervention in Chad (Operation Epervier), which was launched at the request of the Chadian President’ (Zecchini, Le Monde, 31/03/1986) |
| The Topos of Legality | Argument that if an action has a legal basis, it is legitimate. | ‘French military helicopter crews can participate in operations in Chad, under the terms of an agreement between the two countries which has remained secret to this day.’ (Le Monde 24/12/1986) |
| Topos of Legitimacy | Argument that if a government is perceived to be legitimate then it can be supported. | Repetition of ‘legitimate government’ e.g. *Le Monde*, 13/08/1987 |
| Topos of Burden | Argument that an action is undesirable but necessary due to a sense of responsibility. | ‘successive governments of the Fifth Republic have been confronted with the "Chadian problem"’ (Zecchini, Le Monde, 24/03/1986) |
| Topos of Duty | Argument that the French military is responsible to Chad. | ‘the French government - if it wants to continue to appear to support its "Chadian ally" - has to be led to recognise that its duties towards N'Djamena cannot be limited to ensuring the security of a portion of Chadian territory’ (Le Monde, 03/01/1987) |
| Topos of Reconquest | Argument that the French military must help to ‘reconquer’ northern Chad. | ‘there will undoubtedly be support from France to enable Chad to have the means to reconquer its integrity’ (Mitterrand, Le Monde, 13/11/1986) |
| Topos of Dependence | Argument that Chad is dependent on France. | ‘the efforts undertaken by Africa must be accompanied by new external support’ (Zecchini, Le Monde, 29/07/1987) |
| Positive Self, Negative Other | Discursive qualification of the self as positive and the other as negative. | ‘France now considers that its Arab partners are able to differentiate between its policy in the Middle East and the intervention of its army in Chad, which its historical ties to Africa impose on it and the behaviour of Colonel Gaddafi’ (Le Monde, 19/12/1986) |
| Passivisation | De-emphasising agency in order to distance an actor from their actions. | ‘These Gazelles are escorted by Puma helicopters’ (Le Monde, 07/03/1987) |
| *Ethos* | Appeal to authority | Quoting political elites such as the Defence Minister |
| *Pathos* | Appeal to emotion | ‘Poor devils without jobs, without hope, some of whom have had to, at one point or another, abandon their wives and children in the village to look for work’ (Zecchini, Le Monde, 25/02/1986) |

**Table 10. List of Discursive Devices**

## Analysis

The ‘technical military assistance’ frame is made up of two parts: the first is the ‘technical’ aspect, whereby *Le Monde* argues that Operation Epervier is legally justified, and that the operation is characterised by ‘technicality’. The second is the ‘assistance’ aspect, whereby *Le Monde* discursively constructs the elite actors involved in the conflict within a framework of assistance, with the Chadian actors as victims, the Libyan actors as aggressors and the French actors as assisters. Below I will discursively analyse the frame of ‘technical military assistance’ and link it to the wider theoretical implications within the context of French neocolonial practices in Chad.

### The ‘Technical’ Aspect

In this section, I argue that *Le Monde* discursively justifies Operation Epervier in two ways through the frame of ‘technical military assistance’, firstly, by arguing that it is legally justified and positioning it within the remits of the 1976 Technical Military Cooperation agreement between France and Chad, and secondly, through use of technical vocabulary.

#### Legality

Throughout its reporting on Operation Epervier in Chad between 1986 and 1987, *Le Monde* argues that the operation is justified on a legal basis. It does this in three ways: 1) by arguing that the operation is based on legal documents (the topos of Legality), 2) by arguing that the operation took place at the request of the Chadian government, which is required legally before an intervention takes place (the topos of Consent); and 3) by arguing that the Chadian government is legitimate and therefore that French assistance to it is legitimate (the topos of Legitimacy).

Firstly, *Le Monde* argues that Operation Epervier is legally justified through legal agreements and the French government’s communication with international organisations. At the very beginning of Operation Epervier and during the first period of fighting, there was confusion in *Le Monde* about the legal basis of the intervention. The article published on 18/02/1986 states that the 1976 Cooperation Agreement is not relevant in the case of Operation Epervier and that the operation is instead based on the United Nations Charter which guarantees ‘the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations’.[[198]](#footnote-198) The *Le Monde* article also argues for the legitimacy of the intervention based on the French government’s communication with other entities: after the French military’s air raid on Ouadi Doum air base, *Le Monde* claims that the French government alerted the following countries and organisations: ‘its main allies at the Francophone Summit’, ‘the UN General Secretary Mr Perez de Cuellar’, ‘the US State Department’ and ‘the Arab countries most directly affected’.[[199]](#footnote-199) The article claims that these measures were taken because,

The technical military cooperation agreement, signed in 1976 between Paris and N'Djamena, does not provide for this scenario. Article 4 states, in fact, that French military personnel seconded to the Chadian armed forces ‘cannot, under any circumstances, directly take part in the execution of war operations or the maintenance or restoration of law and order’.[[200]](#footnote-200)

*Le Monde* suggests that the cooperation agreement is not valid in the case of Operation Epervier. However, it argues that by alerting international organisations and nations and relying on the UN charter, the French military’s intervention is justified in its intervention because it has been externally validated. This evokes the idea of consensus and legitimacy by implying that there was agreement among the UN, Africa, the USA and several Arab countries regarding French military action in Chad against Libya.

However, as early as April 1986, and without re-referring to Article 4 of the agreement, *Le Monde* argues that the cooperation agreement does in fact legally justify Operation Epervier. *Le Monde* publishes a quote from André Giraud, the French Minister of Defence who met with Chadian President Habré to ‘confirm the maintenance of the military cooperation agreements linking France to Chad’[[201]](#footnote-201) and stating that there is ‘no question of modifying Operation Epervier as long as it remains justified and the sovereignty of a country and an important situation for the whole of Africa are at stake’[[202]](#footnote-202) (AFP/AP, 09/04/1986). Therefore, by April 1986, *Le Monde* links the cooperation agreement to the justification of French military presence in Chad. Moreover, this is communicated through an elite actor, French Defence Minister Giraud, reinforcing the legitimacy of the action through the rhetorical device of *ethos*, the appeal to authority. This demonstrates the importance and strength of the ‘cooperation’ agreements in legitimising not only the practice of French military intervention but also its discursive justification and explanation of that intervention to the French public via elite actors’ voices in *Le Monde*. Furthermore, reference to the ‘cooperation’ agreement places the action in Chad within a larger framework of French military presence abroad as part of the network and relationship of ‘cooperation’ with France’s former colonies, explaining why the French military is present in Chad in the first place.

Furthermore, *Le Monde* claims to exclusively reveal that the ‘cooperation’ agreement allows for even more extensive intervention in Chad. In December 1986, just before the partial redeployment of Operation Epervier, during the second period of fighting, *Le Monde* states that the ‘cooperation’ agreement contains secret clauses that allow further intervention. The article states that ‘the agreement of 6 March 1976 was supplemented with Chad by the signing of two other more specific texts’[[203]](#footnote-203) that allow for the intervention of helicopters: ‘French military helicopter crews can participate in operations in Chad, under the terms of an agreement between the two countries which has remained secret to this day.’[[204]](#footnote-204) (Le Monde, 24/12/1986). This clause legitimises further intervention in Chad and widens the scope of the intervention. The fact that this clause is secret indicates a lack of transparency with regard to French foreign policy. Yet the clause is published, apparently exclusively, in the highest-selling French daily newspaper, legitimising an action that was described previously in the newspaper as unauthorised under the terms of that same agreement. This shows the extent to which *Le Monde* played a role in justifying Operation Epervier’s actions in Chad during this period and the purpose it served the French government in communicating the legitimacy of the operation to the French public.

The fact that the legal basis of Operation Epervier is published in *Le Monde* at the beginning of each period of fighting demonstrates that the legality of the operation was significant enough for *Le Monde* to communicate it to the French public. It also shows the relationship between policy documents and the press in the latter’s communication of the former to the public. *Le Monde* does not question the legitimacy of Operation Epervier, despite having published the aforementioned article (Le Monde, 09/04/1986) stating that the 1976 cooperation agreement does not allow French military intervention during this conflict. Instead, it repeats the words of the French Defence Minister, acting almost as a mouthpiece for the government’s claims of legitimacy. Furthermore, the apparent exclusivity of this information to *Le Monde* further demonstrates the importance of informing the reader of the legality of the operation. Furthermore, the exclusivity of this story in *Le Monde* appeals to the rhetorical device of *ethos,* appealing to authority of the voice of *Le Monde* in reporting on events that other newspapers do not have access to, making *Le Monde* appear a more trustworthy source.

A second important element in the legal justification of Operation Epervier is the Chadian government’s request for French military intervention through the topos of Consent. As I demonstrated in Chapter 2, the idea of consent is central to the discourse of the policy documents signed in the aftermath of Chadian independence, including the 1976 Technical Military Cooperation agreement. Habré’s requests for French military deployment are published throughout *Le Monde*’s reporting on the conflict and are voiced by multiple sources including French and Chadian officials and the journalists themselves. The official sources quoted include President Habré (Le Monde, 18/02/1986c), the French Foreign Minister (Le Monde, 04/04/1987), the French Defence Minister (Le Monde, 26/12/1986), and the Chadian Ambassador to France (Pomonti, Le Monde, 15/02/1986b) as well as journalist Laurent Zecchini (31/03/1986; 24/03/1986). Zecchini writes, ‘it is obvious that the OAU can hardly condemn the French military intervention in Chad (Operation Epervier), which was launched at the request of the Chadian President’ (31/03/1986).[[205]](#footnote-205) Furthermore, Giraud, the Defence Minister is quoted, ‘“of course”, the minister specified, “aerial protection operations cannot be carried out in Chad without the agreement of the legitimate government” (Le Monde, 13/08/1987).[[206]](#footnote-206) The terms ‘it is obvious’ and ‘of course’ both serve to suggest that the legitimacy of the intervention is evident, while emphasising the legitimacy of the actions they permit and countering any criticism of the legal status of the operation. Moreover, the ‘obviousness’ of the legality and legitimacy of the operation is stated both through direct quotes from French politicians and through the statements of the journalists. The discourse of the latter confirms the views of the former. The two actors, journalists and politicians thereby co-construct an interventionist discourse through the language of legality.

The only source quoted in *Le Monde* that does question the legal basis of Operation Epervier is Libyan leader, Colonel Gaddafi. Gaddafi is quoted saying, ‘“What I want to say to the French people is that there are neither defence agreements nor a security treaty between France and Chad allowing French troops to be present in this country; and I challenge the French government to publish a document to this effect”’[[207]](#footnote-207) Although this challenge on the legality of the operation is published in *Le Monde*, the newspaper delegitimises Gaddafi as an actor by dismissing him as untrustworthy. The deligitimisation of Gaddafi is a theme which runs through the articles. I explore this point in detail in the subsection below. Here, I only bring up a single example in order to put forth the argument that Gaddafi is the sole actor to question the legal basis of French military intervention in Chad. But, as we shall see, his argument does not carry weight because of his delegitimised status.

Linked to the delegitimisation of Gaddafi is its opposite, the legitimisation of the Chadian government, through the topos of Legitimacy. In order for French technical military assistance to the Chadian government to take place, the Chadian government had to be a legitimate one. It is difficult to assert that Habré’s government was legitimate because Habré had overthrown Goukouni Oueddei, interim president of the GUNT, in a coup in 1982. Habré was not democratically elected, and Chad was not a democracy. Moreover, Human Rights Watch (2016, p. 14) reported that human rights abuses took place under the Habré regime and that French forces must have been aware.[[208]](#footnote-208) This also brings the legitimacy of Habré’s government into doubt. However, other than Gaddafi, who describes Habré as the ‘the leader of a gang’[[209]](#footnote-209) (*Le Monde*, 06/02/1987), *Le Monde*’s journalists and their sources do not question the legitimacy of Habré’s government. Instead, the legitimacy of the Chadian government is constantly reinforced through repetition throughout the conflict: The Minister of Cooperation (Le Monde and Reuters, 08/11/1986), the Minister of Defence (Le Monde, 13/08/1987), the Minister of the Interior (Le Monde, 13/08/1987b) and *Le Monde*'s journalist (Le Monde, 12/04/1986) all use the qualifying adjective ‘legitimate’ to describe Habré’s government (‘legitimate government’[[210]](#footnote-210)). This repetition has the effect of emphasising French military support to a government, which otherwise may be morally questionable to support financially and militarily.

This section demonstrated the argument for the legality of Operation Epervier in *Le Monde* through the topoi of Legality, Consent and Legitimacy. Framing Operation Epervier as legal discursively legitimises it within the frame of ‘technical military assistance’ which is based on the 1976 Technical Military Cooperation agreement. Emphasising the legality of the operation has the effect of institutionalising the practice of French military intervention in Chad. It also demonstrates the proximity between the language of the policy documents and of *Le Monde*’s news articles.

#### The Use of Technical Vocabulary

I argue that use of technical vocabulary has four main functions: firstly, it emphasises the technologically advanced nature of the operation, constructing the French military as sophisticated; secondly, it creates an emotional and political distance between the actors taking part in the operation and their actions, mitigating or downplaying the role of the French actors; thirdly, it distracts the reader from the other potential motivating factors behind the operation, such as economic and political benefits to the French state, selecting only certain aspects of the operation and ‘mak[ing] them more salient’ (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Finally, it can be seen as a rhetorical device for the *Le Monde* journalists, demonstrating the accuracy and knowledge of the journalists.

The military technology used during Operation Epervier played an important role in the operation. Following the failure of Operation Manta, the French government deployed primarily the French air force over ground troops as part of Operation Epervier. According to Cooper, Grandolini and Delalande (2016, p. 42), the French military’s ‘reorganisations, upgrades and acquisitions’ during this period meant that they ‘developed a very strong expeditionary capability, the kind of which turned into a prototype for similar forces developed by most other major Western military powers in the 1990s’. Granvaud (2014, p. 108) supports this argument by asserting that Chad was a ‘laboratory of external operations’[[211]](#footnote-211) and that the professionalisation of forces through Manta and Epervier served as a model for US military operations in Afghanistan due to its reliance on the air force, its use of special forces to help national forces on the ground, its use of forces to protect strategic points and finally, its training and equipment for local forces (Granvaud, 2009, p. 64). Therefore, the equipment used to fight in this conflict was a very important aspect of the military operation and *Le Monde*’s reporting promotes this characteristic of the conflict, emphasising the contrast between a more advanced France and a less advanced Chad.

Below is an example of a paragraph written by *Le Monde* journalist Laurent Zecchini (03/03/1986) in which he discusses military technology:

In addition to the delimitation of a prohibited zone in N'Djamena's airspace, the capital’s defences have been reinforced with the deployment of Hawks surface-to-air missile batteries near the runway. These missiles, whose altitude range is 8,500 metres, are of American manufacture but belong to the French army. They were transported by a United States Air Force C-5 Galaxy, which landed on Friday, 28 February, in N'Djamena. The Galaxy, capable of transporting 118 tonnes of cargo, or, for example, one thousand armed men, is the largest aircraft in the world. This aircraft was specially chartered by the French government to transport equipment that was both bulky and ‘sensitive’.[[212]](#footnote-212)

Below is a further example of *Le Monde*’s discussion of military technology, published on 07/03/1987:

Thus, twelve French anti-tank helicopters, supported by manoeuvre helicopters, have been based in the Abéché region since Wednesday 4 March. These are twelve Gazelle helicopters, some of which are equipped with Hot anti-tank missiles and the others with 20mm guns intended for air-to-air fire (for the close protection of the first helicopters) and air-to-ground fire for the ground support of troops. These Gazelles are escorted by Puma helicopters, which transport spare parts in particular.[[213]](#footnote-213)

These two passages are typical examples of the way in which *Le Monde* describes the events of Operation Epervier. In these two passages, military weapons and equipment are extensively named using their proper nouns (seven times). Throughout *Le Monde*’s reporting on Operation Epervier, military aircraft and weapons, used by the French, Chadian and Libyan militaries,[[214]](#footnote-214) are referred to using their proper nouns 258 times across the 129 *Le Monde* articles I analysed.

As mentioned above, I argue that this use of technical vocabulary has four effects: 1) it emphasises the advanced technical capabilities of the French military; 2) it distances the actors involved in the operation from their actions; and 3) it distracts the reader from motivating factors behind the operation, such as economic and political advantages, 4) it gives legitimacy to the journalists who can demonstrate their specialist knowledge. Furthermore, stating that some of the military equipment was from the US further legitimises the French military operation by suggesting that the US were offering support to the mission.

Firstly, the emphasis on the technical aspects of military presence emphasises the French military’s technical capabilities. This reflects the discursive device of Positive Self, by valorising the role of the French military. As the secondary literature discussed above shows, testing new weapons and tactics was an essential part of Operation Epervier for the French military. Therefore, *Le Monde*’s showcasing of these capabilities and weapons communicates the strength and knowhow of the French military to the public, legitimising its presence.

Secondly, technical vocabulary distances the actors involved in the operation from their actions. This is achieved through the discursive device of Passivisation. The two above passages mainly feature the passive grammatical construction, there are no active agents mentioned. Other than ‘the French government’, the actors involved in carrying out the actions are the aircraft themselves rather than the people operating them (‘These Gazelles are escorted by Puma helicopters’). The ‘armed men’ who use this technology are mentioned but only as a unit of measurement and as the object rather than the subject of the sentence (‘The Galaxy, capable of transporting…one thousand armed men…’). Emphasising the technology rather than the people operating it has the effect of making the intervention appear technologically advanced, invoking military prowess, accuracy, efficiency, modernity, precision and importantly, objectivity. By reporting in this way, *Le Monde*’s approach does not appeal to subjective emotion but to objective fact. It therefore depoliticises and neutralises the events of the conflict and justifies the actions of the French military based on their advanced military capabilities rather than any political motivations.

Thirdly, the heavy usage of technical vocabulary has the effect of potentially confusing and distracting the reader from the actions of the French military and their consequences, once again reflecting the discursive device of Passivisation. The sentences in the above two examples are long and convoluted. It is unclear what actions are taking place and what the consequences of those actions are or who is performing them. The exact actions of the French military are therefore obscured and cannot be properly scrutinised by the reader. Overall, by constructing Operation Epervier as technical, *Le Monde* depoliticises, sanitises and obscures French military intervention in Chad and makes it difficult to criticise French military presence.

Finally, the technical descriptions of Operation Epervier appear to demonstrate the comprehension and knowledge of the journalists in the area of military operations. The very detailed passages are laden with specialist knowledge and facts about military weapons including names (Gazelle, C-5 Galaxy, Hawks), range ('8,500 metres'), weight capacity ('118 tonnes'), function ('air-to-air'). This reflects the rhetorical device of *ethos* in which the speaker (the journalist) appears trustworthy, in this case, because of their knowledge of a specialist topic. Overall, this contributes to the ‘technical’ aspect of the ‘technical military assistance’ frame, with *Le Monde*’s articles firmly placing the operation within the parameters of the 1976 Technical Military Assistance agreement upon which it is based.

### The ‘Assistance’ Aspect

The ‘assistance’ aspect of the frame of ‘technical military assistance’, which I have identified through my analysis, relates to the aims of Operation Epervier. Officially, the aim of the intervention was to assist the Chadian government and military in defeating Libyan troops and GUNT forces in order to regain the Aouzou strip in northern Chad. As demonstrated above, French technical military assistance to Chad reflected the implementation of the policy of ‘cooperation’ in practice. I demonstrate the articles in *Le Monde* frame Operation Epervier as ‘assistance’ by discursively constructing the three sides of the conflict as an enemy (Libya), a victim (Chad) and an assister (France). I argue that by framing the operation as ‘technical military assistance’, *Le Monde* reinforces the official governmental and military aim of assistance and discursively justifies the operation.

#### The Discursive Construction of the Chadian Government and Military

In Chapter 2, I demonstrated the extent to which agreements, White Papers and presidential speeches post-1960 discursively justified the continued relationship between France and Africa based on African dependence on France. In this section, I explore the extent to which this discourse reappears in *Le Monde*. I argue that in discursively constructing Chad as a victim of Libyan violence, the Chadian government and the territorial integrity of Chad are portrayed as dependent on French military intervention and its technical assistance. I have located three arguments in the articles published in *Le Monde* which discursively construct Chad as dependent on France: firstly, Chad as weak in terms of resources and reliant on French assistance; secondly, Chad as reliant on France in terms of decision-making; thirdly, African countries in general as suffering from disunity and incompetence in terms of governance and therefore dependent on external forces.

The focus in *Le Monde*, regarding the threat of Libya towards Chad, is not on civilian populations but on the territorial integrity of Chad. The voice of Chadian civilians is rarely heard throughout *Le Monde*’s reporting during this period of conflict.[[215]](#footnote-215) This firmly positions the role of the French military in a frame of ‘technical military assistance’ rather than, for example, a ‘humanitarian’ frame and thereby places the operation within the remits and limits of the ‘cooperation’ agreement. This demonstrates proximity between official aims and the newspapers’ framing of the events of the operation.

Firstly, Chad is portrayed as weak in terms of resources. Chadian President Habré and Chadian Interior Minister, Mahmad Itno are quoted in *Le Monde* discussing the logistical problems of Chad and how French technical assistance would be beneficial to the Chadian military,

“the long distances, the absence of real roads, we have a huge logistical problem to get aid to the fighters of the Tibesti… They lack fuel, they lack food, they lack care and medicine, they lack appropriate armaments, especially against the air attack and armoured vehicles, they lack ammunition of all calibres, light vehicles, means of transmission.”[[216]](#footnote-216) (Habré quoted by Amalric, Le Monde, 17/12/1986)

‘“With regard to vehicles: nothing; uniforms: nothing.” Thus he presents the state of his means to fight against the terrorist threat, adding: “Even if France provided us with equipment dating from the start of the 20th century, for us, this equipment would not be outdated.”’[[217]](#footnote-217) (Mahamat Itno quoted in Le Monde, 16/04/1987)

In the first quote, by Habré, the use of listing as a rhetorical device gives the reader the impression of never-ending problems as part of a non-exhaustive list. The word ‘lack’[[218]](#footnote-218) is repeated five times, for emphasis. In Mahamat Itno’s quote, the repetition of the word ‘nothing’[[219]](#footnote-219) has a similar effect. Itno’s quote conveys a sense of desperation in stating that the Chadian government would accept French equipment from the 1900s. Itno suggests that this ‘lack’ can be filled by France or French equipment. This places the Chadian government in an inferior position to the French government by suggesting that they would accept equipment that, for the French military, is unfit for purpose. This is the reverse of the discursive device of Positive Self, Negative Other, in which the Habré and Mahamat Itno discursively qualify the ‘self’ as inferior and the ‘other’ as superior, in order to appeal to French assistance. This is reminiscent of Nolutshungu’s (1996) statement about Chadian leaders ‘manipulat[ing] dependence’ on France (p. 11), discussed in Chapter 1. The two Chadian politicians argue that the Chadian government is poor in terms of the resources and equipment required to fight Libya and emphasise the need for French technical assistance. Regarding the position of *Le Monde*, the fact that it is the Chadian president and interior minister who are listing these problems gives weight to their statements through the rhetorical device of *ethos*, whereby the sources may appeal to the audience by speaking from a position of authority regarding the affairs of Chad. Their official status thereby reinforces and asserts the argument of Chadian dependence on France, rather than the individual Chadian elite’s dependence on the French military for survival. Finally, it is useful to note that Habré and Itno’s list comprises resources which can be provided to the Chadian military according to the ‘cooperation’ agreement and therefore, within the legal framework of the agreement. The two politicians therefore appeal to French ‘assistance’ via *Le Monde*, once again demonstrating the bridge between the press and policy. Furthermore, *Le Monde* omits the extent to which Chadian leaders, such as Habré, were reliant on the French government to remain in power. As I discussed in the context section above, Habré was ousted as a result of the French government’s lack of action in the face of a coup threatening Habré’s government. Therefore, in *Le Monde*, the reader can only glean, from the perspective of Chadian officials, that Chad is weak in terms of resources and needs assistance from France, without understanding the extent to which the Chadian president is weak and in need of French support.

Secondly, the Chadian government is portrayed as dependent on the French military regarding decision-making. In one episode during this conflict, President Habré made a decision without the French military, in response, journalist Zecchini (Le Monde, 03/04/1986) describes the decision that President Habré took without consulting the French Commander of Operation Epervier, as having been decided ‘without warning’.[[220]](#footnote-220) This discursively places Habré below the commander of Operation Epervier in the decision-making hierarchy, despite Habré’s position as Chadian President and Head of the Chadian armed forces. Moreover, when Habré succeeds, following his decision, Zecchini claims that Habré does not have the means to reconquer the occupied cities that ‘really count’,[[221]](#footnote-221) downplaying this success. Zecchini takes this dependence on France further by stating that Habré knew that France would not allow him to be defeated. He writes, ‘He also knows that Paris would not have let him suffer a major defeat’.[[222]](#footnote-222) This discursively ties Habré’s fate to the decisions of the French military and does not allow for effective action independent of France.

Finally, to further understand the way in which *Le Monde* discursively constructs Chadian actors during the conflict, it is important to place Chad within the wider context of *Le Monde*’s perceptions of Africa as a continent and the extent to which the authors discursively construct African countries as dependent on ‘Western’ assistance. This is achieved through the topos of Dependence. In an article published during Operation Epervier’s intervention, on 29/07/1986, *Le Monde’*s Laurent Zecchini discusses African reliance on ‘Western’ powers. Zecchini argues that African nations have been historically reliant on the ‘West’ but have come to understand the importance of organising without relying on others: ‘For the first time, Africans have clearly recognised that they must carry out internal reforms, as international aid will not solve anything in depth.’[[223]](#footnote-223) Zecchini’s tone is condescending as he suggests that it is only for the first time that Africans realise the source of their problems. He argues that because of colonialism, ‘Western countries’ have been blamed for many of the problems faced by Africa. He writes,

Former colonisers, and, as such, Western countries deemed responsible for most of the continent's difficulties, had to make up for the shortcomings of African countries. Whether it was famine, drought, failed economies or wars, they were presumed to be available, to feed, bail out or restore order.[[224]](#footnote-224)

Admittedly, the external factors (repeated climatic disasters, endemic famine, drought, erratic evolution of the world market for raw materials, perpetuation of the legacy of the colonial era) weigh heavily. But internal factors explain even more firmly the failure of African economies: unsuitable economic policies, non-productive investments, training of an insufficient qualified workforce, neglected agricultural development, etc. Above all, lack of political determination.[[225]](#footnote-225)

Here, Zecchini mitigates and negates the role of former colonial power through the discursive device of Passivisation by stating that ‘western’ countries were ‘deemed responsible’ for difficulties in Africa. He does not attribute this statement to a particular person or group and therefore creates distance between the statement and the extent to which it may be true. Instead, Zecchini emphasises the role of African countries with regard to the problems in Africa. Drawing on stereotypes, he blames the problems in Africa on the African failure to organise politically. Zecchini writes about the ‘“congenital” immobility of the Organization of African Unity’,[[226]](#footnote-226) suggesting that its lack of action is innate and therefore unchangeable. Furthermore, Zecchini goes on to dismiss pan-Africanism and the idea of African unity as a ‘farce’[[227]](#footnote-227) He believes that African unity holds ‘little weight in the face of regional particularisms and selfishness, rivalries and political disputes’[[228]](#footnote-228). And despite arguing that particularisms in Africa cause difficulties and dismissing the idea of pan-Africanism, Zecchini, like the authors of the 1972 White Paper, does not differentiate between countries or people when discussing Africa throughout this article. It is also noteworthy that the Libyan leader was a proponent of pan-Africanism and therefore, *Le Monde*’s dismissal of pan-Africanism is also, indirectly, a dismissal of Gaddafi, contributing to a negative discursive construction. This follows Nkrumah’s (1965) argument, discussed in Chapter 1, in which he states that opponents to imperialism are often delegitimised in the ‘western’ news media, contributing to the justification of neocolonial practices.

In contrast to his vision of Africa as a disorganised continent, the ‘West’ is constructed as a united whole. Zecchini refers to ‘les Occidentaux’ (the Westerners) with a capital ‘O’, which is not usually used for proper nouns in French. This has the effect of unifying people from ‘Western’ countries as a coherent mass (despite the existence of divisions). This creates an identity for the ‘West’ as a unified whole in contrast to a disorganised ‘other’ which is less advanced, unable to manage itself, and reliant on ‘the West’. Despite his argument that Africans should not rely on the ‘West’, Zecchini states that ‘external support’ will still be necessary in Africa because ‘Africa’ cannot manage alone and that European interference must continue: ‘Westerners, for their part, have admitted that the efforts undertaken by Africa must be accompanied by new external support to overcome a milestone, that which separates the management of poverty from investment’.[[229]](#footnote-229) This reflects the discursive device of Positive Self, Negative Other, in which the ‘West’ is portrayed as organised and advanced and Africa is portrayed as disorganised and divided. This position legitimises French military intervention and reflects a pro-interventionist stance, established in the policy documents, while negating the role of the French government in creating dependence and division in its former African colonies.

This reflects what Frith (2015, p. 213) describes as an 'imagined wholeness' which forms the discursive construction of French republican identity. Nolutshungu (1996) contextualises this argument: in the aftermath of World War II and decolonisation, unity was necessary in order to create a sense of French national identity and legitimise its military actions and decisions as part of the notion of French values. This discourse is also visible in the 1972 White Paper in which the idea of a ‘community’ and ‘cooperation’ are emphasised, reflecting to the desire of the French to keep the colonial empire alive through other means and in which Chad is discursively constructed as an extension of France, despite independence. Zecchini’s article discursively constructs this sense of unity in opposition to the disunity of ‘Africa’.

Overall, Zecchini’s article has two effects 1) it minimises the role of the former colonial powers in the current conditions in Africa; 2) it dismisses the idea of African unity and maintains the paternalistic idea of a necessity of ‘Western’ intervention. Ultimately, it justifies French military intervention in its former colonies. Once again, this description evokes a negative image of Africans as unable to govern themselves and politically backward. This is reminiscent of the 1972 White Paper on Defence which discursively constructs the relationship between France and Africa as one of dependence. It is reflective of the neocolonial relationship between Chad and France in which Chad is reliant on France to protect its territorial integrity and sovereignty, linking the existence of Chad as a state and its fate to France’s actions. The construction of Chad as a victim therefore runs parallel to Chad as inferior to France and once again re-establishes the coloniser-colonised relationship through the discourse of *Le Monde*.

#### The Discursive Construction of Chadian Opponents

In this section, I analyse the discursive construction of the Chadian opponents fighting against Habré. I argue that the articles in *Le Monde* discursively link these actors to the Libyan government and military, thereby discursively constructing them both as an enemy of French and Chadian governmental forces and as a victim of the Libyan forces. Firstly, *Le Monde* discursively links the actions of the GUNT, the interim government of national unity, to Libyan aggression. Although the GUNT was established before Libyan occupation, in 1979, with Oueddei as its leader, they are not seen as a group in their own right but are instead discursively linked to the Libyan government. Oueddei and the GUNT are discussed in relation to Libya through the qualifying phrases ‘supported’[[230]](#footnote-230) or ‘equipped’[[231]](#footnote-231) ‘by Libya’[[232]](#footnote-232) (Zecchini, 03/04/1986; Le Monde, 10/03/1986; Le Monde, 15/02/1986). This demonstrates the extent to which *Le Monde* discursively constructs the GUNT in relation to Libya and not as a legitimate force of opposition against Habré’s government. This discursively justifies French military intervention against the GUNT because it qualifies the conflict as external rather than internal aggression. By discursively linking the GUNT to the Libyan enemy, the former is discursively constructed as an external enemy or ‘rebel’ as opposed to internal ‘opposition’. This also removes agency from Chadians who are fighting against Habré and perpetuates the idea that Chadians, even the ‘rebels’, need assistance from, and are dependent upon, external powers in order to operate.

Secondly, there are examples of *Le Monde* portraying the Chadians who fight against the Chadian government as victims of Libyan aggression. They are described as having been forced to fight for Libya either through desperation: ‘Poor devils without jobs, without hope, some of whom have had to, at one point or another, abandon their wives and children in the village to look for work’[[233]](#footnote-233) (Zecchini, Le Monde, 25/02/1986)’; or through physical force: ‘Their individual story becomes almost banal when hearing them, in turn, say that they were “forcibly conscripted” into the ranks of the troops of the “lunatic of Sirte”, Colonel Gaddafi’[[234]](#footnote-234) (Zecchini, Le Monde, 25/02/1986). In these passages, Zecchini breaks from his informative tone and uses highly descriptive terms to portray the Chadians fighting for Libya. He invites the reader to sympathise with these Chadian soldiers, adopting the rhetorical device of *pathos*. Once again, agency is removed from Chadian actors and *Le Monde* presents a negative image of ‘poor’ Africans to its French readers. Even when they are not portrayed as victims of Libyan forces, they appear weak nonetheless: whereas Libyan forces are described as ‘installed inside a sort of basin’[[235]](#footnote-235) while under attack, ‘the supporters of Mr. Goukouni Oueddei’[[236]](#footnote-236) are described as having ‘taken refuge on the surrounding heights’.[[237]](#footnote-237) Therefore, whereas the Libyans appear to have deliberately installed themselves in a certain position, the image of the GUNT forces as taking ‘refuge’ makes them appear as victims of an attack.

The negative image of Chadians and Africans enforces a notion of the inferiority of Africans in comparison to the French who, as we will discuss now, are portrayed as positive saviours. This is a neocolonial narrative, which draws on the work of Fanon (1952), whose analysis of the assertion of the inferiority of colonised people and superiority of colonisers (discussed in Chapter 1), highlights the notion of the victimisation of Africans as in need of assistance and the valorisation of dominant powers as assisters. Victimisation of Chadians is a necessary part of the frame of the ‘technical military assistance’ because there needs to be a victim in order to discursively justify the military intervention based on ‘assistance’. This is how Operation Epervier was discursively justified in *Le Monde*, reinforcing the narrative of the French government discussed in Chapter 2, thereby contributing to the longevity of French military presence on the African continent. This forms one of the main arguments of this thesis.

#### The Discursive Construction of the French Government and Military

So far, I have identified that within the ‘assistance’ aspect of the ‘technical military assistance’ frame, *Le Monde* discursively constructed a victim, Chad. In this section, I demonstrate how it discursively constructs an ‘assister’ or ‘saviour’, the French military, whose role it is to protect the victim against the enemy. Assisting the Chadian government and military is the reason behind the intervention according to *Le Monde*. I demonstrate that according to *Le Monde* and its sources, Operation Epervier is discursively constructed as a defensive operation and its ultimate aim is to assist the Chadian government in the ‘reconquest’ of the Chadian territory lost to Libya and that the French military is motivated by a sense of ‘duty’ in Chad.

##### Reconquest

The first way in which *Le Monde* frames the role of the French military in Chad is through the topos of Reconquest, the argument that the French military must assist the Chadian military in re-establishing Chad’s territorial integrity. This reflects the official aim of Operation Epervier, which was to expel occupying Libyan forces from the Aouzou Strip in northern Chad, thus re-establishing its sovereignty and borders. Expelling the Libyan military from the Aouzou strip is frequently referred to by *Le Monde*’s journalists and sources as the ‘reconquest’ of Chad. Emphasis on the aim of ‘reconquest’ became particularly stark during the second period of fighting, as the conflict was drawing to a close. The term ‘reconquest’[[238]](#footnote-238) or ‘reconquer’[[239]](#footnote-239) appears twice in the first period of fighting and 49 times in the period in between fighting, the second period of fighting and the aftermath of fighting. ‘Reconquest’ and ‘reconquer’ appear a total of 51 times in *Le Monde*’s reporting throughout the conflict. An example of the use of the term ‘reconquest’ is François Mitterrand’s quote before the partial redeployment of Operation Epervier in which he states, ‘there will be no French military intervention in Chad, but there will undoubtedly be support from France to enable Chad to have the means to reconquer its integrity’[[240]](#footnote-240) (Le Monde, 13/11/1986). Other examples appear below,

‘The Minister of Defense, Mr. André Giraud, spoke on Sunday August 31 of the possibility of French assistance for the reconquest of northern Chad.’[[241]](#footnote-241) (Le Monde, 02/09/1986)

‘It remains to be seen whether this aid will be enough for him to succeed in this reconquest of the north of his territory, which he will probably never give up.’[[242]](#footnote-242) (Le Monde, 19/12/1986)

‘The reconquest of Faya Largeau seems only to be a matter of days away’.[[243]](#footnote-243) (Le Monde, 29/03/1987)

Although the ‘reconquest’ of Chad is positioned within Operation Epervier’s aims of protecting and re-establishing Chadian sovereignty, it is hard to ignore the connotations that the idea of a ‘reconquest’ carries within the context of a French military intervention in Chad. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, the French government conquered Chad in the 1800s with its military before establishing Chad as a formal colony of France. Therefore, although the aim of Operation Epervier was to restore sovereignty to Chad, it is hard to avoid the idea that French military presence itself does not represent a reconquering of Chad in the colonial sense. This elicits the question of why *Le Monde* discursively qualifies Libyan military presence as ‘imperialist’, as we shall see below, but French military presence as ‘assistance’. Moreover, the topos of Reconquest as an argument to restore sovereignty to Chad is reminiscent of the 1972 White Paper’s assertion that it is the duty of the French state to guarantee the sovereignty of its former colonies, thereby legitimising French military presence in its former colonies, including Chad.

#### Duty and Burden

The second way in which *Le Monde* constructs French military assistance is through the topoi of Duty and Burden. Firstly, the topos of Duty is the argument that the French government has a duty towards Chad because it is an ‘ally’ or a ‘friend’ in need of assistance. I demonstrate that in *Le Monde*, it is argued that this friendship is based on ‘historic links’ between the two countries. Secondly, through the topos of Burden, I argue that the French military’s reluctant involvement constitutes a burden on the French state.

Firstly, the Chadian state is portrayed as an ally of France and therefore is a country that needs to be protected by the French state. Chad is referred to by the sources as one of the ‘Francophone allies of black Africa’[[244]](#footnote-244) (Pomonti, Le Monde, 29/09/1986), France’s ‘Chadian ally’[[245]](#footnote-245) (Le Monde, 03/01/1987) and one of France’s ‘best African friends’[[246]](#footnote-246) (Guérivière, Le Monde, 27/09/1986), reinforcing the friendship between the nations of France. Because of this allyship, *Le Monde* discusses ‘the duties’ (Le Monde, 03/01/1987) of the French government towards the Chadian government. The article states, ‘the French government - if it wants to continue to appear to support its "Chadian ally" - has to be led to recognise that its duties towards N'Djamena cannot be limited to ensuring the security of a portion of Chadian territory’ (Le Monde, 03/01/1987).[[247]](#footnote-247) This ‘duty’ towards allies reflects the notion of ‘friendship’, which is a key part of the relationship of ‘cooperation’ between France and its former colonies, as I discussed in Chapter 1. Foccart's clientelist network, one of the pillars of the France-Africa relationship described by *Françafrique* theorists in Chapter 1, was based on the notion of ‘friendly regimes’.[[248]](#footnote-248) Furthermore, as we saw in Chapter 2, the idea of ‘friendship’ featured heavily in the language of French presidents: de Gaulle called the relationship between France and Africa 'friendly cooperation' (in Bossuat, 2003, p. 433), Mitterrand referred to 'African friends' in his press conference speech in Lomé (1986, para 11) and at the 13th France-Africa Summit in Lomé (1986c). This demonstrates the proximity in language between the press and the policy documents, which discursively legitimises French military involvement in Chad based on a notion of a ‘duty’ towards ‘friends’.

Secondly, this ‘friendship’ is linked to the ‘historic ties’ that link the French state to the Chadian state and that therefore appear to necessitate French military intervention in Chad. One *Le Monde* article states that the historical ties to Chad ‘impose’ French military intervention: ‘the intervention of its army in Chad, which its historical ties to Africa impose on it [[249]](#footnote-249) (Le Monde, 19/12/1986). This quote suggests that France’s historic links with Africa ‘impose’ a responsibility on France to be involved in Chad. This recalls the language of the 1972 White Paper on Defence which states, ‘we are linked both by history and by our present commitments’ (p. 3). Once again, this demonstrates the similarities in the discourse of the press and the discourse of the French officials.

Finally, there is an argument in *Le Monde* that Chad is a burden for the French state. Zecchini (24/03/1986) describes the context of the conflict in Chad as a ‘problem’ with which every president of the French Fifth Republic has had to deal. He writes, ‘successive governments of the Fifth Republic have been confronted with the "Chadian problem", without a lasting solution ever coming to light’.[[250]](#footnote-250) He uses the word ‘inherited’[[251]](#footnote-251) to describe the ‘problem’. Use of the word ‘inherited’ evokes the past relationship between France and Chad, in other words, the colonial relationship. Much like the term ‘congenital’ used to describe the problems of African politics, ‘inherited’ makes the situation in Chad seem inevitable, regardless of the political and diplomatic position of the French president in charge. In contrast to the ‘inherited’ and essentialised ‘problem’ of Africa is the equivalent ‘natural’ solution, France. French presence in Chad is portrayed as natural and therefore unquestioned: ‘France naturally maintains Operation “Epervier” and even strengthens it slightly so as to ensure the mission entrusted to it’[[252]](#footnote-252) (Le Monde, 08/06/1986). Another similar argument is made by Pomonti, ‘It is normal for France to defend this country in its sovereignty’[[253]](#footnote-253) (Jean-Claude Pomonti, Le Monde, 29/09/1986). This reflects the extent to which there was a process of naturalisation or normalisation taking place in *Le Monde* with regard to French military interventionism in Chad, discussed in Chapter 1. The presence of French troops in Chad is discursively qualified as natural and a solution to the problems in Chad.

The discussion of a relationship between France and Chad based on ‘historic links’ has three consequences. Firstly, by omitting the word ‘colonial’ in favour of ‘historic’, it erases the negative colonial relationship which existed between France and Chad. This is an example of what Frith (2015) describes as the ability of the French state, or in this case, the French press, to ‘revise and rewrite’ the narrative of its relationship with its former colonies (p. 218). Consequently redefining it as one of ‘cooperation’ and French ‘assistance’ to Chad, while omitting its negative aspects. Secondly, it confines the colonial relationship in the past. This has the effect of decontextualising the situation in Chad at the time, which, through French involvement, was under the political influence of France. It also negates the negative involvement of the French government and military during the colonial period. The fact that *Le Monde* frames the relationship as ‘technical military assistance’ reflects the omission of the neocolonial aspects of the intervention. Finally, it naturalises French military presence in Chad by suggesting that the relationship between the two countries is inevitable.

Just as Chadians are discursively constructed as victims, here, we have seen that French actors are discursively constructed in *Le Monde* as ‘assisters’ or saviours of those Chadian victims. This happens through the valorisation of French actors, in contrast to the vicitimisation of Chadian actors, discursively justifying Operation Epervier, and neocolonial practices in France’s former colonies.

#### The Discursive Construction of the Libyan Government and Military

In this final analytical section, I look at the discursive construction of the Libyan government and military, which heavily focuses on the character of Libyan leader, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. I argue that by discursively delegitimising Gaddafi, *Le Monde* in turn discursively legitimises Operation Epervier’s intervention in Chad to fight Libya.

*Le Monde* discursively constructs Gaddafi’s Libya as an ‘imperialist’ presence in Chad.[[254]](#footnote-254) This is evident in the way in which the Libyan governments actions in Chad are described in *Le Monde* as ‘besieging’[[255]](#footnote-255) (Médecins sans frontières (MSF) in Le Monde, 01/01/1987); a ‘conquest;’[[256]](#footnote-256) (Le Monde, 29/03/1987); ‘aggression and invasion’[[257]](#footnote-257) (MSF, Le Monde, 01/01/1987); ‘expansionist’[[258]](#footnote-258) (Le Monde, 19/12/1986). By discursively constructing Libya’s presence in Chad as part of an expansionist policy and by presenting their presence in Chad as an occupation, *Le Monde* contrasts Libya’s presence in Chad with France’s presence in Chad, which is instead as an ally, and as a force of assistance and defence. *Le Monde* claims that France wants its ‘Arab partners’ to see the difference between Libya and France,

France now considers that its Arab partners are able to differentiate between its policy in the Near East and the intervention of its army in Chad, which its historical ties to Africa impose on it and the behaviour of Colonel Gaddafi.[[259]](#footnote-259) (Le Monde, 19/12/1986).

In this passage, *Le Monde* emphasises the difference between Libyan and French relations with ‘Africa’. The author uses Positive Self, Negative Other to juxtapose the ‘historical ties’ of France and ‘Africa’, which appear positive, to the ‘behaviour’ of Colonel Gaddafi, which appears negative. Furthermore, another article claims, ‘it remains to be seen what consequences France and the countries of black Africa are ready to draw which, while deploring Libyan imperialism, hesitate to publicly endorse a response from the former colonial power’[[260]](#footnote-260) (Le Monde, 08/02/1987). This suggests that Libya is an imperial power and although ‘African’ countries may not wish to deal with a ‘former colonial power’, the article contrasts Libya’s present actions and France’s *past* actions. Therefore, it does not consider France’s presence in Africa post-independence as a continuation of colonial practices, but Libya’s presence is seen as imperialist.

It is also interesting to note the language used to talk about Libya in relation to ‘Africa’. Although Libya itself is an African country, it appears in *Le Monde* as an external force. This is evident again through use of the phrase ‘the countries of black Africa’ in contrast to Libya. The discursive separation between Libya and ‘black Africa’ reflects Martin’s (1985) ‘semantic balkanisation’, discussed in Chapter 1: *Le Monde*’s journalists divide the African continent in order to justify the involvement of the French state in Chad.

Gaddafi, on the other hand, suggests that it is the French military’s presence in Chad that is colonial, as we have seen. In an interview with *Le Monde* (06/02/1987), he questions the legal basis of French military presence in Chad by challenging the existence of an agreement which would allow the intervention: ‘there are neither defence agreements nor a security treaty between France and Chad allowing French troops to be present in this country; and I challenge the French government to publish a document to this effect’[[261]](#footnote-261) As we saw above, he dismisses Habré as ‘the leader of a gang’[[262]](#footnote-262) rather than a legitimate president and dismisses the idea that there is a government at all in Chad: ‘There is no government in N'Djamena, but a French army occupying N'Djamena’.[[263]](#footnote-263) He labels French military presence in Chad as ‘colonial’.

As mentioned above, Gaddafi is delegitimised as a source in *Le Monde*. This is because he is discursively qualified as 1) untrustworthy, 2) unreasonable and 3) unserious. Firstly, the untrustworthiness of Gaddafi in the context of Operation Epervier is rooted in his deception of Mitterrand in November 1984, when both leaders met in Crete and agreed to withdraw their troops from Chad during French military Operation Manta. However, when it became apparent that Libyan troops were still present in the country, this caused great embarrassment to Mitterrand’s government and contributed to the failure of Operation Manta. Therefore, *Le Monde* describes Gaddafi as someone who has ‘already repeatedly abused France’s good faith’[[264]](#footnote-264) (Le Monde, 15/02/1986) and who did not ‘keep his word’[[265]](#footnote-265) (Zecchini, 24/03/1986). This suggests that Gaddafi is not someone who can be trusted to act in good faith.

Secondly, *Le Monde* discursively qualifies Gaddafi as unreasonable. *Le Monde* quotes the French Socialist Deputy Alain Vivien who suggests that ‘everything needs to be done to make Colonel Gaddafi see reason’.[[266]](#footnote-266) He is also described as ‘off the rails’[[267]](#footnote-267) by the French government (Le Monde, 07/01/1987), having ‘exceeded the limits’[[268]](#footnote-268) (Le Monde, 08/01/1987) and reportedly nicknamed ‘the lunatic of Sirte’[[269]](#footnote-269) in N’Djamena (Zecchini, 25/02/1986). These descriptions construct Gaddafi as unreasonable and excessive and therefore, not a worthy source of information or opinion.

Thirdly, Gaddafi is portrayed as disinterested in the conflict and unserious. In an interview with Gaddafi, the *Le Monde* journalists describe the Libyan leader as he plays games in the barracks: ‘This Wednesday, 4 February, at the end of the afternoon, the colonel had in principle decided to relax. After a game of football, he wished to play billiards in the cafeteria of a barracks of the revolutionary committees.’[[270]](#footnote-270) His engagement in games rather than war suggests the lack of seriousness of Gaddafi as a wartime leader. The contrast between the games and the ‘revolutionary committees’ creates a comical tableau. Moreover, the article adopts a sarcastic tone, claiming that Gaddafi gave the two journalists ‘an hour-long lesson in Chadian geopolitics’,[[271]](#footnote-271) described as his ‘theses’ on the conflict. Once again, Gaddafi’s seriousness about the conflict is questioned in the article as it suggests that the war is not a permanent concern but something he is only showing concern about that day: ‘it is today, it seems, his main concern’.[[272]](#footnote-272) Therefore, when *Le Monde* portrays Gaddafi as the imperialist force, it offers an argument against his influence and presence in Chad in favour of France’s. *Le Monde* does not consider the contradiction in its attitude towards French and Libyan military presence: if military presence is imperialist then why is French military presence not so? This contradiction has the effect of deflecting the accusations of colonialism that Gaddafi lays on France back towards Libya.

Overall, *Le Monde* discursively delegitimises a prominent voice, that of Gaddafi, which speaks out against Operation Epervier. This could be framed as an anti-imperialist position as it opposes French military presence on Chadian soil, but instead, *Le Monde* delegitimises Gaddafi and the Libyan state as imperialist. As outlined by Nkrumah (1965) and discussed in Chapter 2, one of the main aspects of the neocolonial discourse in the ‘western’ news media is to delegitimise anti-imperialist actors. By removing legitimacy from alternative voices *Le Monde* strengthens the frame of ‘technical military assistance’, in which the Chadian state is the victim, the Libyan state is the aggressor and the French state is the assister. It does this by omitting alternative frames, thereby strengthening and normalising the dominant frame, which is in line with the French military’s aims: ‘technical military assistance’. Therefore the delegitimisation of Gaddafi in turn legitimises Operation Epevier’s aim in Chad, reinforcing French neocolonial presence on the African continent.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I argued that *Le Monde* frames Operation Epervier as a ‘technical military assistance’ operation. This frame reinforces the discourse of the policy documents, explored in Chapter 2, firstly, by rooting the operation within the legal framework of the 1976 Technical Military Cooperation agreement and reinforcing the official justifications for military cooperation (technical assistance). Secondly, by discursively constructing the French actors as assisters or saviours in opposition to Libyan actors as aggressors and Chadian actors as victims. Moreover, by framing the operation as 'technical military assistance', *Le Monde* focuses on the role of the French military and omits the motivations of the opponents of Habré. By highlighting only technical aspects of the operation, *Le Monde*’s journalists obscure the economic, political and geostrategic benefits of the conflict to France, which essentially involve holding onto France’s sphere of influence in western and central Africa through the maintenance of military bases in Chad. The way in which Operation Epervier is framed in *Le Monde* is achieved in three ways: 1) the victimisation of Chadian actors as in need of assistance, 2) the legitimisation and valorisation of French actors as saviours, and 3) the delegitimisation and demonisation of the opposition as the enemy.

The ‘technical military assistance’ frame reinforces the power relations between France and Chad as one of dominance in which France is superior and Chad is inferior and dependent on French assistance. This re-establishes and reinforces neocolonial practices in the form of technical military cooperation. Because of its status as a mainstream media organisation, *Le Monde* also co-produces and reinforces the discourse of the government and contributes to the creation of a dominant pro-interventionist narrative. In the next chapter, I analyse how *Le Monde*, *Libération* and *Le Figaro* framed Operation Epervier in 2008-2009, in the aftermath of the Cold War.

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# Chapter 4: Framing Operation Epervier and EUFOR in *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *Libération*, 2008-2009

The aim of this chapter is to explore how the mainstream French press framed Operation Epervier and the EU force’s involvement in Chad during a conflict between Chad and Sudan (2008-2009) through the discursive construction of the actors who played a role within it. I analyse news articles published in *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *Libération* on French military intervention with Operation Epervier and the multilateral *EUFOR Tchad/RCA* operation between February 2008 and March 2009. The operation took place in Chad as part of an ongoing conflict between Chad and Sudan.

Following the previous chapter, in which I looked at the launch of Operation Epervier in Chad during a conflict with Libya (1986-7), this chapter looks at the continuation of Operation Epervier which overlapped with multilateral European Union (EU) force’s EUFOR operation (2008-2009). I explore the similarities and differences between the three news outlets as well as the extent to which the discourse developed in the news articles reproduced that of the French government, analysed in Chapter 2. In order to do this, I use elements of framing analysis and CDA-DHA to analyse 148 articles published in *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *Libération* between February 2008 and March 2009. I argue that the focus of the mainstream French press on elite actors, and the way in which the news outlets construct these actors, discursively legitimised French military involvement in Chad and contributed to the shaping of French neocolonial practices in Africa. I also argue that there exists a common or ‘transmediatic’ narrative across the news outlets that reproduces the official governmental discourse, thereby reinforcing the dominance of this narrative.

In this chapter, I address four questions: 1) *How did* Le Monde, Libération *and* Le Figaro *frame Operation Epervier and EUFOR?* 2) *To what extent did this frame reproduce the discourse of the official policy documents seen in Chapter 2?* 3) *To what extent did the frame discursively justify neocolonial practices? 4) How did the framing of these events differ across the three newspapers?* In order to answer these questions, I once again combine framing analysis with Critical Discourse Analysis - Discourse Historical Approach (CDA-DHA), which I outlined in Chapter 1. First, I analyse the context and secondary literature on the topic of French military intervention in Chad during the conflict in Sudan (2008-2009). I describe the sources, which are made up of news articles published in the three mainstream French newspapers. I then discuss the dominant frame of ‘multilateral security’ and the discursive devices which form the constituent parts of this frame. Subsequently, I analyse the discursive construction of the three main actors which appear across the newspapers: the Chadian state, the Chadian ‘rebels’ and Sudanese state, and the French state. Throughout the chapter I compare the language of the three newspapers and link this language to that of the French foreign policy documents, published after 1990, discussed in Chapter 2.

## Context

The events discussed in this chapter took place in the aftermath of the Cold War and the subsequent reforms to the French policy of ‘cooperation’, which were formalised in 1998, as well as global changes to the international norm, which moved from non-interventionism to the Right to Protect (R2P), adopted by the UN in 2005 (discussed in Chapter 2). I analyse the historical context in relation to French foreign policy approaches during this period. As I explored in Chapter 2, French foreign policy in the aftermath of the Cold War, outlined primarily in the 1994 White Paper on Defence, responded to a preoccupation with ‘insecurity’ and ‘instability’ through the new policies of the ‘multilateralisation’ of French military interventions and the ‘democratisation’ of France’s African allies.

As well as positioning the events of the conflict within the context of the French foreign policy approaches discussed in Chapter 2, it is useful to understand the economic context of this period as a motivation for the French government’s interest in Chad. Oil exploitation in Chad, beginning in 2003, reflected French governmental and business interests in the lead-up to this conflict. The French state benefited economically from natural resources in central Africa such as uranium in Chad’s neighbouring countries, Central African Republic and Niger, through the operations of French companies Areva and Electricité de France (EDF). Chapter 2 showed the extent to which access to these resources had been part of French ‘cooperation’ with its former colonies since 1960. The French government was able to maintain influence in this region through its military presence, primarily through its military bases in Chad. Operation Epervier’s longevity (1986-2014) ensured the presence of a permanent military base in N’Djamena, which the French military was able to use as a launch pad for its operations in Chad’s neighbouring countries in west and central Africa. Operation Epervier was therefore vital to French influence in the region.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Operation Epervier was launched in 1986 in order to expel Libyan troops occupying northern Chad. The operation was successful in its aims and the conflict came to an end in 1987. However, Operation Epervier continued in Chad to consolidate French military bases. In 1996 Epervier troops mobilised to oversee the election of Chadian military leader Idriss Déby, who had taken power after a coup d’état in 1990. This coup had implications for the relationship between Chad and its eastern neighbour, Sudan, with which it shares a border, as well as an ethnic community, the Zaghawas. When Idriss Déby, who was of Zaghawa ethnic descent, carried out a coup against then Chadian President Hissène Habré's government in 1990, the rebellion included Zaghawa people from both Chad and Sudan. Déby's coup was supported by the government of Sudan as well as the governments of France and Libya (Debos, 2016, p. 50). Déby was an important ally for the French government who had chosen not to intervene to protect Habré during Déby’s coup in 1990. At the time, Habré was in the process of making deals with US company Esso regarding the discovery of oil in Chad (Ekobena, 2008). Déby, on the other hand, had promised to involve French oil company ELF (Ekobena, 2008). After his election, a pipeline project was drawn up to export oil from Chad via Cameroon to the coast.[[273]](#footnote-273) Throughout his presidency Déby continued to be an ally of the French government. In 2008, for example, Déby agreed to free members of French NGO, *Arche de Zoé*, imprisoned in Chad for child abduction.[[274]](#footnote-274) At the same time, French President Nicolas Sarkozy failed to condemn the fact that two of Déby’s political opponents had gone missing. The relationship had benefits for both sides.

Sudan was formerly administered by British colonialists, becoming independent in 1956. Regarding the relationship between France and Sudan, both French governmental and business organisations operated in the country during this period. French multinational energy company Total established its presence in Sudan in 2008, during the period under discussion in this chapter, in relation to oil extraction. In 2006, the French government became involved in gold mining in Sudan through state-owned company Areva. Regarding the relationship between Chad and Sudan, *Survie* (survie.org, 1996) offers the following description,

The Chad-Sudanese border is largely theoretical. The main Sudanese armed force, the Republican Guard, is made up of Zaghawa people whose home ground disregards this recent demarcation. Many Sudanese people from Darfur, who are English-speaking and Muslim, will settle in the predominantly Christian south-west of Chad - where the spectre of "settler colonisation" is already being raised. In both countries, the sorcerer's apprentices and the factions in power contrive to tie together religious and racial tensions, in order to better take advantage of them. The two neighbours still share the economic crisis, the decay of the state, the practice of torture... And, now, the grand manoeuvers of the French clans.[[275]](#footnote-275) (para 2)

This description demonstrates the interconnectedness of the two countries as well as French involvement in both, helping us to understand the conflict involving the three countries during this period. This was a period of conflict for both Chad and Sudan. In Sudan, a conflict in Darfur had broken out as the result of a civil war, with multiple and overlapping sides such as the Sudanese Liberation Movement and the Justice and Equality Movement. Hoile (2007) describes it as 'typical’[[276]](#footnote-276) of north-west Africa (p. 81). According to Fontrier (2007), the conflict was rooted in 'old quarrels',[[277]](#footnote-277) exacerbated by the presence of oil (p. 406). Fontrier (2007) describes how the conflict 'spill[ed] over'[[278]](#footnote-278) into Chad due to fleeing refugees. But in fact, the Chadian government was already involved as Déby was aided by Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir in the 1990 coup, when Déby seized power. However, as mentioned above, Déby was also bound to the Zaghawa ethnic group, of which he was a part, with communities in both Chad and Sudan, around the border.

The conflict between Chad and Sudan became heightened in 2005 when a constitutional referendum was held, following which Déby was permitted to stand for a third term. Chadian voters largely boycotted the election (Debos, 2016, p. 54). There was political and popular discontent because Chadian people had not benefited from the wealth created by oil extraction in Chad, which had begun in 2003 (Debos, 2016, p. 54). These factors, as well as the ‘regional context’ of continuous proxy wars between Chad and Sudan resulted in a period of conflict for Chad between 2005 and 2009 (Debos, 2016, p. 54). There were two significant attacks on N'Djamena during this period by the opponents of the Chadian government: the first in 2006 and the second in 2008. In April 2006, Epervier troops intervened to support Chadian troops fighting on the side of Déby against attack by opposing forces. Déby was subsequently re-elected as president of Chad in May 2006 with 77.53% of the vote (Tchadinfos.com, 2021, para 4). Most of the opposition parties boycotted the election, which they deemed an 'electoral masquerade'[[279]](#footnote-279) (Survie, 2006, para 1). Déby's opponents during the presidential election had been ministers in his own government (Tchadinfos.com, 2021).

Regarding reaction to the conflict in Darfur, Hoile (2007) argues that the conflict was used as a pretext by the US administration under President George W. Bush to appeal to its 'anti-Muslim and anti-Sudanese electorate' by labelling it a 'genocide' (p. 81). It was therefore heavily mediatised in the US and there were efforts in multiple countries to stop the ‘crisis’. In December 2006, the Secretary General of the UN, Ban-Ki Moon proposed a 6,000-10,000 strong force to intervene in Chad to contain this ‘crisis’. Two different forces were launched by the UN. The first was MINURCAT, a UN police force. The second was EUFOR, an EU force charged with protecting refugee camps, securitising border zones and protecting the MINURCAT personnel. UN Security Council Resolution 1778 of 25 September 2007 enabled the French government to propose the launch of the 3,700 strong EU force in Chad using ‘all necessary measures’ (United Nations Security Council, 2007). Austria, Belgium, Finland, Ireland, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Slovenia, Spain, Albania, Croatia, Russia provided 1539 troops at fully operational capacity and France provided 1775 troops (Seibert, 2010). France therefore represented more than half of the EU forces.

Fighting took place again in N’Djamena in February 2008 and in Goz Beida, eastern Chad, in June 2008, between the Chadian government forces and its opponents, before EUFOR was fully operational. The opponents consisted of the *Union des forces pour la démocratie et le développement* (UFDD), led by Mahamat Nouri, a former member of Déby's government; the *Rassemblement des forces pour le changement* (RFC), led by Timane Erdimi, Déby's nephew - Timane had been the director of *Cotonchad*, the cotton company and his twin brother, Tom had been head of the Chadian oil project (Tubiana, 2008); The *UFDD-Fondamentale* (UFDD-F), formed by dissident UFDD members and led by Abdelwahid Aboud (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 2008). Finally, the *Alliance nationale* was a grouping of various rebels. According to Tubiana (2008) it was led by Mahamat Nouri and backed by the Sudanese government. In short, there were many different opposition groups, governments and international and intergovernmental actors involved in the conflict. The situation in Chad during this conflict was very complex.

There is evidence that Operation Epervier troops took part in active fighting in February 2008, although this is denied by the French government. Epervier troops also assisted EUFOR throughout the latter’s operation. EUFOR’s mission was replaced in March 2009 with MINURCAT. It is unclear what EUFOR achieved during its deployment. However, Granvaud (2009) argues that its presence led to the survival of Déby’s regime. During this conflict, French military intervention was both unilateral with Epervier forces and multilateral with EUFOR, with crossover between the two operations. The 1994 White Paper on Defence discussed in Chapter 2, was still in force when EUFOR was launched.[[280]](#footnote-280) Although EUFOR was not officially employed under the R2P framework, Bono (2012, p. 128) argues that its launch was influenced by the new norms, which she argues can be traced to ‘the protective authority exercised by international actors in the decolonised world since 1960’. The French military intervention in Chad with Operation Epervier during this period was legally authorised through the 1976 Technical Military Cooperation Agreement, discussed in Chapter 2. Debos (2016, p. 53) argues that the agreement was ‘interpreted very broadly’ in order to be applied and in effect, Epervier troops engaged in activities that went beyond ‘technical military cooperation’ such as protecting the airport, supplying ammunition from Libya and planning a logistical counter-offensive against the rebels. EUFOR on the other hand had a mandate from the UN. Overall, the involvement of the French military in Chad during this period was far-reaching and not always limited within the confines of the agreement.

The significance of this conflict is the extent to which it demonstrates the French foreign policy of multilateralisation in practice, due to the multilateral nature of the EUFOR operation. As discussed in Chapter 2, multilateralisation allowed the French government to share the responsibility or burden[[281]](#footnote-281) of military involvement with other countries and to position their aims within a larger objective, thereby positioning their military presence in Chad within a larger international framework. In this chapter, I demonstrate how the preoccupation with security and the policy position of democratisation in Africa in the discourse of French foreign policy, discussed in Chapter 2, come to bear on the framing of Operation Epervier in the French press. This allows us to trace the changes and identify the continuities in French foreign policy 22 years into the launch of Operation Epervier and to trace the development of the discourse of the press in its reporting of these events, following the reforms to the policy cooperation.

## Literature

The works of French political scientist Marielle Debos (2016), French researcher and NGO worker, Jérôme Tubiana (2008; 2011) and *Survie* member, Raphaël Granvaud (2009) are useful in providing accounts of the events of the conflict and the role of France within it specifically. Ayangafac (2009) and Seibert’s (2010) reports on the conflict also enable us to understand the events and actors involved. Fontrier (2007) and Hoile (2008) have written about the ‘Darfur crisis’, which forms part of the conflict involving Chad and France, contributing to the historical analysis of the conflict. Houénou (2021) has written about the conflict within the context of the cooperation agreements.

Regarding literature on the French news coverage of the conflict, Robinet (2016) and Rolley (2009) offer analyses. French journalist Sonia Rolley (2009) recounts the difficulties she faced as a journalist in Chad during this period such as censorship, safety, accessing sources and low pay. Rolley's book gives us insight into some of the journalistic practices that informed the articles published in mainstream newspapers during this period, through her personal accounts. As we shall see, this is useful in helping us to understand the lack of clarity and limited information in the news articles published by the mainstream French press during this conflict. Robinet (2016, p. 174) briefly analyses French mainstream news media (TV, press and radio) reporting of the conflict using content analysis. He argues that the narrative in the French mainstream news media on France’s role in the conflict with Chad and Sudan in 2008 remained ‘suspended, unfinished and incomplete’.[[282]](#footnote-282) Robinet (2016, p. 174) states that there were no 'dominant transmediatic narratives' (récits transmediatiques dominants’) throughout this period of reporting in the French news media. Like Robinet (2016), I found that the mainstream press’s reporting of the conflict was ‘incomplete’, as I discuss below. However, unlike Robinet, my qualitative and quantitative analysis of 148 articles published in *Le Monde, Le Figaro* and *Libération* finds the existence of patterns and a dominant frame of ‘multilateral security’, explored throughout this chapter.

Charbonneau (2008) has written extensively on French security policy and offers us valuable insights that can be applied within the context of this conflict and the news media discourses surrounding it. Charbonneau (2008) highlights the depoliticisation and dehistoricisation that tends to occur in analyses of France's foreign policy in Africa, he writes,

this theoretical and practical (and hence political) separation of security from the socioeconomic upholds the state as the central unit of analysis and of the practice of security, and thus loads the dice in favour of the status quo – in favour of French hegemony (p. 2).

Like Charbonneau, Debos (2016) discusses the depoliticisation of discourses on conflicts in Africa but in the context of the media. Debos (2016, p. 14) writes,

In the media, the dominant discourses on conflicts in Africa tend to depoliticise them. These conflicts are treated either as security issues (‘we need to take an interest in them because they pose a threat beyond the continent’) or as humanitarian issues (‘we need to take an interest in them so we can go and save the Africans’) – and much more rarely as primarily political issues.

This demonstrates the extent to which the discourses surrounding ‘security’ can be used by French governmental officials and the French press to discursively legitimise French military action on the African continent.

Notably, the ‘security’ discourse is deceptive because, although French security policy centres around the idea that 'the French state (to secure itself among other things) must help in “securing” African states from external and internal threats' (p. 2), in reality, this discourse works to retain power imbalances. Charbonneau (2008) states, 'French policy in Africa is more than anything else the result of transnational elites whose main objective is to maintain and to reproduce the social conditions that privilege them' (p. 2). Therefore, taking Debos' position further, Charbonneau highlights the extent to which the discourse of 'security' serves to obscure the benefits of action taken in its name for the French state.

There is a debate in the literature on the extent to which the French military involvement in Chad was a selfless intervention intended to assist the Chadian government against the destabilising ‘rebel’ and foreign forces and to assist the Sudanese refugees who had crossed the border into Chad, or whether indeed it was a neocolonial intervention, serving the economic and political interests of the French government and businesses. Debos (2016) argues that there were some benefits to the intervention for the Chadian populations, especially due to the collaboration of the French military with EUFOR as they contributed to 'facilitating the work of humanitarians’ (p. 56). Focusing on the benefits, or lack thereof for France, Fontrier (2007) argues that despite the ‘important geographic position of Chad’,[[283]](#footnote-283) the position of Europe in relation to economic rivalry in the region with China and the USA and ‘access to raw materials’[[284]](#footnote-284), ‘France itself has hardly any economic interests left’[[285]](#footnote-285) in Chad (p. 442). This suggests that French military involvement did not reflect neocolonial aims.

Mattelaer (2010) argues that French military intervention during this conflict was mutually beneficial to the Chadian and French governments. Mattelaer (2008) says that France was ‘in its national role as former colonial power’ (p. 4). He argues that through the ‘cooperation’ agreements France was able ‘to keep military bases in the territory, as well as have rights to transit and over-flight. In return France guaranteed external territorial security to its colonies and would consider all requests for assistance in the face of insurgencies and coup attempts’ (Mattelaer, 2008, p. 9). Mattelaer outlines a benefit to Chad as a result of French present, that of ‘territorial security’. However, he does not discuss the benefit for the French government in ‘keep[ing] military bases’ (2008, p. 9), which included economic, material and strategic benefits, as mentioned above. It is interesting that Mattelaer positions France in its role as the ‘former colonial power’ and even mistakenly refers to the signatories of the cooperation agreements as ‘colonies’ rather than former colonies. Overall, Mattelaer sees the conflict as a response to insecurity in Chad, overlooking the benefit to the French state or France’s role in potentially exacerbating insecurity in Chad, as Charbonneau (2008) points out.

Houénou (2021) is much more pessimistic about the positive aspects of the intervention for Chad, arguing that the French military involvement in Chad during this period benefited France. Houénou (2021) states that French involvement strengthened the undemocratic regime in Chad because when the rebels were close to overthrowing Déby, the French military offered aid and assistance to the Chadian army to prevent Déby’s opponents from marching on the capital, thereby protecting him and maintaining the status quo. This happened despite the fact that no defence agreement was in place between the two countries allowing for such an intervention. Houénou (2021) argues that the French government acted 'without restraint and without a clear motive’ to protect Déby.[[286]](#footnote-286) Similarly, Granvaud (2009) argues that the French military intervened during this period in order to keep Déby, an ally of France, in power. This would guarantee that the networks of French influence remained in place, as theorists of *Françafrique* (discussed in Chapter 1) point out is often the aim of French military involvement in its former colonies.

Following from Houénou (2021), Charbonneau (2008) and Granvaud’s (2009) positions, I argue that because of its economic, political and business interests in Chad, the maintenance of a French military base was vital to the French government’s self-interest there. Drawing on the theories of neocolonialism and *Françafrique*, I argue that the French government and military’s involvement in Chad during this period was motivated by economic and geostrategic benefits. The clue to this is in what the French government did after its military involvement during this conflict. After Epervier’s intervention in 2008-2009, its forces assisted Operation Sangaris in Central African Republic and Operation Serval in Mali. In 2014, Operation Epervier (as well as Serval) was replaced with Operation Barkhane. Barkhane operated in Chad, Mali, Niger, Mauritania and Burkina Faso (the Sahel region) and its base was in Chad. Its military presence in Chad, in the centre of Africa, enabled it access to Chad’s neighbouring countries, where it had vital economic interests. In early 2014, French government-owned company Areva had a dispute with the government of Niger regarding the renewal of Areva's licence to operate in Niger in relation to uranium mining. By summer 2014, the French military had set up a presence in the region. I argue that these factors are linked and that French military involvement in Chad is not a selfless act of assistance or aid. Epervier’s longevity enabled the French military to set up a permanent military presence in Chad, expanded through Barkhane to the wider central and western region. This reflects the practices embedded in a neocolonial ideology as described by neocolonial theory (discussed in Chapter 1), demonstrating that the project of the French state, in the aftermath of independence, was to maintain control in its former colonial sphere of influence, inscribing the colonial past into a neocolonial present.

In this chapter, I demonstrate that there were two threats to French presence in Chad during this conflict. Firstly, the threat to Chadian President Déby meant that the French government could lose an ally in central Africa. Secondly, the opponents of Déby’s government, whom the French forces were fighting against, opposed foreign military presence in Chad. Therefore, the French government’s military presence was threatened. I demonstrate that the discourse of the mainstream French press (*Le Monde*, *Libération* and *Le Figaro*) supported French military interventions by discursively legitimising the role of the French government, discursively delegitimising the role of the Chadian and Sudanese opponents of Déby.

## Description of Sources

As with Chapter 3, in this chapter I use the combined methodological framework of CDA-DHA and framing. I analyse 148 articles published in *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *Libération* on French military involvement in Chad between 2 February 2008 and 15 March 2009 (see Appendices 2-4). I used the key word search ‘EUFOR AND Tchad’ on the websites of the three newspapers (lemonde.fr, lefigaro.fr, liberation.fr) and selected all relevant articles. Then I ran the search again using keywords ‘Epervier AND Tchad’ and selected all relevant articles. This enabled me to select all articles relevant to French military intervention with EUFOR and Epervier in Chad. In terms of the timeframe, 2 February 2008 marks the start of the fighting following an attack on N’Djamena (sometimes referred to as the Battle of N’Djamena), in which opposition groups attempted to overthrow Chadian President Déby. At the end of February 2008, EUFOR was deployed. On 15 March 2009, EUFOR ended and was replaced with MINURCAT. As discussed above, the conflict between Chad and Sudan had deep roots, escalating in 2005 and ending in 2010. However, I selected the period between February 2008 and March 2009 for three reasons. Firstly, even though French Epervier troops were involved in active fighting in April 2006, I chose to focus on French military intervention during the deployment of EUFOR as this allows me to analyse the French foreign policy of multilateralisation, discussed in Chapter 2, in practice. Secondly, this period includes two phases of active fighting involving French and EU troops, the first in N’Djamena on 2 February 2008 and the second in Goz Beida on 14 June 2008. Finally, this period constitutes an intensification of French press coverage of the conflict, with heightened reporting in February and June 2008.

Figure 2 is a graph demonstrating the distribution of articles throughout the EUFOR operation.

**Figure 2 The distribution of news articles in *Le Figaro*, *Libération* and *Le Monde* from 2 February 2008 to 15 March 2009**

This graph shows that the articles in all three newspaper articles during EUFOR’s operation are concentrated in February and June 2008, which mark the two main periods of fighting in the conflict, discussed above.

### *Le Monde*, *Libération* and *Le Figaro*

In this chapter, I analyse the news coverage of EUFOR and Operation Epervier’s involvement in Chad during a conflict with Sudan in three daily news outlets: *Le Monde*, *Libération* and *Le Figaro*.[[287]](#footnote-287) As discussed in Chapter 1, I chose to analyse the mainstream French press due to its influence and power in informing but also contributing to shaping public opinion, as it was one of the main sources of information on the action of the French military abroad. The three newspapers differ in terms of editorial line, representing the political Centre (*Le Monde*), Left (*Libération*) and Right (*Le Figaro*) and therefore supposedly reflect a broad spectrum of French political opinion.

The 2000s were a period of great change for *Le Monde* in terms of its editors and directors. Director Jean-Marie Colombani, under whom *Le Monde* had gone under private ownership, was replaced by Pierre Jeantet and head editor Eric Fottorino was replaced in 2007 by Alain Frachon. Previously, in 2007, positioning himself as a centrist, Jean-Marie Colombani had written an editorial before the presidential elections in which he was dismissive of *Mouvement démocrate* (*Democratic Movement*) candidate François Bayrou, claiming that 'his presence can also be analysed as a return to the classic pattern of right-wing primary' (Colombani, 2007, para 8).[[288]](#footnote-288) Colombani presented only two viable options: right-wing UMP (Union pour un Mouvement Populaire or Union for a Popular Movement) candidate Nicolas Sarkozy and Socialist Party candidate, Segolène Royale. According to him, Sarkozy had ‘the advantage of being, of all the candidates, the best prepared; at this stage, the most "credible"' (Colombani, 2007, para 10).[[289]](#footnote-289) In the editorial, after placing Sarkozy ahead of Bayrou, Colombani decided to support Royale's candidacy. Bayrou responded to Colombani by claiming that his editorial was 'proof of the panic which was seized the circles of financial, media and political power'[[290]](#footnote-290) (Le Monde and AFP, 2007, para 1). He accused those involved in *Le Monde* as favouring the status quo: ‘all those who, from Mr. (Alain) Minc[[291]](#footnote-291) to Mr. (Arnaud) Lagardère, have an interest in nothing changing, in order to be able to continue their profitable agreements’ (Le Monde and AFP, 2007, para 4).[[292]](#footnote-292) Bayrou therefore saw Colombani’s editorial and the editorial line of *Le Monde* as a boon to the industrialist owners of the newspaper whom they relied on for financial security.

As for *Libération*, Laurent Joffrin, who was first editor-in-chief in 1981 and who had later quit, returning to the newspaper in 1996, was appointed Publication Director in 2006 by *Libération* owner Edouard de Rothschild (until 2011). Rothschild’s intervention regarding Joffrin, as well as his decision to remove Louis Dreyfus and Serge July as directors in 2005, demonstrates the extent to which the newspaper’s owner had executive control over its editorial staff and consequently, its editorial line. When Joffrin took over *Libération* as its director, he positioned the newspaper’s editorial line on the political left, calling it a ‘common home for the left’[[293]](#footnote-293) (Boutoleau, 2008, para 12). Joffrin dedicated one issue to the May 1968 student protests and invited contemporary Nanterre University students to write for the publication. However, the student writers took it as an opportunity to criticise Joffrin’s *Libération*, accusing it of moving away from its left-wing origins. Students Amiel and Milanesi (2008) wrote that *Libération*’s ‘1972 manifesto declared a desire to fight "against dormant journalism" and "give a voice to the people". A few decades later, its current director, Laurent Joffrin judges, “we were the instruments of the victory of capitalism of the left”’.[[294]](#footnote-294) Joffrin responded by insisting that the student authors were criticising ‘a left that is clearly too reasonable’[[295]](#footnote-295) (Boutoleau, 2008, para 10). Joffrin’s appointment by banker Rothischild and the newspapers move from being a ‘militant newspaper to a standard newspaper’[[296]](#footnote-296) and joining the ‘consensus’ (Kahina Mazari quoted in Boutoleau, 2008, para 2) demonstrates the changes to *Libération*’s editorial line in the wake of its corporatisation and change in ownership in the 2000s. The students’ accusations of *Libération*’s ‘consensus’ was similar to Bayrou’s criticism of *Le Monde*’s support for the ‘status quo’ and demonstrated the extent to which the lines between right, left and centre had started to blur in the mainstream press in the 2000s.

*Le Figaro* supported French President Nicolas Sarkozy’s successful candidature during the 2007 French presidential elections. Journalist Mathieu Magnaudeix, writing in newly launched online news outlet *Médiapart*,*[[297]](#footnote-297)* described the political position of Etienne Mougeotte, *Le Figaro*’s director as well as its owner Serge Dassault as 'Sarkozyisme' (2008, drophead section). Under Mougeotte, *Le Figaro*'s journalists accused the newspaper of having become a 'bulletin of a party'[[298]](#footnote-298), meaning Sarkozy's governing UMP (Ternisien, 2012, headline). Mougeotte was replaced as editor of *Le Figaro* in 2012, with the depart of Sarkozy as president, after the election of Socialist Party candidate François Hollande. Geoffroy Clavel (2012) reported in the *Huffington Post* that even though Hollande had claimed he was not concerned with the management, editorial staff or journalists of a newspaper, Serge Dassault 'whose aeronautical activities are dependent on orders and the support of the state, is well placed to know this'[[299]](#footnote-299) (para 4). Clavel therefore suggests that when the editorial line of the newspaper and the state no longer aligned after a right-wing president was replaced with a more left-wing candidate, the editor of *Le Figaro* had to change too. This demonstrates the close links between and shared interests of the media, the state and the defence and arms industry. It shows that the status quo of military intervention continues regardless of the political party in charge and the political views of newspapers, with the latter shifting to accommodate it.

In terms of readership, the 2008 figures show that during this period *Le Figaro* was the highest-selling national daily newspaper in France, selling 320,003 copies a day (AFP, 2009). *Le Monde* was the second highest, selling 300,522 copies a day (AFP, 2009). *Libération*’s daily sales were 126,000 (challenges.fr, 2009).During the period of analysis, only *Le Figaro* had a social media account (Twitter) but in November 2008, it only had 25 followers. I therefore do not conduct any social media analysis. All three newspapers had websites; however, it is difficult to discern which articles were published exclusively online or in print and online. Therefore, I do not differentiate between the articles. Based on a study carried out in November 2006, lemonde.fr had more unique visitors in France than Yahoo News and Google News (Tessier, 2007, p. 35). French press websites also had more visitors than TV news websites, news aggregator sites and press agencies websites (Tessier, 2007).

In terms of ownership, the early 2000s reflected the corporatisation of the French press. During this period, the three newspapers were no longer independently owned but came under the ownership of large corporations. French banker Edouard de Rothschild acquired 39% of shares in *Libération* in 2005. Other shares belonged to the staff consortium (18.4%), with the remaining shares owned by French film production company Pathé, British investment fund 3i as well as ‘the society of friends of the paper’ (July, 2004, para 7). *Le Figaro* had been owned by Socpresse (80% owned by private French defence company Dassault) since March 2004. In February 2005 French publishing company Lagardère acquired 15% of Le Monde SA, the group that owns *Le Monde*. Arnaud Lagardère and Serge Dassault both had financial and industrial interests in defence.

Industrialist group Dassault had a financial interest in French military intervention in Chad through its production of military aircraft such as the Breguet Atlantique 2 and Mirage F1, which were deployed by the French military in Chad. The Mirage F1 was first deployed by the French military in 1984 in Chad during Operation Manta (ATAC, no date) and these aircraft continued to be in use throughout the conflict with Sudan and until 2014. Journalist Ternisien wrote that 'the culture of the Dassault family has always been to create allies in all political families.'[[300]](#footnote-300) (Ternisien, 2012, para 3), demonstrating the close relations and the importance of good relations between military industrialists, politicians and the media. The financial interests of the military industrialist-owners of newspapers, such as Dassault were therefore inseparable from the way that the events of a war, during which it sold its products, was reported in a newspaper that it majority owned.

It is therefore particularly important to consider the news media’s portrayal of conflict in which the sale of arms is a big profit-making industry. It can easily be argued that this represents a conflict of interest between the news organisation’s role in reporting conflicts, and their industrialist owners, who benefit from the sale of arms during the conflicts. Moreover, Kuhn (2011) describes the close ties between the French President Nicolas Sarkozy (2007-2012) and industrialists such as Arnaud Lagardère as well as Vincent Bolloré and Martin Bouygues.[[301]](#footnote-301) Kuhn (2011) demonstrates the extent to which it benefitted these industrialists to remain on good terms with the president and how the president, in turn, benefitted from the ‘favourable coverage’ in their media outlets (pp. 72-3). In terms of funding, the three newspapers also received state subsidies. In 2009-11 *Le Monde* received 18,465,277 euro in state subsidies, *Le Figaro* received 17,217,154 euro, *Libération* received 9,908,388 euro (Communication à la commission des finances du Sénat, 2013, p. 40). This demonstrates that the three newspapers were reliant on both their industrialist-owners and the state for financial support and demonstrates the importance for the French government of sustaining the written press. Herman and Chomsky (1988) have explained in their ‘propaganda model’ that the conflict of interest between the profit-making imperative of media owners may influence or determine what is and is not reported on in the news media. It is useful to bear this in mind when analysing the way in which Operation Epervier was reported on in the three news outlets.

In terms of journalistic practices, during this period, journalists had little access to information about the events in Chad and Sudan, except through officials. EUFOR's official purpose was to respond to 'the humanitarian threat posed by armed groups' and to 'assist refugees and to counter threats to humanitarian activities'. Its mission therefore took place in response to humanitarian concerns about refugees (UN Press, 2007). However, although the three news outlets repeatedly state the official aims of the EUFOR mission, the focus of the news articles is not on the refugees. Therefore, the journalistic practices adopted by the journalists during this period do not reflect what Bell (1997) calls a 'journalism of attachment', in other words they do not frame the mission in a ‘compassionate’ way (Heywood, 2015, p. 211). Instead, the articles tend to focus on the role of the French government and military in response to the events.

This demonstrates the extent to which the language of the press corresponded to the language of the French and EU officials when stating the aims of the operation, reflecting a low level of autonomy in the journalistic field, as discussed in Chapter 1. Furthermore, the reporting is carried out largely through information provided by French official sources.[[302]](#footnote-302) Moreover, unlike *Le Monde*’s reporting of Operation Epervier between 1986 and 1987, analysed in Chapter 3, which detailed the events of the conflict, the articles analysed in this chapter focus on the intentions and response of the French government and military as represented by the lack of information on events and over-reliance on official sources to describe the intentions of the actors involved in the conflict.

## The ‘Multilateral Security’ Frame

Through my analysis, one dominant frame emerges across the three newspapers: the ‘multilateral security’ frame. As Debos (2016, p. 14) has argued, French military interventions tend to be framed in the French news media either as ‘humanitarian’ or as ‘security’ issues. Above, I explained that ‘humanitarianism’ is not a feature of the reporting on this conflict across the three newspapers. Yet ‘security’ does emerge as a dominant frame in my analysis. I demonstrate that this frame has two constituent parts: 1) the ‘multilateral’ aspect, and 2) the ‘security’ aspect. The ‘multilateral’ subframe emerges in the coverage of the launch of EUFOR, which was a joint effort between several European countries, although initiated by France. It reflects the new French foreign policy in Africa at that time (discussed in Chapter 2). Whereas the ‘security’ aspect is dominant in the coverage of Operation Epervier and in relation to EUFOR’s mission of rescuing refugees and foreign nationals. A preoccupation with ‘security’ had been a major preoccupation in post-Cold War French foreign policy approaches (discussed in Chapter 2), allowing us to trace the origins of this frame. Thus, there are two aspects to this ‘security’ subframe, one of which is more individualised as it relates to the security of people, the other is more concerned with diplomatic security and emerges in concordance with French foreign policy approaches.

As discussed in Chapter 1, frames function through naturalisation, communicability and incontestability. This thesis is concerned with how messages are framed in the French press and the role that they play in shaping the understanding of the reader through messages that are included and omitted. Discursive devices form constituent parts of the frames, following Entman’s (1993) comment that ‘a particular framing of the situation that is most heavily supported by the text and is congruent with the most common audience schema’ (p. 56). By analysing the discursive construction of actors and events, I uncover the components of the ‘multilateral security’ frame. I find that the ‘rebels’ are identified as the cause the ‘insecurity’ which requires response; the Chadian government is portrayed as the site of the insecurity, which needs assistance; and the French and European troops appear to act as a multilateral unit in order to respond to the insecurity.

## Discursive Devices

Below is a table highlighting the main discursive devices that I have identified in relation to the above mentioned frames throughout my analysis in this chapter. The table names the discursive devices, their purpose and examples of them from the text.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Discursive Device | Purpose | Example |
| The Topos of Threat | If a threat is posed to the self or an ally, then intervention to prevent the threat is legitimate. | ‘the rebels launched their attack against N’Djamena’. (Le Figaro, vers un déploiement rapide de l'Eufor, 07/02/2008) |
| The Topos of Insecurity/Instability | If an ally is unstable/insecure, then military intervention to stabilise or securitise it is legitimate. | ‘the security of the public remains precarious’ because of a cycle of armed rebellion that undermines any chance of development. (Philippe Bernard, *Le Monde*, 20/03/2008) |
| The Topos of Legality | If an action is presented as legal then it is legitimate | ‘The text, without being the resolution that Paris originally wanted, is considered a sufficient legal basis for military action’. (Bernard, Bolopion and Nougayrède, *Le Monde*, 06/02/2008) |
| Positive Self, Negative Other | Discursively constructing France’s actions or characteristics as positive or altruistic and the actions or characteristics of an ‘other’ as negative. | ‘For months, years, we were moved, powerless, before the tragedy of Darfur. For 15 days, despite the unrest in Chad, Europe has provided itself with the means to protect the victims and rebuild their villages in eastern Chad’. (Le Monde, 10/03/2008) |
| Omission | Excluding information that may be harmful to the self. | Omission of the motivations of the opponents of Déby |
| *Pathos* | An appeal to emotion | 'The women raped or murdered as soon as they left their camp, the starving children will finally be assisted, rescued'. (Bernard Kouchner, Le Monde, 10/03/2008) |
| Metaphor of a ‘trap’ | Comparing France’s former colonies to ‘traps’ | ‘the Chadian trap’ |
| Topos of Dependence | Argument that Chadian actors are dependent on others for assistance | ‘Mr Déby did discreetly ask for help from the French’. 07/02/2008). |

**Table 11. Discursive Devices, purposes and examples relevant to Chapter 4**

## Analysis

In this section, I once again use a combined methodological approach, drawing on elements of framing and CDA-DHA, to analyse the 148 articles published in *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *Libération* between February 2008 and March 2009 on Operation Epervier and EUFOR. I bring in other sources, such as statements by the United Nations, where relevant, in order to provide an inter-textual analysis. I dedicate a section to the discursive construction of each of the main actors highlighted in the conflict: 1) the Chadian and Sudanese ‘rebels’, 2) the Chadian state, 3) the French government and military. In each section, I analyse and compare the articles published in *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *Libération*.

### The Discursive Construction of the Chadian State

During the period of analysis from 2008-2009, the Chadian government and military were fighting against the government’s opponents, the so-called ‘rebels’, who were both Chadian and Sudanese. The French government was positioned on the side of the Chadian state. The French military, both as part of Epervier and EUFOR, were also positioned against these ‘rebels’. In this section I analyse how *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *Libération* discursively construct the Chadian governmental and military actors. Firstly, I argue that the three news outlets discursively construct Chad as an ‘unstable’ country that is in need of assistance. This ‘instability’, leading to an attack on the territorial integrity of Chad, is part of EUFOR’s UN mandate. Through the frame of ‘multilateral security’, the news articles discursively qualify Chad as insecure and in need of assistance. Secondly, I argue that depending on the news outlet and journalist, the Chadian government is constructed either as democratic or undemocratic. Some of the articles, particularly those published in *Le Figaro*,discursively qualify the Chadian government as democratic and therefore legitimate. But others discursively qualify the Chadian government as undemocratic and are critical of French governmental support of Déby’s regime.

In Chapters 2 and 3, I explored the extent to which the idea of the consent of the Chadian president was an important factor in informing French military interventions in line with the policy of cooperation. *Le Monde*’s reporting of Operation Epervier’s intervention in Chad in 1986-7 reiterated the importance of consent through repetition of Chadian President Habré’s request for French military intervention and through frequent citation of Chadian sources (33% of sources were Chadian). However, in the articles published during Operation Epervier and EUFOR’s intervention, French sources are a lot more frequently cited than Chadian sources (in *Le Figaro*, 16% Chadian, 37% French; in *Le Monde*, 18% Chadian, 37% French; in Libération, 14% Chadian, 36% French). Consequently, the will of Chadian official actors, as well as their consent to the intervention is a lot less visible in the articles published during Operation Epervier and EUFOR’s intervention in 2008-9. It is striking to note how similar the three newspapers are in terms of the sources cited, demonstrating the extent to which it is mainly through French sources that the narrative of the conflict is framed.

I link the diminished focus on consent to the changes to the French policies of ‘cooperation’, within the context of the rise of the post-Cold War international norm of interventionism (through the establishment of R2P). Under R2P, obtaining consent and asserting sovereignty were trumped by the idea of a ‘responsibility to protect’. This is reflected in *Le Monde*’s attitude towards the Chadian president’s request for French aid, which is somewhat derided in a *Le Monde* article, ‘Mr Déby did discreetly ask for help from the French. "He wanted us to act", Paris comments, "he is used to the old methods"’[[303]](#footnote-303) (Le Monde, ‘Tchad : l'Elysée était partagé sur l'intervention’, 07/02/2008). *Le Monde* suggests that requesting aid is outdated and therefore, the notion of consent is no longer a concern within the discourse of the newspaper. This also discursively qualifies the Chadian leader himself as outmoded and suggests that the French government has evolved whereas the Chadian government has not, highlighting a perceived superiority of France against Chad.

#### Insecurity and instability and the ‘trap’

Chad as a state, and the Chadian government, are discursively qualified as unstable in the three news outlets. This is demonstrated through analysis of the words preceding ‘Chad’ (‘Tchad’) across the articles published in the three newspapers. In *Le Figaro*, the words preceding ‘of Chad’ (‘du Tchad’) include, ‘integrity’ (l’intégrité), ‘security’ (la sécurité), ‘border’ (la frontière), ‘troubled regions’ (les régions troublées), ‘rebels’ (les rebelles). In *Le Monde* they include, ‘territorial integrity’ (l'intégrité territoriale), ‘crisis’ (la crise), ‘destabilisation’ (la déstabilisation), ‘border’ (la frontière), stability (la stabilité), ‘rebels’ (les rebelles). In *Libération*, these include, ‘political independence’ (l'indépendance politique), ‘rebels’ (les rebelles), ‘expatriates’ (les expatriés), ‘secure the east’ (sécuriser l'est). These keywords are largely negative and discursively construct Chad as an unstable or insecure country. The similarities in keywords between *Le Figaro* and *Le Monde* is striking despite their different editorial and political stances. Analysis of these words is a starting point through which we can highlight the following discursive devices, which are recurrent throughout the reporting of the conflict: firstly, the topos of Insecurity/Instability, the argument that Chad is unstable and insecure; secondly, the topos of Dependence, the argument that Chad is dependent on assistance; thirdly, the metaphor of Chad as a trap (piège) in which the French military is obliged to intervene in order to create stability.

The preoccupation with the stability of Chad is mentioned in the UN Security Council’s mandate for intervention. All three newspapers quote the UN Security Council's declaration that it ‘strongly condemns the attack perpetrated by armed groups against the Chadian government and all attempts at destabilisation by force, and reaffirms its support for the sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and political independence of Chad’.[[304]](#footnote-304) The UN Security Council's declaration suggests that there is a risk of destabilisation in Chad, as well as a threat to its sovereignty, unity, integrity and independence. Listing the aspects of a country that make it cohesive, the threat to Chad appears extremely grave. The risk described by the UN Security council is similar to the existential threat to France’s former colonies described in the 1972 White Paper on Defence. Its authors state that French ‘support still appears as a condition of [‘Francophone’ Africa’s] independence’ (p. 4). Here it is suggested that the preservation of the integrity of Chad depends on the actions of EUFOR, reflecting the topos of Dependence.

Moreover, the UN Security Council’s declaration describes a contemporaneous situation that needs to be addressed with urgency. Citing the UN Security Council and its involvement in the conflict positions the intervention within the frame of ‘security’. Various French officials are also quoted highlighting the link between intervention and the instability or insecurity of Chad. French President Nicolas Sarkozy is quoted in *Le Monde* saying that France is ‘committed to the unity and stability of Chad’[[305]](#footnote-305) (Philippe Bernard and Philippe Bolopion, *Le Monde*, 04/02/2008). Defence Minister Hervé Morin is quoted in *Le Figaro* saying that ‘EUFOR Tchad is a peacekeeping operation, an operation of stability’[[306]](#footnote-306) (C.J, Le Figaro, 05/03/2008). *Libération* quotes NGOs who suspended their activities in order to ‘protest against deteriorating security’[[307]](#footnote-307) (Hofnung, *Libération*, 03/05/2008).

Some of the articles, as we shall see in examples below, link the cause of the instability and insecurity to the character of the region, in Africa. Unlike the UN Security Council’s characterisation of instability in Chad as a contemporaneous situation, the following examples attach this as a permanent characteristic of Chad. In *Le Monde*, French colonel Garnier describes the 'insecurity'[[308]](#footnote-308) in Chad as ‘traditional in this region’[[309]](#footnote-309) (Zecchini, *Le Monde*, 23/05/2008). Conveying a similar message, journalist Philippe Bernard writes in *Le Monde*, ‘the security of the public remains precarious’[[310]](#footnote-310) because of ‘a cycle of armed rebellion that undermines any chance of development’[[311]](#footnote-311) (*Le Monde*, 20/03/2008). Former British Marine, Simon Haselock,[[312]](#footnote-312) writes in *Libération*, ‘if [UN intervention] falls behind, Darfur but also Chad could experience a new disastrous cycle of violence for already weakened civilian populations’[[313]](#footnote-313) (Libération, 03/07/2008). In another article in *Libération*, the certainty of the repetition of this ‘cycle’ is stated by journalist Hofnung, ‘The question was not if such an incident could occur, but when, as the situation is unstable in eastern Chad’.[[314]](#footnote-314) (Hofnung, Libération, 06/06/2008). Haselock also claims that ‘above all, the Darfur crisis is an African crisis, which involves several countries in the region and threatens to destabilise all of central and Saharan Africa’[[315]](#footnote-315) (Libération, 07/03/2008). These quotes suggest that insecurity is a *characteristic* of the region. The idea of a ‘cycle’ suggests that insecurity and instability will be repeated endlessly. This is reminiscent of Sarkozy’s speech in Dakar in 2007, in which he asks his Senegalese audience ‘Do you want peace on the African continent? Do you want collective security? Do you want peaceful resolution of conflicts? Do you want to end the vicious cycle of revenge and hatred?’ (Sarkozy, 2007). He thereby repeats the idea of a never-ending cycle of insecurity. This repetition is explained by Sarkozy as a characteristic of Africans, ‘The African peasant [...] knows only the eternal restarting of time punctuated by the endless repetition of the same gestures and the same words’[[316]](#footnote-316) (Sarkozy, 2007). This racialised discourse positions Africans as civilisionally inferior and embeds insecurity within the fabric of African countries. Furthermore, this discourse dehistoricises and depoliticises the conflicts taking place on the African continent, removing agency from French actors involved in the conflicts and thereby minimises their role in the African continent’s past and present.

Overall, the discursive construction of the Chadian state as insecure and unstable and therefore in need of external assistance demonstrates my argument on the existence of a neocolonial discourse in the language of the French press. In this argument, I state that the assertion of the perceived inferiority of Africans especially in binary contrast to ‘Europeans’ (based on Fanon’s (1952) theories), leads to the victimisation of Chad and the discursive legitimation of French military interventions under the pretext of protection or assistance. This presence, in turn, helps to secure French influence on the continent in order to be able to continue exploiting the natural resources in west and central Africa, which it needs for its own economy and energy in France. The fact that this frame of (in)security appears across all three newspapers demonstrates the existence of a ‘transmediatic’ narrative, which reinforces the neocolonial ideology of inferiority and superiority and shows the extent to which it is embedded in the language of the mainstream French press.

**The ‘Trap’**

In the discursive construction of Chad in *Le Figaro* and *Libération*, the country is referred to as a 'trap'. The metaphor of the ‘trap’ appears three times across the articles published in *Le Figaro* and *Liberation* during this period. In *Le Figaro*, ‘The Chadian trap’[[317]](#footnote-317) appears as a headline in an editorial by Pierre Rousselin (04/02/2008). Again, in *Le Figaro*, journalist Thierry Oberlé (13/02/2008) writes, ‘In this crisis, Paris must also take into account the concerns of its European partners, who fear falling into the Chadian trap’.[[318]](#footnote-318) Similarly, in *Libération*, Hofnung writes, ‘In N'Djamena, Paris has above all taken care to avoid an Ivorian trap’.[[319]](#footnote-319) In the first example, the ‘trap’ is described as ‘Chadian’. Use of the definite article 'le' (‘the’) to describe the 'trap', suggests that it is known to the reader and therefore, that the Chadian trap must be a familiar idea. Furthermore, the idea of the ‘trap’ suggests a *burden* carried by France in the face of European partners: France must prevent its partners from falling inside the trap. The second example is written in reference to the French military intervention in Côte d'Ivoire in 2002, following a coup threatening Ivorian President Laurent Gbagbo. Here, the ‘trap’ is not described as Chadian but Ivorian. It is nonetheless seen as something that could become Chadian. Furthermore, both Côte d'Ivoire and Chad are, of course, former French colonies in Africa. Therefore, according to Hofnung, the ‘trap’ may be a metaphor for France's situation in its former colonies. Both the idea of a burden carried by France to avoid the Chadian ‘trap’ and the attribution of the metaphor of a ‘trap’ to both Côte d’Ivoire and Chad, demonstrates the discursive construction of Chad as negative and a burden for the French military and government who must avoid its ‘trap’ in *Le Figaro* and *Libération*. *Le Monde* does not refer to Chad as a trap during this period of analysis. But interestingly, it does refer to ‘The Chadian trap’ (‘Le piège tchadien’), in an article during the conflict with Sudan in 2006.

The ‘trap’ and the implications of burden which accompany it have colonial connotations, discursively constructing Africa as a ‘hopeless’ place (Ekwe-Ekwe, 2007, p. 3). This colonial discourse is also in use in the language of prominent French politician Bernard Kouchner. After a French NGO worker was shot dead in Chad on the Sudanese border, Kouchner made the following statement, reported in *Le Monde*,

"I have been informed that Pascal Marlinge, a French national working for a humanitarian or

ganisation, was savagely murdered while working with displaced and refugee communities in the locality of Farchana, in eastern Chad," said the minister. "This is a despicable act of barbarism. I ask the Chadian authorities to shed full light," added the Head of French Diplomacy.[[320]](#footnote-320) (Le Monde with AP and AFP, 01/05/2008)

Use of the words ‘savagely’ and ‘barbarism’ both invoke a colonial discourse of a civilisationally inferior place (Morgan, 1877). Kouchner’s demand for Chadian authorities ‘to shed full light’ on the matter juxtaposes the ‘barbarism’ in Chad with the ‘light’ that France demands. It also juxtaposes the ‘humanitarian’, positive actions of the French actor (working with refugees) with the negative, ‘despicable act’, which took place in Chad (the murder). The contrast between dark/light also comes through in the phrase ‘the black continent’[[321]](#footnote-321) used by *Le Figaro* journalist, Arnaud de la Grange (28/02/2008), an example of the negative ‘semantic balkanisation’ described by Martin (1985, p. 129).

*Libération* takes a different angle towards the murder of the NGO worker. An article by Hofnung quotes a Save the Children director calling the murder ‘a financially motivated crime more so than an act targeted specifically at a French person.’[[322]](#footnote-322) Hofnung describes it as a ‘strange murder’[[323]](#footnote-323) (Libération, 03/05/2008). Therefore, Kouchner appears to overplay the brutality of the murder, using racialised terminology, whereas Hofnung’s article downplays it, potentially reflecting their different political positions.

Despite this minor contrast between the three newspapers, the fact that all three newspapers have used the term ‘trap’, at various points, to describe France’s former colonies, despite their differing political positions, demonstrates the extent to which there is a consensus in the mainstream French press (as represented by the three newspapers) regarding French foreign policy in France’s former colonies in Africa. It shows that the derogatory language and the inferior position of France’s former African colonies in relation to France does not depend on the political position of the publications but is part of a normalised discourse on French military involvement on the African continent. It also shows the relation between discourse and practice, as this negative portrayal of the African continent contributes to the legitimisation of a positively portrayed France’s intervention.

#### Legitimacy and Democracy

The discursive construction of the Chadian President Idriss Déby is ambiguous throughout this period and between the three news outlets, despite the French government’s strong support of him. Therefore, the construction of the Chadian government as democratic mainly occurs through the citing of elite actors rather than the journalists’ voices. Meanwhile, criticism of Déby mainly comes through the voice of the journalists and mostly regards the disappearance of three members of the political opposition in February 2008. Firstly, I will look at some instances of the discursive construction of Déby as democratic or legitimate before moving on to the discursive construction of the Déby regime as undemocratic.

The following are examples from *Le Figaro*, in which the Chadian government is discursively constructed as legitimate or democratic.

* ‘French president Nicolas Sarkozy has called for support for the Chadian government because it is legitimate’[[324]](#footnote-324) (Le Figaro, ‘L'ONU condamne les attaques des rebelles tchadiens’, 04/02/2008)
* ‘It was certainly necessary to support President Idriss Déby, since he was elected and he is the legitimate Head of State of a country to which we are linked by a military cooperation agreement’[[325]](#footnote-325) (Le Figaro, ‘Le piège tchadien’, 04/02/2008)

From the above examples, it is clear that the journalists in question are either voicing or echoing the views of officials in claiming that Déby's government is legitimate or that he is a democratic leader. *Le Figaro*’s right-wing political position, its support of Sarkozy during the 2007 French presidential elections and its owner, Dassault’s friendship with Sarkozy may play a part in the newspaper’s stance on Sarkozy’s actions. The lack of criticism of the relationship between Sarkozy and Déby and the legitimisation Déby’s leadership reflect this political position. This is especially important as release of the *Arche de Zoe* prisoners corresponded with the attempted coup against Déby’s government and the French military intervention, which helped Déby prevent the coup. This was pointed out at the time by others such as *Libération* journalists, explored below, and later by Tubiana (2008). Therefore, *Le Figaro*’s reluctance to criticise the French government and even to support its allyship with Déby, potentially reflects its political position as a right-wing news media outlet with ties to President Sarkozy.

*Le Monde*, on the other hand, doubts the democratic nature of Déby's presidency. Philippe Bernard writes, ‘After saving the Chadian President Idriss Déby from a rebel attack, France is struggling to make him make his regime more presentable in terms of human rights and democracy’[[326]](#footnote-326) (*Le Monde*, ‘N'Djamena reste sourd aux appels en faveur des droits de l'homme’, 20/03/2008). Therefore, unlike *Le Figaro*’s articles, which suggest that Déby’s government is legitimate, *Le Monde*’s article states that Déby’s ‘regime’ lacks ‘human rights and democracy’. This is reflective of *Le Monde*’s centrist position in contrast with *Le Figaro*’s right-wing and pro-governmental position.

However, there is a point of similarity between the two newspapers, as both suggest that the French government has a role to play in democratisation. Bernard claims that France has an aim to ‘make him make his regime more presentable’ and Pierre Prier’s of *Le Figaro* (27/02/2008), writes, ‘the deployment of the European force, EUFOR should, according to Paris, facilitate the return to democracy’.[[327]](#footnote-327) *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro* both discursively link French and European presence to democracy by suggesting that it can lead Chad to democratisation. It is interesting to note that Prier specifies a ‘return’ to democracy, suggesting that Déby’s regime was at some point democratic, linking back to the notion that the Chadian government is legitimate.

In contrast with *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*, *Libération*’s journalist, Hofnung is more critical of the democratic future of Chad. He states the intentions of Sarkozy to ‘relaunch an inter-Chadian political dialogue, with a view to democratic elections’[[328]](#footnote-328) (28/02/2008). However, he is sceptical of this, writing with regard to the government’s action in Chad that he is ‘not sure that’s enough to keep up appearances’[[329]](#footnote-329) In other words, it reflects badly on the French government that they support an undemocratic leader. Regarding the overlap between the release of the *Arche de Zoe* prisoners and France’s military support of the Chadian president in the face of an attempted coup, an article in *Libération* questions the motivations of the French government, it states, ‘scrupulous respect for an agreement or apparent support for a regime?’[[330]](#footnote-330). In this article, *Libération* asks whether French military support of Déby’s government with Operation Epervier in February 2008 was within the remit of the 1976 Technical Cooperation Agreement with Chad or whether it amounts to support of a ‘regime’ (liberation.fr avec source AFP, 07/02/2008). Immediately after posing this question, the article quotes Déby, Sarkozy and Defence Minister Morin, denying that the French military was directly involved in combat during the attempted coup. Even though *Libération* appears to be critical of the French government’s involvement with the Chadian government, its journalists do not elaborate on this criticism or explain the reasons for French support of Déby’s government, which, as we have seen, is linked to French influence and economic control in the central African region.

Overall, although each news outlet has a different stance towards the French government’s support of Déby and towards Déby’s legitimacy, all three are united in their support of the French government’s aim of democratisation in Chad, even if they do not all agree on whether it is achievable or not. This reflects the ‘democratisation’ policy outlined in Chapter 2, which emerged in the aftermath of the Cold War, firstly through Mitterrand’s speech at La Baule in 1990 and then with the 1994 White Paper on Defence. The idea that it was part of the role of the French government to promote democracy in Chad reflects a neocolonial version of the ‘civilising mission’ in which the French government believes it has the right to spread what it believes to be the French value of ‘democracy’ in its ‘sphere of influence’. The fact that this narrative is repeated by journalists in the three news outlets demonstrates the existence of a ‘transmediatic’ narrative, as well as the extent to which neocolonial discourses are co-produced in both policy and news texts, legitimising the presence of the French military in Chad. Therefore, this shows the extent to which the neocolonial discourse is a form of social practice that can lead to military action.

### The Discursive Construction of the ‘Rebels’

In this section, I analyse how the news articles in *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *Libération* discursively construct the 'rebels', in other words, the Chadian and Sudanese actors fighting against the Chadian government. I identify two principal ways in which the news articles discursively construct these actors: firstly, through Omission, and secondly, through the topos of Threat. Omission refers to the extent to which information about the rebels is omitted, such as their identity and their motives, a technique widely adopted intentionally or not within journalism (Noetzel et al., 2023). Omission forms an important aspect of framing analysis, as what is *not* included in the frame (Ahmad, 2020). The topos of Threat is the argument that the Chadian actors are a threat with regard to the stability and security of the Chadian government and to the humanitarian efforts of the French and European forces.

#### Omission

As mentioned above, there were four main groups who opposed Déby’s government and took part in this conflict, the RFC, UFDD, UFDD-F and *Alliance Nationale*. Throughout the reporting of the three newspapers, the identity and motivations of the rebels remain unclear. Firstly, the main label used to refer to these actors is simply the word 'rebels'.[[331]](#footnote-331) ‘Rebels’ is the fifth most frequently used word across all articles published in *Le Monde, Le Figaro* and *Libération*. However, the ‘rebels’ only represent 8% of sources in *Le Figaro*, 9% in *Le Monde* and 9% in *Libération*. Furthermore, rebel groups are named very infrequently: the UFDD is named in five articles, the UFDD-F is named in four, the *Alliance nationale* is mentioned in 19 and the RFC is named in two articles (in *Libération* only). Most of the time, these actors are referred to simply as ‘rebels’ and it is thus unclear who exactly is being discussed. This lack of clarity evokes the idea of the ‘unknown’ threat, put forth in the 1994 White Paper on Defence, discussed in Chapter 2. The 1994 White Paper argues that in the aftermath of the Cold War, the ‘enemy’ is unpredictable. The authors of the White Paper argue that these types of threats contribute to a lack of security and stability and therefore must be addressed militarily for the sake of defence. By omitting the identity of the Chadian ‘rebels’, the news articles thereby position French military involvement in Chad within the frame of ‘security’, discursively legitimising their French military presence as a way of guaranteeing security.

Secondly, the motivations of the rebels are omitted from the news articles. As we have seen in the secondary literature, one of the contributing factors to the rise of the rebellion against Déby's government can be traced to its decision to change the constitution in 2005, allowing Déby to run for president again in 2006. It has also been linked in the literature to the unequal distribution of wealth gained from oil extraction under Déby's presidency (Debos, 2016). In their own words, the rebels had grievances against foreign military presence in Chad. In July 2007, before the launch of EUFOR, the main Chadian rebel groups and coalitions (*Concorde nationale du Tchad* or CNT, RFC, UFDD and UFDD–F) voiced their opposition to French military presence in Chad. Quoted in Tubiana (2008, p. 53) they stated that they,

strongly condemn French government initiatives aiming to transform the French troops in Chad into a European force under the pretext of protecting Sudanese refugees from Darfur, and Chadian displaced persons, and of guaranteeing border and national security. The intervention of these foreign forces in Chad is unacceptable to us because the undeclared aim of this Machiavellian manoeuvre is to save a failing regime at all costs. . . The armed opposition warns the countries of the European Union who are tempted by this military adventure, as it will have disastrous repercussions and risks leading them directly into a conflict with our armed forces. They will then be obliged to face all the consequences of their actions.

The passage demonstrates that these groups saw French and EU military intervention as an attempt to ‘save a failing regime’ under the pretext of protecting refugees and guaranteeing security. The opposition groups therefore posed a threat to Operation Epervier’s existence and the French military’s permanent presence in Chad.

Yet these motivating factors remain unspoken throughout the news reports in *Le Monde, Le Figaro* and *Libération*. There are three mentions of oil across the articles published in the three news outlets as a potential reason for discontent among Déby’s opponents. One is Thomas Hofnung's article in *Libération* (28/02/2008), which mentions Déby withholding oil revenues, he states that the Chadian rebels ‘seek to put an end to Idriss Déby who confiscated power as well as revenues from Chadian oil’.[[332]](#footnote-332) Another is Christophe Ayad’s article in *Libération* which discusses Tom Erdimi’s role in the oil industry. He writes, ‘Their dispute has nothing political, but concerns the monopolisation of oil wealth’[[333]](#footnote-333) (Ayad, Libération, 06/02/2008). Despite mentioning the significance of oil, Ayad’s statement depoliticises the motivations of the RFC and opposition to French military presence, discussed above, by relating it to wealth-gain only. This serves to discredit any political motivations that the opposition groups may have. However, unlike *Le Figaro* and *Le Monde*, who do not mention oil in relation to the motivations of the rebels or to the discontent of Chadian civilians,[[334]](#footnote-334) *Libération* provides some context and motivation for the actions of the ‘rebels’. It is possible to argue that *Libération*’s left-wing political position means that it is able to partially justify the reason for a rebellion against the Chadian government, which the French government supports, because justification of the actions of the ‘rebels’ amounts to criticism of French interference in the rebellion.

‘Rebel’ groups’ criticisms or accusations of French military presence are mentioned in the news articles, albeit not linked to the aims or motivations of these groups. For example, an article in *Libération* states,

On Tuesday, Nicolas Sarkozy also denied any direct participation of the French military in the recent fighting in N'Djamena, while the rebels on Tuesday accused the French air force of having intervened, causing, according to them, numerous victims. According to the French president, "there was no shooting by the French army except to protect our compatriots [...] They were in a state of self-defence."[[335]](#footnote-335) (Libération with AFP, 02/07/2008)

Here, the journalist airs the grievances of the ‘rebels’ against French military involvement in Chad. However, it is immediately rebuffed by a quote from the French President. Similarly in *Le Figaro*, the accusations of the rebels are stated in a news article,

[...] the rebels are already accusing France of having intervened directly in the conflict which has left at least 1,000 dead and more than 1,000 injured in N'Djamena since Saturday. In a press release, they condemn "the direct intervention of the French air force which caused enormous civilian casualties, notably at the Lycée de la Liberté and the central market" of N'Djamena. Claims denied by Paris.[[336]](#footnote-336) (C.J, Le Figaro, 05/02/2008)

Once again, immediately after the perspective of the ‘rebels’ is posed, it is followed by the French government’s counterclaim. Finally, this point of view is described in *Le Monde* (Le Monde and AFP, 13/06/2008):

Ali Gueddei, the spokesperson for the Alliance nationale, which opposes the regime of President Idriss Déby, declared that "the armed forces of the opposition" were in favour of Eufor's mission to protect civilian populations, but that "France has distorted the mission of Eufor (...) through its behaviour" within the framework of the Epervier mission.[[337]](#footnote-337)

Here, the ‘rebels’ deny that they are attempting to frustrate EUFOR’s humanitarian efforts and criticise the involvement of the French government, thus delegitimising their involvement. However, once again, their statement is immediately followed by a refutation:

France was carrying out reconnaissance operations to verify the claims of the rebels, who say they have penetrated the country widely and are steering towards N'Djamena. The authorities deny and denounce a "poisoning campaign devoid of any foundation".

The journalist counters their negative claims with the perspective of the French government and explains that the French government’s actions are simply logistical and reconnaissance operations. The journalist thereby neutralises the criticism of the rebels with the counterclaim. The criticism of French military presence is cited again in *Le Monde* but this time with regard to Sudanese actors: ‘The policy of Sudan, which supports the rebellion in the neighbouring country, is clear. It aims to prevent the arrival of international contingents in the region.[[338]](#footnote-338) (Le Monde, ‘Le Tchad déstabilisé’ 02/02/2008). This demonstrates that *Le Monde* does mention the grievances of Déby’s opponents against French military presence, but without linking this criticism to French hostility against them. By offering the perspective of the government in response to criticism against it from ‘rebel’ groups, *Le Monde* acts as a mouthpiece for the government. This strengthens the French government’s justifications of its military presence in Chad by repeating the government's arguments for the military intervention. This shows the extent to which an interventionist discourse is mutually constructed and reinforced by both the French governmental actors and journalists.

Omission contributes to the discursive delegitimisation of the opponents of Déby. Firstly, by making it unclear who they are and discursively qualifying them as simply ‘rebels’, the reader remains in the dark about their identity and motives. Secondly, without seeing legitimate motivations, the reader is unable to sympathise with the aims of the ‘rebels’. By omitting the aims of the opposition groups, the news articles obscure the motivations of the French military in fighting against these opposition groups in Chad. It can therefore be argued that through this delegitimisation of these groups, the news articles discursively legitimise military action against such ‘rebels’.

What is omitted is what threat these groups pose to the French government and military, why is stopping the ‘rebels’ an end in itself? The motivations of belligerents are essential to understanding the conflict. The fact that the motivations of the Chadian government's opponents are missing from the framing of the conflict in the three news outlets is therefore very striking. Within the frame of ‘security’, the ‘rebels’ appear as the instigators of insecurity, with the Chadian government appearing as the victim and the French and EU forces appearing as the protectors of Chad. Therefore, explicitly stating or justifying the aims and motivations of these opponents, and presenting them as opponents rather than ‘rebels’ would risk undermining the French military’s stance against them. The omission of the identity and motivations of the ‘rebels’ therefore serves to delegitimise the rebels and in turn, legitimise the French military operations against them.

It is however clear that the ‘rebels’ were against French military presence in Chad and had been vocal about wanting the foreign militaries to leave the Chadian territory. Therefore, these ‘rebel’ groups could have been perceived to be taking an anti-imperial stance, against French and EU military involvement. In their quote, shown above, they stated this explicitly, although their position was not widely reported in the three newspapers I analysed. This is an example of the neocolonial ideology. As Nkrumah (1965) points out, the negative portrayal of opponents of the dominant power in the ‘western media’ has the effect of delegitimising their actions against that power. In other words, the negative construction or omission of the grievances of opponents of the Chadian government, discursively legitimised French military presence in Chad. French presence was framed as countering the perceived threat of the ‘rebels’ and the ‘insecurity’ caused by this threat. In turn, this military presence ensured the French government could maintain influence on the African continent to protect its economic and geostrategic interests.

#### The Topos of Threat

Regardless of who they are and what their aims are, the ‘rebels’ are positioned in all three newspapers as a threat to the Chadian state and therefore in opposition to French and EU actors who are assisting and protecting Chad. Instead of referring to the motivations of the Chadian ‘rebels’, the news articles focus on their actions or intended actions. These actions are largely discursively qualified as negative and contrasted against the positive actions of the French and European forces.

I begin by looking at the extent to which the actions of the Chadian rebels are discursively constructed as a threat to the Chadian government. This is achieved through the topos of Threat as well as through use of active grammatical structures which emphasises the agency of the actors performing the action. The following are examples from *Le Figaro*:

* ‘[...] against the rebels who besieged it in N’Djamena’[[339]](#footnote-339) (Le Figaro, ‘Paris a volé au secours de la victoire d'Idriss Déby’, 06/02/2008)
* ‘the rebels launched their attack against N’Djamena’[[340]](#footnote-340) (Le Figaro, ‘vers un déploiement rapide de l'Eufor’, 07/02/2008)
* ‘the rebels were getting dangerously close to the capital, N’Djamena’[[341]](#footnote-341) (Le Figaro, ‘Réunion à l'Elysée sur la crise au Tchad’, 02/02/2008)

All the above examples use active grammatical constructions to describe the actions of the rebels. The journalists use verbs, nouns and adverbs to depict a sense of threat, 'besiege', 'attack', 'dangerously'. It is also useful to note that the above articles were published at the beginning of the battle on 2 February and before the operationalisation of EUFOR. Therefore, it can be argued that the sense of tension created through the portrayal of threat discursively legitimises the ‘multilateral security’ operation which followed in order to prevent further rebel action.

The topos of Threat, an important component of the ‘security’ frame, is also visible in the articles published in *Le Monde*. The action of the rebels is described in the following way in *Le Monde*:

* ‘the most serious attack by rebels in two years in Chad’[[342]](#footnote-342) (Le Monde, ‘la position d'Idriss Déby serait fragilisée’, 02/02/2008)
* ‘the rebels who were still threatening the capital, N’Djamena’[[343]](#footnote-343) (Le Monde, ‘Des tirs à l'arme lourde aux abords de N'Djamena’, 02/02/2008)
* ‘the rebel column clashed with the Chadian army’[[344]](#footnote-344) (ibid)
* ‘the rebels rushing the capital’[[345]](#footnote-345) (ibid)
* ‘rebel elements engaged in violent hold-ups of NGOs’[[346]](#footnote-346) (Rémy, Le Monde, 18/06/2008)

Like the articles published in *Le Figaro*, *Le Monde* uses keywords related to threat ('threatening', 'clashed', 'rushing', ‘violent’), as well as superlatives (‘the most serious') to demonstrate the scale and intensity of the rebel threat. Use of the present participle ‘rushing’ creates a sense of active danger or threat.

Finally, the topos of Threat is also present in *Libération*:

* ‘the rebel forces besiege the presidency and launch their assault on Adré’[[347]](#footnote-347) (AFP, Libération, 03/02/2008)
* ‘the rebels affirm that a new attack on the town is imminent’[[348]](#footnote-348) (AFP and Reuters, Libération, 02/02/2008)
* ‘Déby survived a plethora of rebel offensives’[[349]](#footnote-349) (Hofnung, Libération, ‘Idriss Déby menacé par les rebelles’, 02/02/2008)

Like *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*, *Libération* uses the vocabulary of threat to describe the actions of the rebels such as ‘attack’, ‘offensives’, ‘assault’, ‘besiege’. The term ‘besiege’ is used as it is in *Le Figaro*. The scale of the attack is emphasised through the noun ‘plethora’. In the above examples, there is also an instance of intended action, as one attack is described as ‘imminent’. Therefore, the actions and intended actions of the ‘rebels’ are selected by the authors of the articles to be communicated to readers but their motivations are omitted.

One of the main ways in which the Chadian ‘rebels’ and the Sudanese government are argued to be a threat to stability and security in Chad in the three newspapers is through their perceived actions against the EUFOR mission. Below are some examples from the news articles:

* ‘EUFOR has to be a major asset in the Darfur crisis, an issue that Nicolas Sarkozy considers a priority. Not fooled, the Sudanese wanted to torpedo the operation.’[[350]](#footnote-350) (Le Figaro, ‘La France en Afrique : l'analyse de Thierry Oberlé’, 13/02/2008)
* ‘According to an observer close to the matter, "the rebel attack, sponsored by Sudan, was seen as an attempt by Khartoum to intimidate Eufor.’[[351]](#footnote-351) (Rémy, Le Monde, 09/02/2008)
* ‘The Chadian rebels, who have been defeated but not destroyed, are threatening to lay into Eufor’.[[352]](#footnote-352) (Ayad, Libération, 13/02/2008)

The Sudanese actors and Chadian ‘rebels’ are accused in the three newspapers of deliberately frustrating EUFOR’s mission. Using the verbs ‘to torpedo’, ‘to intimidate’ and ‘to lay into’, these actors come across as violent and threatening.

The way in which a sense of threat is discursively constructed in the three newspapers is strikingly similar. The keywords used by all three newspapers are almost identical. This shows that despite the differing political positions of the three newspapers, their description of the events of the conflict do not vary much. Overall, the topos of Threat creates a sense of urgency to which there needs to be an immediate response, legitimising French military interventionist action across the three newspapers.

#### Sudanese Backing

According to the newspapers, the Chadian opponents of Déby were financially and politically backed by the government of Sudan. As the Sudanese government was itself positioned against the French government during this conflict, it is useful to explore the way in which the three news outlets discursively constructed Sudanese actors. Once I have done this, it will be possible to see how Chadian ‘rebels’ were discursively positioned in relation to the Sudanese actors. Sudanese sources are the least frequently cited sources in all three newspapers (*Le Figaro*, 6%; *Libération*, 11%; *Le Monde*, 5%). They are largely portrayed negatively, through the discursive device of Positive Self, Negative Other. Their actions are discussed in relation to their backing of the Chadian ‘rebels’, who, as the news articles claim, pose a threat to the Chadian government and aim to frustrate the positive work of the French and EUFOR troops.

As stated above, the newspapers describe the actions of the Chadian opponents of Déby as a ‘threat’ to the Chadian state. Here, I demonstrate that this threat is linked to the support of the Sudanese government. The Chadian ‘rebels’ are discursively constructed in relation to Sudanese actors as the examples below demonstrate:

* ‘This powerful rebel offensive, obviously supported by Sudan […]’[[353]](#footnote-353) (Le Monde, ‘la position d'Idriss Déby serait fragilisée’, 02/02/2008)
* ‘According to experts, the rebels formed an alliance in mid-December under pressure from Sudan’.[[354]](#footnote-354) (C.M and S.P with AFP and AP, Le Figaro, 02/02/2008)
* ‘The rebels, despite divergent interests, formed an alliance in mid-December under pressure from Sudan, according to experts’.[[355]](#footnote-355) (AFP, Libération, 02/03/2008)
* ‘Sudan, which houses the Chadian rebels, arms and encourages them’[[356]](#footnote-356) (Le Figaro, ‘Le piège tchadien’, 04/02/2008)
* ‘[…] danger of an armed rebellion fuelled by Sudan’.[[357]](#footnote-357) (Bernard and Nougayrède, Le Monde, 07/02/2008)
* ‘a rebellion that is seen in Paris as manipulated by Sudan’[[358]](#footnote-358) (Le Figaro, 27/02/2008)

The news articles describe the relationship between the Chadian ‘rebels’ and ‘Sudan’ through transitive verbs: ‘manipulate’, ‘arm and encourage’, ‘support’. This has the effect of discursively qualifying the Sudanese actors as coercive. In the first example, the consequence of this coercion is described as ‘powerful’. This demonstrates the extent to which the Sudanese actors are discursively constructed as important and threatening. Moreover, these verbs position Sudanese actors as subjects and Chadian actors as objects. Chadian rebels thereby appear almost as victims of the Sudanese government. This is further evident in the phrase that describes Chadian actors as ‘under pressure from’ Sudan.

This is similar to the discursive construction of Chadian ‘rebels’ in the conflict against Chad in *Le Monde*, which I explored in Chapter 3. In Chapter 3, I highlighted the extent to which *Le Monde* discursively linked the internal opponents of the Chadian government to the Libyan government during Operation Epervier’s intervention 1986-7. Here, we see that Déby’s Chadian opponents are once again linked to external agents, the Sudanese government. It once again reflects the topos of Dependence, in which Chadian actors, even when they are enemies, are in need of assistance. Furthermore, the idea that Chadian rebels are controlled by Sudan means they become a double ‘other’: they are rebels against the Chadian army but they are also controlled by an external Sudanese ‘other’. Another interesting element of the above examples to note is that almost the exact same wording is employed in both *Le Figaro* and *Libération*, in describing the formation of an alliance. This may be due to the reliance of both newspapers on the AFP as a news source. The difficulty of obtaining information during this conflict was outlined by Rolley (2009). This demonstrates the extent to which there are similarities in the discourse of the newspapers.

Therefore, despite their opposing political positions, with *Le Figaro* on the right and *Libération* on the left, both newspapers depend on AFP for information, regardless of whether it reflects their political position or not. This suggests that when it comes to reporting on French military presence in Chad, the newspapers forgo their political positions. This leads to a homogenisation of the angles and frames of news reports on this conflict and a lack of diversity of opinion is presented to the French public. Because of this, the frame through which messages about the conflict are communicated to the French public, namely the ‘security’ frame, remains uncontested and one dominant narrative emerges across the three newspapers. This demonstrates the extent to which a ‘transmediatic’ narrative appears in the news articles and how the construction of an enemy ‘other’ then justifies the practice of French military action.

To strengthen their reports, both newspapers cite unnamed ‘experts’ as a source. This draws on the rhetorical device of *ethos*, or an appeal to the authority of the source, as ‘experts’ appear trustworthy due to their knowledge of a subject. It also distances the journalists from their statements by deferring to an external source. Yet, in the aforementioned interview with researcher Tubiana in *Libération*, the researcher says, ‘Of course, Sudan provides support to Déby's armed opponents, but limited support’.[[359]](#footnote-359) He thereby does the opposite to most of the sources cited in the newspapers, as well as the journalists, by downplaying the support of the Sudanese government (Hofnung, Libération, 18/06/2008). It is also interesting to note that Tubiana uses the term ‘opponent’ rather than ‘rebel’, thereby adding a degree of legitimacy to their cause. Overall, the extent to which the Sudanese government backed the Chadian opponents of Déby is unclear, however, it is evident that the newspapers discursively construct a strong relationship between the two actors. This has the effect of discursively qualifying both Chadian ‘rebels’ and the Sudanese government as enemies of the Chadian state and therefore enemies of the French military.

### The Discursive Construction of the French State and Military (with Epervier and EUFOR)

In this section, I analyse how the *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *Libération* discursively construct the French governmental and military actors. Having discursively constructed an enemy and victim, the final actor is the protector or assister. The discursive construction of the French actors is positioned within the frame of ‘multilateral security’ as their mission is to respond to the insecurity caused by the ‘rebels’ in Chad and characterised by a joint multilateral effort. Firstly, I argue that the three media outlets discursively construct the role of the French forces as part of Epervier and EUFOR, as well as the government's aims in Chad, as positive. Secondly, I argue that French military involvement is framed through the policy of multilateralisation and that there is tension between the new policy of multilateralisation and old French 'exceptionalism'. Finally, I compare how *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *Libération* report on the investigations in *La Croix* newspaper, which revealed that the French military had intervened in Chad before the launch of EUFOR, despite the denial of involvement by the French government and the contravention of the 1976 Technical Military Cooperation agreement.

As mentioned above, when EUFOR was launched, French foreign policy was still based on the 1994 White Paper on Defence. The White Paper set out a new direction for French military interventions as multilateral, particularly as part of Europe, moving away from the unilateral interventions which had developed after 1960 and during the context of the Cold War. This policy developed further in the aftermath of criticism of Operation Turquoise, the unilateral French military intervention in Rwanda, which offered support to the genocidal Rwandan government in 1994. Hofnung describes this change in policy in relation to the Genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda,

The days when the Foreign Legion was parachuted into an African city to restore order in no time has passed for years. Traumatised by accusations of complicity in the genocide in Rwanda in spring 1994, France refuses to appear on the front line. The problem is that the defence agreements - or military cooperation agreements - are still in force.[[360]](#footnote-360) (Libération, 05/02/2008)

Hofnung describes France as the victim of the period in which the genocide in Rwanda took place because France was ‘traumatised by accusations of complicity’. He sees the old-style unilateral interventions as having passed, and the ‘cooperation’ agreements as vestiges of this period that continue to tie France to Africa. This distances France from its colonial past and discursively constructs France as the victim of that past, in place of Rwanda or the other countries in central Africa which were affected by French military presence in the region. It also suggests that it is because of the unilateral interventions, based on the ‘cooperation’ agreements that this happened. Therefore, multilateralisation can be presented as a solution.

As mentioned above, multilateralisation developed in response to criticisms of France’s role in the Genocide of the Tutsis as well as globalisation, which led to the decreasing influence of France as the major power in Africa. French President Sarkozy was elected nine months before the period of analysis of this chapter (February 2008-March 2009). Therefore, this was a time of change, during which the Sarkozy administration attempted to shape or leave its mark on French foreign policy. In March 2009, Sarkozy made the decision that France should fully re-join NATO. This further demonstrated the desire to multilateralise. This proximity with the USA under Sarkozy’s government prompted an article in *Le Monde* asking whether it was ‘the end of gaullisme’[[361]](#footnote-361) (Nougayrède, Le Monde, 05/05/2008) as de Gaulle had wished to keep France independent of the USA’s influence, unlike Sarkozy. *Le Monde*’s article is not critical of Sarkozy’s position, despite the newspaper’s historical proximity to de Gaulle, having been founded at de Gaulle’s request. However, its conclusion that there remains ‘residues’[[362]](#footnote-362) of Gaullisme in France’s foreign policy perhaps reflects *Le Monde*’s continued support of the current governmental.

Regarding French foreign policy in Africa, Sarkozy promised, as with every president since de Gaulle, to break with France's neocolonial past. He is quoted in *Libération* during this period of analysis, describing the military relationship between France and Africa as ‘“Obsolete”. This is the adjective that Nicolas Sarkozy used, yesterday, before the South African parliament in Cape Town, to evaluate the military relations between France and Africa’[[363]](#footnote-363) (Merchet, Libération, 29/02/2008). The adjective ‘obsolete’ suggests that the military relationship is outmoded. This is similar to *Le Monde*’s description of Déby’s request for assistance from the French military, discussed above. As presidential candidate in 2006, Sarkozy had similarly stated that ‘There are no French mining companies in Africa’,[[364]](#footnote-364) forgetting that state-owned French uranium company Areva was operating in Sudan, for example (Survie, 2010). As president, Sarkozy also stated that the French government would revise the ‘defence’ and ‘cooperation’ agreements tying France to its former African colonies. Critics of Sarkozy were sceptical about changes, especially after his speech in Dakar university in July 2007, in which he repeated many neocolonial and racialising tropes about Africa, discussed in Chapter 2. I find that despite the promises of change and denial of a relationship between France and African countries, the French neocolonial practice of military interventions continued throughout the period of Sarkozy's administration and beyond. I argue that by discursively constructing the role of the French forces as positive and multilateral, the news articles discursively legitimise its presence in Chad.

#### Valorisation of French Actors

The actions of the French government and military, as part of EUFOR and Epervier, were broadly constructed as positive by the three newspapers, as could be expected. This was achieved through the discursive device of Positive Self, Negative Other, whereby the actions of these actors are framed as positive in contrast to a negative 'other'. It is also achieved through the topos of Legality: the argument that the intervention was legally justified and therefore legitimate. The discursive device of Omission is also apparent in the news articles, whereby the news outlets omit certain negative aspects of French military involvement in Chad, such as self-interest.

By analysing the words that directly precede 'France',[[365]](#footnote-365) 'of France',[[366]](#footnote-366) or ‘to France’,[[367]](#footnote-367) we get an understanding of how the news articles characterise French actors and actions. Using the 'word tree' function on Nvivo, I was able to identify patterns in the texts about the discourse around France. These include: ‘ambitious’,[[368]](#footnote-368) ‘capability’,[[369]](#footnote-369) ‘aid’,[[370]](#footnote-370) ‘responsibility’,[[371]](#footnote-371) ‘action’[[372]](#footnote-372). It can be argued that the words convey a sense of action and duty that discursively constructs France in a positive and strong way (this is in contrast to Chad, as we saw above, that is constructed as negative and weak or the Chadian rebels, who are constructed as negative and threatening).

This lack of assertion about French self-interest is evident in an article published in *Le Monde* (15/02/2008) in which journalist Béguin asks head of the CNRS, Jean-François Bayart, what economic benefits there are for France from the intervention. Bayart replies, ‘Economically, none. The main resource of the country, oil, is controlled by foreign companies, notably American, and Total has withdrawn from all oil activity in Chad, which it had inherited from the company Elf.’[[373]](#footnote-373) Bayart’s statement ignores the fact that even if the French government does not directly benefit from oil in Chad, it benefits from its geostrategic position, where it has positioned its military bases, giving it access to neighbouring countries rich in natural resources, such as uranium and beryllium in neighbouring Niger and Central African Republic.

Interestingly, and in contrast to the omission of French economic interest linked to its presence in Chad, an article in *Le Figaro*, discusses Chinese economic interests in Chad, but not French interests: ‘China’s military and diplomatic support for Sudan, where it has oil interests, no longer needs to be demonstrated’[[374]](#footnote-374) (Pierre Prier Le Figaro 25/02/2008). This shows the extent to which *Le Figaro*’s journalist is happy to explore the context of Chinese presence in Chad in relation to its economic benefits, but not France’s. In turn, by obscuring France’s economic interests in the region, Prier portrays French military presence as altruistic and positive, discursively justifying its presence in Chad as beneficial for Chad. This is similar to the discursive construction of Libyan in Chapter 3, whereby Libyan military presence was discursively qualified as ‘imperialist’ whereas French military presence was seen as ‘natural’. In this case, Chinese economic interests in the region are explicitly stated whereas French interests are either ignored or denied, preventing criticisms which could delegitimise French military presence in Chad.

#### Multilateralisation

As discussed above, EUFOR was a multilateral military intervention involving several European countries yet with more than half of the force was made up of French troops. Furthermore, it was launched at the initiative of the French government. And although it was led by an Irish commander, the second in command, Jean-Philippe Ganascia, was French. EUFOR and Epervier were supposed to be separate missions, however, there was crossover between the two. Tubiana (2008) wrote the following about the differences between EUFOR and Epervier’s missions,

Despite the differing mandates of MINURCAT, EUFOR, and Epervier, the distinctions in the roles and responsibilities of these forces are far from clear to many on the ground. French troops in EUFOR and those of Epervier will have different uniforms (sand for EUFOR, khaki for Epervier), but the European peacekeepers will be stationed in the same areas as the Epervier troops in N’Djamena and Abéché, and will also benefit from Epervier aerial support. Interviewed in January, EUFOR was unable to promise that it will remain neutral if Epervier troops come into danger. Neither was it able to confirm that it will protect civilians if they are attacked by Chadian government or pro-government forces, as opposed to Chadian rebels or janjawid [sic].[[375]](#footnote-375) Finally, while being unable to differentiate their position clearly from that of Epervier, EUFOR troops are planning to carry out humanitarian or development ‘quick impact projects’ to ‘facilitate the acceptance of the force’s presence’. This is bound to create another dangerous confusion and overlapping of roles, this time between the military forces and the humanitarian organisations (p. 56)

This demonstrates the extent to which there was overlap between the two forces. Epervier was a unilateral intervention, legitimised through the 1976 Technical Military Cooperation agreement between France and Chad. EUFOR was legitimised through a UN mandate. The confusion created by the two forces and the resultant potential for the impartiality of EUFOR is discussed in the news articles, particularly in *Libération*,

* ‘For months, Paris had to deploy considerable persuasion to convince its partners within the European Union (EU) to participate in this force, insisting on its strictly humanitarian mission and its impartiality’.[[376]](#footnote-376) (Hofnung, Libération, 06/06/2008)
* In February, Austria had already expressed doubts about its participation after Paris had given decisive support to the regime of Idriss Déby’[[377]](#footnote-377) (Hofnung and Buffet, Libération, 19/04/2008)

The above quotes demonstrate how *Libération* reports on doubts about French impartiality. Similarly, *Le Monde* reported that according to 'an observer', ‘'the French attack and support for Idriss Déby rather reinforced the idea that France, the framework nation of Eufor, was not impartial vis-à-vis Chad and this poses a problem."'[[378]](#footnote-378) (Rémy, Le Monde, 02/09/2008).

However, other articles position French military involvement within a multilateral framework, which legitimised France’s presence in Chad. *Libération* expresses Sarkozy’s intentions to create a common defence framework with the EU and NATO:

Paris, which will take over the presidency of the EU on 1 July, wants in particular to relaunch the construction of a common defence. In exchange for this, explained Nicolas Sarkozy, France could reintegrate NATO's integrated command. “We are following the situation in eastern Chad very carefully,” the Quai d'Orsay said on Friday. Any armed action targeting Chad and its institutions can only be condemned by France and the international community.”[[379]](#footnote-379) (Hofnung, Libération, 06/06/2008)

The position of France is placed alongside that of the ‘international community’. There is therefore the idea of France working with different organisations towards a common goal, reinforcing its legitimacy as part of a larger framework. *Le Figaro* also discusses the ‘unanimity’ and ‘support’ among the UN with regard to military action in Chad.

* ‘The UN Security Council today condemned the ongoing offensive by armed rebel groups in Chad, in a unanimously adopted statement’.[[380]](#footnote-380) (Le Figaro, 16/06/2008)
* ‘The senior correspondent in foreign affairs for Le Figaro explains that France is now surrounded by international support to intervene in Africa’[[381]](#footnote-381) (Le Figaro, ‘La France en Afrique : l'analyse de Thierry Oberlé’, 13/02/2008).

The idea of being ‘surrounded’ by support emphasises the scale of support that France receives from the international community. Furthermore, the importance of the authority of the journalist reinforces the impact of the statement through the rhetorical device of *ethos*, as the reporter is described as ‘explain[ing]’ this fact to the reader rather than opining.

*Le Monde* also highlights the unanimity of the UN’s decision and the role of France within it,

Highlighting that the Security Council text - voted unanimously, with notably the support of Libya - called for support for the "legal government" of Chad, the French ambassador to the UN, Jean-Maurice Ripert commented that "if Déby requests a certain number of things from the Member States, as he now has authorisation to do, the French authorities will decide."[[382]](#footnote-382)

France obtained from the UN Security Council, Monday 4 February, a green light for a possible military intervention in Chad by the adoption of a declaration condemning the rebel attacks against the regime of President Idriss Déby and demanding "Member States to provide the support requested by the Chadian government". The text, without being the resolution that Paris originally wanted, is considered a sufficient legal basis for military action.[[383]](#footnote-383) (Bernard, Bolopion and Nougayrède, Le Monde, 06/02/2008)

The idea of the unanimity of international bodies regarding French actions legitimises French intervention, and the fact that it is reiterated in the news outlets shows the extent to which the news outlets lend their voice in support of French actions.

An article published by Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner published in *Le Monde* (10/03/2008) at the beginning of the period of analysis is particularly useful in analysing *Le Monde*’s discursive construction of French actors during the conflict. Below I quote the first four paragraphs of his article,

For months, years, we were moved, powerless, before the tragedy of Darfur. For 15 days, despite the unrest in Chad, Europe has provided itself with the means to protect the victims and rebuild their villages in eastern Chad. Under the leadership of France and thanks to the efforts of our European partners, the European Union, in accordance with a resolution of the United Nations Security Council adopted unanimously, launched the "Eufor" operation.

The women raped or murdered as soon as they left their camp, the starving children will finally be assisted, rescued. This is not a small result. I have just returned from Goz Beïda, in eastern Chad, and I will not forget the enthusiastic welcome that the displaced people and refugees gave to the European soldiers. Neither will the latter, I'm sure, despite the risks and the death of Sergeant Polin, whose sacrifice I salute.

The launch of an autonomous Union operation in Africa, led by an Irish general assisted by a Polish deputy and bringing together troops from some fifteen countries illustrates the path that we have travelled to build the Europe of defence.

This is now desired and supported by States which, even yesterday, remained sceptical. We have been working on European defence since the 1990s. Europeans had to have the military means to match their political ambitions. How could we hope to weigh in a crisis or a negotiation if we could not command respect?[[384]](#footnote-384)

In the opening lines of the article, Kouchner refers to himself in the first person plural (‘nous’). In the next line it becomes apparent that he is positioning Europe as a collective, of which he is a part, through use of the pronoun 'we'. He juxtaposes the events taking place in Chad ('tragedy of Darfur') in contrast to the actions of the Europeans (protection of victims, rebuilding villages) through the discursive device of Positive Self, Negative Other. He therefore clearly discursively constructs a victim (Chad) and a saviour (Europe). He then goes on to position France as part of the effort involving Europe and the United Nations Security Council. However, France is not simply described as an equal partner but placed at the centre of the action and as the main saviour: it was under the 'leadership of France' and 'thanks to' the 'European partners' (of France) that Chad was assisted. Therefore, France is discursively qualified as a vital component in the operation.

The second paragraph describes the victims of the 'tragedy'. This is unusual in the articles I have analysed as they do not usually feature the perspective of non-political civilians (11% of sources in *Le Monde* are non-military and non-official). Here, Kouchner describes tragic scenes of rape, murder and starvation, appealing to the readers emotions through the rhetorical device of *pathos*. He then once again juxtaposes this negative, sad image with a positive, happier image of the 'enthusiastic welcome' that these victims gave to the European soldiers. Once again, Kouchner discursively constructs an African victim in contrast to a European saviour. This is reminiscent of the discourse of the 'civilising mission' during the colonial period, which I discussed in Chapter 2, and linked to French General Lacaze’s quote about Chadians during Operation Manta. Lacaze stated, ‘this is why these people saw with pleasure and relief the Whites, we the French, “occupying” the country’ (Lacaze, 1993, p. 378). The notion of the civilising mission comes through further in the article when Koucher states that in the EU operations since 2003 in ‘the Balkans, Africa, the Middle East, Afghanistan and as far as Indonesia’,[[385]](#footnote-385) 'in each of them, the Union has been guided by a single ideal: to save the thousands of lives threatened by conflict to prevent wars'.[[386]](#footnote-386) Kouchner’s pro-interventionist stance, having supported the War in Iraq as a ‘humanitarian’ intervention, asserts the aim of EU operations as a need to be saviours. And this is achieved, for him, through military means.

In the third and fourth paragraphs, Kouchner brings up the countries that were taking part in EUFOR and mentions how those who were sceptical of the operation now 'desire' and 'support' the operation. He therefore adopts a self-congratulatory tone as he claims that those sceptical countries had converted to the cause initiated by France. He uses it as an argument for multilateral European operations, using a rhetorical question to emphasise his point. Further in the article, Kouchner quotes the Saint-Malo declaration, signed by France and Great Britain (discussed in Chapter 2) about responding to international crises: ‘“The Union must have an autonomous capacity for action, supported by credible military forces, with the means to use them and to be ready to do so in order to respond to international crises”’.[[387]](#footnote-387) He therefore positions the success of European operations and operational capacity within the foreign policy of France.

By discursively constructing the French as ‘saviours’, we once again see Fanon’s (1952) argument at play, in which French actors are regarded as ‘superior’. This shows the extent to which a neocolonial ideology is embedded in the language used by Kouchner and reproduced in *Le Monde*. The continuation of the idea of the ‘civilising mission’ through the discursive construction of the French actors as saviours in Kouchner’s language, reflects the way that the justification for French military involvement in Chad is reliant on an ideology rooted in the colonial period and in turn normalised as a narrative.

#### The Revelations in La Croix

Despite the discussions about France’s role within a multilateral EU operation, one news outlet revealed that the old-style unilateral interventions were still taking place. On 8 February 2008, *La Croix*, the French Catholic daily newspaper, revealed that the French military unilaterally intervened in Chad on 2 February to actively fight against rebel attack during the Battle of N’Djamena, despite French authorities denying involvement and not having a mandate to do so. In this section, I analyse the responses of the three newspapers to this revelation. *La Croix* is not part of my news source base; my interests pertain to how *Le Figaro*, *Le Monde* and *Libération* reported on the revelations published in *La Croix*.

##### Le Figaro

The day after the publication of the revelations about French military involvement in combat in Chad in *La Croix* on 8 February 2008, *Le Figaro*’s senior correspondent, Oberlé, expressed scepticism about their report. He wrote, ‘The assertions of *La Croix*, which claim to rely on anonymous “diplomatic and military sources”, are unverifiable’ (Le Figaro, 09/02/2008).[[388]](#footnote-388) The perspective of Oberlé is that *La Croix*’s only ‘claims’ to know what happened and its sources are ‘unverifiable’ and therefore suggests that they cannot be trusted. This sentence is followed by another in which any doubts about the French government’s position are countered by Oberlé’s own assertions, rooted in certainty: ‘However, it is undeniable that the French soldiers provide their Chadian counterparts, under technical cooperation agreements, with information on the movements of the rebel columns’.[[389]](#footnote-389) In other words, he asserts that French involvement is legal and justified. The word ‘undeniable’ is contrasted against ‘unverifiable’ to highlight the certainty of their legal ‘technical’ assistance. Furthermore, Oberlé reassures the readers of the legitimacy of France’s assistance by quoting a trustworthy source, close to the action, French General Ganascia. The reader is invited to sympathise with Ganascia, who is described as ‘serene despite everything’.[[390]](#footnote-390) Ganascia states, ‘we are politically neutral, but those who enter a cycle of violence, in our mandate zone, risk finding themselves opposed to us’.[[391]](#footnote-391) Ganascia’s warning that the French military is neutral until provoked portrays the idea of reactiveness and defensiveness rather than being offensive or attacking. Moreover, once again, the idea of a 'cycle of violence' makes the conflict in Chad seem like an inevitable, recurring type of event, a characteristic of the area, and therefore, to be expected. This normalises the situation rather than feeding into the idea of a revelation. The reader is therefore reassured that the French military did not contravene the ‘cooperation’ agreement.

Oberlé relays the perspective of the French military. Although he does not give his direct opinions, it is important to analyse the underlying aspects of his text. For example, Ganascia says that Epervier and EUFOR are separate. The journalist, in turn, describes the camp being constructed as ‘almost virgin’.[[392]](#footnote-392) It can be argued that being ‘virgin’ communicates the idea that there was nothing there before, and therefore that EUFOR is building something new and perhaps, unrelated to what was there before, i.e., Epervier. Also, Oberlé interprets Ganascia’s words as ‘assurance’. As this article was published the day after accusations about the French military, this ‘assurance’ is necessary in order to protect its image.

In another article published in *Le Figaro* on the same day, by S.L and using AP sources, the journalists communicate the perspective of the ‘rebels’, without directly quoting them. According to the article, the ‘rebels’ claim that France did intervene on 2 February. Despite their important claim, it is not possible to directly hear their opposing voices, as they are not quoted. Furthermore, the article does not question the legality of the intervention and reiterates France's position that it did not contravene the 'cooperation' agreement between France and Chad. This time, French Commander Prazuck is directly quoted, stating “This information has “not the slightest sign of reality”.[[393]](#footnote-393) Therefore, once again, a military source is quoted to deny the potential legal contravention of French forces, positioning *Le Figaro* on the side of the French military. Use of Prazuck and Ganascia as sources gives weight to *Le Figaro*’s arguments through the rhetorical device of *ethos*, an appeal to authority, in this case of the French military.

##### Le Monde

The first half of the *Le Monde* article published on the revelations in *La Croix* quotes the latter's article. Its author claims that *Le Monde* already had knowledge of French military involvement in the battle through the provision of intelligence to the Chadian military and that it was therefore allowed under the 1976 Technical Military Cooperation agreement. The revelations in *La Croix*, however, suggest that French troops took part in direct combat and that the French military delivered weapons from Libya to Chadian troops, which is not allowed according to the agreement. Therefore, *Le Monde* contradicts the findings in *La Croix* and asserts that French military involvement was legitimate. Emphasising the fact that *Le Monde* already had information on this episode demonstrates perhaps that the newspaper was concerned with its own reputation as a news source and wanted to appear as a trustworthy source of information.

The second half of the article quotes French ministers and a French military general who deny involvement. Relying on a governmental source and a military source shows the extent to which *Le Monde*, like *Le Figaro* but unlike *La Croix,* relieson official sources in order to frame its news stories. This leads to an overrepresentation of the perspective of official actors and a reinforcement of the governmental narrative.

*La Croix*’s findings are mentioned again once during this period of analysis in an interview with Jean-François Bayart, director of research at the CNRS, on 15 February 2008. He is asked how he knows that French troops were involved in battle on 2 February despite denial from the French government. He replies:

Firstly, there are serious journalists, from the newspaper *La Croix* in this case, who published this information in the 8 February edition, largely confirmed it on 11 February and moreover, I have my own sources from N’Djamena.[[394]](#footnote-394) (Béguin, Le Monde, 15/02/2008)

Unlike *Le Monde’s* journalist in the article published on 9 February,he therefore affirms the legitimacy of the journalist's findings. This is not commented on by the interviewer. Furthermore, it is not referred to again in the articles published on Epervier and EUFOR in the articles I analyse during this period.

##### Libération

Just one day before the revelations in *La Croix* were published, *Libération* published a quote from Defence Minister Hervé Morin denying French involving in the bombing in Chad, ‘Defense Minister Hervé Morin also denied that France had participated in bombings in Chad as accused by the Chadian rebels, assuring that it had “in no case intervened militarily”’[[395]](#footnote-395) (Libération, 07/02/2008). The following day, *Libération* published a story on the investigation of *La Croix*, quoting Bernard Kouchner’s denial of involvement: “It has never been so clear, never in the history of relations between France and Africa has there been so little intervention by France in a specific crisis situation.”’[[396]](#footnote-396) Yet, following this, there was a degree of criticism from journalist Hofnung of French military presence in Chad,

Questions about the legitimacy and real role of French troops in Chad could resurface very quickly. On Friday, Paris confirmed the arrival of a new column of rebels stationed between N'Djamena and Abéché, in an area out of range of Déby's helicopters. Before his election to the presidency, candidate Sarkozy had promised a “break” with the era of Françafrique. Which will inevitably involve a revision of the defence agreements from another era linking France with a number of former colonies.[[397]](#footnote-397)

By stating that questions about the legitimacy of French troops ‘could resurface’, Hofnung is not himself questioning this legitimacy. Hofnung distances himself from the question about ‘the legitimacy and real role of French troops’[[398]](#footnote-398) by not asking the question himself but by attributing it to no particular subject. he poses. The criticism that is contained within the question is therefore dampened by a lack of agency.

On 15 June 2008, one week after the investigations in *La Croix*, in an article by Ludovic Blecher in *Libération*, there is no mention of the revelations. Blechner writes that, France 'provided decisive support - without however directly intervening - last February to President Idriss Deby Itno who was surrounded in his palace in N'Djamena during a rebel offensive, which he finally managed to break.'[[399]](#footnote-399) *La Croix*’s investigation was therefore no longer treated as a credible story. Hofnung (09/02/2008) claims that if the findings of *La Croix* were true, it would be ‘more than embarrassing’[[400]](#footnote-400) for the French government, especially as they had had such a difficult time recruiting soldiers from other EU countries.

##### Comparison

Overall, there are very few articles on this matter in all three news outlets. *Le Figaro* is the most defensive of the three news outlets, with Oberlé denying the credibility of *La Croix*’s findings. This reflects its position as a right-wing news outlet which had supported the election of the right-wing president of France. *Le Monde* is slightly more accepting of *La Croix*’s investigation through the voice of Jean-François Bayart, who labels the journalists of *La Croix* ‘serious’. However, Bayart is not a *Le Monde* journalist and therefore his position does not necessarily reflect that of the editorial board. But his authoritative position as head of the CNRS gives weight to this position and therefore reflects a different viewpoint to that of *Le Monde*’s journalists, unlike *Le Figaro*. *Libération* is the most critical of the government’s involvement in Chad following this episode. This may reflect its left-wing position. However, the criticality is indirect and contradicted in later articles.

What is striking in all three news outlets is that there is little concern with the implications of direct French military involvement during the battle with the Chadian military against the opponents of the Chadian government. As *Survie* has suggested, the French government and military have at certain times taken part in illegal actions in their former colonies, as discussed in Chapter 1. If the 1976 Technical Military Cooperation agreement with Chad was contravened then the French military intervened without a mandate and therefore, illegally. The fact that none of the newspapers directly questions the legitimacy of French involvement in Chad demonstrates the extent to which the news outlets tend to accept the version of events narrated by French officials. More worryingly, it reflects the extent to which French military presence in its former colonies had become normalised to the point that a potential contravention of the only agreement legally binding France to Chad did not appear as a serious point. I argue that this normalisation in discourse led to a normalisation in the action of the French military in Chad, discursively legitimising French presence there.

## Conclusion

After 2009, Operation Epervier intervened as part of Operation Serval in Mali, and Operation Sangaris in Central African Republic. In 2014, the French government launched Operation Barkhane, which replaced Epervier. Its operations stretched to Chad, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. It can be argued that Epervier’s assistance to Serval and Sangaris was a precursor to the multilateralisation of operations through Barkhane, involving multiple African ‘partners’, under the pretext of fighting Islamic terrorism in the Sahel region.

As in Chapter 3, we see the same patterns of the victimisation of Chad and Chadian actors, the delegitimisation of ‘rebels’ or opponents and the legitimisation and valorisation of France and French actors. This reflects a neocolonial discourse based on perceived inferiority/superiority and a way of framing events which favours a dominant pro-interventionist narrative. The language of the newspapers largely reinforces that of the officials and official documents analysed in Chapter 2. Furthermore, the language of the three newspapers, despite being on different sides of the political spectrum and with different political allegiances, is strikingly similar, reflecting and reinforcing a ‘transmediatic’ dominant narrative across different new outlets. This narrative serves to reinforce a neocolonial ideology in which the French military has a continued right to intervene in France’s former sphere of influence. The normalisation of French military involvement in Chad is reflected in the fact that there is little explanation, across the three newspapers, of the reasons for which there was a rebellion against the Chadian government. Instead, it is taken for granted that the French government should intervene to protect the Chadian state. In that way, fighting Chadian rebels becomes an end in itself, maintaining military bases in Africa becomes an end in itself.

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# Conclusion

I began this thesis with a quote from journalist Tamar Golan’s (1981) short article, asking ‘*How can France do everything that it does in Africa – and get away with?’* (p. 3). A pertinent question due to the scale and scope of French military involvement in its former African colonies since the latter’s independence in the 1960s. Despite the independence of the African countries formerly colonised by France, the French state has remained involved in its former ‘sphere of influence’ in west and central Africa on a semi-continuous basis, intervening in the region over 50 times since 1960.

In this thesis, I demonstrated the extent to which French military interventions in Chad were discursively justified in French foreign policy and journalistic texts produced between 1960 and 2014. I showed that in the aftermath of independence, the authors of French foreign policy documents reformulated a relationship between France and its former colonies (which had previously been based on colonial exploitation) as a positive relationship based on a policy of ‘cooperation’. This policy was outlined in the ‘defence’, ‘assistance’ and ‘cooperation’ agreements signed by France and the newly independent African countries, enabling continued French military presence on the African continent. The discourse of ‘cooperation’ was further constructed across the French mainstream press, regardless of the political position of the news outlet, through a pro-interventionist framing of French military operation Epervier (1986-2014). These frames were disseminated and communicated to the French public, contributing to the shaping of public opinion on the role of the French military in Chad.

I argued that the discourse of ‘cooperation’ was based on a neocolonial ideology, which valorised the actions of the French military, victimised Chadian actors and delegitimised those who opposed or were critical of French military involvement in Africa and its allies. This discourse served the longevity of French military involvement in its former colonies, allowing the French state to benefit economically, politically and geostrategically from its former colonial ‘sphere of influence’ in west and central Africa. This benefit to France came at the expense of Chad, where wealth inequality and conflict continued to damage Chadian life.

I asked three main research questions. Below I will discuss how each question was addressed in the course of this thesis. My first question concerned the policy of ‘cooperation’. I asked, *how did the official governmental discourse around the relationship between France and Chad develop after Chadian independence in 1960?* After the end of formal colonialism, the relationship between France and its former colonies continued through the signing of ‘cooperation’ agreements. Related to the above question, is the following, *to what extent did the new relationship between France and Chad reflect a break with the old relationship based on colonialism?*

This research question was dealt with mostly in Chapter 2. I showed that once it was clear that the French government under de Gaulle could no longer hold onto the French colonial empire, the relationship between France and the newly independent countries of Africa moved from colonialism to ‘cooperation’. The French state moved from direct rule to a more subtle form of control in its former ‘sphere of influence’. The discourse of ‘cooperation’ suggested that the relationship would be based on consent, collaboration and community, but also the dependence of France’s former colonies on France to guarantee their sovereignty and the duty of France to provide aid and assistance. The notions of dependence and duty were used to prolong French military involvement in the region. In reality, France was dependent on the natural resources in the region and needed military bases to access and protect its financial interests and those of French businesses.

The relationship of ‘cooperation’ continued despite global and domestic changes taking place in the period between 1990 and 2014. In the aftermath of the Cold War, there were two significant changes to French foreign policy, which led to reforms to the policy of ‘cooperation’: democratisation and multilateralisation. The ability of the French government to discursively adapt the nature of the relationship of ‘cooperation’ reinforced the established neocolonial practice of French military intervention in Chad, in turn, enabling continued French dominance in central and west Africa at the expense of the latter. Therefore, I argued that a new relationship did form in the aftermath of independence between France and Chad, as well as its other former African colonies. However, the exploitative nature of the relationship continued in the form of neocolonial relations.

My second research question concerned the role of the mainstream press in the discursive justification of French military Operation Epervier in Chad (1986-2014). I asked, *how did the mainstream French press frame Operation Epervier and discursively construct the actors involved in its military interventions, their actions and the relationships between them?* The mainstream French press was influential and played a role in the shaping of public opinion in its communication of the events of French military interventions to the French public. Related to this research question is the following, *how did journalistic discourses differ from that of the French government?*

I dealt with this question in Chapters 3 and 4. In Chapter 3, during Operation Epervier’s intervention in Chad between 1986 and 1987, I determined that a dominant frame emerged through the news articles, the ‘technical military assistance’ frame. I argued that this frame had the effect of discursively justifying Operation Epervier and French military presence in Chad. The *actions* of the French military were justified through their legality based on the ‘technical’ aspect of the operation. The French government’s *aims* were justified through the ‘assistance’ aspect of the operation. The frame reinforced the power relations between France and Chad as one of dominance in which France was valorised and Chad was victimised and portrayed as dependent on French assistance. This re-established and reinforced neocolonial practices in the form of technical military cooperation. Therefore, *Le Monde* also co-constructed and reinforced the governmental discourse, contributing to the dissemination of a dominant pro-interventionist narrative to the French public.

In Chapter 4, I identified a dominant frame of ‘multilateral security’ across *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *Libération*, which reflected the shifts in French foreign policy towards multilateralisation as a response to insecurity internationally and domestically for France. Journalistic reporting on the same subject but from different political standpoints still led to very similar outcomes in reporting. Overall, I argued that the discourse of the policy and the press did not hugely differ, demonstrating the consensus across the French news media and government. It showed not only how the positive pro-interventionist discourse of ‘cooperation’ was constructed but how it was disseminated to the public, which was essential to the justification of the military operation. This demonstrated the extent to which discourse is social practice with real implications on the actions of people and governments.

My final research question dealt with the ideological nature of the governmental and journalistic discourses on French military intervention in France’s former colonies, and in particular, Chad. I asked, *to what extent did these discourses shape the relationship between the two countries and to what extent were they rooted in ideologies inherited from the colonial period?* I argued that the shift in discourse from ‘colonialism’ to ‘cooperation’ in both the policy documents and the news articles, enabled the French military to continue its military presence in Chad. It was able to do this because the discourse of ‘cooperation’ was rooted in the ideology of neocolonialism and justified French presence in Chad based on the notion of Chadian dependence on the French state and the duty of France to intervene in its former colonies.

The idea of a duty or a right of the French government to intervene in the countries of its former colonial empire, as well as other countries in the region, which had been colonised by other European powers, was rooted in a colonial logic, and led to a naturalisation of French military involvement in Chad. This was demonstrated in the lack of critical coverage, across the three newspapers and an omission in terms of reporting on the reasons for which the conflicts had started in the first place. Instead, a presumption was made that the French government should intervene to protect the Chadian state. Consequently, fighting Chadian ‘rebels’, who were a threat to the Chadian president, an ally of France, as well as French military presence, became an end in itself as did maintaining military bases in Chad. The lack of criticism in the newspapers thereby contributed to the normalisation and in turn, justification of French military presence in Chad.

On the one hand, the ‘cooperation’ agreements signed between France and the newly independent countries of Africa, provided the basis of a legal and constituted transition from colonialism to neocolonialism. The risks of continued economic and political exploitation under these agreements was explored by thinkers such as Sally N’Dongo (1972; 1976) at the time. On the other hand, the discourse of French governmental elites as well as that of the French mainstream press, normalised the practices carried out under the terms of the agreements through a discursive justification of French military presence on African soil. This justification contributed to the maintenance of the colonial power imbalance. Moreover, the ‘transmediatic’ narrative, co-produced across the news outlets, disseminated the normalised and dominant version of events to the French public.

Normalisation or naturalisation in the language of French foreign policy and journalistic texts has been exacerbated by the lack of critique in some prominent scholarly works, notably Chafer (2014) and Keese (2007). This is why we need the theoretical approaches of CDA and framing to demystify the process of naturalisation and critique the status quo. Together with the critical approach of neocolonial and *Françafrique* theory, based in an activist approach, we can question the legitimacy of the presence of the French military in the independent country of Chad.

To the academic body of work on this topic, my thesis contributes a reassessment of the nature of the scholarship on Chad and on France's neocolonial relationship. Neocolonial theory has been rejected in much of the ‘western’ scholarship on France-Chad and France-Africa relations. This is because it does not sit within Eurocentric thought and instead disobeys it. By drawing on neocolonial theory and not searching for ‘newness’ (Mignolo, 2011, p. 45), but rather, re-centring the theories of African scholars of the 1960s and 1970s (such as N’Dongo and Nkrumah), I aimed to critique the neocolonial practices of the French state and adopt a decolonial approach to my analysis.

Critique is at the heart of the combined methodology of CDA-DHA and framing analysis, which I used in this thesis. Critical Discourse analysts aim to ‘understand, expose and ultimately challenge social inequality’ (Van Dijk, 2015, p. 466). While framing analysts aim to critique claims of objectivity about the news media. The ‘politically engaged’ (Bourdieu, 2001, pp. 35-41) approach to scholarship as an overt objective is embedded within these approaches. Using CDA-DHA and framing analysis, I embarked on a project of demystifying and uncovering ideologies embedded in the discourse of the policy documents and mainstream press. Through this methodology it was possible to reveal the role of the three French news outlets in reinforcing a dominant pro-interventionist narrative, discursively legitimising French military interventions in Chad. This legitimisation demonstrated the extent to which discourse is a form of social practice, with implications regarding the actions of elites. Consequently, throughout my period of analysis, the discourses of the French government and press evolved and adapted to global and domestic changes, justifying the French military practices in Chad and enabling its permanent presence from 1960 onwards.

Overall, my thesis showed, through the approaches of neocolonial theory and decolonial thinking, that this type of research can lead us ‘to other places; to the places of colonial memory; to the footprints of the colonial wound from where decolonial thinking is weaved’ (Mignolo, 2011, p. 48). In other words, it can lead us to historically and politically contextualising the longevity and continuing neocolonial actions of the French state within a colonial logic that is still present.

Further study could analyse how the discourse continued to develop after Operation Epervier was replaced with Operation Barkhane, with a new focus on anti-terrorism. It would be interesting to understand how this shifting discourse justified the continuation of French military involvement in Africa. It is also pressing to analyse how the news has covered the recent coups in west and central Africa and whether this marks a shift in French foreign policy or whether it will adapt once more in order to remain present on the African continent. This is ever pertinent as the countries of Africa, formerly colonised by France, continue to struggle against the former colonial power.

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The 1960 quadripartite agreement signed by the governments of France, Central African Republic (CAR), Congo and Chad.

The 1976 Technical Military Cooperation agreement signed by the governments of France and Chad.

# Appendices

A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generatedAppendix 1: Table of articles published in *Le Monde* on Operation Eperiver 13/14 February 1986-11 September 1987

A screenshot of a document

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Appendix 2: Table of articles published in *Le Figaro* on Operation Epervier and EUFOR, 2 February 2008-15 March 2009



Appendix 3: Table of articles published in *Le Monde* on Operation Epervier and EUFOR, 2 February 2008-15 March 2009



Appendix 4: Table of articles published in *Libération* on Operation Epervier and EUFOR, 2 February 2008-15 March 2009



1. Cameroon, Senegal, Togo, Madagascar, Dahomey (now Benin), Niger, Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), Côte d’Ivoire, Chad, Central African Republic, Congo-Brazzaville (now Republic of Congo), Gabon, Mali and Mauritania. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The governments of presidents Charles de Gaulle (1958-1969), Georges Pompidou (1969-1974) and Valéry Giscard-d'Estaing (1974-1981). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Today, Areva continues to operate in Niger as Orano. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. There have been six major military operations launched in Chad since 1960: Unnamed operation (1968), Operation Bison (1969-1971), Operation Tacaud (1978-1980), Operation Manta (1983-1984), Operation Epervier (1986-2014), Operation Barkhane (2014-2022). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Sparrowhawk. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The longest running French military operation globally after joint United Nations operations in Lebanon, 1948-2011 and 1978-2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. ‘domination militaire’. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. ‘récit trans-médiatique’. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. I also borrow from van Dijk's CDA approach when focusing on the notion of the 'other' in discourse (detailed in Chapter 1). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. ‘savoir engagé’. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Created in 1895 and made up of Dahomey (now Benin), French Sudan (now Mali), French Guinea (now Guinea), Ivory Coast, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Created in 1910 and made up of Ubangi-Chari (now Central African Republic), Chad, Middle-Congo (People’s Republic of Congo) and Gabon. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. ‘Scramble for Africa’ [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. ‘le côté humanitaire et civilisateur’ [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. ‘les races supérieures ont un droit vis-à-vis des races inférieures’ [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. ‘vous osez dire cela dans le pays où ont été proclamés les droits de l'homme !’ [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. ‘Est-ce que ces populations de race inférieure n'ont pas autant de droits que vous ? Est-ce qu'elles ne sont pas maîtresses chez elles ? Est-ce qu'elles vous appellent ?’. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. ‘il y a pour les races supérieures un droit, parce qu'il y a un devoir pour elles. Elles ont le devoir de civiliser les races inférieures’ [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. This fits into the definition of interventionism or ‘cooperation’ as assistance and links to the international norm of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), adopted by the United Nations in 2005, whereby duty trumps sovereignty. Interestingly, the problem of consent, evoked by Jules Maigne, is solved by the ‘cooperation’ agreements, which require the consent of the government in which the French military intervenes. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. ‘dans sa politique d'extension coloniale, qu'il avait le sentiment de la grandeur de la France.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. The military base was also called Fort Lamy. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. This term is used by academics as well as French officials such as Mitterrand (1986, p. 36). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Guinean President Sékou Touré (1958, INA, 2'50) proclaimed, 'We prefer freedom in poverty to wealth in slavery' ('Nous préférons la pauvreté dans la liberté à la richesse dans l'esclavage'). The French government retaliated to the ‘no’ vote in Guinea by cutting telephone wires, removing hospital and military equipment, halting the import of medicine, transferring business and money out of the country and inserting counterfeit currency into circulation (Schmidt, 2021, para 5). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Over time multiple French agencies became involved policymaking in Africa, including the Ministère de la France d’Outre-Mer, Union Française, Commissariat au Plan, Treasury, Ministry of Defence, Ministère de la Coopération, Foreign Affairs Ministry, Ministry of Education, Banque de France. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. This took place at the same time as other accords being signed with Senegal, Mali, French Sudan; Madagascar; Gabon; Niger, Côte d'Ivoire and Dahomey (1961); Mauritania; Togo (1963) [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. 'Afin de garantir leurs intérêts mutuels en matière de défense, les parties contractantes décident de coopérer dans le domaine des matériaux de défense'. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. elles limitent ou interdisent leur exportation à destination d'autre pays'. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. 'réservent par priorité leur vente à la République française'. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. ‘Les hydrocarbures liquides ou gazeux; l'uranium, le thorium, le lithium, le béryllium; l'hélium, leurs minerais et composés’. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Its duties were incorporated into 1) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, responsible for defining development policy as well as cultural, scientific and development measures, 2) The Ministry of Finance, responsible for the financial aspects of development and debt, and 3) The French Development Agency, acting as a public-private bank for development aid. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. ‘décennies de relations’. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Address of Ministry of Cooperation. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. ‘signal politique en direction des dirigeants africains, dont la rue Monsieur était l'interlocuteur traditionnel’. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. exclusive domain. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. For example, through the *Loi-cadre Defferre*, which granted African leaders some extra powers to govern while still under colonial rule. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. ‘Avec la Communauté d’abord puis l’indépendance, de Gaulle n’a fait que poursuivre, en accélérant, le processus de constitution d’Etats néo-coloniaux, déjà commencé avec la loi-cadre Defferre’. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Jack Woddis (1914-1980) was a British writer and executive member of the Communist Party in Britain. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. See Swanner, 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. ‘plus feutrée, plus subtile’ [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. ‘tout aussi efficace’ [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Kwame Nkrumah was deposed in 1966. Sekou Touré, President of Guinea cut ties with France in 1965, Guinea was the only country to vote against the The French Fifth Republic's creation of a ‘French Union’ in 1958, but resumed diplomatic relations again in 1978. Mobido Keita, socialist president of Mali was overthrown by General Moussa Traoré in 1968. Julius Nyerere, President of Tanzania, anti-colonialist and socialist was conducting economic deals with the US in the 1970s. Thomas Sankara, president of Burkina Faso, a socialist who nationalised multiple industries in Burkina Faso was killed in a coup in 1987. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Led by the World Bank and International Monetary fund, focused on financial liberalisation, deregulation of the economic market, privatisation of state owned enterprises and the idea of a self-regulating market. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Neo-patrimonialism, which Langan (2018) describes as the ‘obverse’ of neo-colonialism, is an approach which asserts that an ‘African political culture has emerged centred upon “Big Men” leaders who utilise state institutions to maintain corrupt client-patron networks' based on ‘ethnic affiliation’ (p. 17). [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. *Fric* meaning cash. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. *domaine réservé*. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. For example, the Ministry of Defence, Foreign Affairs Ministry, Ministry of Education, Banque de France. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. African countries used as arena for corruption, for example, in the 'Carrefour du developpement' affair, which unfolded in April 1986, Minister of Cooperation, Christian Nucci and Cabinet Chief, Yves Chalier embezzled public money meant for a conference in Burundi and spent it on personal finances instead. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. *régimes amis*. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. For example, the notion of ‘attributes’ in framing is ‘predication’ in CDA-DHA. I use the latter. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. The reason for which I analyse only *Le Monde* in Chapter 3 and *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *Libération* in Chapter 4 is because *Le Monde* has digitised its entire archive and I therefore had access to every article required for analysis in this thesis online, whereas the articles published in the 1980s in *Le Figaro* and *Libération* have not been digitised. These articles only exist in physical archives in France, which I was unable to visit due to Covid-19 restrictions. I therefore did not have access to articles published during the period of analysis of Chapter 3 (1986-7) in *Le Figaro* and *Libération*. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. ‘un raid lancé par les Jaguar français’. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Some examples: in 1990 a French military operation in Gabon used troops from Chad, in 1991 Operation Baumier in Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo) used troops from Chad, in 1994 Chadian contingents joined Operation Turquoise in Rwanda. As mentioned above, Operation Epervier also supported Operations Serval and Sangaris in 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Along with Cameroon, Togo, Madagascar, DR Congo, Somalia, Benin, Niger, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Gabon, Senegal, Mali, Nigeria, Mauritania [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Central African Republic, Chad, Mali, Senegal, Niger, Mauritania, Burkina Faso (Upper Volta), Madagascar, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Dahomey, Republic of Congo [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Oil currently makes up 60% of Chad’s exports but oil production only started in 2003. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Bases in Chad, Djibouti, Gabon, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal as of 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. For example, journalist Sonia Rolley (2006) explains how French officials contacted her in order to get information about the positions of rebels fighting against the Chadian military in 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. ‘journal de référence’. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. ‘boussole’. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. ‘se tenir le plus possible à distance des querelles partisanes et idéologiques’. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. He attributes this lack of moral rigour to a change in practices, for example *Le Monde* journalists no longer fact-check AFP articles, whereas they did in the 1970s. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Especially in comparison to the UK and the US (Laville, 2013; Benson and Hallin 2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Although she may be overlooking the role of the BBC in the history of the British media. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. The Professional Journalists' Identity Card Commission [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. See Le Monde (2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. 'encourager la libre communication des pensées entre les citoyens'. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Quote based on Déclaration du 26 août 1789 des droits de l'homme et du citoyen [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. 'la survie de la plupart des titres d’information générale et politique dépend déjà étroitement du maintien de cette perfusion d’argent public'. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. '5 milliards d’euros ont été engloutis dans le secteur, soit en moyenne 1,6 milliard par an. Ce montant représente près de 15 % du chiffre d’affaires de cette industrie — une situation analogue à celle du milieu des années 1980'. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. These countries were Benin (then Dahomey), Burkina Faso (then Upper Volta), Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea (then French Guinea), Mali (then French Sudan), Mauritania, Niger and Senegal, which made up French West Africa (Afrique-Occidentale française or AOF) and Chad, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo and Gabon, which made up French Equatorial Africa (Afrique-Equatoriale française or AEF) and Madagascar. The two large federations, AOF and AEF, were divided into the 12 countries listed above. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. ‘porte-avion’. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Code name: Operation Bison. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Code name: Operation Tacaud (meaning pouting fish). [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. In 2008, the French military intervened with the European initiative, EUFOR, using stationed Epervier troops. Operation Epervier was then replaced in 2014 with Opération Barkhane, also present in Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, ending in 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. I only have access to the English language version of this text because it is the only version available online. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. 'pose les grandes orientations stratégiques de la défense française'. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. 'un exercice théorique qui présente un cadre stratégique avec diverses options qui doivent être prises en compte dans la LPM.' [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Ministre d'Etat, chargé de la défense nationale. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. ‘Les événements survenus depuis la chute du mur de Berlin, la disparition du Pacte de Varsovie, les mutations accélérées de notre environnement européen et international, des progrès technologiques ou de la vie économique, m’ont incité, avec l’accord du Président de la République, à faire de la publication d’un nouveau Livre Blanc une priorité du gouvernement’. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. 'la Commission du Livre Blanc'. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. format de poche. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. ‘faciliter l'information et la documentation des citoyen’. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. 'expliquer et informer certes, mais aussi, et cela est moins explicitement annoncé, convaincre et persuader'. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Le dispositif français de coopération internationale Textes officiels, 1998 – 2004. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Direction générale de la coopération internationale et du développement. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. ‘réunion de famille’. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. ‘Action de coopérer, de participer à une œuvre commune ; collaboration, concours’. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. ‘Politique d'aide économique, technique et financière des pays développés en faveur des pays en développement’. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. ‘coopération monétaire' [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. 'adhésion à l'Union monétaire' [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. 'coopération culturelle' [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. 'l'enseignement de type français' [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. 'coopération en matière de défense' [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. 'conviennent d'organiser avec la République française un système commun afin de préparer et d'assurer leur défense et celle de la Communauté dont elles font partie.' [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. ‘personnels, formation, fournitures de matériels et équipements, facilités de transit et d'escale’. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. ‘Cette disposition de base permet de saisir facilement la différence fondamentale entre le texte qui nous est soumis et ceux de 1960 : la notion de participation mutuelle à la défense militaire des parties contractantes disparaît ; seule subsiste celle de la coopération militaire technique au sens limitatif’. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. 'Les états africains et la France ont décidé de développer des liens entièrement nouveaux, fondés sur le respect de la souveraineté et l'égalité des parties'. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. ‘Elle lui donne beaucoup d'amitié’. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. ‘Amitié’. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. ‘Entre le Sénégal et la France, l'histoire a tissé les liens d'une amitié que nul ne peut défaire. Cette amitié est forte et sincère’. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. ‘amis de la France’. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. ‘régimes amis’. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. ‘l’indépendance politique n’a pas modifié la nature des relations entre les pays africains colonisés et les pays européens colonisateurs. Les tendances actuelles de la politique de la bourgeoisie française en Afrique sont fondamentalement les même qu’avant 1959, même si ses formes se sont modifiées. Une telle permanence ne peut venir que de la *nature* même des économies en cause, notamment de la nature des économies capitalistes’. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. ‘les coopérants sont omniprésents à tous les échelons des nouveaux États, prolongeant l’administration coloniale, et, pour certains d’entre eux, dirigeant réellement le pays’. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. ‘ces intérêts, hérités de la période coloniale, sont d’abord économiques’. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. ‘assurent l’indépendance énergétique française’. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. ‘Les Etats intéressés accèdent à la pleine souveraineté et traitent avec la France sur un pied de parfaite égalité. Ils forment d'autre part, avec la France et d’autres Etats, une communauté qui comporte une coopération librement consentie, la poursuite de politiques concertées et l’aide, en divers domaines, de la République Française aux Etats moins favorisés’. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. ‘A la demande du Gouvernement de la République du Tchad, le Gouvernement de la République française apporte, dans la limite de ses possibilités, le concours en personnels militaires français qui lui sont nécessaires pour l'organisation et l'instruction des forces armées du Tchad’. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. ‘Le Gouvernement de la République française assure, dans la mesure de ses moyens et sur la demande du Gouvernement de la République du Tchad, la formation et le perfectionnement des personnels des forces armées tchadiennes’. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. ‘Est-ce qu'elles vous appellent ?’. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. ‘commun(e)’ [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. ‘communauté’ [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. The word ‘communauté’ appears in the 1960 quadripartite agreement 96 times. The word 'commun(e)' appears 49 times. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. ‘Ces forces armées nationales participent, avec les forces armées françaises, sous un commandement unique, au système commun de défense organisé par le présent accord’. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. ‘La République française, la République centrafricaine, la République du Congo et la République du Tchad procèdent à des consultations régulières, notamment au sein de la conférence des chefs d'État et de Gouvernement et du conseil de défense, sur la politique qu'elles sont appelées à suivre dans le domaine des matières premières et produits stratégiques, compte tenu en particulier des besoins généraux de la défense commune, de l'évolution des ressources dans les Etats de la Communauté et de la situation du marché mondial’ [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. ‘Je le crois, je l’espère, nous allons former cette Communauté franco-africaine qui me paraît indispensable à notre puissance politique commune, à notre développement économique commun, à notre développement culturel et, si c’est nécessaire, à notre défense, parce que nul n’ignore qu’il y a de grands dangers qui sont latents dans le monde, de grandes menaces qui pèsent au-dessus de nos têtes, et en particulier de grandes menaces qui pèsent sur l’Afrique’. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. ‘commun/commune’. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. ‘notre’. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. ‘L’Afrique francophone’. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. The document discusses France's relationship with the USA, Great Britain, Germany and Russia, China naming each country to which it refers. However, when it discusses France's relationship with countries on the African continent, it refers to them as 'Francophone African' countries, despite discussing in depth this relationship. It does discuss ‘Latin powers’ (‘puissances latines’) and the ‘Middle East’ (‘le Moyen-Orient’) but only in passing. Madagascar is named as an entity separate from the rest of Africa. This is an example of Martin’s (1985, p. 192) ‘semantic balkanisation’. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. Madagascar is named but seen as separate to ‘Francophone Africa’. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. ‘notre soutien apparaît encore comme une condition de leur indépendance’. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. ‘La France…sans se prévaloir d'aucune mission particulière, représente économiquement, politiquement, culturellement, pour une grande partie du continent africain, un facteur incomparable d'équilibre et de progrès, et que de véritables traités d'alliance militaire l'unissent à plusieurs Etats francophones’. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. ‘Quant aux discours qui consistent à dire à nos amis africains "vous êtes adultes", cela fait déjà longtemps qu'ils le sont. Ils ont acquis leur indépendance, ils se gèrent eux-mêmes, ils exercent leur souveraineté. Ils ont des besoins qu'ils ne peuvent remplir par eux-mêmes. Ils ont besoin d'être compris et aidés par la société internationale. La France qui a une expérience historique des besoins de ces peuples est au premier rang de ceux qui y répondent’. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. Dans ces pays, la misère est tellement épouvantable que, si vous enlevez à ces gens le peu qu'ils possèdent. . . il ne leur reste, au sens premier du terme, qu'a “crever de faim”. Voilà pourquoi ces populations voyaient avec plaisir et soulagement ces Blancs, nous les Français, “occuper” le pays. Et lorsque le retrait de nos troupes était annoncé et entamé, c'était chaque fois les mêmes scènes terribles et bouleversantes, qui m'ont fait penser à la fin de la guerre d'Algérie. Car ces hommes et ces femmes comprenaient que le départ de nos soldats allaient les replacer dans un univers d'insécurité et de misère. Et ils voulaient tous partir avec nous. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. ‘Est-ce qu'il est possible de nier que ce soit une bonne fortune pour ces malheureuses populations de l'Afrique équatoriale de tomber sous le protectorat de la nation française ou de la nation anglaise ?’ [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. [in 1985] France was dependent on Africa ‘100 per cent for cobalt, 87 to 100 per cent for uranium, 83 per cent for phosphates, 68 per cent for bauxite, 35 per cent for manganese, and 32 per cent for copper’. (Martin, 1985, p. 197) [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. ‘L’action hors d’Europe’ [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. la France, pays moderne et industrialisé, ne peut vivre sans que soient établis, maintenus, développés, protégés, des liens économiques avec le reste du monde. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. ‘l'existence, l'indépendance et la force de la France sont le point de départ d'une politique qui prend naturellement appui sur le sentiment de la nation et la volonté de son développement’. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. ‘fondement de son indépendance et de sa liberté d’action’. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. ‘adopter pour elle-même une stratégie de dissuasion fondée sur une capacité nucléaire nationale.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. ‘Sa position de puissance moyenne lui permet de viser un niveau d'armement qui n'a pas besoin d'être comparable à celui des plus grandes puissances, niveau dont ses ressources techniques industrielles et financières lui donnent précisément les moyens.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. ‘La dissuasion est exclusivement nationale’ [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. ‘le côté humanitaire et civilisateur’ [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. ‘il s’agit ici, au besoin par une aide militaire, de soutenir l’indépendance de certains Etats de culture francophone auxquels nous sommes liés tant par l’histoire que par nos engagements présents’. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. ‘Si ses intérêts vitaux sont localisés principalement sur son sol et ses intérêts majeurs en Europe, elle assume aussi des responsabilités, sans doute d'importance inégale, en Méditerranée, en Atlantique, dans ses départements et territoires d'Outre-mer, en Afrique francophone et, plus généralement, partout où sa présence ou son intervention sont ou seraient utiles au maintien ou au rétablissement de la paix’. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. ‘Mais il nous faut protéger les territoires lointains qui de par le monde manifestent leur appartenance à la souveraineté française. Il nous faut aussi faire face aux engagements que nous avons pris à l'égard des États de l'Afrique francophone ou de Madagascar, États forgés par notre culture et nos lois. Pour plusieurs d'entre eux notre soutien apparaît encore comme une condition de leur indépendance. Bref, il nous faut pouvoir affirmer, même à l'extérieur du monde occidental auquel nous appartenons, notre influence économique et culturelle : cette influence qui se traduit par des intérêts et d'où peuvent naître des devoirs est en fin de compte une part de notre définition nationale’. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. ‘Il est conforme enfin à l'histoire de la France comme à ses aspirations qu'elle soit présente dans le monde là où, à sa mesure, elle peut jouer un rôle positif au service de la paix, de la justice et de la liberté’ [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. ‘La France a fait ce qu'elle devait et continuera de le faire’. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. ‘qu’on ne pouvait pas proposer à la France un idéal politique conforme à celui de nations comme la libre Belgique et comme la Suisse républicaine, qu'il faut autre chose à la France : qu'elle ne peut pas être seulement un pays libre, qu'elle doit aussi être un grand pays exerçant sur les destinées de l'Europe toute l'influence qui lui appartient, qu'elle doit répandre cette influence sur le monde, et porter partout où elle le peut sa langue, ses moeurs, son drapeau, ses armes, son génie’. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. ‘une des plus anciennes nations de l’Europe occidentale’ [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. ‘la première, elle a forgé son unité politique’ [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. Projet de loi de programmation relatif à l'équipement militaire et aux effectifs de la défense pour les années 1992-1994. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. ‘éteindre les incendies’. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. La défense de la France ne se joue plus immédiatement à ses frontières. Elle dépend du maintien de la stabilité internationale, de la prévention de crises, en Europe ou hors d’Europe, qui, dégénérant, mettraient en péril nos intérêts et notre sécurité. Il nous faut donc développer l’aptitude propre de nos moyens classiques à prévoir, prévenir, agir, souvent à distance du territoire national. A cette fin, il convient de disposer de capacités qui nous permettent à tout moment de nous joindre à nos alliés, et de préparer activement une capacité européenne future. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. ‘dégénérant’. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. La tentation est encore forte, malgré les expériences douloureuses qui ont suivi l’effondrement du Mur de Berlin et du Pacte de Varsovie; d’accorder désormais une attention moindre à notre défense. De baisser la garde. L’histoire de notre pays nous enseigne pourtant, comme l’antique sagesse latine, que c’est bien la paix qui est un dividende de la défense, non l’inverse. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. ‘…la France se trouve dans la situation peu familière, où ses frontières ne semblent plus immédiatement et directement menacées. Rarement pourtant, depuis la guerre, un sentiment souvent diffus d’insécurité n’a été aussi fortement ressenti. La menace précise et identifiée ne s’incarne plus dans un adversaire, un espace, ni un Pacte. Notre sécurité n’en est pas moins exposée, soit que des risques apparaissent, soit qu’on en pressente de nouveaux, soit que l’on redoute la réapparition de dangers qu’on avait pu croire, un moment, éloignés’. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. ‘La France liera tout son effort de contribution aux efforts qui seront accomplis pour aller vers plus de liberté ; il y aura une aide normale de la France à l'égard des pays africains, mais il est évident que cette aide sera plus tiède envers ceux qui se comporteraient de façon autoritaire, et plus enthousiaste envers ceux qui franchiront,

     avec courage, ce pas vers la démocratisation…’ [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. ‘si vous choisissez la démocratie, la liberté, la justice et le Droit, alors la France s'associera à vous pour les construire’ [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
152. ‘C'est de s'approprier les droits de l'homme, la démocratie, la liberté, l'égalité, la justice comme l'héritage commun de toutes les civilisations et de tous les hommes.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
153. Ministère de l'intérieur et des outre-mer. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
154. ‘Démocratie représentative’. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
155. 'Le système politique de la Ve République reconnaît à une assemblée restreinte le droit de représenter le peuple français et de prendre des décisions le concernant'. [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
156. ‘Volonté populaire’. [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
157. ‘La souveraineté nationale appartient au peuple qui l’exerce par ses représentants et par la voie du référendum’ [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
158. ‘la démocratie, la liberté, l'égalité, la justice’. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
159. ‘la période douloureuse de décolonisation’ [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
160. ‘Dans le contexte de l’après-guerre froide, il appartient aux démocraties de mettre ensemble la force au service de la paix et de se prémunir ainsi contre la fragilité qui leur est naturelle. La défense de nos valeurs, de nos idéaux, dans des circonstances nouvelles, dans des lieux éloignés du territoire national, constituera souvent la première ligne de notre sécurité’. [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
161. ‘Il nous faut parler de démocratie. C'est un principe universel qui vient d'apparaître aux peuples de l'Europe centrale comme une évidence absolue au point qu'en l'espace de quelques semaines, les régimes, considérés comme les plus forts, ont été bouleversés. Le peuple était dans les rues, sur les places et le pouvoir ancien sentant sa fragilité, cessait toute résistance comme s'il était déjà, et depuis longtemps, vidé de substance et qu'il le savait. Et cette révolution des peuples, la plus importante que l'on eut connue depuis la Révolution française de 1789, va continuer’. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
162. ‘Membre permanent du Conseil de Sécurité, elle ‘doit contribuer activement, sans doute plus que d’autres, au maintien de la paix dans le monde et au respect du droit international. Attachée aux valeurs de la démocratie, la France a d’autant plus pour ambition de les promouvoir et, lorsque nécessaire, de les défendre, qu’elles constituent à ses yeux une garantie de la stabilité et de la sécurité internationale’. [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
163. ‘La France fait partie des quelques pays qui peuvent avoir une action sur la stabilité dans le monde’. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
164. ‘Les valeurs que nous défendons - la démocratie, l’Etat de droit, les droits de l’homme ne sont pas universellement partagées. La France fait partie d’une minorité de pays privilégiés, dont les idéaux qui fondent l’esprit de défense doivent être réaffirmés avec force’. [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
165. ‘La civilisation musulmane, la chrétienté, la colonisation, au-delà des crimes et des fautes qui furent commises en leur nom et qui ne sont pas excusables, ont ouvert les cœurs et les mentalités africaines à l’universel et à l’histoire.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
166. 'la démocratie s'installe'. [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
167. 'élections libre'. [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
168. 'élections régulières'. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
169. ‘Rappelez-vous, il y a quatre ans, à La Baule, j'avais mis l'accent sur la nécessité de lier intimement démocratie et développement, et le terrain parcouru depuis lors est considérable’. [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
170. ‘des pays francophones d'Afrique se comportent soudain comme des disciplines fidèles de Montesquieu’. [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
171. It is also noteworthy that the structure of France’s former colonies reflects that of the French system. For example, Côte d’Ivoire also has a three-level system based on the executive, legislative and judiciary, just as we saw above with France. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
172. In 1981, the World Bank published a report entitled ‘Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Agenda for Action’. Fosu and Gafa (2020, pp. 2-3) explain that the World Bank's recommendations included 'trade and financial liberalisation, foreign exchange market reform (including devaluation), deregulation, privatisation of state-owned enterprises, control of public expenditure (including debt), and the restructuring of government social expenditure'. These reforms were implemented from the mid-1980s onwards. [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
173. The CFA Franc was the currency in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo (West African CFA) and Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Gabon and the Republic of Congo which had been fixed since 1948 became devalued by 50% in 1994. [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
174. These include the *Caisse Centrale de Coopération Economique* from 1958, becoming the *Caisse Française de Développement* in 1992 and finally, the *Agence française de développement* (AFD) in 1998 which acted through PROPARCO, an institution which also catered to private shareholder interests. The AFD had public status as well as a specialised financial status subject to the Banking Act of 1974 and it became one of the main instruments of official development assistance to France’s former African colonies. [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
175. Known as the ‘Abidjan Doctrine’. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
176. For full list see Quentin (2001). [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
177. French foreign policy came under scrutiny not only due to military activity but also due to multiple political affairs taking place during the 1990s: legal investigations into affairs took place in the 1990s such as the ELF Affair, corruption charges against Michel Roussin (former Cooperation Minister who was part of the DGSE then head of the Africa Committee of the French Employers' Federation) and investigations into the activities of Jean-Christophe Mitterrand (presidential adviser and François Mitterrand’s son) and Charles Pasqua for money laundering and illegal arms sales. [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
178. ‘Là où l'Afrique et la communauté internationale le demanderont, elle continuera à prendre toutes ses responsabilités. Qu'il s'agisse de prévenir des crises ou de traiter des conflits, elle agira dans le cadre légitime des mandats de l'ONU ou de l'Union africaine’. [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
179. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
180. Western European Union. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
181. ‘La contribution française au règlement de telles situations n’est envisagée que dans un cadre politique international (ONU, CSCE, ...) et dans un contexte militaire multinational (OTAN, UEO, coalitions). Il ne faudra pas sous-estimer la difficulté à appréhender et gérer une crise, à conduire des opérations de faible intensité́, dans des milieux de guerre latente ou ouverte, de guérilla, notamment urbaine, la puissance militaire des belligérants pouvant être très variable’. [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
182. ‘l’Afrique subsaharienne est également une zone de grandes fragilités’. [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
183. ‘Le soutien à la formation d’une architecture de sécurité collective en Afrique est une priorité de la politique de coopération et de développement de la France’. [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
184. Membre fondateur de l’Union européenne, la France appartient à un ensemble de 500 millions de citoyens unis par des valeurs communes de démocratie, de justice et de paix’. [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
185. ‘ En complément, huit accords de partenariat de défense (Cameroun, Centrafrique, Comores, Côte d’Ivoire, Djibouti, Gabon, Sénégal, Togo) et seize accords techniques de coopération accompagnent les États africains dans l’appropriation et la maîtrise de leur sécurité. Ces accords offrent en outre à nos forces armées des facilités d’anticipation et de réaction’. [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
186. 'la lutte contre le terrorisme'. [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
187. ‘l’intégralité territoriale’. [↑](#footnote-ref-187)
188. Bruyère-Ostells (2014) writes about French mercenaries, including Bob Denard, 'The revival of mercenaries is a phenomenon occurring concomitantly with the African decolonisation. From 1960 to the end of the Cold War, mercenaries took part in the development of political and armed violence on the African continent. Those men stand out as “The Affreux”, a term referring to the first mercenaries in Katanga (DRC), right from 1960. Among them appeared some French men. The most emblematic of all, Bob Denard, made his career from his experience in Katanga to his stranglehold on the Comoros presidential guard between 1978 and 1989' (p. 1). [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
189. One newspaper survey revealed that half of the French population were in favour of a withdrawal of French troops in Chad (Ngansop, 1986, p. 155). [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
190. This led to an incident in which the brother of one of the French soldiers who died in Chad attempted to run over the French Minister of Defence on 10 April 1984 (Ngansop, 1986, pp. 154-5). [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
191. ‘redéploiement partiel’ [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
192. The sixteenth parallel was the ‘red line’ drawn by the French military, south of which the Libyan military was not permitted to enter. [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
193. The Hydrocarbon research, exploitation and transport agreement between the Republic of Chad and the Esso – Shell – Chevron Consortium. [↑](#footnote-ref-193)
194. The protocol says the following: ‘The legal basis of French military presence is constituted by the military cooperation agreement of 6 March 1976 and its additional protocol of 7 April 1990, modified 10 June 1998, which provides for the agreement between the two countries on the stationing of forces for an indefinite period' (‘La base juridique de la présence militaire française est constituée par l'accord de coopération militaire du 6 mars 1976 et son protocole additionnel du 7 avril 1990 modifié le 10 juin 1998 qui prévoit l'accord des deux gouvernements sur le stationnement des forces pour une durée indéterminée’) (de Rohan et al., 2009, para 20). [↑](#footnote-ref-194)
195. Uranium reserves were erroneously considered significant in the Aouzou Strip. [↑](#footnote-ref-195)
196. ‘sphère de la politique étrangère’. [↑](#footnote-ref-196)
197. 'qui va m'étonner, me surprendre, me faire dérailler'. [↑](#footnote-ref-197)
198. ‘les droits naturels de légitime défense, individuelle ou collective, dans le cas où un membre des Nations unies est l'objet d'une agression armée’ [↑](#footnote-ref-198)
199. ‘ses principaux alliés africains, présents à Paris à l'occasion du sommet francophone’ ; ‘le secrétaire général de l'ONU, M. Perez de Cuellar’ ; ‘le département d'État américain’ ; ‘les pays arabes les plus directement concernés’. [↑](#footnote-ref-199)
200. ‘l'accord de coopération militaire technique, passé en 1976 entre Paris et N’Djamena, ne prévoit pas ce cas de figure. Son article 4 affirme, en effet, que les personnels militaires français détachés auprès des forces armées tchadiennes " ne peuvent, en aucun cas, participer directement à l'exécution d'opérations de guerre ni de maintien ou de rétablissement de l'ordre ou de la légalité "’ [↑](#footnote-ref-200)
201. ‘il a confirmé le maintien des accords de coopération militaire liant la France au Tchad’ [↑](#footnote-ref-201)
202. ‘aussi longtemps qu'elle restera justifiée et que se jouera la souveraineté d'un pays et une situation importante pour l'ensemble de l'Afrique’. [↑](#footnote-ref-202)
203. ‘l'accord du 6 mars 1976 a été complété avec le Tchad par la signature de deux autres textes plus ponctuels.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-203)
204. ‘Des équipages français d'hélicoptères militaires peuvent participer à des opérations au Tchad, selon les termes d'un accord entre les deux pays qui est demeuré secret à ce jour.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-204)
205. ‘il est évident que l'OUA peut difficilement condamner l'intervention militaire française au Tchad (l'opération Épervier), qui a été déclenchée à la demande du président tchadien.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-205)
206. ‘“Bien entendu”, a précisé le ministre, “des opérations de protection aérienne ne sauraient se faire au Tchad sans l'accord du gouvernement légitime”’ [↑](#footnote-ref-206)
207. ‘“Ce que je veux dire au peuple français, c'est qu'il n'y a ni accords de défense ni traité de sécurité entre la France et le Tchad donnant la possibilité aux troupes française d'être présentes dans ce pays ; et je mets au défi le gouvernement français de publier un document en ce sens.”’ [↑](#footnote-ref-207)
208. ‘The evidence shows that the French government supported a regime while having enough information to suspect that the latter was the perpetrator of serious human rights violations.’ (‘Les preuves démontrent que le gouvernement français soutenait un régime tout en ayant suffisamment d’informations pour soupçonner que ce dernier était l’auteur de violations graves des droits humains’). [↑](#footnote-ref-208)
209. ‘un chef de bande’. [↑](#footnote-ref-209)
210. ‘gouvernement légitime’. [↑](#footnote-ref-210)
211. ‘laboratoire des opérations extérieures’. [↑](#footnote-ref-211)
212. Outre la délimitation d'une zone interdite dans l'espace aérien de N'Djamena, la défense de la capitale a été également renforcée avec le déploiement de batteries de missiles sol-air Hawks aux abords de la piste. Ces missiles, dont la portée en altitude est de 8 500 mètres, sont de fabrication américaine mais appartiennent à l'armée française. Ils ont été transportés par un C-5 Galaxy de l'armée de l'air des États-Unis, qui a atterri, vendredi 28 février, à N'Djamena. Le Galaxy, capable de transporter 118 tonnes de fret, ou, par exemple, un millier d'hommes en armes, est le plus gros avion du monde. Cet appareil a été affrété spécialement par le gouvernement français pour acheminer du matériel à la fois encombrant et " sensible ". [↑](#footnote-ref-212)
213. Ainsi, douze hélicoptères anti-char français, appuyés par des hélicoptères de manœuvre, sont, depuis mercredi 4 mars, basés dans la région d'Abéché. Il s'agit de douze hélicoptères Gazelle, dont les uns sont équipés de missiles antichars Hot et les autres de canons de 20 mm destinés au tir air-air (pour la protection rapprochée des premiers hélicoptères) et au tir air-sol pour l'appui au sol des troupes. Ces Gazelle sont escortés d'hélicoptères Puma, qui transportent notamment les rechanges. [↑](#footnote-ref-213)
214. It is important to note that French aircraft and weapons manufacturers sold weapons to the Libyan military as well as to the French and Chadian militaries. [↑](#footnote-ref-214)
215. Whereas 54% of sources in the 129 articles I analysed are official, 25% are non-official. [↑](#footnote-ref-215)
216. “les longues distances, l'absence de véritables routes, nous avons un énorme problème logistique pour acheminer une aide aux combattants du Tibesti…Ils manquent de carburant, ils manquent de vivres, ils manquent de soins et de médicaments, ils manquent de l'armement approprié, surtout contre l'aviation et les blindés, ils manquent de munitions de tous calibres, de véhicules légers, de moyens de transmission.” [↑](#footnote-ref-216)
217. ‘“En ce qui concerne les véhicules : rien ; les tenues : rien. "Ainsi présente-t-il l'état de ses moyens pour lutter contre la menace terroriste, ajoutant : " Même si la France mettait à notre disposition du matériel datant des années 1900, pour nous, ce matériel ne serait pas dépassé.”’ [↑](#footnote-ref-217)
218. ‘manquent’. [↑](#footnote-ref-218)
219. ‘rien’. [↑](#footnote-ref-219)
220. 'sans prévenir'. [↑](#footnote-ref-220)
221. 'qui compte vraiment' [↑](#footnote-ref-221)
222. ‘il sait que Paris ne l'aurait pas laissé essuyer une défaite de grande ampleur'. [↑](#footnote-ref-222)
223. ‘Pour la première fois aussi nettement, les Africains ont cependant reconnu qu'ils doivent procéder à des réformes internes, faute de quoi l'aide internationale ne résoudra rien en profondeur.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-223)
224. Anciens colonisateurs, et, à ce titre, réputés responsables de la plupart des difficultés du continent, les pays occidentaux se devaient de pallier les carences des pays africains. Qu'il s'agisse de la famine, de la sécheresse, de la faillite des économies ou des guerres, ils étaient présumés disponibles, pour nourrir, renflouer ou rétablir l'ordre. [↑](#footnote-ref-224)
225. Certes, les facteurs externes (catastrophes climatiques répétées, famine endémique, sécheresse, évolution erratique du marché mondial des matières premières, perpétuation de séquelles de l'époque coloniale) pèsent lourdement. Mais les facteurs internes expliquent encore plus sûrement la faillite des économies africaines : politiques économiques inadaptées, investissements non productifs, formation d'une main-d'œuvre qualifiée insuffisante, développement agricole délaissé, etc. Surtout, manque de détermination politique. [↑](#footnote-ref-225)
226. ‘l'immobilisme "congénital" de l'Organisation de l'unité africaine’. [↑](#footnote-ref-226)
227. ‘simulacre’ [↑](#footnote-ref-227)
228. ‘peu de poids face aux particularismes et égoïsmes régionaux, aux rivalités et contentieux politiques’. [↑](#footnote-ref-228)
229. ‘Les Occidentaux, de leur côté, ont admis que les efforts entrepris par l'Afrique devaient être accompagnés par de nouveaux appuis extérieurs pour dépasser un cap, celui qui sépare la gestion de la pauvreté de l'investissement.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-229)
230. ‘soutenue’ [↑](#footnote-ref-230)
231. équipées [↑](#footnote-ref-231)
232. ‘par Libye’ [↑](#footnote-ref-232)
233. ‘De pauvres diables sans emploi, sans espoir, dont certains ont dû, à un moment ou à un autre, abandonner femme et enfants au village pour chercher du travail’ [↑](#footnote-ref-233)
234. ‘Leur histoire individuelle est presque banale à force de les entendre, tour à tour, raconter qu'ils ont été " enrôlés de force " dans les rangs des troupes du " fou de Syrte ", le colonel Kadhafi’. [↑](#footnote-ref-234)
235. ‘installées à l'intérieur de cette sorte de cuvette’. [↑](#footnote-ref-235)
236. ‘Les partisans de M. Goukouni Oueddei’. [↑](#footnote-ref-236)
237. ‘réfugiés sur les hauteurs environnantes’ [↑](#footnote-ref-237)
238. ‘reconquête’. [↑](#footnote-ref-238)
239. Reconquérir. [↑](#footnote-ref-239)
240. ‘il n'y aura pas d'intervention militaire française au Tchad, mais il y aura indiscutablement un soutien de la France pour permettre au Tchad de disposer des moyens de reconquérir son intégrité’. [↑](#footnote-ref-240)
241. ‘Le ministre de la défense, M. André Giraud, a évoqué, dimanche 31 août, la possibilité d'un concours de la France pour la reconquête du nord du Tchad'. [↑](#footnote-ref-241)
242. ‘Reste à savoir si cette aide suffira à celui-ci pour réussir cette reconquête du nord de son territoire, à laquelle il ne renoncera vraisemblablement jamais’. [↑](#footnote-ref-242)
243. ‘La reconquête de Faya Largeau ne semble plus être qu'une question de jours’. [↑](#footnote-ref-243)
244. ‘alliés francophones d'Afrique noire’. [↑](#footnote-ref-244)
245. ‘allié tchadien’. [↑](#footnote-ref-245)
246. ‘meilleurs amis africains’. [↑](#footnote-ref-246)
247. ‘le gouvernement français s'il veut continuer à paraître soutenir son "allié tchadien" devait être amené à reconnaître que ses devoirs envers N'Djamena ne peuvent se borner à assurer la sécurité d'une portion du territoire tchadien’. [↑](#footnote-ref-247)
248. 'régimes amis'. [↑](#footnote-ref-248)
249. ‘l'intervention de son armée au Tchad, que lui imposent ses liens historiques’ [↑](#footnote-ref-249)
250. ‘les gouvernements successifs de la Ve République ont été confrontés au " problème tchadien ", sans que jamais une solution durable ne parvienne à s'imposer.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-250)
251. ‘Hériter’ [↑](#footnote-ref-251)
252. ‘La France maintient naturellement le dispositif " Épervier " et même en le renforçant légèrement de façon à assurer la mission qui lui est confiée.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-252)
253. ‘Il est normal que la France défende ce pays dans sa souveraineté’ [↑](#footnote-ref-253)
254. I use the term ‘imperial’ because it is the term used in *Le Monde*. I refer to it as the ideological expansionist aim of Libya in Chad, as it appears in *Le Monde*, as opposed to France’s formal colonisation of Chad and its ongoing elements in the form of neocolonialism, defined in Chapter 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-254)
255. ‘assiéger’ [↑](#footnote-ref-255)
256. ‘Conquête’ [↑](#footnote-ref-256)
257. ‘agresse et envahit’ [↑](#footnote-ref-257)
258. ‘Expansionnistes’ [↑](#footnote-ref-258)
259. ‘La France considère aujourd'hui que ses partenaires arabes sont à même de faire la différence entre sa politique au Proche-Orient et l'intervention de son armée au Tchad, que lui imposent ses liens historiques avec l'Afrique et le comportement du colonel Kadhafi.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-259)
260. ‘Reste à savoir quelles conséquences sont prêts à en tirer la France et les pays d'Afrique noire qui, tout en déplorant l'impérialisme libyen, hésitent à cautionner publiquement une riposte de l'ancienne puissance coloniale.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-260)
261. ‘il n'y a ni accords de défense ni traité de sécurité entre la France et le Tchad donnant la possibilité aux troupes française d'être présentes dans ce pays ; et je mets au défi le gouvernement français de publier un document en ce sens.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-261)
262. ‘un chef de bande’ [↑](#footnote-ref-262)
263. ‘Il n'y a pas de gouvernement à N'Djamena, mais une armée française qui occupe N'Djamena’ [↑](#footnote-ref-263)
264. ‘déjà abusé à plusieurs reprises de la bonne foi de la France’ [↑](#footnote-ref-264)
265. ‘n'a pas…tenu parole’ [↑](#footnote-ref-265)
266. ‘Tout doit être fait pour ramener le colonel Kadhafi à la raison’ [↑](#footnote-ref-266)
267. ‘est sorti des rails’ [↑](#footnote-ref-267)
268. ‘dépassé les bornes’ [↑](#footnote-ref-268)
269. ‘le fou de Syrte’ [↑](#footnote-ref-269)
270. ‘Ce mercredi 4 février, en fin d'après-midi, le colonel avait en principe décidé de se détendre. Après une partie de football, il entendait jouer au billard dans la cafétéria d'une caserne des comités révolutionnaires’. [↑](#footnote-ref-270)
271. ‘une heure durant, un cours de géopolitique tchadienne’. [↑](#footnote-ref-271)
272. ‘c'est aujourd'hui, semble-t-il, sa principale préoccupation’. [↑](#footnote-ref-272)
273. Throughout the project, France did all it could to keep the pipeline within the Francophone domain, such as ensuring the pipeline ended up at Kribi in French-speaking Cameroon rather than Limbe, in English-speaking Cameroon, where it was originally planned to go through (Survie, 1999, 27). This would mean that it had geostrategic advantages for the French state which would be able to use its military presence in the south of Chad to protect the pipeline (Survie, 1999, pp. 27-8). Elf was a French oil company with a long history in Africa, having been created by President de Gaulle in order to maintain influence in Africa. It was essential in the running of affairs with the blessing and cooperation of the French state. CEO of ELF, Loïk Le Floch-Prigent admitted, ‘C'est grâce à Elf que la France maintient une présence en Afrique francophone et l'élargit à d'autres pays’ (‘it’s thanks to ELF that France maintains a presence in francophone Africa and expands it to other countries’) (L’Express, 1996, para 5). Survie (1999) points out that in every country in central Africa which had oil reserves, France was present, represented by ELF. For Survie (1999, p. 28), this is reflective of the French state’s hegemonic aspirations in which international relations are controlled through the control of hydrocarbon reserves. [↑](#footnote-ref-273)
274. In 2008, the Chadian government arrested 17 people who worked for the French NGO Arche de Zoé on charges of child abduction, six of whom were French citizens. This was following the fact that 103 children, whom the charity claimed were Sudanese orphans from Darfur in Chad, were taken by the NGO. However, most of the children were not orphans nor from Darfur and were returned to their parents. The prisoners were released by Déby on 31 March 2008. [↑](#footnote-ref-274)
275. ‘La frontière tchado-soudanaise est largement théorique. La principale force armée soudanaise, la Garde républicaine, est composée de Zaghawas dont l’aire d’origine chevauche en l’ignorant cette démarcation récente. Nombre de Soudanais du Darfour, anglophones et musulmans, vont s’installer dans le Sud-Ouest tchadien, majoritairement chrétien - où l’on évoque déjà le spectre d’une " colonisation de peuplement ". Dans les deux pays, les apprentis-sorciers et les factions au pouvoir s’ingénient à nouer les tensions religieuses et raciales, pour mieux en abuser. Les deux voisins partagent encore la crise économique, le délabrement de l’Etat, la pratique de la torture... Et, désormais, les grandes manœuvres des clans français’. [↑](#footnote-ref-275)
276. 'typique'. [↑](#footnote-ref-276)
277. 'vieilles querelles'. [↑](#footnote-ref-277)
278. ‘débord[é]' [↑](#footnote-ref-278)
279. ‘mascarade électorale’. [↑](#footnote-ref-279)
280. It was replaced on 17 June 2008 with a new White Paper on Defence. [↑](#footnote-ref-280)
281. The concept of ‘burden sharing’ is argued to be one of the benefits of multilateralisation (OECD, 2011) [↑](#footnote-ref-281)
282. ‘ce récit reste suspendu, inachevé et toujours incomplet’ [↑](#footnote-ref-282)
283. ‘la situation géographique importante du Tchad’. [↑](#footnote-ref-283)
284. ‘accès aux matières premières’. [↑](#footnote-ref-284)
285. ‘France elle-même n’a plus guère d’intérêts économiques’. [↑](#footnote-ref-285)
286. ‘sans retenue et sans motif clair’. [↑](#footnote-ref-286)
287. During this period of analysis, I had access to articles in all three newspapers online, unlike Chapter 3, where I only had access to *Le Monde* online and was unable to access articles from *Le Figaro* and *Le Monde* due to Covid restrictions preventing me from visiting physical archives in Paris. [↑](#footnote-ref-287)
288. 'sa présence s'analyse aussi comme le retour au schéma classique d'une primaire à droit'. [↑](#footnote-ref-288)
289. 'a pour lui d'être, de tous les candidates, le mieux préparé ; à ce stade le plus "crédible"'. [↑](#footnote-ref-289)
290. 'la preuve de la panique qui s'est emparée de tous ces milieux de pouvoir, financiers, médiatiques et politiques'. [↑](#footnote-ref-290)
291. Member of *Le Monde*’s board of directors until 2008. [↑](#footnote-ref-291)
292. ‘Tous ceux qui, de M. (Alain) Minc à M. (Arnaud) Lagardère, ont intérêt à ce que rien ne change, pour pouvoir continuer leurs ententes profitables’. [↑](#footnote-ref-292)
293. ‘maison commune de la gauche’. [↑](#footnote-ref-293)
294. ‘Son manifeste de 1972 déclarait vouloir lutter “contre le journalisme couché” et “donner la parole au people”. Quelques décennies plus tard, son actuel directeur, Laurent Joffrin, estimait : “On a été les instruments de la victoire du capitalisme dans la gauche”’. [↑](#footnote-ref-294)
295. ‘une gauche manifestement trop raisonnable’. [↑](#footnote-ref-295)
296. ‘journal militant à un journal standard’. [↑](#footnote-ref-296)
297. Launched by former *Le Monde* editor, Edwy Plenel in 2008. [↑](#footnote-ref-297)
298. 'le bulletin d'un parti'. [↑](#footnote-ref-298)
299. 'les activités aéronautiques dépendent étroitement des commandes et du soutien de l'Etat, est bien placé pour le savoir'. [↑](#footnote-ref-299)
300. 'La culture de la famille Dassault a toujours été de se ménager des alliés dans toutes les familles politiques'. [↑](#footnote-ref-300)
301. Although not linked to the three French newspapers I analyse in this thesis, Bouygues part-owned TV channel TF1, Bolloré part owned free newspaper *MatinPlus*, during this period of analysis. [↑](#footnote-ref-301)
302. Use of official governmental sources was 45% of all sources in *Libération*, 49% in *Le Monde*, 57% in *Le Figaro*. It is noteworthy that *Le Figaro*, which supported President Sarkozy's candidature, was most likely to quote governmental sources. [↑](#footnote-ref-302)
303. ‘M. Déby a bel et bien sollicité discrètement l'aide des Français. "Il voulait qu'on agisse, commente-t-on à Paris. Il est habitué aux vieilles méthodes..."’ [↑](#footnote-ref-303)
304. 'condamne fermement les attaques perpétrées par des groupes armés contre le gouvernement tchadien et toutes les tentatives de déstabilisation par la force, et rappelle son soutien à la souveraineté, l'unité, l'intégrité territoriale et l'indépendance politique du Tchad' [↑](#footnote-ref-304)
305. ‘attachée à l'unité et à la stabilité du Tchad’ [↑](#footnote-ref-305)
306. 'EUFOR Tchad est une opération de paix, une opération de stabilité' [↑](#footnote-ref-306)
307. ‘protester contre la détérioration de la sécurité’ [↑](#footnote-ref-307)
308. ‘insécurité’ [↑](#footnote-ref-308)
309. 'traditionnelle dans cette région' [↑](#footnote-ref-309)
310. 'la sécurité publique reste précaire' [↑](#footnote-ref-310)
311. 'un cycle de rébellions armée qui obère toute chance de développement' [↑](#footnote-ref-311)
312. Simon Haselock is a former British Marine, later Director of Public Information United Nations Mission in Kosovo, then Head of the Media Development Advisory Team (MDAT) Iraq for the foreign and commonwealth office. At the time of writing, he was (and still is) the Founding Executive Director of Albany Associates, a public relations and communications services company. [↑](#footnote-ref-312)
313. ‘Si elle prenait trop de retard, le Darfour mais aussi le Tchad pourraient connaître un nouveau cycle de violences désastreux pour des populations civiles déjà fragilisées.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-313)
314. ‘La question n'était pas de savoir si un tel incident pouvait se produire, mais quand, tant la situation est instable dans l'est du Tchad.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-314)
315. ‘Surtout la crise du Darfour est une crise africaine, qui implique plusieurs pays de la région et menace de déstabiliser toute l'Afrique centrale et saharienne.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-315)
316. ‘Le paysan africain... ne connaît que l'éternel recommencement du temps rythmé par la répétition sans fin des mêmes gestes et des mêmes paroles’. [↑](#footnote-ref-316)
317. 'Le piège tchadien' [↑](#footnote-ref-317)
318. ‘Dans cette crise, Paris doit également tenir compte des inquiétudes de ses partenaires européens, qui redoutent de tomber dans le piège tchadien. ' [↑](#footnote-ref-318)
319. 'A N'Djamena, Paris a surtout veillé à éviter un piège à l'ivoirienne.' [↑](#footnote-ref-319)
320. "J'ai été informé que Pascal Marlinge, ressortissant français travaillant pour une organisation humanitaire, a été sauvagement assassiné alors qu'il travaillait auprès des populations déplacées et réfugiées dans la localité de Farchana, à l'Est du Tchad", déclare le ministre. "Il s'agit d'un acte de barbarie ignoble. Je demande aux autorités tchadiennes de faire toute la lumière", ajoute le chef de la diplomatie française’. [↑](#footnote-ref-320)
321. ‘Le continent noir’ [↑](#footnote-ref-321)
322. 'un crime crapuleux plutôt que celle d'un acte visant spécifiquement un Français.' [↑](#footnote-ref-322)
323. 'étrange meurtre' [↑](#footnote-ref-323)
324. ‘le président français Nicolas Sarkozy a appelé à soutenir le gouvernement tchadien, car il est légitime.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-324)
325. ‘Il fallait, certes, soutenir le président Idriss Déby, puisqu'il a été élu et qu'il est le chef d'État légitime d'un pays auquel nous sommes liés par un accord de coopération militaire’. [↑](#footnote-ref-325)
326. ‘Après avoir sauvé le président tchadien Idriss Déby d'une attaque rebelle, la France peine à obtenir qu'il rende son régime plus présentable en matière de droits de l'homme et de démocratie.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-326)
327. ‘Le déploiement de la force européenne Eufor devrait, selon Paris, faciliter le retour à la démocratie.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-327)
328. ‘a relance du dialogue politique intertchadien, en vue d'élections démocratiques’ [↑](#footnote-ref-328)
329. ‘Pas sûr que cela suffise à sauver les apparences.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-329)
330. ‘respect scrupuleux d'un accord ou soutien affiché à un régime?’ [↑](#footnote-ref-330)
331. ‘rebelles’ [↑](#footnote-ref-331)
332. 'cherchent à en finir avec un Idriss Déby qui a confisqué le pouvoir ainsi que les revenus tirés du pétrole tchadien'. [↑](#footnote-ref-332)
333. ‘Leur différend n'a rien de politique, mais porte sur l'accaparement de la manne pétrolière’. [↑](#footnote-ref-333)
334. The third article which mentions oil is published in *Le Monde* but does not concern the motivations of the rebels. [↑](#footnote-ref-334)
335. Mardi, Nicolas Sarkozy avait lui aussi démenti toute participation directe des militaires français aux récents combats à N'Djamena, alors que les rebelles avaient accusé mardi l'aviation française d'être intervenue, faisant selon eux de nombreuses victimes. Selon le président français, “il n'y a eu aucun tir de l'armée française si ce n'est pour protéger nos compatriotes […] Ils étaient en état de légitime défense”. [↑](#footnote-ref-335)
336. ‘Mais les rebelles accusent déjà la France d'être intervenue directement dans le conflit qui a fait, depuis samedi, au moins 1000 morts et plus de 1000 blessés à N'Djamena. Dans un communiqué, ils condamnent « l'intervention directe de l'aviation française qui a causé d'énormes victimes civiles, notamment sur le Lycée de la Liberté et le marché central» de N'Djamena. Des affirmations démenties par Paris’. [↑](#footnote-ref-336)
337. ‘Ali Gueddei, le porte parole de l'Alliance nationale, qui s'oppose au régime du président Idriss Déby, a déclaré que "les forces armées de l'opposition" étaient favorables à la mission de l'Eufor de protection des populations civiles, mais que "la France a dénaturé la mission de l'Eufor (...) par son comportement" dans le cadre de la mission Epervier.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-337)
338. ‘La politique du Soudan, qui soutient la rébellion dans le pays voisin, est claire. Elle vise à empêcher l'arrivée des contingents internationaux dans la région’. [↑](#footnote-ref-338)
339. ‘face aux rebelles qui l'assiégeaient dans N'Djamena’. [↑](#footnote-ref-339)
340. ‘les rebelles ont lancé leur attaque contre N'Djamena’. [↑](#footnote-ref-340)
341. ‘les rebelles se rapprochaient dangereusement de la capitale N'Djamena’. [↑](#footnote-ref-341)
342. ‘la plus grave attaque de rebelles depuis deux ans au Tchad’ [↑](#footnote-ref-342)
343. ‘les rebelles qui menaçaient toujours la capitale N'Djamena’ [↑](#footnote-ref-343)
344. ‘la colonne des rebelles s'est heurtée à l'armée tchadienne’ [↑](#footnote-ref-344)
345. ‘les rebelles se ruant sur la capitale’ [↑](#footnote-ref-345)
346. ‘les éléments rebelles se sont livrés à des braquages violents d'ONG’ [↑](#footnote-ref-346)
347. ‘les rebelles assiègent la présidence et lancent l'assaut sur Adré’ [↑](#footnote-ref-347)
348. ‘les rebelles affirment qu'une nouvelle attaque sur la ville est imminente’. [↑](#footnote-ref-348)
349. ‘Déby a survécu à pléthore d'offensives rebelles’ [↑](#footnote-ref-349)
350. ‘L'Eufor doit être un atout majeur dans la crise du Darfour, un dossier que Nicolas Sarkozy juge prioritaire. Pas dupes, les Soudanais ont voulu torpiller l'entreprise'. [↑](#footnote-ref-350)
351. ‘Mais, selon un observateur proche du dossier, "l'attaque rebelle, parrainée par le Soudan, a été perçue comme une tentative d'intimidation de Khartoum adressée à l'Eufor. De nombreux pays ont fait taire leurs doutes sur la mission aﬁn de ne pas céder à cette tentative d'intimidation.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-351)
352. ‘Les rebelles tchadiens, qui ont été défaits mais pas détruits, menacent de s'en prendre à l'Eufor’. [↑](#footnote-ref-352)
353. ‘Cette puissante offensive rebelle, manifestement soutenue par le Soudan,’ [↑](#footnote-ref-353)
354. ‘Selon les experts, les rebelles se sont alliés mi-décembre sous la pression du Soudan’. [↑](#footnote-ref-354)
355. ‘Les rebelles, malgré des intérêts divergents, se sont alliés mi-décembre sous la pression du Soudan, selon des experts.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-355)
356. ‘Le Soudan, qui abrite les rebelles tchadiens, les arme et les encourage’ [↑](#footnote-ref-356)
357. ‘danger d'une rébellion armée attisée par le Soudan.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-357)
358. ‘une rébellion qui est perçue à Paris comme manipulée par le Soudan’ [↑](#footnote-ref-358)
359. ‘Certes le Soudan fournit un soutien aux opposants armés de Déby, mais un soutien limité.’. [↑](#footnote-ref-359)
360. ‘L'époque où la Légion étrangère était parachutée sur une ville africaine pour ramener l'ordre en deux temps trois mouvements est révolue depuis des années. Traumatisée par les accusations de complicité dans le génocide au Rwanda du printemps 1994, la France refuse d'apparaître en première ligne. Le problème, c'est que les accords de défense - ou de coopération militaire -, eux, sont toujours en vigueur’. [↑](#footnote-ref-360)
361. ‘La fin du gaullisme’. [↑](#footnote-ref-361)
362. ‘résidus’ [↑](#footnote-ref-362)
363. ‘“Obsolète.” C'est l'adjectif que Nicolas Sarkozy a employé, hier devant le parlement sud-africain au Cap, pour juger les relations militaires entre la France et l'Afrique’. [↑](#footnote-ref-363)
364. ‘Il n’existe pas de compagnies minières françaises en Afrique’ [↑](#footnote-ref-364)
365. 'la France' [↑](#footnote-ref-365)
366. ‘de la France’ [↑](#footnote-ref-366)
367. à la France’ [↑](#footnote-ref-367)
368. 'ambitieux' [↑](#footnote-ref-368)
369. 'capactité' [↑](#footnote-ref-369)
370. 'l'aide' [↑](#footnote-ref-370)
371. 'responsabilité' [↑](#footnote-ref-371)
372. 'l'action' [↑](#footnote-ref-372)
373. ‘Au plan économique, aucun. La principale ressource du pays, le pétrole, est contrôlée par des compagnies étrangères, notamment américaines, et Total s'est retiré de toute activité pétrolière au Tchad, qu'elle avait héritée de la compagnie Elf’. [↑](#footnote-ref-373)
374. ‘Le soutien militaire et diplomatique de la Chine au Soudan, où elle a des intérêts pétroliers, n'est plus à démontrer’. [↑](#footnote-ref-374)
375. A Sudanese militia group. [↑](#footnote-ref-375)
376. ‘Durant des mois, Paris a dû déployer des trésors de persuasion pour convaincre ses partenaires au sein de l'Union européenne (UE) de participer à cette force, en insistant sur sa mission strictement humanitaire et son impartialité’. [↑](#footnote-ref-376)
377. ‘En février, l'Autriche avait déjà exprimé des doutes sur sa participation après que Paris eût apporté un soutien déterminant au régime d'Idriss Déby’. [↑](#footnote-ref-377)
378. 'Mais l'attaque et l'appui français à Idriss Déby ont plutôt renforcé l'idée que la France, nation cadre de l'Eufor, n'était pas impartiale vis-à-vis du Tchad et cela pose problème"'. [↑](#footnote-ref-378)
379. ‘Paris, qui va prendre la présidence de l'UE au 1er juillet, veut notamment relancer la construction d'une défense commune. En échange de quoi, a expliqué Nicolas Sarkozy, la France pourrait réintégrer le commandement intégré de l'Otan. “Nous suivons avec beaucoup d'attention la situation dans l'est du Tchad, avait déclaré vendredi le Quai d'Orsay. Toute action armée visant le Tchad et ses institutions ne peut qu'être condamnée par la France et la communauté internationale.”’ [↑](#footnote-ref-379)
380. ‘Le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU a condamné aujourd'hui l'offensive menée actuellement par des groupes rebelles armés au Tchad, dans une déclaration adoptée à l'unanimité.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-380)
381. ‘Le grand reporter au service Étranger du Figaro explique que la France s'entoure désormais de soutiens internationaux pour intervenir en Afrique.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-381)
382. ‘Soulignant que le texte du Conseil de sécurité - voté à l'unanimité, avec notamment le soutien de la Libye - appelait à un soutien au "gouvernement légal" du Tchad, l'ambassadeur français à l'ONU, Jean-Maurice Ripert a commenté que "si Déby demande un certain nombre de choses aux Etats membres, comme il en a l'autorisation dorénavant, les autorités françaises décideront"’. [↑](#footnote-ref-382)
383. 'La France a obtenu du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU, lundi 4 février, un feu vert à une éventuelle intervention militaire au Tchad par l'adoption d'une déclaration condamnant les attaques des rebelles contre le régime du président Idriss Déby et demandant "aux Etats membres d'apporter l'appui demandé par le gouvernement tchadien". Le texte, sans être la résolution que souhaitait à l'origine Paris, est considéré comme une base juridique suffisante pour une action militaire.' [↑](#footnote-ref-383)
384. Pendant des mois, des années, nous nous sommes émus, impuissants, devant le drame du Darfour. Depuis quinze jours, en dépit des troubles au Tchad, l'Europe s'est donné les moyens de protéger les victimes et de reconstruire leurs villages dans l'est du Tchad. Sous l'impulsion de la France et grâce à l'effort de nos partenaires européens, l'Union européenne, en application d'une résolution du Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies adoptée à l'unanimité, a lancé l'opération "Eufor".

     Les femmes violées ou assassinées dès qu'elles s'éloignaient de leur campement, les enfants affamés seront enfin assistés, secourus. Ce n'est pas un mince résultat. Je reviens de Goz Beïda, dans l'est du Tchad, et je n'oublierai pas l'accueil enthousiaste que les personnes déplacées et les réfugiés ont réservé aux soldats européens. Ces derniers non plus, j'en suis certain, malgré les risques et la mort du sergent Polin, dont je salue le sacrifice.

     Le lancement d'une opération autonome de l'Union, en Afrique, dirigée par un général irlandais assisté d'un adjoint polonais et regroupant les troupes d'une quinzaine de pays illustre le chemin que nous avons parcouru pour construire European defence.

     Celle-ci est désormais souhaitée et soutenue par des Etats qui, hier encore, demeuraient sceptiques. Nous travaillons à l'Europe de la défense depuis les années 1990. Les Européens devaient avoir les moyens militaires de leurs ambitions politiques. Comment pouvions [sic] nous espérer peser dans une crise ou une négociation si nous ne pouvions pas nous faire respecter ? [↑](#footnote-ref-384)
385. ‘Les Balkans, en Afrique, au Moyen-Orient, en Afghanistan et jusqu'en Indonésie’ [↑](#footnote-ref-385)
386. 'Dans chacune d'elles, l'Union a été guidée par un seul idéal : sauver les milliers de vies menacées par des conflits, prévenir des guerres'. [↑](#footnote-ref-386)
387. ‘"L'Union doit avoir une capacité autonome d'action, appuyée sur des forces militaires crédibles, avec les moyens de les utiliser et en étant prête à le faire aﬁn de répondre aux crises internationales"’ [↑](#footnote-ref-387)
388. ‘Les affirmations de La Croix, qui dit s'appuyer sur des « sources diplomatiques et militaires » anonymes, sont invérifiables.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-388)
389. Il est toutefois indéniable que les militaires français fournissent à leurs homologues tchadiens, en vertu d'accords de coopération technique, des informations sur les déplacements des colonnes de rebelles’. [↑](#footnote-ref-389)
390. 'Serein malgré tout'. [↑](#footnote-ref-390)
391. “Nous sommes politiquement neutres, mais ceux qui entreront dans un cycle de violence, dans notre zone de mandat, prennent le risque de se trouver opposés à nous”’ [↑](#footnote-ref-391)
392. ‘presque vierge’. [↑](#footnote-ref-392)
393. “Ces informations n'ont «pas le moindre début de réalité”. [↑](#footnote-ref-393)
394. ‘Il y a d'une part des journalistes sérieux, du journal La Croix en l'occurrence, qui ont publié ces informations dans l'édition du 8 février, les ont largement confirmées le 11 février et par ailleurs, je dispose de sources propres venant de N'Djamena’. [↑](#footnote-ref-394)
395. ‘Le ministre de la Défense Hervé Morin avait également démenti que la France ait participé à des bombardements au Tchad comme l'en accusent les rebelles tchadiens, assurant qu'elle n'était “en aucun cas intervenu militairement”’. [↑](#footnote-ref-395)
396. “Cela n'a jamais été si clair, jamais dans l'histoire des relations entre la France et l'Afrique il n'y a eu aussi peu d'intervention de la France dans une situation de crise précise.”’ [↑](#footnote-ref-396)
397. ‘Les questions sur la légitimité et le rôle réel des troupes françaises au Tchad pourraient resurgir très vite. Vendredi, Paris a confirmé l'arrivée d'une nouvelle colonne de rebelles stationnant entre N'Djamena et Abéché, dans une zone hors de portée des hélicoptères de Déby. Avant son élection à la présidence, le candidat Sarkozy avait promis la «rupture» avec l'époque de la Françafrique. Laquelle passera inévitablement par une révision des accords de défense d'un autre temps liant la France avec nombre d'anciennes colonies. [↑](#footnote-ref-397)
398. ‘la légitimité et le rôle réel des troupes françaises’. [↑](#footnote-ref-398)
399. ‘a fourni un appui décisif -sans toutefois intervenir directement- en février dernier au président Idriss Deby Itno encerclé dans son palais à N'Djamena lors d'une offensive rebelle, qu'il avait finalement réussi à briser.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-399)
400. 'plus qu'embarrassant'. [↑](#footnote-ref-400)