

Decentralisation and the practice of intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division, Northwest Region of Cameroon

by

Tangang Tangang Andrew

*Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
Masters in Public Administration in the faculty of Management Science
at Stellenbosch University*



Supervisor: Prof Frederik Uys

March 2020

DECLARATION

By submitting this thesis, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Date: March 2020

ABSTRACT

After over three decades of centralisation, Cameroon, like many African countries, introduced decentralisation reforms in the 1990s partly as a means of empowering democratically elected lower levels of government as agents of development. However, the lack of clarity on decentralised authority and deconcentrated functions, coupled with local councils' perception of central government oversight as interference, are major challenges to intergovernmental relations in Cameroon. This study examines the extent to which decentralisation has influenced intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division, an administrative unit within the Northwest Region of Cameroon. The study uses semi-structured interviews with purposefully selected local council executives and central government officials in Mezam Division.

According to the findings of the study, there exist intergovernmental institutions in Mezam such as the Mezam Divisional Committee on Local Finance, the Technical Committee for the Recovery of Global Taxes in Bamenda, and the sub-committee of the Bamenda Local Tax Committee. These intergovernmental relations institutions however deal exclusively with financial issues, and central government still plays a dominant role because certain key decisions are made at the central government level without consulting the central government representatives and the local councils in Mezam Division. To improve intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division and Cameroon, central government should adopt a policy on intergovernmental relations contained in a Framework document specifying the modalities for relations between the central government, regional councils and local councils in Cameroon, more authority should be transferred to the local councils, more emphasis on local-intergovernmental relationships (between central government representatives and local council executives), and collaboration between and amongst central government representatives and local council executives in Mezam Division should be improved on through the setting up of institutions like the Mezam Local Development Forum (MELODEF) and the Bamenda City Consultative Forum (BACCOF).

OPSOMMING

Na sentralisasie oor 'n tydperk van drie dekades het Kameroen, soos vele ander Afrikalande, in die jare negentig desentralisasieherformings ingestel, deels as wyse om demokratiese verkose laer regeringsvlakke as ontwikkelingsagente te bemagtig. Die gebrek aan duidelikheid oor gedesentraliseerde gesag en gedekonsentreerde funksies, tesame met plaaslike rade se beskouing dat toesig deur die sentrale regering inmenging is, is groot uitdagings vir interregeringsverhoudinge in Kameroen. Hierdie studie ondersoek die mate waartoe desentralisasie interregeringsverhoudinge in die Mezam-afdeling beïnvloed het – dié afdeling is 'n administratiewe eenheid in die noordwestelike streek van Kameroen. Die studie maak gebruik van semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude met doelgerig-geselekteerde uitvoerende bestuurders van die plaaslike rade en amptenare van die sentrale regering in die Mezam-afdeling.

Volgens die bevindinge van die studie, bestaan daar interregeringsinstellings in Mezam soos die Mezam-afdelingskomitee vir Plaaslike Finansies, die Tegniese Komitee vir die verhaling van Globale Belasting in Bamenda, en die subkomitee van die Plaaslike Belastingkomitee van Bamenda. Hierdie instellings vir interregeringsverhoudinge handel egter uitsluitlik oor finansiële aangeleenthede, en die sentrale regering speel steeds 'n oorheersende rol omdat sekere sleutelbesluite op sentrale regeringsvlak geneem word sonder om die sentrale regeringsverteenwoordigers en die plaaslike rade in die Mezam-afdeling enigsins te raadpleeg. Om die interregeringsverhoudinge in die Mezam-afdeling en Kameroen te verbeter, behoort die sentrale regering 'n beleid in te stel oor interregeringsverhoudinge wat in 'n raamwerkdokument vervat is waarin die voorwaardes vir betrekkinge tussen die sentrale regering, streekraade en plaaslike rade in Kameroen uiteengesit word. Meer gesag behoort aan die plaaslike rade oorgedra te word, daar behoort groter klem geplaas te word op plaaslike interregeringsverhoudinge (tussen verteenwoordigers van die sentrale regering en bestuurslede van plaaslike rade) en samewerking onderling en tussen verteenwoordigers van die sentrale regering en bestuurslede van plaaslike rade in die Mezam-afdeling behoort verbeter te word deur instellings soos the Mezam Plaaslike Ontwikkelingsforum (MELODEF) en die Stadskonsulerende Forum van Bamenda Stad (BACCOF).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to appreciate the Mandela Rhodes Foundation in Cape Town who gave me the opportunity to study at Stellenbosch University as a Mandela Rhodes Scholar (Class of 2018). Their financial assistance enhanced the process of data collection on the field, and their leadership trainings added more perspectives to my ability to think critically and practically.

I am grateful to Professor Frederik Uys, my supervisor, for his thorough intellectual counsel and orientation throughout the research process. Despite being on sabbatical, he made out time for us to engage in academic discourses that helped me to continuously structure and restructure my ideas and writing. He spared no effort to ensure that I was always on track.

I would equally like to thank the staff of Stellenbosch University, particularly the School of Public Leadership, for supporting us throughout our time as students. We had access to the best study materials that has enabled us to acquire knowledge and skills that is relevant to service in any public or private sector at various levels.

I wish to thank the Senior Divisional Officer for Mezam Division for granting me the permission to carry out my research work in the Mezam Divisional Office, and all the officials of the Divisional Office who participated in the research (First Assistant SDO and the Chief of Service for Local Development). I am equally grateful to officials of the various local councils in Mezam Division (Mayors, Deputy Mayors, Secretary Generals, and Finance Controllers) who participated in the research and provided invaluable information.

I am grateful to my family and friends for their motivation especially when all hope seems lost. I am particularly thankful to my friend and brother, George M. Teke for his unconditional support. To all those who contributed in any way to the realisation of this work, I want to say THANK YOU.

Finally, all glory to God Almighty through whom all things are possible.

DEDICATION

To

All my mothers: Bijengsi Jacqueline Buboh, Chungong Grace Tangang, Manjong Mirabel
Lem, Adeline Galabe, Fosi Laura and Elnari Potgieter

And

My father, Tangang Isidore Chungong

Thanks for supporting and encouraging me always and may God Almighty shower with you
with abundant blessings

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	i
ABSTRACT.....	ii
OPSOMMING.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
DEDICATION.....	v
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xiii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	1
1.2. PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW	4
1.2.1. Unitary government.....	4
1.2.2. Federal government.....	4
1.2.3. Decentralisation	5
1.2.4. Intergovernmental Relations	5
1.2.5. Theoretical Framework	6
1.3. PRACTICAL OVERVIEW OF DECENTRALISATION AND THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS STRUCTURE IN CAMEROON ..	8
1.4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	13
1.5. AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	14
1.6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS	15
1.7. METHODOLOGY	16
1.8. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY	18
1.9. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	19
1.10. CHAPTER OUTLINE.....	20
1.11. CHAPTER SUMMARY.....	22
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW ON DECENTRALISATION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS	23
2.1. INTRODUCTION	23
2.2. THE CONCEPT OF DECENTRALISATION.....	23

2.2.1. Definition of decentralisation.....	23
2.2.2. Types of decentralisation	25
2.2.3. Advantages of decentralisation	32
2.2.4. Challenges and misconceptions of decentralisation.....	33
2.3. THE CONCEPT OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS	36
2.3.1. Definition of intergovernmental relations	36
2.3.2. Features of intergovernmental relations	37
2.3.3. Intergovernmental relations approaches	39
2.3.4. Dimensions of intergovernmental relations	41
2.3.5. The tools of intergovernmental relations.....	46
2.4. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DECENTRALISATION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS	49
2.4.1. Characteristics of the relationship between decentralisation and intergovernmental relations	49
2.4.2. Drivers of the link between decentralisation and intergovernmental relations	51
2.5. CHAPTER SUMMARY	54
 CHAPTER 3: INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT OF DECENTRALISATION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS	 55
3.1. INTRODUCTION	55
3.2. DECENTRALISATION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN THE FRENCH REPUBLIC.....	55
3.2.1. The major phases of decentralisation in France	56
3.2.2. Institutions for the implementation of decentralisation in France.....	59
3.2.3. Intergovernmental relations in France	66
3.3. DECENTRALISATION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA	70
3.3.1. Legislative framework of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations in South Africa.....	70
3.3.2. Institutional framework of co-operative government and intergovernmental relations in South Africa	75
3.4. CHAPTER SUMMARY	82

CHAPTER 4: POLICY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK OF DECENTRALISATION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN CAMEROON.....	83
4.1. INTRODUCTION	83
4.2. THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK OF DECENTRALISATION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN CAMEROON	83
4.2.1. The Constitution of Cameroon, 1996.....	83
4.2.2. The 2004 Laws on Decentralization.....	84
4.2.3. Law no. 2009/011 of 10 July 2009 on the financial regime of regional and local councils	91
4.3. ACTORS AND INSTITUTIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DECENTRALISATION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN CAMEROON	94
4.3.1. Actors and institutions charged with the implementation of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations	94
4.3.2. Institutions for the monitoring and evaluation of decentralisation	104
4.3.3. Other institutions involved in the implementation of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations in Cameroon	108
4.4. CHAPTER SUMMARY	111
 CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION OF THE CASE STUDY, THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND MAJOR RESEARCH FINDINGS.....	 112
5.1. INTRODUCTION	112
5.2. THE CASE STUDY: MEZAM DIVISION.....	112
5.2.1. The location of Mezam Division	112
5.2.2. Governance of Mezam Division.....	113
5.3. THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	117
5.3.1. Research population and sampling.....	117
5.3.2. Data collection techniques and sources	124
5.3.3. Ethical considerations	125
5.3.4. Socio-political environment during the data collection exercise	126
5.3.5. Field challenges	128
5.3.6. Data presentation and analysis.....	129
5.4. PRESENTATION OF THE MAJOR RESEARCH FINDINGS	130
5.5. CHAPTER SUMMARY	140

CHAPTER 6: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS' INITIATIVES IN CAMEROON: MEZAM DIVISION	142
6.1. INTRODUCTION	142
6.2. ANALYSIS OF CAMEROON'S POLICY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK ON DECENTRALISATION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS	142
6.2.1. The legislative framework	143
6.2.2. The institutional framework	144
6.3. ANALYSIS OF THE DECENTRALISATION STRUCTURE IN CAMEROON AND THE LINK TO INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS	145
6.4. ANALYSIS OF THE MECHANISMS OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN MEZAM DIVISION	148
6.4.1. Supervision of councils by central government representatives in Mezam Division	148 148
6.4.2. Mechanisms for coordination in Mezam Division	149
6.4.3. Mechanisms for conflict resolution in Mezam Division	151
6.4.4. Mechanism for accountability in Mezam Division	154
6.5. SOME CHALLENGES TO INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN MEZAM DIVISION	156
6.6. CHAPTER SUMMARY	161
 CHAPTER 7: A NORMATIVE APPROACH TO INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN MEZAM DIVISION	 163
7.1. INTRODUCTION	163
7.2. PROPOSED ACTIONS BY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO AMELIORATE INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN CAMEROON	163
7.2.1. Improving the policy and regulatory framework of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations in Cameroon	164 164
7.2.2. Proposals on ameliorating the management structure of decentralisation in Cameroon	171 171
7.3. RECOMMENDATIONS ON IMPROVING INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN MEZAM DIVISION	174

7.3.1. The role of the central government representatives in facilitating intergovernmental relations	174
7.3.2. The role of local councils in enhancing intergovernmental relations	179
7.4. CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY	182
7.4.1. Discussions on the objectives of the study.....	182
7.4.2. Proposals for future research.....	183
BIBLIOGRAPHY	185
ANNEXURES.....	195
ANNEX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS....	196
ANNEX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LOCAL COUNCIL OFFICIALS IN MEZAM DIVISION	197
ANNEX 3: CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS ON DECENTRALISATION IN CAMEROON	198

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: The structure of decentralisation in Cameroon	9
Figure 3.1: Structure of the French government	60
Figure 3.2: Structure of the South Africa government	71
Figure 5.1: Map of Mezam Division.....	113
Figure 5.1: Percentage distribution by level of government.....	120
Figure 5.2: Percentage distribution by type of government.....	120
Figure 5.3: Percentage distribution by political affiliation	121

LIST OF TABLES

Table 5.1: Sub-divisions in Mezam Division	114
Table 5.2: Local councils in Mezam Division	115
Table 5.3: Traditional Fondoms in Mezam Division.....	116
Table 5.4: Officials selected as research participants for the study	119

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BACCOF:	Bamenda City Consultative Forum
CODEFIL:	Divisional Committee on Local Finance
CONAFIL:	National Committee on Local Finance
CPDM:	Cameroon People's Democratic Movement
DO:	Divisional Officer
FEICOM:	Special Council Support Fund for Mutual Assistance
FOREDEV:	Forum for Regional Development
FR:	French Republic
IGR:	Intergovernmental Relations
MELODEF:	Mezam Local Development Forum
MINATD:	Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation
MINDELDEV:	Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development
PACOD:	Presidential Advisory Council on Decentralisation
PCC:	President's Coordinating Council
PNDP:	National Community-Driven Development Programme
RC:	Republic of Cameroon
RSA:	Republic of South Africa
SALGA:	South African Local Government Association
SDF:	Social Democratic Front
SDO:	Senior Divisional Officer
UCCC:	United Councils and Cities of Cameroon
UNDESA:	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNECA:	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UNHABITAT:	United Nations Human Settlements Programme

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

One of the characteristics of post-independent Africa was the centralisation in African states. Upon obtaining their independence, almost all African countries ensured that every element of power and decision-making revolved around the central government. Thomas (2010:112) notes that this centralisation was mainly manifested in two ways: the creation of the One-Party State and the subordination of 'peripheral' state institutions to the core executive. Thomas (2010:113) states "The One-Party State was justified as a means to consolidate 'Unity' in ethnically divided societies with separatist tendencies; the absence of a multi-party democratic culture in Africa and the need to recreate and consolidate consensus politics typical of pre-colonial Africa; and the desire to precipitate the economic development of the underdeveloped states." Local government was among the 'peripheral' governmental institutions that was completely absorbed by the core executive, the others being Parliaments and the Judiciary. Tordoff (1994:555) explains that decentralisation in Sub-Saharan Africa until the late 1980s was a mechanism used by the central government to tighten its control rather than facilitating local autonomy.

The inability by independent African states to further strengthen the role of local governments was a major setback given some significant gains recorded by the departing colonial administrations. According to Olowu (1989:206), the British government, after World War II, used local self-governance as a means to prepare its African colonies for independence. They considered effective local governments as an essential step towards preparing the colonies for future political and economic development. The French on the other hand granted relative local autonomy to the nationalists in a bid to further delay the full independence of their colonies (Thomas, 2010:116). After independence, municipal officials in some countries such as Senegal, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire were appointed and not elected as before, while in Anglophone African countries, the powers of traditional chiefs or authorities were significantly reduced or completely removed (Tordoff, 1994:557). Hence, the once vibrant, quite empowered and development-oriented local governments during the colonial era were weakened and they had

little or no stakes in the national development processes. As Thomas (2010:116) explains: “...locally elected institutions and officials were uprooted, replaced by officers and agencies directly controlled from the centre. Responsibilities such as education, health, road maintenance and the collection of taxes were controlled by regional administrators who reported to, and took orders from superiors in the state capital. National initiatives thus suppressed local initiatives and local communities had little or no influence over policies and decisions that affected them”. In such a prevailing climate, there was visibly no relationship between the central government and local government as the local governments were merely an extension of the central governments. Local governments functioned as per the instructions of the central government with no need to consider the local realities.

Almost three decades after achieving their independences, the centralised governmental system had failed considerably on their “desire to precipitate the economic development of Africa” which was a justification for centralization. According to statistics from the World Bank obtained at the time, while all developing countries experienced a 3.5 percent growth rate (GNP) from 1960 to 1970, and at a 2.7 percent growth rate from 1970 to 1979, African countries recorded only a 1.3 percent and 0.8 percent growth rate over the same periods (Wunsch and Olowu, 1990:2). Wunsch and Olowu (1990:11-13) paint a clear picture of the drastic failure of excessive centralisation by identifying three ways in which centralisation policy contributed to eroding human development processes in Africa. These included the exploitation and abuse of the powerless by the powerful; the over optimistic view of bureaucracy as the ideal management strategy; and the erosion of local social “tools” or “technologies” of human action which weakened the diverse small scale organisations needed for local development.

The late 1980s and early 1990s marked yet another turning point in Africa’s political and economic development. The collapse of the Berlin Wall, marking the end of the Cold War, apparently ushered in a shift from authoritarianism to liberal democracy. Multi-party politics replaced the One-Party System, and central governments were urged to consider working with other actors within the state construct. This wave of democratisation included among others decentralisation reforms. African governments were encouraged to recognize and strengthen the role of local governments in promoting development at the local level according to the needs expressed by the local peoples. In the words of the Arusha Declaration (UNECA, 1990:

Paragraph 7): “Africa has no alternative but to empower its people ‘urgently and immediately’. Failure to do so would cause Africa to become further marginalised in world affairs, both geopolitically and economically.” This was a recognition of decentralisation and participation as the way forward for Africa.

In the post-Cold War era, decentralisation has been one of the main governance reforms being undertaken in Africa. According to Dickovick and Wunsch (2014:1), more countries in Africa have engaged in decentralisation than any other part of the world since the end of the Cold War. This is because, most African central governments have commenced or intensified the transfer of authority and resources to other spheres of government or sub-national governments such as states, provinces, regions, districts and municipalities or councils (Dickovick and Wunsch, 2014:1). This transfer of competencies and resources from the central to the local equally has a bearing on the dynamics of the relationship between the central government and the local governments. The World Bank (1999:114) recognised central government commitment to the new rules of their intergovernmental relationship with local governments as one of the precedents for proper democratic decentralisation. Therefore, within the decentralisation policy arrangements, there was the need to create an avenue of cooperation between the central government and the local government.

The Republic of Cameroon is one of the African countries that has been through the various stages of institutionalised centralisation (through the creation of the One-Party State and subordination of local governments). It was once a federal republic from 1961 to 1972 and since the creation of the unitary system to replace the federal system, Cameroon has experienced different forms of decentralisation. The current context of decentralisation in Cameroon can be traced back to the constitutional amendment of 1996 by Law No 96/06 of 18 January 1996, and the 2004 Laws on Decentralisation (Cheka, 2007:182). This new direction meant local councils would have new responsibilities regarding local development as prior to this, they were merely involved in discharging social functions such as officiating civil marriages, and issuing birth and death certificates as defined in the 1974 Laws relating to Councils (Cheka, 2007:184). The shift in responsibilities from the central government to the local governments in Cameroon equally meant a redefinition of the relationship between the central and the local government. The need for this relationship is further buttressed by the fact that as per the Cameroonian context of

decentralisation, authority is concurrently exercised by the central government and the local government. This study identifies and analyses the institutions and processes of intergovernmental relations between Councils in the Mezam Division of the Northwest Region of Cameroon and the central government since 2010 when decentralisation became fully operational.

1.2. PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

This preliminary literature review defines some of the key concepts in this study such as unitary government, federal government, decentralisation and intergovernmental relations. It also analyses structural functionalism and institutional pluralism as the theoretical underpinnings for decentralisation and intergovernmental relations.

1.2.1. Unitary government

A unitary government is one in which authority is centralised at the national level, while little or no autonomy is granted to the lower levels or spheres of government (Kahn, Madue & Kalema, 2011:28). Authority is concentrated with the central government, while the other levels or spheres of government exercise only the authority assigned to them by the central government who can in some cases override the decisions of the other levels or spheres because the final decision rests with the central government (Fox and Meyer, 1995:132). Most often, the lower levels are field offices of the central government and execute only the decisions made by the central government.

In modern times, many unitary states have resorted to decentralising authority to lower spheres of government and have features of both centralisation and decentralisation. Cameroon, for example, is a decentralised unitary state.

1.2.2. Federal government

According to Smith (1995:7), a federal government is a constitutional government in a decentralised political system in which the constituent territorial units practice a politics of accommodation. The distinguishing feature of the separation of authority between the centre and the lower spheres of government from other forms of political devolution, is the constitutional guarantee of regional autonomy. De Villiers (1994:8) notes that the purpose of a federal

government is to achieve both political integration and political freedom through the combination of shared rule with self-rule on some matters. This is explained by the fact that humans achieve greater fulfilment by participating in a wider community that at the same time upholds and values diversity and local or individual identity.

1.2.3. Decentralisation

Decentralisation according to UNDP (1997:4) is the reorganisation of authority in which a system of co-responsibility is established between institutions of governance at the central government, regional/state government and local government levels in line with the concept of subsidiarity. Some of the forms of decentralisation include: political decentralisation (devolution); administrative decentralisation (deconcentration); fiscal decentralisation; and delegation. Political decentralisation, otherwise known as devolution according to Manor (1999:6), is the transfer of authority and resources to democratically elected lower levels of government with minimal control from the central government. Administrative decentralisation or deconcentration on the other hand is the transfer of authority from the central government to local government officials who report to a central government ministry, agency or department (Arthur, 2012:30). Fiscal decentralisation is the transfer of funds from the central government to the lower levels of government, or the granting of authority to the lower levels of governments to internally generate their own revenues at their various levels (Arthur, 2012:29). Delegation according to Ahmad and Talib (2011:60) is “the lending of central authority, responsibility, and resources for exercising administrative and substantive functions to subordinate units or organisations in the centre. Although these organisations and agencies are considered decentralised, they reinforce centralisation and decision-making at higher levels”.

1.2.4. Intergovernmental Relations

Intergovernmental relations (IGR) is the manner in which relations are conducted between the different levels/spheres of a governing hierarchy within a country (Kahn *et al.*, 2011:4). They are innovative mechanisms through which cooperative engagements are maintained among and between horizontal and vertical parties. Intergovernmental relations are defined by Phillimore (2013:229) as the institutions and processes through which interactions occur between government levels within a political system. He affirms that the existence of more than one level

of government, be it federal or unitary, indicates that there should be some sort of intergovernmental relations among and between the different government levels.

1.2.5. Theoretical Framework

Several theories can be used to analyse the relationship between decentralisation and intergovernmental relations. This study focuses more on the structural functionalism and the institutional pluralism theories. However, the use of these theories is not exclusive because other theories can be employed in the course of the study to enhance analyses.

Structural Functionalism

Parsons' (1961:37) theory of social action suggests that there are four basic survival requisites/problems for society to maintain itself. These requisites/problems which he refers to as functions are Pattern-Maintenance, Goal-Attainment, Adaptation, and Integration.

- The Pattern-Maintenance function: This refers to the need for mechanisms that can maintain the stability of patterns of institutionalised cultures defining the structure of the system. The focus is on the institutionalisation of values that maintain the stability of the system even if these values (be they religious beliefs or ideology) do change (Parsons, 1961:38). In this study, the pattern-maintenance function is concerned with tension management or how the actors in the social system deal with internal tension. The management of conflicts that could arise among different actors of decentralisation at various levels determines its stability despite the variations in ideologies or beliefs, hence the need for robust conflict resolution mechanisms.
- The Goal-Attainment function: Social systems which are complex systems, have needs which must be met. A system has numerous goals which can be adjusted to the changing priorities of the system. Individuals are not committed to the values of the system, but their motivation to facilitate the functioning of the system according to its exigencies (Parsons, 1961:39). Therefore, the different actors of decentralisation at various levels must set their goals or priorities of what they intend doing, as well as defining their roles.
- The Adaptation function: This function provides the facilities needed for the attainment of the system's goals. Due to the multiplicity of system's goals, the facilities must be flexible and compatible for use in meeting all the goals within that system (Parsons,

1961:40). It means different actors of decentralisation must secure the necessary resources needed to achieve their goals.

- The Integration function: Most systems are composed of independent units or subsystems of the inclusive system. Integration is concerned with how these units contribute to ensuring the proper functioning of the entire system. Legal norms and the proper institutions to manage these norms can be used to facilitate integration in highly differentiated societies (Parsons, 1961:40). In this study, actors of decentralisation at different levels, should be contributing to ensuring that decentralisation is effective by harmonising their actions in the different domains hence the interrelationships amongst them which are intergovernmental relations.

Holton (2001:155) presents Parsons' four functional requisites (in no specific order of priority) as Adaptation (A), Goal-attainment (G), Integration (I), and Latency (L), commonly referred to as the AGIL Paradigm. In Adaptation, society interacts with outer nature to generate available resources for social distribution; Goal-Attainment is concerned with how resources are arranged to attain human goals; Integration is concerned with how the various units of the whole system are harmonised, perhaps through coordination and maintenance of viable interrelationships among them; and Latency ensures the stabilisation of individual's values into patterns of social values.

One of the strengths of Parsons' theory of social action is the emphasis on the relationship between the social system and its environment. However, Parsons' critics also note that Parsons fails to elaborate the medium of communication between the social system and its environment (Holton, 2001:160).

Institutional Pluralism

According to Cohen and Peterson (1998:9) there is the need to dismantle the "monopoly of the central design of administration" by emphasising the organisational and institutional distribution of roles required to execute specific tasks. They propose Institutional Pluralism or Institutional Partnerships which are "a progressive network of central, non-central, and private organisations and institutions sharing roles and tasks related to producing and distributing public goods and services" (Cohen and Peterson, 1998:9). Institutional Pluralism therefore advocates for a shift from spatial institutional relationships to tasks and roles oriented institutional relationships.

Institutional Pluralism is a strategy for improving service delivery and accountability. Cohen and Peterson (1998:9) note that, “by increasing the number and diversity of institutions and organisations involved in brokering and providing services, accountability is ensured and the management of service delivery is improved upon and tailored to the needs of the local people.” Therefore, rather than a centralised model of central government monopoly over given public tasks, Institutional Pluralism advocates for government institutions as brokers networking with a range of central, local and non-state institutions and organisations who perform roles needed to deliver a given public good (Cohen and Peterson, 1998:9).

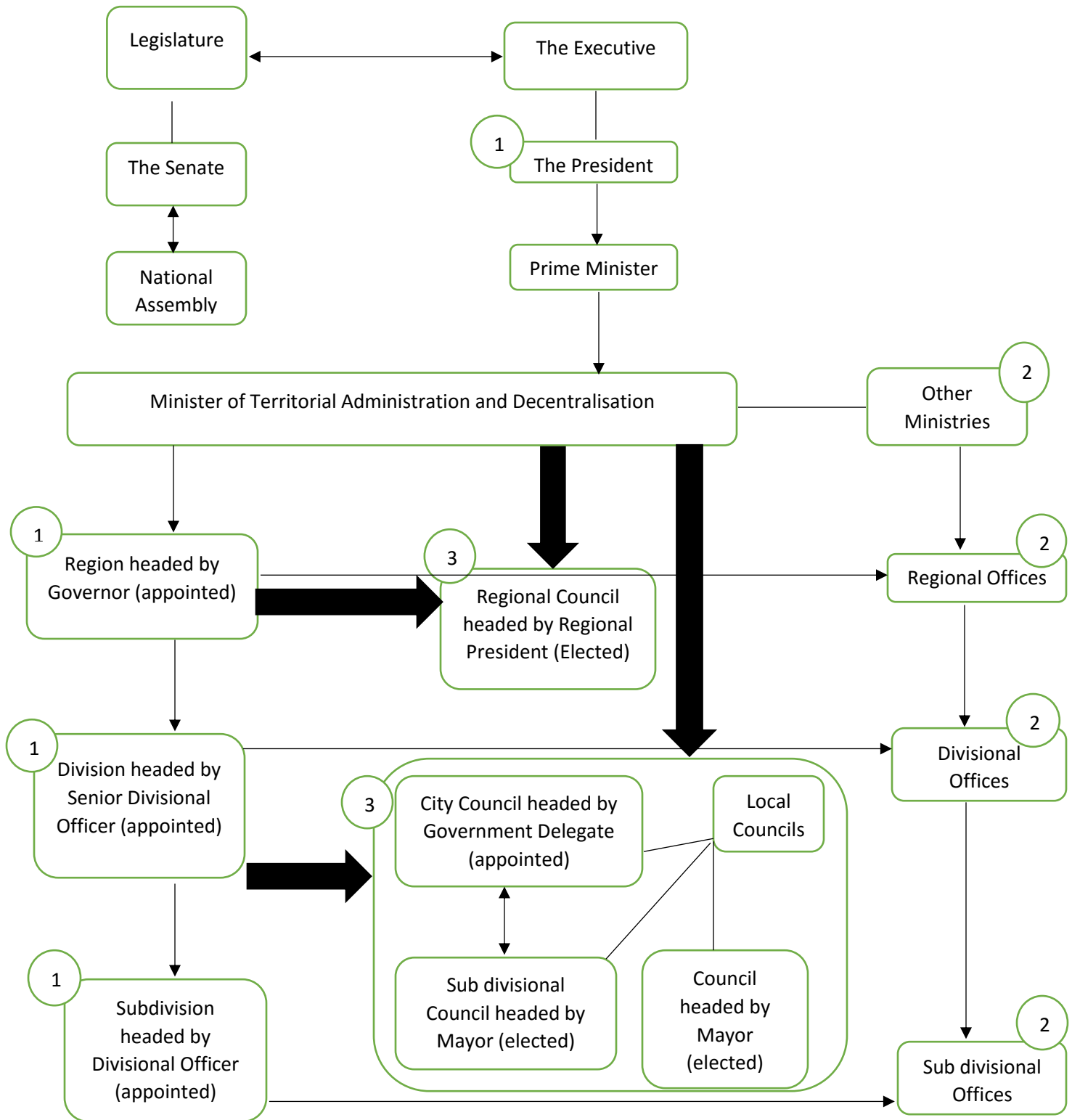
Within the context of this study, Institutional Pluralism by virtue of its definition advocates for decentralisation through the dismantling of central government monopoly and transferring some responsibilities to the lower spheres or levels of government, hence intergovernmental relations. Central governments should also go further to work closely with the different institutions at the lower level indicating that the focus is not just on creating institutions in geographical areas, but clearly defining their tasks and roles, and working closely with them in providing public goods and services. Moreover, the relationship goes beyond the sharing of roles and tasks to benefiting from each other’s knowledge and resources. Hence, decentralisation creates lower spheres of government institutions which should continuously work with the central government institutions to promote development.

However, one of the major weaknesses of Institutional Pluralism is the financial, technical and human resource deficits that could be existing in lower governmental institutions which make them unable to perform specific tasks. This can be used as a justification for continuous central government monopoly. Also, as noted by Cohen and Peterson (1998:13), some politicians at national level tend to be more control-oriented, and highly centralised governments use the Distributive Institutional Monopoly for the allocation of public sector tasks.

1.3. PRACTICAL OVERVIEW OF DECENTRALISATION AND THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS STRUCTURE IN CAMEROON

Decentralisation, as practiced in Cameroon today, is defined by Chapter X of the 1996 Constitution and the 2004 Laws on Decentralisation. To explain the decentralisation structure in Cameroon, it is essential to present the administrative organisation of Cameroon as seen in Figure 1.1 below.

Figure 1.1: The structure of decentralisation in Cameroon



Source: Author

The 1996 Constitution of Cameroon empowers the President of Cameroon to define the organisational structure of the Republic of Cameroon, and make appointments to various civil positions by decree (Article 8 [9] & [10], Constitution of Cameroon) (Republic of Cameroon (RC), 1996). The structure of the government of Cameroon can be explained from two distinct yet interdependent dimensions: administrative decentralisation or deconcentration, and political decentralisation or devolution.

From a deconcentration perspective, there are four levels of government (Presidential Decree No 2008/376 of 12 November 2008 on the Administrative organisation of Cameroon) (RC, 2008c):

- The Central government (President, Prime Minister, and the Ministers);
- 10 Regions headed by Governors;
- 58 Divisions headed by Senior Divisional Officers (SDOs); and
- 362 Subdivisions headed by Divisional Officers (DOs). (See 1 in Figure 1.1 above)

The Governors, SDOs and DOs are appointed by the President and placed under the supervision of the Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation. They represent the President and the central government in their respective administrative units (Governor in the Region, SDO in the Division, and the DO in the Sub-division). Hence, they are in charge of coordinating - on behalf of different Ministers - the activities of the regional, divisional and subdivisional offices of different ministries in their respective administrative units (See 2 in Figure 1.1 above). Governors are superiors to the SDOs and the SDOs are superiors to the DOs.

From a devolution perspective, there are three levels of government to which authority has been transferred (Article 55, Constitution of Cameroon) (RC, 1996):

- The Central government (President, Prime Minister, and the Ministers)
- 10 Regional Councils headed by an elected Regional President
- 374 Local Councils – the Law on the decentralisation, rules applicable to local councils, identifies 3 categories of local councils:
 - City councils (made up of 2 or more Sub-divisional Councils) headed by appointed Government Delegates (currently 12);
 - Sub-divisional Councils headed by elected Mayors and located within the territory of the City Councils (currently 43); and

- Councils headed by elected Mayors (currently 319). (See 3 in Figure 1.1 above)

According to the Constitution of Cameroon, regional councils and local councils have administrative and financial autonomy in the management of regional and local interests. Their duty is to promote the economic, social, health, educational, cultural and sports development of their respective communities (Article 55 [2] Constitution of Cameroon) (RC, 1996).

Presidents of regional councils and mayors of councils and sub-divisional councils are elected, while the government delegates in city councils are appointed by the President of the Republic. A city council is made up of at least two or more sub-divisional councils, hence all sub-divisional councils must be located within the territory of a city council. Regional councils and local councils are placed under the authority of the Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation who supervises their activities through the Governors (appointed) in the regions and the Senior Divisional Officers (appointed) in the divisions. It is worth noting that all local councils are situated within the divisions, the administrative unit controlled by the Senior Divisional Officer (SDO). However, apart from city councils, all councils and sub-divisional councils are part of subdivisions controlled by the Divisional Officer (DO), but the law gives supervisory powers over local councils exclusively to the SDO. In certain circumstances, the SDO can mandate the DO to represent him/her in some council meetings.

Decentralisation in Cameroon is built on three principles: subsidiarity, complementarity, and progressiveness. According to the principle of complementarity, authority transferred to the regional councils and local councils is not exclusive because this authority is jointly exercised by the central government and these regional and local councils. This explains why some of the responsibilities transferred to the regional and local councils are also part of the functions of the regional, divisional and sub-divisional offices of central government ministries. Cameroon therefore operates a 3-tier decentralisation system comprising the central government, regional councils and local councils (as shown in Figure 1.1 above). However, as of now, the regional councils still exist only on paper and only the local councils are operational. This study focuses on the relationship between the central government and the local councils.

The decentralisation process in Cameroon, particularly the intergovernmental relations structure, has been the subject of much controversy in both the academic and the professional arena. According to Oyono (2004:95), the active role of appointed Senior Divisional Officers (SDO)

within the local government sphere in Cameroon demonstrates the limits and ‘instrumentality’ of Cameroon’s version of decentralisation. The supervision of mayors by SDOs bears testimony to the fact that the central government’s agenda has since independence been that of continuously exercising their authority over local representatives (Oyono, 2004:96). This is a similar opinion held by Kofele-Kale (2011:526) who stipulates that the appointment of officials to supervise the actions of elected local governments is a demonstration that the central government cannot or does not trust these local governments with the management of their local affairs. Mback (in Eyoh and Stren, 2007:69) commenting on the decentralisation laws states that these laws have not clearly defined and differentiated the authority or responsibilities transferred to local governments and the central government in Cameroon, hence there is a risk of interference and conflicts. Also, according to Mbuagbo (2012:16-17), one of the immediate sources of conflict between city councils and sub-divisional councils in Cameroon emanates from ambiguities and lack of clarity in the law on the financial regime of Councils in Cameroon regarding internally-generated revenue of these local councils given that they are located within the same territory. Tani, Abangma, & Bruno (2012:100) note that decentralisation in Cameroon has led to the creation and restructuring of numerous institutions at the central and local level to discharge specific functions. However, the practical implementation of decentralisation since 2010 has revealed numerous dysfunctions within the system resulting from the inability of ministries and their deconcentrated services in the divisions and subdivisions to effectively adhere to the decentralisation reform.

On the other hand, authors such as Owona (2012:9) and Kuate (2014:14) uphold the legitimate obligation of the central government to supervise the actions of the regional and local councils in Cameroon. This study unveils the real purpose of central government oversight over local councils which is still being considered as a mechanism of interference by the central government in the local councils. Moreover, the study of intergovernmental relations in the implementation of decentralisation in Cameroon focuses more on the formal structures and institutions. This study also seeks to investigate the informal processes of exchange and interaction which is also characteristic of intergovernmental relations.

Analysing the relationship between decentralisation and intergovernmental relations in Cameroon, merely from the negative consequences of the supervisory authorities, can be a

limited approach. There is limited knowledge on the existing formal and informal operations and institutions of intergovernmental relations in Cameroon; the existing mechanisms for the various levels of government to hold each other accountable; the various instruments for coordinating joint activities and resolving conflicts between the central government's field offices and the local councils; and the mechanisms for resolving conflicts between the city council and the sub-divisional councils. These are the issues which this study seeks to address by analysing the implementation of decentralisation within Mezam Division. Therefore, the study follows the approach proposed by Ribot (2002:1-2) in which decentralisation is examined in terms of centre-local relations with the focus on strengthening the local governments.

1.4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

One of the main challenges of the decentralisation process in Cameroon is the multiplicity of governmental actors involved in its practical implementation at the local level (Patricia & Bekono, 2012:3-5). There is lack of collaboration between these actors, and the supervision of local councils by central government through the senior divisional officers, though legal, has been perceived as a mechanism of domination and a centralisation tendency. Moreover, authority transferred to local councils and deconcentrated government services overlap in most cases. As the World Bank (2012:11) notes, the legal framework of decentralisation in Cameroon is “overlapping, cumbersome and contradictory, and in many respects open to different interpretations. This is because decentralised functions are not clearly defined and distinguished from ‘deconcentrated’ central government operations”. Instead of promoting collaboration between the local councils and deconcentrated government services, the overlap has rather created a situation in which local councils perceive deconcentrated government organs as threatening their autonomy.

In addition, local government executives in councils within the Mezam Division are a combination of elected mayors and an appointed government delegate, especially within the Bamenda City Council. This has created a situation of conflict in which the sub-divisional councils complain of their authority and resources being usurped almost completely by the government delegates. Mbuagbo (2012:16-17) uses the laws governing local finances in Cameroon to illustrate the areas of potential conflicts between the city council and the sub-divisional councils. Section 2 of Law No. 2009/011 of 10 July 2009 (RC, 2009a) on the

Financial Regime of Regional and Local Authorities states that, “local authorities shall be corporate bodies governed by public law who shall have legal personality and administrative and financial autonomy for the management of regional and local interests. They shall freely manage their revenue and expenditure within the framework of budgets adopted by their deliberative bodies”. Law No. 2009/019 of 15 December 2009 (RC, 2009b) on the local fiscal system in Cameroon in the same vein provides that “city councils and sub-divisional councils shall not be entitled to the same sources of revenue. The fiscal revenue of the city council shall delimit the revenue sources for city councils and sub-divisional councils respectively.” However, as Mbuagbo, (2012:17) states, “a closer reading of this law opens a window of conflict between the different city councils and sub-divisional councils in Cameroon because the sources of revenue are few, and the law does not specify the territory of operation of city councils (which covers the territory of the sub-divisional councils). More so, the sources of fiscal revenue for city councils sometimes apply to the sub-divisional councils. Hence, there is no clarity on which authority (city council or sub-divisional council) is really entitled to collecting what revenue and for what purpose. These ambiguities and lack of clarity in the financial regime of local councils is the immediate source of conflict between city councils and the various sub-divisional councils in Cameroon.”

These difficulties all point to the fact that there is a problem with the implementation of intergovernmental relations in the ongoing decentralisation process in Cameroon. This is mainly due to differences in the interpretations of the transfer of authority and resources between the central government and the local governments. Central government oversight over councils is perceived as interference, and coordination and conflict resolution is a persistent challenge.

1.5. AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main aim of the study is to examine the extent to which the implementation of the Cameroonian decentralisation model has influenced intergovernmental relations in Councils of Mezam Division in the Northwest Region.

The objectives include:

- To describe and explain decentralisation and intergovernmental relations through various theories;

- To describe the international perspective of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations;
- To identify the laws and institutions that govern decentralisation and intergovernmental relations in Cameroon;
- To explore the existing formal and informal institutions and processes of intergovernmental relations in the implementation of decentralisation in Mezam Division (the case study);
- To examine the perceptions of officials on the nature of intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division;
- To critically analyse the positive and negative influences of decentralisation on intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division;
- To formulate recommendations on improving intergovernmental relations in the ongoing decentralisation process in Cameroon

1.6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question is: *To what extent has the implementation of decentralisation influenced the practice of intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division?*

The research questions include:

- What is the relationship between the concepts and practices of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations?
- How is decentralisation and intergovernmental relations practiced in the French Republic and the Republic of South Africa?
- What are the laws and institutions governing decentralisation and intergovernmental relations in Cameroon?
- How has the implementation of decentralisation led to formal and informal processes, as well as institutions for intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division?
- What are the perceptions of various officials on the state of intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division?
- To what extent has decentralisation influenced intergovernmental relations initiatives in Mezam Division both positively and negatively?

- How can intergovernmental relations be improved in the current decentralisation process in Cameroon?

1.7. METHODOLOGY

This study makes use of the exploratory research design and more precisely, the case study method. The main idea in an exploratory study which according to Ghosh (1992:210) is the discovery of facts and insights. The aim of the case study method is to know the factors and causes which explain the complex behavioural patterns of a unit and the place of the unit in its surrounding social milieu. The study seeks to understand how decentralisation in Mezam Division has influenced the practice of intergovernmental relations.

The relevance of the exploratory research design can be further justified by the fact that it would provide a better understanding of the uniqueness of the Cameroonian context of intergovernmental relations in decentralisation which has been subject to many interpretations. Also, with much attention been focused on the formal legal and institutional frameworks of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations in Cameroon, the exploratory design would be appropriate to investigate the informal mechanisms for intergovernmental relations within a particular case study, Mezam Division.

This case study research, which is also empirical field research, makes use of qualitative research methods. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with local council executives in Mezam Division, officials of some central government divisional offices and the office of the Senior Divisional Officer for Mezam Division. This facilitated the collection of information on the practical implementation of decentralisation in Mezam Division and its effects on intergovernmental relations with the perspective of the various central government actors at the local level. This was complemented by interviews with officials of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation at central government level.

Mezam Division was selected for the study because it has all the attributes of local councils and deconcentrated local authorities in Cameroon. It has all the various types of local councils (a city council, sub-divisional councils and councils). Moreover, some of these councils are governed by the ruling party and others by the Opposition party. Hence, the researcher verified the influence of different political ideologies on decentralisation and how it affects

intergovernmental relations in Mezam. The headquarters of Mezam Division, Bamenda, hosts all the Mezam Divisional offices of all deconcentrated state services. This has made accessibility to the various actors of decentralisation easy.

For primary data, the study employed the purposive sampling method which selects key informants that can best help the researcher understand the central phenomenon as these key informants are considered to be “information-rich”. Participants selected for the research included officials from the local councils and deconcentrated central government services who are directly involved with the decentralisation process such as the mayors, government delegates, divisional representatives of central government ministries, services in charge of local councils in the Office of the Senior Divisional Officer for Mezam Division. At the central government level, some technocrats on decentralisation in the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation were also interviewed.

Secondary data was obtained by reading through existing literature on decentralization and intergovernmental relations in Cameroon, South Africa, the French Republic and the world at large from books, journal articles, and reports. Most of the literature that was consulted focuses on efforts by different governments around the world at implementing decentralisation and intergovernmental relations. Other literature illustrates some attempts at explaining how different systems of government such as federal and unitary governments orientate intergovernmental relations.

The purpose of the literature review was to identify and explore different types of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations initiatives. Although there are many examples of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations internationally, the study identified literature related to decentralisation and intergovernmental relations in the French Republic and South Africa. This is because, the decentralisation system in Cameroon is modelled according to the French system on the one-hand, and South Africa, like Cameroon, is a unitary government. The information collected from the literature review was useful in analysing the research findings from the fieldwork, and to propose strategies for improving intergovernmental relations in Mezam division.

The secondary data for the study were collected from multiple sources mainly in South Africa and Cameroon as listed below: Stellenbosch University Main Campus Library; Stellenbosch

University Belpark Campus Library; Department of Political Science, University of Yaoundé II; Department of Political Science and University Library, University of Buea; Department of Political Science, University of Dschang; Department of Political Science, University of Bamenda; Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization (MINATD) archives; United Councils and Cities of Cameroon (UCCC) library; Mezam Divisional Office archives; Bamenda City Council archives; Bamenda I Council archives; Bamenda II Council archives; Bamenda III Council archives; Bafut Council archives; Bali Council archives; and Tubah Council archives.

More so, in recent years, the internet has become an indispensable source of secondary data for research. The online library of Stellenbosch University provided access to numerous published journal articles which analyse key questions around decentralisation and intergovernmental relations. Reports and articles were equally accessed on the website of international development organisations such as the World Bank Group, and intergovernmental organisations such as the United Nations and the European Commission. The website of the French government provided access to the different legislations on decentralisation policies in France and the institutional reforms that have accompanied the French decentralisation process since 1982 to date.

1.8. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on decentralisation and intergovernmental relations as practiced in Cameroon. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to pretend that one could study the more than 374 councils, city councils and sub-divisional councils located in over 58 divisions of Cameroon, as well as all the other stakeholders of decentralisation. Hence geographically, the research focuses on the councils in Mezam Division of the Northwest Region of Cameroon. This is because of its diversity in terms of having all the types of local councils in Cameroon (city council, sub-divisional council, and councils), as well as diverse political ideologies since some of the councils are controlled by the ruling party while others are controlled by the Opposition.

In terms of temporal delimitation, the study shall focus on the period from 2010 to date. This is because although decentralisation was mentioned in the Cameroon Constitution since 1996 and the Laws on Decentralisation had been promulgated since 2004, the effective transfer of competences and resources to local councils only started in 2010. Therefore, it would be more

realistic to look at the period when competencies and resources were transferred to local councils.

In terms of content, this study focuses on the contribution of decentralisation to intergovernmental relations in the Mezam Division. It investigates how the various legislative texts on decentralisation in Cameroon deal with intergovernmental relations. It also identifies various intergovernmental relations mechanisms (formal and informal) in the Mezam Division, and the perceptions of council executives in Mezam and central government official on the practice and nature of intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division and in Cameroon.

1.9. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Decentralisation is undoubtedly one of the policy instruments through which governments can improve on service delivery and accountability. The creation of lower spheres of government shifts some responsibilities to governments which are closer to the people and are knowledgeable of local needs and priorities. This provides an opportunity for the various levels of government to design common strategies on how to tackle developmental issues. This study has a policy, administrative and a scientific relevance, particularly with regards to the Cameroonian context.

From a political point of view, this study would identify the various mechanisms through which the implementation of decentralisation is fostering intergovernmental relations in Cameroon (the formal and informal processes, and the challenges faced by the various actors involved). The outcomes and recommendations would provide the major decentralisation actors from the central government and local government with the required information needed to further enhance intergovernmental relations. It is worth noting that the current decentralisation policy in Cameroon is more like an experiment because the government opted for a much more progressive implementation mechanism. Hence, all the institutions have not yet been set up like the regions which are yet to go operational. On the other hand, other institutions have been set up and are being modified to suit the current trend such as the recent creation of a separate Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development from the former Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation. Thus, the research serves as an exploratory study whose findings could inform actors and stakeholders of decentralisation on the perception of local and central governments on intergovernmental relations.

From an administrative perspective, this study examines the working relationship between the supervisory authorities, the local councils and the deconcentrated central government services. Although there seems to be an overlap in the responsibilities of the deconcentrated central government services and the local councils, their activities are complementary because they are all geared towards promoting local development. In some cases, the role of the supervisory authority is sometimes misunderstood and considered as another form of authoritarianism. This study would create a nexus between the government oversight mechanisms and the autonomy of local councils within the implementation of decentralisation in Cameroon. This is crucial to understanding the relationship between the central government and local governments.

With regards to scientific relevance, since the 1990s, numerous academic and development institutions have extensively done research on decentralisation in Cameroon. The relationship between the central government and the local governments has most often been presented from the negative perspective of the burden of government oversight on local councils. This study explores the practice of intergovernmental relations within Cameroon's model of decentralisation in the context of a particular case study. This in-depth study should clarify the purpose of government oversight over local councils, identify the shortcomings, and how all the actors at various government levels can work together for decentralisation to achieve its stated objectives. It will equally explore the mechanisms for coordination and conflict resolution between various local councils, and between the local councils and deconcentrated central government services. This would significantly contribute to the current literature on decentralisation in Cameroon.

1.10. CHAPTER OUTLINE

The proposed chapter outline for this study is as follows

Chapter 1: Introduction

It presents the background to the study, preliminary literature review, practical overview of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations in Cameroon, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives, the methodology, delimitation of the study in terms of geography or space, time and content, significance of the study with reference to its policy, administrative and scientific importance, and the outline of the various chapters that constitute the study.

Chapter 2: Literature review on decentralisation and intergovernmental relations.

It analyses the existing literature on decentralisation and intergovernmental relations according to the conceptual framework and the various approaches to these concepts. It also establishes a relationship between decentralisation and intergovernmental relations from the definitions and approaches.

Chapter 3: International context of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations.

This chapter presents the context of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations in 2 other countries in Europe and Africa. These include France and South Africa. The Cameroonian model of decentralisation is inspired directly from the French model, and South Africa which has aspects of a unitary government like Cameroon.

Chapter 4: Policy and regulatory framework of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations in Cameroon.

This chapter presents the various laws and institutions governing decentralisation and intergovernmental relations in Cameroon, both at central level and at local level.

Chapter 5: Presentation of the Case study: Mezam Division.

This chapter presents the Mezam Division which is the focus of this study, and explains in detail the research design and the methodology that will be used for the collection and analysis of data, some of the challenges encountered during the research, and ethical considerations for the research. The chapter presents some of the findings of the research based on the data collected through the interviews.

Chapter 6: A Critical analysis of intergovernmental relations initiatives in Mezam Division.

This chapter analyses various intergovernmental relations initiatives in Mezam Division using information from the literature review, the international context, the policy and regulatory framework, and the case study (fieldwork). The analysis is based on some mechanisms for intergovernmental relations such as supervision, coordination, conflict resolutions and accountability mechanisms. It analyses the various ways in which decentralisation has changed

or is changing the relationship between the central government and local councils in Mezam Division and the challenges faced.

Chapter 7: A normative approach to intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division.

This chapter formulates proposals to improve the relationship between the central and the local governments in Mezam Division, and Cameroon judging from the results obtained regarding the situation in Mezam Division. The proposals could therefore serve as a normative approach to effective and sustainable intergovernmental relations in the implementation of decentralisation in Cameroon.

1.11. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter is the main introduction to the thesis. It presents the background to the study focusing on the overall context, the preliminary literature review which defines some key terms and the theoretical framework, and a brief explanation of the decentralisation and intergovernmental relations structure in Cameroon. The chapter further presents other major components of the introduction which include: the statement of the problem; the aim, objectives and research questions; aspects of the research methodology; the geographical, temporal and content delimitation of the study; and the policy, administrative and scientific relevance of the study within the Cameroonian context. The chapter outline presents a brief description of the seven chapters in the thesis. The researcher follows the sequence of first describing and explaining the concepts and literature Chapter 1 and 2), and the macro context of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations through an analysis of the international context (Chapter 3). This is followed by a presentation of the Cameroon case, the practical research in Cameroon and the synthesis of the challenges encountered by the intergovernmental relations approach in Cameroon (Chapters 4 to 6). Chapter 7 highlights a normative approach as recommendations to improving the intergovernmental relations in Cameroon and Mezam Division.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW ON DECENTRALISATION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The literature review of this study explores various analyses on decentralisation and intergovernmental relations from different scholars and institutions. Firstly, the literature focuses on the conceptual framework of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations through elaborate definitions and clarification of the concepts. Secondly, it establishes the relationship existing between decentralisation and intergovernmental relations based on the conceptual clarifications and the various approaches.

2.2. THE CONCEPT OF DECENTRALISATION

This section analyses the concept of decentralisation by examining various definitions and the types of decentralisation. It equally presents some proposed overarching advantages of decentralisation, as well as some popular misconceptions around the concept and practice of decentralisation.

2.2.1. Definition of decentralisation

Decentralisation according to UNDP (1997:4) is the reorganisation of authority in which a system of co-responsibility is established between institutions of governance at central government, regional/state government and local government levels in line with the concept of subsidiarity. The purpose is to improve on the overall quality and effectiveness of the governance system, while strengthening the authority and capacities of the governance systems at sub-national levels. The World Bank (1999:108) defines decentralisation as the transfer of political, fiscal and administrative authority to lower levels of government. It implies therefore that countries without autonomous elected lower level governments - with the capacity of making decisions on certain policy issues - cannot be considered as decentralised. Also, decentralisation could mean creating such governments or widening the resources and responsibilities of the already existing governments at the lower levels.

Masuri & Rao (2016: 4-5) refer to decentralisation as “efforts to strengthen village and municipal governments on both the demand and supply sides. On the demand side, decentralisation strengthens citizen’s participation in local government by, for example, instituting regular elections, improving access to information, and fostering mechanisms for deliberative decision-making. On the supply side, it enhances the ability of local governments to provide services by increasing their financial resources, strengthening their capacities, and streamlining and rationalising their administrative functions.” Decentralisation, according to the European Commission (2004:85), occurs when the national government transfers authority and resources to regional and local authorities which are democratically elected. Authority and resources are transferred to these authorities because at that level, the authority is exercised in a more effective and efficient manner. The authority being exercised is autonomous and subject only to legal requirements. Moreover, the local authorities are called upon to be answerable for the exercise of these powers to the local community whom they represent through electoral and consultative processes. The success of decentralisation notes the European Commission (2004:85) would largely depend on the provision of the necessary financial, technical and human resources needed by the regional and local authorities to fulfil their mission.

According to Ahwoi (2010:4), “decentralisation is a tool of public administration reform that involves the transfer of functions and powers, skills and competencies and means and resources to lower levels of governance, normally structures of good government, though in some jurisdictions, the transfer is to other spheres of governance”. Using Ghana as an example, Ahwoi (2010:4) notes that political decentralisation ensures the transfer of functions and powers; administrative decentralisation ensures the transfer of skills and competencies, while fiscal decentralisation ensures the transfer of means and resources. In the same light, Ribot (2002:1) defines decentralisation as “the act of a central government formally relinquishing powers to actors and institutions at lower levels in a politico-administrative and territorial hierarchy.” Ribot (2002:2) notes that through decentralisation, local institutions can be strengthened to have a more symbolic, accessible, and productive role in impacting the local populations within their respective local communities. This would normally involve transferring some financial resources and decision-making authority from the central government. Ribot (2002:1-2) also perceives decentralisation as centre-local relations as he states that “decentralisation reforms is not about dismantling central governments in favour of local institutions. Rather, such reforms can be

about strengthening the latter through mechanisms supporting the objectives of national unification, democratisation, and greater efficiency and equity in using public services and service delivery”.

Owona (2012:9) follows the same direction as Ribot by defining decentralisation as a method of administrative organisation in which the state creates decentralised public entities, grants them jurisdiction and resources, while preserving the supervisory and monitoring power over these entities. It is a means of power sharing between the central government and local authorities according to Kuate (2014:14).

The above definitions make reference to some key elements of decentralisation which include creating or strengthening lower levels of government, transfer of authority and resources to these lower levels and co-responsibility between the central government and the lower levels. Decentralisation has been considered to have numerous benefits for various countries.

2.2.2. Types of decentralisation

The concept and practice of decentralisation has different interpretations around the world and according to different authors. The commonly used typologies of decentralisation are deconcentration, delegation, devolution and divestment/privatisation.

Deconcentration

Deconcentration is the shifting of responsibilities from a ministry, agency or department at the central government level to field offices who cannot make decisions but act according to the directives from the central level (Ahwoi, 2010:5). The practice of central government dispersing responsibilities for some services to branch offices at the lower levels of government is deconcentration. However, deconcentration does not involve transferring authority to lower levels of government, and it is unlikely that the potential benefits or pitfalls of decentralisation can be perceived (Litvack, Ahmad & Bird, 1998:4). Deconcentration can also be referred to as the simple dilution of centrality whereby some political and administrative responsibilities are distributed to non-central offices (Ahmad & Talib, 2011:60). The staff of these deconcentrated offices are recruited by central government and serve under its control, thus deconcentration is a means of increasing central control. With regards to accountability, these government agents only report to superiors above the chain of command in the specific department or ministry.

Deconcentration has been the most common form of decentralisation practiced in Africa after independence. It is still commonly used today alongside other forms of decentralisation. Deconcentration is sometimes referred to as administrative decentralisation.

Schneider (2003:38) defines administrative decentralisation as the dispersal of policy responsibilities by the central government to field offices. Although this dispersal alters the geographical and spatial distribution of authority, the autonomy of the institution receiving the authority from the central government remains unchanged. Litvack *et al.* (1998:6) note that administrative decentralisation deals with mechanisms through which political institutions use fiscal and regulatory actions to turn policy decisions into allocative (and distributive) outcomes.

Administrative decentralisation, according to the European Commission (2007:16), is the transfer by central government of decision-making responsibility and resources to governments in the lower levels or central government field offices to ensure the provision of some public services or functions. Arthur (2012:30) defines administrative decentralisation as the central government transferring responsibilities to local government officials who are part of central government ministries, departments or agencies. One of the major characteristics is the making of decisions by the central government, while the role of local government officials is to implement these decisions most often without questions. Administrative decentralisation is very often considered as a limited form of decentralisation because the transfer of authority to local institutions is not based on political representation controlled from communities at the local level, but on political decisions made at the centre (European Commission, 2007:16).

Another name for administrative decentralisation, according to UNDESA (2005:65), is institutional decentralisation which refers to the administrative institutions and mechanisms at the sub-national and intergovernmental levels through which the central government manages and supports decentralisation processes. Within this framework, there are some mechanisms that are used to establish a relationship between formal government bodies and key local actors such as traditional institutions (where they exist), non-governmental organisations, and private sector organisations. The purpose of institutional or administrative decentralisation is to structure interactions among the various levels of government which can be used to create a balance between national development imperatives and local development priorities, hence generating

incentives for suitable behaviour and commendable performance by relevant stakeholders at all levels (UNDESA, 2005:65).

The key ingredients of administrative decentralisation, according to the European Commission (2007:16), are:

- Existing levels of government below the central government, field offices and agencies;
- A dynamic system for local – intergovernmental relationships;
- Capacity building mechanisms for institutions at the lower levels;
- Establishing a clear system of accountability between local and central government (control/tutelle);
- Execution on behalf of central government; and
- The provision of public goods, services and functions at lower levels of government.

A major challenge arises with the level of local control over civil servants. Are civil servants appointed to local councils answerable to these local councils or to the central government where they received their appointments? Most often, administrative decentralisation is a mechanism used by central governments to control local governments.

Delegation

Delegation, according to Arthur (2012:26), is the assignment of specific decision-making authority, such as the transfer of managerial responsibility for some clearly defined functions to public organisations located inside the normal bureaucratic structure of central government. It implies the lending of central authority, responsibility, and resources for exercising administrative and substantive functions to subordinate units or organisations in the centre. Ahmad & Talib (2011:60) explain that although these organisations and agencies are considered to be decentralised, they merely reinforce centralisation and decision-making at the central government levels.

Devolution

Devolution or political decentralisation, according to Litvack *et al* (1998:6), is a situation whereby decision-making authority, finance and management authority is transferred to semi-autonomous units of lower governmental levels by central government. These responsibilities for

service delivery are usually transferred to municipalities who elect their mayors and councils, can raise their revenues locally, and can independently take and implement decisions on local investments. UNHABITAT (2002:4) notes that the local government's discretionary authority to decision-making is at the heart of devolution which is bound only by the broad national policy guidelines; local government's financial, human and material capacities, and the physical environment within which the local governments must operate. Devolution involves the constitutional conferment of authority on formally constituted provincial/regional and local governments to perform specific functions (Ahwoi, 2010:5). These provincial/regional and local governments exercise their authority and carry out their functions without necessarily referring back to the central government because they are legally responsible for the outcomes of exercising their authority and executing their functions (Ahwoi, 2010:5).

UNDP (1997:6) establishes certain preconditions for devolution in its purest form. Firstly, the autonomous, independent nature of local governments, perceived as a different level of government over which central government should exercise no direct or minimal control; secondly, local governments should exercise their authority and perform their public functions within a clearly and legally recognised geographical boundary; thirdly, local governments are corporate bodies with the authority to secure the necessary resources for the performance of their duties; fourthly, devolution should have as outcome the "development and strengthening of local governments as institutions" so that the local citizens perceive them as a responsive and effective governmental unit that seeks to satisfy local needs; and finally, in devolution, the existing relationships between central governments and local governments should be coordinated, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial. The paradigm shift from centralisation to decentralisation reforms in Africa is understood to mean the introduction of devolution which is a term employed by the Constitutions of most African countries.

Political decentralisation, according to the European Commission (2007:15), refers to the partial transfer of political authority from the central government to governments at the lower levels. Political decentralisation is a process that transcends election of local leaders to the transfer of political authority that provides citizens and locally elected representatives with a greater voice in taking decisions and implementing actions in various domains extending beyond political governance issues to include tackling local socio-economic development challenges (UNDESA,

2005:11). In the realm of political decentralisation, decision-making authority is conferred to local governments (including people and communities) whether it concerns financial decisions like drafting the budget of the local council, in matters of planning local development like conceiving a development plan for the community, service delivery concerns like decisions on where to construct a road, where to install a new pipe-borne water system, or in which locality should a school or health center be constructed (UNDESA, 2005:11).

Manor (1999:6) defines political decentralisation as the transfer of authority and necessary financial and technical resources to democratically elected lower level governments who enjoy partially independence from central government control. In other words, authority is genuinely devolved to local governance units of governance which are available and accountable to the local citizens, who benefit from full political rights and liberties (Blair, 2000:21). Political decentralisation, notes Litvack *et al.*, (1998:6), ensures that the responsibilities for providing some services are transferred to democratically elected local governments which can locally generate their revenues and can independently decide on the nature of local investments. In order to measure the degree of political decentralisation, political scientists check the extent to which the authority to make decisions has been transferred to lower levels of government, to local citizens, or to representatives that are elected locally (Cohen & Peterson, 1998:3).

The European Commission (2007:15) identifies the following elements as the ingredients of political decentralisation:

- Existing lower levels of government separated from the centre by the Constitution;
- Elections at the lower levels of government that are free and fair;
- The discretion of lower levels of government to plan and spend their resources;
- Local political processes that are inclusive or participatory;
- A properly organised system of downward accountability; and
- The existence of public institutions which are adapted to decentralised context.

Most often, political decentralisation is considered as a genuine means of decentralising government because of the numerous benefits it is expected to bring with it. Some of these benefits include advancing democracy at local level, promoting participation in local affairs and ensuring the accountability of local politicians (European Commission, 2007:15).

From the above-mentioned definitions, it can be said that political decentralisation creates a platform where local councillors can easily interact with local civil society and private sector organisations to promote local development. In such interactions, various stakeholders can clearly identify the locality's priority needs, and it creates space for accountability. This explains why political decentralisation can also be regarded as democratic decentralisation.

Divestment/Privatisation

Divestment involves the transfer of planning responsibilities, administrative or other public functions from the government to non-state actors such as voluntary associations, private institutions, or non-governmental organisations (UNDP, 1997:6). It concerns transferring responsibilities and necessary resources for executing certain government functions to organisations/institutions in the private sector (Ahmad & Talib, 2011:60). This implies that functions that were hitherto the government's responsibility are now being executed by non-state development actors like local community groups, businesses, non-governmental organisations, cooperatives and voluntary associations. Governments can mandate parallel organisations such as national industrial and trade associations, professional or ecclesiastical organisations, political parties, or cooperatives, with the right to license, regulate or supervise their members in performing functions that were previously controlled by the government. In other cases, the responsibility for producing goods or supplying services could be shifted to private organisations in privatisation (UNDP, 1997:6). Local public – private partnerships equally fall within this category.

In addition to the above-mentioned forms of decentralisation, the World Bank's (1999:108) definition of decentralisation makes mention of three key aspects which have been further developed by other authors and institutions. These include political decentralisation, fiscal decentralisation, and administrative decentralisation. Political and administrative decentralisation have already been explained in detail under devolution and deconcentration respectively above. This section presents fiscal decentralisation.

Fiscal decentralisation

Fiscal decentralisation, according to Arthur (2012:29), is the transfer of funds from the central government to the lower levels of government, or the granting of authority for the lower levels of

governments to internally generate their own revenues at their various levels. It also concerns local government's authority over decisions on budgetary and financial issues. Fiscal decentralisation can also be defined as the assignment by central government of responsibilities, including sectoral functions and local revenue sources, to lower levels of government. Due to the inadequacies of local revenue sources relative to the assigned expenditures of lower governmental levels, there is a possibility for intergovernmental transfers to close this fiscal gap and alleviate interregional resource disparities (UNDESA, 2005:64-65).

Fiscal decentralisation is also referred to as financial responsibility, a fundamental feature of decentralisation. Local governments effectively executing their decentralised functions requires that they should have sufficient revenues which should either be generated locally or obtained through fiscal transfers from the central government, and the local governments should have decision-making authority on local expenditures (UNHABITAT, 2002:64). There are two fundamental rights transferred to local councils in fiscal decentralisation: the funds to execute decentralised functions; and authority to generate revenue and decide on spending. There are five main forms of fiscal decentralisation according to UNHABITAT (2002:64) which include:

- Self-financing of local governments through user charges;
- Co-financing or co-production of local initiatives, in which local citizens take part in service provision, contribute labour and money for infrastructural developments;
- Increasing local government revenues through indirect charges, sale of property or taxes;
- Intergovernmental financial transfers of general tax revenues collected by the central government to local governments for general or a particular purpose; and
- Providing loan guarantees which authorises municipal borrowing and mobilisation of national or local government resources.

Fiscal decentralisation, according to the European Commission (2007:18), has the following as key ingredients:

- Allocating responsibilities among the different governmental levels;
- Introducing the budgetary planning cycle at lower levels;
- Allocating tax responsibilities for each of the levels of government;
- Instituting an effective intergovernmental fiscal transfer system;

- Existing mechanisms for central government control (upward accountability); and
- Assessment of the impact of fiscal decentralisation.

Generally, local councils face a fiscal problem due to inadequate financial resources and their inability to raise revenue. Arthur (2012:29) encourages local governments to harness various local revenue sources because it ensures that local development is financed from below thereby creating an opportunity for local actors to engage fully in decision-making, and push for more accountability from those charged with managing the resources.

Decentralisation would be considered limited if it is not accompanied by fiscal decentralisation. This is because the responsibilities transferred to lower governmental levels should be accompanied by the necessary financial resources needed to execute the responsibilities.

2.2.3. Advantages of decentralisation

The policy of decentralisation is believed to have numerous positive outcomes if properly implemented. Based on his analysis of various literature on decentralisation, Smoke (2003:9-10) identifies the improvement of government's efficiency, enhanced governance, reduced inequalities and poverty reduction as the potential advantages of decentralisation.

Improvement in the efficiency of government: Proponents of decentralisation argue that in different parts of a country people have different needs and Local governments being closer to the people have access to local information and better understand the local context. Therefore, they are also better placed to identify the types of services their constituents need than the central government which can significantly improve on allocative efficiency. This is probably one of the driving forces for decentralisation, particularly in Africa, as it is considered that through decentralisation, services would be more efficiently rendered to the local populations (Smoke, 2003:9). Through decentralisation, local government and its partners, could develop innovative strategies for responding to various local development challenges (Cheema and Rondinelli, 2007:7).

Enhanced governance: According to Cheema (2005:120) decentralisation can promote an accountability culture amongst political and government officials through direct interactions between local citizens and these officials which can facilitate access to the services they provide.

However, this would depend on the type of government and the interest of the local citizens in interacting with the local government officials for the right purpose. Also, as Smoke (2003:9) recommends, people must not have everything they wish for when key national goals have to take precedence over local needs. The process of governance and collective action are not purely local and in the process of governance, some sacrifices have to be made for the national good when necessary.

Reduction of inequalities, poverty, and improved development: Cheema and Rondinelli (2007:7) opine that decentralisation can enhance the capacity of local governments (alongside civil society and private sector organisations) to ensure that services reach larger numbers of people. In essence, decentralisation can enhance the process of allocating new resources to poor and remote areas that hitherto had few or no services (Crook, 2003:83). Given that local governments are acquainted with local needs, they could be in a better position to distribute public resources more equitably and target poverty within their own jurisdictions, although in some situations, central government should be involved in redistribution from richer to poorer areas (Smoke, 2003:9). Prud'homme (2003:20) suggests that decentralisation has a positive impact on income redistribution as governments can take from the richer regions to provide for the poorer regions. In this sense, decentralisation is used as a tool for inter-regional equity. Decentralisation is an indispensable element for local economic development and it is a requirement for State Owned Enterprises (particularly at local levels) to promote sustainable social development (Edoun, 2015:98).

From these arguments, one could say decentralisation can be regarded as a means for governments to better provide for the needs of their citizens in every nook and cranny of the country. This is not just about providing the needs of the citizens, but needs that have been expressed by the citizens within their respective contexts.

2.2.4. Challenges and misconceptions of decentralisation

Despite the arguments indicating the positive outcomes of decentralisation policies, the implementation of this policy encounters some challenges and misconceptions. Some of these challenges and misconceptions are analysed below.

Local elite capture

According to Olowu (2003:44), political decentralisation can facilitate the capture of local governments by strong local elites due to their desire to maintain their power and networks. Cheema (2005:121) supports this argument by asserting that some decentralised political systems create avenues for authoritarian figures or movements to build or consolidate their fiefs and avoid central government intervention. The problem of elite capture is rife, particularly during the nascent stages of the implementation of decentralisation when the local populations have little or no knowledge of the decentralisation process

Inadequate administrative and managerial capacity

The shortcomings or failures of decentralisation policies have often been attributed to minimal levels of administrative and managerial capacity within local governments (Cheema and Rondinelli, 2007:8). Decentralisation most often entails the transfer of responsibilities to lower levels of government and these responsibilities require technical knowledge for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Most local governments do not have the qualified staff who can effectively take on these responsibilities.

Inadequate mechanisms for coordinating different actors and policies

There are many actors involved in the implementation of decentralisation both at central government and at local government level. Smoke (2003:13) notes that decentralisation efforts are hampered by lack of coordination of various actors, accompanied by failure to link various decentralisation components at national, local and intergovernmental levels. For example, finance ministries or national treasuries are responsible for intergovernmental transfers; sectoral ministries (education, health, public works, and agriculture) influence transfer of responsibilities; and interior ministries, local government ministries, most often have the responsibility to develop local government institutions. At local level, there is the need to coordinate activities of local governments, central government field offices, civil society actors and traditional authorities.

On the other hand, Cheema (2005:121) reveals that in some democracies, particularly countries operating a federal system of government, there are tensions on policy issues between the central government, state governments, and local governments. Smoke (2003:13) concludes that the

environment is characterised by different visions of decentralisation and competition over control of the decentralisation agenda which can provide access to central government and international donor funds.

The precedence of political will

One of the most omnipresent assertions regarding decentralisation, according to Smoke (2003:12), is the lack of political will being the greatest impediment to progress and a fundamental requirement for success. The central government most often stands accused of having a lack of political will to decentralise, whereas in some cases, the central government has the political will, but the attitude of the other units of government (perhaps due to political ideologies) is lukewarm. A close examination of governance systems in the world today, in both developing and developed countries, shows an extremely strong political will to decentralise through the enactment of laws and the creation of various institutions to support decentralisation.

However, the enactment of laws and the establishment of institutions do not in any way indicate that the process would be without flaws. In Africa for example, most of the countries have laws and institutions that were borrowed from former colonial masters that do not necessarily fit the Africa context. Also, the pace of decentralisation is so slow in other countries because of the length of time between the promulgation of the laws, creation of institutions and effective transfer of competencies and resources.

In addition to Smoke's analyses, another misconception regarding decentralisation is that the central government fully transfers authority and resources to unchecked local governments. As presented by Olowu (2003:44), this is the misconception that "devolution means the abdication of all service responsibilities by the central government whereas in reality, the central government must assume responsibilities for policy formulation, regulation, monitoring and evaluation, and certain delivery aspects of some services." Decentralisation is thus the sharing of responsibilities and resources between the central government and local governments.

In the same vein, UNDP (1998:1) proposes that decentralisation should not be conceived as an alternative to centralisation because both are necessary. This is due to the complementary roles of central and local governments in finding the most effective ways and means of achieving set

objectives. Also, conceiving decentralisation exclusively as a public sector reform, is misleading because decentralisation transcends administrative reform to include roles and relationships of all actors (public and non-state actors) in society. This explains why UNDP rather uses the term ‘decentralised governance’.

2.3. THE CONCEPT OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

According to Smith (2003:621), intergovernmental relations have been conceptualised in the French context as ‘centre-periphery’ or centre-local relations, and in North America as ‘intergovernmental’ relations. This section examines the concept of intergovernmental relations with emphasis on its definition, intergovernmental relations approaches, dimensions and tools.

2.3.1. Definition of intergovernmental relations

Intergovernmental relations (IGR) is the manner in which relations are conducted between the different levels/spheres of a governing hierarchy within a country. It entails innovative mechanisms through which cooperative engagements are maintained among and between horizontal and vertical parties (Kahn *et al.*, 2011:4). Aside coordination and cooperation, intergovernmental relations have other aims, according to Maud and Wood (1974:45), such as controls and interventions by government institutions at the higher levels, and convening consultations with all other levels of government. In some cases, according to Kahn *et al.* (2011:5), these elements are not used to foster coordination and cooperation but to either “reinforce the subjugation of one level of government to another, or to promote dependence of lower levels of government on the higher levels for assistance and support.”

According to Thornhill, Malan, Odendaal, Mathebula, Van Dijk, and Mello (2002:8) “intergovernmental relations encompass all the interdependent relations amongst the various tiers/spheres/levels of government. They include the coordination of public policies determined by the legislative and executive bodies of the various government structures. It also refers to the actions and transactions of political office bearers and officials on any level/sphere of government that have a bearing on the decisions and actions of another level/tier/sphere of government.” Thornhill *et al.* (2002:8) note that the number and type of government institution operating within a country illustrates the multiplicity of intergovernmental relations, and these relationships can either exist formally or informally, its effectiveness being an essential

requirement for delivering public goods and services efficiently and effectively. This can include relationships between central government departments, regional/provincial government departments, municipal government departments; national legislatures, regional/provincial legislatures, municipal councils; national executive, regional/provincial executive, and municipal council executive.

Phillimore (2013:229) defines Intergovernmental relations as “the processes and institutions through which interactions occur between governments within a political system.” He affirms that the existence of more than one level of government be it a federal or unitary government indicates the practice of intergovernmental relations of some sort. Phillimore (2013:229) further emphasises that although an analysis of traditional intergovernmental relations has concentrated on formally established structures and institutions, informal processes of exchange and interaction is also worth considering. Malan (2005:228) in line with Phillimore describes intergovernmental relations as “a set of formal and informal processes, as well as institutional arrangements and structures for bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation within and among the three spheres of government”. He identifies some major determinants of the nature of intergovernmental interactions: the degree of cooperation; the system’s dynamics; stakeholders involved in managing and accommodating interdependence at any given time; geographical and social diversity; and ongoing comprehensive transformation (Malan, 2005:228-229).

Intergovernmental relations, according to Phago (2013:111), examine the various arrangements within the country through which the national government relays information, and provides resources and other forms of support to the other levels of government below (provincial/regional government and local government). They also focus on the mechanism through which governments at lower levels communicate with the higher spheres, although there are some inherent challenges such as capacity deficits to facilitate the coordination of various activities.

2.3.2. Features of intergovernmental relations

Wright (1978:8-14), from his study of the United States system, identified five distinctive features of intergovernmental relations. These include the holistic component, human component, a continuous process, participation of all public officials, and the policy component.

The holistic component

Intergovernmental relations comprise every existing engagement among the various governmental units within the country. These include central-local, central-regional/provincial/state, regional/provincial/state-local, central-regional/provincial/state-local, and inter-local relations (Wright, 1978:8). It does not matter whether the country operates a governing system that is unitary or federal. The existence of more than one sphere of government paves the way for intergovernmental relations.

The human component

Wright (1978:9) states that the actions and behaviours of the people who occupy official positions determine the level and nature of the intergovernmental relations. In his opinion, intergovernmental relations are invisible, but relations among and between officials managing different units are quite visible. This means there would be no intergovernmental relations without relations among the officials managing different government units. The actions of each of these public managers are influenced by how they perceive the actions and attitudes of their peers in different levels of government (Wright, 1978:10).

A continuous process

Relations among various officials in different spheres should be conceived as a continuous pattern of day-to-day contacts among officials characterised by exchanges of viewpoints and information. This negates the perception of intergovernmental relations as occasional occurrences which have been formally ratified in agreements or rigidly established by statutes. The main preoccupation of the actors in the intergovernmental relationship is ‘getting things done’, that is, with the informal, practical, goal-oriented arrangements that can be realised within the officials’ formal, legal, and institutional context (Wright, 1978:12).

Participation of all public officials

It is imperative that all public officials participate actively in intergovernmental relations at all levels. Some of these public officials, as identified by Wright (1978:13), include: Mayors, city council members, governors, members of the legislature and presidents. However, the nature of the public officials can vary from one context to another. The bottom-line is the participation of

public officials from the apex of the country to the local level. Moreover, participation should not be limited only to public officials as other actors such as traditional rulers, religious authorities, civil society and private sector actors should equally participate. This is because their actions at every level affects the functioning of government.

The policy component

The last distinctive characteristic of intergovernmental relations is the policy component which denotes the intentions and actions (or inactions) of public officials and the consequences of these actions (Wright, 1978:13). Although Wright (1978:13) proposes that policy, in the intergovernmental setting, is developed by all the public officials working in different governmental levels, all other societal actors should be included. The policy should be reflective of the cross section of the society, and the roles of the various actors should be clearly defined.

According to Boraine, Levy, and Asmal (1995:4), intergovernmental relations can be classified into constitutional, political and financial relations. However, their focus on the constitutional dimension is based on the perception that the constitution which creates the various levels of government is drafted by the central government. Thus, the lower levels of government are subordinate to central government. Similarly, the first distinguishing feature of intergovernmental relations, according to Wright (1978:8), places the central government at the centre of all existing engagements among and between the various levels of government.

2.3.3. Intergovernmental relations approaches

There are several approaches to analysing relations between various levels of government in a country. Hattingh (1998:10) proposes four approaches which are: the constitutional/legal approach, the democratic approach, the financial approach, and the normative/operational approach.

The constitutional/legal approach

This approach highlights the importance of the constitution and other legislative texts as the most important elements in intergovernmental relations studies. The legality of the actions of various spheres of government and their interactions are determined by the provisions in the Constitutional and other existing legislation on intergovernmental relations. In this case, the

Constitution and legislation will contain a list of all government institutions with a clear description of the duties and responsibilities of each of the officials representing these institutions (Hattingh, 1998:11). This is the main approach to intergovernmental relations that is used in Cameroon as the Constitution and other legal text are often used in all instances to justify the actions of each of the levels of government.

However, this approach can be problematic because there is a tendency to consider legislative provisions as accurate and static unless it is amended (Kahn *et al.* 2011:6). This implies that any actions undertaken outside the prescriptions of the legislation are likely to be considered “illegal” or “unconstitutional” even if they produce positive outcomes. As Kahn *et al.* (2011:6) notes, “This approach fails to explain the dynamics of the existing relationship among various government bodies, particularly the people working in these bodies. Their actions need to be analysed in order to make adjustments where necessary.”

The democratic approach

This approach focuses on the ‘autonomy’ of the other spheres or levels of government (provincial/regional and municipal) from the central government. Proponents of this approach advocate for less centralisation of authority and more devolution to regional and local governments (Kahn *et al.* 2011:6). If the context is taken as it is, it would mean the total ‘independence’ of regional and local governments which is impossible even in the so-called ‘advanced’ democracies. The notion of autonomy in the real world depends on the central government who decides the nature of authority and responsibilities to be transferred to the regional and local governments (Hattingh, 1998:12).

The democratic approach to intergovernmental relations nonetheless has some difficulties particularly in its interpretation and application. The term ‘democracy’ is understood differently in various contexts and in some cases, the ideology of the ruling political party within a country influences the perception of democracy.

The financial approach

Financial relations occur when one level of government transfers financial resources to another through payment of grants, donations or payments for subsidies, or when the central government permits lower levels of government to collect certain types of revenue for a defined purpose

(Hattingh, 1998:12). In most cases, it is often recommended that the transfer of responsibilities to the lower spheres of government be accompanied by transferring the necessary financial resources required for the exercise of these responsibilities. This is because the regional and local governments most often rely on the central government for a bulk of their financial resources.

Cheema and Rondinelli (2007:133) raise a few concerns about intergovernmental fiscal transfers. These financial transfers, most often in developing countries, are poorly structured. The involvement of various ministries in managing programmes at local level can lead to confusion, transparency and accountability are hindered by subjective allocation, and local resource mobilisation can also be hindered by intergovernmental fiscal transfers.

The normative/operational approach

According to Van der Walddt, Du Toit, & Stroh (1997:136), this approach focuses on the need to consider every applicable norm to delineate the complete operationalisation of governmental relations without overemphasising one component at the detriment of other components worth examining. It applies all the general functions and normative features in administrative processes to analyse, investigate and describe the nature of a particular relationship. Also, this approach focuses on the importance of group norms or value objectives, given that it explores what is applicable or what should be considered acceptable (Hattingh, 1998:14).

From the forgoing argument, the normative/operational approach to intergovernmental relations should therefore be looked upon as the interrelationship between all other approaches (constitutional/legal, democratic and financial approaches). To some extent, the constitution and legislation would lay the foundation for the type of autonomy which regional and local governments would have, as well as the various forms of financial transfers and resources.

2.3.4. Dimensions of intergovernmental relations

Phillimore (2013:230) identifies four dimensions of intergovernmental relations which serve as the foundation for analysing the institutions and processes of intergovernmental relations. These include vertical, horizontal, sectoral and degree of formality.

Vertical intergovernmental relations

This is the most common form of IGR which involves the relationships between the central government and lower levels of or sub-national governments (Phillimore, 2013:230). Kahn *et al.* (2011:12) define vertical IGR as relations between government institutions in the different spheres or levels of government. Vertical IGR can either be bilateral or multilateral because in this relationship, the central government depending on the issue at hand, can either decide to work with all the lower spheres of government, a few, or just one of the spheres. However, the central government must not treat all the spheres of government equally on all issues, but has to work with the various units as per the nature of these issues (Phillimore, 2013:230).

Authority is one of the central elements of vertical IGR because the central government controls more authority and the lower levels of government depend on central government (Kahn *et al.* 2011:12). Although Kahn *et al.* criticize this dependency as limiting the discretion of the lower spheres of government to decide on the goals to be achieved by the community, Hattingh (1998:23) rather sees a relationship of reciprocity (interdependence) between the authorities. This interdependence grants lower spheres of government some bargaining or negotiating powers.

Horizontal intergovernmental relations

This occurs between the constituent units to tackle an issue of common interest. Most often, it is manifested through the creation of national associations of a constituent unit of government to collectively act on a particular issue or lobby the government on issues of common importance (Phillimore, 2013:231). Kahn *et al.* (2011:12) define horizontal intergovernmental relations as relations amongst and between government officials working in the same level or sphere of government and within a country, - this is only possible with the other tiers or levels of government and not the central government as there is only one national government.

Horizontal intergovernmental relations differ from vertical intergovernmental relations in that the formal concept of authority is absent though present in relations between smaller and larger bodies; governments of the same level have similar negotiating abilities; and interdependence in horizontal intergovernmental relations differs according to the resources needed (information and

physical assistance) which is contrary to policy and finance needed in vertical intergovernmental relations (Kahn *et al.* 2011:12).

Sectoral intergovernmental relations

According to Phillimore (2013:231), sectoral intergovernmental relations concern policy in a particular sector. It is the manner in which the different spheres of government relate in drafting, implementing and evaluating public policies within each sector of society. This concerns sectors in which all the spheres of government are involved. Phillimore (2013:231) notes that the nature, frequency, and intensity of interactions varies according to the policy areas, similar to the degree of conflict or cooperation. This can be determined by the financial reliance of sub-national governments in various policy areas, the constitutional authority, administrative and technical know-how of other spheres in a given sector, the political relevance of the policy issue, and the degree of trust the community has in the sphere of government regarding the given policy areas.

Formal and informal intergovernmental relations

Formal intergovernmental relations mechanisms include constitutional, statutory or non-statutory agreements and processes (Phillimore 2013:231). The informal intergovernmental relations mechanisms, though complicated to observe, are as necessary as the formal mechanisms. This is because the system is held together by informal interactions such as unspoken and unwritten rules or principles relevant to the operation and effectiveness of intergovernmental relations.

Through a study of older federations in the United States, Switzerland and Australia, Phillimore (2013:231) further notes that the constitutions in these older federations said little about intergovernmental relations and established few institutions to manage interactions between the federal government and the state governments. The thinking was that coordination would prevail within the government though in recent federations such as South Africa, some formal mechanism and structures have been set-up to manage relations between the spheres of government.

Commenting on informal relations, Hattingh (1998:38-39) identifies six degrees of intensity. He classifies Indifference, Manipulation, and Communication from lowest intensity to low intensity, while Consultation, Advisory and Full Participation are classified from high intensity to highest intensity relations.

- Indifference: At this level, there are no relations although relations could emerge as a result of a voluntary act by a member or members of the community;
- Manipulation: Here, the government intentionally creates committees or other such institutions to represent the community and publicly supports their decisions and actions. It may be for the purpose of political or other gains;
- Communication: The government establishes relations with communities by informing them of government intentions and actions that could affect their interests. In most cases, the media and newspapers are used;
- Consultation: The government consults non-governmental organisations before taking any decisions on issues that could be of interest to them;
- Advisory: The government nominates one or more advisory bodies consisting of representatives of non-governmental organisations to deliberate and formulate proposals on matters referred to them by government. Although the government still dominates, there is an indication that it can receive advice from the community;
- Full Participation: The government is not the dominant partner and relations are based on joint decision-making. In this instance, the government and the community all have the authority to jointly investigate and discuss important issues and take decisions.

In intergovernmental relations involving central government and the lower spheres or levels of government, all the above mentioned degrees of intensity can be applicable. This would depend on the depth of the relations and the issues to be handled by each of the spheres or levels of government. The intensity of relations would be low for countries that have just created the lower spheres of government without giving them any significant power and resources. The intensity would be higher in countries where there is already a culture of cooperation amongst and between all the spheres of government. However, the central government which in most cases holds most of the authority, can decide the intensity of the relations, especially in countries with unitary governments. Moreover, highest intensity (full participation) can pave the way for a more formal type of relationship because there is already a culture of cooperation.

One other major factor which can determine the nature of intergovernmental relations is the type of governing system. Intergovernmental relations in federal governing systems will in most cases

differ from governmental relations in unitary governing system. Take for instance the case of governmental relations in unitary governing systems which is applicable to this study.

A unitary governing system is one in which authority is centralised at the national level, while little or no autonomy is granted to the lower levels of government (Kahn *et al.*, 2011:28). Otherwise stated, in a unitary government, the central government accumulates almost all authority, while the other spheres or levels of government only exercise the authority which the central government assigns to them. The central government can in some cases override the decisions of the other spheres or levels of government because the final decision rests with it (Fox and Meyer, 1995:132). Hattingh (1998:114) identifies the following principles as pertaining to a unitary government: indivisible and unlimited supreme authority; the national legislature can promulgate, approve and amend laws on all issues affecting state life; national legislature approves financial resources and creates executive institutions to carry out its functions; national legislature assigns authority and resources to other spheres of government and regulates intergovernmental relations.

Interactions between the various levels of government in the unitary system would be determined by the legislature due to their expansive authority (Kahn *et al.* 2011:28). Within a unitary government, there exists a situation in which lower levels of government are absolutely subjugated to the central government although this would depend on the type of control to which a subordinate body is subjected and the degree of discretion conferred upon the lower levels of government (Hattingh, 1998:115-116).

The type of unitary government equally determines the nature of intergovernmental relations. Subordination to legislative authority would obtain in a unitary government where the legislature has the mandate to create institutions and allocate the necessary authority and resources. In strong presidential unitary government systems, the president of the republic is vested with the authority to create institutions (including other spheres of government) and allocate resources to these institutions. In this case, the other spheres of government are subordinated to the central executive, and it is the executive that determines the nature of the intergovernmental relations within the state.

2.3.5. The tools of intergovernmental relations

Radin (2003:610-614 and 2014:643-648), analysing intergovernmental relations in the US, examines four categories of intergovernmental relations instruments. These are structural, programmatic, capacity building and research, and behavioural instruments.

Structural intergovernmental relations instruments

These are the formal roles, relationships, configuration of leadership and authority, and the rules, policies and regulations governing intergovernmental relations (Radin, 2003:610, and 2014:643). Generally, the concern is with the manner in which the whole system of government is organised. Some of the structural instruments are:

Reorganisation: These are the various changes in the established roles, relationships and the patterns of authority and leadership within the government organisational structure. This occurs mostly due to the changing needs and priorities of governments involving merging related programmes, or focusing of enhancing accountability and local autonomy (Radin, 2003:610).

Commissions: Commissions can be created to handle specific issues across the different levels of government. While it is believed to promote coordination, its operations, at a symbolic level, can rather make coordination difficult and there is a tendency to centralise power at the centre (Radin, 2014:643).

Coordination: It is used for the structural integration of units separated by functions, level or geography. It is one of the implicit purposes for reorganisation as it is believed that horizontal and vertical intergovernmental relationships can be easily managed (Radin, 2003:611 and 2014:643).

Deregulation: This involves the relaxation of mandates imposed on lower level governments by the higher level through regulations (Radin, 2003:611 and 2014:644).

Decentralisation: This is when central government transfers some authority and resources to lower levels of government with emphasis on relative local autonomy (Radin, 2003:611 and 2014:644).

Regulation and Oversight: These are mechanisms used by the central government to check the work of lower levels of government. The focus can either be to evaluate programme performance, or to promote accountability (Radin, 2003:612 and 2014:645).

Programmatic intergovernmental relations instruments

According to Radin (2003:612 and 2014:645), these are the mechanisms through which the central government provide the lower levels of government with the necessary resources to tackle social and economic problems. The central government can design a programme and request that the lower levels of government apply for grants to fund projects within this programme. Some of the programmatic instruments of intergovernmental relations include:

Providing broader purpose grants: This is when lower units of government are required to apply for specific categories of grants following specific guidelines laid down at the higher level, especially by the central government. In the US for example, applications from the Councils must be reviewed by state agencies before being forwarded to the national government (Radin, 2003:612 and 2014:646).

Partnerships: This is when governments at the lower levels cooperate with each other, with the central government (public-public partnerships) or with non-state actors (public-private partnerships) to achieve a specific purpose and a sense of shared responsibility for the outcomes of their activities (Radin, 2014:646).

Collaboration: This involves granting of funds by the national government to a group of lower level governments provided they are able to share resources and work together (Radin, 2003:613 and 2014:646).

Intergovernmental relations instruments for capacity-building and research

Otherwise known as intergovernmental relations instruments for ‘empowerment’, according to Radin (2014:646), these set of instruments are concerned with improving the management capacities of governments at all levels. Some of the specific tools in this category include:

Research: It is an indirect intergovernmental relations instrument that seeks to help people understand problems and issues, various options for addressing these issues and the consequences of these options. Research can generate knowledge that can facilitate inter-agency

coordination and in some cases it can provide the lower levels of government with knowledge which can improve on their negotiating power with the central government (Radin, 2003:613 and 2014:647).

Banks of Information: Each of the levels of government can serve as an information bank to furnish information on almost everything. This can serve as the basis for intergovernmental relations although it would require that the information is accurate, properly collected and stored (Radin, 2003:613 and 2014:647).

Capacity-building: Radin (2003:613 and 2014:647) considers this as one of the most widely used tools of intergovernmental relations wherein the central government enhances the capacities of the lower spheres or levels of government for effective and efficient management of programmes at these levels. The central government also seeks to ensure compliance with existing management norms and practices.

Behavioural instruments of intergovernmental relations

Wright (1978:8) notes that intergovernmental relations has much to do with the human beings appointed or elected to manage public institutions at various levels. Central governments' concerns, notes Radin (2003:614 and 2014:647), can either be to provide the lower levels of government with more or less autonomy, or to ensure more or less accountability (the autonomy/accountability dilemma). The specific instruments for this category of intergovernmental relations tools are:

Conflict management: Conflict is a constant term within the intergovernmental relations sphere for there will always be disagreements. It should therefore be properly managed as it cannot be avoided. Some of the mechanisms include building consensus among various actors in programmes and policy areas, and taking a negotiated approach rather than a 'decide, announce and defend' approach to promulgating rules and regulations (Radin, 2003:614 and 2014:647).

Individual communication: According to Radin (2003:614 and 2014:648), improving communication between different levels of government could lead to the management of the autonomy/accountability dilemma. Where resources are scarce and there is political uncertainty, effective intergovernmental relations demand open interactions across all the spheres of

government (listening, delegating, managing conflict and building consensus). Therefore, the ‘command and control’ communication method from top to bottom is ineffective.

Group communication: Radin (2003:614 and 2014:648) proposes hearings which is a formal means of group communication in policy development as an instrument of intergovernmental relations. This is because it provides a platform for persons within and outside the government to express their views and the various governments can collect information and shape their ideas. Governments at various levels can use this as an opportunity to build consensus if they consider the autonomy/accountability dilemma in intergovernmental relations as an opportunity rather than a problem.

Radin (2003:614 and 2014:648) notes that none of these four categories of intergovernmental relations tools is a panacea or solution to every issue. Various actors of intergovernmental relations must look at their context and what tool works well under which circumstances. For effective intergovernmental relations, all the set of tools are important because they complement each other and they can be used within any form of government (federal or unitary). Nonetheless, the behavioural instruments of intergovernmental relations must be considered closely because they deal directly with the human beings who would be using all three other intergovernmental relations tools. If the behavioural instruments are not robust and properly used, then intergovernmental relations would be built on a weak foundation.

2.4. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DECENTRALISATION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

The clarification of the concepts of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations indicates that a direct relationship can be established between these concepts. This section examines the features and the driving factors of this relationship.

2.4.1. Characteristics of the relationship between decentralisation and intergovernmental relations

Some features of the connection between decentralisation and intergovernmental relations include: Decentralisation as the foundation of intergovernmental relations; the nature of interactions between central and local governments; intergovernmental fiscal relations; and decentralisation as an intergovernmental relations instrument.

Decentralisation as the foundation of intergovernmental relations

Most, if not all, the definitions of decentralisation involve the notion of transfer of authority from central government to lower levels or spheres of government. UNDP (1997:4) emphasises decentralisation creating a system of co-responsibility between various levels of government. UNDP (1998:1) also considers these levels of government as having complementary roles in designing strategies for achieving stated objectives.

Moreover, some scholars have defined decentralisation as intergovernmental relations. Ribot (2002:1-2) considers decentralisation as centre-local relations because decentralisation should focus on strengthening the role of lower governmental levels in development rather than dismantling central governments. As Kuate (2014:14) points out, decentralisation is a means of sharing authority between governmental levels. This justifies the foregoing argument of complementary roles between the different levels or spheres of government.

The nature of interactions between central government and lower level governments

The relationship between decentralisation and intergovernmental relations is viewed as a mechanism for facilitating the central government's interactions with the other government levels. These interactions can clarify the responsibilities and the accountability lines between the different levels. Owona (2012:9) defines decentralisation from a central government-centred perspective because the central government creates lower governmental levels, grants them authority and resources, and supervises their actions. Evidently, the central government would be both player and referee in the process. Olowu (2003:46) refers to this as the hierarchical control of lower levels of governments by central government. In Africa, Olowu (2003:46) notes that this hierarchical control is a means of ensuring accountability through mechanisms such as inspectorates, approval mechanisms of decisions made by the lower governmental levels, deployment of personnel from central government institutions to institutions in the lower levels, and the suspension or dissolution of lower level governments that do not comply with the law. Although, there are instances of misuse of power by the central government and its agents to settle political scores or victimise opposition-led lower level governments.

Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations

Intergovernmental fiscal relations are the mechanisms in place for the effective transfer of financial resources from the central government to the lower level governments. According to Arthur (2012:29), fiscal decentralisation enables central government to transfer funds to lower level governments. Although in most cases, central government assigns tax collecting responsibilities to lower level governments to raise revenue, UNDESA (2005:64-65) explains that inadequacies of lower level government own-source revenue creates the possibility for intergovernmental transfers which can have a double purpose: close the fiscal gap and narrow intergovernmental resource disparities.

Intergovernmental fiscal relations are a major component of fiscal decentralisation, and key to ensuring that lower level governments have the necessary financial resources. The transfer of funds must also be accompanied by effective accountability mechanisms, hence the European Commission (2007:18) proposes mechanisms for central government control.

Decentralisation as an instrument of intergovernmental relations

Radin (2003:611 and 2012:644) proposes decentralisation as a structural tool of intergovernmental relations. Decentralisation (particularly devolution or political decentralisation) creates and strengthens new lower spheres of government which pave the way for changing the nature of interactions between the central government and the lower spheres. This new relationship is made possible by the fact that the lower spheres of government, through devolution, have relative autonomy in taking their decisions and undertaking their actions. This point further strengthens the argument that decentralisation is the foundation of intergovernmental relations.

2.4.2. Drivers of the link between decentralisation and intergovernmental relations

The link between decentralisation and intergovernmental relations depends on some catalysts. These include: Clearly defined roles for central and local governments; principles of intergovernmental relations; capacity-building and the human dimension.

The roles of central and lower level governments

It is not enough that central government creates lower spheres of government through decentralisation, - their roles must be clearly defined. The authority and responsibilities being transferred to lower governmental spheres has hitherto been the prerogative of the central government and the latter would frequently intervene to ensure balanced development for all lower governmental spheres. Therefore, the interactions between the central government and the lower governmental spheres would depend on their clearly defined roles (Wright, 1978:13). Each of them needs to understand their limits (although most often central government has no limits), and central government interference should not be seen as a burden but as a complementary action. Lower spheres of government on their part must work according to the laid down principles and act within the confines of the law (Hattingh, 1998:11).

Principles of intergovernmental relations

The creation of lower spheres of government should be accompanied by defining the principles underpinning the relationship between the various tiers of government. The principles should clearly state the coordination mechanisms for joint actions and the conflict resolution mechanisms when such conflicts do arise. These principles should be formalised in an act of parliament, or by a decree, or in the constitution, and should be agreed upon by all the different levels of government (Hattingh, 1998:11). However, there could be other informal mechanisms peculiar to particular regions of the country. These must be used to complement the formalised principles.

Capacity-building

When the central government transfers authority and responsibilities to the lower spheres or levels of government, such transfers should be accompanied by the necessary training for officials at all the governmental levels to understand their roles and the principles of their interactions. In some cases, people are voted to become mayors not because they are literate but because they are popular. Therefore, such people need to be properly trained (Radin, 2003:613 and 2014:647). Capacity building can be an additional ingredient to the clearly defined roles and the principles of intergovernmental relations because it can serve as a platform for central and lower level governmental actors to clarify their intentions and actions. Improved knowledge and

understanding through capacity building can, to some extent, improve on the relations between the actors.

The human factor

This is perhaps the most important determinant that connects decentralisation and intergovernmental relations. As Wright (1978:9) states, the level and nature of intergovernmental relations is determined by the activities and attitudes of persons occupying positions at various governmental levels. The other drivers explained above will be determined by the actions of various humans managing the institutions at the lower governmental levels and central government level. In a situation of prevailing political ideology, there would be a conflicting relationship between the different levels or spheres of government. The ideal situation would be to go beyond political ideologies and put the interest of local citizens first. Moreover, it can also depend on the driving force behind decentralisation for if it is genuine, then the relationship between the different levels of government would be that of understanding and cooperation.

From the characteristics and the drivers of the relationship between decentralisation and intergovernmental relations, it would appear that the lines between both concepts are blurred. The basic reasoning behind decentralisation and intergovernmental relations is that the central government should ensure the lower levels of government have all that they need to effectively execute their functions (transfer of responsibilities should be concurrent with transfer of the necessary financial, human and technical resources linked to these responsibilities). Lower levels of government, on their part, should be ready to shoulder these new responsibilities while ensuring accountability to the central government. This, however, appears to be an ideal situation which is not always the case perhaps due to scarce resources, motives for decentralisation and political ideologies. Therefore, decentralisation and intergovernmental relations are inextricably intertwined for there can be no effective decentralisation without intergovernmental relations. Decentralisation is likely not to attain its goals and objectives of effective and efficient delivery of public goods and services locally if there are poor interactions between the different levels of government, particularly in developing countries.

2.5. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter analyses the theoretical basis of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations. On the one hand, the chapter defines decentralisation, presenting its advantages, challenges, popular misconceptions and the various types of decentralisation. On the other hand, the chapter defines intergovernmental relations with its main features, approaches, dimensions, and the various tools of intergovernmental relations. The chapter equally focuses on how decentralisation relates to intergovernmental relations by identifying some of the characteristics and the driving factors of this relationship. The creation of lower levels of government particularly through political decentralisation or devolution evidently implies the need for improved governmental interactions between all spheres of government. The human factor has an indispensable impact on the link between decentralisation and intergovernmental relations. The behaviour of individuals elected or appointed to occupy various offices at central government or lower government levels determines if government programmes would succeed or fail amongst which are decentralisation and intergovernmental relations.

CHAPTER 3

INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT OF DECENTRALISATION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

3.1. INTRODUCTION

In various parts of the world, different countries have their unique practices of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations. In some cases, the practices in one country have influenced the way decentralisation and intergovernmental relations operate in other countries. This chapter examines decentralisation and intergovernmental relations as it operates in two different countries: The French Republic in Europe, and the Republic of South Africa in Africa. These cases were selected because they both operate unitary government systems which could serve as a lesson for Cameroon from the context of the developed and the developing world.

3.2. DECENTRALISATION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN THE FRENCH REPUBLIC

The French Republic, founded after the French Revolution of 1789 experienced different forms of decentralisation such as the decentralisation laws of August 1871 and April 1884. These laws attributed some authority to lower levels of government such as departments and municipal councils which were elected (Rocheron, Houldsworth, Atger, El Bakir, & Longueville, 2016:4). However, before the 1980s, the French Republic was still an epitome of centralisation as politics was dominated almost entirely by the central government and its field operatives or representatives at various levels (Vlahos, 2013:6).

The election of Francois Mitterand, a Socialist, as President of France in 1981, brought about sweeping reforms in the modus operandi of the French political arena. The idea of distributing authority and resources between the central government and lower spheres of government was introduced within the French society. Decentralisation, as it is practiced today in France, started in 1982 with the promulgation of laws that introduced and have since accelerated various decentralisation reforms (Schmidt, 1990:105).

3.2.1. The major phases of decentralisation in France

There are three major phases of decentralisation reforms in France. These phases include: Act I of decentralisation from 1982 to 2002; Act II of decentralisation from 2003 to 2012; and Act III of decentralisation from 2013 to present.

a) Act I of decentralisation

This phase is mainly characterised by the promulgation of the Defferre Laws on decentralisation (named after the then French Minister for the Interior and Decentralisation, Gaston Defferre). These laws include law no 82-213 of 2 March 1982 on the rights and freedoms of communes, departments and regions (French Republic (FR), 1982); and law no 83-8 of 7 January 1983 on the distribution of authority between the communes, departments, the regions, and the central government (FR, 1983a) which was later completed by law no 83-663 of 22 July 1983 (FR, 1983b). The Defferre Laws introduced three major changes in France:

- The supervision of communes by the departmental prefect was replaced by legal checks exercised by administrative and regional audit courts - the prefects henceforth referred any issues deemed illegal to these courts;
- Executive authority at departmental level was transferred from the prefect to an elected departmental council;
- Regions were created, granted full authority and recognised as a level of government below the central government.

The Defferre Laws laid the foundation for numerous other laws and decrees that were aimed at ameliorating the decentralisation policy of France. Some of these laws include:

- Law no 92-12 of 6 February 1992 on the territorial administration of France (ATR Law) (FR, 1992);
- Law no 95-115 of 4 February 1995 on the orientation of territorial planning and development (Pasqua Law) (FR, 1995);
- Law no 99-533 of 25 June 1999 on the orientation for territorial planning and sustainable development (Voynet Law) (FR, 1999a);
- Law no 99-586 of 12 July 1999 relating to the enhancement and simplification of intercommunal cooperation (Chevenement Law) (FR, 1999b).

b) Act II of decentralisation: The Constitutional amendments

Act II of decentralisation in France was characterised mainly by the amendments made to the French Constitution in 2003. These amendments were officialised by Constitutional law no 2003-276 of 28 March 2003 relative to the decentralised organisation of the French Republic (FR, 2003a). Article 1 of this constitutional amendment emphasised and confirmed that “the organisation of the French Republic is decentralised”. Other major amendments to the constitution included: the right to hold local referenda and the right to petition (Article 72-1) and the financial autonomy of territorial collectivities (Article 72-2). The expression ‘local collectivities’ (*collectivités locales*) was replaced with the expression ‘territorial collectivities’ (*collectivités territoriales*). The constitutional amendment in Article 72 recognised the following as territorial collectivities in France: Communes or councils, departments (*departements*), regions (*regions*), collectivities with special status (*collectivités a statut particulier*), and overseas collectivities (*collectivités d’outre-mer*) (FR, 2003a).

The constitutional amendment of 28 March 2003 was followed by the enactment of laws to enforce some of the new principles of decentralisation which were enshrined in the Constitution. These laws include the following:

- Law no 2003-705 of 1 August 2003 (FR, 2003b), relative to local referenda: This law was in response to Article 72-1 of the Constitution of the French Republic. Territorial collectivities can propose by referendum a decision on issues within their domain of authority for the electors to approve. It is a mechanism for citizens to participate directly in local decision-making as stipulated in Chapter II of the law. Also, citizens have the right to petition that an issue be included on the agenda of the local assembly provided it falls within its authority
- Law no 2004-758 of 29 July 2004 (FR, 2004a), relative to the financial autonomy of territorial collectivities: This law was enacted to define the principle of autonomy as espoused in Article 72 of the French Constitution. The law redefined the French system of financing territorial collectivities, and the financial relations between the central government and the lower levels of government. Territorial collectivities had financial autonomy, both in income and expenditure. According to this law, the transfer of authority from the central government to the lower levels of government must be

accompanied by the transfer of necessary resources as stated in Article 72-2 of the Constitution (FR, 2003a). The law equally defined the revenue generating authority of the territorial collectivities, and the conditions for ensuring fiscal equality between the collectivities, given that the territorial collectivities do not have equal revenue generating strengths.

- Law no 2004-809 of 13 August 2004 (FR, 2004b), relative to the rights and obligations of territorial collectivities: This law enumerates the new competencies transferred by the central government to the territorial collectivities. It defines the principles for financial compensation accompanying these new competencies, the modalities for the transfer of personnel from the central government to the territorial collectivities, and the guarantees provided to the civil servants transferred to the central government. The law defines the distribution of the different competencies between the central government and the lower levels of government, some of which include the following: Communes (municipal services, primary education infrastructure, land-use planning and issuance of building permits); departments (health and social services, construction and maintenance of public infrastructure, transportation and secondary school infrastructure); and regions (coordination of regional economic planning and policy, vocational training, and industrial development).

Although each of the lower levels of government was attributed new responsibilities, the bulk of these new responsibilities was transferred to the regions and the departments.

c) Act III of decentralisation

This phase of decentralisation in France can be defined as various efforts by President Francois Holland to enhance the decentralisation process initiated in 1982. Some of the main laws promulgated during this period include the following:

- Law no 2014-58 of 27 January 2014 (FR, 2014) on the modernisation of territorial public action and the creation of metropolises: This law otherwise known by its French acronym (Loi MAPTAM or MAPTAM law) clarifies the authority of territorial collectivities and the coordination of decentralisation stakeholders by creating territorial conferences for public action (*conference territoriale de l'action public*). The territorial conferences for public action is an organ for dialogue between various territorial collectivities in various

regions. MAPTAM law also created metropolises with three of these metropolises having special status: Paris, Lyon and Marseille.

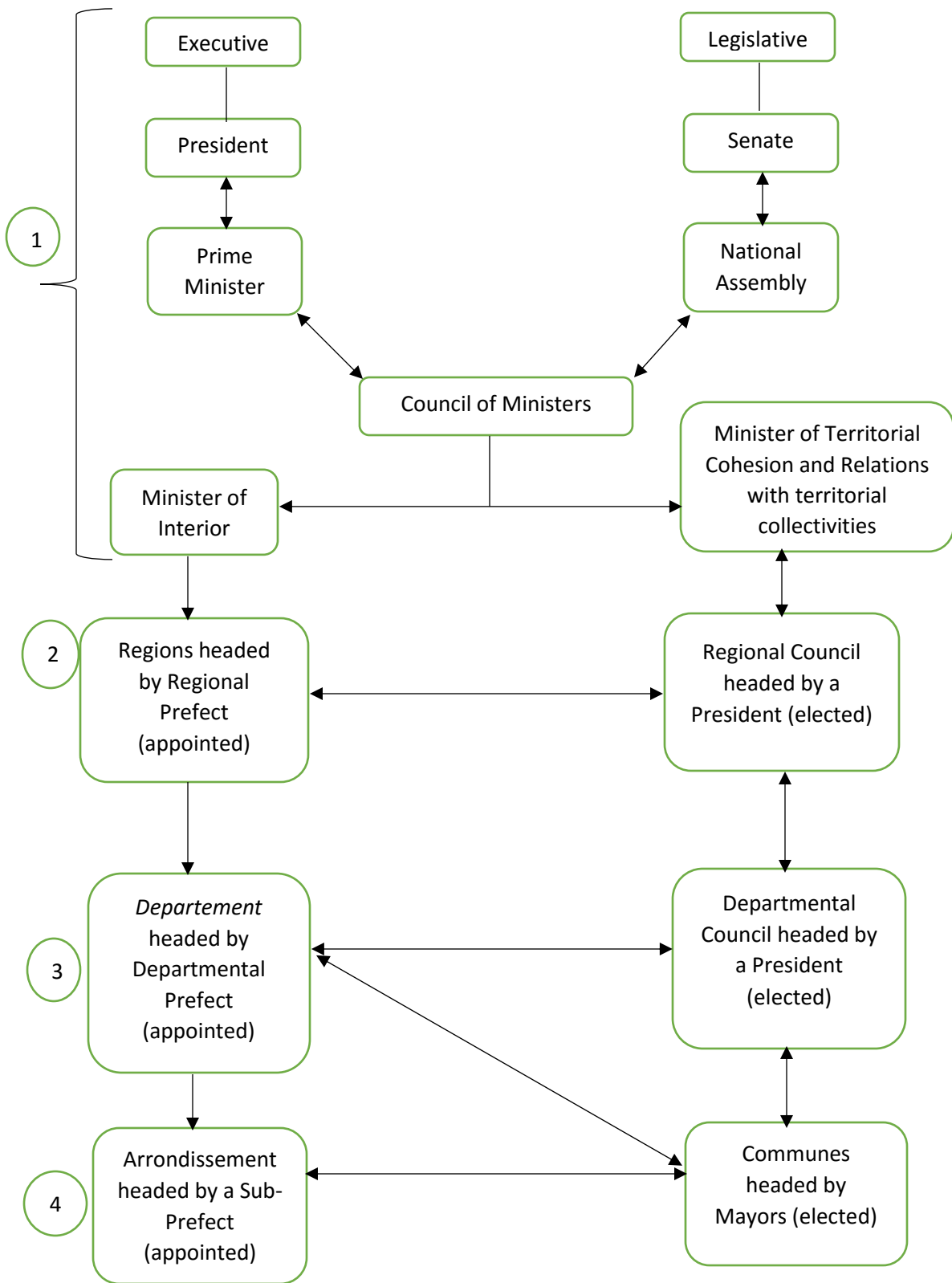
- Law no 2015-29 of 16 January 2015 (FR, 2015a) on the specialisation of regions: The main aspect of this law is the fusion of over 22 regions to form 13 regions. This was effective from 1 January 2016.

This evolution of decentralisation in France since the Defferre Laws of 1982 indicates that decentralisation in France is a dynamic process which is frequently modified to suit to changing landscape of the political environment in France.

3.2.2. Institutions for the implementation of decentralisation in France

To understand the overall functioning of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations in France, it is necessary to present the organisational structure of the French government. This is illustrated in Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1. Structure of the French government



Source: Author

According to Figure 3.1 above, France operates a four-level decentralisation system: The central government, the regions, the *départements* (departments), and the communes. At the central government level, the Minister of Interior is in charge of the central government representatives (the prefects) while the Minister of Territorial Cohesion equally ensures the interactions between the central government and territorial collectivities (regions, departments and communes).

The Region is led by a Regional Prefect appointed by the Council of Ministers, who represents the central government in the region. Also, there is a regional council which is led by an elected President. The Regional Prefect ensures administrative control over the legality of the decisions of the President of the regional council.

The *Département* is led by a Departmental Prefect appointed by the Council of Ministers, who represents the central government in the department. Similar to the regions, there is a Departmental Council headed by an elected President. The Departmental Prefect ensures the administrative control of the legality of decisions taken by the Departmental Council President on the one-hand, and the decisions taken by mayors of the communes within the *département* on the other hand.

The Arrondissement is headed by a Sub-Prefect who is an assistant to the Departmental Prefect. He/she assists the Departmental Prefect in exercising administrative control over the communes located within the department.

Before the 1982 decentralisation reforms in France, a number of institutions had already been established to manage the partial decentralisation that was practiced at the time. Since 1982, some institutions have either been created or reformed to ensure the effectiveness of the government decentralisation efforts. Some of these institutions are examined below.

a) The General Directorate of Local Collectivities or Direction Generale des Collectivites Locales (DGCL)

This is one of the directorates in the French Ministry of the Interior although the directorate is jointly administered by the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Territorial Cohesion. It is one of the key directorates at central government level that deals exclusively with the functioning of the lower levels of government (regional councils, departmental councils and communes). This

directorate is in charge of drafting the various regulations that concerns the territorial collectivities, sharing the financial resources between the central government and the lower levels of government, and defining the status of actors in the lower levels of government (elected officials and personnel). The DGCL equally ensures the functioning of the secretariats of various institutions of collaboration between the central government and the lower levels of government such as: The national conference of territories; the local finance committee; the national council for the evaluation of norms; the supreme council for territorial public service; the national council for the training of elected local officials; the territorial public service deontology commission; and the national council for funeral operations (FR, 2019a:1).

b) The Prefects (Le Prefet)

The functions of prefects in France is defined by decree no 2004 – 374 of 29 April 2004 (FR, 2004c) modified by decree no 2010 – 146 of 16 February 2010 (FR, 2010) relative to the authority of prefects, and the organisation and actions of central government services in the regions and departments. Article 1 of decree no 2004 – 374 of 29 April 2004 (FR, 2004c) states that prefects exercise central government authority in their areas of command. They also represent the Prime Minister and other ministers, and ensure the implementation of central government decisions. There are two types of prefects in France: The regional prefect and the departmental prefect.

The regional prefect ensures the coherence of central government services in the region working closely with the departmental prefects whose actions are coordinated by the regional prefect (Article 2, decree no 2010 – 146 of 16 February 2010) (FR, 2010). Regarding the transfer of authority to local levels of government, the regional prefect ensures administrative control of the regional council and its institutions to ensure that decisions of the regional council are in line with the law (Article 4, decree no 2004 – 374 of 29 April 2004) (FR, 2004c).

According to Article 9 of decree no 2004 – 374 of 29 April 2004 (FR, 2004c), the departmental prefect oversees the implementation of central government policies in the department. Similar to the regional prefect, departmental prefects ensure administrative control over departmental councils, communes and their institutions to certify the legality of the decisions (Article 10, decree no 2004 – 374) (FR, 2004c).

The Prefect was one of the mechanisms used to enforce centralisation in France. However, the role of the Prefect has changed significantly since the initiation of decentralisation reforms in 1982.

c) The Regional Councils

The administration of regions in France is the responsibility of regional councils elected by direct universal suffrage (Article L4131 – 1) (FR, 2019b). The elected regional councillors constitute the regional assembly or the legislative arm of the region which holds deliberations on various decisions concerning the region. The other organs of the regional council are the President and bureau, the Permanent Commission, and the Regional Economic, Social and Environmental Council (RESEC).

The President and the bureau of the regional council are designated by the regional councillors from amongst their peers. The President heads the bureau, and is assisted by Vice-Presidents and members delegated by the Permanent Commission. As the executive arm of the region, the President of the regional council prepares and executes the deliberations of the regional council (Articles L4133 – 1, L4133 – 8, & L4231 – 1) (FR, 2019b).

The Regional Economic, Social and Environmental Council (RESEC) is a consultative assembly at the disposal of the regional council and the President of the regional council. Its missions include: Advising the regional council on the stakes and consequences of regional economic, social and environmental policies; participating in consultations organised at regional level; and contributing to the monitoring and evaluation of regional policies. Members of the RESEC include representatives of associations and foundations working in the domain of the environment, experts in environmental and sustainable development issues, representatives of youth associations aged below 30, trade unions, companies and institutions dealing with issues affecting the region (Articles L4134 – 1 & L4134 – 2) (FR, 2019b).

Some of the authority transferred to the regional councils by the central government include: Development of regional economic policies and plans, industrial development, construction of high schools, vocational training and skills development for the unemployed, and interregional transport facilities.

Despite being recognised as a level of government below the central government, the regional councils in France cannot enact their own laws like states in Federal governments, such as Germany, can do. At present, there are 13 regions in France.

d) The Departmental Council

The departments in France are a level of government located directly below the regions. The departmental council (formerly referred to as general council before the 2014 reforms) is the elected assembly or legislative organ of the department representing the population and all the territories in it (Article L3121 – 1) (FR, 2019b). The members of the departmental council are called departmental councillors. The other organs of the department include the President of the departmental council, the Permanent Commission and the bureau of the departmental council.

The president of the departmental council is a departmental councillor elected by other departmental councillors. He/she is the executive organ of the department, thus, prepares and executes the deliberations of the departmental council. The President of the departmental council heads the bureau of the council assisted by members delegated by the Permanent Commission of the departmental council (Articles L3122 – 1, L3122 – 8, & L3221 – 1) (FR, 2019b).

Some of the authority transferred to departmental councils includes: The maintenance of departmental roads or intercity roads, social policies and welfare allowances, and the construction of secondary schools. France currently has a total of 96 departments.

e) The Communes and Intercommunal cooperation

The commune in France is the lowest level of government located below the department. They range from large cities of over 2 million inhabitants, to towns of 10.000 inhabitants, or a hamlet of 10 persons because the communes are formed based on pre-existing villages. France has the highest number of communes in Europe with over 36.000 representing 40% of communal administration within the European Union (Rocheron *et al.*, 2016:10).

The governance of French communes is the responsibility of elected officials who constitute the municipal council (*conseil municipal*), a mayor and his/her deputies who are elected from the ranks of the members of the municipal council (Articles L2121 – 1 & L2122 – 1) (FR, 2019b).

One of the specificities of French communes is the need to improve on local democracy and provide proximity services to the population. Hence, inhabitants of a commune have rights to information and to be consulted about every decision which concerns them (Article L2141 – 1) (FR, 2019b). Municipal councils of communes with 80.000 or more inhabitants can subdivide the commune into districts and create district councils for each district. These district councils can be consulted by the mayor to seek their opinions on certain issues concerning their district. The district council can equally participate in the elaboration, implementation, and evaluation of various actions that concern their district (Article L2143 – 1) (FR, 2019b). In addition, municipal councils can also create consultation committees to handle specific issues affecting the commune or part of the commune. There is a communal accessibility commission in communes of 5.000 or more inhabitants which ensures the participation of disadvantaged groups in communal activities. Proximity services can be provided through mobile services, or the setting up of annex municipal council services in various districts of communes with 100.000 or more inhabitants. This is a means of bringing services closer to inhabitants of various parts of the commune (Articles L2143 – 2, L2143 – 3 & L2144 – 1) (FR, 2019b).

Some of the authority transferred to communes by the central government include: Construction of nursery and elementary schools, communal roads, local police and public order, urban development, local ports and canals, housing development, cemeteries, incentives towards culture and sports development, provision of local social services, management of local transport systems, and the development of gas and electricity networks.

The French laws on decentralisation encourages the communes to be involved in intercommunal cooperation known in French as *intercommunalité*. According to Arsenault (2005:2), intercommunal cooperation is founded on the free will of communes to elaborate common development projects within the framework of promoting communal solidarity through the creation of public intercommunal cooperation institutions (*Etablissements Publics de Cooperation Intercommunale – EPCI*). The intercommunal cooperation institutions are tasked with performing certain functions such as garbage collection and urban transport, elaborate economic development projects and town planning. The Chevenement Law of 1999 is considered as one of the most successful in promoting intercommunal cooperation in France. This law outlines two types of intercommunal cooperation institutions in France: Those without fiscal authority and those with fiscal authority.

- Intercommunal institutions without fiscal authority: These are the traditional syndicates of Communes in which communes come together and contribute financially to the syndicate, but the syndicate cannot levy its own taxes. Syndicates can either be set up for a particular purpose (waste management, water and energy distribution) or to deal with several issues. This is a loose form of intercommunal cooperation because communes can leave the syndicate when they deem it necessary.
- Intercommunal institutions with fiscal authority: There are various forms of these institutions such as the community of communes (*communauté des communes*) which brings together communes in rural areas; the community of agglomeration (*communauté d'agglomération*) which concerns towns, medium sized cities and their suburbs; the urban community (*communauté urbaine*) which concerns larger cities and their suburbs; and the metropole which concerns some major cities (Arsenault, 2005:2 – 3).

3.2.3. Intergovernmental relations in France

Intergovernmental relations in France takes place at two major levels: The local level (representing each of the lower levels of government below the central government), and at the central government level. At the lower levels of government, the central government is represented by the regional prefects in the regions, and the departmental prefects in the departments and the communes. The prefect on behalf of the central government ensures the administrative control of the actions of the regional and departmental councils, and the communes. He/she also ensures the implementation of national policies at these lower levels bearing in mind the promotion of national interest and the respect for the laws of France. The laws on decentralisation in France are quite specific on the relationship between each of the lower levels of government and the prefects.

- At the level of the commune, Article 133 of law no 2004-809 of 13 August 2004 (FR, 2004b) stipulates that the mayor on his/her request receives necessary information from the departmental prefect for the exercise of his/her duties. The departmental prefect also at his/her request receives necessary information from the mayor for the exercising of his/her duties.
- At the level of the department, Article 1 (V) of law no 2013-403 of 17 May 2013 (FR, 2013) also requires the president of the departmental council and the departmental prefect

to exchange necessary information for the exercise of their duties. It also requires that every year, the departmental prefect through a special report, informs the departmental council of the activities of the various deconcentrated central government institutions within the department. This special report from the departmental prefect is open to debate by the departmental council in the presence of the prefect. More so, the departmental council president and the departmental prefect jointly coordinate the actions of departmental council services and central government field offices in the department.

- At the level of the region, law no 96-142 of 21 February 1996 (FR, 1996) stipulates that the president of the regional council and the regional prefect should each exchange information necessary for the exercise of their specific duties. The law also requires the regional prefect to inform the regional council, through a special report, of the activities of various central government services in the region. As in the departmental council, this report is open to debate by the regional council in the presence of the regional prefect. The regional council president and the regional prefect jointly coordinate the actions of regional council services and central government field offices in the region. Also, in each region, a conference for the harmonisation of investments meets twice annually bringing together the regional prefect, the regional council president, departmental prefects and departmental council presidents. This conference enables information exchange on the investment programmes of the central government, the region and the departments within the region (Article 1 (V) of law no 2013-403 of 17 May 2013) (FR, 2013).

There is visibly an effort by the French legislators to balance the authority of the central government with that of the lower levels of government through collaboration, coordination and accountability. The information exchanges between the prefects and the mayors, departmental and regional council presidents, are mechanisms to strengthen cooperation between the central government representative and local level and the executives of the territorial collectivities. The obligation of the regional and departmental prefects to report to the departmental and regional councils annually on the activities of central government services in the department and regions, is a means for the lower levels of government to hold the central government accountable for its various activities at these levels. Moreover, there is the shared responsibility between the regional and departmental prefects and the regional and departmental council presidents to

coordinate the actions of central government field offices and the services of regional and departmental councils.

In addition, French regions, departments and communes share responsibilities on issues of gender equality, culture, sports, tourism and promotion of regional languages (Article L1111 – 4) (FR, 2019b). Hence, in each region, there is a Territorial Conference for Public Action (*Conference Territoriale de l'Action Public*) which seeks to promote concertation on these shared responsibilities between the regional council, the departmental councils and the communes. This conference formulates proposals on all issues related to the exercise of authority and implementation of policies that requires coordination between the territorial collectivities. The conference is chaired by the president of the regional council and its participants include presidents of departmental councils and representatives of various communes within the region (Article L1111 – 9 – 1) (FR, 2019b).

At the central government level, there are a number of institutions acting as a forum for consultations and action between central government institutions involved in the implementation of decentralisation and the lower spheres of government. Some of these institutions include: The local finance committee; the national council for the evaluation of norms; and the national conference of territories.

- ***The local finance committee:*** This committee brings together representatives from the national assembly, the senate, regional councils, departmental councils, public intercommunal cooperation institutions, mayors, and the prefects. This committee has four main missions, according to Article 113 of law no 2015-991 of 7 August 2015 (FR, 2015b) on the new territorial organisation of the French Republic: Provide government and parliament with the necessary analysis for the elaboration of the finance law that concerns the territorial collectivities; produce an annual report on the financial situation of territorial collectivities based on the administrative and financial accounts of these collectivities; collect, analyse, update and publicise statistics and data on the management of territorial collectivities in order to promote the development of good practices; and evaluate local public policies. This committee can also be consulted by the central government on bills concerning finances of territorial collectivities, whereas, consultation of the committee is mandatory for decrees on the finances of territorial collectivities.

- ***The national council for the evaluation of norms:*** This council is made up of representatives of the national assembly, the senate, regional councillors, departmental councillors, councillors of public intercommunal cooperation institutions, municipal councillors, and prefects. According to Article 10 of law no 2016-1888 of 28 December 2016 (FR, 2016), this council is consulted by the government on the financial and technical impact of legal texts that create or modify laws applicable to territorial collectivities and their public institutions. It also examines the evolution of the rules applicable to territorial collectivities and their public institutions, and evaluates the technical and financial impact of these rules vis-à-vis the stated objectives. The council can suggest, in its evaluation, various mechanisms for the adaptation of legal norms to the stated objectives if the application of these norms entails disproportionate material, financial and technical consequences for the territorial collectivities and their public institutions.
- ***The national conference of territories:*** This institution was created in 2017 by French President Emmanuel Macron. Placed under the authority of the Prime Minister, the national conference of territories is made up of members of government, representatives of parliament, territorial collectivities, and existing organisations for territorial consultations. The objective of this institution is to strengthen the relationship between the elected authorities in the regions, departments and communes and the central government through a “pact of trust”. It will enable the territorial collectivities to be involved from inception in all central government decisions that concern them. The conference meets every six months and until now, it has already convened two meetings (July and December 2017). The establishment of the national conference of territories seeks to redefine the division of roles between the central government and lower levels of government by valorising the indispensable role of the lower governmental levels (FR, 2017:3 – 5).

There are other institutions for intergovernmental relations at central government level apart from the above-mentioned, such as: The higher council of territorial public service; the national council for the training of elected local officials; the territorial public service deontology commission; and the national council for funeral operations.

3.3. DECENTRALISATION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa experienced different forms of government since the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910 until the fall of apartheid in 1994. According to Kahn *et al.* (2011:50), the 1909 South African Act or Constitution of the Union provided for three spheres of government (central, provincial and local spheres), which had little or no authority. Relations between the lower spheres of government and the central government before 1994 was characterised by subjugation of the lower spheres to the central government. The majority of the decisions were made by the central government and the lower spheres could only implement these decisions.

Since 1994, the government of South Africa has introduced numerous reforms which have significantly modified and improved the governance landscape within and between the different spheres of government. The South African perspective of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations can be understood through an examination of the existing legislative and institutional framework.

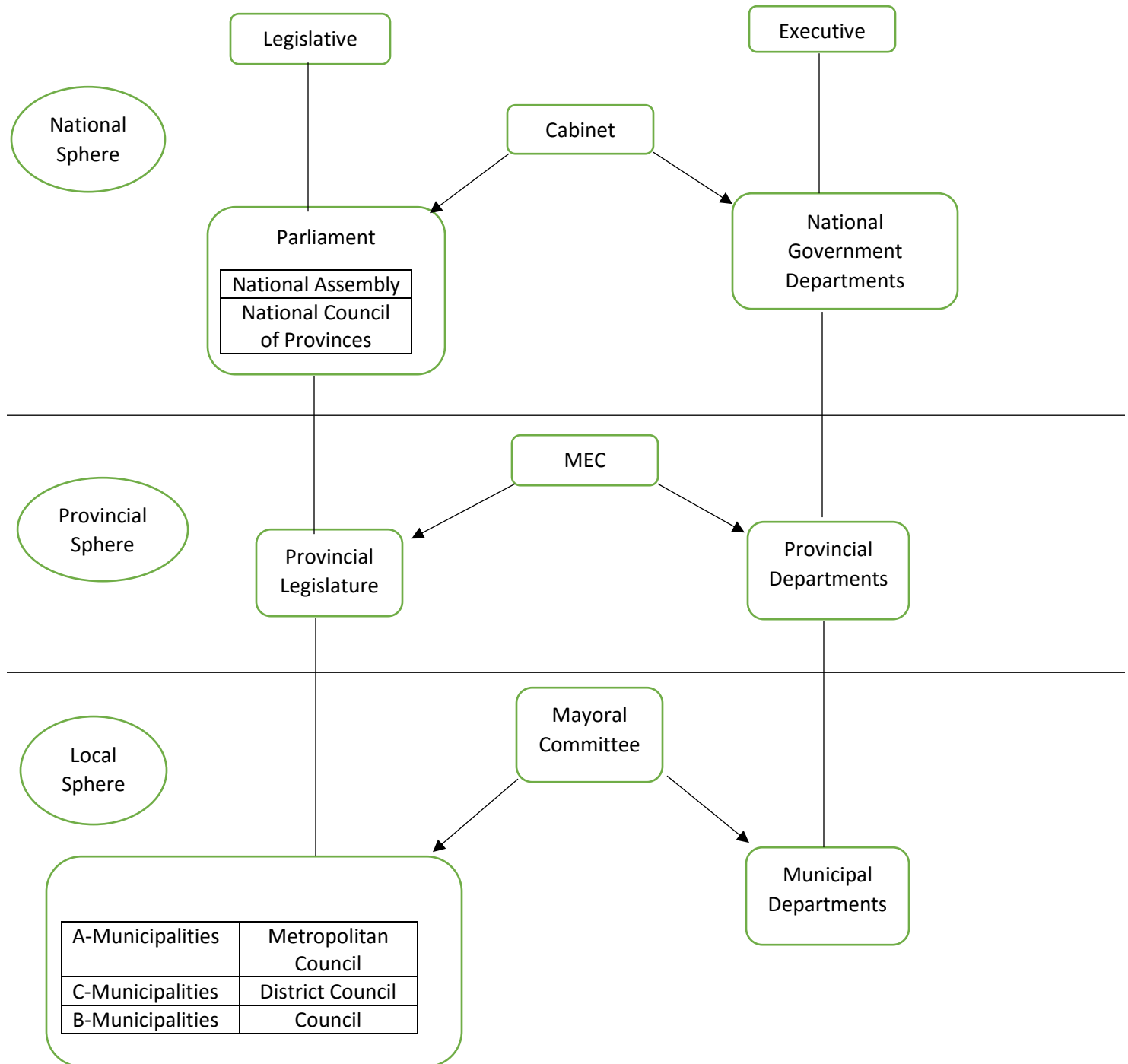
3.3.1. Legislative framework of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations in South Africa

The various legislative texts governing decentralisation and intergovernmental relations in South Africa include: The Constitution, 1996 (Republic of South Africa (RSA), 1996); the Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (No 117 of 1998) (RSA, 1998); the Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (No 32 of 2000) (RSA, 2000); the Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations Act, 1997 (No 97 of 1997) (RSA, 1997); the Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (No 56 of 2003) (RSA, 2003); and the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005 (No 13 of 2005) (RSA, 2005).

a) The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996

The South African Constitution was promulgated into law on 18 December, 1996. Chapter 3 of this Constitution focuses on co-operative government and intergovernmental relations which are the specificity of the South African context. Section 40 (1) states that government is made up of the national, provincial and local spheres which are distinctive, interdependent and interrelated as seen in Figure 3.2 below.

Figure 3.2. Structure of the South Africa government



Source: Uys (2012:33)

According to Figure 3.2 above, the national government comprises the two houses of Parliament (National Assembly elected by voters, and the National Council of Provinces representing the nine provincial legislatures and organised local government) on the one hand, and the national executive comprising the President and the Cabinet on the other hand.

The provincial sphere consisting of the nine provincial legislatures and the provincial executives with the Premiers at the helm of each province. National government departments are represented in the provinces by provincial departments.

The local sphere comprises 283 municipalities. According to the Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (No 117 of 1998) (RSA, 1998), there are three categories of municipalities as seen in Figure 3.2 above:

- Category A or metropolitan councils (currently 6);
- Category C or district councils (currently 46); and
- Category B or local councils (currently 231)

Section 41 (1) of the Constitution of South Africa 1996 (RSA, 1996) enumerates the principles governing co-operative government and intergovernmental relations among the various spheres of government in South Africa some of which include:

- Respect for the constitutional status, institutions, powers and functions of government in the other spheres;
- Not assume any power or function except those conferred on them in terms of the Constitution;
- Exercising their authority and performing their functions in a manner that does not encroach on the geographical, functional or institutional integrity of government in another sphere; and
- Co-operating in mutual trust and good faith by fostering friendly relations, assisting and supporting one another, informing one another of, and consulting one another on, matters of common interest, coordinating their actions and legislation with one another, adhering to agreed procedures and avoiding legal proceedings against one another.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 of the Constitution focus on the roles and responsibilities of each of the spheres of government, the conditions under which the national government can intervene in the provincial government, and the conditions under which the provincial government can intervene in the local government.

b) The Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (No 117 of 1998)

The objective of the Municipal Structures Act, 1998, include the following: To provide for the establishment of municipalities in accordance with the requirements relating to categories and types of municipalities; to establish the criteria for determining the category of municipalities to be established in an area; to define the types of municipality that may be established within each category; to provide for an appropriate division of functions and authority between categories of municipalities; to regulate the internal systems, structures and office-bearers of municipalities; to provide for appropriate electoral systems; and to provide for other related matters.

c) The Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (No 32 of 2000)

The Municipal Systems Act, 2000, enumerates the fundamental principles, mechanisms and processes that can enable municipalities to promote the socio-economic development of local communities and ensure access to basic services affordable to all. This Act defines the legal nature of a municipality; explains how municipal authority and functions are exercised, and mechanisms for community participation; and establishes an enabling framework for the core processes of planning, performance management, resource mobilisation and organisational change which form the basis for the notion of a local government that is development oriented.

Other objectives of this Act include: To provide a framework for local public administration and the development of human resources; to empower the poor and ensure that municipalities put in place service tariffs and credit control policies that take into account the needs of the poor through providing a framework for the provision of services, service delivery agreements and municipal service districts; to establish a framework for support, monitoring and standard setting by other spheres of government to progressively build local government into an efficient, frontline development agency capable of integrating the activities of all spheres of government for the overall socio-economic development of communities in harmony with their natural environment; and to provide for the legal issues pertaining to local governments.

d) The Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations Act, 1997 (No 97 of 1997)

The objective of the Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations Act, 1997, is to promote cooperation between the national, provincial and local spheres of government with regard to fiscal, budgetary and financial issues; to prescribe a processes for determining the equitable sharing and allocation of revenue raised nationally; and to provide for other related issues. Two intergovernmental fiscal relations structures are created by this Act. They are the Budget Council chaired by the Minister of Finance which brings together provincial members of the executive council for finance; and the Local Government Budget Forum chaired by the Minister of Finance which comprises the provincial members of the executive council for finance, five representatives nominated by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), and one representative nominated by each provincial organisation (Parts 1 & 2, Act 97 of 1997). The Act also explains the process for revenue sharing between the national, provincial and local spheres of government, and the timeframes for the Financial and Fiscal Commission to submit its recommendations to both Houses of Parliament, Provincial legislatures, and the Minister of Finance (Part 3, Act 97 of 1997).

e) The Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (No 56 of 2003)

The objectives of the Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 include: To secure sound and sustainable management of the financial affairs of the municipalities and other institutions within the local sphere of government; to establish treasury norms and standards to govern the local sphere of government; and to provide for other related matters. Chapter 5 of this Act imposes some mandates on the national government and the provincial government towards the municipalities in the spirit of co-operative government as stated in the Constitution, 1996. Some of these mandates include capacity building for municipalities; transfer of funds from the national and provincial governments to the municipalities; and provide timely information and assistance to the municipalities to help them plan properly and prepare their budgets according to the laid down rules. The municipalities, in turn, also have certain responsibilities towards the national and provincial governments, and the other municipalities. Some of these mandates include providing budgetary and other financial information to the relevant municipalities, the provincial and national organs of the government; and ensuring that they meet all their financial

commitments towards other municipalities, the provincial and national organs of the government.

f) The Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005 (No 13 of 2005)

The Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005 is in line with Section 41 (2) of the South African Constitution which stipulates that an Act of Parliament must establish the structures and institutions to promote and facilitate intergovernmental relations. The objectives of the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005 include: Establishing a framework for the national, provincial and local governments to promote and facilitate intergovernmental relations; to provide for mechanisms and procedures that would facilitate the settlement of intergovernmental disputes; and to facilitate coordination in the implementation of policy and legislation in line with the principles of coherent government, effective provision of services, monitoring the implementation of policy and legislation, and realisation of national priorities.

Chapter 2 of this Act creates formal intergovernmental structures such as the President's Coordinating Council, National intergovernmental forums, Provincial intergovernmental forums, and Municipal intergovernmental forums (which are further divided into District intergovernmental forums, and Inter-municipality forums). The Act also explains the mechanisms for the conduct of intergovernmental relations and the settlement of intergovernmental disputes in chapters 3 and 4 respectively.

From these legislative texts, it can be deduced that the government of South Africa preferred to opt for a unique approach consisting of co-operative governance and intergovernmental relations which encompasses decentralisation.

3.3.2. Institutional framework of co-operative government and intergovernmental relations in South Africa

In order to effectively uphold the principle of co-operative government which is at the core of the South African model of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations, a number of institutions have been established. These institutions exist at parliament level (the National Council of Provinces), the various spheres of government, and the South African Local Government Association.

a) The National Council of Provinces (NCOP)

The NCOP is one of the houses of parliament which represents the provinces in the national legislative process to ensure that provincial interests are taken into account in the national sphere of government process and provides a national forum for public consideration of issues affecting the provinces (Section 42 (4), Constitution of South Africa, 1996) (RSA, 1996). Each province sends a single delegation to the NCOP, composed of 10 delegates with the premier of the province as the head of delegation, who is called upon to cast a vote on behalf of the province. Amendments to the South African Constitution, 1996, on issues affecting the provinces, require the vote of at least six of the nine provinces before an amendment can be approved. The authority of the NCOP depends on the extent to which the legislation has an impact on the provinces (Section 76, Constitution of South Africa, 1996) (RSA, 1996). Kahn *et al.* (2011:83) refer to the NCOP as the “house of provinces” because voting is on provincial basis and each province has a single vote.

Section 67 of the South African Constitution, 1996, provides for the participation, when necessary, of ten part time representatives designated by organised local government to represent the different categories of municipalities in the National Council of Provinces. However, these representatives do not have the right to vote.

b) Institutions at the various spheres of government

Numerous institutions have been established at the different spheres of the South African government to promote effective intergovernmental relations. These institutions include the President’s Coordinating Council; national intergovernmental forums; provincial intergovernmental forums; district intergovernmental forums and municipality forums which were all created by the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005. Others include the Forum of South African Directors General, and the Budget Council and Local Government Budget Forum (which were created by the Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations Act, 1997).

The President’s Coordinating Council (PCC)

According to the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005 (RSA, 2005), the PCC is a consultative forum through which the President raises matters of national interest with provincial

governments and organised local government to seek their views on those matters; consults provincial governments and organised local government on the implementation of national policy and legislation in provinces and municipalities; the co-ordination and alignment of priorities, objectives and strategies across national, provincial and local governments; and other matters of strategic importance that affect the interests of other spheres of government. Also, the forum enables the president and members to hold discussions on the performance regarding the provision of services so as to detect failures and initiate preventive or corrective action when necessary; and examine reports from other intergovernmental forums on matters affecting the national interest, and reports dealing with the performance of provinces and municipalities (Section 7, No 13 of 2005) (RSA, 2005).

The PCC is chaired by the President and comprises the Deputy President, the Minister in the Presidency, the Ministers for Provincial and Local Government, Finance and Public Service, the Premiers of the nine provinces and a representative of municipal councils designated by the South African Local Government Association – SALGA (Section 6, No 13 of 2005) (RSA, 2005).

National intergovernmental forums

Section 9 (1) of No 13 of 2005 (RSA, 2005) encourages cabinet ministers to establish national intergovernmental forums in their areas of work to enhance intergovernmental relations. This is a consultative forum which is used for the following purposes: Raise matters of national interest within a particular area with the provincial governments and representatives of local governments where necessary in order to obtain their opinions; to consult provincial governments and where necessary representatives of local governments on developing national policy and legislation relating to matters affecting that functional area, implementing national policy and legislation in that functional area, coordinating and aligning the strategic and performance plans of that functional area with priorities, objectives and strategies of national, provincial and local governments. The forum also discusses the performance with regards to the provision of services in order to detect failures and to initiate preventive or corrective action when necessary (Section 11, No 13 of 2005) (RSA, 2005).

The cabinet minister for each specific functional area chairs the forum which comprises the deputy minister, the member of the executive council of provinces responsible for that functional area in the province, a municipal councillor designated by the national organisation provided the functional area for which the forum was established concerns local government. The national intergovernmental forums must report to the 'President's 'Coordinating Council (Sections 10 & 11, No 13 of 2005) (RSA, 2005).

Provincial intergovernmental forums

These forums, also known as the Premier's intergovernmental forum, seek to promote and facilitate intergovernmental relations between the province and local governments in the province. It is a forum for consultation for the provincial premier and local governments to discuss and consult on matters of mutual interest such as: The implementation of national policy and legislation in the province affecting local government interests; matters arising in the President's Coordinating Council and other national intergovernmental forums affecting local government interests in the province; drafting national policy and legislation on matters affecting local government interests in the province; development and implementation of provincial policy and legislation relating to these matters; coordination of provincial and municipal development planning to ensure coherent planning within the province; coordinating and aligning strategic and performance plans and priorities, objectives and strategies of the provincial government and local government in the province; and other matters that could affect the interest of local governments in the province. The forum also examines reports from other provincial intergovernmental forums on issues of mutual interest to the province and local governments in the province; and district intergovernmental forums in the province (Section 18, No 13 of 2005) (RSA, 2005).

This forum is chaired by the provincial premier and comprises the member of the executive council of the province in charge of local government, any member of the executive council designated by the premier, the mayors of district and metropolitan municipalities in the province; a municipal councillor designated by the national local government association in the province (Section 17, No 13 of 2005) (RSA, 2005). The Premier's intergovernmental forum reports annually to the President's Coordinating Council on the state of the implementation of national

policy and legislation in the province and matters of national interest. In addition, the premier can establish a provincial intergovernmental forum for a specific functional area to enhance effective and efficient intergovernmental relations between the province and local governments in the province regarding that functional area (Sections 20 & 21, No 13 of 2005) (RSA, 2005).

Moreover, premiers of two or more provinces can establish an interprovincial forum for the purpose of promoting and enhancing intergovernmental relations. Such a forum serves as a framework for consultation, information and best practice sharing, capacity building, and cooperation on shared provincial development challenges (Sections 22 & 23, No 13 of 2005) (RSA, 2005).

District intergovernmental forums and forums between municipalities

This is a forum to enhance intergovernmental relations between the district municipality and the local municipalities in the district. It is a consultative forum for the district municipality and local municipalities in the district to consult each other on matters of mutual interest. Some of these matters include: Drafting and implementing national and provincial policy and legislation relating to issues affecting local government interests in the district; discussing matters arising from the Premier's intergovernmental forum affecting the district; providing mutual support and services in the district; ensuring coherent planning and development in the district; coordinating and aligning strategic and performance plans and priorities, objectives and strategies of the municipalities of the district; and dealing with other matters of strategic importance affecting the interests of municipalities in the district. Matters arising from the district intergovernmental forum may be referred to the Premier's intergovernmental forum, or other provincial intergovernmental forums (Section 26, No 13 of 2005) (RSA, 2005).

The mayor of the district municipality or the administrator (if the municipality is subject to an intervention) chairs the district intergovernmental forum which comprises the mayors of the local municipalities in the district or a councillor designated by the municipality, should there be no mayor. If any of these municipalities are under intervention, the administrator participates in the meetings of the district intergovernmental forum (Section 25, No 13 of 2005) (RSA, 2005).

Moreover, two or more municipalities can establish an inter-municipality forum to serve as a consultative framework for the municipalities to: Share information and best practices, capacity building, cooperate regarding common municipal challenges affecting them, and reviewing other issues of strategic importance influencing the interests of the participating municipalities (Sections 28 & 29, No 13 of 2005) (RSA, 2005).

Forum of South African Directors-General (FOSAD)

FOSAD was established in June 1998 by the cabinet to coordinate policy and facilitate intergovernmental cooperation at both the horizontal and vertical levels of government (Kahn *et al.*, 2011:4). According to Thornhill *et al.* (2002:114), some of the functions of FOSAD include: Providing technical and administrative support to the President's Coordinating Council; adopting an intergovernmental approach to examining crosscutting issues such as rural development strategies, urban renewal programmes, human resource development strategies and economic development strategies; acting as technical advisors to cabinet committees; preparing reports for the cabinet strategic planning session in the months of January and July; and examining the cabinet's memos dealing with crosscutting issues such as integrated rural renewal development strategies, and formulating recommendations to the cabinet.

FOSAD is chaired by the Director General in the Office of the President, and brings together all nine directors general of the provinces, and the directors general of various departments at national level.

The Budget Council and Local Government Budget Forum

The Budget Council and the Government Budget Forum were established by the Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations Act, 1997 (RSA, 1997). Through the Budget Council, national government and the provincial governments can consult on fiscal, budgetary or financial matters affecting the provincial sphere of government; examine proposed legislation or policy with financial implications for the provinces or specific provinces; and examine matters concerning the financial management or monitoring of the finances of the provinces or any specific province. The Budget Council is chaired by the Minister of Finance and brings together

provincial members of the executive council for finance (Sections 2, 3 & 4, No 97 of 1997) (RSA, 1997).

The Local Government Budget Forum enables the national government, the provincial governments and organised local governments to consult on fiscal, budgetary or financial matters concerning the local sphere of government; examine proposed legislation or policy with financial implications for the local governments; and examine matters on the financial management or monitoring of the finances of local governments. This forum is chaired by the Minister of Finance and comprises the provincial members of the executive council for finance, five representatives nominated by the national local government organisation, and one representative nominated by each provincial organisation (Sections 5, 6 & 7, No 97 of 1997) (RSA, 1997).

c) The South African Local Government Association (SALGA)

This is the national organisation of local governments with nine provincial associations. It was established in line with Section 163 of the South African Constitution, 1996 (RSA, 1996), on organised local government which prescribed that an Act of Parliament establish national and provincial organisations to represent the municipalities, as well as define the procedures through which the local governments may consult with the national government or a provincial government, and designate representatives to participate in the National Council of Provinces. This led to the passing of the Organised Local Government Act, 1997 (No 52 of 1997) (RSA, 1997). The role of SALGA boils down to the effective representation of the interests of local governments within the system of government as a whole, and actively participating in the intergovernmental relations system by providing common policy positions on numerous issues and voicing local government interests (SALGA, 2016:21). SALGA represents the interests of local governments in forums such as the National Council of Provinces, the Financial and Fiscal Commission, the Local Government Budget Forum, and various intergovernmental relations forums.

3.4. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The objective of this chapter was to examine the international context of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations as practiced in some countries around the world. It focuses on decentralisation and intergovernmental relations in the French Republic and the Republic of South Africa. There are differences between the French system and the South African system. While the French system is a centralised unitary system characterised by the appointment of central government representatives or the Prefects to supervise the actions of the regional, departmental and local councils, the South African government system is a unitary system with federal characteristics. This is because, the provincial governments in South Africa can pass their own legislation as long as it respects the Constitution. Also, South Africa opted for a unique style of decentralisation, and cooperative government between the different spheres of government is a demonstration of their distinct yet interdependent character. Both France and South Africa have engaged in decentralisation reforms aimed at strengthening the role of the lower levels or spheres of government. They have equally been involved in adjusting the laws and institutions to suit the changing environment of governance in their respective context.

CHAPTER 4

POLICY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK OF DECENTRALISATION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN CAMEROON

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Since the independence and reunification of Cameroon in 1961, there have been numerous constitutional amendments and changes in the systems of government. The federal system that was adopted at reunification in 1961 was abolished in favour of a unitary system in 1972 which still applied to this day. Also, Cameroon during this period experienced different forms of decentralisation. Nonetheless, never has the commitment to decentralisation by the government been as profound as it is today beginning in 1996. Since then, a number of policy instruments have been put in place aimed at defining the context of decentralisation in Cameroon, and several institutions have equally been created to implement decentralisation and hence, intergovernmental relations. This chapter examines the legislative and institutional framework of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations in Cameroon.

4.2. THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK OF DECENTRALISATION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN CAMEROON

Decentralisation and intergovernmental relations in Cameroon are governed by a series of laws. The main laws are the Constitution of Cameroon, 1996; the 2004 laws on decentralisation; and the law on the financial regime of regional and local authorities (See Figure 1.1 on p. 9 for structure).

4.2.1. The Constitution of Cameroon, 1996

Decentralisation, as it is practiced in Cameroon today, is embodied in the 18 January 1996 Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon as per law no. 96/06 of 18 January 1996 (Republic of Cameroon (RC), 1996). This was a revision of the 1972 Constitution of the United Republic of Cameroon. The 1996 Constitution has some specificities pertaining to decentralisation and intergovernmental relations. Firstly, the concept of decentralisation was recognised in the Constitution as per Article 1 (2) which stipulates that the “Republic of Cameroon shall be a

decentralised unitary state”. Secondly, the Constitution created lower levels of government below the central government such as the regional councils and local councils which did not exist in the previous Constitution. This implies that the central government will transfer some authority and resources to these regional and local councils to enable them carry out their duties of promoting the economic, social, health, educational, cultural and sports development of their communities (Article 55 (1), Constitution of Cameroon, 1996) (RC, 1996). Nevertheless, the regional and local councils must carry out their duties bearing in mind the principle of identity of the law. According to this principle and in line with Article 55 (3), the central government exercises supervisory control over the regional and local councils to check the legality of their actions. In addition, these regional and local councils shall have administrative and financial autonomy in the management of regional and local interests (Article 55 (2), Constitution of Cameroon, 1996) (RC, 1996).

4.2.2. The 2004 Laws on Decentralisation

The Parliament of Cameroon in June 2004 voted three bills which were promulgated by the president into law on July 22, 2004. This study closely examines these three bills.

a) Law no. 2004/017 of 22 July 2004 on the Orientation of Decentralisation

Law no. 2004/017 of 22 July 2004 (RC, 2004a) lays down the general rules on the orientation of decentralisation from the Cameroonian context. It explains the context of decentralisation and the principle of transfer of authority; the organisation and functioning of regional and local authorities; supervision of regional and local authorities; and the monitoring organs of the decentralisation process.

Section 2 of this law defines decentralisation as “devolution of special authority and resources by the central government to elected regional and local councils. It is the driving force for the promotion of local development, democracy and good governance.” The regional and local councils carry out their activities in line with ensuring national unity, territorial integrity and the primacy of the central government. These regional and local councils, which are elected, are endowed with administrative and financial autonomy for managing regional and local interests, particularly in promoting the economic, social, health, educational, cultural and sports development of their respective areas. The authority transferred to regional councils is different

from authority transferred to the local councils and the principles of decentralisation in Cameroon are subsidiarity, progressiveness and complementarity (Section 9) (RC, 2004a). Moreover, the authority transferred to the regional and local councils are not exclusive because they are concurrently exercised with the central government. In essence, the central government is directly involved in the exercising of the authority transferred to the regional and local councils.

The central government exercises supervisory authority over the regional and local councils to ensure the harmonious development of the regions and councils based on national solidarity, potentials of regional and local councils, and inter-regional/inter-council balance (Section 10) (RC, 2004a). The central government has appointed representatives in the regional councils and local councils who ensure the supervision of these councils. The governor represents the central government in the regional council, while the senior divisional officer represents the central government in the local councils. The role of these central government representatives is to ensure administrative control, and respect for the rules and regulations, safeguard national interests, and maintain law and order (Section 67) (RC, 2004a). Decisions of the regional and local governments must be forwarded to the respective central government representatives for prior approval before they can go into effect. Decisions in the following domains must be approved by the representative of the central government (Section 70) (RC, 2004a):

- Initial and annex budgets, below-the-line accounts and special expenditure authorisations;
- Loans and loan guarantees;
- International cooperation partnership agreements;
- Land issues;
- Securities and shares;
- Agreements on the execution and control of public contracts in line with the threshold stipulated by the law;
- Award of public service contracts;
- Recruitment of certain personnel according to the laid down procedures; and
- Regional and council development plans, as well as regional land development plans to ensure that they are in line with the national development plans.

The central government representative can inform the regional council president or the mayor of any illegalities observed in their decisions by way of writing, and forwards the matter (s) to the competent administrative court. The central government representative can also cancel decisions of regional and local councils that are grossly unlawful although the regional and local council executives can challenge such decisions before a competent administrative court (Sections 71 and 73) (RC, 2004a).

The executives of the regional and local councils and the central government representatives shall, upon request, receive from each other information required for the performance of their duties, and the regional and local councils must be informed of the content of all correspondences from the central government representative (Section 77) (RC, 2004a).

b) Law no. 2004/019 of 22 July 2004 to lay down decentralisation rules applicable to regions

Law no. 2004/019 of 22 July 2004 (RC, 2004c) explains how the decentralisation rules will be applied to regions as a level of government below the central government. Article 2 states that a region is a decentralised territorial collectivity made up of many administrative divisions (departements). Although the Constitution provides for 10 regions, it gives the President of the Republic the authority to create other regions as well as change the names and geographical delimitations of the current regions (Article 60, Constitution of Cameroon, 1996) (RC, 1996).

According to Part III Law no. 2004/019 (RC, 2004c), authority has been transferred to the regions in the following domains:

- Regional economic development;
- Environmental protection and management of natural resources;
- Urban planning, development and housing;
- Health, population and social welfare;
- Education, literacy education and vocational training;
- Youths, sports and leisure;
- Culture and development of national languages.

The organs of the region include the regional council and the president of the regional council. The regional council, which is the deliberative organ of the region, is made up of elected

representatives of the administrative divisions that make up the region, and they are called regional councillors. (Article 26) (RC, 2004c). The president of the regional council is the executive of the region and is assisted by a regional bureau comprising a first vice-president, a vice-president, two questors and two secretaries. The members of the bureau of the regional council are regional councillors elected by their peers, and it must reflect the sociological composition of the region.

Part V of Law no. 2004/019 (RC, 2004c) makes provisions for inter-regional cooperation and solidarity. It defines decentralised cooperation as an agreement in which two or more regions put their resources together to achieve common objectives, and it can be between regions in Cameroon, or between a region in Cameroon and a foreign region. It also allows regions in Cameroon to become members of international organisations of twinned regions, and the cooperation agreement must be approved by deliberation of the regional council, and by the minister in charge of decentralisation through the central government representative (Articles 83 and 84) (RC, 2004c).

Law no. 2004/019 (RC, 2004c) has no specific section on the relationship between the region and the central government on the one hand, and between the regional council and the local councils within the region on the other hand. However, there are some specific parts of this law that can point to the nature of these relations:

- The regional council may propose to the local councils under its jurisdiction measures to foster the coordination of local development and local investment actions (Article 7);
- If a regional council holds sessions other than its statutory sessions, or on an issue of which it has no authority, the central government representative exerts all necessary measures to halt the meeting (Article 8 (1));
- The central government representative convenes the first meeting of the regional council on the second Tuesday following the proclamation of election results (Article 31 (2)). He/she can also request an extraordinary meeting of the regional council (Article 2);
- The central government representative or his delegate must be present at all regional council meetings and can take the floor to speak each time he requests to do so. However, he can neither vote, nor preside over the regional council meeting and his declarations are recorded in the minutes. Also, in the month of January of the year following the end of a

budgetary year, the central government representative presents a special report to the regional council on the activities of central government services, or field offices, in the region. This report is subject to open debate in his/her presence (Article 42);

- The representative of the central government, working with the president of the regional council, coordinates the activities of the regional services and central government field offices in the region. The central government representative organises a harmonisation conference at least twice annually on the investment programmes of the central government in the region with the participation of the president and bureau of the regional council (Article 69);
- Matters of common interest can be debated in conferences in which the regions concerned are represented by a three-man special commission. The central government representative in the regions concerned can take part, or be represented, in these conferences and the decisions arrived at must respect the laws on decentralisation or else the meeting will be declared illegal by the central government representative (Articles 94 and 95);
- Mixed working groups can be created by an accord between the regional council and the central government, or with public institutions, or with local councils, to work on a service which will be beneficial to all parties concerned (Article 96).

It is worth noting that the regional councils are yet to go operational in Cameroon. However, this law on the rules of decentralisation applicable to regions shows that the regions will have a great role to play in terms of intergovernmental relations with the central government on the one hand, and with local councils on the other hand.

c) Law no. 2004/018 of 22 July 2004 to lay down decentralisation rules applicable to local councils

Law no. 2004/018 of 22 July 2004 (RC, 2004b) explains how the rules of decentralisation apply to councils as the local authorities in Cameroon. The local councils are recognised as the lowest level of government (decentralised local authority) and are created by decree of the president of the Republic of Cameroon (Article 2), their mission is to promote local development and improve the living conditions of the local populations (Article 3 (1)) (RC, 2004b). The authority

transferred to the local councils involves the promotion of local development in the following domains as enumerated in Part III of the law (RC, 2004b):

- Local economic development;
- Environmental protection and management of natural resources;
- Urban planning, development and housing;
- Health, population and social welfare;
- Education, literacy education and vocational training;
- Youths, sports and leisure;
- Culture and development of national languages.

The organs of the local council include the deliberative organ made up of the elected councilors, and the executive organ made of the mayor and deputy mayors. The mayor and deputy mayors are themselves local councillors elected by their peers.

Part V of Law no. 2004/018 (RC, 2004b) concerns special regulations applicable to urban centres. The president of the Republic of Cameroon by decree can elevate some urban centres to city councils by virtue of their specific nature. A city council is a local council which comprises at least two councils called sub-divisional councils. Article 110 mentions the domains in which authority has been transferred to the city council by the central government which include:

- Management of public squares, city greens, parks, gardens, lakes, rivers;
- Industrial refuse and household waste management, cleaning of city roads, urban sanitation;
- Development of urban environmental action plans, protection of lawns, public cemeteries, sports facilities;
- Management of urban development projects, community land reserves, community cultural centres, community facilities;
- Construction and management of markets, bus stations, slaughter houses, urban passenger transport;
- Drafting and implementation of community investment plans, community development contracts and plans;

- Formulating recommendations on the draft development plan of the region before its approval;
- Management of primary and secondary community roads and equipment, including public lights, road signs, rainwater drainage, safety facilities and bridges;
- Ensuring the coordination of urban networks for the supply of power, drinking water and telecommunications services and of stakeholders in community traffic zones; and
- Development of urban circulation plans covering the entire circulation network.

Similar to other local councils, the organs of the city council include the deliberative organ and the executive organ. However, the deliberative organ is made up of the mayors of each of the sub-divisional councils that form the city council, and five other councillors from these sub-divisional councils who are called senior councillors. The executive organ of the city council is made up of a government delegate and assistant government delegates appointed by the president of the republic of Cameroon. The government delegate exercises all the functions of a mayor within the city council as stipulated in the laws.

Part VI of Law no. 2004/018 (RC, 2004b) makes provisions for inter-council cooperation and solidarity. It defines decentralised cooperation as an agreement in which two or more councils combine their resources to achieve common objectives, and it can be between Cameroonian councils, or between a Cameroonian council and a foreign council. It also allows Cameroonian councils to become members of international organisations of twinned cities, and the cooperation agreement must be approved by the minister in charge of decentralisation through the central government representative (Article 131 and 132) (RC, 2004b). In addition, the law provides for the creation of council unions bringing together councils of the same administrative division or region through a signed convention to handle issues of inter-communal interest. The council union is an inter-council public entity which has legal status, enjoys administrative and financial autonomy, and is subjected to the law on the orientation of decentralisation and the law on the rules applicable to councils (Articles 133 and 134) (RC, 2004b).

Law no. 2004/018 (RC, 2004b) makes no special provisions regarding the relationship between the local councils and the central government. However, the central government through its representative (the senior divisional officer) plays an important role in the functioning of the

local council. Apart from approving the decisions of the local councils, the representative of the central government performs the following other functions:

- Requests an extraordinary meeting of the municipal council and if the mayor does not agree, the representative of the central government can convene the meeting (Article 31 (2) and (4));
- Attends all council meetings and can speak each time he requests to do so. However, he can neither vote, nor preside over the council session and his declarations are registered in the minutes (Article 36 (3));
- Convenes the first meeting of the council on the first Tuesday following the declaration of the municipal election results. This meeting is meant to elect the mayor and the deputy mayors (Article 60(1)).

From the law on the rules of decentralisation application to local councils, there are three types of local councils in Cameroon: councils, sub-divisional councils, and city councils. While the mayors of councils and sub-divisional councils are elected, the government delegates of city councils are appointed by decree of the President of the Republic.

4.2.3. Law no. 2009/011 of 10 July 2009 on the financial regime of regional and local councils

Law no. 2009/011 of 10 July 2009 (RC, 2009a) defines the financial regime of regional and local councils. It lays down the conditions for the elaboration, execution and control of the execution of the budgets of regions and local councils. It applies to regions, councils, sub-divisional councils, city councils and other regional and local councils created by law (Section 1). The budgets of regional and local councils must show programmes that promote the economic, social, health, educational, cultural and sports development of the regions and councils. These budgets must also be consistent with the economic and financial objectives of the central government, and the competent central government services must provide the regional and local councils with the required information needed to prepare their budgets (Section 4).

Part II of the law explains the different revenues and expenditures of the regional and local councils which are the two main parts that constitute the contents of their budgets. The revenue is further divided into operating and investment revenue, while the expenditures are divided into

operating and investment expenses, and non-discretionary, discretionary or forbidden expenditures. Part III focuses on the presentation of the budget of regional and local councils. It defines the budgetary principles, and the budgeting process consisting of budget preparation, adoption and approval.

Part IV of Law no. 2009/011 (RC, 2009a), which focuses on the budget execution of regional and local councils identifies the president of the regional council, the mayor of the council and sub-divisional council, the government delegate of the city council and the president of the council union as the authorising officers of their respective budgets. Hence, they are responsible for the execution of budgetary operations in collaboration with the accounting officers (Sections 54 and 55). Other issues dealt with in this part of the law include revenue operations, expenditure operations, cash operations, and the methods for managing local public institutions (direct management and delegated management methods). Part V of the law defines the accounting system of regional and local councils. This comprises the accounting principles, the accounts of authorising officers and accounting officers, and the stores accounting.

Part VI of this law defines the mechanisms for control of the budget and management of regional and local councils. It establishes four levels of control which include control by the deliberative organ of the regional and local councils; administrative control by specialised central government services; judicial control by the audit bench of the supreme court; and independent audits which may be requested by the central government representative, the deliberative organ or the executive organ of the regional or local council (Sections 104 to 108). Part VII on the transitional, miscellaneous and final provisions of this law sets up the National Local Finance Committee, which is in charge of mobilising revenue for the regional and local councils, as well as ensuring the proper management of these funds.

There is no specific section in Law no. 2009/011 (RC, 2009a) on the fiscal relations between the central government and the lower levels of government. A reading of the law, however, indicates in some sections the intergovernmental fiscal relations between the central government and the regional and local councils some of which include the following:

- The central government shall create institutions to ensure the balanced development of all the regional and local councils based on national solidarity, the potentials of the regional and local councils, and inter-regional and inter-council balance (Section 5);
- The central government representative must approve a regional or local council tax or fee which must be provided for the law and adopted by the deliberative organ of the said council (Section 11);
- The central government provides the regional and local councils with allocations and subsidies for the discharge of their duties. However, the general allocation granted to sub-divisional councils is a mandatory expenditure for the city council (Sections 15 and 16);
- Where the regional or local council executive fails to convene the deliberative organ to a council budgetary session at least 15 days before the session or three days in the event of an emergency, the central government representative shall order the convening of this session without delay (Section 41);
- The central government representative plays an arbitration role when the deliberative organ of a regional or local council refuses to adopt the budget (Section 42);
- The central government representative issues an order to approve the budgets of regional and local councils. If there are any irregularities with the budget and the regional or local councils concerned have not made the necessary adjustments, the central government representative can amend the budget on his own initiative without increasing the expenditure (Section 47);
- Any acts of misconduct on financial issues identified by the deliberative organ of the regional or local council may be referred to the central government representative or any other competent authority (Section 105 (2));
- The central government representative can request an independent audit of the regional or local council (Section 108).

The law on the financial regime of regional and local councils in Cameroon is complemented by Law no 2009/019 of 15 December 2009 (RC, 2009b) on the tax system of regional and local councils which lays down the taxes, levies and royalties collected for the regional and local councils.

The legislative framework of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations in Cameroon identifies some key actors and institutions in charge of the implementation of decentralisation and ensuring intergovernmental relations. The next section examines the role of some of these actors and institutions.

4.3. ACTORS AND INSTITUTIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DECENTRALISATION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN CAMEROON

There are many actors and institutions in Cameroon in charge of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations. Some of these actors and institutions are charged with the implementation of decentralisation, while others are charged with monitoring and evaluation of decentralisation at both central government level and lower levels of government (See Figure 1.1 on p. 9 for structure).

4.3.1. Actors and institutions charged with the implementation of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations

The implementation of decentralisation occurs both at central government level and at the lower levels of government. To this end, there are various actors and institutions at these levels charged with implementing decentralisation and ensuring intergovernmental relations as per the provisions of the laws.

a) Implementation of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations at central government level

The main actors and institutions charged with the implementation of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations at central government level include: The President of the Republic of Cameroon, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation, the other Ministerial departments, the Senate and the Special Council Support Fund for Mutual Assistance (FEICOM).

- ***The President of the Republic of Cameroon***

The President of the Republic of Cameroon is arguably one of the most indispensable actors of decentralisation in Cameroon as a result of the authority conferred on him by the Constitution and the laws of decentralisation. As per Articles 5 and 8 of the Constitution of Cameroon, 1996

(RC, 1996), the President defines national policies, establishes and organises the administrative services of the nation, and makes various appointments to most civil and military positions. He appoints and dismisses the Prime Minister and the cabinet (Article 10) (RC, 1996). With regards to decentralisation, the president appoints the governors and the senior divisional officers who are the central government representatives in the regions and the local councils respectively (Article 58) (RC, 1996).

With regards to the regions, the President can create more regions, change the names and modify the boundaries of the current regions (Article 61). He can also suspend (for a period of two months) or dissolve the regional council, as well as suspend or dismiss the President and the bureau of the regional council if it carries out activities contrary to the Constitution; undermines national security or public law and order; endangers national integrity; and if they have difficulties functioning normally (Article 59, Constitution of Cameroon, 1996 (RC, 1996); Article 48, Law no. 2004/019 (RC, 2004c)).

Regarding the local councils, the President of the Republic by decree creates local councils, determines their nomenclature, the headquarters and their territorial jurisdiction. He can also by decree change the names of the councils, their headquarters, or modify their territorial jurisdiction, as well as temporarily regroup certain councils together on the recommendations of the minister of decentralisation (Article 2, law on rules applicable to councils) (RC, 2004b). The President of the Republic can dissolve the municipal council, and dismiss the mayor and executive of the council should they undermine the constitution, national security, territorial integrity or they fail to function normally (Articles 47, 94 and 95, law on rules applicable to councils) (RC, 2004b). In the case of city councils, they are created by the President of the Republic who equally appoints the government delegates and the assistant government delegates with the full authority to function as mayors and deputy mayors (Articles 109 and 115, law on rules applicable to councils) (RC, 2004b).

The law on the financial regimes of regional and local councils in Section 5 (2) authorises the president of the Republic to set up the necessary institutions that would ensure the balanced development of the regional and the local councils (RC, 2009a).

It is clear from this analysis that the President of the Republic of Cameroon is influential in terms of the implementation of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations. He has the authority

to define the policies, set up the institutions, and make appointments to positions in these institutions at both the central government and the lower levels of government.

- ***The Prime Minister***

According to Article 12 of the Constitution of Cameroon, 1996 (RC, 1996), the Prime Minister as the Head of Government coordinates government action by ensuring the effective implementation of national policies as defined by the President. He can also appoint to civil posts, subject to the prerogatives of the President of the Republic.

In matters of decentralisation, the Prime Minister ensures that various ministerial departments take into account decentralisation in their strategies. In February 2010, a series of prime ministerial decrees were signed to lay down the conditions for the exercising of some authority transferred by the central government to the local councils (RC, 2010). These prime ministerial decrees of February 2010 officially started the operational face of decentralisation in Cameroon. The Prime Minister convenes and presides over the meeting of the National Decentralisation Council which is one the institutions in charged with evaluating the progress of decentralisation in Cameroon.

- ***The Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation (MINATD)***

The Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation (MINATD), according to Presidential decree No 2005/104 of 13 April 2005 (RC, 2005) organising it, had its missions defined under the domains of territorial Administration, civil protection and decentralisation. In the domain of decentralisation, its missions were threefold:

- The drafting and monitoring of the implementation of legislation regarding the organisation and functioning of regional and local authorities;
- Exercising central government supervisory authority over the regional and local authorities under the authority of the President of the Republic; and
- Ensuring the periodic evaluation of the implementation of decentralisation.

The Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation approves the election of mayors and their deputies, and he can suspend a councillor, the mayor and deputies, the municipal council, as per the laws on decentralisation (Articles 46 and 94, law on rules applicable to

councils) (RC, 2004b). He/she appoints and dismisses the secretary general for the local council, as well as the municipal treasurer in a joint order with the Minister of Finance. Moreover, he/she authorises the recruitment of local council personnel from the 7th category and approves their contracts. He equally approves some key local council decisions, amongst them, decentralised cooperation agreements.

As regards the regions, the Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation initiates the process for the suspension or dissolution of a regional council by the President of the Republic and recommends the creation of a special delegation to oversee the running of the regional council under such circumstances (Article 48 rules applicable to regions) (RC, 2004c). The Minister also proposes candidates to be appointed to the post of secretary general of the regional council by the President of the Republic (Article 68, rules applicable to regions) (RC, 2004c). Decentralised cooperation agreements of regional councils and other inter-regional arrangements must be approved by the Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation.

The Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation presides over the Inter-ministerial Committee for Local Services, the National Committee on Local Finance (CONAFIL), and the Concertation Committee for the implementation of decentralisation.

The decentralisation landscape in Cameroon has been characterised by the creation of the new Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development (MINDELDEV). This Ministry was created by Presidential decree no 2018/190 of 2 March 2018 (RC, 2018a), reorganising the government of Cameroon, as a separate ministry in charge of regional and local councils. This function was previously performed by the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation from which the new Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development was born.

Article 2 of Presidential decree no 2018/449 of 1 August 2018 (RC, 2018b), regarding the organisation of the ministry of decentralisation and local development, states that the ministry of decentralisation and local development oversees the elaboration, implementation and evaluation of government policy on decentralisation, and the promotion of local development. Specifically, the minister of decentralisation and local development performs the following functions:

- In the domain of decentralisation: Elaborating rules and legislation relative to the organisation and functioning of regional and local councils; evaluation and control of regional and local councils; monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of decentralisation; exercising supervisory authority of the central government over the regional and local councils under the authority of the President of the Republic;
- In the domain of local development: The promotion of the socio-economic development of regions and local councils; and the promotion of good governance in the regional and local councils.

Evidently, there are some few additions to the mission of the new ministry, notably the emphasis on the promotion of local development and good governance within the regional and local councils.

Article 87 of Presidential decree no 2018/449 of 1 August 2018 (RC, 2018b) also created deconcentrated services or field offices of the Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development at the lower levels of government. These deconcentrated services are the Regional Delegations for Decentralisation and Local Development which works directly with the regional councils, and the Divisional Delegations for Decentralisation and Local Development which works directly with the local councils.

Although the Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development is already functional, all structures at both national level and the lower levels of government have not yet been set up. Therefore, the analysis of this study would make use of the former Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation.

- ***The other ministerial departments***

Other ministerial departments come into play within the framework of the authority and resources transferred to the councils in line with the prescriptions of the law to lay down decentralisation rules applicable to councils. The series of Prime Ministerial decrees of February 2010 laid down the conditions for the transfer of authority by nine ministerial departments to the local councils. These ministries include:

- Ministry of social affairs
- Ministry of agriculture and rural development;

- Ministry of culture;
- Ministry of basic education;
- Ministry of livestock, fisheries and animal husbandry;
- Ministry of water and energy;
- Ministry of women empowerment and the family;
- Ministry of public health; and
- Ministry of public works.

In terms of intergovernmental relations, the prime ministerial decrees of February 2010 (RC, 2010) defines the authority and resources to be transferred by these respective ministries to the local councils; and requires each of these ministries to prepare duty specifications containing the terms and technical conditions for the exercising of the authority transferred by the central government. In addition, while the central government would ensure the monitoring and evaluation of the authority transferred to the local councils, the decrees require that the local councils and the competent field offices of each ministry concerned draw up a six-monthly report on the state of the implementation of the authority transferred by the central government. This report is addressed by the central government representative (Senior Divisional Officer) to the Minister of Decentralisation and the Ministers concerned with the authority transferred to the councils.

The Ministries of Finance and the Economy, or Public Investment, are key amongst these ministries, particularly in their role of financing decentralisation and follow-up of local development projects. All the ministers concerned with the transfer of authority to the regional and local councils, as well as those involved in the financing of decentralisation are members of the Local Services Inter-ministerial Committee.

- ***The Senate***

The Senate in Cameroon is one of the institutions that was created by the 1996 Constitution (RC, 1996). It is one of the houses of the Cameroonian parliament representing the regional and the local councils to ensure that the interests of each region are reflected in all legislation. Each region of Cameroon is represented by ten senators, seven elected by indirect universal suffrage and three are appointed by the president of the republic.

- ***The Special Council Support Fund for Mutual Assistance (FEICOM)***

This institution, better known by its French acronym FEICOM (*Fonds Special d'Equipement et d'Intervention Intercommunale*), is a public establishment created by Law No74/23 of 5 December 1974 (RC, 1974). It was reorganised by presidential decrees no 2000/365 of 11 December 2000 (RC, 2000), and no 2006/182 of 31 May 2006 (RC, 2006a). FEICOM is placed under the technical supervision of the Ministry of Regional and Local Councils, and the financial supervision of the Ministry of Finance. Some of the missions conferred upon FEICOM include the following:

- Provision of mutual assistance to councils through solidarity contributions and cash advances;
- Financing council and inter-council investment projects; pooling and redistribution additional council taxes;
- Financing the training of council and civil status staff;
- Providing funds to the Common Decentralisation Fund;
- Pooling and paying the quota of 50% of forest royalty and 100% of automobile stamp duty to councils; and
- Providing assistance to councils for fund raising, as well as the design, implementation and monitoring of development projects.

FEICOM finances local development in Cameroon through a series of mechanisms and specific programmes such as the Assistance Code of FEICOM (CIF), the Special Investment Framework for City Councils and Councils with High potentials (CAPIC), the Programme of Assistance to Low Income Councils (PACARF), the Special Assistance to the International Activities of Councils (CAFAIC), and the BEST PRACTICES AWARD. FEICOM is often referred to as the “Bank of Local Councils” and it implements its assistance at the level of the regions through the regional agencies or branch offices around Cameroon.

- ***The National Community-Driven Development Programme (PNDP)***

The National Community-Driven Development Programme (PNDP) is an instrument of the ministry of economy, planning and regional development (MINEPAT) whose development objective is to assist the Government of Cameroon in establishing and implementing a

decentralised funding mechanism to ensure decentralised participatory development in rural areas (FEICOM, 2012:23). The programme aims to contribute to the amelioration of basic socio-economic services of the communities, reinforce decentralisation, and improve on the ability of local authorities to assume their mission of promoting local development and planning. Specifically, the programme is designed to support: the establishment of a mechanism for funds to be transferred to rural councils in order to finance priority community infrastructures; assisting the government of Cameroon to set up and execute a decentralised financing mechanism to ensure participatory community development in rural areas. This agency endeavours to establish a mechanism for transferring funds to councils in the rural areas for the financing of basic infrastructure, capacity building of the councils in the planning and the management of their own development and drawing up of a local and regulatory framework for decentralised rural development. The programme targets mainly the councils in the rural areas prioritising the financing of Council Development Plans (FEICOM, 2012:24).

PNDP was put in place in 2004 and consisted of three phases of four years each. Phase I, called the initiation phase, ended in 2009 and covered 155 councils in six regions. Phase II, which ended in 2014, was called the extension phase and covered all ten regions with all 329 councils in the rural areas. The programme is currently in phase III, called the consolidation phase, and covers all local councils, including sub-divisional councils (PNDP, 2013:2). The programme has regional branches or offices in each of the regions of Cameroon.

Apart from the abovementioned institutions, it is important to mention the role of the Local Government Training Centre (CEFAM) which trains municipal administrators for all the councils in Cameroon. It was created by Presidential decree No 77/494 of 7 December 1977 (RC, 1977b) under the supervision of the ministry of regional and local councils and the ministry of finance. It has contributed to enhancing the decentralisation process in Cameroon through providing the local councils with adequately trained personnel.

b) The implementation of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations at the lower levels of government

At the lower levels of government in Cameroon, the key actors and institutions of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations are the central government representatives and field offices of ministries, and the regional and local authorities.

- ***Central government representatives and field offices of ministries***

The central government has appointed representatives and field offices of the respective ministries at each of the lower levels of government. The central government representatives are the governor of the region, the senior divisional officer in the division, and the divisional officer in the sub-division. In matters of decentralisation, the governor exercises supervisory authority over the regional council while the senior divisional officer exercises supervisory authority over the local councils within his/her administrative unit. This explains why on November 12, 2008, within the framework of the restructuring of the offices of regional governors, Decree No 2008/377 (RC, 2008c) created a department of regional development in the governor's offices (Article 27). This department assists the governor to perform the following functions (Article 34):

- Exercise supervisory authority of the central government over the regional council and its institutions;
- Propose recommendations regarding the harmonious functioning of the regional council and its institutions;
- Examine various issues related to regional planning and development;
- Examining contentious files concerning the decisions of regional councils in collaboration with the division for administrative and legal affairs;
- Controlling the legality and budgets of the regional and local councils;
- Supporting the institutional development of the region and its institutions;
- Monitoring and evaluating the elaboration and implementation of regional and communal development plans; and
- Monitoring the activities of regional development committees.

Still in line with these reforms, a service in charge of local development was created in the offices of senior divisional officers (Article 44). This service assists the senior divisional officer in performing the following functions relative to decentralisation (Article 50):

- Supervising the activities of local councils and their local establishments;
- Proposing recommendations on the harmonious function of local councils and their local institutions;

- Controlling the budgets and the legality of the decisions of local councils and their local institutions;
- Monitoring and evaluation of decentralised cooperation initiatives;
- Monitoring and evaluation of income generating projects;
- Ensures the promotion, monitoring and evaluation of local development initiatives.

The governors and senior divisional officers, as central government representatives in the regions and the local councils respectively, exercise supervision on behalf of the President of the Republic and the Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation.

The different ministries of the central government have field offices at the level of each region and each division. Some of these ministries have effectively transferred some authority and resources to councils. As a result, the field offices of the ministries concerned with the transfer of authority to councils, are supposed to provide technical support and the necessary assistance for the execution of projects in the councils. These field offices are required to provide a semester report on the state of the implementation of the authority transferred to the local councils through the senior divisional officer.

The central government representatives ensure the general supervision, coordination, and control of the activities of these central government field offices at both regional and divisional levels. Therefore, from this perspective, central government representatives should ensure a proper working relationship between the field offices of the central government and the elected regional and local councils which have the responsibility to promote the development of their respective communities.

- ***The regional and local authorities***

The regional and local authorities are the elected lower levels of government created by Part X of the 1996 Constitution (RC, 1996) and comprise the regional councils and local councils. Regional and local councils have legal personality, as well as administrative and financial autonomy in the management of regional and local issues. They are freely administered by councillors elected under conditions stipulated by the law, and have as duty to promote the economic, social, health, educational, cultural and sports development of their respective communities. The regional council, the level of government below the central government, is

headed by an elected regional council president - under the supervision of the governor who is the central government representative for the region. There are currently ten regions in Cameroon. However, the regional councils have not yet been established, hence, in the meantime, the central government representative (the governor) now plays the role of regional executive pending the institution of the regional councils.

The local councils are the lowest level of elected government in Cameroon and there are three types of local councils: City councils, sub-divisional councils (which are located within the city councils), and councils. The city councils are headed by government delegates appointed by the president of the Republic, while the sub-divisional councils and councils are headed by mayors who are elected. There are altogether 374 local councils in Cameroon which are divided as follows: 14 city councils, 43 sub-divisional councils, and 319 councils. The local councils are placed under the supervision of the senior divisional officer (central government representative) of the division in which the councils are located.

4.3.2. Institutions for the monitoring and evaluation of decentralisation

The Law on the orientation of decentralisation provides for two main institutions charged with the monitoring and evaluation of decentralisation in Cameroon: The National Decentralisation Council in the office of the Prime Minister, and the Inter-ministerial Committee for Local Services under the authority of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation. There is also the National Committee on Local Finance, created by the law on the financial regime of regional and local councils.

a) The National Council on Decentralisation

The National Council on Decentralisation was created by the laws of 22 July 2004, and presidential decree no 2008/013 of 17 January 2008 (RC, 2008a) elaborated on its organisation and functioning. The main mission of this council is to monitor and evaluate the implementation of decentralisation. To this end, it submits to the president of the Republic the annual report on the state of decentralisation and functioning of local services and formulates recommendations on the annual programme of the transfer of authority and resources to the regional and local councils, as well as the modalities for these transfers (Article 2) (RC, 2008a).

This council is presided over by the prime minister as its chairperson, with the minister of regional and local councils as the vice-chairperson. The other members of the council include the cabinet ministers for agriculture, urban development, lands, finance, basic education, vocational training, water and energy, secondary education, public service, youth affairs, economy and planning, public health, sports and physical education, and public works; two senators designated by the bureau of the senate; two members of the national assembly designated by its bureau; and two representatives of the economic and social council designated by its bureau. Other persons can be invited to meetings of the council if the agenda of such meetings concerns them (Article 3) (RC, 2008a).

The council meets twice annually and in extraordinary sessions should the need arise. For the proper functioning of the council, a permanent secretariat has been set up and headed by a permanent secretary who prepares the council's meetings and ensures the implementation of the resolutions of the council.

b) The Inter-ministerial Committee for Local Services

The Inter-ministerial Committee for Local Services was also created by the 2004 laws on decentralisation and its organisation and functioning was laid down by decree no. 2008/014 of 17 January 2008 (RC, 2008b). This is an inter-ministerial concertation organ under the authority of the minister of regional and local councils involving all the ministries from which competences have been transferred to local councils. Its mission is to prepare and monitor the transfer of authority and resources to the regional and local councils as per the directives of the ministries involved. To this end, this committee elaborates the programme of transfer of competences and resources, and prepares the related texts on these transfers; evaluates the human and material resources necessary to the exercise of authority transferred; evaluates the costs of these transfers and proposes new mechanisms of financing the transfer of authority by the central government; conducts studies and prospective analysis on decentralisation; elaborates an annual report on the state of decentralisation and the functioning of local services; and submits proposals on issues related to decentralisation to the national decentralisation council (Article 2) (RC, 2008b).

This committee is presided over by the minister of regional and local councils, and comprises the following: A representative each of the general secretariat of the presidency and the prime

minister's office; a representative from each of the following ministries: decentralisation, social affairs, agriculture, commerce, culture, urban development, lands, finance, basic education, livestock and fisheries, vocational training, water and energy, secondary education, environment and nature protection, public service, industry and mines, youth affairs, economy and planning, small and medium-size enterprises, women empowerment and the family, public health, sports and physical education, tourism and leisure, transport, labour and social security, and public works; two representatives of city councils designated by the minister of decentralisation; four representatives of councils; two representatives of regions; and two representatives of civil society. Other persons can be invited to the meetings of the committee depending on their knowledge concerning the agenda of the meeting, and ad hoc committees can be established to work on specific issues (Articles 3 and 5) (RC, 2008b).

This committee meets once every semester in ordinary sessions, and in extraordinary sessions when the need arises. At the end of each meeting, a report on the proceedings is sent to the chairman of the national decentralisation council. Moreover, a technical secretariat has been created to ensure the proper functioning of this committee and placed under the coordination of the director of regional and local authorities in the ministry of decentralisation.

c) The National Committee on Local Finance (CONAFIL)

This committee was created by the law on the financial regime of the regional and local councils, and its organisation and functioning was defined by Prime Ministerial decree no 2011/1732 of 18 July 2011 (RC, 2011a). It is a concertation organ placed under the authority of the minister of regional and local councils, whose mission is to monitor the optimal mobilisation of finances for regional and local councils, as well as the proper management of local finances. Thus, the committee elaborates and monitors the implementation of appropriate strategies for the optimal mobilisation of financial resources for regional and local councils; ensures the effective transfer by the central government of local taxes and financial resources that should accompany the transfer of authority; conducts studies on the relationship between the funds disbursed to regional and local councils and the competencies and resources transferred to them; formulates recommendations in proposed bills, legislation and regulations on financial matters concerning regional and local councils; ensures the modernisation and the digitalisation of the financial

management of regional and local councils; monitors, when necessary, the management of municipal treasuries and their indebtedness; proposes all necessary measures to ameliorate the quality of local expenditures; and provides statistics and analysis on local finances. This committee provides an annual report on local finances to the inter-ministerial committee for local services, which is validated and integrated in the annual report on decentralisation (Article 2) (RC, 2011a).

The National Committee on Local Finance is presided over by the minister of regional and local councils who is the chairperson, and the minister of finance is the vice-chairperson. The other members of the committee include: a representative of the secretariat general of the prime minister's office; the permanent secretary of the national decentralisation council; four representatives of the ministry of regional and local councils; a representative of the ministry of the economy; the director general of the special council support fund for mutual assistance (FEICOM) or his representative; the director general of taxation or his representative; the director general of customs or his representative; the director general of budget or his representative; the director general of the treasury or his representative; the director of public accounting at the directorate general of the treasury; the paymaster general of the treasury; two treasury pay generals; two representatives of FEICOM; two representatives of regions; the national president of the association of local councils; three representatives of city councils; five mayors of which two represent sub-divisional councils; and two municipal treasurers (Article 3) (RC, 2011a).

The committee meets once every two months in ordinary session, and in extraordinary sessions when the need arises. For the accomplishment of its missions, this committee has a technical secretariat placed under the coordination of the director of regional and local councils in the ministry of regional and local councils. In addition, Article 11 of this decree on the organisation and functioning of the national local finance committee provides for the creation of Regional and Divisional Local Finance Committees at the level of various regions and divisions.

These institutions for the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of decentralisation in Cameroon are, in essence, intergovernmental relations forums. This is reflected in their missions, organisation and functioning. In fact, they constitute some of the instances in which actors and

representatives from the various levels of government (central, regional and local government) meet to reflect, discuss and take decisions on the transfer and exercise of authority and resources from the central government to the lower levels of government. The prime ministerial decree on the organisation and functioning of the national local finance committee further creates regional and local finance committees. This could be a mechanism to ensure intergovernmental relations at the lower levels of government between the representatives of the central government in the regions and divisions, the field offices of the central government at regional and divisional levels, and the regional and local councils.

Apart from the abovementioned institutions, there is also the Inter-ministerial Commission on Decentralised Cooperation which ensures the monitoring and evaluation of decentralised cooperation in Cameroon. This commission is also chaired by the minister of regional and local councils.

4.3.3. Other institutions involved in the implementation of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations in Cameroon

Apart from the aforementioned actors and institutions, the government of Cameroon and the local councils have created some specialised institutions to accelerate the implementation of decentralisation and ensure intergovernmental relations between the regional and local councils and the central government. These institutions include the United Councils and Cities of Cameroon, and the Concertation Committee for the implementation of decentralisation.

a) The United Councils and Cities of Cameroon (UCCC)

The United Councils and Cities of Cameroon (UCCC) is the national association of local councils which brings together all the 374 councils, sub-divisional councils and city councils in Cameroon. It is an umbrella organisation responsible for overseeing the interests of its members. The UCCC plays an intermediary role between the central government and the local councils, and assists them to safeguard their prerogatives through taking the necessary action regarding upstream problems, anticipative participation in focus groups or by sharing views on certain draft bills and legislation. The UCCC was created in 2003 following the merger of the two former local council associations (fusion of Union of Councils and Cities of Cameroon and the

Association of Councils and Cities of Cameroon). Some of the objectives of UCCC according to Article 3 of its Constitution include (UCCC, 2005):

- Reinforce decentralisation;
- Forge solidarity ties between councils and cities of Cameroon and establish continuous consultations for promoting local development and improving the living environment and conditions of the population;
- Create a forum for dialogue between councils and cities on the one hand, and the central government, development partners and all decentralisation stakeholders on the other hand;
- Promote modern governance based on the participation of all active forces in the promotion of collective welfare;
- Encourage a mutually beneficial partnership between local, regional, national, continental and global structures;
- Exchange information, experiences and models so as to contribute to improving the management of local affairs and the working conditions of elected officials and council staff; and
- Encourage the integration of youths, women and the underprivileged classes in the management of the city.

The association is represented at the national level, the regional level and the divisional level by the following organs: the general assembly and the national executive bureau; the regional assembly and regional executive bureau; and the divisional assembly and the divisional executive bureau (Article 8, Constitution of UCCC) (UCCC, 2005). In order to promote intergovernmental relations between the local councils and the central government, UCCC has among its nine technical committees, a committee in charge of relations with the councils, the central government and the traditional institutions (Article 13, Constitution of UCCC) (UCCC, 2005).

b) The Concertation Committee for the implementation of decentralisation

This committee was created by Prime Ministerial order no. 130 of 6 October 2006 (RC, 2006b), which equally lays down the conditions for its organisation and functioning. This committee -

placed under the authority of the minister of regional and local councils - has as mission the coordination and harmonisation of actions, projects and support programmes to the decentralisation process. Hence, the committee monitors and evaluates the actions, projects and support programmes to the decentralisation process; it informs and involves national and international partners in the decentralisation process; and it formulates proposals on the intervention of these partners and ensures a proper articulation of their interventions (Articles 1 and 2).

The Minister of Decentralisation is the chairman of this committee and its members include: A representative of the prime minister's office; three representatives of the ministry of regional and local councils; a representative each of the ministries of finance, external relations, urban development, and economy and planning; a representative of the special council support fund for mutual assistance (FEICOM); a representative of the local government training centre; a representative of the United Councils and Cities of Cameroon; a representative of the National Programme on Governance; two representatives of civil society; and a representative of each of the international partners or funding agencies. Other persons by virtue of their expertise can be invited to the meetings of the committee (Article 3) (RC, 2006b).

The committee meets once every semester, and submits an annual report to the prime minister on the implementation of actions, projects and support programmes to the decentralisation process. For the execution of its missions, the committee has a technical secretariat under the coordination of a working group in charge of the implementation of decentralisation (Articles 4, 5 and 6).

These institutions, the United Councils and Cities of Cameroon and the Concertation Committee for the implementation of decentralisation have as common denominator accelerating the decentralisation process in Cameroon. Nevertheless, the UCCC is also preoccupied by the relationship between the councils and the central government, while the Concertation Committee, though not too focused directly with issues on intergovernmental relations, can act as another forum for representatives of local councils and the central government to discuss issues affecting the local councils within the framework of decentralisation.

4.4. CHAPTER SUMMARY

Since the constitutional amendment of 1996, the government of Cameroon has resolutely been committed to accelerating the process of decentralisation. This is evident in the enactment of various legislations and the creation of institutions at both central government level and the lower levels of government, aimed at implementing the decentralisation policy. Some of the legislation includes the 2004 laws on decentralisation and the law on the financial regime of regional and local councils. The institutions have different functions such as financing decentralisation (such as FEICOM), supervising the activities of the regional and local councils (the minister of decentralisation, through the governor and senior divisional officer in the region and division respectively), monitoring and evaluating the implementation of decentralisation (such as the national decentralisation council, the inter-ministerial committee for local services and the national local finance committee). Although there is no specific legislation on intergovernmental relations, this chapter identifies some of the sections of the different legislations that to some extent involves the relations between the central government and the lower levels of government. Likewise, the various institutions are not specific on ensuring intergovernmental relations, some of these institutions, particularly those of the monitoring and evaluation of decentralisation, are in essence intergovernmental relations forums bringing together representatives of the central and lower levels of government.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION OF THE CASE STUDY, THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND MAJOR RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents key aspects of the research site, Mezam division. These include the location of and the different governance institutions operating in Mezam Division. The chapter equally presents the methodology applied in the field research study, and some of the challenges encountered in the course of data collection. The last part of the chapter examines some of the major research findings regarding intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division.

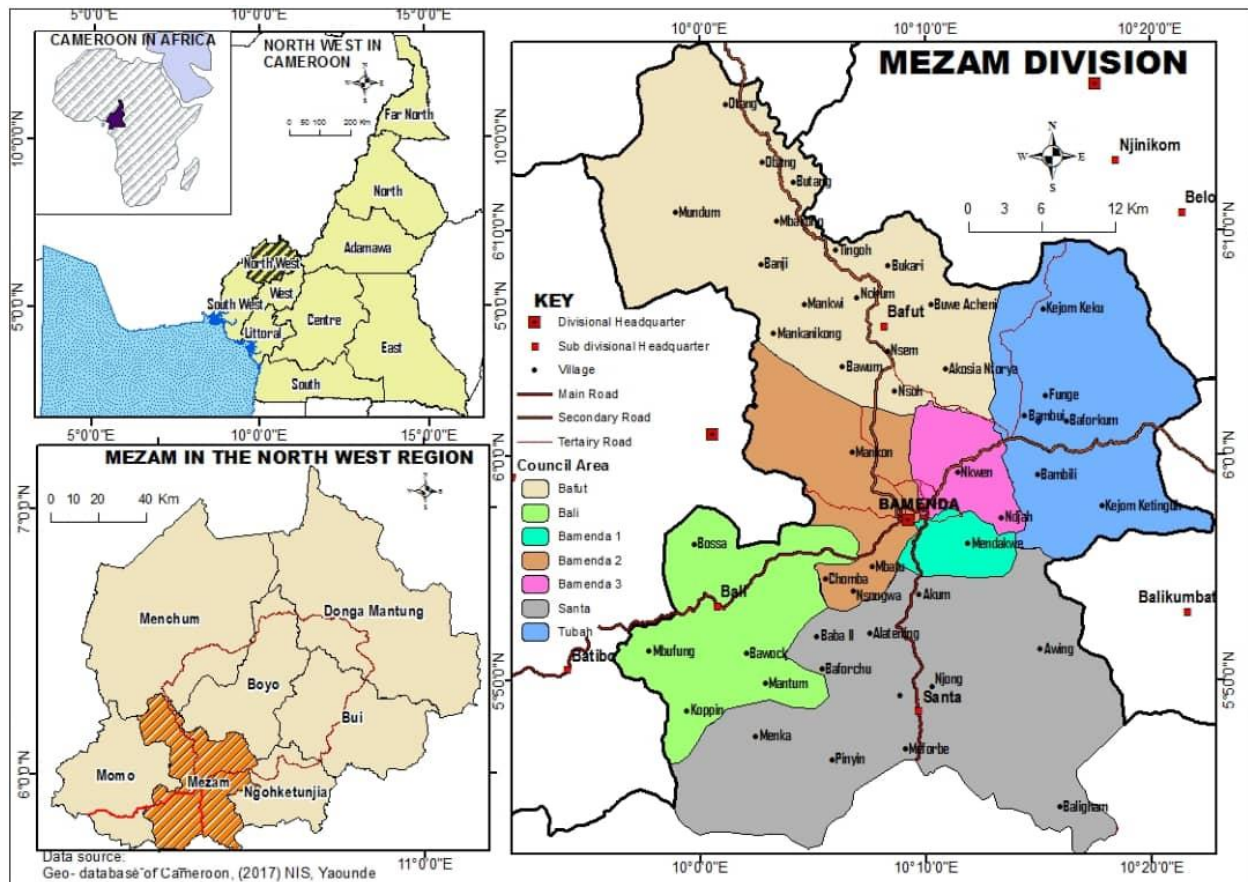
5.2. THE CASE STUDY: MEZAM DIVISION

The Republic of Cameroon has 58 administrative divisions amongst which is Mezam Division. This section presents the location of and the governance institutions in Mezam Division.

5.2.1. The location of Mezam Division

Mezam Division is one of the seven administrative divisions in the Northwest Region of Cameroon as shown on Figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1. Map of Mezam Division



Source: National Institute of Statistics (2017)

Mezam Division is bordered to the north by Boyo Division, to the west by Momo Division, to the east by Ngohketunjia Division (all in the Northwest Region), and to the south by Bamboutous Division in the West Region of Cameroon. Mezam Division covers an area of 1.745 Km² and has a population estimated at over 600.000. The headquarters of Mezam Division is Bamenda (RC, 2012).

5.2.2. Governance of Mezam Division

The responsibility for the day to day management of different activities in Mezam Division is assured by a plethora of public institutions and actors. These institutions and actors include the deconcentrated central government services, the local councils and the traditional authorities.

a) Deconcentrated central government services

Mezam Division, like other administrative divisions in Cameroon, is headed by a Senior Divisional Officer (SDO) appointed by the President of the Republic. The SDO represents the President of the Republic and various government ministers at divisional level. In Cameroon, a division is an administrative unit comprising of two or more sub-divisions. Mezam Division has seven sub-divisions all headed by Divisional Officers (DO) as indicated in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1. Sub-divisions in Mezam Division

Sub-divisions	Headquarters
Bamenda I	Mendakwe
Bamenda II	Mankon
Bamenda III	Nkwen
Bafut	Bafut
Bali	Bali
Santa	Santa
Tubah	Bambui

Source: Author

The Divisional Officers of the sub-divisions are appointed by the President of the Republic, and are answerable to the Senior Divisional Officer for Mezam Division.

b) Local Councils in Mezam Division

Through the ongoing decentralisation reforms, the government of Cameroon has created local councils which are the elected local governments. In Mezam Division, there are eight local councils as illustrated in Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2. Local councils in Mezam Division

Name of Council	Executive	Number of Councillors	Type of Council
Bamenda City Council	Government Delegate	18	City Council
Bamenda I Council	Mayor	31	Sub-divisional Council
Bamenda II Council	Mayor	31	Sub-divisional Council
Bamenda III Council	Mayor	31	Sub-divisional Council
Bafut Council	Mayor	35	Council
Bali Council	Mayor	35	Council
Santa Council	Mayor	41	Council
Tubah Council	Mayor	35	Council

Source: Author

Of the eight local councils located in Mezam Division, there is one city council, three sub-divisional councils and four councils. The Bamenda City Council covers the territory of the Bamenda I, II, and III Sub-divisional Councils. Apart from the government delegate to the Bamenda City Council, who is appointed by the President of the Republic, all the mayors are elected by the population.

c) Traditional governance institutions

According to Presidential decree No 77/246 of 15 July 1977 (RC, 1977a) on the organisation of chieftaincies in Cameroon, there are three classes of chieftaincies: First Class Chiefs, Second Class Chiefs and Third Class Chiefs. In the Northwest Region of Cameroon, chieftaincies are called Fondoms and the Chiefs are referred to as Fons. Mezam Division has 26 Fondoms (mainly First class Fondoms and Second class Fondoms) spread across the seven sub-divisions as shown in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3. Traditional Fondoms in Mezam Division

Sub-division	First class Fondoms	Second class Fondoms
Bamenda I		Bamendakwe
Bamenda II	Mankon	Chomba Nsongwa
Bamenda III		Nkwen
Bafut	Bafut	Mundum I Nsem Mankanikong Mankwi Mambu Banji Bawum Obang Mbankong
Bali	Bali	Bawock
Santa		Pinyin Awing Akum Baligham
Tubah		Bambui Bambili Kedjom-Keku Kedjom-Ketinguh Sabga

Source: Author

According to Table 5.3, there are three first class Fondoms and 23 second class Fondoms in Mezam Division. The 1977 Presidential decree assigns a governance role to the traditional authorities (in this case Fons) as ‘auxiliaries’ of the administration. In each of the Fondoms listed in Table 5.3, there is a Village Council and a Village Cultural and Development Association which assist the Fons in the management of village affairs. Over the years, these traditional governance institutions have been instrumental in the provision of certain social services such as pipe-borne water, education and healthcare.

5.3. THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This field study makes use of the exploratory research design and more precisely, the case study method and interviews. The main idea in an exploratory study according to Ghosh (1992:210) is the discovery of facts and insights. The aim of the case study method and interviews is to know the factors and causes which explain the complex behavioural patterns of a unit and the place of the unit in its surrounding social milieu. The study seeks to understand how decentralisation in Mezam Division has influenced the practice of intergovernmental relations.

The relevance of the exploratory research design can be further justified by the fact that it would provide a better understanding of the uniqueness of the Cameroonian context of intergovernmental relations which has been subject to many interpretations. Also, with much attention which has been focused on the formal legal and institutional frameworks of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations in Cameroon, the exploratory design would be appropriate to also investigate the informal mechanisms for intergovernmental relations within a particular case study, Mezam Division.

The qualitative research approach of interviews was selected for the study. According to Babbie and Mouton (2017:278), qualitative research studies human action within its natural environment through the lens of the actors themselves. It emphasises descriptions in detail and a profound understanding of phenomena as it occurs in the relevant context. The main advantage of the qualitative research approach is that it provides for a detailed one-on-one engagement with the research participants, hence enabling the researcher to collect in-depth information (Babbie and Mouton, 2017:279). Within the context of this study, the qualitative research approach is appropriate because it analyses the perceptions of the main actors of decentralisation within Mezam Division on the nature of the relationship between the central government and the local governments.

5.3.1. Research population and sampling

The study applies the purposive sampling method which, according to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009:237), is a method used in case study research to select participants who are informative. The purposive sampling method helps select people or sites that can enable the researcher understand the central phenomenon of the study. The standard for choosing the

individuals to participate in the research is that they are “information-rich” based on their experience working in the specific domain or the site under study (Creswell, 2012:206).

The choice of Mezam Division for the study emanates from the fact that it has all the attributes of deconcentrated and decentralised local authorities in Cameroon. As concerns the decentralised local authorities, Mezam Division has all the various types of local councils (a city council, sub-divisional councils and councils). Moreover, some of these councils are governed by the ruling party and others by the Opposition party. Hence, the researcher was able to verify the influence of different political ideologies on decentralisation and how they affect intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division. The headquarters of Mezam Division, Bamenda, hosts all the Mezam Divisional offices of all deconcentrated state services. This made accessibility to the various actors of decentralisation easy.

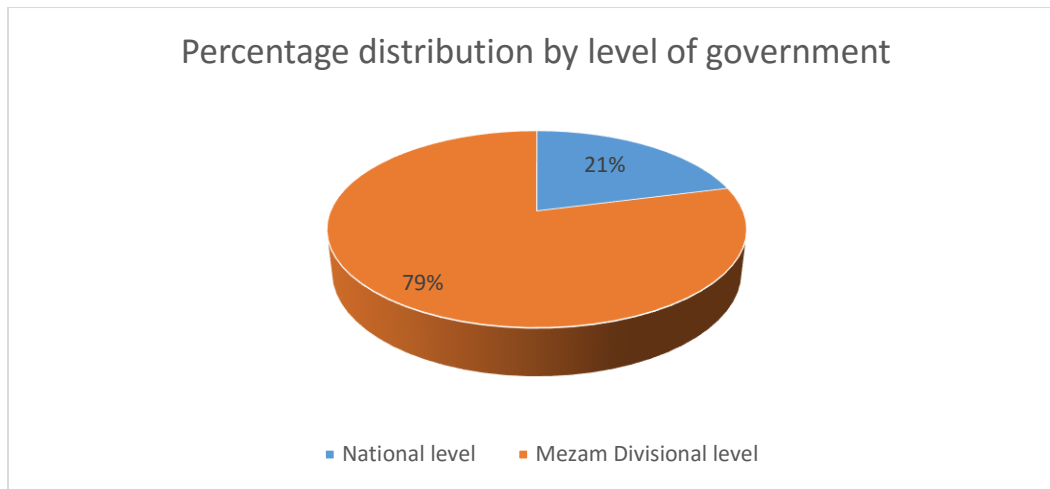
The participants for the research were selected from institutions at the central government, central government deconcentrated services in Mezam Division, and the local councils in Mezam Division. All the participants were purposefully selected based on their knowledge and experience working on the decentralisation process as shown in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4. Officials selected as research participants for the study

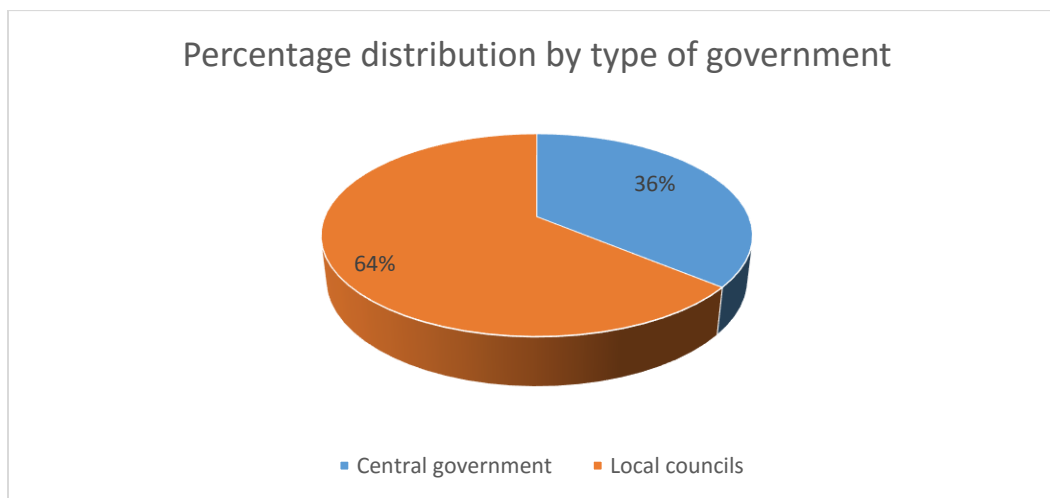
Institution	Persons interviewed	Number
<i>Central government level</i>		
Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inspector General in charge of Local Councils - Director of Regional and Local Authorities 	2
United Councils and Cities of Cameroon (National Executive)	Chairperson of Committee in charge of relations with the central government	1
<i>Central government deconcentrated offices in Mezam Division</i>		
Office of the Senior Divisional Officer for Mezam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First Assistant Senior Divisional Officer; - Chief of Service for Local Development 	2
Local councils		
Bamenda City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secretary General (appointed) - Finance Controller (appointed) 	2
Bamenda I and II Sub-divisional Councils	Mayors (elected)	2
Bamenda III Sub-divisional Council	2 nd Deputy Mayor (elected)	1
Bafut and Bali Councils	Mayors (elected)	2
Tubah Council	2 nd Deputy Mayor (elected)	1
United Councils and Cities of Cameroon (Mezam Divisional Executive)	Chairperson	1
Total		14

Source: Author

The government officials who were interviewed as participants in this study can be further distributed according to the level of government, the type of government representative, and the political party affiliations of the officials. These are represented on the pie charts in Figures 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3. Only information collected from officials in Mezam Division was used in the study because officials at the central government level mostly provided general information pertaining to the whole of Cameroon.

Figure 5.1. Percentage distribution by level of government

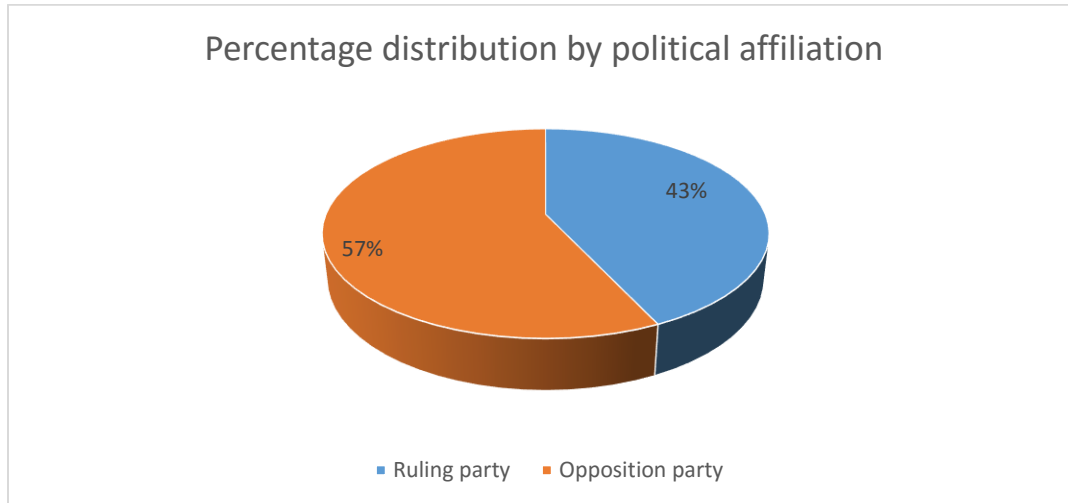
79% of the research participants were selected from the Mezam divisional level against 21% at the national government level. This is because Mezam Division is the focus of this study and it has institutions that represent the interest of the national government. The central government representatives can implement certain measures to coordinate government action in Mezam Division which may not necessarily require the authorisation of the central government.

Figure 5.2. Percentage distribution by type of government

Central government officials represent 36% of the research participants while local councils in Mezam Division represent 64% of the research participants. The central government officials include those at national government level and national government representatives in Mezam

Division. The local councils include selected representatives from all the types of local councils in Mezam Division (city council, sub-divisional councils and councils).

Figure 5.3. Percentage distribution by political affiliation



Mezam Division has eight local councils of which four are controlled by the ruling party, the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM), while the other four are controlled by the main Opposition party, the Social Democratic Front (SDF). This study selected 57% of the local council participants from Opposition controlled local councils and 43% from local councils controlled by the ruling party. Although there was a possibility of interviewing officials from all the local councils in Mezam Division, there was no response from some of the councils controlled by the ruling party despite several attempts that were made to contact them.

Table 5.4 above enumerates a list of institutions and officials who were selected and interviewed for this study. It is important to understand why these particular institutions and officials were selected for this study.

a) Institutions at central government level

The main institutions at central government level that were selected for this research are the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation (MINATD), and the United Councils and Cities of Cameroon (UCCC) National Executive.

Although this research was carried out at a time when the government of Cameroon had just created the Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development, the organizational structure of

this Ministry was still unknown. Moreover, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation had been handling the responsibility for government policy on decentralisation since the 1996 reforms. Hence, the research focused on the main officials working on decentralisation issues in the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation. These officials include the Inspector General in charge of Regional and Local Authorities, and the Director of Regional and Local Authorities. As per the organizational structure of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation, these were the main officials involved in the implementation of the decentralisation policy and ensuring the supervision of local councils by the central government. This is because they were in charge of performing the following functions: elaborating government policy on decentralisation; drafting legislation relative to regional and local authorities; monitoring the implementation of legislation that involves regional and local authorities; controls over the decisions of the regional and local authorities; and representing the interest of regional and local authorities in different decision making forums at central government level.

The United Councils and Cities of Cameroon (UCCC) has as one of its main missions ensuring dialogue between Councils and Cities on the one hand, and the central government on the other hand. This explains why amongst the 10 Committees that make up the UCCC, there is a Committee in charge of relations with the central government. The chairman of this committee was selected as a participant in this study by virtue of his duties of promoting dialogue between local councils and the government.

b) Central government deconcentrated offices in Mezam Division

The Senior Divisional Officer (SDO) for Mezam represents the central government in Mezam Division. He has the responsibility of coordinating the activities of the field offices of all central government ministries, and supervising the activities of all local councils in Mezam Division. Most importantly, only the Senior Divisional Officer or his designated representative can speak on behalf of the central government when appearing before the local councils. This study examines the relationship existing between local councils in Mezam Division and the central government, thus some officials in the Office of the Senior Divisional Officer for Mezam Division were selected for the study. These officials include the First Assistant Senior Divisional Officer for Mezam Division and the Chief of the Local Development Service. The First Assistant

Senor Divisional Officer for Mezam Division represents the SDO in most meetings with the local councils, and he handles important files concerning the local councils in the absence of the SDO. The Chief of Local Development Service on his part assists the SDO in supervising the activities of local councils and controlling the budgets and legality of the decisions of the local councils. This explains why they were selected as participants in the study.

c) Local council executives in Mezam Division

The local council executives are the elected and appointed officials who have the mandate of managing the affairs of their respective local councils. The elected officials include the mayors and deputy mayors, while the appointed officials include the government delegate for the city council, and the secretary general, municipal treasurers and finance controllers of all the councils.

The study of intergovernmental relations focuses mainly on the interactions among senior government officials in the different spheres or levels of government. For the purpose of this study, information was collected from the secretary general and the finance controller of the Bamenda City Council; the mayors of the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, Bafut and Bali councils; and the deputy mayors of the Bamenda III and Tubah Councils. The secretary general of the Bamenda City Council was selected for the study because the government delegate was unavailable and the secretary general is the immediate assistant to the government delegate.

The diversity of local council executives enabled the researcher to collect data that captures intergovernmental relations between the local councils and the central government on the one hand, and intergovernmental relations within the Bamenda city council (which covers the territory of the Bamenda I, II and III sub divisional councils) on the other hand. The diversity equally takes into consideration the political affiliations of the local council executives. The Bamenda city council, Bamenda I council and the Bali council, are controlled by the ruling CPDM party, while the other councils (Bamenda II, Bamenda III, Bafut and Tubah) are controlled by the main Opposition SDF party. This enabled the researcher to investigate the influence of political affiliation on intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division.

d) Mezam Divisional Chairperson, United Councils and Cities of Cameroon

The United Councils and Cities of Cameroon (UCCC) which is the umbrella association of local councils in Cameroon is represented in all 58 divisions in Cameroon through a Divisional Executive elected by the local councils within the divisions. The presence of the UCCC in every administrative unit is to ensure that the interests of local councils are represented and considered at every local level. The UCCC Divisional Executive, like the National Executive, has as one of its mandates to create the conditions for permanent dialogue between the local councils within the division and the central government representatives and field government offices. In this regard, the chairperson of the Mezam Divisional Executive of the UCCC was selected as a participant in this study.

5.3.2. Data collection techniques and sources

Primary data was obtained using semi-structured interviews with the 14 officials from different institutions at the national level and the Mezam Divisional level of government purposefully selected for the study. The researcher had the opportunity to interview each of the selected officials one-on-one with the help of semi-structured interview questions.

The purpose of these one-on-one interviews was to acquire qualitative data from the selected government officials at central government level and Mezam Divisional level on the existing formal and informal forums for dialogue between central government and local councils, the effectiveness of these forums in building a conducive working relationship between central government and local councils, and how central government representatives and local councils perceive the supervisory authority of the appointed central government officials over councils as enshrined in legislation. The interviews were equally essential in identifying and determining the effectiveness of mechanisms for coordinating central government and local council actions, mechanisms for resolving conflicts that could arise between central government and local councils, and mechanisms for enforcing central government and local government accountability.

Two interview semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect data: one was used for interviews with officials at central government level and central government deconcentrated services in Mezam Division, while the other was used for interviews with officials of the local

councils in Mezam Division that were selected for the study. The semi-structured interview questions were designed in accordance with the objectives of the study and research questions. The semi-structured interview questions specifically probed the extent to which the decentralisation policy is changing the nature of the relationship between the central government and local councils in Mezam division, the relationship between the Bamenda City Council and its three sub-divisional councils (Bamenda I, II and III Councils), and how intergovernmental relations could be improved in Mezam division.

The researcher contacted the officials selected for the study by writing a formal letter to their institutions requesting an interview. Attached to these letters was the letter approving the research topic and nominating the thesis supervisor from the School of Public Leadership of Stellenbosch University, a letter of introduction from the thesis supervisor confirming that the research student had started writing his thesis and needed data to complete it, the informed consent form, the research proposal and the interview guide. All the institutions responded positively to the request and granted verbal permission to conduct the interviews. Arrangements were made and the interviews were scheduled after working hours in the offices of the officials and in a few cases over the weekend in the homes of the officials because they felt more comfortable to engage in a conversation at home.

Each of the interview sessions lasted approximately 45 minutes to 120 minutes and the interview questions were semi-structured and open-ended enabling the researcher to collect more in-depth information through a series of follow-up questions related to the study.

5.3.3. Ethical considerations

One of the requirements for Stellenbosch University students carrying out research that involves any direct contact with people is to obtain ethical clearance from the institution. This study required the collection of data through one-on-one interviews with some selected research participants. The researcher applied for and obtained the ethical clearance certificate from the School of Public Leadership before undertaking fieldwork for data collection.

Although the questions on the interview guide did not touch on sensitive issues, there was a possibility that follow-up questions during the interview sessions could open access to some sensitive information. The researcher prepared an informed consent form that was submitted to

the various respondents. Before each interview session, the research participant was required to read and sign two informed consent forms. The research participant kept one of the informed consent forms and the other one was kept by the researcher. Some of the research participants did not understand the need for informed consent. Rather, they required adequate proof that the researcher was a student as had been indicated in the request for interview.

In some government offices, authorisation was needed before the researcher could have access to any information as per the procedures. This was the case in the Office of the Senior Divisional Officer for Mezam Division where authorisation was needed to access information in any of the departments. The authorisation signed by the Senior Divisional Officer provided access to all the necessary data in the Mezam Divisional office, and significantly facilitated the interview sessions with the First Assistant Senior Divisional Officer and the Chief of the Service for Local Development. Aside from the informed consent forms, these officials had the liberty to talk freely on issues covering decentralisation and intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division. These officials were instrumental in arranging meetings with some of the local council officials who had been selected to be part of the study.

5.3.4. Socio-political environment during the data collection exercise

The period 2018 to 2019 has been challenging for the Republic of Cameroon. At the time of the fieldwork, the socio-political environment in Cameroon in general and the Northwest Region, especially Mezam division in particular, was characterised by some key events.

The Northwest and Southwest Regions of Cameroon (the Anglophone regions) are currently involved in an armed conflict between the government and separatist groups advocating for the creation of a separate state. This struggle dates back to September 2016 when Anglophone (Common law) lawyers started peaceful protests against the appointment of French judges in common law courts. The government responded by arresting lawyers and seizing their robes. The lawyers were joined by Anglophone Teacher's Trade Unions on 21 November 2016 who called for school boycotts across Anglophone Cameroon to protest the appointment of French teachers to teach in English schools. In essence, the Anglophone lawyers and teachers were calling for the preservation of the Anglophone legal and education systems which to them was being tampered with by the government. To this end, the Anglophone teachers and lawyers

created the Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium to better channel their grievances to the government and open the door for negotiations.

The government responded in January 2017 by outlawing the Consortium, arresting its leaders and shutting down the internet in Anglophone Cameroon for over 90 days. In the course of 2017, the crisis degenerated into an armed conflict with the creation of numerous armed separatists groups in Anglophone Cameroon. The President of Cameroon declared war on the separatists groups on 30 November 2017 and since then, it has been difficult to find a solution to the crisis. There have been numerous calls for inclusive dialogue without preconditions from the international community but there have been no signs of any significant steps towards dialogue.

Mezam Division, like all the other 13 Divisions in the two English-speaking regions of Cameroon was a theatre of what could seemingly be described as a “battle zone”. It was characterised by the exchange of gun fire between the armed forces and the separatist groups. This threat caused the governor of the Northwest region and the senior divisional officer for Mezam to impose a curfew restricting movements from 06:00 to 18:00.

Also, the President of Cameroon signed a decree on March 3 2018 splitting the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation into the Ministry of Territorial Administration and the Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development. The organisational structure of this new ministry of decentralisation and local development was decided upon by presidential decree in August 2018 and the officials of this ministry were appointed in November 2018. The field work was carried out at a time when new institutions were being established and new officials appointed at national level and the local levels to perform the functions that hitherto had been performed by other institutions and officials.

Moreover, the year 2018 was a crucial electoral year in Cameroon because all three major elections were scheduled to take place at different periods of the year. The senatorial elections were scheduled for April 2018, the parliamentary and municipal elections for August 2018, and the presidential elections for October 2018. Unfortunately, in Cameroon, election dates are not known to the public as only the president of the Republic has the authority to convene the Electoral College. Nevertheless, the parliamentary and municipal elections which were scheduled for August 2018 were postponed and the mandates of parliamentarians and municipal councillors were extended by a year. This was advantageous to the researcher because of the

guarantee that most of the mayors who had been elected in 2013 would still be occupying their offices during the data collection. Had matters been different, it would have been laborious convincing mayors who would have lost elections to participate in the study. In some cases, certain mayors do not wish to talk about municipal council affairs, especially those who were hoping to renew their mandates yet lost elections. There was also the probability that the elections would have led to the selection of new mayors and council officials which could have influenced the dynamics of the research, particularly with regards to the research participants. More so, it is possible that the new mayors and local council officials could have very little or no information about the functioning of local councils and the decentralisation system.

5.3.5. Field challenges

These socio-political events which characterised the fieldwork environment had an impact on the conduct of the research. The researcher faced certain challenges in the course of the data collection exercise which are worth mentioning.

Firstly, the socio-political environment in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon in general, and the Northwest Region in particular, was and is still characterised by much tension due to the armed conflict between the security forces and the armed separatist groups. Movements to all parts of Mezam Division were restricted and vehicles were at times prevented from circulating due to the sporadic exchange of gunfire. In some cases, roads leading to some local councils were blocked and even when the roads were opened, the council premises were completely deserted because of the atmosphere of tension and insecurity in the area. This was precisely the case with the Bafut and Bali councils where in the few days before the commencement of the fieldwork, the areas had been characterised by periods of gunfire and many people had fled to the neighbouring city of Bamenda. This atmosphere of tension made data collection - especially from the council archives - quite tedious because the researcher had to wait for the security situation to significantly calm down before visiting these councils. Some of the interview sessions that had been scheduled with the mayors living in these areas had to be postponed on several occasions. In the English-speaking regions, Mondays are considered 'ghost town' days as people are expected to remain indoors as part of the protest. The leaders of the separatist groups could also call for other 'ghost towns' within the week apart from Mondays and these calls were

heeded. As a result of this insecure climate, the data collection at the level of Mezam Division initially planned for a month was extended to two months.

Secondly, the process of meeting some of the research participants was complicated due to bureaucratic red tape. In one of the local councils, the request for permission to interview the mayor was deliberately kept in the mail office for over eight days. In other instances, some of the officials - under the guise of having much work to do - referred the researcher to a junior staff member who had little or no knowledge about the subject matter. Apparently, the said official had not understood the purpose of the research, thus had not taken time to read through the request for an interview submitted by the researcher. For example, one mayor, because he was busy, proposed that the Human Resource officer should participate in the interview on his behalf. In the course of the interview, it was observed that this person had scanty knowledge of the decentralisation policy and the manner in which the council relates with the central government representative. To resolve this issue, the researcher contacted the deputy mayor who was better informed with regards to the subject matter.

Thirdly, fieldwork was initially scheduled for the months of August and September 2018. However, there was a major delay in obtaining ethical clearance from Stellenbosch University caused by a limited understanding of how the ethical clearance application system works on the part of the researcher. As a result, the fieldwork was postponed to a later date when the ethical clearance would have been approved. Notwithstanding this, the period from August to September 2018 was used to establish initial contact with some of the research participants, as well as explore literature from some of the secondary data sources in Cameroon and Ghana.

In addition, some of the central government services did not have important information required for the research. The researcher was unable to find any document in the archives of the Mezam Divisional office containing the history and evolution of Mezam Division. As a result, this information had to be collected from other sources not directly linked to the research and it was quite a tedious task gaining access to these sources.

5.3.6. Data presentation and analysis

The interview sessions were recorded using a tape recorder and later transcribed by the researcher. The data was classified according to the levels of government and institutions in

which the officials are working (that is, the central government level and the Mezam Divisional level). At the Mezam Divisional level, the data was classified according to government officials (from the office of the Senior Divisional Officer for Mezam Division) and the types of local councils (city council, sub-divisional councils and the councils). The purpose of this classification was to examine the trends in terms of the similarities and differences of the perceptions of central government officials on the one hand, and local council officials in Mezam Division on the other regarding intergovernmental relations. However, only data collected from officials at the Mezam Divisional level was relevant for this research because officials at the central government level provided mostly generic information pertaining to Cameroon as a whole.

The data collected was analysed using thematic analysis which is a form of qualitative data analysis. This is because through thematic analysis, the researcher can review the relationship between concepts and the data collected. Thematic analysis offers the possibility of relating the concepts and the opinions in a different context, and comparing them to data collected in another context (Alhojailan, 2012:40).

5.4. PRESENTATION OF THE MAJOR RESEARCH FINDINGS

Based on the review of documents in the Mezam Divisional Office and the interview questions, the major findings of this research tackle issues related to intergovernmental relations forums in Mezam Division. These findings equally present the functioning of various mechanisms for intergovernmental relations such as supervision, coordination, conflict resolution and accountability. Some of the interview questions and responses (italics) are presented below.

a) The existing intergovernmental relations forums in Mezam Division

The institution that currently brings together central government representatives and all local councils in Mezam Division is the Mezam Divisional Committee for Local Finances. It was created by Prefectural Order No 481/PO/E29/LDS of 7 July 2014 (RC, 2014) which also appointed members of the Mezam Divisional Committee for Local Finances. The purpose of this committee is to monitor the mobilisation of finances for the local councils and oversee the proper management of these finances.

The members of the Mezam Divisional Committee for Local Finances include:

- The Senior Divisional Officer for Mezam Division (chairperson);
- The Head of the Local Development Service, Office of the SDO for Mezam Division (secretary);
- The Government Delegate to the Bamenda City Council (member);
- All Mayors in Mezam Division (members);
- The Regional Paymaster General, Northwest Region (member);
- The Regional Chief of FEICOM, Northwest Region (member);
- The Divisional Chief of Taxation, Mezam Division (member);
- The Chief of Service for Recoveries FEICOM Bamenda (member);
- All Municipal Treasurers of Councils in Mezam Division (members).

All 22 members of Mezam CODEFIL meet once every three months (a quarter) to monitor the mobilization and use of funds by the different local councils in Mezam Division. As noted by the Chief of Service for Local Development in the Office of the SDO for Mezam Division (appointed official) (2018:Interview), Mezam CODEFIL has contributed to strengthening the relationship between the central government representatives and the local councils in Mezam Division. He stated that *“Mezam CODEFIL meetings are held on a rotatory basis so that each local council will have the chance to host the members of the committee. Also, the first meeting which was held in 2014 was used to sensitise the councils on what they should do, how to prepare a budget, and the taxes each of the councils should collect”*.

In order to ensure the proper distribution and management of some common sources of revenue for the Bamenda City Council and the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils, two committees have been established bringing together representatives of the respective councils and the central government. These committees include:

- ***The Technical Committee for the recovery of global taxes and parking fees in Bamenda***

Created by Prefectural Order No 409/PO/E29/712/S1 of 26 October 2011 (RC, 2011c), this committee ensures the centralization of the recovery of global transport taxes and parking fees in Bamenda. The 13 members of this committee include:

- The Senior Divisional Officer (SDO) for Mezam or his representative (chairperson);

- The Secretary General of the Bamenda City Council (secretary);
- The Representative of the Office of the SDO for Mezam (member);
- The Northwest Regional Chief of FEICOM (member);
- The Chief of Service for Recovery FEICOM (member);
- The Mezam Divisional Chief of Centre for Taxation (member);
- The Municipal Treasurers of the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils (members);
- The Municipal Treasurer of the Bamenda City Council (member);
- The Secretary Generals of the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils (members).

- ***The Sub-Committee of the Bamenda Local Tax Technical Committee***

Created by Prefectural order No 407/Po/E29/712/S1 of 20 October 2011 (RC, 2011b), this sub-committee performs the following duties: Collecting, processing and exploiting tax base and establishing recovery data; following up of issuing recovery and centralising transactions of proceeds from parking fees; updating the transporters card index; updating the transporters data base (know your tax payer); and drawing up the statement of distribution of proceeds from taxes. The eight members of this sub-committee include:

- The Northwest Regional Chief of FEICOM (chairperson);
- The Chief of Service for Recovery FEICOM (secretary);
- The representative of the Mezam Divisional Office (member);
- The Municipal Treasurers of the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils (members);
- The Municipal Treasurer of the Bamenda City Council (member);
- The Secretary General of the Bamenda City Council (member).

The common denominator relating to these different committees in Mezam Division is that all are formal committees because they were created by a Prefectural Order signed by the Senior Divisional Officer for Mezam Division. Also, these committees bring together representatives from different central government agencies, central government representatives, and local

government representatives to deliberate on mainly financial issues concerning the local councils.

***b) What do you think is the purpose of central government supervision of local councils?
How effective is this supervision in Mezam Division?***

Central government supervision is a means of ensuring that local council executives comply with the regulation on decentralisation. A central government official, the First Assistant SDO for Mezam Division (appointed official) (2018:Interview), affirmed that *“there is absolute need for control or supervision from the central government. If government allowed the mayors without control, it would be very chaotic and even with the control, it is not smooth. Mayors have not been through any formal education to manage councils and their excesses can only be managed through controls.”* Another central government official, the Chief of the Service for Local Development in the Office of the SDO for Mezam Division (2018:Interview) said that *“When a mayor promises employment to youths and he gets elected, he gets to the council and finds the existing staff. The law states that councils cannot have a wage bill that is above 35% of their functional expenditure. The mayor may decide to employ as many young people as he wants, and he convinces the councillors to approve this decision through a council deliberation. However, when this decision gets to the Senior Divisional Officer (SDO) for approval, it is rejected by the SDO because the wage bill surpasses 35% of the council’s functional budget. In some instances, the SDO can notice that there are some persons who have been employed but they are doing absolutely nothing, and he decides to reject the mayor’s request to employ more staff. Such a mayor will see the SDO as disturbing them from achieving their objectives whereas the SDO is ensuring that the actions of mayors comply with the law.”*

The Chief of Service for Local Development (2018:Interview) further asserted that *“If a mayor decides to construct a road or a school and the proposed plan is sent to the SDO for approval who realizes that due to financial constraints, these projects are not feasible and he rejects the plan, the mayor sees it as a nuisance. Whereas, if the mayor submitted such a proposed project and the SDO lobbied for funds to execute these projects, then supervision would be perceived by the mayors as positive.”*

On the part of local council officials, some are in favour of central government supervision. The mayor of the Bamenda I Sub-divisional Council (elected official) (2018:Interview) justified the

need for central government supervision as such *“the absence of qualified staff in the councils makes it incumbent on the central government to perform a supervisory role over the councils. When the councils will have qualified and competent manpower, then central government supervision can be partially or totally removed.”*

Other local council executives are opposed to central government supervision. The 2nd Deputy Mayor of the Tubah Council (elected official) (2018:Interview) expressed the opinion that *“central government supervision is just a question of power at all levels because the supervisory authorities give instructions to suit their agenda which is destroying the relationship between these authorities and the councils. Mayors present their plans, but the supervisory authority blocks its implementation. There is lack of cooperation from the administrative authorities and lack of respect for timing which delays the implementation of some council decisions. This situation has transformed some mayors into ‘paper-tigers’ who have well written plans but no implementation.”*

To another local government official, the 2nd Deputy Mayor of Bamenda III Sub-divisional Council (elected official) (2018:Interview), *“Some SDOs use their supervisory authority to extort money from councils for activities that have been budgeted for by the central government such as the celebration of the National Day. If the request of the SDO is rejected by any council, the said council’s expenditures will not be approved by the SDO. When these councils give monies to the SDO that have not been budgeted for, they need to find another way of justifying such expenditures else they will be held responsible for misappropriation of funds.”*

c) How do local councils and central government field offices in Mezam Division coordinate their activities? How effective are these coordination mechanisms?

The mayor of Bamenda I Sub-divisional Council (2018:Interview) claimed that *“whenever any of the central government ministries that have transferred authority to local councils deem it necessary, they invite us to meetings and tell us what to do. It is more or less a question of giving instructions or a mere information session. Such meetings should enable the participants to share ideas rather than sitting in Yaoundé (the capital city) and writing circular letters with instructions for people to follow. In my opinion, the dialogue between the councils in Mezam Division and the central government ministries is ineffective.”*

However, other local government officials, who face challenges working with some central government field offices, send petitions to the central government in Yaoundé and the issue is resolved. As attested by the mayor of Bafut Council (elected official) (2018:Interview), *“I once had a problem with the Mezam Divisional Delegation of Public Contracts because they wanted to award a contract to a different contractor whereas I knew someone who could do a better job. The contract was awarded to someone else who did an unpleasant job. Unfortunately, I could not control the work of this contractor because the contract was not awarded by our council, and the municipality could not enjoy the services he was supposed to offer because the work was poorly executed. I wrote to the Minister who immediately cancelled the contract and requested that it should be redone.”*

d) How are conflicts between central government field offices and local councils in Mezam Division resolved? How effective are these conflict resolution mechanisms?

The Governor of the Northwest Region and the SDO for Mezam Division play the role of arbitrators between the local councils and central government field offices when problems arise. Using the case of water supply, the Chief of Service for Local Development (2018:Interview) explained that *“a project for the supply of water was transferred to the Santa Council and naturally, the mayor was the project owner. However, the Regional Delegate for Water and Energy Resources (representing the Ministry of Water and Energy Resources) for the Northwest Region took upon himself to request for the bidding as the project owner (competent authority to award the contract). The mayor of Santa Council rejected this regional delegate’s claim and immediately wrote to the SDO for Mezam Division to find a solution. Given that the matter involved a regional delegate, the matter was referred to the Governor of the Northwest Region who intervened and resolved the conflict by stating that the mayor of Santa Council was the competent authority to award the project.”*

The Bamenda I Sub-divisional Council had faced a similar situation with the Regional Delegate for Women Empowerment for the Northwest Region. The mayor of the Bamenda I Sub-divisional Council (2018:Interview) declared that *“The Bamenda I Council was selected as project owner for the construction of a Women’s Empowerment Centre in the Bamenda I Municipality. However, the Regional Delegate for Women’s Empowerment for the Northwest Region believed the project was supposed to replace the Women’s Empowerment Centre in*

Bamenda II Municipality that had been burnt some weeks earlier. We argued that the project should have been stated as 'rehabilitation' and not 'construction' of a Women's Empowerment Centre. The matter was addressed to the Governor of the Northwest Region who stated that the project be implemented in the Bamenda I Council because the projected was quoted for the Bamenda I Council".

In some circumstances, the Governor of the Northwest Region and the SDO for Mezam Division have failed to resolve conflicts between local councils and central government field offices in Mezam Division. As illustrated by the mayor of the Bamenda I Sub-divisional Council (2018:Interview), *"The Council found pieces of land to build structures on that could generate income for the Municipality. The SDO for Mezam Division accompanied us throughout the process of identifying these portions of lands. The Council met the necessary requirements for using these lands and monies had been paid as part of the process. On the day boundary pillars were to be planted on these lands to indicate that it could be used by the council, the Customs Department prevented us from using one of the lands claiming it belonged to them. Instead of trying to resolve the issue, the SDO for Mezam rather referred us to the Governor of the Northwest Region, who in turn referred us to Yaoundé (the central government). Moreover, the day a meeting was scheduled with the Governor, nobody showed up from the Customs Department and nothing has happened till date".*

e) How are conflicts between the Bamenda City Council and the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils resolved? How effective are these mechanisms?

The SDO for Mezam Division arbitrates in cases of conflicts between the Bamenda City Council and the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils. The Chief of the Service for Local Development (2018:Interview) in the Office of the SDO for Mezam Division affirmed that

"The main areas of conflict between the Bamenda City Council and the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils is the collection of the road degradation tax and the temporary occupation tax. For the temporary occupation tax collected from traders occupying spaces around a market to carry out their trading activities, the law states that the local council that owns the market should collect the tax. In this case, the Bamenda City Council should

collect the temporary occupation taxes around the Bamenda Main Market, the Nkwen Market, and the Ntarinkon Market which it owns. The Sub-divisional Councils argue that they should collect these temporary occupation taxes because the area occupied by the traders is situated outside the market space. This led to a conflict between the Bamenda City Council and the Bamenda II and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils. The Bamenda II and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils wrote to the SDO for a solution and the SDO decided that the Bamenda City Council who owns these markets should collect the temporary occupation taxes. The mayors of Bamenda II and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils where these markets are located were not pleased with the SDOs decision.”

Some of the Sub-divisional Councils resort to dialogue to resolve conflicts with the Bamenda City Council. The mayor of the Bamenda I Sub-divisional Council (2018:Interview) declared that *“There is a piece of land in Bamenda I Council which was being claimed by the Bamenda City Council. We decided to use this land to construct a Women’s Empowerment Centre and when work had started, the City Council wrote to us that we could not use this land as the City Council intends to construct an ultra-modern bus station there. So, we started negotiating with the City Council on the basis that the land is large enough for both the City Council and the Bamenda I Council to execute their respective projects. In the end, the City Council agreed to use a portion of the land for the ultra-modern bus station, while the Bamenda I Council will use another portion of the land for the construction of the Women Empowerment Centre.”* Dialogue between the Bamenda I Sub-divisional Council and the Bamenda City Council is possible because both Councils are controlled by executives of the same political party, the ruling Cameroon Peoples Democratic Movement (CPDM). The mayor of the Bamenda I Sub-divisional Council (2018:Interview) further disclosed that *“when the opposition Social Democratic Front (SDF) party was in control of the Bamenda I Sub-divisional Council, they often clashed with the Bamenda City Council on a number of issues. The City Council for example took control of a cattle market that was the jurisdiction of the Bamenda I Sub-divisional Council in order to reduce the sources of income for the Bamenda I Council. This cattle market has been ceded by the Bamenda City Council back to the Bamenda I Sub-divisional Council because it is now controlled by the ruling CPDM party, and the government delegate of the Bamenda City Council and the mayor of the Bamenda I Sub-divisional Council are all members of the CPDM.”*

The Mayor of Bamenda II Sub-divisional Council (2018:Interview), who is of the opposition SDF party, argued that, *“When we raise issues during City Council sessions on the excesses of the Government Delegate, councillors from the Bamenda I Sub-divisional Council often remain mute. It means they have no problems or complains on the actions of the Government Delegate.”*

The Mayor of Bamenda II Sub-divisional Council (2018:Interview) further explained that *“we had a platform created between 2008 and 2009 bringing together the 3 Sub-divisional Councils and the Bamenda City Council. We met frequently to dialogue, resolve our misunderstandings, and share positive practices in our respective councils. Suddenly, it stopped because the Government Delegate who is supposed to convene these meetings has not been doing so. The Government Delegate has never really explained why he stopped convening these meetings”*

f) What are the existing mechanisms for the central government to hold local councils in Mezam Division accountable? How effective are these mechanisms?

The findings of the research reveal that the Senior Divisional Officer (SDO) for Mezam Division uses control missions from his office to hold local councils accountable. These control missions consist of deploying officials from the Service for Local Development to monitor how work is carried out in the local councils. Nevertheless, the Chief of the Service for Local Development (2018:Interview) in the Office of the SDO for Mezam Division, disclosed that, *“Although we carry out field missions, it is not effective because we do it from our offices. When we discover that a mayor is doing something wrong, we write to the mayor informing him/her that the action is incorrect. Then we equally advice the mayor on what to do and how it should be done. I think it is important to go down to the field and check some council operations such as the preparation of vouchers, collection of revenue, arrangement of treasury receipt booklets. I once went to the field and discovered a treasurer issuing treasury receipts and leaving some receipts empty. Apparently, there was something unorthodox about this because there should be no empty receipts. So, it is important to go around, check these operations, and advise on how it should be done properly.”*

g) Can local councils in Mezam Division hold the central government or its representatives accountable?

There exists few or no mechanism for the local councils in Mezam Division to hold the central government and its representatives accountable. When asked if local councils can hold the

central government accountable, the First Assistant SDO (2018:Interview) for Mezam Division declared *“councils, hold central government accountable, what powers do they have? The mayors can only disobey. The mayors and councillors can refuse to implement instructions coming from the central government representative. If the SDO oversteps his bounds, the local councils can refuse to comply with such demands if it is wrong or unlawful. Nevertheless, the local councils can appeal by calling the attention of the central government to what the SDOs are doing which is not correct, but not holding the government accountable.”* In the same vein, a local council official (the mayor of Bali Council, an elected official) (2018:Interview) decried that *“Councils cannot hold the SDO or the central government accountable. Just let it be.”*

Some local council executives do send petitions directly to the central government to complain about the actions of the SDO. The mayor of the Bamenda II Sub-divisional Council (2018:Interview) affirmed, *“If I have a problem with the SDO and I know he will not pay attention, I write straight to the central government in Yaoundé. I had a problem with the Bamenda City Council concerning my finances that were blocked there. I knew that if I approached the SDO, he will not resolve the issue because he did not want to see me as I had raised some issues that he was not doing right, and he saw me as an obstacle. I wrote directly to the central government in Yaoundé who gave instructions and the money was paid.”*

Some of the local council executives decry the lack of accountability from some central government institutions. Commenting on intergovernmental fiscal relations and the accountability of central government institutions to the local councils, the Finance Controller (appointed official) at the Bamenda City Council (2018:Interview) declared that *“the Special Council Support Fund for Mutual Assistance (FEICOM) which has the responsibility for centralising and redistributing council finances to ensure that financially weak local councils have some revenue have often given us the impression that we are only receiving from them. However, FEICOM does not publish its annual figures of the amount it receives from every local council relative to what is redistributes. So how can the local councils in Mezam Division determine if they are only receiving part of their revenue from FEICOM as claimed or if FEICOM also collects money from them to redistribute to other local councils with minimal finances?”*

Still commenting on intergovernmental fiscal relations, the Finance Controller of the Bamenda City Council (2018:Interview) further indicated that some central government regulations have significantly reduced local council revenue. He stated that *“Government has created the Large Tax Payers Zone where every company with a turnover of 1 billion XAF (approximately \$1,712,300) pays taxes directly to the central government. This therefore implies that the big companies in Bamenda like the inter-urban transport companies and the brewery companies pay their taxes directly to the central government. Under such circumstances, it is difficult to assess whether the local councils in Bamenda are only receiving money from the central government. This is because these large tax payers have not and do not disclose the exact amount they pay as taxes to the central government.”*

5.5. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter focused on presenting the case study of the research, Mezam Division, and the methodology that was utilised for the research. Mezam Division is located in the Northwest Region of Cameroon and is bordered by Bamboutous Division in the West region, Ngoketunjia Division, Boyo Division and Momo Division in the Northwest region. Mezam Division is headed by a Senior Divisional Officer who represents the central government in the division similar to other divisions in Cameroon, and it has seven sub-divisions headed by Divisional Officers. There are eight local councils in Mezam comprising a city council, three sub-divisional councils and four councils which constitute the elected local governments as per the ongoing decentralisation reforms. In addition to these, Mezam Division has over 26 traditional Fondoms spread across the seven sub-divisions of which three are first class Fondoms while 23 are second class Fondoms.

The study uses the exploratory research design and the qualitative research approach which provide detailed descriptions of phenomena in a given context. Research participants were selected using the purposive sampling method and these participants were selected from institutions at the central government level and Mezam Divisional level. Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews with the selected participants at the central government level and the Mezam Divisional level, although only information collected from the Mezam Divisional level was useful for the research. The chapter equally explains the socio-

political climate that characterized the data collection exercise and some of the challenges encountered.

According to some of the key findings of the research, Mezam Division has intergovernmental relations institutions. These institutions which deal exclusively with financial management issues are classified according to the relationship between the central government representatives and local councils in Mezam Division, and the relationship between the Bamenda City Council and the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils. The findings further unveil the functioning of various mechanisms for promoting intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division such as supervision coordination, conflict resolution, and accountability.

CHAPTER 6

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS’ INITIATIVES IN CAMEROON: MEZAM DIVISION

6.1. INTRODUCTION

The decentralisation process in Cameroon has created a platform for the establishment of various committees in Mezam Division bringing together representatives of the central government and local councils. This does not suggest that the committees are the most effective component of intergovernmental relations. It is worth examining other components of intergovernmental relations such as supervision, coordination, conflict resolution, and accountability. This chapter critically analyses the research findings on intergovernmental relations initiatives in Mezam Division based on the interviews conducted with the different research participants. It is a critical evaluation of the different intergovernmental relations initiatives in Mezam Division which analyses the Cameroonian legislation on decentralisation relative to intergovernmental relations, the mechanisms of intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division (supervision, coordination, conflict resolution and accountability) and highlights the major challenges facing effective intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division. This critical evaluation employs an integrated approach using ideas from the theoretical framework (Chapter 2), international context (Chapter 3), the policy framework in Cameroon (Chapter 4), and the interviews (Chapter 5).

6.2. ANALYSIS OF CAMEROON’S POLICY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK ON DECENTRALISATION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

One of the distinguishing characteristics of intergovernmental relations, according to Wright (1978:13), is the policy component which outlines the intentions and actions of the institutions and officials concerned, as well as the corresponding consequences of the actions of these institutions and officials. In order to appraise the influence of decentralisation on intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division, it is important to critical analyse Cameroon’s

policy and regulatory framework regarding decentralisation. This analysis can be examined from two dimensions: the legislative framework and the institutional framework.

6.2.1. The legislative framework

The main legislative instruments of decentralisation in Cameroon include the Constitution of 1996, the 2004 laws on decentralisation (Orientation of Decentralisation, Rules applicable to Regions and Rules applicable to Local Councils), and the law on the financial regime of regions and local councils. There is neither a specific regulation on intergovernmental relations, nor is there any section of these laws that focus exclusively on the relationship between the central government and lower levels of government. Instead, some sections of these laws make mention of certain aspects of intergovernmental relations.

The 2004 laws on decentralisation, particularly law no 2004/017 of 22 July 2004 (RC, 2004a) on the Orientation of Decentralisation, defines decentralisation in Cameroon as “devolution of authority and resources by central government to elected regional and local councils which have administrative and financial autonomy in managing regional and local interests”. A closer reading of these laws, however, contradicts the principle of devolution in its originality. This is because the law provides for the appointment, by the central government, of some local council executives such as the government delegates who head the city councils, and some key officials in the local councils such as the secretary generals and the municipal treasurers. The central government equally appoints administrators (Senior Divisional Officers) to supervise the actions of the elected local councils on behalf of the central government. The role of the supervisory authority erodes the administrative and financial autonomy of local councils in Cameroon and a fundamental precondition for devolution: the autonomous, independent nature of local councils regarded as a separate level of government with the central government exercising minimal or no control (UNDP, 1997:6). Therefore, although the legislation on decentralisation in Cameroon focuses on the devolution of authority to local councils, this devolution has numerous features of deconcentration or administrative decentralisation.

Considering that the type of decentralisation influences the nature of intergovernmental relations, the legislation on decentralisation in Cameroon does not clarify the nature of intergovernmental relations. According to the principle of devolution in its pure form, the relationships between the central government and the local councils are reciprocal, mutually beneficial, and coordinated.

This is properly articulated in the French decentralisation system (on which the Cameroonian system is based) through frequent exchange of information between the Departmental prefect and the local council mayors for the exercising of their duties. Although the Cameroonian legislation on decentralisation encourages the exchange of information between the SDO and the mayors for the exercising of their functions, the emphasis is on supervision or “tutelle” which is one of the fundamental characteristics of administrative decentralisation as elaborated by the European Union (2007:16). There is a propensity to perceive this system as a strict command and control vertical intergovernmental relations in which the SDOs, acting on behalf of the central government, are viewed as superiors to the mayors, and the latter must respect every instruction of the SDO.

6.2.2. The institutional framework

The Cameroonian legislation on decentralisation establishes institutions at the different levels of government to ensure the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of decentralisation. There are no institutions that have specifically been established by the legislation to promote intergovernmental relations although it is one of the functions of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation. However, some of the institutions for the monitoring and evaluation of decentralisation such as the National Decentralisation Council, the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Local Services, and the National Committee on Local Finance can be considered as national intergovernmental relations forums. This is because they bring together representatives from the different levels of government.

Moreover, these institutions, acting as intergovernmental relations forums, exists only at central government level. The only exception is the National Committee on Local Finance, which as per Article 11 (1) of Prime Ministerial Decree No 2011/1732 of 18 July 2011 (RC, 2011), exists in each of the lower levels of government through Regional Committees on Local Finance, and Divisional Committees on Local Finance. At the local level, it is therefore the responsibility of the senior divisional officer, the deconcentrated central government officers, the mayors, and government delegates (where they exist) within an administrative Division to define the nature of their local intergovernmental relationships, and establish their local intergovernmental relations forums in line with their needs and aspirations. The French and South African legislations establish intergovernmental relations forums in each of the spheres/levels of government and

clearly define their functions. This is in line with the constitutional/legal approach to intergovernmental relations in which the Constitution and legal texts lists all government institutions involved with clear descriptions of the responsibilities of each of these institutions and its members (Hattingh, 1998:11). In the case of Cameroon, this approach seems limited looking at the nature of the legislation.

In addition, the Cameroonian legislation on decentralisation encourages inter-council cooperation and solidarity through an agreement in which two or more councils pool their resources to achieve common goals. The legislation equally fosters the creation of Council Unions in which councils within a particular administrative division or region of Cameroon can sign a convention aimed at handling inter-communal interests. This section of the law has been exploited by the local councils in Cameroon to establish the United Councils and Cities of Cameroon (UCCC) which has a national executive, regional executives, and divisional executives. Hence, the UCCC is represented at the different levels of government and one of its main missions is to create a dialogue forum for councils and cities on the one hand, and the central government on the other hand. The establishment of the UCCC can be viewed as a mechanism for promoting horizontal intergovernmental relations among the local councils which have come together to lobby the government on actions and policies directly and indirectly affecting the local councils. The challenge though is the effectiveness of the actions of the divisional executives of the UCCC who have the responsibility to promote effective intergovernmental relations in their respective administrative units.

6.3. ANALYSIS OF THE DECENTRALISATION STRUCTURE IN CAMEROON AND THE LINK TO INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

In Cameroon, the structure of decentralisation has been subject to changes over time, the most recent being the creation of a new Ministry in charge of decentralisation and local development in March 2018. The impact of the decentralisation structure on intergovernmental relations in Cameroon can be analysed through the lens of decision-making. Ribot (2002:1 – 2) conceives decentralisation as centre-local relations which focus on strengthening local governments. In the case of Cameroon, does the decentralisation structure encourage centre-local relations which strengthens the local governments?

On a positive note, the structure of decentralisation in Cameroon is clearly defined in the legislation as seen in Figure 1.1, similar to the French Republic and South Africa which both have well defined structures (Figure 3.1 and 3.2 respectively). Article 55 (1) of the Constitution of Cameroon, 1996 (RC, 1996) creates lower levels of government below the central government, regions and local councils, which are elected and endowed with administrative and financial autonomy. Since 2010, the central government has transferred some authority and resources to the local councils to perform their functions of promoting local development. This is according to the World Bank's (1999:108) prescriptions for decentralisation as the transfer of political, fiscal, and administrative authority to government units at sub-national level which are elected, is autonomous, and have the capacity to take binding decisions in certain policy areas. Also, the structure provides for the central government to be in constant connection with the lower levels of government through the central government representatives - the governors, and SDOs. All of these are a strategy to ensure that decentralisation actions across all levels of government are coherent and properly coordinated. The deconcentrated offices of central government ministries are responsible for providing technical support to the local councils, and facilitating communication between the central government ministries and local councils.

However, the decentralisation structure in Cameroon poses a challenge particularly for intergovernmental relations or centre-local relations. There are multiple actors involved in the implementation of decentralisation at the local level - each having their own interests and perceptions of decentralisation. The majority of these key actors are central government field officials appointed in the central government field offices, with some clearly feeling at times that they are superior to, - or are not in any way answerable to - the local councils. Aside this, most central government ministries still take decisions that must be implemented by the local councils working closely with the respective central government field offices. When these decisions, made at the central government level, do not represent the realities at local council level, such decisions cannot be implemented. In essence, the local councils and the central government field officers at times are cut off from some decision making processes by the central government.

The new structure of decentralisation in Cameroon, particularly the creation of the Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development, introduces slight changes in the nature of the relationship between the central government and lower levels of government. Although to a

greater extent, it still maintains the status quo. This is because the new Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development equally has deconcentrated offices in the lower levels of government, hence adding the number of appointed officials involved in the implementation of decentralisation.

Firstly, the Regional Governors and the Senior Divisional Officers in the Divisions are still vested with the authority to supervise the actions of the Regional Councils and the Local Councils respectively. However, the Presidential decree, organising the Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development, repeals Articles 34 and 50 of Presidential decree No 2008/377 of 12 November 2008 (RC, 2008d) on the organisation and functioning of the Services of Heads of Administrative Units in Cameroon. Henceforth, the responsibilities of the Division for Regional Development, as per Article 34 of Presidential decree No 2008/377 of 12 November 2008 (RC, 2008d), have been transferred to the Regional Delegations of the Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development. In the same vein, the functions of the Local Development Services in the Offices of the Senior Divisional Officers, as defined by Article 50 of Presidential decree No 2008/377 of 12 November 2008 (RC, 2008d), have been transferred to the Divisional Delegations of the Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development. Therefore, in their work with the Regional Councils and the Local Councils, the Regional Delegates and Divisional Delegates of the Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development, like the heads of field offices of all other ministries, must work closely with the Regional Governors and the Senior Divisional Officers.

Secondly, the field offices of the new Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development (the Regional and Divisional Delegations) have specialised offices in charge of supporting and ensuring the harmonious functioning of some intergovernmental relations institutions at regional and divisional levels. In the Regional Delegations, there is the Bureau for assistance to the Regional Committee on Local Finances, and in the Divisional Delegations, there is the Bureau for assistance to the Divisional Committee on Local Finances.

Although a new Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development has been created in Cameroon, the field offices of this new Ministry are yet to be put in place. Thus, its work, particularly its contribution to intergovernmental relations at various levels of government, can only be evaluated in the long-run when all its structures should be functioning.

6.4. ANALYSIS OF THE MECHANISMS OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN MEZAM DIVISION

Interactions amongst and between different spheres or levels of governments within a country involves different instruments. Some of these instruments include supervision, coordination, conflict resolution, and accountability. This section analyses these mechanisms as they operate in the intergovernmental relations' arrangements in Mezam Division.

6.4.1. Supervision of councils by central government representatives in Mezam Division

One of the main controversies regarding the decentralisation process in Cameroon has been the supervision of elected local councils by appointed central government officials. This has been considered as a means through which the central government maintains its hold on the councils, hence a major source of friction between the central government and these elected local councils.

To illustrate the importance of central government supervision over local councils, the Cameroonian legislation on decentralisation emphasises central government supervision as an interaction mechanism between the central government and local councils. The case of central government supervision over local councils in Mezam Division presents varying perceptions of the purpose of this supervision. According to the central government officials in Mezam Division, supervision is meant to ensure that local councils act within the confines of the law as these local councils do not have well-trained staff. This opinion is equally shared by some local council officials who support central government supervision. On the other hand, other local council officials oppose supervision due to the way it is carried out, that is, command and control by the supervisory authorities. This reduces the intensity of the relations between the supervisory authorities and the local councils.

Although in the French Republic, the central government supervises the actions of the local councils through the appointed departmental prefects, this supervision has been subject to considerable adjustments since 1982 and limited strictly to legal checks which are referred to the competent courts. The Cameroonian decentralisation system rather practices an integrated prefectural system reminiscent of what was practiced in France prior to 1982. The supervision of local councils by central government appointees is among the key ingredients of administrative decentralisation according to the European Commission (2007:16).

Generally, the central government officials who support central government supervision over local councils herald the opinion that the central government supervision is effective, especially in those areas in which the law requires that the central government exercises control over matters such as approving the decisions and budgets of local councils. However, some of the central government officials are of the opinion that to some extent and depending on the circumstances, councils understand or do not understand the purpose of central government supervision. When central government supervision is in favour of the mayor's actions, it is seen as being positive, whereas when the supervision stifles the mayor or blocks an unlawful act, it is perceived as a hindrance to the smooth functioning of the council. For local government officials who oppose central government supervision, they think this supervision should be eliminated completely. According to them, the central government should rather institute the necessary mechanisms which would be at the disposal of the local councils to perform well.

Central government supervision over local councils can be seen as government regulation and oversight which is one of the structural instruments of intergovernmental relations (Radin, 2014:645). Supervision also creates an avenue for a vertical relationship between the central government and the local councils as the central government wields more authority (Kahn *et al.*, 2011:12). It equally underscores the influence of deconcentration or administrative decentralisation strategies on intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division because the SDO exercises control over the local councils on behalf of the central government.

6.4.2. Mechanisms for coordination in Mezam Division

Coordination is one of the structural instruments of intergovernmental relations which is used for integrating units structurally that are separated by functions, level, or geography (Radin, 2003:611 and 2014:643). The research findings identify a pivotal role for the Governor of the Northwest Region and the Senior Divisional Officer for Mezam Division in ensuring coordination between the central government field offices and local councils in Mezam Division.

Depending on the level of the central government field office involved in an issue, the coordination of the activities of the central government field offices and local councils in Mezam Division is carried out by either the Governor of the Northwest Region (in matters that involve the Northwest Regional Field Office) and by the Senior Divisional Officer for Mezam Division (in matters that involve the Mezam Divisional Field Office). In the Prime Ministerial decrees of

2010, which define the conditions for the transfer of authority to the local councils, the domains reserved for the central government and those reserved for the local councils are specified. In Mezam Division, Divisional Field Offices of central government ministries act as technical advisers to the mayors, hence they are often invited to ordinary and extraordinary council sessions by the SDO to formulate recommendations on issues that fall within their area of work.

In France, the departmental prefect and the president of the departmental council jointly coordinate actions of deconcentrated central government services in the department, and the departmental council services. The responsibility for coordination is jointly held by the appointed departmental prefect and the elected president of the departmental council as per Article 1 (V), Law No 2013 – 403 of 17 May 2013 (FR, 2013). Similarly, in South Africa, district intergovernmental forums coordinate strategic plans and priorities of municipalities of the district as per Section 2, No 13 of 2005 (RSA, 2005).

Institutions, such as the departmental council in France and the district intergovernmental relations forums in South Africa, are absent in Cameroon. Hence, the coordination responsibility is entirely concentrated in the hands of the appointed Senior Divisional Officer (SDO) in the Division (similar to the *Département* in France). Perhaps, this explains why in Mezam Division, some local council executives complain of the absence of dialogue opportunities with the central government ministries because these central government officials focus on writing letters with instructions for them (local council executives) to follow. This form of communication between the central government and the local councils in Mezam Division could be a means of informing the local councils of government's decisions and intentions that could affect them, which is a low intensity degree of informal intergovernmental relations according to Hattingh (1998:38). Also, it is normal that instructions from the central government be conveyed to the local councils by the SDO and the central government field officers in Mezam Division because they are appointed by the central government and can only implement instructions that have been received from above. This could equally explain why when some local council officials in Mezam Division encounter difficulties working with field offices of the central government ministries, they prefer to write directly to the central government.

Just like the supervision of local councils in Mezam Division, the current existing coordination mechanism in Mezam Division reinforces the practice of vertical intergovernmental relations between the central government and local councils in Mezam Division.

Section 77 of Law No 2004/017 of 22 July 2004 (RC, 2004a) on the Orientation of Decentralisation in Cameroon, encourages the SDO and local council executives to exchange information required to effectively perform their duties. However, the exchange of information between the SDO and local council executives is non-existent in Mezam Division due to the hierarchical perception in which the SDO is seen as superior to the local council executives. The exchange of information is vital to coordination.

6.4.3. Mechanisms for conflict resolution in Mezam Division

Conflict resolution or conflict management is one of the behavioural instruments for intergovernmental relations which involves consensus building among various actors and adopting a negotiated approach rather than a ‘decide, announce and defend’ approach to decision-making (Radin, 2003:614 and 2014:647). The findings of this research identifies the Governor of the Northwest Region and the SDO for Mezam Division as the main players involved in conflict resolution, depending on the issues to be handled. The findings equally identify two levels of conflict resolution in Mezam Division: conflict resolution involving local councils and central government field offices on the one hand (vertical intergovernmental relations), and conflict resolution involving the Bamenda City Council and the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils on the other hand (horizontal intergovernmental relations).

- ***Conflict resolution involving local councils and the central government field offices in Mezam Division***

Based on the research findings, the Governor of the Northwest Region and the SDO for Mezam Division have been successful in resolving some conflicts between local councils and central government deconcentrated offices through arbitration. These conflicts involve attempts by some deconcentrated central government services to usurp the responsibilities of local council officials, or misinterpretation of the nature of development projects destined for some of these local councils. It is the role of the central government representative to clarify some of these

issues when they arise. However, these central government representatives (Governor and SDO) are at times left helpless when the conflicts concern issues that do not directly involve the responsibility of local councils, such as the use of public land. Conflicts of such nature could only be resolved by the central government and this sometimes leaves local council officials frustrated over the fact that the central government representatives are unable to protect their interests. The dispute over the ownership of land between the Bamenda I Sub-divisional Council and the Customs Department is an example of one of such circumstances.

Generally, local council officials in Mezam Division affirm that in most instances, when conflicts arise between their councils and the central government field offices, the most appropriate mechanism for resolving these conflicts is through dialogue. When dialogue between them fails, writing a petition to the SDO for Mezam Division or the Governor of the Northwest Region is usually the last resort. At this point, the SDO for Mezam Division or the Governor of the Northwest Region arbitrates and resolves the conflicts if they fall within their competence; otherwise the matter is referred to the central government where the conflict resolution process may become even more complicated due to the administrative bottlenecks.

- ***Conflict resolution involving the Bamenda City Council and the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils***

The Bamenda City Council covers the territory of the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils. Although the decentralisation laws clarify the competencies of the City Council and the Sub-divisional Councils, there are still some misunderstandings and overlaps which are a breeding ground for conflicts.

In the domain of local tax collection, there is a popular debate in Cameroon between the city councils and sub-divisional councils about the issue of which of the local councils collect what tax. The city council and sub-divisional council officials all have different interpretations and it is up to the central government representative (SDO) to provide clarifications. Nevertheless, the major problem with the collection of taxes reserved for either the city council or the sub-divisional councils in Bamenda is encroachment by the revenue collectors of either councils. For example, revenue collectors of the Bamenda City Council can take advantage of the fact that the revenue collectors of a specific Sub-divisional Council are absent from a revenue collection

point to collect a tax that is meant to be collected by the Sub-divisional Council revenue collectors.

Dialogue as a tool for resolving conflicts between the Bamenda City Council and the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils is imperative. As of now, dialogue only occurs between the Bamenda City Council and the Bamenda I Sub-divisional Council because both are controlled by officials from the same political party, the ruling CPDM party (the Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils are controlled by the opposition SDF party). One would expect all these local councils to constantly dialogue because they already have an available platform for dialogue which is the fact that they are part of the legislative or deliberative organ of the Bamenda City Council. However, this dialogue has been rendered impossible due to these local government officials thinking and acting along political party lines (the ruling CPDM party and the opposition SDF party). The strict adherence to political party philosophy contributes to slowing the intensity of intergovernmental relations between the Bamenda City Council and the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils. Even the platform established to encourage and facilitate dialogue between these local councils is non-functional because the Government Delegate appointed by the central government to head the Bamenda City Council has not convened a meeting of this platform.

Moreover, the low intensity of relations between the Bamenda City Council and the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils can be explained by the fact that the Government Delegate to the Bamenda City Council considers himself as superior to the mayors of the Sub-divisional Councils. Given that he is appointed by the President of the Republic of Cameroon, he is answerable to the person who appointed him rather than the local population he is meant to serve. Therefore, this apparent superiority complex of the Government Delegate tends to create a vertical relationship between the Bamenda City Council and the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils (similar to the relationship between the central government and the local councils) instead of the horizontal relationship that is supposed to be a feature of these local councils.

From the different conflict resolution mechanisms, it is important to underscore the communication aspect that characterises the relationships between the central government field offices and local councils in Mezam Division, and the relationships between the Bamenda City

Council and the Sub-divisional Councils. Communication like conflict resolution is one of the behavioural instruments of intergovernmental relations in which the players involved listen to each other, manage their conflicts, and find ways of building consensus amongst them (Radin, 2003:614). Also, the Pattern-Maintenance function of the structural functionalism theory (Parsons, 1961: 38) can be used to explain the mechanisms for conflict resolution in Mezam Division. The purpose of dialogue between the central government representatives and councils, and the City Council and Sub-divisional Councils or arbitration by the Governor of the Northwest Region or the SDO for Mezam Division is to institutionalise values that would maintain the stability of the decentralisation policy in Mezam Division.

The South African legislation, particularly Sections 28 & 29 of the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act (No 13 of 2005) (RSA, 2005), proposes inter-municipality forums as a platform to review strategically important issues affecting the interests of participating municipalities. The Technical Committee for the recovery of global taxes and parking fees in Bamenda and the Subcommittee of the Bamenda Local Tax Committee can act as other mechanisms for resolving conflicts between the Bamenda City Council and the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils. This is because these committees are to some extent intermunicipality forums between the Bamenda City Council, and the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub divisional Councils. However, the limitations of these committees reside in their exclusive focus on financial issues because apart from the local council representatives and representatives of the SDO for Mezam Division, most of the other members of these committees are from central government field offices who deal with financial issues.

6.4.4. Mechanism for accountability in Mezam Division

The supervision of local councils by the central government and its field agents is often justified as a means of ensuring compliance with the law and accountability of the local councils to the central government (Radin, 2014:645). According to the findings of the research, the SDO for Mezam Division at times sends officials of the Service of Local Development to check the work of the local councils.

Apart from field missions, the SDO can constitute an audit team to check the accounts or dealings of any council if some specific figures do not add up, or if he receives a written petition from any tax payer complaining of wrong doings. All the local council officials interviewed for

this study affirmed that they are subject to periodic control missions from some central government ministries such as the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy, Planning, and Regional Development, the Ministry of Public Contracts, and the Supreme State Audit.

Field missions from the Office of the SDO are challenging in Mezam Division because the staff complement in the Service for Local Development at the Office of the SDO is inadequate. Currently, the office is made up of just two persons charged with managing the affairs of eight local councils. This explains why the SDO for Mezam Division prefers writing letters to these local council officials to point out some of their shortcomings rather than deploying staff to the field for proper control.

While the central government and its representatives in Mezam Division have instituted various mechanisms to hold the local councils accountable, there are few or no mechanism for the local councils in Mezam Division to hold the central government and its representatives accountable. According to the principle of complementarity in Cameroon's decentralisation system, the authority transferred to local councils is not exclusive. This authority is concurrently exercised by the central government and the local councils. This is buttressed by UNDP (1997:4) which considers decentralisation as co-responsibility between various levels of government, and each of the levels has a complementary role. Judging by this definition, co-responsibility implies that the local councils are accountable to the central government on the one hand, and the central government is accountable to the local councils on the other hand. This appears not to be the case in Mezam Division because the system is structured in a manner that a central government representative could easily get away with wrong-doing towards the local councils due to no checks and balances. This probably explains why a local council official, when asked about holding central government officials accountable, responded “...*just let it be*”.

The system of co-responsibility between the central government and the lower levels of government is visibly practiced in the French Republic. According to Article 1 (V) of Law No 2013 – 403 of 17 May 2013 (FR, 2013), the departmental prefect presents an annual report to the departmental council on the activities of the deconcentrated central government institutions within the department. The departmental council debates on this report in the presence of the departmental prefect, which can be a means of holding the departmental prefect (by extension the central government) accountable.

The mechanisms for accountability can be explained by the institutional pluralism theory due to its emphasis on organisational and institutional distribution of roles that are needed in executing specific tasks (Cohen and Peterson, 1998:9). Each of the actors involved in intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division have specific roles and tasks. Hence, each of them should be accountable to each other with regards to the execution of their respective tasks. It means that although the central government and its field representatives wield much authority over the local councils, they are still somehow accountable to the local councils on the manner in which they perform their roles.

Communication equally plays a great role in ensuring accountability, particularly individual communication (Radin, 2014:648). There needs to be open interactions between central government officials, central government representatives and local council executives on various policy issues that cut across all the levels of government. This requires a shift from the ‘command and control’ or one-way communication approach (in which central government officials pass down information to lower levels), to a ‘negotiated and persuasive’ or two-way communication approach (in which officials at all levels of government exchange views through roundtable dialogues).

6.5. SOME CHALLENGES TO INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN MEZAM DIVISION

Although there are no rules specifying the nature of intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division, the local councils and the central government still find a way to work with each other in addressing local development issues. However, there are a number of actions or perceptions from the central government or its representatives in Mezam Division, and the local council officials in Mezam Division, that impede the consolidation of a convivial working relationship between the central government or its representatives and the local councils in Mezam Division.

a. Shortcomings of the intergovernmental relations forums in Mezam Division

The intergovernmental relations forums in Mezam Division refers to the Mezam Divisional Committee for Local Finance (Mezam CODEFIL) which brings together representatives of the central government and all the local councils in Mezam Division; the Technical Committee for the recovery of global taxes and parking fees in Bamenda, and the Sub-Committee of the

Bamenda Local Tax Technical Committee which brings together representatives of the central government, the Bamenda City Council, and the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils. The overarching weakness of these forums is its exclusive focus only on handling financial issues. Intergovernmental relations transcend finance to include all other aspects that affect the proper functioning of local councils.

One of the main difficulties faced by Mezam CODEFIL is the irregular convening of its meetings. Although meetings are supposed to be held regularly (every three months) as stipulated by the Prefectural Order, so far only five meetings have been held since the inaugural meeting in 2014. According to the Chief of Service for Local Development (2018:Interview) in the Office of the SDO for Mezam Division, *“The irregular meetings are due to inadequate financial resources because funding for the running of CODEFIL comes from the central government. Although the local councils are also supposed to provide funding for the running of CODEFIL, this measure is not effective because the budgets of the local councils in Mezam Division do not financially support the operations of Mezam CODEFIL.”*

On the other hand, the main challenge faced by the Technical Committee and the Sub-committee is the level of commitment to collecting the unified taxes from each of the local councils involved. This is because some of the councils such as the Bamenda II and the Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils have a high concentration of socio-economic activities hence they would do most of the collection. The Bamenda I Sub-divisional Council is an administrative area with a lesser concentration of commercial activities compared to the Bamenda II and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils. In the end, all these councils receive equal amounts which appear to be unfair to the councils (Bamenda I and Bamenda II) who do most of the collection.

b. The dominant role of the central government

The central government plays a dominant role in awarding public contracts meant for local councils in Mezam Division. For example, in the domain of education, central government has transferred the construction of classrooms to local councils (building and equipping) but most, if not all these contracts are still awarded at central government level in Yaoundé. At times, some contractors just casually appear at the council premises and inform the mayor that they have been awarded a contract to construct classrooms.

The influence of the central government in the awarding contracts was confirmed by the mayor of the Bamenda II Sub-divisional Council who said that the central government is geographically far from Mezam Division. Yet, central government officials tend to make decisions on behalf of local councils that cannot be verified. The mayor Bamenda II Sub-divisional Council (2018:Interview) declared: *“I applied for a road and instead of giving me the authority to request for tender files as project owner at the level of the council, the contract was awarded in Yaoundé. I just realised that work had commenced on one of the roads in the municipality and when I approached the contractor for inquiries, he informed me that he had been awarded the contract in Yaoundé. Contracts awarded by the council for the construction of roads have been properly executed, whereas this contract that was awarded in Yaoundé has been stagnant for years now because I do not have the authority to control this contractor.”*

Most often, officials at the central government level feel they are the highest hierarchy, and that they can take certain decisions which, if taken at the local level, will be ineffective. However, experience shows that most of the decisions that are being made at central government level end up failing to achieve the desired objectives. Even when these objectives are attained, the results are unsatisfactory.

c. Local councils cannot freely manage their finances

Local councils do not have the authority to manage most of the financial resources transferred to accompany or finance contracts awarded or competencies transferred by the central government. These financial resources are still being managed by the national treasury and not by the treasury of the local councils. The Chief of Service for Local Development (2018:Interview) in the Office of the SDO for Mezam Division confirms:

“A mayor can have the authority to award a contract for the construction of 2 classrooms. Although this mayor signs the contract and prepares the bills, it is not the municipal treasury of his council that pays for the contract but the public treasury of the central government. In some cases, the central government even dictates the price at which the contract must be awarded. However, the same classroom constructed for \$20.000 could also be constructed for \$10.000 if the mayor had the free hand to fully manage the contracts and the finances of the contract. Given that the central government has already prescribed the amount for the tender, the contractors are bound to follow these guidelines or their bids will be rejected for non-compliance.”

Apparently, the central government interferes almost directly in exercising the authority and resources transferred to local councils. This is because the central government can decide on who will execute the financial part of an arrangement, and even who has the responsibility for the execution of the project without consulting the local councils concerned by these projects.

d. Central government decides on the location of projects within the local councils

The central government has transferred to local councils the responsibility to implement projects and equally dictates the localities where these projects should be implemented within the respective local council areas. The mayor of Bafut Council (2018:Interview) decried *“I requested for the construction of classrooms in any government primary school in my municipality and when the request was approved, the central government selected a school in a locality which already had numerous buildings. Whereas, there was a government primary school that had been existing for long without any classroom buildings, everything there was managed through community contributions. I stood my grounds, wrote a petition with pictures and forwarded to Yaoundé. I personally went to Yaoundé to justify my petition and in the end, it was decided that the classrooms be built where there was need for it. If I was consulted before, it would have been better and such confusion could have been avoided.”*

From the foregoing argument, it can be concluded that to some extent, there is inadequate communication regarding projects between the central government officials, the central government representatives and the local council officials in Mezam Division.

e. Pressure from local politicians and influential elites on central government officials

In some cases, the decision by the central government officials to dictate on the location of some projects within a local council can be due to the influence of local politicians or influential elites at central government level. For example, a politician can go to Yaoundé and lobby for the construction of classrooms in a secondary school and instead of these classrooms being constructed where there are no buildings, he/she prefers that it should be constructed in a school which is saturated with buildings just because he/she hails from that area. He/she wants the impact to be felt and for the people to see that he/she is working whereas if the mayor and the councillors were to decide, then such projects would be implemented in localities that are in need.

f. Inadequate collaboration between central government officials, central government representatives and central government field offices in Mezam Division

The findings of the research indicate that the SDO for Mezam Division, as central government representative, is at times faced with situations which he is unable to manage. When decisions are already made at the central government level, the SDO cannot overturn them even if they are wrong or do not fit with the local realities in Mezam Division. As regards a contract, even if the SDO overturns the decision, the project will not be paid for by the public treasury of the central government because the quotation will differ from the initial quotation sent by the central government. So the SDO is obliged to write back to the central government with his observations and recommendations.

Referring to the example of the provision of portable water in some local councils in Mezam Division, the Chief of Service for Local Development (2018:Interview) in the Office of the SDO for Mezam Division, explained:

“The Minister of Water and Energy resources approved a project for the construction of bore-holes in the Santa, Bafut, and Tubah Councils. The quotation for these projects specified bore holes, and the various localities within the local councils where the bore holes should be constructed. The Mezam Divisional Delegate for Water and Energy who is the technician went to the field for feasibility studies in the prescribed areas and did not approve any of the projects. This is because according to the Delegate’s report following the feasibility studies, the gravity-fed water supply system will be more lasting, self-sustaining, than digging bore-holes. The recommendation was that the project be transformed into the gravity-fed water supply system for each of the three councils because there were streams uphill that could be exploited. Given that the Minister of Water had prescribed boreholes, the project could not be changed and the SDO for Mezam Division had to write back to the Minister of Water and Energy with the field report. The process took a long time before the Minister of Water and Energy approved the proposed changes to the initial project.”

From the foregoing, it appears the role of the SDO as central government representative and the field offices of central government ministries are being minimised by the same central government they represent. Faced with such situations on major development projects, local council officials could come to the conclusion that the SDO and the Divisional Delegate are not

there to promote the interests of the local councils. Moreover, such circumstances can even be perceived by these local council officials as a ploy by the central government and its field agents to delay or stall the development of their local communities. This is further complicated by the fact that most of the central government appointees working in Mezam Division and charged with influencing these major decisions hail from different parts of the country and could generate a perception of bias.

g. Inadequate knowledge and cooperation from some local councils

Some of the local council officials in Mezam Division have limited knowledge on the Cameroonian legislation on decentralisation particularly Law No 2004/018 of 22 July 2004 (RC, 2004b) stating the decentralisation rules applicable to local councils. Some of the local council officials that were interviewed for this study demonstrated some lack of understanding for these rules and rather blamed the actions of the central government and its representatives, especially the SDO for Mezam Division, for impeding the effective implementation of decentralisation. This was mainly the case with some of the local council officials from both the ruling CPDM party and the opposition SDF party because they have their perception of what decentralisation should be and this is seemingly different from what the legislation proposes. As such, these local council officials are always in conflict with the central government and its representatives and would often be suspicious of any activities by the central government representative that concerns their local councils.

6.6. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter critically evaluates the different intergovernmental relations' initiatives in Mezam Division. For a proper evaluation of these initiatives, the chapter in the first instance analysis the policy and regulatory framework of decentralisation in Cameroon and its resulting influence on intergovernmental relations, and Cameroon's decentralisation structure and its influence on intergovernmental relations. Also, the various mechanisms for intergovernmental relations such as supervision, coordination, conflict resolution, and accountability are critically analysed.

This critical evaluation highlights some problems with the legislation on decentralisation in Cameroon, particularly the implementation of some decentralisation concepts such as devolution which is mentioned in the legislation. Despite some changes to the structure of decentralisation

with the creation of the Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development, they may rather contribute to maintaining the status quo because this institution rather increases the number of decentralisation stakeholders at national level and lower levels of government. The Governor of the Northwest Region and the Senior Divisional Officer for Mezam Division are indispensable in ensuring supervision, coordination, conflict resolution and accountability although there still exists major dysfunctions.

Nevertheless, the findings equally unveil some challenges to intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division such as: the dominance of the central government; the inability of local councils to freely manage their finances; the influence of the central government regarding the location of development projects in the local councils; lack of collaboration between the central government and the local councils, and inadequate knowledge and cooperation from some local councils.

CHAPTER 7

A NORMATIVE APPROACH TO INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN MEZAM DIVISION

7.1. INTRODUCTION

The implementation of the decentralisation policy in Cameroon has paved the way for various kinds of interactions between the central government, central government representatives, central government field offices, and local councils. In the case of Mezam Division, these interactions involve the central government representatives and the local councils on the one hand, and the Bamenda City Council and the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils on the other hand by virtue of the type of local councils. The findings of this study identified some major challenges which to some extent negatively impact the practice of intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division. From these challenges, how then can the practice of intergovernmental relations be improved in Mezam Division? This chapter formulates some recommendations on strengthening intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division. Given that Mezam Division has all types of local councils which exist in other parts of Cameroon (a city council, sub-divisional councils and councils), these recommendations could to some extent be, applied in other parts of Cameroon. The recommendations propose actions that should be undertaken by the central government, the central government representatives and the local council executives in Mezam Division.

7.2. PROPOSED ACTIONS BY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO AMELIORATE INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN CAMEROON

Despite the existence of different levels or spheres of government within a country, the central government still wields more authority than the lower levels or spheres of government. This is because in most circumstances, it is the decision of the central government to establish the lower levels of government and define their functions. The central government in Cameroon should use the structural intergovernmental relations instrument of reorganisation (Radin, 2003:610). This is

to introduce some changes in the formal roles and relationships and the patterns of authority and leadership based on changing needs and priorities.

7.2.1. Improving the policy and regulatory framework of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations in Cameroon

The policy framework of decentralisation in Cameroon does not clearly define the nature of the relationships between the various levels of government. There is thus the need to draft and adopt a new regulation regarding intergovernmental relations in Cameroon, and amend certain parts and sections of the current policy documents.

a) Framework document specifying the modalities for relations between the central government, regional councils, and local councils in Cameroon

This framework document should clearly define the nature of all intergovernmental relationships in Cameroon. The legislators - while drafting this document - should bear in mind the holistic component of intergovernmental relations (Wright, 1978:8). Therefore, this document should specify the nature of central – regional relations; central - local relations; central – regional – local relations; regional – local relations; and inter – local relations. The framework document should be structured as such:

PART I: GENERAL PROVISIONS

This document defines the framework for the relationship between the central government, regional councils and local councils in Cameroon. The purpose is to strengthen coordination and collaboration in drafting, implementing, and monitoring and evaluating policies and legislations. This is a vital ingredient to ensuring coherent government and effective provision of services to citizens at all levels.

To this end, the document lays down a set of principles to guide the conduct of intergovernmental relations among various levels of government in Cameroon. In addition, the document establishes intergovernmental relations institutions at various levels in a bid to promote coherence in governmental actions in the different levels.

The document is meant to act as a complement to the constitutional provisions on decentralisation as spelt out in Chapter X, and the provisions of the laws on decentralisation (Law No 2004/017 on the orientation of decentralisation, Law No 2004/018 on the decentralisation rules applicable to local councils, and Law No 2004/019 on the decentralisation rules applicable to regions).

PART II: PRINCIPLES OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN CAMEROON

Government officials and institutions at the central, regional and local government levels must adhere to the following principles in the conduct of their affairs:

- a. Respect the Constitution and people of Cameroon,
- b. Work to promote the peace, national unity, and the indivisible character of the Republic of Cameroon,
- c. Ensure the well-being of the people of Cameroon,
- d. Promote effective, efficient, transparent, accountable and coherent government,
- e. Not assume any functions other than those conferred on them by the Constitution and the laws on decentralisation,
- f. Co-operate with one another in mutual trust and good faith by:
 - Promoting friendly relations;
 - Assisting and supporting each other;
 - Encouraging co-construction through obligatory exchange of information and consulting each other on matters of common interest;
 - Coordinating their actions with one another; and
 - Respecting agreed procedures and avoiding legal proceedings against one another.

PART III: RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND THE REGIONS (REGIONAL COUNCILS)

- a. The Governor represents the central government in the Region. In this capacity, he/she serves as the link between the central government and the regional council, and between the regional council and the central government.
- b. The Governor shall ensure that regional deconcentrated central government services and the regional council coordinate their activities to ensure coherence.

- c. The Governor shall resolve all disputes that may arise between the regional council and the regional deconcentrated central government services. If need be, the Governor may solicit assistance from the central government.
- d. A Presidential Advisory Council on Decentralisation (PACOD) is established to enable consultations between the central government, regional councils and representatives of local councils on issues of national interests. PACOD shall strengthen the relationship between elected and appointed officials at all levels of government, and ensure the effective participation of regional and local councils in policy decisions at the central level that concerns them. PACOD shall consist of:
 - The President of the Republic;
 - The Prime Minister, Head of Government;
 - Minister of Decentralisation and Local Development;
 - Minister of Finance;
 - Minister of Economy, Planning and Regional Development;
 - Presidents of the 10 Regional Councils;
 - 1 representative of local councils from each of the regions;
 - The Chairperson of the United Councils and Cities of Cameroon; and
 - A representative each from the Senate and the National Assembly.

The President of the Republic chairs the meetings of PACOD which shall be convened twice annually in ordinary sessions, and as many times as the need may arise in extraordinary sessions. The President may invite other Ministers or stakeholders to the meetings if the order of the meeting concerns them.

The functions of PACOD are similar to the President's Coordinating Council (PCC) in South Africa (RSA, 2005), and the National Conference of Territories in the French Republic (FR, 2017).

PART IV: RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL COUNCILS

- a. The Senior Divisional Officer (SDO) represents the central government in the local councils within the Division. In this capacity, he/she serves as the link between the

central government and the local councils, and between the local councils and the central government.

- b. The SDO shall ensure that divisional deconcentrated central government services and the local councils coordinate their activities to ensure coherence.
- c. The SDO shall resolve all disputes that may arise between the local councils and the divisional deconcentrated central government services. Where the SDO is unable to resolve a dispute, he/she shall refer the matter to the Governor of the Region. If the need arises, the Governor may solicit assistance from the central government in resolving the dispute.
- d. A Local Development Forum shall be established in each Division to enhance relations between central government institutions and local councils in the Division. The organisation and functioning of the Local Development Forum shall be determined by a Prefectural Order signed by the SDO of the Division following extensive consultations with the relevant stakeholders. This Forum is like the District intergovernmental relations forums in South Africa (RSA, 2005).
- e. In the month of December each year, the SDO shall present to the Local Development Forum a report on the functioning of central government deconcentrated services in the Division. This report shall be open to debate by the members of the Local Development Forum in the presence of the SDO.

PART V: RELATIONS BETWEEN THE REGIONAL COUNCILS AND LOCAL COUNCILS

- a. The Governor of the Region shall ensure that the regional council and local councils coordinate their activities to ensure coherence.
- b. The Governor shall resolve all disputes that may arise between the regional council and the local councils. If need be, the Governor may solicit assistance from the central government.
- c. A Forum for Regional Development (FOREDEV) shall be set-up to enhance relations between the regional council and the local councils within the region. It shall consist of:
 - The President of the Regional Council;
 - The Regional Delegate for Decentralisation and Local Development;

- Government Delegates to the City Councils;
- Mayors of Sub-divisional Councils and Councils; and
- Representative of the Regional Executive of the United Councils and Cities of Cameroon.

FOREDEV shall be a platform for concertation between the regional council and the local councils to hold constructive discussions and formulate recommendations on the exercise of authority, coordination of policy implementation strategies, evaluation of joint actions, and resolution of disputes. The President of the Regional Council shall chair the meetings of FOREDEV which shall be convened twice annually. The Governor of the Region shall participate in these meetings in an advisory capacity and may speak when required to. Other development actors can be invited to these meetings if the order of the day concerns them.

FORDEV would perform similar functions like the Territorial Conference for Public Action in the French Republic (FR, 2017) and the Provincial intergovernmental relations forums in South Africa (RSA, 2005).

PART VI: RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CITY COUNCILS AND SUB-DIVISIONAL COUNCILS

- a. In Divisions where there is a City Council and Sub-divisional Councils, the SDO shall, if necessary and following extensive consultations with these local councils, create a Consultative Forum for the City Council and Sub-divisional Councils to discuss and tackle issues of mutual interests.
- b. Government Delegates to City Councils and the Mayors of the Sub-divisional Councils shall set-up a platform for policy coordination, dialogue, and joint actions. When necessary, the SDO of the Division shall be invited to participate in such meetings. The outcomes of the meetings shall be communicated to the SDO for effective follow-up.

PART VII: MISCELLANEOUS AND FINAL PROVISIONS

- a. The intergovernmental relations institutions that have been established in the lower levels of government should be established following extensive consultations, and according to the needs and the ability of the lower levels of government to sustain them.

- b. This framework document shall be registered, published according to the procedure of urgency, and inserted in the Official Gazette in English and French.

The drafting of a framework document on intergovernmental relations in Cameroon highlights the need for structural reforms like deregulation (Radin, 2003:611 and 2014:644) and the facilitation of central government oversight (Radin, 2003:612 and 2014:645).

b) Proposed amendments to the laws on decentralisation in Cameroon

Given that this research focused essentially on local councils, the proposed amendments will only touch on the law on the orientation of decentralisation in Cameroon (Law No 2004/017 of 22 July 2004) (RC, 2004a), and the law on the decentralisation rules applicable to local councils (Law No 2004/018 of 22 July 2004) (RC, 2004b).

- ***Amendments to the law on the orientation of decentralisation in Cameroon***

One of the problems with Cameroon's decentralisation system is the lack of clarity with the terms used. Although the legislation mentions devolution of authority, the practice rather points to partial devolution with numerous characteristics of deconcentration.

Part II of this law, which focuses on Principle of Devolution of Powers, should be amended to specify the following elements:

- Functions transferred to the regional councils.
- Functions transferred to the local councils.
- Rights and responsibilities of the central government.

This section should specify functional domains of concurrent central government and regional government competence, and the functional areas of exclusive regional government competence. In each of these functional domains, the functions of local councils should be clearly defined as is the case in schedule 4 and 5 of the South African Constitution (RSA, 1996), and Law no 2004-809 of 13 August 2004 (FR, 2004b). With these specifications, the principle of complementarity is equally clarified because it is easy to identify the functions of each of the levels of government (central government, regional councils and local councils). This helps to define the kind of

relationship that should exist between the central government and the lower levels of government.

Part IV of this law on Supervision of Regional and Local Authorities should be amended to Relations between the Central government and the Regional and Local Authorities. The sections under this part should address the following headings:

- Supervision of Regional and Local Authorities;
- Exchange of information between the Central government and Regional and Local Authorities;

This part should specify that a separate text would define the modalities for intergovernmental relations between the central government, regional councils and local councils.

- *Amendments to the law on the decentralisation rules applicable to local councils in Cameroon*

One of the challenges of the relations between the City Councils and the Sub-divisional Councils is lack of clarity on the functions transferred to each of these local councils.

In Part V of this law dealing with Special regimes applicable to Urban Centres, Chapter II on Sub-divisional Councils should specify the functions transferred to Sub-divisional Councils just like Chapter I of Part V on the City Council clearly specifies the functions transferred to the City Councils. This way, both the City Council and the Sub-divisional Councils will be aware of where their functions starts and ends. Moreover, if there is need for the exercising of joint authority by the City Council and the Sub-divisional Councils regarding a specific function, a section of Part V of this law should clearly state the issue and the way this joint authority would be exercised. Moreover, the position of Government Delegate which is appointed by the President of the Republic should be transformed into an elective position.

This law has no part or section on intergovernmental relations. Therefore, a new part, Part VII on relations between the supervisory authority and the local councils, should be included in this law. The sections in this part should emphasise the following aspects:

- The Senior Divisional Officers shall request information from the Government Delegates and Mayors required for their duties to be exercised.
- The Government Delegates and Mayors shall request information from the Senior Divisional Officer required for their duties to be exercised.
- In the months of January and June of each year, the Senior Divisional Officers shall convene a meeting of all Government Delegates (in Divisions with City Councils) and Mayors. At these meetings, the Senior Divisional Officers shall present a report to inform these local council officials on the functioning of various deconcentrated central government institutions within their respective Divisions. This report shall be open to debate by the local council officials in the presence of the Senior Divisional Officers.

This part of the law is necessary to encourage frequent exchanges between the supervisory authorities and the local council executives which can contribute to facilitating the coordination of development actions. It would also create a favourable platform for the local council executives to hold the supervisory authority (by extension the central government) accountable.

7.2.2. Proposals on ameliorating the management structure of decentralisation in Cameroon

The decentralisation structure in Cameroon does not adequately valorise the role of central government representatives (Governors and Senior Divisional Officers) and local council executives in planning, organising and implementing major decisions. This is important because some important decisions on projects to be implemented in local councils are still made by officials in various central government ministries. The following actions aimed at reorganisation (Radin, 2003:610) should be implemented by the central government:

a) Emphasising the importance of effective local – intergovernmental relationships

Cameroon's decentralisation structure indicates the active presence of the central government in the lower levels of government through appointed central government representatives, and deconcentrated field offices of central government ministries. The central government should recognise and valorise the indispensable role of the Governors and the SDOs as central government representatives on the ground. In this instance, the framework document specifying the modalities for relations between central government, regional councils and local councils can

serve as a reference. According to this framework document, central government representatives are empowered to respond to all queries raised by the local councils, resolve all conflicts that may arise between the central government and the local councils, and consult the central government if the need arises. This measure could avoid the involvement of officials at the central government level in resolving issues that should normally be resolved locally. Also, if central government representatives, on behalf of the central government and working with the local council executives, provides satisfactory answers to all queries raised by local councils, and resolves conflicts, this can contribute to building trust between the central government and local councils as the local councils will always view the central government representatives as facilitating their work.

b) Financial grants for local councils and financing of intergovernmental relations institutions at the local level

According to the findings of the research, the running of certain intergovernmental relations institutions at the local level like the Divisional Committees on Local Finance (CODEFIL) are partly financed by the central government. However, the central government delays the transfer of the funds for these institutions, and other activities of local councils. Therefore, the central government should outline a comprehensive timeline for the transfer of funds to local councils, the amounts to be transferred as a percentage of the central government's contribution, the expected contributions from the local councils, and the purpose of the money transferred. The timeline should equally indicate the period within which a detailed report should be submitted to the central government. In case the central government is facing any challenges which might delay the transfer of these funds to the lower levels of government, then they must communicate such challenges appropriately with the lower levels to facilitate planning at the lower levels.

Moreover, the financial responsibilities of the central government and the regional councils towards the local councils should be clearly outline for proper comprehension. This is the case in South Africa in Chapter 5 of the Municipal Finance Management Act (No 56 of 2003) (RSA, 2003), and Article L1111-4 of the Code général des collectivités territoriales (FR, 2019b).

c) The need for local development contracts to be awarded at the local level

Officials in the central government ministries should avoid direct interference in the awarding of certain local development contracts as well as the location of these local development projects within the local councils. The central government should transfer the awarding of these contracts to the contract boards of the local councils. The SDO with the support of the divisional field office of the ministry of public contracts must ensure that the process of awarding these contracts by the local councils is in line with the approved criteria.

Also, the implementation of local development projects should be entirely transferred to the local councils which should be required to work closely with the field office of the ministry concerned and the SDO to identify the priority areas within the municipality where these projects should be implemented. This would improve the working relationship between the central government representative, the field office of various ministries that have transferred responsibilities to local councils, and the beneficiary local councils.

d) Financial management of local development contracts by local councils under the guidance of central government representatives

The transfer of the awarding of local development contracts to the local councils equally entails that the finances for these local development contracts should be managed by the treasuries of these local councils. The central government should encourage local councils to manage the finances meant for the execution of contracts within their municipalities under the supervision of the Governors and the SDOs while the regional branches of the National Treasury ensure strict control. This entails that the central government should transfer finances for local development projects to the treasuries of the local councils and notify the Governor and SDO. Payments can only be made from the local council treasury after approval by the Governor or the SDO, depending on the amounts concerned. The regional branches of the National Treasury must ensure strict control on how these finances are used through periodic controls and audits. The Public Contracts Board of each local council and the SDO should periodically monitor and evaluate the outcomes/impact of the executed contract. This will further valorise the work of the central government representatives and the field offices of central government ministries in the Divisions.

The Governors and Senior Divisional Officers generally have the responsibility of ensuring a proper working relationship between the central government and the lower levels of government. Being closer to the lower levels of government and having full knowledge of how central government works, they can better represent and defend the interests of the lower levels of government within the central government, and also represent and defend the interests of the central government within the lower levels of government which is one of their main functions. Therefore, effective intergovernmental relations would entail that local councils build trust and enhance their working relationships with the Governors and the SDOs to ensure that there is clear understanding in the ranks of governments at the lower levels.

Intergovernmental relations in Cameroon should be conceived more as a “bottom-up” process in which discussions and engagements are more intense at the lower levels of government while the central government ensures effective coordination. Through effective local – intergovernmental relationships amongst the various units of government, the engagements between government officials at the base can be strengthened.

7.3. RECOMMENDATIONS ON IMPROVING INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN MEZAM DIVISION

The research findings identified some challenges of intergovernmental relations that are peculiar to Mezam Division. Some mechanisms need to be put in place by the central government representatives and the local councils in Mezam Division to improve intergovernmental relations. As Hattingh (1998:39) explains, there needs to be full participation in which there is no dominant party, and relations are characterised by joint decision-making.

7.3.1. The role of the central government representatives in facilitating intergovernmental relations

The findings of this study reveal that the Governors and SDOs, as central government representatives, play an important role not only in supervising the activities of local councils, but also coordination and conflict resolution at lower levels of government. Although their role is to represent and secure the interests of the central government within the local councils, it should equally be recognised that these central government representatives have the mandate to represent and protect the interests of the local councils within the central government. The

Governors and the SDOs act as a bridge between the central government and the local councils. In this light, the central government representatives in Mezam should take the following actions to improve intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division:

a) Creation of Intergovernmental Relations Forums in Mezam Division

Most of the existing Intergovernmental Relations Forums in Mezam Division deal exclusively with financial issues. In line with the provisions of the framework document specifying the modalities for relations between central government, regional councils and local councils in Cameroon, the SDO should create other forums to tackle other issues of mutual interest other than financial issues in Mezam Division. These forums include:

- ***The Mezam Local Development Forum (MELODEF)***

MELODEF should be a consultative forum for the SDO and the local councils in Mezam Division to consult each other on matters of mutual interest. Some of these issues could include: Providing mutual support and services in Mezam Division; ensuring coherent planning and development in Mezam Division; drafting and implementing strategic and performance plans of the local councils in Mezam Division; sharing of information and best practices, and capacity building for council executives, councillors, and staff of local councils within Mezam Division. The members of MELODEF should include:

- The Senior Divisional Officer (SDO) for Mezam Division (chairperson);
- The Mezam Divisional Delegate for Decentralisation and Local Development (secretary);
- The Government Delegate to the Bamenda City Council (elected not appointed) (member);
- The Mayors the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils (members);
- The Mayors of the Bafut, Bali, Santa and Tubah Councils (members); and
- A Representative of the Mezam Divisional Executive of the United Councils and Cities of Cameroon (member).

MELODEF should meet once every six months, on a rotatory basis in the premises of different local councils. This would present an opportunity for each of the local councils in Mezam

Division to host their peers alongside the central government representative. The meetings of MELODEF should not be limited to senior officials such as the SDO and the local council executives. It can be used as a platform for each of the field offices of the central government ministries in Mezam Division to exchange ideas with the staff of the local councils. The creation of the Mezam Local Development Forum (MELODEF) is similar to the South African experience with the District Intergovernmental Relations Forums as provided for in Section 26 of the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act (No 13 of 2005) (RSA, 2005).

In addition, MELODEF should be used as a platform for the SDO to present a report on the functioning of central government services in Mezam Division. This should provide the local council executives with the opportunity to ask the necessary questions in the presence of the SDO which is a means of ensuring the accountability of central government and its representatives to local councils.

- ***The Bamenda City Consultative Forum (BACCOF)***

BACCOF should be a forum for the Bamenda City Council and the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils to discuss issues of mutual interest affecting their respective councils. The members of the Bamenda City Consultative Forum should include:

- The SDO for Mezam Division or his/her representative (chairperson);
- The Mezam Divisional Delegate for Decentralisation and Local Development (secretary);
- The Government Delegate to the Bamenda City Council (member);
- The Mayors of the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils (members);
- The Secretary General of the Bamenda City Council (member);
- The Secretary Generals of the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda II Sub-divisional Councils (members);
- The Municipal Treasurer of the Bamenda City Council (member);
- The Municipal Treasurers of the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils (members); and
- A Representative of the Mezam Divisional Executive of the United Councils and Cities of Cameroon (member).

BACCOF meetings should be held once every four months (hence three annual meetings), with each of the local councils hosting the members. Also, the SDO for Mezam Division should invite other deconcentrated central government officials to be part of these meetings if such persons are able to provide valuable information that is necessary for the smooth functioning of the local councils in Bamenda City.

BACCOF can serve as a platform for the City Council and the Sub-divisional Councils to coordinate their development actions to ensure coherence as the actions of the City Council and those of the Sub-divisional Councils are not mutually exclusive. The SDO for Mezam Division could equally use BACCOF as a means of resolving any conflicts that could arise between the Bamenda City Council and the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils.

There is need to avoid the establishment of multiple institutions which might become cumbersome to manage or which could lead to the duplication of institutional functions. The creation of new intergovernmental relations institutions in Mezam Division by the SDO must be done in a coordinated manner taking into consideration the challenges (such as the management of markets with the Bamenda City Council) that need to be addressed by these forums.

b) Scheduling meetings of existing Intergovernmental Relations Forums and other informal meetings in Mezam Division

The SDO for Mezam Division should convene regular meetings of the already existing Intergovernmental Relations Forums in Mezam Division such as the Mezam Divisional Committee on Local Finance (CODEFIL). The SDO should equally ensure the proper functioning of the other committees chaired by his representative or any other officials such as the Technical Committee for the Recovery of Global Taxes and parking fees in Bamenda and the Sub-committee of the Bamenda Local Tax Technical Committee. The SDO for Mezam Division should ensure that the recommendations formulated by the members of these committees are effectively implemented within the stated deadlines.

Moreover, the SDO for Mezam Division should convene regular informal meetings bringing together local council executives and central government field officials in Mezam Division to have constructive discussions on the development priorities of local councils within the Division.

These informal meetings can be in the form of “Coffee Think and Talk sessions”. Such informal meeting sessions can contribute to fortify the working relationship between the central government and the local councils as the discussion environment is more relaxed and they all see each other as local development stakeholders.

c) Decision-making and communication between the SDO and local councils in Mezam Division

The SDO should avoid delays in approving the decisions of local councils, and should communicate such potential delays when they are unavoidable. The SDO should use his/her supervisory authority to properly communicate and train local council executives and councillors on the provisions of the legislation, rather than viewing themselves as superiors appointed to command and control these local council executives and the councillors. In a nutshell, the central government representatives should not take advantage of local council executives and councillors who are not knowledgeable of procedures but should rather provide orientations to these local council executives and councillors in their efforts to promote the development of their communities.

Also, the SDO should not abuse his authority through inducing local council executives to error by requiring them to make payments for activities which have already been budgeted for by the central government, for instance, the National Day celebrations. Such actions contribute to undermining the authority of the SDO and hampers the relationship between the SDO and the local council executives.

d) Providing orientation to the personnel of the local councils

The SDO for Mezam Division should organise frequent field visits to the local councils which should not be aimed at punishing local council officials or personnel for wrong-doing, but should act as assistance missions. The challenge raised was the lack of personnel at the Service for Local Development in the Office of the SDO for Mezam Division. This has been complemented with personnel at the Mezam Divisional Delegation for Decentralisation and Local Development when it goes operational. Therefore, officials from the Office of the SDO and the Divisional Delegation of Decentralisation and Local Development should visit local council authorities to

determine how they are working, and give them advice on how to carry out certain technical operations.

The central government representatives should provide orientations and when there appears to be any difficulties at the local councils, the central government representatives should cooperate with the local council authorities to ensure that the local councils are functioning normally and properly. The Governors and SDOs must become real agents of local development which entails that they be non-partisan and non-complacent in their decisions and actions.

7.3.2. The role of local councils in enhancing intergovernmental relations

Various analysis and commentaries on the decentralisation process in Cameroon most often paint a picture of local councils being victims of the actions of the central government and its representatives. The results of this study identified inadequate knowledge and cooperation from some local councils as an impediment to effective intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division. Therefore, the local councils in Mezam Division should carry out the following actions to enhance decentralisation and intergovernmental relations

a) Capacity-building training for local council officials

Capacity-building is one of the intergovernmental relations' instruments used to ensure that local councils effectively and efficiently manage their local development programmes (Radin, 2003:613 and 2012:647). The local councils in Mezam Division should organise capacity building workshops to train the Government Delegate, Mayors, Councillors and council staff regarding the legislation on decentralisation, the role of the supervisory authority and local councils, and the relationship between the local councils and the central government. As far as the City Council and the Sub-divisional Councils are concerned, their executives and staff should be trained to manage the different responsibilities transferred to each of the local councils, and the relationship that should exist between the City Council and the Sub-divisional Councils.

Along the same lines, the central government should introduce training programmes on decentralisation, intergovernmental relations and municipal council management in all the state universities. Although there is a Local Government Training Centre for staff of local councils, the training programmes in the state universities would complement the efforts of the aforementioned Centre by providing local councils with qualified and knowledgeable personnel.

b) Setting up of an inter-municipality platform for dialogue

The Bamenda City Council and the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils should jointly set-up an inter-municipality forum based on inspiration from the South African experience as per Sections 28 & 29 of the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act (No 13 of 2005) (RSA, 2005). Such a platform suits this context because the Bamenda City Council and the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils together make up the City of Bamenda, which is their common locality. This platform will therefore provide a framework for consultation through which these local councils can cooperate on common challenges affecting them; review issues of strategic importance affecting their common interests; share information and best practices; and train their staff. Regardless of their political affiliations, they have a responsibility to work for the development of the local populations in Bamenda.

Given that there seems to be some overlaps and misunderstandings in the responsibilities transferred to the City Councils and the Sub-divisional Councils by Law No 2004/018 of 22 July 2004 on the decentralisation rules applicable to local councils, such a forum should enable these local councils to coordinate their activities or resolve their conflicts without the intervention of the central government representative. However, the functioning of this platform for dialogue should respect the principles of horizontal intergovernmental relations (Kahn *et al.*, 2011:12) where the government delegate to the Bamenda City Council is not considered as superior to the mayors of the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils.

c) Joint planning and implementation of local development projects with field offices of central government ministries

Local councils should make it their responsibility to at all times cooperate with the Mezam Divisional field offices of the central government ministries in designing, implementing, and evaluating local development projects, regardless of their political affiliations. In case of any misunderstandings, the local councils should table the complaint(s) to the competent administrative authority at the Mezam Divisional level or the Northwest Regional level. The rationale is to avoid situations in which the local councils bypass the central government representatives and put complaints directly to the central government as in the long run this

could have a negative outcome on the relationship between the local councils and the central government representatives. However, if the local councils feel they have exhausted all available options at the Mezam Divisional level and the Northwest Regional level, and no concrete actions have been taken, then they can write directly to the central government. Joint action between the local councils and field offices of central government ministries in Mezam Division legitimises the importance of partnerships as a programmatic instrument (Radin, 2003:614 and 2014:646) and group communication as a behavioural instrument for enhancing intergovernmental relations (Radin, 2014:648).

Most of the local council executives in Mezam Division have their perception of what decentralisation should be. This has led them to be negative towards the central government representatives whom they are supposed to collaborate with. Local council executives in Mezam Division should seize various capacity-building opportunities organised by the central government or development partners to understand the uniqueness of the Cameroonian system of decentralisation, and how they (local council executives) can make the best use of decentralisation to promote development at local level.

d) Financing of Intergovernmental Relations Forums in Mezam Division and the Mezam Divisional branch of the United Councils and Cities of Cameroon (UCCC)

When drafting their annual budgets, the local councils should make necessary allocations (2% of their budgets) for the running of the different Intergovernmental Relations Forums to which they belong and avoid over dependence on central government financing. In this way, the central government representative or SDO and the local council executives in Mezam Division would take full responsibility for managing their local affairs with or without the financial support of the central government.

More so, the local councils in Mezam Division should provide the Divisional Executive of the UCCC with the necessary technical and financial resources needed to properly function. The local councils should equally ensure that a member of the Mezam Divisional Executive of the UCCC participates in all the meetings of the different Intergovernmental Relations Forums in Mezam Division. At the end of the year, the Mezam Divisional Branch of the UCCC should

present a report on the state of the relationship between the central government representatives and the local councils in Mezam Division.

The research findings to a greater extent shift the responsibility of facilitating intergovernmental relations at all levels almost entirely to the central government or its field representatives such as the Governors and the SDOs. Yet, the local councils equally need to shoulder this responsibility of enhancing intergovernmental relations amongst themselves and with the central government. This is because over 97% of local council executives in Cameroon are elected and represent the people (apart from the Government Delegates of City Councils who are appointed by decree of the President of Cameroon). The main objectives of the local councils in Cameroon is to promote development, democracy, and good governance at local level. The weight of these objectives makes it imperative for these local councils to regularly consult and learn from their peers which entails that the mayors and government delegates must be non-partisan, and regard each other as equals. If the local council executives are unable to meaningfully engage with each other, then it is possible that any attempts by the central government or its representatives at the lower levels to promote intergovernmental relations, would encounter hindrances and negativity from some of the local councils.

7.4. CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to examine the extent to which the implementation of decentralisation in Cameroon is influencing intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division of the Northwest Region. The conclusions of this study will focus on discussing key issues with regards to the objectives of the study and formulating proposals for future research.

7.4.1. Discussions on the objectives of the study

This study had seven specific objectives, with chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 of this thesis designed to provide answers to the demands of each of the set objectives. The first objective of the study was to establish the relationship between decentralisation and intergovernmental relations through various theories. The literature review indicates that a direct relationship can be established between decentralisation and intergovernmental relations. This is because decentralisation creates lower levels of government which must interact with each other and the central government. The focus of the second objective was to describe the international context

of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations. France and South Africa, the selected countries used to explain this international context, each have unique practices of decentralisation and intergovernmental relations through policies and institutions at the different levels or spheres of government.

The third objective of the study was to identify the laws and institutions governing decentralisation and intergovernmental relations in Cameroon. A careful reading of the legislation indicates that Cameroon concentrates more on decentralisation with few aspects of the legislation dealing with intergovernmental relations. The fourth objective was to explore the existing formal and informal institutions and processes of intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division. The research findings reveal the existence of three formal intergovernmental relations institutions which deal specifically with financial issues, and various processes such as dialogue and the interventions of central government representatives in Mezam Division. The fifth objective was to critically analyse the intergovernmental relations initiatives in Mezam Division. Some of the main problems identified include irregular meetings of the existing intergovernmental relations institutions, the limited role of central government representatives in influencing key local decisions that have been approved at central government level, and lack of collaboration between the Bamenda City Council and the Bamenda I, Bamenda II, and Bamenda III Sub-divisional Councils. The focus of the sixth objective was to formulate recommendations on improving intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division and Cameroon as a whole. Some of these recommendations include drafting and adopting a policy on intergovernmental relations in Cameroon, creation of the Mezam Local Development Forum (MELODEF) and the Bamenda City Consultative Forum (BACCOF) to promote local intergovernmental relationships in Mezam Division, and organising capacity building and training workshops for local council executives in Mezam Division.

7.4.2. Proposals for future research

The study has some limitations which could alter the generalisability of the outcomes of the research in Cameroon. Firstly, the study focused on one Division (Mezam Division) out of 58 such Divisions in Cameroon. Thus one cannot conclude that the experiences of intergovernmental relations in Mezam Division are similar to those in the other 57 Divisions. Although all the Divisions are subject to similar rules and regulations, the officials heading

institutions in these Divisions may have different working mechanisms which can have either a positive or negative impact on intergovernmental relations. Secondly, scanty information exists on the newly created Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development. The field offices of the Ministry are not yet up and running. Thus, it cannot be concluded with certainty that the creation of this ministry could further complicate intergovernmental relations at local level. It would be preferable to allow these institutions to be established and be fully operational at all levels before determining if this new institution is facilitating or impeding intergovernmental relations.

Regarding suggestions for future research, some areas worth investigating further include the following:

- The participation of non-state actors such as traditional and religious authorities, private sector and civil society actors in intergovernmental relations in Cameroon
- Inter-municipality relations between city councils and sub-divisional councils in Cameroon.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ahmad, M. S. & Talib, N. A. 2011. Decentralization and Participatory Rural Development: A Literature Review. *Contemporary Economics*. 5 (4), 58-67.
- Ahwoi, K. 2010. *Local Government and Decentralization in Ghana*. Accra: Unimax Macmillan Ltd.
- Alhojailan, M. I. 2012. Thematic Analysis: A Critical Review of its Process and Evaluation. *West East Journal of Social Sciences*. 1 (1), 39-47.
- Arsenault, L. 2005. *Les grandes Etapes de la Decentralisation en France*. Paris: Ministère des Affaires Municipales et des Régions.
- Arthur, S. N. 2012. *The Unfinished Business of Decentralization: Political Accountability of Local Government in Ghana. A case study of the Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem (KEEA) Municipality*. Doctoral thesis. Bonn: University of Bonn.
- Babbie, E. & Mouton, J. 2017. *The Practice of Social Research*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd.
- Blair, H. 2000. Participation and Accountability at the Periphery: Democratic Local Governance in Six Countries. *World Development*. 28 (1), 21-39.
- Boraine, A., Levy, J. & Asmal, K. 1995. *The Healing of a Nation?* Cape Town: Justice in Transition.
- Cheema G. S. 2005. *Building Democratic Institutions: Governance Reform in Developing Countries*. Worcester: Kumarian Press Inc.
- Cheema, G. S. & Rondinelli, D. A (eds). 2007. *Decentralising Governance: Emerging Concepts and Practices*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Cheka, C. 2007. The State of the Process of Decentralisation in Cameroon. *Africa Development*. Vol. XXXII, No. 2, 181-196
- Chief of Service for Local Development (Office of SDO Mezam Division). 2018. Interview conducted by Tangang Andrew (student on research). Bamenda: Field Records.
- Cohen, J. M. & Peterson, S. B. 1998. Administrative Decentralisation: A New Framework for Improved Governance, Accountability, and Performance. *Development Discussion Paper, No. 582*. Massachusetts: Harvard Institute for International Development (HIID).
- Creswell, J. W. 2012. *Educational Research: Planning, Conduction, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. Fourth Edition. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

- Crook, R. 2003. Decentralisation and Poverty Reduction in Africa: The Politics of Local-Central Relations. *Public Administration and Development*. 23, 77-88.
- De Villiers, B (ed). 1994. *Evaluating Federal Systems*. Cape Town: Juta & Co Ltd.
- Deputy Mayor of Bamenda III Sub-divisional Council. 2018. Interview conducted by Tangang Andrew (student on research). Bamenda: Field Records.
- Deputy Mayor of Tubah Council. 2018. Interview conducted by Tangang Andrew (student on research). Bamenda: Field Records.
- Dickovick, J. T. & Wunsch, J. S (eds). 2014. *Decentralisation in Africa: The Paradox of State Strength*. Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.
- Edoun, E. I. 2015. The Impact of Decentralisation On Public Enterprises in Africa. *The Business and Management Review*. 6 (4), 95-101.
- European Commission. 2004. *Handbook on Promoting Good Governance in EC Development and Cooperation*, Brussels: European Commission.
- European Commission. 2007. *Supporting Decentralization and Local Governance in Third Countries*. Brussels: European Commission.
- FEICOM. 2012. *Cameroon at Africities Dakar 2012*. Yaoundé: FEICOM.
- Finance Controller (Bamenda City Council). 2018. Interview conducted by Tangang Andrew (student on research). Bamenda: Field Records.
- First Assistant SDO (Mezam Division). 2018. Interview conducted by Tangang Andrew (student on research). Bamenda: Field Records.
- Fox, W. & Meyer, I. 1995. *Public Administration Dictionary*. Cape Town: Juta & Co Ltd.
- French Republic (FR), 2016. Law no 2016-1888 of 28 December 2016 on the Modernisation, Development and Protection of Territories located in mountainous areas. Paris: Legifrance.
- French Republic (FR). 1982. Law no 82-213 of 2 March 1982 on the Rights and Freedoms of Communes, Departments and Regions. Paris: Legifrance.
- French Republic (FR). 1983a. Law no 83-8 of 7 January 1983 on the Distribution of Authority between the Communes, Departments, the Regions, and the Central government. Paris: Legifrance.
- French Republic (FR). 1983b. Law no 83-663 of 22 July 1983 to amend law no 83-8 of 7 January 1983 on the Distribution of Authority between the Communes, Departments, the Regions, and the Central government. Paris: Legifrance.

- French Republic (FR). 1992. Law no 92-12 of 6 February 1992 on the Territorial Administration of France (ATR Law). Paris: Legifrance.
- French Republic (FR). 1995. Law no 95-115 of 4 February 1995 on the Orientation of Territorial Planning and Development (Pasqua Law). Paris: Legifrance.
- French Republic (FR). 1996. Law no 96-142 of 21 February 1996 on the Legislative Content of the General Code for Territorial Collectivities. Paris: Legifrance.
- French Republic (FR). 1999a. Law no 99-533 of 25 June 1999 on the Orientation for Territorial Planning and Sustainable Development (Voynet Law). Paris: Legifrance.
- French Republic (FR). 1999b. Law no 99-586 of 12 July 1999 relating to the Enhancement and Simplification of Intercommunal Cooperation (Chevenement Law). Paris: Legifrance.
- French Republic (FR). 2003a. Constitutional law no 2003-276 of 28 March 2003 relative to the Decentralised Organisation of the French Republic. Paris: Legifrance.
- French Republic (FR). 2003b. Law no 2003-705 of 1 August 2003 relative to Local Referenda. Paris: Legifrance.
- French Republic (FR). 2004a. Law no 2004-758 of 29 July 2004 relative to the Financial Autonomy of Territorial Collectivities. Paris: Legifrance.
- French Republic (FR). 2004b. Law no 2004-809 of 13 August 2004 relative to the Rights and Obligations of Territorial Collectivities. Paris: Legifrance.
- French Republic (FR). 2004c. Decree no 2004 – 374 of 29 April 2004 relative to the Authority of Prefects, and the Organisation and Actions of Central government Services in the Regions and Departments. Paris: Legifrance.
- French Republic (FR). 2010. Decree no 2010 – 146 of 16 February 2010 to modify Decree no 2004 – 374 of 29 April 2004 relative to the Authority of Prefects, and the Organisation and Actions of Central government Services in the Regions and Departments. Paris: Legifrance.
- French Republic (FR). 2013. Law no 2013-403 of 17 May 2013 on the Election of Departmental Councillors, Municipal Councillors, and Community Councillors, and Modifying the Electoral Calendar. Paris: Legifrance.
- French Republic (FR). 2014. Law no 2014-58 of 27 January 2014 on the Modernisation of Territorial Public Action and the Creation of Metropoles. Paris: Legifrance.
- French Republic (FR). 2015a. Law no 2015-29 of 16 January 2015 relative to the Specialisation of Regions. Paris: Legifrance.

- French Republic (FR). 2015b. Law no 2015-991 of 7 August 2015 on the New Territorial Organisation of the French Republic. Paris: Legifrance.
- French Republic (FR). 2017. Circulaire relative à l'accord de méthode Etat – collectivités territoriales élaboré dans le cadre de la conférence nationale des territoires. Paris: Hôtel Matignon.
- French Republic (FR). 2019a. Organigramme du Ministère de la Cohésion des territoires et des Relations avec les collectivités territoriales (MCTRCT). Paris: MCTRCT.
- French Republic (FR). 2019b. Code général des Collectivités Territoriales. Paris: Legifrance.
- Ghosh, B. N. 1992. *Scientific Method and Social Research*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd.
- Hattingh, J. J. 1998. *Governmental Relations – a South African Perspective*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Holton, R. J. 2001. Talcott Parsons: Conservative Apologists or Irreplaceable Icon? In *Handbook of Social Theory*. Smart, B. & Ritzer, G (ed). London: SAGE.
- Kahn, S., Madue, S. M. & Kalema, R. 2011. *Intergovernmental Relations in South Africa*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Kofele-Kale, N. 2011. Local governance under Cameroon's Decentralisation Regime: Is it all Sound and Fury Signifying Nothing? *Commonwealth Law Bulletin*, 37 (3).
- Kuate, J. P. 2014. *Les Collectivités Territoriales Décentralisées au Cameroun: Recueil de Textes Commentés, Septième édition*. Yaoundé: SOPECAM.
- Litvack, J., Ahmad, J. & Bird, R. 1998. *Rethinking Decentralization in Developing Countries*. Washington D.C: World Bank.
- Malan, L. 2005. Intergovernmental Relations and Co-operative Government in South Africa: The Ten-year Review. *Politeia*. 24 (2), 226-243.
- Manor, J. 1999. *The Political Economy of Democratic Decentralization*. Washington DC: World Bank.
- Masuri, G. & Rao, V. 2016. Can Participation be Induced? Some Evidences from Developing Countries. *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*. 16 (2), 284-304.
- Maud, R. & Wood, B. 1974. *English Local Government Reformed*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Mayor of Bafut Council. 2018. Interview conducted by Tangang Andrew (student on research). Bamenda: Field Records.

- Mayor of Bali Council. 2018. Interview conducted by Tangang Andrew (student on research). Bamenda: Field Records.
- Mayor of Bamenda I Sub-divisional Council. 2018. Interview conducted by Tangang Andrew (student on research). Bamenda: Field Records.
- Mayor of Bamenda II Sub-divisional Council. 2018. Interview conducted by Tangang Andrew (student on research). Bamenda: Field Records.
- Mback, C. N. 2007. "One Century of Municipalization in Cameroon: The Miseries of Urban Democracy". In *Decentralisation and the Politics of Urban Development in West Africa*. Eyoh, D, & Stren, R (eds). Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.
- Mbuagbo, O. T. 2012. Cameroon: Flawed Decentralization & Politics of Identity in the Urban Space. *Global Journal of Human, Social Science, Sociology, Economics and Political Science*. 12 (11), 201-231.
- National Institute of Statistics (NIS). 2017. *Geo-database of Cameroon*. Yaoundé: NIS.
- Olowu, D. 1989. Local Institutes and Development: The African Experience. *Canadian Journal of African Studies/Revue Canadienne des Etudes Africaines*. 23 (2), 201-231.
- Olowu, D. 2003. Local Institutional and Political Structures and Processes: Recent Experience in Africa. *Public Administration and Development*, 23, 41-52.
- Owona, J. 2012. *Decentralisation in Cameroon*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Oyono, P. R. 2004. One Step Forward, Two steps Back? Paradoxes of Natural Resources Management Decentralisation in Cameroon. *Journal of Modern African Studies*. 42 (1), 91-111.
- Parsons, T. 1961. *Theories of Society: Foundations of Modern Sociological Theory*. New York: Free Press of Glencoe.
- Patricia, M. M. S. & Bekono, E. R. 2012. *Gouvernance des Collectivités Territoriales Décentralisées (CTD) Et Gestion Des Compétences Transférées*. Yaoundé: Institut Supérieur de Management Public (ISMP).
- Phago, K. 2013. Good Governance and Effective Public Administration in Africa. *Africa Insight* 43 (1), 693-696.
- Phillimore, J. 2013. Understanding Intergovernmental Relations: Key Features and Trends. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*. 72 (3), 228-238.
- PNDP. 2013. *Les Echos du PNDP*. No 001 Juillet – Aout – Septembre. Yaoundé: PNDP.

- Prud'homme, R. 2003. Fiscal Decentralisation in Africa: A Framework for Considering Reform. *Public Administration and Development*, 23(1), 17-27.
- Radin, B. A. 2003. "The Instruments of Intergovernmental Management". In *Handbook of Public Administration*. Peters, B. G. & Pierre, J (eds). London: Sage Publications.
- Radin, B. A. 2014. "The Instruments of Intergovernmental Management". In *The SAGE Handbook Of Public Administration*. Peters, B.G. & Pierre, J (eds). Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Republic of Cameroon (RC). 1974. Law No74/23 of 5th December 1974 to Organise Local Councils in Cameroon. Yaoundé: National Assembly.
- Republic of Cameroon (RC). 1977a. Presidential Decree No 77/246 of 15 July 1977 on the Organization of Chieftaincies in Cameroon. Yaoundé: Presidency of the Republic.
- Republic of Cameroon (RC). 1977b. Presidential Decree No 77/494 of 7 December 1977 to Create the Local Government Training Center (CEFAM). Yaoundé: Presidency of the Republic.
- Republic of Cameroon (RC). 1996. Law No. 96/06 of 18 January 1996 to Amend the Constitution of 2 June 1972. Yaoundé: National Assembly.
- Republic of Cameroon (RC). 2000. Presidential Decree No 2000/365 of 11 December 2000 to Reorganise the Special Council Support Fund for Mutual Assistance (FEICOM). Yaoundé: Presidency of the Republic.
- Republic of Cameroon (RC). 2004a. Law No. 2004/017 of 22 July 2004 on the Orientation of Decentralisation. Yaoundé: National Assembly.
- Republic of Cameroon (RC). 2004b. Law No. 2004/018 of 22 July 2004 to lay down Rules Applicable to Councils, Yaoundé: National Assembly. Yaoundé: National Assembly.
- Republic of Cameroon (RC). 2004c. Law No. 2004/019 of 22 July 2004 to lay down Decentralisation Rules Applicable to Regions. Yaoundé: National Assembly.
- Republic of Cameroon (RC). 2005. Presidential Decree No. 2005/104 of 13 April 2005 to Organise the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation. Yaoundé: Presidency of the Republic.
- Republic of Cameroon (RC). 2006a. Presidential Decree no 2006/182 of 31 May 2006 to Reorganise the Special Council Support Fund for Mutual Assistance (FEICOM). Yaoundé: Presidency of the Republic.
- Republic of Cameroon (RC). 2006b. Prime Ministerial Order no. 130 of 6 October 2006 to set-up the Concertation Committee for the Implementation of Decentralisation. Yaoundé: Prime Minister's Office.

- Republic of Cameroon (RC). 2008a. Presidential Decree No. 2008/013 of 17 January 2008 on the Organization and Functioning of the National Decentralisation Council. Yaoundé: Presidency of the Republic.
- Republic of Cameroon (RC). 2008b. Presidential Decree No. 2008/014 of 17 January 2008 on the Organization and Functioning of the Local Services Inter-Ministerial Committee. Yaoundé: Presidency of the Republic.
- Republic of Cameroon (RC). 2008c. Presidential Decree No 2008/376 of 12 November 2008 on the Administrative Organisation of Cameroon. Yaoundé: Presidency of the Republic.
- Republic of Cameroon (RC). 2008d. Presidential Decree No. 2008/377 of 12 November 2008 on the Organisation and Functioning of the Services of Heads of Administrative Units in Cameroon. Yaoundé: Presidency of the Republic.
- Republic of Cameroon (RC). 2009a. Law no. 2009/011 of 10 July 2009 on the Financial Regime of Regional and Local Councils. Yaoundé: National Assembly.
- Republic of Cameroon (RC). 2009b. Law No. 2009/019 of 15th December 2009 on the Local Fiscal System in Cameroon. Yaoundé: National Assembly.
- Republic of Cameroon (RC). 2010. Prime Ministerial Decrees of 26th February 2010 to lay down Conditions for the Exercise of Authority transferred by Central government to Local Councils. Yaoundé: Prime Minister's Office.
- Republic of Cameroon (RC). 2011a. Prime Ministerial Decree no 2011/1732 of 18 July 2011 to Define the Organisation and Functioning of the National Committee on Local Finance (CONAFIL). Yaoundé: Prime Minister's Office.
- Republic of Cameroon (RC). 2011b. Prefectural Order No 407/Po/E29/712/S1 of 20th October 2011 to Create the Sub-Committee of the Bamenda Local Tax Technical Committee. Bamenda: Mezam Divisional Office.
- Republic of Cameroon (RC). 2011c. Prefectural Order No 409/PO/E29/712/S1 of 26th October 2011 to Set-up the Technical Committee for the Recovery of Global Taxes and Parking Fees in Bamenda. Bamenda: Mezam Divisional Office.
- Republic of Cameroon (RC). 2012. Geographical location of Mezam Division in the Northwest Region. Bamenda: Northwest Governor's Office.
- Republic of Cameroon (RC). 2014. Prefectural Order No 481/PO/E29/LDS of 7th July 2014 Appointing members of the Mezam Divisional Committee for Local Finances. Bamenda: Mezam Divisional Office.
- Republic of Cameroon (RC). 2018a. Presidential Decree no 2018/190 of 2 March 2018 to Reorganise the Government of Cameroon. Yaoundé: Presidency of the Republic.

- Republic of Cameroon (RC). 2018b. Presidential Decree no 2018/449 of 1 August 2018 on the Organisation of the Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development. Yaoundé: Presidency of the Republic.
- Republic of South Africa (RSA). 1996. The Constitution of Republic of South Africa. Cape Town: Government Printer.
- Republic of South Africa (RSA). 1997a. Organised Local Government Act, 1997 (No 52 of 1997). Cape Town: Government Printer.
- Republic of South Africa (RSA). 1997b. Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations Act, 1997 (No 97 of 1997). Cape Town: Government Printer.
- Republic of South Africa (RSA). 1998. Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (No 117 of 1998). Cape Town: Government Printer.
- Republic of South Africa (RSA). 2000. Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (No 32 of 2000). Cape Town: Government Printer.
- Republic of South Africa (RSA). 2003. Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (No 56 of 2003). Cape Town: Government Printer.
- Republic of South Africa (RSA). 2005. Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005 (No 13 of 2005). Cape Town: Government Printer.
- Ribot, J. 2002. African Decentralization: Local Actors, Powers and Accountability. *United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) Programme on Democracy, Governance and Human Rights Paper No 8*. Geneva: UNRISD.
- Rocheron, J. L., Houldsworth, J., Atger, P. M., El Bakir, A. & Longueville, E. 2016. *The French Experience of Decentralisation*. Paris: Administrateurs Territoriaux.
- South African Local Government Association (SALGA), 2016. *Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022*. Pretoria: SALGA.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. 2009. *Research Methods for Business Students, Fifth Edition*. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.
- Schmidt, V. 1990. *Decentralising France: The Political and Administrative History of Decentralisation*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Schneider, A. 2003. Decentralisation: Conceptualisation and Measurement. *Studies in Comparative International Development*. 38 (3).
- Smith, A. 2003. “Multi-level Governance: What It Is and How It Can Be Studied”. In *Handbook of Public Administration*, Peters, B. G. & Pierre, J (eds). London: Sage Publications.

- Smith, G (ed). 1995. *Federalism: The Multi-ethnic Challenge*. New York: Longman Publishing Group Ltd.
- Smoke, P. 2003. Decentralisation in Africa: Goals, Dimensions, Myths and Challenges. *Public Administration and Development*, 23, 7-16.
- Tani, B. V., Abangma, J. A. & Bruno, A. M. 2012. The Dilemmas of Implementing Decentralisation Policies in a Centralised State Construct: Evidences from Some Municipalities in the Northwest Region of Cameroon. *African Journal of Social Sciences*. 3 (2).
- Thomas, A. 2010. *An Introduction to African Politics*. Third Edition. New York: Routledge.
- Thornhill, C., Malan, L. P., Odendaal, M. J., Mathebula, F. M. L., Van Dijk, H. G. & Mello, D. 2002. *An Overview of Intergovernmental Relations in Africa: Southern African Development Community (SADC)*. Pretoria: SAFPUM Publishers.
- Tordoff, W. 1994. Decentralisation: Comparative Experiences in Commonwealth Africa. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*. 32 (4), 555-580.
- United Councils and Cities of Cameroon (UCCC). 2005. *Constitution*. Yaoundé: UCCC.
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). 2005. *Decentralized Governance for Democracy, Peace, Development and Effective Service Delivery*. New York: United Nations.
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). 1997. *Decentralized Governance Programme: Strengthening Capacity for People-Centered Development*. New York: Management Development and Governance Division, Bureau for Development Policy (UNDP).
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). 1998. *Factors to Consider in Designing Decentralised Governance Policies and Programmes to Achieve Sustainable People-Centered Development*. New York: Management Development and Governance Division (UNDP).
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UNHABITAT). 2002. *Local Democracy and Decentralization in East and Southern Africa: Experiences from Uganda, Kenya, Botswana, Tanzania and Ethiopia*. Nairobi: United Nations.
- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). 1990. *African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation (Arusha 1990)*. Addis Ababa: UNECA.
- Uys, F. M. 2012. A Critical Perspective on Decentralisation Initiatives in South Africa: A Co-operative Perspective. *IASIA Bali Conference Paper*.

- Van der Waldd, G., Du Toit, D. & Stroh, E. 1997. *Managing for Excellence in The Public Sector*. Cape Town: Juta & Co Ltd.
- Vlahos, N. 2013. The Politics of Subnational Decentralisation in France, Brazil, and Italy. *Journal of Public Deliberation*. 9 (2), 1-29.
- World Bank. 1999. *Entering the 21st Century – World Development Report 1999/2000*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- World Bank. 2012. *Cameroon, The Path to Fiscal Decentralisation: Opportunities and Challenges*. Washington DC: The World Bank.
- Wright, D. 1978. *Understanding Intergovernmental Relations*. California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc.
- Wunsch, J. S. & Olowu, D (eds). 1990. *The Failure of the Centralised State: Institutions and Self-Governance in Africa*. Colorado: Westview Press.

ANNEXURES

ANNEX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Interview guide for selected central government officials

At the central government level and Mezam Divisional level

- 1) What are the existing forums for dialogue between central government and local government officials in Mezam? Are these forums formal or informal? What is the contribution of these forums to building the relationship between the central government and the local governments?
- 2) What is the purpose of central government supervision of local councils? Do you think local councils understand the purpose for central government supervision? How effective is central government supervision over local councils in Mezam?
- 3) How do you coordinate the activities of central government field officers and local governments in Mezam where there are overlaps (both formal and informal mechanisms)? How effective are these coordination mechanisms?
- 4) How do you resolve conflicts between central government field officers and the local governments when they arise (both formal and informal mechanisms)? How effective have these mechanisms been?
- 5) How do you resolve conflicts that may sometimes arise between the city council and the sub-divisional councils (formal and informal mechanisms)? How effective have these mechanisms been?
- 6) How do you ensure the accountability of local governments in Mezam to the central government? Can local governments hold the central government accountable? If yes, how? How effective are these accountability mechanisms?
- 7) In your opinion, how can the relationship between the central government and the local governments in Mezam be improved upon?

ANNEX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LOCAL COUNCIL OFFICIALS IN MEZAM DIVISION

Interview guide for local council officials

- 1) What are the existing forums for dialogue between central government and local government officials in Mezam? Are these forums formal or informal? What is the contribution of these forums to building the relationship between the central government and the local governments?
- 2) What do you think is the purpose of central government supervision of local councils? How effective is central government supervision over local councils in Mezam? Do you think central government supervision should be done differently?
- 3) How do you coordinate your council activities with those of central government field officers in Mezam where there are overlaps (both formal and informal mechanisms)? How effective are these coordination mechanisms? What is the role of the supervisory authority?
- 4) How do you resolve conflicts between the council and central government field officers when they arise (both formal and informal mechanisms)? How effective have these mechanisms been? What is the role of the supervisory authority?
- 5) How do you resolve conflicts that may sometimes arise between the city council and the sub-divisional councils (formal and informal mechanisms)? How effective have these mechanisms been? What is the role of the supervisory authority?
- 6) As a local governments, what are the mechanisms in place to ensure you are accountable to the central government? Can local governments hold the central government accountable? If yes, how? How effective are these accountability mechanisms?
- 7) In your opinion, how can the relationship between the central government and the local governments in Mezam be improved upon?

ANNEX 3: CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS ON DECENTRALISATION IN CAMEROON

PART X

Regional and Local Authorities

Article 55

(1) Regional and local authorities of the Republic shall comprise Regions and Councils.

Any other such authority shall be created by law.

(2) Regional and local authorities shall be public law corporate bodies. They shall have administrative and financial autonomy in the management of regional and local interests. They shall be freely administered by councils elected under conditions laid down by law.

The duty of the councils of regional and local authorities shall be to promote the economic, social, health, educational, cultural and sports development of the said authorities.

(3) The State shall exercise supervisory powers over regional and local authorities, under conditions laid down by law.

(4) The State shall ensure the harmonious development of all the regional and local authorities on the basis of national solidarity, regional potentials and inter-regional balance.

(5) The organization, functioning and financial regulations of regional and local authorities shall be defined by law.

(6) The rules and regulations governing councils shall be defined by law.

Article 56

(1) The State shall transfer to Regions, under conditions laid down by law, jurisdiction in areas necessary for their economic, social, health, educational, cultural and sports development.

(2) The law shall define:

- the sharing of powers between the State and Regions in the areas of competence so transferred.

(3) The resources of the Regions.

(4) The land and property of each region.

Article 57

(1) The organs of the Region shall be the Regional Council and the President of the Regional Council. The Regional Council and the President of the Regional Council shall function within the framework of powers transferred to the Region by the State.

(2) The Regional Council shall be the deliberative organ of the Region. Regional Councillors whose term of office shall be 5 (five) years shall comprise:

- Divisional delegates elected by indirect universal suffrage;
- Representatives of traditional rulers elected by their peers.

The Regional Council shall reflect the various sociological components of the Region.

The system of election, number, proportion by category, rules governing ineligibility, incompatibilities and emoluments of Regional Councillors shall be laid down by law.

(3) The Regional Council shall be headed by an indigene of the Region elected from among its members for the life of the Council.

The President of the Regional Council shall be the executive organ of the Region. In this capacity, he shall be the interlocutor of the State representative. He shall be assisted by a Regional Bureau elected at the same time as himself from among the members of the Council. The Regional Bureau shall reflect the sociological components of the Region.

(4) Members of Parliament of the Region shall sit in the Regional Council in an advisory capacity.

Article 58

(1) A delegate, appointed by the President of the Republic shall represent the State in the Region. In this capacity, he shall be responsible for national interests, administrative control, ensuring compliance with laws and regulations, as well as maintaining law and order. He shall, under the authority of the Government, supervise and co-ordinate civil State services in the Region.

(2) He shall exercise the supervisory authority of the State over the Region.

Article 59

(1) The Regional Council may be suspended by the President of the Republic where such organ:

- carries out activities contrary to the constitution;
- undermines the security of the State or public law and order;
- endangers the State's territorial integrity.

The other cases of suspension shall be laid down by law.

(2) The Regional Council may be dissolved by the President of the Republic, after consultation with the Constitutional Council in all the cases provided for under paragraph (1) above.

The other cases of dissolution shall be laid down by law.

(3) The automatic replacement of the said organ by the State in the cases provided for under paragraphs (1) and (2) above shall be decided by the President of the Republic.

(4) The conditions of implementation of this article shall be determined by law.

Article 60

(1) The President and the Bureau of the Regional Council may be suspended by the President of the Republic where such organs:

- carry out activities contrary to the Constitution;
- undermine the security of the State or public law and order;
- endanger the State's territorial integrity.

The other cases of suspension shall be laid down by law.

(2) The President and the Bureau of the Regional Council may be dismissed by the President of the Republic, after consultation with the Constitutional Council in all the cases provided for under paragraph (1) above.

The other cases of dismissal shall be laid down by law.

(3) The automatic replacement of the said organ by the State in the cases provided for under paragraphs (1) and (2) above shall be decided by the President of the Republic.

(4) The conditions of implementation of this article shall be determined by law.

Article 61

(1) The following provinces shall become Regions:

- Adamaoua;
- Centre;
- East;
- Far North;
- Littoral;
- North.
- North-West;
- West;
- South;
- South-West.

(2) The President of the Republic may, as and when necessary:

- a) Change the names and modify the geographical boundaries of the Regions listed in paragraph (1) above;
- b) Create other Regions. In this case, he shall give them names and fix their geographical boundaries.

Article 62

- (1) The aforementioned rules and regulations shall apply to all regions.
- (2) Without prejudice to the provisions of this Part, the law may take into consideration the specificities of certain Regions with regard to their organization and functioning.