Portland State University

PDXScholar

6-20-2024

Culture or Power: The Eruption of the Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon

Danielle Tagakou Talla
Portland State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/open_access_etds

Part of the Peace and Conflict Studies Commons

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation
Talla, Danielle Tagakou, "Culture or Power: The Eruption of the Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon" (2024). *Dissertations and Theses.* Paper 6636.
https://doi.org/10.15760/etd.3768

Culture or Power: The Eruption of the Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon

by

Danielle Tagakou Talla

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
Conflict Resolution

Thesis Committee
Vandy Kanyako, Chair
Harry Anastasiou
Barbara Tint
Safia Farole

Portland State University
2024

Abstract

  Located in Central West Africa, Cameroon has been the stage of a protracted conflict since 2016. The conflict called the "Anglophone crisis" is rooted in Cameroon colonial history. This is reflected in the composition of its population with a large majority of Francophones and only 20 percent of Anglophones. The subsequent thesis aims to examine the crisis between 2016 and 2022 and understand the shift in focus that happened in the early years of the conflict. Using a qualitative methodology, journal articles, books and recorded interviews will provide substantial sources to decipher the change from cultural focus to one of power dynamics. In this piece, the historical background of Cameroon will set the foundation to make sense of the eruption of the crisis. In addition, a description of the inception of the crisis coupled with an analysis of conflict resolution concepts such as ethnocentrism will provide an understanding to the shift in focus. Lastly, the thesis will summarize findings, look at possible outcomes to the crisis and considerations for additional research.

Dedication

To papa who has inspired me to be an instrument of peace
To maman who has given me the love, support, and courage to live
To my sisters, all my family, and friends who have been my backbone
I am because you are

Table of Contents

Chapter I: Introduction

As a Francophone growing up in a bilingual country where French and English are the national languages, I always felt a sense of pride. Proud of speaking the dominant language. Proud of living on the dominant side of the country. Proud of being born, me. That pride slowly grew into a sense of superiority. I started seeing the others- minority- as unimportant, nonexistent. At a young age, I realized that French was more powerful than English in Cameroon and because I spoke French, I held more power than someone who didn't. I saw English as an afterthought, as a fish swimming in French waters.

Cameroon is where I grew up. It is a country located in the center of Africa that inherited a cultural and socio-political bilingualism from its double colonization by France and England. The two colonizing countries had different political structures, educational systems and social norms that they passed on the part of Cameroon they possessed. For instance, French rule was more centralized and focused on the principle of assimilation to subdue or erase the native's culture (Ngoh, 1979) whereas British rule divided their administration into two - colonial and native administration which gave some power to the natives (Njeuma, 1989).

Since its independence in 1960 and its reunification in 1961, the two French-speaking and English-speaking communities enjoyed an uneasy peace held with an iron fist by a centralized government (mostly Francophone) that allowed no opposition and no movement to defend human rights. There is a power asymmetry at play here with

the Francophones as the majority (about 80 percent of the population) and the Anglophones the minority. As positive as the 1961 reunification sounds, it brought various changes in both parties and was the starting point of the dormant crisis that erupted recently. Gradually, the excesses of language discrimination and marginalization will arouse discontent and generate demands from lawyers' and teachers' unions in the two English-speaking provinces, North West and South West provinces.

At the end of 2016, these movements, intended to be peaceful, were violently reprimanded by the national security forces. The language issue quickly evolved into a violent conflict with the overflowing glass of decades of marginalization. At the dawn of 2017, this crisis generated an armed conflict between the government of Cameroon and separatist groups in the North-West and South-West of the country (Anglophones). This unfortunate development became known as the Anglophone crisis.

As someone who spent 17 years of her life in Cameroon, I felt a disconnect when this crisis erupted. I never encountered someone who identified as an Anglophone in Cameroon so how could this crisis be? Living in Cameroon, I always felt a sense of peace within the population and never saw or heard about the marginalization of the English-speaking population. I was cocooned or maybe brainwashed to enjoy my privileged life as a French-speaking girl living in the Capital, Yaounde. In some ways, I am ashamed I didn't know my native country as a whole. Writing this thesis is an opportunity for me not only to reconnect with Cameroon but also to understand the roots of the crisis, its evolution and to start drawing a path to peace.

As an immigrant living in the U.S. where English is the main language, I have experienced English and French as dominant cultures. Moving to the U.S. and navigating

a system designed for the dominant culture was a challenge to say the least. I had to learn how to not only speak English but also speak it in a way I was understood, even if it meant erasing my 'accent'. The dominant English culture by design swallows other small ones. Is this how Anglophones feel in Cameroon? Are they losing their identity and culture because of the spreading dominant Francophone culture? Those are questions that floated in my mind when I chose to focus my research on the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon.

In my native country, I was part of the dominant culture and felt I possessed power over the Anglophones minority. Here, in the U.S, I speak the dominant language but I am part of a minority group on different levels: race, language, social class. It is an interesting dynamic that gives me different critical lenses crucial for the analysis of this topic. Through this paper, I have the opportunity to look at my native country from different angles: as an outsider who has seen it from the inside and as someone who's being part of a dominant culture but also part of the minority. Furthermore, as a graduate student of the conflict resolution program, I have gained important skills needed to examine the Anglophone crisis more critically with support from various theories and concepts.

One of theories that could apply to this crisis is ethnocentrism which is a concept in which we see our culture as the norm and evaluate other cultures according to preconceptions. Bennett defines an ethnocentric as one who thinks the world revolves around their culture and only their culture (Bennett, 1993). To be more specific, an ethnocentric is one that uses their own set of standards and customs to judge all people (Bennett, 1998). Per the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity, there are three

ethnocentric stages: denial, defense, and minimization (Bennett, 1993). Looking at these concepts will help the cultural and power dynamics analysis of the Anglophone crisis.

Another theory relevant to our topic is the concept of permanent inequality from Jean Baker Miller. It is when "some people or groups of people are defined as unequal by means of what sociologists call ascription; that is, your birth defines you" (Miller, 2007, p.110). Criteria ranges from race, sex to nationality and religion. In these types of relationships, the inferior is boxed as "defective". "The actions and words of the dominant group tend to be destructive of the subordinates" (Miller, 2007, p.110). According to Miller, dominant groups assign acceptable roles for subordinate groups. Because the latter are born with deficiencies, it is impossible for them to change or develop so the 'acceptable roles' are the only ones they can perform (Miller, 2007, p 111). The concept of permanent inequality is crucial to our understanding of the power differentials at play in the Anglophone crisis.

The subsequent thesis will be about the buildup and eruption of this dormant conflict in Cameroon between the Anglophones and the majorly Francophone government. The analysis will focus on the historical background, a vivid description of the early years of the crisis and the shift that happens from a cultural to an overly power heavy conflict. Our piece will look at the conflict from different angles to dissect the Anglophone crisis with the goal to understand its roots, its eruption and its possible solutions.

Chapter 2 will be our literature review that will give an overview of the different voices we will use in our paper. This chapter will invite voices of authors talking about different concepts related to conflict resolution such as Milton Bennett's concept of

4

ethnocentrism and voices of authors explaining the conflict directly through different viewpoints such as Bouopda Pierre Kamé's take on the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon. The use of a variety of authors is important to look at the topic with critical lenses on.

Chapter 3 will be on the historical background of Cameroon. Ultimately, Cameroon's colonial history set the scene for a failed government after the independence of both the French and English Cameroon. It is important to understand the colonial history of Cameroon to have a full picture of the Anglophone crisis. It is where the roots of this crisis lie. In this section of our analysis, we will look at the brief German rule in Cameroon, followed by the dual colonization of France and England that divided the country in two Cameroons with different languages and administrations. Throughout this chapter specifically talking about British rule, our focus will be the Southern Cameroons as they are more relevant to our analysis, with brief mentions of the Northern Cameroons. Furthermore, we will briefly analyze the rise of nationalism in the French-speaking and English-speaking population. In addition to French and British rule, we will talk about the independence of both Cameroons, and the reunification of French Cameroon with the British Cameroons with the conditions surrounding this glued connection. Lastly this chapter will explicate and describe the federalization time of the English- speaking Cameroons.

Chapter 4 of our analysis will focus on the Anglophone crisis from 2016 until 2022 with an emphasis on events that occurred between late 2016 and end of 2017. This is where the description of the eruption will occur. What was the trigger of this violent eruption? We will look at the different parties involved in the conflict and the roles they played or are continuing playing. What were the tactics used by the parties? What are

their grievances? But most importantly, what is the human dimension of both parties? This part of our analysis will try to answer these questions in depth.

Chapter 5 will explicate the shift in the conflict. Starting as a focused cultural crisis, specifically with the language aspect at the forefront, the conflict and its narrative quickly evolved into a power showdown. Here, we want to explore different concepts as they apply to the crisis to understand why this shift happened. Milton Bennett' stages of ethnocentrism in his intercultural sensitivity theory, Jean Baker Miller's theory on domination and subordination, the rise of Anglophone nationalism, and Morton Deutsch's take on competition and cooperation are some of the concepts we will look at and critically examine as they relate to the crisis.

Finally, the last section of our analysis, chapter 6, will summarize our analysis and look at possible outcomes to the Anglophone crisis. What path will lead to peace? As a protracted ongoing conflict, will it ever end? Is separation the right solution in this conflict? Is unity still possible at this stage? These are pertinent questions we will try to answer in this section.

Methodology

This thesis follows the qualitative research methodology. It will focus on the analysis of various theories and how they relate to the Anglophone crisis. Through newspaper articles, journals, books, videos and recorded interviews, our conflict at hand will be meticulously examined. We will compare and contrast our research materials while keeping in mind the power of narratives and how it can be a tool to control the story.

The literature I chose to review includes works from trailblazers in the field of conflict resolution and some Cameroonian authors. From concepts such as competition and collaboration to stages of intercultural sensitivity, the work of pioneers of conflict resolution will enrich my analysis by putting the Anglophone crisis through different microscopic lenses. The subsequent analysis will also examine writings of Cameroonian authors specifically on the Anglophone crisis to get perspectives from some people directly or indirectly affected by the conflict.

There are a few limitations of my research. As a Francophone from Cameroon, I have to keep in mind that I may have some biases regarding this topic which I will try to filter out to write this analysis with an open mind. Living for 17 years in the French part of Cameroon and having close to no exposure to Anglophones, my work may lack in providing examples of interactions between Francophones and Anglophones while looking at Anglophones' identity. In addition, as Cameroon is ruled by a dictator, some articles mentioned in this thesis might not reflect the reality or might be fully constructed to push a narrative approved by one person. It is important to critically analyze all works, especially the ones written by Cameroonians. Following the lines of the previous statement, it seems that most authors from Cameroon talking about the crisis are mainly people from the English-speaking region. It could be because Francophones feel powerfully dominant and hence are not concerned with the minority. However, it could also be because they are scared of the repercussions -prison or death- of them voicing their opinions about the crisis in an authoritarian regime. All this to say that the research currently done might not reflect the sentiment of most people in Cameroon. This ambivalence will be addressed in the analysis.

Lastly, as the Anglophone crisis is an ongoing conflict, the situation may change by the completion of my thesis and new factors may be added that could impact my analysis. The subsequent work will be as accurate as possible but some facts or events will be missing as it focuses on the crisis until the end of 2022.

Research statement

The inquiry of my thesis will explore the escalation of the conflict since 2016 by analyzing the events that occurred between the Anglophones and the majorly-Francophone government and how they were perceived by both parties. We will look at the root causes of the conflict as they relate to the historical background of Cameroon. Language discrimination was the originator of the conflict but power dynamics took the lead role as the conflict evolved. In light of the above statement, the following research question was born:

Research question: Why did the anglophone crisis evolve from a cultural issue to a power dynamic one?

Hypotheses

- Language discrimination and cultural issues mixed with power dynamic issues created the perfect condition for a violent protracted conflict and hence the worst condition for peace to flourish.
- Cultural issues are at the core of the Anglophone crisis

References

Bennett, J. M. (1993). Toward Ethnorelativism: A Developmental Model of Intercultural
Sensitivity. In R. M. Paige (Ed.), Education for the Intercultural Experience (pp.
21-71). Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Bennett, J. M. (1998). Intercultural Communication: A Current Perspective.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/246501677_Intercultural_Communicati
on_A_Current_Perspective

Miller, J. B. (2007). Domination and Subordination. In P. S. Rothenberg (Ed.), Race,
Class, and
Gender in the United States (7th ed., pp. 108-114). New York: Worth Publishers.

Njeuma, M. Z. (1989). *Introduction to the history of Cameroon : nineteenth and twentieth
centuries*. St. Martin's Press.

Ngoh, V. J. (1979). *The political evolution of Cameroon, 1884-1961*. Portland State
University.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Since 2016, Cameroon has been in a protracted conflict. Many articles and papers have been written on the Anglophone crisis focusing on various aspects of the conflict. The subsequent analysis will examine the crisis from a cultural perspective and slowly progress to a power dynamic perspective chronologically. The literature review will focus on two categories of authors: voices of the field of conflict resolution and voices speaking directly about the conflict with the goal to critically look at the evolution of the Anglophone crisis.

One of the important names in the field of conflict resolution is Milton Bennett. His work on intercultural sensitivity was revolutionary in the field. In fact, he developed a model called developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. Bennett's framework is divided into two major concepts: ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism. For the purpose of our thesis, the former is the concept we will analyze. Ethnocentrism is a concept in which we see our culture as the norm and evaluate other cultures according to preconceptions. Bennett defines an ethnocentric as "assuming that the worldview of one's own culture is central to all reality" (Bennett, 1993, p.30). To be more specific, an ethnocentric is one that uses their own set of standards and customs to judge all people (Bennett, 1998). Per the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity, there are three ethnocentric stages: denial, defense, and minimization (1993).

Denial is "the purest form of ethnocentrism" and can be divided into two sub-dimension: isolation and separation (Bennett, 1993, p.30). A person in the denial stage is not capable of interpreting complex cultural differences (1998) and "believes that

cultural diversity only occurs elsewhere" (1993, p.30). Physical isolation is a way to limit interactions with 'others' and separation is "the intentional erection of physical or social barriers to create distance from cultural difference as a means of maintaining a state of denial" (1993, p.32). People at this stage may use inductive stereotypes, like generalization from one person to a group of people (1998). Unlike isolation, separation temporarily acknowledges some kind of difference which is a step towards intercultural sensitivity (1993). To move from the denial stage to the defense stage, exposure to "cultural awareness activities" is needed (1993, p.34). For instance, attending an international night with different music, costumes, dance or food would be beneficial "to create more differentiation among general categories of cultural difference" (1993, p.34).

Defense is the second stage of ethnocentrism. People in this stage "recognize specific cultural differences and create specific defenses against them" (1993, p.35). It is the development of the concept of a dominant 'us' versus a negative 'them' (1998). The defense stage has three forms: denigration, superiority and reversal. Denigration is a form of negative stereotyping in which to counter the threat of difference we evaluate it negatively. Superiority "emphasizes the positive evaluation of one's own culture status" (1993, p.37). Here, "cultural difference needs to be overcome for the construction or maintenance of superiority" (1993, p.37). Finally, reversal is the "denigration of one's own culture and an attendant assumption of the superiority of a different culture" (1993, p.40). To move out of defense, we need to emphasize "the commonality of cultures, particularly in terms of what is generally good in all cultures" (1993, p.40-41).

The last stage of ethnocentrism is minimization. A person in this stage naively asserts that "despite differences, all people share some basic characteristics"

(1993, p.42). There are two forms of minimization: physical universalism and transcendent universalism. In physical universalism, people assume that "knowledge of the physical universals of behavior is sufficient for understanding all other people" (1993, p.43). Transcendent universalism "suggests that all human beings, whether they know it or not, are products of some single transcendent principle" (1993, p.43). With the help of "simulations, reports of personal experience and other methods of illustrating substantial cultural differences in the interpretation of behavior" we could transition from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism (1993, p.45).

In the subsequent analysis, we will explain each of the stages of ethnocentrism in how they relate to our main subject, specifically looking at the role of ethnocentrism in the power dynamics of Cameroon. What dimension are the parties involved in? What is keeping them from advancing to the next stage? With such a rich historical background and more than 200 ethnic tribes with strong identities, is Milton Bennett's intercultural sensitivity possible in Cameroon? We will try to answer some of these questions while keeping in mind that Bennett's model might not be a one size fits all.

The second author I want to highlight in this literature review is Jean Baker Miller. She wrote a chapter on *Domination and Subordination* which talks about the differences between temporary and permanent inequality. Temporary inequality is when "the lesser party is socially defined as unequal" (Miller, 2007, p. 109). Here, the superior party has more to give to the inferior party- "some ability or valuable quality which [they are] supposed to impart to the"lesser " person"" (Miller, 2007, p. 109). Since it is temporary, the end goal is to sever the relationship of inequality. An example of temporary inequality is the relationship between a parent and their child with the former

as the dominant party. Baker Miller crucially points out the important role of power in these relationships. The goal of temporary inequality is only achieved if the dominant party is willing to end the relationship. "The second type [of inequality] molds the very ways we perceive and conceptualize what we are doing in the first" (Miller, 2007, p. 110).

On the other side of the spectrum, permanent inequality is when "some people or groups of people are defined as unequal by means of what sociologists call ascription; that is, your birth defines you" (Miller, 2007, p. 110). Criteria ranges from race, sex to nationality and religion. In these types of relationships, the inferior is boxed as "defective". "The actions and words of the dominant group tend to be destructive of the subordinates" (Miller, 2007, p. 110). According to Miller (2007), dominant groups assign acceptable roles for subordinate groups. Because the latter are born with deficiencies, it is impossible for them to change or develop so the 'acceptable roles' are the only ones they can perform (p.111). Miller goes on by saying if the subordinate group does what it is supposed to do or expected to do- "submissiveness, dependency, lack of initiative, inability to act, to decide, to think"- "they are considered well-adjusted" (Miller, 2007, p. 111). On the other hand, if subordinates step out of the box they are confined in, they are labeled as abnormal. Hence, society has no place for them because "the dominant group [...] legitimizes the unequal relationship and incorporates it into society's guiding concepts". The dominant group portrays the model for "normal human relationships" (Miller, 2007, p. 112). Everything they do is normal and should not be questioned whether they are treating others destructively or creating false explanations.

13

The following quotes from Miller's work are critical to her analysis of dominant and subordinate: "What dominant groups usually cannot act on, or even see, is that the situation of inequality in fact deprives them particularly on the psychological level". "Dominants are usually convinced that the way things are is right and good, not only for them but especially for the subordinates" (Miller, 2007, p. 112). Dominant groups are blinded by what they believe to be right. Thus, they cannot see that the unequal relationships they created and are trying to maintain are detrimental to subordinate groups but also to them. This is when "inequality has created a state of conflict" (Miller, 2007, p.112).

In our analysis, we will focus on the differences between temporary inequalities and permanent inequalities as it relates to the Anglophone crisis. Who is the dominant group? Who is the subordinate group? Are there any temporary inequalities present in the Anglophone crisis? What about permanent inequalities? "Who defines the conflict? Who sets the terms? When is conflict overt or covert?" (Miller, 2007, p 114). These questions are critical to understanding the power dynamics of the Anglophone crisis.

Adding to the power dynamics of the crisis, Morton Deutsch, one of the founders of conflict resolution, talks about cooperation and competition in *The handbook of conflict resolution: Theory and practice.* According to Deutsch, "the course and outcome of a conflict is determined by whether the participants in the conflict have a cooperative orientation or a competitive one" (Deutsch, 2006, p.23). He categorized three different types of interdependence which he defines as the nature of relationship between the two sides' goals. The two that are closely related to this crisis are negative and positive interdependence. Negative interdependence is when "each side's goals are tied together in

14

such a way that the probability of one side attaining its goal is decreased by the probability of the other side successfully attaining its goal" (Spangler, 2003). We see this concept in competitive situations in which communication is impaired. Morton Deutsch talks about the notion of autistic hostility as a challenge of interdependence. It "involves breaking off contact and communication with the other" resulting in more perpetuated hostility (Deutsch, 2006, p.28).

On the opposite, positive interdependence is when "each side's goals are tied together, the chance of one attaining its goal is increased by the probability of the other side successfully attaining its goal" (Spangler, 2003). Cooperative relationships are characterized by positive interdependence. For Deutsch (2006), a constructive process of conflict resolution is an effective cooperative problem-solving process and a destructive process of conflict resolution is a competitive process. He mentions that competition can be constructive as long as it occurs in a cooperative context and it is regulated by fair rules.

What type of interdependence characterizes the relationship between the parties involved in the Anglophone crisis? Is autistic hostility present? If the Anglophone crisis is distinguished by competitiveness, is it constructive or destructive competition? Morton Deutsch's thoughts on cooperation and competition gives us the opportunity to look at the core of the relationships of the parties involved in the Anglophone crisis.

In this second part of our literature review, we will bring works from authors that specifically address the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon.

Bouopda Pierre Kamé, currently a senior lecturer at the University of Valenciennes in France, in his book titled *The Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon* talks

15

about the crisis in depth. His work highlights the root causes of the conflict found in Cameroon's historical background (Kamé, 2018). He starts his argument by focusing on the colonization of Cameroon that separated one country into two territories with two legacies. In this part of his book he explained how Cameroon was under the mandate of the League of Nations, then under the United Nations trusteeship. Finally, he narrates what happened at the end of international trusteeship.

The author goes on in his analysis to look at the impact of the two legacies on Cameroon, the expression of two legacies on the institutions. Kamé analyzes Cameroon as a federation with political pluralism and Cameroon as a federation without political pluralism. With the change in government, he notices that the deinstitutionalization of the Anglophone heritage slowly progressed. He takes a deep dive at the origins of deinstitutionalization and its effect in Cameroon. The last part of Kamé's book focuses on the refusal of institutional expurgation by the Anglophones. This is where we see the violent crisis, the creation of an unrecognized independent state, and the stagnation of the crisis.

Kamé's book will enrich this analysis by providing a deeper understanding of the historical background as it relates to the ongoing crisis. In addition, his book gives us a clear timeline of the events that occurred at the conception of the crisis. Is the protracted nature of this conflict solely rooted in its history? Bouopda Pierre Kamé's analysis of the Anglophone crisis will shed light on a major aspect of the conflict- the historical background.

Another author speaking directly about the Anglophone crisis is Benjamin Akih. He is a Cameroonian from the North West Region currently occupying the position of

Associate Professor of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering at Syracuse University in New York. *The West Cameroon Problem and its Solution* is one of his books that will enrich our analysis. Akih interestingly starts his book with a potential solution to the Anglophone crisis. "Sustainable peace and justice in a united Cameroon can only be guaranteed by respecting [...] cultural and historical differences within a federation" (Akih, 2021, p.1). For the author, Cameroon can only walk away from its conflicted state by restoring the federal state of the Anglophone slice.

Akih supports this affirmation by looking specifically at West Cameroon's history and how the lack of federalism was detrimental to the peace of Anglophones. In this part of his analysis, the federalist period before 1972 is a critical aspect of the subsequent analysis. This author criticizes the unification of Cameroon as the starting point of assimilation and marginalization of the Anglophone population. As an Anglophone himself, Akih considers the separatist solution in his argument. However, he quickly comes to the conclusion that separation will only bring more fuel to the crisis. For him federalism is the solution to the Anglophone crisis with the help of a third-party mediator and a disarmament force.

Akih's book gives insight about what a peaceful solution could look like from an Anglophone's perspective. However, isn't it utopian to think that both sides of the conflict would ever consider federalism as a solution especially since their goals differ? Akih's book provides some material needed to ponder on a solution for the Anglophone crisis.

In view of the above literature review, these themes emerge from voices in the conflict resolution field: ethnocentrism, temporary and permanent inequality in

17

domination and subordination, negative interdependence in competition. From voices speaking about the Anglophone crisis, there is a laser focus on the historical background of Cameroon as the main cause of the conflict with a potential solution in the form of federalism. The following analysis will analyze the evolution of the crisis from a cultural to power dynamics shift. With the support of these authors' concepts and ideas, this thesis will examine the conflict from its historical background to its human dimension and possibly to a solution. We will look at how the above themes played a role in the crisis but also how they generated new branches positive or negative in the Anglophone crisis.

References

Akih, B. K. (2021). *The West Cameroon Problem and its Solution: A Federalist Perspective*. Self Published.

Bennett, J. M. (1993). Toward Ethnorelativism: A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. In R. M. Paige (Ed.), Education for the Intercultural Experience (pp. 21-71). Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Bennett, J. M. (1998). Intercultural Communication: A Current Perspective. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/246501677_Intercultural_Communication_A_Current_Perspective

Deutsch, M. (2006). Cooperation and competition. In M. Deutsch, P. T. Coleman, & E. C. Marcus (Eds.), *The handbook of conflict resolution: Theory and practice* (pp. 23–42).Wiley Publishing.

Kamé, B. P. (2018). *The anglophone crisis in Cameroon*. L'Harmattan.

Miller, J. B. (2007). Domination and Subordination. In P. S. Rothenberg (Ed.), Race, Class, and
Gender in the United States (7th ed., pp. 108-114). New York: Worth Publishers.

Spangler, B. (2003) *Competitive and cooperative approaches to conflict, Beyond Intractability*. Available at: https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/competitive_cooperative_frames

Chapter III- Historical Background

To understand the Anglophone crisis and possibly find a solution, there are different topics that need to be addressed. The first is the colonization period and its legacy. Cameroon was colonized by three countries. The first country was Germany followed by France and England simultaneously. Indeed, the two colonizing countries, France and England, had different political structures, educational systems and social norms. We would need to analyze their systems, how they operated and the impact the two governments had on the population involved.

The 1961 reunification is the second topic that needs to be explicated. In fact, that period of time brought various changes in both parties and was the starting point of the dormant crisis that erupted in 2017. These two topics consist of looking at the background of the conflict, the history, the roots of the crisis, to understand its beginning and possibly to find ways to move towards a more peaceful future.

Colonization by Germany 1884 - 1916

Eyongetah and Brain narrate the history of Cameroon in their book and call the period before Cameroon first became a protectorate "The scramble for the Cameroon" (1974, p. 58-60). During that time, there was a race between British, French, Portuguese and to everyone's surprise German settlers to possess Cameroon. With the help of some local chiefs, negotiations began with English missionaries (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974, p. 58-60). However, "by the time [the consul Edward Hewett] arrived in Douala, [Dr. Nachtigal, the personal emissary of Germany] had already arrived by German gun-boat, and the German flag had been hoisted in the territory (14 July 1884)" (Eyongetah &

Brain, 1974, p. 61). Hence, Germany became the first European country to control or as some of them described to 'protect' Cameroon. For the next thirty years, my native country slowly but surely became a German colony and Cameroon became known as Kamerun. The German settlers had a centralized administration with a governor at the heart of it "whose powers were delegated from the German Emperor" (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974, p. 90). The colonizers exploited the country through their 'discoveries' of trade routes or "raw materials like Ivory, Palm oil and kernel" (*German imperial Rule in Cameroon*).

The Germans ruled with an iron fist on every domain in Cameroon. For instance, their "educational system placed emphasis on a knowledge of the German language" as they considered the Douala and Bali languages to be the 'enemy' language (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974, p. 92). "In 1907, Douala housed a conference on the educational situation in Cameroon. It was decided that European languages, except German, should not be taught in the schools and the Douala dialect should also be discouraged in schools" (Ngoh, 1979, p. 20). Eyongetah and Brain (1974) in their narration of the German administration included the following heartbreaking extract describing an acting governor's use of women: "he entertained guests at dinner by having the Dahomean women perform a tribal dance without clothing. After the dance the Women were distributed to the guests for the night" (p. 94). Humiliation, dehumanization, marginalization or killings were some of the ways in which the Germans suppressed insurrection among the natives (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974, p. 94).

The Germans faced resistance from some natives especially over land ownership. "The German-Douala Treaty of July 1884 gave no land to Germany as the natives

understood it" (Ngoh, 1979, p. 22). In 1888 Germany sent a representative " to determine the conditions under which the whites could obtain land. In June 1896, an Imperial decree labeled all unoccupied land as crown land"(Ngoh, 1979, p. 22). "This enabled the Germans to claim all unoccupied land which aroused the Douala people" (Ngoh, 1979, p. 23). In spite of the resistance from the natives, Germany always came victorious. The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 was when the tides started turning.

The switch from Germany to France and England occupation: how it happened

The German colony, Kamerun, was faced with a formidable almost insurmountable battle. The British, French and Belgian-French forces all attacked the German forces of about "1,000 German soldiers supported by about 3,000 African troops" (West Africa Campaign, n.d.). The German forces were greatly outmanned just by the British forces who " included the Nigeria and Gold Coast Regiments of the West African Frontier Force and eventually Indian and British troops". The British regiments played a crucial part in ending the era of Kamerun (*West Africa Campaign*, n.d.). "After many skirmishes, ambushes and long marches through inhospitable terrain, the last surviving German post surrendered on 18 February 1916. German Kamerun was no more" (*West Africa Campaign*, n.d.). Pertinent to our analysis, it is important to note that "the Germans instilled in the minds of the Cameroonians the sense of obedience and respect for authority while "some of the German's repressive policies ..... fostered protest movements containing the seeds of future political action"" (Ngoh, 1979, p. 26). Germany planted a seed of domination through division that France and England heavily watered over the following years.

Dual colonization decision

"At the Treaty of Versailles, it was decided that all German colonies were to become League of Nations Mandate Territories" (Akih, 2021, P. 8). "The provisions of Article XXII.5 of the Covenant of the League of Nations stipulated that the holder of a 'B' mandate must be:

> responsible for the administration of the territory under condition which will guarantee freedom of conscience and religion, subject only to the maintenance of public order and morals, the prohibition of abuses such as the slave trade, the drug traffic, the liquor traffic, and the prevention of the establishment of fortifications or military bases, and of the training of natives for other than police purposes and the defense of territory, and will secure equal opportunities for the trade and commerce of other members of the League" (Ngoh, 1979, p. 28).

"Following the Treaty of Versailles, Cameroon was partitioned between the British and the French in a declaration signed by Viscount Milner, the British Secretary for the Colonies, and Henri Simon, the French Minister for the Colonies". This division was "disproportionate: five-sixths of the territory [an area of 166,800 square miles] became a French mandate and the remainder [an area of 34,081 square miles] British" (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974, p. 95-97). The way Cameroon was divided with a disregard of languages or ethnicity later became fuel for the country's political problems (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974, p. 97).

French Rule/ Administration in Cameroon 1916-1960

France, who was responsible for the majority of Cameroon, "governed Cameroon as though she were her colonial possession and not a mandated territory" (Ngoh, 1979, p. 29). Based on a system of decrees, France appointed its own commissioners in its portion of Cameroon. The only link with the French ministry, the one who possessed civil and military power in Cameroon was the High Commissioner with the support from "a

Secretary-General, a Cabinet, Directors, 'chefs de service' and by a 'Conseil d'Administration'" (Ngoh, 1979, p. 29). The French colonizers were the only ones governing in French Cameroon with a sprinkle of what they called "sujets francais" or natives as advisors that were allowed as long as they were willing to implement pro-French policies (Ngoh, 1979, p. 29-31). We want to mention here that 'sujet francais' is a dehumanizing term that reduces the natives to things that belong to the French. The French political and administrative rule followed the principle of assimilation which "suppressed or ignored the political structure that were truly African and the African culture, replacing them by colonial structures and colonial education which were indeed 'French' but profoundly different from what existed at the same level in France itself" (Ngoh, 1979, p.30). The French colonizers saw Cameroon as their possession and wanted it to mirror their French aspirations with a disregard for the culture and values of the Cameroonian population. They use division as a tool to rule in Cameroon. Indeed, they sectioned their portion of the country into 19 districts, each led by an administrator (Ngoh, 1979, p.30).

The legal system under French rule was set up to include all habitants of Cameroon, Africans and Europeans, but favor the latter (Ngoh, 1979, p.31). There were two categories of people when it came to the legal system: 'sujet français', the natives, and 'citoyens français', the ones who had a French citizenship. (Ngoh, 1979, p.31) To firmly grip the natives, the French administrators put in place "a collection of legal dispositions permitting immediate repression" called the 'indigenat'(Ngoh, 1979, p.32). For instance, people could be imprisoned for ten years in 1920 for public disorder or not paying taxes (Ngoh, 1979, p.32-33). "On the whole the *indigenat* was used to punish

natives who failed to work their farms or pay their taxes" (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974, p. 116).

As we established earlier, the French cared for only themselves and saw the natives as their possessions. This was portrayed in their economic system. "France inherited from the Germans in Cameroon, railroads, harbours, roads and plantations which were producing a variety of tropical crops for export"(Ngoh, 1979, p.33). To maximize their profit, France overworked the natives so much so "that some natives died while others escaped to the British Cameroons" (Ngoh, 1979, p.33). With the assistance of the abused natives, the French colonizers constructed, expanded and improved roads and ports to facilitate the transportation of goods (Ngoh, 1979, p.34). In addition to those different ways of transportation, they expanded the railroad system still treating the helping hands inhumanely.

"In 1944 about 86 percent of the recruited workers in the Bafang sub-division of the Bamileke region deserted mostly to the British Cameroons" (Ngoh, 1979, P.35). Despite the loss of many workers, France still managed to profit substantially from all the resources that Cameroon offered. However the mistreatment of the natives and the discontent of some native chiefs regarding their stolen lands created the first spark of Cameroonian nationalism in the French Cameroon (Ngoh, 1979, p.40-42).

Seed of Nationalism in the French Cameroon

Nationalism in the French Cameroon was born before World War II (WWII) where we see the emergence of Cameroonian Unions. For instance, "in 1937 the 'Union Camerounaise' led by Ahmadou Abidjo, was founded" (Ngoh, 1979, p.41). However, nationalism was solidified after WWII through various ways. Supporting this idea, Ngoh

(1979) says "the effect of the war was partly responsible for the tremendous wave of native nationalisms which swept through Africa after 1945 and Cameroun was not left untouched" (p.48). In 1944, a conference was held in Brazzaville about French colonies which resulted in the suppression of forced labor, the replacement of the 'indigenat' with "a uniform penal code", and the possibility of "colonial peoples to assist in the restructuralization of French political institutions in the 1946 French Parliament as was outlined in the French Constitution of 1946" (Ngoh, 1979, p.48). There was a political awakening of indigenous elites that emerged following this conference (Ngoh, 1979, p.49). The abolition of the League of Nations on April 18, 1946 and the transfer of its territories to the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations Organization played a role in watering the seed of nationalism in French Cameroon (Ngoh, 1979). According to "Article 76 of the United Nations Charter on Trust Territories stipulated the objectives of the trusteeship system as being:

> to promote the political, economic, and social and education advancement of the inhabitants of the trust territories, and their progressive development towards self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of each territory and its people concerned, and as may be provided by the terms of each trusteeship agreement …" (Ngoh, 1979, p.49).

French Cameroon under this new system became more educated and started thinking about autonomy and independence. Supporting the idea that the end of WWII created a waterfall for nationalism, Atangana (1997) says that "during the decade following World War II, political and social struggles against the colonial regime resulted in the rise of nationalism in Cameroon" (p.90). According to him, French capitalism was another reason for the rise of nationalism in Cameroon. To support this idea, he gives the example of the major increase in exports and imports in Cameroon between 1947 and

26

1953 which "the French cited as a proof of their positive contribution to Cameroon's

development". However, this was seen by Cameroonians as "a reinforcement of their

subordinate position in the economic structure of French colonialism" (Atangana, 1997,

p. 95). The French tried to hide behind the headline 'development of Cameroon' to profit

from it at the expense of the natives but Cameroonians could see through this illusion.

Furthermore, after WWII, there was an increase in Cameroonian unions. The most

prominent of them being " Union des Populations du Cameroun (UPC)" (Atangana,

1997, P.85). UPC which was created in 1948 was "as much the heir of a tradition of

anti-colonialism in the territory as the initiator of organized radical nationalist

movement" (Atangana, 1997, p. 96)

French rule in Cameroon and the rise of nationalism give us some of the material

we need to analyze the crisis. However, as the name of our thesis includes 'Anglophone',

it is crucial to look at the British rule in Cameroon. This analysis of British rule in

Cameroon will mainly focus on the Southern Cameroons as it is more pertaining to

understanding the roots of the crisis.

**British rule/administration (1916-1961)/ British Cameroons- Northern Cameroons
and Southern Cameroons**

To ease their rule of their portion of Cameroon, the British divided it into two

parts, Northern Cameroons and Southern Cameroons, who were administered from

Nigeria. "Such arrangements were justified [...] by the administrative problem which

would have been created by an attempt to constitute these areas into separate and distinct

political units" (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974, pg 97). This analysis of British rule in

Cameroon will mainly focus on the Southern Cameroons as it is more pertaining to understanding the roots of the crisis. The thought behind this division was that because Nigeria was a more established British colony and the Cameroons would profit from Nigeria's already established system. Some of the benefits included access to Nigerian experts on different fields such as agriculture, Nigerian scholarships and railroads (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974, p. 100). However, the Cameroons came with their own riches such as 'German plantations' in the Southern Cameroons. These plantations flourished with the support from a great number of workers from Nigeria, the French Cameroon and the English Cameroons. According to a report on plantations and villages in the Cameroons, in 1938 plantation workers included 17,879 people from British Cameroons, 4,725 people from French Cameroon and 2,509 people from Nigeria and other areas (LeVine, 1964, p. 196).

Over the years under British rule, the Cameroons were still neglected to a certain extent. "On the whole the economic situation was poor in both territories, the slump in world prices during the depression and the reluctance of the British to finance any new undertaking being the prime reasons for this" (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974, p. 101). The Cameroons' economy was low mainly because the majority of profits from sectors like agriculture were poured into the development of Nigeria and not on improving the Cameroons. On top of the poor economy, the British administration encountered problems in the Northern Cameroons that differed from those in the Southern Cameroons (LeVine, 1964, p. 197).

The Northern Cameroons had "an already well established, highly developed political tradition"(LeVine, 1964, p. 197). Because of that, the British were faced with

28

fewer problems in that region compared to the ones they were met with in the Southern

Cameroons.

The Southern Cameroons included various groups of tribes, clans, and

traditionally made political arrangements that made the British's colonization difficult

(LeVine, 1964, p. 198). For instance, "in the Bamenda section, the large grassland and

highland areas were under the rule of traditional chiefs (fons), the natural and often

autocratic rulers of a number of [...] tribal groups" (LeVine, 1964, p.198). Scared of

repeating their miscalculation in Nigeria's administration, the British appointed "Native

Authorities" instead of synthetic ones. They took the time to assess all groups present in

the Southern Cameroons from traditional to political ones and made their appointments

based on their discoveries (LeVine, 1964, p. 198). "The system meant that these local

authorities were responsible for various aspects of local government, under the control of

district officers; they looked after police, operated courts, collected taxes and dealt with

such matters as health, sanitation and roads" (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974, p.109). "Native

Authorities" or local authorities worked hand in hand with the British colonizers. "As the

popular *Political Memoranda* noted:

> There (were) not two sets of rulers - British and Native - working either separately
> or in co-operation, but a single Government in which the Native Chiefs have
> well-defined duties and an acknowledged status equally with the British officials"
> (Njeuma, 1989, p.183).

Because of this set-up, the judicial system consisted of two types of courts: one

where European law was followed and another called native court that had different rules

depending on the types of cases and the importance of those- based on the amount of the

claim (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974, p. 111). The British administration observed that

without their involvement, "native authority participation [...] functioned better [...] where chiefs were 'more powerful... and had been accustomed to dealing with cases'" (Njeuma, 1989, p. 185). In addition to being a somewhat source of peace, native courts were also a great source of remuneration and "the economic backbone of native administration" (Njeuma, 1989, p. 185). According to colonial reports of 1922-1938, in 1928 there were 39 courts reported and by 1937, there were 85 courts (Njeuma, 1989, p. 186). Native courts were an essential part of the economic development of the native administration. Furthermore, "a key feature of native administration in the early 1930s, especially beginning 1932, was the attempt to enlist, or at least engage, the educated element in native administration" (Njeuma, 1989, p.187).

Seeds of nationalism in the Southern Cameroons

Education is one of the seeds that fed nationalism in the Southern Cameroons. The educated wanted to be part of the colonial administration instead of the native one (Njeuma, 1989, p.188). They questioned the 'norm' of an aristocratic system and demanded from the colonial administration a more democratic system (Njeuma, 1989, p.188). This phenomenon gave rise to the creation of councils which shared some of the executive power held by the chiefs (Njeuma, 1989, p.188-189). "By the late 1930s, shifts in favour of corporate responsibility led the colonial administration to entrust native administration with a more direct interest in the development of the territory" (Njeuma, 1989, p.189). The educated progressive class were pushing boundaries and criticizing not only the native administration but also the colonial one so much so that "by the end of 1940s, literacy was increasingly a necessary qualification for appointment to council" (Njeuma, 1989, p. 191). The turmoil raised by the educated class made the British

colonizers realize that they might have generated a problem with their establishment of

two different administrations- native and colonial (Njeuma, 1989, p. 191). Being part of

the educated class, people felt a sense of belonging which fueled their nationalist ideals.

Moreover, education became a requirement for a future in national politics (Njeuma,

1989, p. 194). Education or literacy, part of modernization, pushed the traditional

institutions out of the scene of the modern political system (Njeuma, 1989, p. 195).

The other seed that fed nationalism in the Southern Cameroons was religion.

"Although cultural differences existed between the two provinces [North West province

and South West Province], religious denominations promoted the emergence of a

common culture centered around the English language and denominational affiliations,

quite beyond tribal affinities" (Akih, 2021, p. 9). Religion and education played

hand-in-hand as there is a level of education needed to speak, understand and write in

English. "English-speaking Catholicism and Protestantism in West Cameroon fostered

the development of a sense of belonging together", a nationhood (Akih, 2021, p. 10).

British and French rule compared

As we can see British rule differs from French rule in Cameroon in various

aspects. First, their goals were different. The French objective was "to make Cameroon a

part of France itself" (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974, p.113). They wanted Cameroon to

mirror France in every aspect whereas the British had more of an indirect rule and

promoted development of the natives (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974, p.114). For instance, "in

West Cameroon and Nigeria, chiefs were men of importance who were highly respected

by European and African alike, whereas their counterparts in the French territory were

shorn of economic privilege and political power" (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974, p.114). An example of the French system was the removal and exile of Sultan Njoya of Bamum in 1931 (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974, p.116).

On a development level, French Cameroon had the upper hand. According to Eyongetah and Brain (1974), "the French territory seemed a paradise of progress to young English-speaking Cameroonians. They saw the building of ports and railways, fine hard-surfaced roads, [...] water supplies and electricity" (p.117). It is true that French Cameroon was more modernly advanced than the British Cameroons. However, to whose expense was this advancement? "The British system was a more humane one, and there was certainly no system remotely approaching the French *indigenat* which virtually deprived French Cameroonians of their liberty of criticism, association and movement" (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974, p.118). Here, we would like to note that some British rulers treated some of the natives inhumanely but their acts were not justified by any law in place compared to the French *indigenat* system. In addition to different administration systems, economic development levels, the French and the British had different views regarding the independence of their colonies (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974, p.113). This leads us to briefly examine the independence of both parts of Cameroon.

Independence of both Cameroons

January 1st, 1960- Independence of French Cameroon

When describing the independence of French Cameroon, LeVine talks about "the myth of independence. According to him, the months before independence were full of misconceptions about the essence of independence (LeVine, 1964, p.216). He writes people thought "Independence is a sort of magic wand, one touch of which will resolve

all conflicts, solve all problems, heal all wounds, grant all wishes, and realize all hopes"
(LeVine, 1964, p.215). People saw independence as something that could give them a
better life in a blink of an eye. They were wrong. Five months before independence,
Prime minister Ahidjo addressed this false belief:

"We must [...] work without relaxation to save our country from the bitterness
born of an independence which changes nothing, which leaves unused the enormous
potential of human energy which this magic word evoked" (LeVine, 1964, p.215). After
months of talks, French Cameroon became independent on January 1st, 1960 and became
known as "La Republique du Cameroun" (Ngoh, 1979, p.75). On that same day, a printed
issue of the UPC (Union des Populations du Cameroun) newspaper called "La Voix du
Peuple" translating to 'the voice of the People' listed a long list of what independence is
not (LeVine, 1964, p.216). For instance, the paper said "INDEPENDENCE DOES NOT
MEAN That liberty will degenerate into license and everyone will be able to do as he
pleases" (LeVine, 1964, p.216). La Republique du Cameroun was independent but not
free. When French Cameroon became independent, it was still a state. Becoming a nation
proved to be a difficult task due to various reasons; one of them being that the French rule
never encouraged national consciousness (LeVine, 1964, p.218). "Essentially, the task of
creating a nation lies in what Karl Deutsch has called "the transformation of people, or
several ethnic elements, in the process of social mobilization" (LeVine, 1964, p.220). It
was quite a difficult task but they followed a path that eventually led to a nation. The
Cameroon Republic adopted a constitution quite similar to that of the French Republic
with the creation of a unitary state with a national assembly (LeVine, 1964, p. 225). "A
transitional section, Article 52, called for the election of the first President of the

33

Republic by the National Assembly. Accordingly, on May 5, 1960, M. Ahidjo was elected to the presidency by the Assembly elected April 4, 1960" (LeVine, 1964, p.226). The Cameroon Republic created their government promptly after their independence but their story differs from that of British Cameroons.

October 1st, 1961- independence of Southern Cameroons

British Cameroons had a different agenda than French Cameroon. They were divided into Northern Cameroons and Southern Cameroons whose goals were not similar. In the Southern Cameroons, Mr. Foncha, who was part of the KNDP ("Kamerun National Democratic Party", [largest party in British Cameroons]- (Ngoh, 1979, p.85) became prime minister in 1959 with a goal to separate from Nigeria and reunify with French Cameroon (Ngoh, 1979, p.87). The Northern Cameroons were not so fond of this idea and wanted to become part of Nigeria. After multiple conferences and debates with the United Nations, an election was conducted with "a landslide victory for the KNDP in British Southern Cameroons. With 233,571 votes to 97,741, Southern Cameroons voted in 1961 to unite with the Republique du Cameroun" (Ngoh, 1979, P.95). Here we should note that there were 97,741 Southern Cameroonians that did not want to merge with the Republique du Cameroun. Northern Cameroons voted and the majority decided to integrate with Nigeria (Ngoh, 1979, p.96). "With two Constitutional Conferences held in June and July 1961 at Bamenda and Founban by representatives from the Cameroon Republic and Southern Cameroons, reunification was proclaimed on October 1st, 1961 with the two Cameroons forming the Federal Republic of Cameroon" (Ngoh, 1979, p.96). The Southern Cameroons became independent on the same day of their reunification with

The Cameroon Republic as part of the Federal Republic of Cameroon. The Cameroon

Republic before the merge with the Southern Cameroons already had their own

government in place and constituted about 80 percent of the Federal Republic of

Cameroon after the merge. In addition, "An understanding of the differences between

French and British attitudes towards the administration of their mandate and trust

territories is important in that reunification has brought a confrontation between the

results of two different policies" (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974, p.114). Let's examine

reunification and its impact on the population.

October 1st, 1961- Reunification and its challenges

Reunification as described by Le Vine brought together a bride- British

Cameroons- with a bridegroom- the Republic of Cameroon (Awasom, 2000, p.91). This

is portraying the stronger bridegroom who was "ten times the area of the British Southern

Cameroons, had four times its population, and had "immeasurable greater resources and a

much higher level of social and economic development" [Le Vine 1976: 273]" (Awasom,

2000, p.91). We have this imagery of strong vs weak, big vs small so we ask ourselves

these questions: "Was reunification a triumphant event or an unfortunate one in the

history of Cameroon? [...] Put differently, who needed whom more in the reunification

process?" (Awasom, 2000, p.93). The reunification between the Republique du

Cameroun and the Southern Cameroons cooked up some challenges in the unify Federal

Republic of Cameroon.

The education system is one that suffered after the reunification. There was

collaboration in the early days of reunification to come up with a system of education that

worked in favor of all. "The Federal Republic adopted harmonization as a policy

framework for the establishment of a new national educational system that was to unequivocally represent both colonial heritages without feelings of marginalization by any side" (Ndille, 2020, p.33). The goal of this policy was to create a system of education that inspired "a sense of adherence to a single Cameroonian identity" (Ndille, 2020, p.35). Some of the differences in the education system centered around the structure, the education policy as well as the language policy. For instance, British Southern Cameroons' education system was decentralized based on indigenous needs and in favor of local languages whereas La Republique du Cameroun's education system was a centralized system based on assimilation in favor of the colonial language- French (Ndille, 2020, p.35). How can they come together when they are inherently different? Having this question in mind, UNESCO came up with 3 options. The first one was for one party to abandon their system and adopt the more proficient system; the second was for the parties to keep the system they already had in place, and the last option was to come up with a new system [UNESCO 1962] (Ndille, 2020, P.37). Ndille writes that "the new state opted for [...] an unrealistic blend of UNESCO's second and third options" (p.38). Some developments were made in the year of 1965. There was the creation of a Joint Committee of Experts from both sides to come up with a way of harmonizing both systems. From 1965 to 1971, they worked vigorously and submitted their recommendations to the Higher Council of Education but they were never approved (Ndille, 2020, p.39). Instead President Ahidjo ordered the creation of the Institute of National Education (INE) in Yaounde with a similar goal of the Joint Committee of Experts but their work was never concretely heard of (Ndille, 2020, p.39-40). In the 1980s, it was decided that the General Certificate of Education (GCE) of the Anglophone

side "had to take some orientation as examinations in the Francophone sub-system of education" (Ndille, 2020, p.40). Marginalization and erasure of educational heritage were concepts that Anglophones started seeing from Francophones. The Anglophones students expressed their frustration through demonstrations in Yaounde and the Northwest and Southwest provinces but the President told them to return to class (Ndille, 2020, p.40-41). It became clear that "the state had abandoned the harmonization laws and was proceeding with the assimilation of the Anglophone system into that of the Francophones as had been the case with many economic and political structures" (Ndille, 2020, p.41). The reunification started with a semblance of collaboration between both sides but the Francophone government slowly portrayed their dominant colors in most aspects of society, not only the education system.

The Federal government and the Francophone government were one and the same and started to assume control of most departments in the Republic. In fact, "By 1965, the Federal government had taken over [...] the legal and judicial departments; the state police; [...]; Agriculture; Forestry; [...]; Natural Resources" (Atanga, 2011, p.61). Because the West Cameroon previously known as the Southern Cameroons didn't have a government prior to reunification, they were at the mercy of the dominant Federal government. Indeed, after reunification, President Ahidjo divided the Federal Republic into six regions under Francophone Federal Inspectors, even in the West English-speaking Cameroon that was one of the regions (Atanga, 2011, p.61-62).

One of the major effects of reunification on West Cameroon was felt economically. Both states before reunification had different currencies: the Francophones had the CFA franc and the Anglophones had the pound. What happened after

reunification to the currencies? Three options were proposed to deal with the issue: both states could keep their current currencies without mixing currencies; both currencies could circulate in both states; or the pound would be removed and West Cameroon would start using the CFA franc (Atanga, 2011, p.89). Based on our analysis so far, we could guess which option was chosen. Indeed, "On April 2, 1962, a presidential decree established the CFA franc as the sole legal tender in the Federal Republic of Cameroon" (Atanga, 2011, p. 89-90). This decree was not favorable to the people of West Cameroon. They were confused and frustrated as certain goods prices doubled and business companies faced difficulties (Atanga, 2011, p.90). The incorporation of the economy of West Cameroon to that of East Cameroon was the Federal government goal but they did it not as a way to better the whole Republic but to take control of the economy of West Cameroon for their own profit (Atanga, 2011, p.95). Another example is the construction of more roads to facilitate the transport of goods to the port of Douala (Francophone city) (Atanga, 2011, p.95) and the unbalanced allocation of funds to improve ports in West Cameroon (Tiko and Victoria) versus the port of East Cameroon in Douala. "In the 1976 - 1981 Development Plan, 18,426 million francs (USD 75.2 millions) was allocated for both Tiko and Victoria ports. Between 1982 and 1992, 4.2 Billion francs CFA (USD 1.7 billions) was used in dredging the port of Douala" (Atanga, 2011, p.96). Reunification of both states brought comfort to Francophones while slowly stabbing and robbing Anglophones of not only their culture but also their livelihood. In the words of Albert Mukong, a political activist, about the struggle of West Cameroon: "But fear seized all and everyone, as each in his own way tried to make friends with the new lord and tyrant

38

that was lost and we automatically accepted our new status of second class citizens"
(Atanga, 2011, p.53).

October 1st, 1961 marked the independence of Southern Cameroons and the reunification with La Republique du Cameroun to form the Federal Republic of Cameroon. The years following the reunification were filled with marginalization of Anglophones on all levels and through various ways. The mountain of mistreatments experienced by the minority English speaking population built the foundation of the current Anglophone crisis. However, we ask ourselves, was there ever a time when the Anglophones had control of their own resources after reunification?

Federalization time - October 1st, 1961 to May 20th, 1972

After the French Cameroun achieved its independence in 1960, talks between the President Ahmadou Ahidjo and Prime Minister John Ngu Foncha of the Southern Cameroons began to draft a constitution of the future Cameroon after reunification (Kame, 2018, p.45-50). On October 1st 1961, the day of the reunification marks the birth of the Federal Republic of Cameroon (Kame, 2018, p.53). It was born out of the collaboration of the leaders of both sides and was a Republic supposed to be advantageous for all. The reunification didn't necessarily mean the unification of both French and English Cameroon. It was mostly a cooperation between still two different societies that each still governed their own respective state. This was the federation period that ended in 1972. You may ask, how did it end?

The story goes like this. A few days after reunification, "on November 11, 1961, [...], President Ahmadou Ahidjo calls for the creation of a <<large unified national party>>" (Kame, 2018, p.55). La Republique du Cameroun and Southern Cameroons

before reunification already had multiple political parties but President Ahidjo saw the need for only one party. "He [saw] the one-party governance system as a pragmatic and transitory necessity in the service of national integration and economic and social development" (Kame, 2018, p.55). Despite some opposition in 1966, the Union Camerounaise (UC), dominant party in La Republique du Cameroun, and KNDP, dominant party in the West Cameroon previously known as the Southern Cameroons, merged to form the Cameroonian National Union- CNU (Kame, 2018, P.68-69). The leadership of this new party reflected the state of Cameroon with the majority of them being former members of the Union Camerounaise with a sprinkle of a few former members of KNDP (Kame, 2018, p.69). The wheel of deinstitutionalization of socio-political heritage of the Anglophone Cameroon was started with the creation of one unified party (Kame, 2018, p.67). With a single party in place, President Ahidjo slowly but surely promoted this idea of a single nation. His proposed constitution asked people to vote on the following question:

> <<*In Order to consolidate national unity and accelerate the economic, social and cultural development of the nation, you approve of the draft constitution submitted to the people of Cameroon by the President of the Federal Republic of Cameroon and establishing a Republic of Cameroon, united and indivisible, under the name of the United Republic of Cameroon?>>* (Kame, 2018, p.74)

Out of 3,326,280 voters, only 176 people were against it. The majority voted for the dismantling of the federation period (Atanga, 2011, p.77). Atanga (2011) mentioned that West Cameroonians should have been the only ones voting as they were the ones who supported it in the first place (p.77). On May 20th, 1972, the United Republic of Cameroon was born and with it a monument commemorating the unification was erected

in Yaounde, the capital (Kame, 2018, p.42-43). According to Kame, this marks the

creation of a "new national personality". The constitution reads:

> *The Cameroonian people,*
> *Proud of its cultural and linguistic diversity, part of its national personality that it contributes to enrich, but deeply aware of the imperative need to perfect its unity, solemnly proclaims that it constitutes one and the same nation, engaged in the same destiny and affirms its unwavering desire to build the Cameroonian homeland on the basis of the ideal of fraternity, justice and progress* (Kame, 2018, p.75).

French and English Cameroon united under one nation despite their multitude of

differences. What a wonderful nation, one may say! With the resignation of President

Ahmadou Ahidjo, his Prime Minister Paul Biya gets promoted and becomes the President

of the United Republic of Cameroon in November 1982 (Kame, 2018, p.78). Compared

to former President Ahidjo, President Biya was not fond of collaborating with the

Anglophone Cameroon. In February 1984, "without the consent of the two most senior

politicians of the former Anglophone Cameroon still in office, [he passed] a bill that

changed the name of the unitary state of Cameroon" (Kame, 2018, p.78). It became

known as the Republic of Cameroon (Kame, 2018, p.78). This was the name of French

Cameroon when they gained independence and now became the name of the country of

both French and English. Expressing the feeling of subordination that Anglophone

Cameroonians felt in 1984, "Solomon Tankeng Muna, Speaker of the National Assembly,

sent a Memorandum to Paul Biya, President of the Republic:

> *Virtually every Anglo-Saxon qualification is inferior to French ones, and so Anglo-Saxon standards are assumed to be inferior to French ones. This gives an idea of the frustrations which English-speaking citizens face virtually at all levels in the university, in the public service and in State corporations with regard to their progress*" (Kame, 2018, p.79).

Akih (2021) summarizes the federation period as one characterized by "1. A decentralized unitary state disguised as a federation in the constitution through federal assemblies and ministerial cabinets, 2. Demonstration of low regard for stable constitutions, 3. Abolition of democratic rule through the suppression of multi-party politics, and 4. Liberal use of the divide-and-conquer strategy against West Cameroonians" (p.17). The federation period that started in 1961 and ended in 1972 didn't reflect what it was intended to be and was disadvantageous to West Cameroonians. Most of the political leaders not to say all in Anglophone Cameroon "have always preferred the federal government organization. Attached to peace, or helpless in the face of the imbalance of the balance of power, they advocated, negotiated solutions with the current central power, that is to say, cooperative and non-violent solutions. The current generations of Anglophone Cameroonians are clearly no longer in the same state of mind to conform a *posteriori* to subjugation" (Kame, 2018, p. 82). Now that we have looked at the historical background of the conflict, let's deep dive into the analysis of the Anglophone crisis.

References

Akih, B. K. (2021). *The West Cameroon Problem and its Solution: A Federalist Perspective*. Self Published.

Atanga, Mufor. (2011). *The Anglophone Cameroon predicament*. Langaa Research & Pub., CIG.

Atangana, M. R. (1997). French Capitalism and Nationalism in Cameroon. *African Studies Review*, *40*(1), 83–111. https://doi.org/10.2307/525034

Awasom, N. F. (2000). The Reunification Question in Cameroon History: Was the Bride an Enthusiastic or a Reluctant One? *Africa Today*, *47*(2), 91–119. https://doi.org/10.1353/at.2000.0027

Eyongetah, T. & Brain, Robert. (1974). A History of the Cameroon. Longman Group.

"German imperial Rule in Cameroon", taken from: Batey, George Eno: Effective modern history for colleges. Bamenda: NAB Ventures, 3rd ed. [3. Aufl.] ed., 2012 [2008], 25,30-32,39,40, in: WorldViews, ed. by the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, Braunschweig [2017]. http://worldviews.gei.de/open/CM_2008_Batey_EffectiveModernHistoryForColleges_25__30_32__39_40/1/eng/. Version 1

Fon, N. N. A. (2019). Official Bilingualism in Cameroon: An Endangered Policy? *African Studies Quarterly, 18*(2), 55-66.

Kamé, B. P. (2018). *The anglophone crisis in Cameroon*. L'Harmattan.

LeVine, Victor. (1964). The CAMEROONS from Mandate to Independence. University of California Press.

Ndille, R. N. (2020). Colonial Heritages, Educational Incompatibilities and the Challenges for a Reunified Cameroon: 1961–2016. *Historická Sociologie*, *12*(1), 33–47. https://doi.org/10.14712/23363525.2020.3

Ngoh, V. J. (1979). *The political evolution of Cameroon, 1884-1961*. Portland State University.

Njeuma, M. Z. (1989). *Introduction to the history of Cameroon : nineteenth and twentieth centuries*. St. Martin's Press.

West Africa campaign. (n.d.). National Army Museum. https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/west-africa-campaign

Chapter IV- Description of the Inception of the Anglophone Crisis

The analysis of the start of the crisis is crucial to understand why the anglophone volcano that erupted in 2016 is still active. This chapter of our work will pull most information from Bouopda Pierre Kame's book titled *The Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon* which offers us a great overview of the first few years of the crisis.

In the beginning, there were demands made by the anglophone Cameroon's lawyers regarding the translation in English of some legal texts and the appointment of Anglophone magistrates in the English-speaking provinces instead of Francophone magistrates that didn't speak English (Kame, 2018, p.86-87). Indeed, "Thousands of French-speaking judges and teachers were dispatched to Anglophone Cameroon at the start of the 2016 school term" (Cascais, 2021). After stating their demands, they planned their strike and on November 6, 2016, they marched the streets of West Cameroon. However, despite the peaceful nature of the protest, "gendarmes [intervened] to disperse the protesters. On this occasion, they [brutalized] lawyers in robes, [ransacked] their chambers, [confiscated] their robes and toques" (Kame, 2018, p.88). A few days later, another group voiced their concerns. Anglophone teachers took their demands to the Minister of Higher education. In fact, on November 18, 2016, listed their demands and some of their grievances were answered (Kame, 2018, p.88). It seemed like the government was hearing these demands. Nevertheless, two days later, Minister Paul Atanga Nji (part of the central government), who originates from Anglophone Cameroon gave an interview on Cameroon Radio Television. He said:

I say straight away that there is no Anglophone problem in Cameroon,
And those who talk about it, I can say that they are impostors who are
In search of notoriety.
We have often said it and I will say that there is no Anglophone
Problem in Cameroon.
And I can safely say that President Paul Biya since 1982 has given
Preferential treatment to Anglophones. And that's what we have to
Remember (Kame, 2018, p.88).

His interview is completely dismissing the grievances, the needs and the voices of the Anglophone lawyers and teachers. It is unclear the exact date but the administration banned demonstrations sometimes in November. Nonetheless, Anglophone teachers wanted to be heard and seen so on November 21, 2016, they went on strike. They protested "fundamentally against the progressive substitution of the education system of Francophone Cameroon for their educational system inherited from that of the United Kingdom" (Kame, 2018, p.89). Unfortunately, they clashed with law enforcement that resulted in the arrest of multiple protesters and the death of a policewoman and 3 civilians (Kame, 2018, p.89). By this time, the lawyers and the teachers have tried to express themselves but have been reprimanded, arrested and some of them killed. The last group that tried to make themselves heard is students. On November 28, 2016, hundreds of students of the University of Buea marched on their campus (Kame, 2018, p.89). Their demands included "the mandating of English as the sole language of instruction at UB, the disbursement of presidential grants, and the abolishment of late-registration fees, among others" (*2016-11-28 University of Buea | Scholars at Risk*, 2016). Again, despite the peaceful nature of the march, police forces were deployed and used brutal force against the students and arrested some of them (Kame, 2018, p.90). Following these unfortunate events, teachers unions and lawyers associations decided to

join hands and formed the Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium- CACSC in the perspective of negotiations with the government of Cameroon. On December 2, 2016: the Minister of Communication dismissed "accusations of human rights abuses and praises the restraint and professionalism of the police". He placed a warning on "those who spread misleading news [and remarks that they will be exposing] themselves to the rigor of the sanctions provided by law" (Kame, 2018, p.90). The Anglophone lawyers and teachers are faced with a government that doesn't take accountability for their actions and threatens to punish anyone speaking against the 'truth' of the government. In view of this, the teachers and lawyers added to their demands, a return to federalism but it was rejected based on the fact that "Cameroonian nation is one and indivisible" (Kame, 2018, p. 91). More violent clashes occurred in Bamenda-major city in West Cameroon-increasing the presence of the police forces in Anglophone Cameroon. During this period, teachers and lawyers of West Cameroon were depicted in the media as "insurrectional" thugs (Kame, 2018, p.91). Schools, courts, and universities in West Cameroon were paralyzed since the inception of the crisis. Some Bishops in Anglophone Cameroon asked the President "to recognize the reality and the political nature of the <<Anglophone problem>> to bring about appropriate solutions" (Kame, 2018, p.92). Two months went by without a word from the President. On December 31, 2016, the President Paul Biya spoke for the first time on the conflict during his yearly end of the year address to the country:

> *My dear compatriots,*
> *I would now like to focus on the latest developments in the Northwest and*
> *Southwest regions. These events challenge us deeply in our flesh and in our spirit.*
> *By the doings of a group of extremist protesters, who are manipulated and*
> *influenced, Cameroonians lost their lives; public and private buildings were*

destroyed; the most sacred symbols of our nation have been desecrated; economic activities have been temporarily paralyzed.
All this, you will agree, is UNACCEPTABLE.
[...] Every citizen has the right to express his opinion on any matter of national life, including through the peaceful observation of a strike action, duly declared.
[...] This right is inalienable in the democratic ideal that I have proposed to the Cameroonian people and that, on a daily basis, we build TOGETHER, patiently and obdurately.
It is not appropriate that some people want to use this framework of freedom to carry out acts of violence and seek to undermine the unity of our country.
In such circumstances, the state has a compelling duty to restore order, in the name of the law and in the interest of all. To do otherwise is to compromise our democracy; it means letting anarchy take over in the place of the rule of law.
The Cameroonian people, as one man, is committed to building a united, inclusive and bilingual nation. This is a unique experience in Africa. [...]
We are willing, following, and in the spirit of the artisans of Reunification to create a national structure whose mission will be to offer us solutions to maintain peace, consolidate the unity of our country and strengthen our will and daily practice of LIVING TOGETHER.
And that, in the strict respect of our constitution and our institutions.
Do I have to say it again? CAMEROON IS ONE AND INDIVISIBLE!
It will remain so ..." (Kame, 2018, p.93-94)

From the President's speech, a few things are worth highlighting. First, he mentioned that all Cameroonians have the right to freely express their opinions. Freedom of speech exists as long as what is said is not against the government, specifically the President. Choosing this topic as my thesis was a gamble because I felt that I could be reprimanded by the Cameroonian government if they don't agree with what they read. The arrest of protesters, the use of brutal force of the police, and the death of some anglophones are proof that freedom of expression is not a right for the Anglophones involved in this conflict.

The second thing worth highlighting is the justification he gives for the actions of the government: We are doing what we are doing to protect our democracy, the people, the nation. The Just War Theory is highlighted in this part of his speech. This idea, that

morality sometimes requires killing, is fundamental to any view that excuses the deaths of innocents as "collateral damage" (Calhoun, 2001). This theory puts the notions of ethics and morality up front to hide casualties and murders which seemed to be the strategy of President Biya in his speech. The year of 2016 ended on this note from the President of Cameroon that set the tone for 2017.

On January 12, 2017, talks between the government and the CACSC began in Bamenda but clashes and riots followed (Kame, 2018, p.96). "Despite the favorable responses, apparently made to almost all of their corporatist demands [including recruitment of 1,000 bilingual teachers and an additional grant of CFAF 2 billion for private primary and secondary schools], the teachers unions demanded the unconditional release of protesters arrested since late [...] 2016 in Anglophone Cameroon and still detained in Yaounde; and the return to the Federation" (Kame, 2018, p.97). The government wants a return to normalcy where the country is united and one which according to them federation reflects the opposite.

January 2017 marks the start of a strong repressive season against not only the West Cameroon people involved in the conflict but also anglophone civilians. A series of arrests occurred from most of the leaders of the consortium- CACSC to a radio host and the Advocate General at the Supreme court of West Cameroon (Kame, 2018, p. 97-99). The arrested leaders of CACSC and some other civilians were "accused of resorting to intimidation and terror to bring the Government of the Republic to its knees. Under national law, defendants are punishable by death with these charges" (Kame, 2018, p.100). On top of all these events, the internet network in West Cameroon is shutted down by the government (kame, 2018, p.98). Looking at these actions taken by the

government, it seems they are showing the Anglophone people the extent of their power. At the end of January, the President created a <<National Commision for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism>> under his authority as a response to some of the demands of the Anglophone lawyers, teachers and students (Kame, 2018, p.99). Responding to Cardinal Christian Tumi in an interview that aired on January 24th 2017 highlighting the desire of Anglophones to return to federalism, the government said "*federalism is a backtracking*" (Kame, 2018, p.100). Kame in his analysis perfectly summarized this stage of the crisis. He said: "Deaf to all the protests against this authoritarian and repressive drift, the government camps in its certainties and pursues in vain its symptomatic treatment of the crisis" (Kame, 2018, p.105). The next few months will be marked by acts of 'generosity' of the President. For instance, on April 20, 2016, the President restored the internet in Anglophone Cameroon after 3 months of suppression (Kame, 2018, p.106). Moreover, on August 30, 2017, "the President of the Republic [ordered] the discontinuation of the pending proceedings before the Military Tribunal of Yaounde against the leaders of the Consortium and others arrested in the context of the Anglophone crisis" (Kame, 2018, p.109). The government of Cameroon under the direction of the President showed their power through the arrest and release of the leaders of the Consortium who, if found guilty, would have gotten the death penalty. Looking at the events of January 2017, it seems that the government is creating their own form of 'justice' with a disregard for human rights.

The release of the leaders of the banned CACSC added fuel to the already burning fire. In fact, one of the leaders wrote a letter to the supporters of his cause, he said:

"I believe that fighting against the injustice and marginalization of the anglophone minority is right. And it's time to do it right. I have never been more engaged" (Kame, 2018, p.110).

Those were powerful words for Anglophones, especially separatist organizations which had become radicalized since the inception of the crisis and opposed a return to normalcy. On September 4, 2017, a semblance of return to normalcy in the form of school started but was met with a series of violent operations (Kame, 2018, p.110). Indeed, September 2017 is filled with multiple explosions from homemade bombs that injured 3 police officers (Kame, 2018, p.110). This is the period when the Anglophone side exhibited their power to the government. At the end of September 2017, there was a massive demonstration in cities of Anglophone Cameroon with some people demanding "the independence of Anglophone Cameroon" (Kame, 2018, p.111). Civilians were wounded, killed and a gendarmerie station was burned (Kame, 2018, p.111). Despite the prohibitions of the administration, on October 1, 2017, protesters flooded the streets of the main cities of Anglophone Cameroon, Buea and Bamenda. Protesters and police clashed resulting in more than a dozen dead and wounded (Kame, 2018, p.111). On that same day, the Anglophone separatists branched out of the government and created the Federal Republic of Ambazonia demanding a restoration of their independence of 1961. The English-speaking Cameroon that used to be British Cameroons gained their independence on October 1, 1961. The separatists chose that specific date not only because it is an important date in their history but also because they were never really independent after uniting with French Cameroon. According to them, their government "is validated and legitimized by the People by virtue of their response of the September 22, 2017 global demonstrations, October 1, 2017 Declaration of Independence, and

Ground Zero execution of Ghost Towns, Self Defense Initiatives, No School Policies".

This is an extract from their government page where they listed their President, Vice

President, and their Chief of Staff (Press Office, n.d.).

The formal creation of the Federal Republic of Ambazonia escalated the crisis.

Between November 6 and 10, 2017, "four soldiers of the Defense and Security Forces

[who were on duty in Anglophone Cameroon were] shot dead by terrorists claiming to

belong to the Southern Cameroons Ambazonia Consortium United Front (SCACUF)"

(Kame, 2018, p.116). Moreover, at the end of November 2017, four soldiers and two

policemen were murdered (Kame, 2018, p.116). Following these unfortunate events, the

President Paul Biya addressed the nation:

> "*I think that things are now perfectly clear for everyone: Cameroon is the victim*
> *of repeated attacks by terrorist gangs claiming a secessionist movement. In the*
> *face of the acts of aggression, I wish to reassure the Cameroonian people that all*
> *steps are being taken to contain the criminals and to ensure that peace and*
> *security are safeguarded throughout the country's national territory*" (Kame,
> 2018, p.117).

In this address from the president, we can see how he differentiates the people, the

government from these 'terrorist gangs' and 'criminals'. The separatists are now the

enemy, the others who are disrupting the peace of the nation. At this point, the

preservation of cultural heritage and identity is not the main headline of the crisis. It is

now: Cameroonian government vs Ambazonia government or separatists, who will win?

It is important to note the relationship between culture and power. They are

always interacting with each other. The Anglophone crisis was never just a cultural issue

because power always played a role. For instance, when the Anglophone lawyers first

complained about language discrimination, there was power at play because in order to

marginalize a group of people, the harm-doer needs to have power over those people. All this to say that culture and power were always present in the Anglophone crisis but there was a shift in the narrative from a cultural to a power dynamic one meaning it became a show of who is stronger and who can win the battle.

The analysis of the first two years of the crisis gives us an understanding of the progression of the crisis and its roots. From 2018 to 2022, the Cameroonian government and Anglophone separatists engaged in a power heavy fight in which lives were lost from soldiers to separatists to civilians caught in the middle of this protracted conflict. This is a snapshot of the Anglophone crisis until 2022. In the rest of this chapter, we will examine different aspects of the crisis: actors, tactics used, grievances, and human dimension.

Parties involved in the crisis

Actors on the Anglophone side

When the conflict started the main actors were lawyers, teachers, students and some civilians demanding the translation of one document, the bettering of the English education system and the preservation of their culture. The violent response of the Francophone government led to the creation of extremist groups using inhumane ways to get their point across. "Anglophone separatist groups emerge, who total some 4,000 members altogether. They are supported by Cameroon's diaspora. The most influential separatist organizations are the Ambazonia Defense Forces, Ambazonia Self-Defense Council, African People's Liberation Movement and its armed wing, the Southern Cameroons Defense Forces" (Cascais, 2021). All of those groups became the primary actors in the conflict. Their main goal which initially was to stop systemic discrimination changed into two other objectives which divided the groups. One of them was to form a

federalist government and the other more extreme was to separate from the Francophones and form their own independent state. The Ambazonia Defense Forces or ADF is the extremist group that first became known as the separatists or secessionists. Members of other Anglophone groups later joined their cause to form the "Ambazonia", a state for Cameroon's English speakers (Mapping Militant Organizations, 2019). With the support of Anglophone Cameroonians in other countries as secondary parties, separatists were able to fund their movement. Other actors that could possibly be siding with the ADF are some Francophones. It is not advertised but there could be some Francophones supporting the separatists behind the scenes with their own agenda to take down the government.

Actors on the Francophone side

On the Francophone side, the primary party is the government led by the President Paul Biya. He used his military to stop the conflict by eliminating the separatists. As much as he advertises Cameroon as a democratic country, his ruling looks more authoritarian with his government only including people who support or are coerced to support his beliefs. A secondary party that could be supporting the Cameroonian government is Nigeria. Indeed, according to an article written by The Guardian, some of the leaders of the separatist movement were arrested by Nigerian authorities in 2018 and transferred to Cameroonian authorities (Reporter, 2018). Hence, the Nigerian government could be seen as a secondary party. They could be helping the Cameroonian government because the Anglophone crisis problems are spilling in Nigeria. According to an article, "Ambazonian insurgents are also engaged in drugs, arms and human trafficking and have brought that illegal trade across the border into Nigeria" (Aboh, 2024). Here,

53

Ambazonian insurgents are separatists from their created independent state- Ambazonia. The Nigerian government could be helping the Cameroonian government to handle the security issues the Anglophone crisis is causing in Nigeria.

Anglophones and Francophones have multiple parties who each have their own agenda. The conflict is not black and white. There are different shades of gray that need to be examined. Let's take a deeper look at some of the complaints that emerged from the crisis.

Grievances

Grievances of the Anglophones

The main issue that birthed the conflict was the translation of important law documents from French to English. Because of the bilingual nature of Cameroon, those documents should have been translated into English. The brutal response of the government in face of a peaceful protest from lawyers brought other issues to the surface. Indeed, for years Francophone lawyers have been sent to work in the English region which in the eyes of some Anglophones is a disrespect of their culture and language. It seems that the government has a strong disregard for the Anglophones' system and wants it replaced by theirs. Some Anglophone teachers and students demanded a restoration and preservation of their education system. Another issue that was brought to light is the systemic discrimination of Anglophones for decades. In fact, the country has been governed by Paul Biya, a francophone, since 1982. Anglophones feel that they have less opportunities than Francophones in various domains such as education or even to be part of the government which is majorly Francophone. The birth of separatist organizations and their newly created government are the outcome of years of marginalization from the

Francophone government. The conflict started with language discrimination at the front line, evolved as a cultural and identity attack then transformed into a power dynamic crisis.

Grievances of the Francophones

These grievances are mostly not to say only the complaints of the president who represents the government. The main issue is "to restore order" as it is mediatized. In fact, the authoritarian Francophone President does not tolerate any opposition to his orders. He perceives the separatists' action as an attempt to take control of the country and marks them as terrorists. What the separatists saw as a solution to their issues, the government took it as a chosen trauma which escalated the conflict. Besides 'restoring order', some could say the president's other concern could be to maintain control of the resources coming from the Anglophones' region. "Present-day Buea [which is one of the main cities of West Cameroon] is an administrative and trade center. It has textile, construction, and wood industries, and nearby are a number of oil-palm and rubber plantations owned by the Cameroon Development Corporation" (Encyclopedia Britannica). The English-speaking regions "which contribute around 20 per cent of Cameroon's GDP[Gross Domestic Product], has had an impact on them as well as on the national economy" (*Cameroon's Anglophone crisis at the Crossroads*, 2017). Both sides are so blinded by their agendas to the point of using brutal and inhumane tactics.

Tactics Used

Tactics used by the separatists

The separatists used various tactics to get their point across. A common theme was fear. There were several attacks on students, teachers and schools. In order to

maintain a united front and pressure the government, the separatists wanted all anglophones to respect their orders which included boycotting schools and following curfews. Anyone who disobeyed would face deadly consequences. Separatists kidnapped principals of schools, killed students and teachers (Pedneault, 2021). In 2018, at least three principals were kidnapped because they had opened their schools. They were eventually released with "machete wounds"(Pedneault, 2021). In another instance, a student was shot and killed in class to make sure the Anglophone population understood the importance of the boycott of schools (Pedneault, 2021). Moreover, there were several arson attacks on schools that didn't follow the boycott. "In June 2018, UNICEF reported that 58 schools had been damaged since the beginning of the crisis in the North-West and South-West regions"(Pedneault, 2021). Lastly, multiple threats were sent to parents and teachers to keep them in line (Pedneault, 2021). Overall, it seems that the tactics used by separatists were mostly to maintain a strong front against the government and their attacks were directed towards the Anglophones disobeying their orders.

Tactics used by the government

On the other side of the conflict, the government responded to the separatists' tactics with more brutal ones. The military acting for the government uses an excessive amount of force against the demonstrators (Pedneault, 2021). In addition, torture and extrajudicial executions were common tactics used by the government. Human Rights Watch (HRW) documented many instances of the military beating up people they believed were part of the separatists (Pedneault, 2021). As an example, "On January 29,

2018, security forces beat to death [a] 22-year-old" who they believed was a member of the separatists (Pedneault, 2021).

Another strategy used by the government is their inhuman treatment of detainees. Many interviews from the HRW of some Anglophones shed light on the abuses of the government. Before any interrogation, detainees are kept "for several weeks in poor, overcrowded and unsanitary facilities"(Pedneault, 2021). On top of the mistreatment from the military, detainees are also extorted for what little they have left. Authorities ask for bribes conditional to their release even though some were imprisoned without cause.

Furthermore to discourage separatists, the government sends its military to attack villages supposedly where separatists live. In retaliation from earlier attacks by armed separatists, security forces justified their tactics of burning villages and killing dozens of people. In early 2018, the killing of one member of the security forces by separatists prompted "a retaliatory operation by security forces in Kombone in which they burned half a dozen houses and reportedly killed two civilians" (Pedneault, 2021).

A non-violent tactic of the government is their use of the media to portray separatists as terrorists and criminals whose only goal is to disrupt the 'peace' in the country. They use war oriented journalism to control the narrative by suppressing events that are against their chosen narrative. Lastly, the government is getting help from Nigeria which borders the Anglophones' region. "In early January 2018, Nigerian authorities arrested 47 Cameroonian Anglophone activists in Nigeria, including the "interim president" of the "Republic of Ambazonia" and members of his cabinet"

57

(Pedneault, 2021). The government's chosen glory is the separatists' chosen trauma which escalated the conflict. It seems as though the government used more violent tactics against separatists to 'restore order in the country' but also the government has more resources to fund their war tactics.

Human dimension of both parties

Human dimension of Anglophones

After reading different articles and analyzing the conflict, it is clear that the Anglophones and Francophones experienced the crisis differently. The Anglophones lost their family and friends in some of the riots. Some of them were severely beaten and many of them were arrested during protests. The government cut the internet on the anglophone side for about three months. Due to the lack of teachers, burned schools and the unsafe feeling of going to school, many Anglophones lost years of school. With the crisis boiling came the rise of separatists who committed the most inhumane acts. The separatists in Cameroon are "fighting to create an independent Anglophone state of "Ambazonia" since 2016" (Cameroon: Separatist Abuses in Anglophone Regions, 2022). Armed separatist groups are kidnapping, terrorizing, and killing civilians across the English-speaking regions with no apparent fear of being held to account by either their own leaders or Cameroonian law enforcement" (Cameroon: Separatist Abuses in Anglophone Regions, 2022).

Most Cameroonian articles written about the crisis described the separatists as the ones bringing chaos to the country. One rare article by the Washington Post contained testimonies from the displaced Anglophones telling a different story. According to them, the francophone military is the one killing people, burning villages. Interviews from

58

anglophone civilians who were displaced are depicting the horrific inhumane acts of the francophone military ("killing a pregnant woman who could not lie down"). Some feel that the government goal is to kill anglophones. This leads to anglophone civilians willing to join the extreme separatists.

"Human Rights Watch (HRW) reports some 4,000 people have died in clashes, with around 60,000 forced to flee to neighboring Nigeria. It says about 850,000 children are unable to attend school due to the ongoing conflict. Some 2.3 million out of the 5 million Anglophone Cameroonians depend on humanitarian aid, according to HRW" (Cascais 2021).

Human dimension of Francophones

On the other side, some Francophones have experienced the loss of their family and friends sent by the government as part of the army. In addition, some lost their relatives that were sent to the English speaking region for work. In fact, many Francophones are sent to the English part of the country after they graduate to work. The education department assigns people to specific workplaces, usually teachers, lawyers and doctors. Emotionally, some live in fear of retaliation from the other party or just finding themselves in the crossfire.

The military from the Francophone side is claiming the Anglophone population doesn't support them even though they are trying to help them by killing the extreme separatists. They are saying that they have never burned innocent villages or killed anglophone civilians. There is video proof of them burning an anglophone village but it's still met with their denial. A government official francophone said " this can never take place and will never take place" talking about negotiating the split of

Cameroon. He described it as an "amputation" (WP Company 2019). "As of June 11, 2018, the government said armed separatists had killed 32 soldiers, 42 gendarmes, 7 police officers, 2 prison wardens and 1 eco-guard in 123 attacks since the beginning of the crisis. In some cases, according to the government, bodies of security forces personnel were found mutilated or beheaded" (Pedneault, 2021). Living in an extreme dictatorship, some Francophones are scared to help or say anything in favor of the Anglophones as they know they will either end up in prison or dead. A prime example, it's the arrest of Maurice Kamto, the head of the MRC (Cameroon Renaissance Movement). He was sentenced to 8 months in prison February 2019 for "inciting violence" but really protesting against systemic discrimination (Cascais 2021).

Now that we have looked at the conflict from its historical background to the inception of the crisis in 2016, our next chapter will focus on the shift of the nature of the Anglophone crisis from cultural to power.

References

Aboh, A. (2024). *Nigeria's security problems deepen as Anglophone insurgency in*

Cameroon spills across border. The Conversation.

https://theconversation.com/nigerias-security-problems-deepen-as-anglophone-insurgency-in-cameroon-spills-across-border-223078

Calhoun, L. (2001). REGARDING WAR REALISM. *International Journal on World Peace*, *18*(4), 37–61. Retrieved March 19, 2023, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/20753328

Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis at the Crossroads. (2017, November 6). Crisis Group. Retrieved October 3, 2022, from https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/250-cameroons-anglophone-crisis-crossroads

Cameroon: Separatist Abuses in Anglophone Regions. (2022, June 27). Human Rights Watch. Retrieved October 3, 2022, from https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/06/27/cameroon-separatist-abuses-anglophone-regions

Cascais, A. (2021, October 1). *5 years of Violent Civil War in Cameroon* . dw.com. Retrieved November 14, 2022, from https://www.dw.com/en/separatism-in-cameroon-5-years-of-violent-civil-war/a-59369417

Encyclopedia Britannica, inc. (n.d.). *Buea*. Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved November 19, 2022, from https://www.britannica.com/place/Buea

Legal Information Institute. (n.d.). *Federalism*. Legal Information Institute. Retrieved November 19, 2022, from https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/federalism

Mapping Militant Organizations. "Ambazonia Defense Forces." Stanford University. Last modified April 2019. Retrieved November 19, 2022, from

https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/ambazonia-defense-forces

Pedneault, J. (2021, September 6). *"these killings can be stopped"*. Human Rights Watch. Retrieved December 4, 2022, from https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/07/19/these-killings-can-be-stopped/abuses-government-and-separatist-groups-cameroons

Press Office. (n.d.). *Who we are*. https://www.ambazoniagov.org/index.php/about-us/who-we-are

Reporter, G. S. (2018, January 7). Cameroon separatist leader detained in Nigeria as unrest grows. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/07/cameroon-separatist-leader-julius-ayuk-tabe-detained-in-nigeria

WP Company. (2019, February 5). *Cameroon's crackdown on its English-speaking minority is fueling support for a secessionist movement*. The Washington Post.

Retrieved October 17, 2022, from
https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/world/cameroon-anglophone-crisis/

2016-11-28 University of Buea | Scholars at Risk. (2016, November 28). Scholars at
Risk. https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2016-11-28-university-buea/

Chapter V- The Shift: from Cultural to Power Dynamic Narrative

Cameroon is a bilingual country with French and English as the official languages due to its colonial background. Language is an important part of the culture of people. According to an article, "Written and spoken words are an art form, a way for values and traditions to be passed down for generations. When a language is lost, part of that culture is lost" (Rogers, 2020). The article more specifically states that "language is history and discourse, customs and heritage" (Rogers, 2020). In view of these statements, we wonder how bilingualism shows in Cameroon. In his analysis on the survival of bilingualism in Cameroon, Fon (2019) mentioned that "ordinary Cameroonians [...think] It is Cameroon that is bilingual not Cameroonians" (p.58). As a native of Cameroon, I can attest to this because living in French Cameroon, even though English was part of our curriculum, it didn't leave the classroom. Having this picture in mind, how can bilingualism or specifically French and English both survive in Cameroon?

In the complex socio-political landscape of the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon, tribal languages also play a multifaceted role. These languages, representing diverse ethnic groups, serve as vessels of cultural identity and solidarity, fostering a sense of community among their speakers. The President of Cameroon, Paul Biya, is part of the Beti tribe and his government is reflective of that. Indeed, the majority of his government is from the Beti tribe and speaks the tribal language. In addition to having a majorly Francophone government, Cameroon also has a dominant Beti government. Even within the Francophone community, there are divisions because of the multitude of tribes. There

is a power imbalance between the tribes in Cameroon that could be worth analyzing further as its own research topic.

The Anglophone crisis was born out of a language discrimination incident that attacked the legal system of Anglophone Cameroon. Indeed, Anglophone lawyers demanded the translation in English of some legal documents which according to the bilingual nature of Cameroon should have been done (Kame, 2018, p.86-87). In addition, "The Ministry of Justice deployed magistrates to Common Law jurisdictions [English system] who lacked a sound knowledge of the Common Law or sometimes even fluency in the English language" (Fon, 2019, p.59). These were attacks on the English language, on the Anglophone culture and on their identities. In their analysis on language as a crucial value of culture, Smolicz (1980) states "When language provides the core of an ethnic or minority culture, and where the dominant majority's ideological system is that of linguistic monism, the individual's chances for constructing a viable personal ethnic linguistic system become somewhat more problematic" (p.9). The Anglophone crisis shows how problematic constructing and preserving the English language is with a central dominant Francophone government.

Other marginalization issues that led to the eruption of the crisis are related to what Fon (2019) calls "Francophonization" of the Cameroonian administration (p.59). It goes hand in hand with the concept of linguistic monism mentioned earlier. In the case of the Anglophone crisis, it is shown via systemic violence. Indeed, the Anglophone teachers protested at the beginning of the conflict "against the progressive substitution of the education system of Francophone Cameroon for their educational system inherited from that of the United Kingdom" (Kame, 2018, p.89). This was one of the attacks on the

Anglophone education system. The other was portrayed through the protest of students from an Anglophone University demanding that English be the sole language of instruction (*2016-11-28 University of Buea | Scholars at Risk*, 2016). Both of these grievances are cries from Anglophones against the erasure of their language, their culture.

The Anglophone conflict emerged out of the necessity of Anglophones to protect their cultural heritage. However, unmet needs, retaliations from the Francophone government and the newly formed Ambazonia government resulting in multiple lives lost are some of the weights that shifted the focus of the crisis from a cultural one to a power heavy conflict. Let's examine this change in focus through the lenses of various conflict resolution concepts.

Role of Ethnocentrism in power dynamics

Ethnocentrism is the first concept we will use to explicate the shift from culture to power. It was developed by Milton Bennett who defines an ethnocentric as "assuming that the worldview of one's own culture is central to all reality" (Bennett, 1993, p.30). The government of Cameroon based on the French centralized system from its inception has been slowly following this agenda of 'francophonization' mentioned earlier. How does ethnocentrism show up in the Anglophone crisis both in the Cameroon government and the Anglophone separatists side? Let us explore this question in light of Milton Bennett's three stages of ethnocentrism.

Denial is the first stage of ethnocentrism. It is "the purest form of ethnocentrism" and a person in this stage "believes that cultural diversity occurs elsewhere" (Bennett, 1993, p.30). It can be divided into two sub-dimension. The first is isolation defined as a way to limit interactions where there is no experience of cultural differences. The second

65

is separation described as "the intentional erection of physical or social barriers to create distance from cultural difference as a means of maintaining a state of denial" (Bennett,1993, p.30-32).

The Cameroonian government when created opted for the bilingual option which is a positive acknowledgement of cultural differences but during the process of its implementation the tendency seemed to indirectly impose French culture. During the crisis, in view of the grievances of Anglophones, President Paul Biya created in January 2017 a National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism (Fon, 2019, p.62). One of the roles of this commission includes "monitoring the implementation of constitutional provisions establishing English and French as two official languages of equal status" (Fon, 2019, p.62). In these actions from the President, there is no presence of isolation or separation. It appears to be the opposite of it. United and indivisible are two adjectives used by President Biya to describe Cameroon in most of his speeches. We conclude that the Cameroonian government is not in the denial stage of ethnocentrism but what about the Anglophone separatists?

The rise of separatists in the Anglophone crisis makes us question if the two forms of denial apply to them. Even though they are not officially recognized, they separated from the main government and created their own- the Federal government of Ambazonia with its president. The division is based on their willingness to see English and anglo saxon culture prioritized on their territory other than French and subsequent French culture. They believe that their culture should be the norm rather than what the Cameroon government wants to impose on them. They are fighting to preserve their cultural heritage. Therefore, as the Cameroonian government, separatists are also

66

rejecting the dominant French culture, and put theirs in the center. Both of the parties in spite of official discourse on unity or acceptance are not aiming to promote cultural diversity. This leads us to explore the second stage of ethnocentrism which is defense.

Defense is a step above denial in which people "recognize specific cultural differences and create specific defenses against them" (Bennett, 1993, p.35). Bennett (1993) identifies three forms of defense: denigration, superiority and reversal. Denigration is a form of negative stereotyping in which to counter the threat of difference we perceive it negatively. Superiority "emphasizes the positive evaluation of one's own culture status" where "cultural difference needs to be overcome for the construction or maintenance of superiority" (1993, p.37). Bennett (1993) notes that superiority or praising one's culture implies denigrating the other. Finally, reverse is the "denigration of one's own culture and an attendant assumption of the superiority of a different culture" (1993, p.39). Bennett clarifies that someone in the reverse stage is still ethnocentric but the central culture has changed (1993).

Relating this back to the Anglophone crisis, the government of Cameroon could be in the denigration and superiority forms of defense. The denigration is shown through their use of negative stereotypes. Indeed, during one of President Biya's addresses to the nation, he labeled separatists as criminals and terrorists (Kame, 2018, p.117). This exemplifies the denigration form of defense. Moreover, there are various occurrences of superiority shown by the government of Cameroon. One of them is the positive portrayal by the media of a united and indivisible Cameroon which mainly represents the Francophone government working towards the good of all Cameroon citizens. They are trying to overcome cultural differences between Francophones and Anglophones to

maintain their centralized power. Superiority insinuates denigration so the government of Cameroon are simultaneously involved in both of these forms of defense.

On the side of the Anglophone separatists, there are traces of denigration in their way of approaching the conflict. Since the reunification, difference has been a threat with a dominant Francophone forward government that undervalues their culture. Separatists look at the Cameroonian government negatively. It represents their oppressor which is explained with years of systemic violence and more specifically during the conflict, state violence. Moreover, colonizer is another negative stereotyping word the separatists used to describe the Cameroonian government. In fact, separatists are demanding their independence which implies that the Francophone government had been colonizing them all along. In addition, there is a willingness to express their superiority against the Cameroon government. They believe that their traditional culture is the most powerful of them all. Their resistance against the Cameroon government is based on this belief and the fighters are convinced that they will win the war against "the weak and corrupt Cameroon government" as the separatists described them.

We observed that because of the presence of denigration and superiority, neither the Cameroonian government nor the Anglophone separatists are in the reversal stage of defense. They do not have any appreciation for the other's culture that they can endorse and embrace as their own. Let us now move to the last stage of ethnocentrism called minimization.

Milton Bennett (1993) defines minimization beautifully as "the last attempt to preserve the centrality of one's own worldview [that] involves an effort to bury difference under the weight of cultural similarities" (p.41). There are two forms of minimization:

68

physical universalism and transcendent universalism. In physical universalism, "human beings in all cultures have physical characteristics in common that dictate behavior which is basically understandable to any other human being" (Bennett, 1993, p.42). This is to say, we can all understand each other because we share similar physical characteristics and behaviors. On the other hand, transcendent universalism "suggests that all human beings, whether they know it or not, are products of some single transcendent principle" (Bennett, 1993, p.43). Developing this idea, Bennett (1993) mentioned the Marxist notion of historical imperative "wherein all people are subject to the same historical forces; economic and political laws that are thought to affect all people the same way" (p.43). Minimization is highlighted by this idea of sameness to hide cultural differences.

Relating it back to the Anglophone crisis, the Cameroonian government appears to be in this stage of minimization mainly under transcendent universalism. Indeed they are preserving the centralization of power by hiding differences under the slogan 'Cameroon is one and indivisible' from speeches given by the President and members of his government. The Cameroonian government describes the nation as a democratic country which the President highlighted in his first address to the nation about the Anglophone crisis (Kame, 2018, p.93-94). However, the country has been in the hands of an authoritarian President since 1982. An example of a message of sameness is the fact all Cameroonians have a shared colonial history and laws in place apply and affect all Cameroonians equally. During the crisis, the government of Cameroon used these subliminal messages of similarities to hide differences and inequalities surfacing in order to keep controlling the narratives.

On the other hand, the separatists are fighting to maintain the differences inherited from French and British colonization. They would like to step away from the government because of the fear of having their culture and identity desecrated. As the minority group, they don't have room to express minimization even though they believe in the power of their culture.

To synthesize this part of our analysis, ethnocentrism plays an important role in the Anglophone crisis. It highlights the sense of cultural superiority felt by each party of the conflict. Since its inception the Cameroon government has made it clear that what they say is good and should be applied to all without exception. Any opposition to them, even peaceful protests, is followed by brutal sanctions. Because power is centralized and controlled by the Francophone government, culture has also become centralized. On the other hand, the separatists are fighting as they would like their culture to be at the center of their own lives. The Anglophone crisis brought up to the surface the ethnocentric nature of the government and the separatists at various degrees. With power and control the Cameroonian government is aiming to maintain their culture as the dominant one and continue their erasure agenda of Anglophone culture. Anglophone separatists are fighting to ensure their culture is preserved.

On one side we have a powerful dominant Francophone Cameroon that tolerates cultural differences under a centralized governing system. On the other side, we have the Anglophone separatists that formed their own government to save their culture from extinction. What else can follow this scenario except a war where the narrative reads: Cameroonian government vs Anglophone separatist, who will prevail? This question

prompts us to examine the concepts of domination and subordination as they relate to the ongoing crisis.

Role of domination and subordination in power dynamics

This section of Chapter five will examine the concepts of domination and subordination from Jean Baker Miller's lenses and how it relates to the Anglophone crisis. As a prelude to the following paragraphs, 80 percent of Cameroon's population is Francophone and the rest Anglophone. Since the reunification in 1961, the Francophone government has ruled Cameroon.

Jean Baker Miller wrote a chapter titled *Domination and Subordination* which talks about the differences between temporary and permanent inequality. Temporary inequality is when "the lesser party is *socially* defined as unequal" (Miller, 2007, p.109). Here, the superior party has more to give to the inferior party such as "some ability or valuable quality which [they are] supposed to impart to the "lesser" person" (Miller, 2007, p.109). Since it is temporary, the end goal is to sever the relationship of inequality. Miller (2007) crucially points out the important role of power in these relationships in which the superior party holds all the power. She goes on to say that the goal of temporary inequality is only achieved if the superior party is willing to end the relationship.

The two main parties involved in the Anglophone crisis are the Cameroonian government represented by President Biya and the Anglophone separatists. The superior party in this conflict is the Cameroonian government and the Anglophones are in the inferior box. In temporary inequality, the use of words such as superior and inferior echoes the hope of a change from inequality to equality. Is this the case in the

Anglophone crisis? The years of marginalization suffered by Anglophones highlighted in this crisis would indicate otherwise. The nature of the inequalities in this conflict is not temporary.

The other form of inequality described by Miller is permanent inequality which better fits in the Anglophone crisis. This type of inequality gives instructions on the enforcement of inequality without the transition from inequality to equality (Miller, 2007, p.110). It is when "some people or groups of people are defined as unequal by means of what sociologists call ascription; that is, your birth defines you" (Miller, 2007, p.110). Criteria varies from race to nationality. Under the umbrella of permanent inequality, there comes the concepts of domination versus subordination.

Since the reunification of 1961, the Anglophone community in Cameroon has been systematically marginalized. English-speaking people are born in a society that assigns them the 'unequal' characteristic which they then experience throughout their lives. Decades of discrimination shows the level to which inequality is highlighted in Cameroon. With Francophones making 80 percent of the population and tightly holding governmental power, the path from inequality to equality seems to have disappeared. In this conflict, the Cameroonian government is the dominant party and the separatist group or as they are calling themselves, the Federal Republic of Ambazonia is the subordinate one. In permanent inequality, discrimination is crystallized within the society. The Anglophone crisis surfaced the frustrations of separatists who do not want to be subordinates anymore.

Elaborating on permanent inequality, Miller says that the presence of a dominant group assumes a subordinate one which is labeled as flawed. "The actions and words of

the dominant group tend to be destructive of the subordinates" (Miller, 2007, p.110). According to Miller (2007), dominant groups assign acceptable roles for subordinate groups. Because the latter are born with deficiencies, it is impossible for them to change or develop so the 'acceptable roles' are the only ones they can perform (Miller, 2007, p.111). Miller goes on to say if the subordinate group does what it is supposed to do or expected to do- "submissiveness, dependency, lack of initiative, inability to act, to decide, to think"- "they are considered well-adjusted" (Miller, 2007, p.111). On the other hand, if subordinates step out of the box they are confined in, they are labeled as abnormal. Hence, society has no place for them because "the dominant group [...] legitimizes the unequal relationship and incorporates it into society's guiding concepts" (Miller, 2007, p.111). The dominant group portrays the model for "normal human relationships" (Miller, 2007, p.112). Everything they do is normal and should not be questioned whether they are treating others destructively or creating false explanations.

The Cameroonian government was created by Francophones who are the dominant group in Cameroon. They hold the most important governmental positions and usually come from the political party of the President. The Anglophones are assigned lesser important positions in every domain of society. For instance, at the beginning of the crisis, the Cameroonian government was sending Francophone magistrates to West Cameroon. It seems that any position that holds some form of power should be occupied by a Francophone even on the Anglophone side. As long as the Anglophones didn't complain, they were part of Cameroon society because they stayed in the inequality box that was designed for them. The moment they made their voices heard through protests

and peaceful demonstrations, they went 'against their nature' or specifically against the wishes of the dominant group- Cameroonian government.

The following quotes from Miller's work are critical to her analysis of domination and subordination: "What dominant groups usually cannot act on, or even see, is that the situation of inequality in fact deprives them particularly on the psychological level". "Dominants are usually convinced that the way things are is right and good, not only for them but especially for the subordinates" (Miller, 2007, p.112). Dominant groups are blinded by what they believe to be right. Thus, they cannot see that the unequal relationships they created and are trying to maintain are detrimental to subordinate groups but also to them. This is when "inequality has created a state of conflict" (Miller, 2007, p.112).

The dominant Cameroonian government has created 'a perfect functioning society' for all its citizens. The Anglophone crisis is proof that the foundation of society is deeply rooted in inequality. However, is the crisis a wake up call for the dominant group in this conflict? It does not seem so. In fact, because the government believes that their system is flawless, they see this crisis as a virus that needs to be eradicated. They justify their violent actions in the crisis as a response to protect the people of the nation which to an extent is the truth. However, it is also to maintain power and control over the nation. This is where we see a push back from the Anglophone separatists who also want power and control of their created republic.

Miller (2007) mentions that it is difficult for dominants to understand subordinates because they set the norm without consulting all its people. Kame (2018) talking about the conflict adds to the previous idea when he says "Ignorance, arrogance,

74

deafness and self-sufficiency are indeed the dominant postures and traits of those who have been in charge of the operational management of this Anglophone crisis since its inception" (p.12). Dominants are blinded by their righteousness in a state of conflict. For years, Anglophones in Cameroon as the subordinate group have been swallowing their pride and concentrating on what Miller calls "basic survival" (2007, p.113). However, the dosage of inequalities increased to the point where they couldn't hold their frustrations in and decided to march in the streets. "Open, self-initiated action in its own self-interest must [...] be avoided [as it] can, and still do, literally result in death for some subordinate groups" (Miller, 2007, p.113). The deaths and unjustifiable long imprisonment of protesters saw the rise in demands for independence because the subordinate separatists see separation as their only alternative to gain power and control over themselves. According to Miller (2007), the subordinate group has more insight about the dominant group than vice versa because they spend years accommodating and pleasing the dominant group (p. 113). The separatists in this case have spent years observing the behavior of the dominant Cameroonian government and do not see a world in which they could be equal to Francophones if they remain part of Cameroon. On the other hand, the dominant group believes in their expertise about subordinates that is usually nonexistent because they make decisions for all (Miller, 2007, p.113). Under their ethnocentric umbrella, the Cameroonian government believes that they are experts on the Anglophone subject but it is not the case. Through demonstrations and protests, separatists developed their sense of self and realized what they were capable of. They stepped outside of their inequality box to stand their ground. However, as Miller (2007) says "Mutually enhancing interaction is not probable between unequals" so conflict is unavoidable (p.

75

114). Now that the dominant Cameroonian government and the subordinate Anglophone separatists are interacting, the narratives have changed with the separatists aiming to gain power and control over a portion of Cameroon. The separatists have developed their unrecognized Federal Republic of Ambazonia with a base of nationalism.

Nationalism spicing up the crisis

Nationalism, a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, extends beyond geopolitical boundaries to permeate the very fabric of human identity. At its core, nationalism embodies a sense of collective belonging and shared allegiance to a distinct community. While it is often analyzed through historical, political, or economic lenses, the psychological dimension of nationalism remains a pivotal and intriguing aspect. The psychological definition of nationalism is "the conviction that one belongs to a certain human grouping, associated with a particular territory held together by a common history, language, customs, laws, social institutions, values, religion, ways of life, kinship and racial characteristics, which differ significantly from those of other peoples, and set one apart even from neighbors who live in close geographic proximity" (Mack, 1983, p.48).

The Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon provides a compelling case study to explore the intricate psychological dimensions of nationalism. The crisis, rooted in historical grievances and political dynamics, unveils how national identity and resilience shape individuals' perceptions, reactions, and collective narratives.

The Anglophone regions of Cameroon have historical ties to British colonial rule, distinct from the Francophone majority. The imposition of French-centric policies ignited a sense of marginalization and cultural suppression among Anglophones. Colonialism

76

breeds nationalism. This historical backdrop laid the foundation for the emergence of nationalist sentiments, grounded in a distinct linguistic and cultural identity.

Psychological theories, such as Tajfel's Social Identity Theory, become pertinent in understanding how perceived marginalization contributes to the crystallization of national identity (Ashforth & Mael, 2004). The Anglophone population, feeling excluded from key political and economic decisions, underwent a collective psychological process of identity formation as a means of asserting their distinctiveness. The driving forces of nationalism include the "breakdown of traditional, social, cultural and religious institutions and affiliations, accompanied simultaneously by the increasing threat to individual security posed through frequent local wars, especially when technologically advanced weaponry are in the possession of most of one's potential enemies" (Mack, 1983, p.48). This statement by Mack describes the grievances of the Anglophones in the crisis.

In addition, the Anglophone Crisis exemplifies Benedict Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1995). The use of national symbols, flags, and anthems in both the Anglophone and Francophone regions becomes a psychological battleground. Symbols, charged with emotional significance, reinforce group identity and contribute to the creation of distinct imagined communities within the broader nation. The separatist Anglophones have created their own unrecognized independent nation that includes a new flag and a new government separate from the Cameroonian government shortly after the crisis erupted.

Furthermore, confirmation bias and the fundamental attribution error are evident in the interpretation of historical events. Individuals on both sides may selectively

77

emphasize aspects that align with their narrative while attributing negative actions to inherent characteristics of the 'other.' This cognitive bias contributes to the deepening divide between Anglophone and Francophone communities. With narratives being controlled on both sides by the extremists and the people in power, the people's national identity is intensified. This is a clear version of ingroup vs outgroup dynamics. Separatists believe they have nothing in common with the Francophone government and vice versa.

Understanding the psychological dimensions of the Anglophone Crisis provides insights into potential pathways for resolution. Psychosocial interventions, dialogue initiatives, and policies acknowledging cultural diversity can address the deep-seated psychological factors fueling the conflict. The next part of this chapter will look at the competing and cooperating aspect of the Anglophone crisis mainly through the lenses of Morton Deutsch.

Role of Competition and Cooperation in Power dynamics

The course and outcome of a conflict is determined by whether the participants in the conflict have a cooperative orientation or a competitive one (Deutsch, 2006). The Anglophone crisis of Cameroon has been kept alive due to its destructive competitive aspect. In this section, we want to look at how competition plays a role in the conflict. In addition, we want to analyze failed cooperation attempts and what a constructive cooperation approach would look like.

What does competition look like in this protracted conflict? An article puts it simply in the words of Morton Deutsch, "in [a] competitive situation if one swims, the other must sink." (Spangler, 2003). The Anglophone crisis started because Anglophones'

78

needs were not being met, the main one being equal opportunity in all aspects of life. The Francophone government interpreted the Anglophone's protest as an act of disobedience and direct attack. That is when Deutsch's notion of competition saw light. Each side of the conflict wanted to win and the only way to victory they could see was by sinking the other. What started as a cry for help turned into a battlefield with the sole purpose of dominating the other.

The Francophone government represented by President Biya is fighting against the extremist Anglophones (separatists): this is the main headline of the conflict. They are competing against each other with one side- separatists- fighting to be recognized as an independent state and the other - Francophone government- fighting to keep all parts of Cameroon unchanged. At a glance, both sides have different goals which makes it easier for competition to take over cooperation. Deutsch's concept of negative interdependence applies perfectly to this conflict:"the goals are linked in such a way that the amount or probability of goal attainment is negatively correlated with the amount or probability of the other's goal attainment" (Deutsch, 2006, p.24) Both sides can't attain their goals as long as there is a plethora of competitiveness.

Before the eruption of the crisis in 2016, Cameroon was already separated between Francophones who are the majority living in one part of the country and the Anglophones, the minority, living in another. Since the conflict started, the chasm between both sides has deepened: separatists created their own independent state called Ambazonia (Cascais 2021). Contact between both sides is close to none. Competition here is heightened by what Newcomb calls autistic hostility. It is this idea that mutual avoidance decreases opportunities for learning information that could disconfirm

perceptions of the other's motives. (Brewer & Miller, 1996) The growing gap between both groups decreases the chance for cooperation to see the light. Brewer and Miller (1996) put forward this idea that differences and hostility between groups are increased by competition. Deutsch talks about the negative characteristics of competitive processes which include communication impairment and "suspicion of one another's intentions" (Deutsch, 2006, p.28). In the Anglophone crisis, continuous false promises from the Francophone government led to distrust which ruined communication between the two sides. It may seem that the conflict was solely characterized by competitive processes. However, throughout the evolution of the crisis, there were some cooperation attempts that were unfortunately unsuccessful.

At the beginning of the crisis, Cameroon's prime minister initiated open negotiations with the Anglophones' regions but he had no "concrete proposals" and was "perhaps expecting that the promise of dialogue and his presence would be enough to end the strike" (*Cameroon's Anglophone crisis at the Crossroads*, 2017). In this instance, cooperation failed because the Francophone government was still expecting the separatists to surrender, to return to their subordinate inequality box. Deutsch's negative interdependence was present so no cooperative approach could emerge.

Another dialogue attempt happened in 2019 when the president, Paul Biya, announced that a 5-day national dialogue will happen on September 30th (Cascais 2021). Highlighted in an article, he said the purpose of the dialogue was to "examine within our constitution the ways and means by which the deep hopes of the people from the north and southwest, but also of all other parts of our nation, can be answered" (Köpp, 2019). This may seem like the starting point of cooperation between both sides. Unfortunately,

this attempt was viewed as a facade by the separatists. Most of the leaders of separatists invited to the dialogue were in the Cameroonian prison. Hence, the ones wanting to attend were scared of being arrested. This could have been a tactic of the government to win the conflict by imprisoning the main actors of the opposition. All these cooperation attempts failed, so what does positive cooperation look like?

First, it is important to talk about positive interdependence of Deutsch where "each side's goals are tied together in such a way that the chance of one side attaining its goal is increased by the probability of the other side successfully attaining its goal" (Spangler, 2003). In order to walk the path of constructive resolution process, both sides must develop a relationship of trust with mutually beneficial options for settlement (Spangler, 2003). This is a slow and delicate process. Contact between both sides in a neutral safe environment could be the first step. Contact hypothesis of intergroup relations by Allport states that contact between people of opposing groups should decrease hostility and increase mutual knowledge and acquaintance (Brewer & Miller, 1996). This could be a good concept to apply as the first remedy to the crisis. After trust is built, dialogue attempts could happen in an environment that is safe for both parties. For instance, before initiating any form of negotiation, there could be small groups or someone representing both sides meeting with a mediator to talk about an aspect of the conflict they both have in common that is too often disregarded: the human dimension.

In addition to contact between both groups, multiple social interactions and multiple mutual cooperative activities need to occur to build some foundations for cooperative peace (Brewer & Miller, 1996). Overtime, when both sides become more cooperative than competitive, we can talk about Deutsch's cooperative situation in which

"the goals are so linked that everybody 'sinks or swims' together" (Spangler, 2003). We hope for this to happen one day.

In conclusion, competition in the Anglophone crisis will only lead to a larger gap between both parties. Autistic hostility and negative interdependence are both present in the crisis as concepts that heightened competition. Cooperation can only be possible with more positive interactions between both sides. The course and outcome of the Anglophone crisis would be a positive one if cooperation overshadows competition. In the last chapter of our analysis we will summarize our analysis and critically analyze possible outcomes to the Anglophone crisis.

References

Anderson, B. (1995) Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, 2nd edn, New York: Verso. ch.11. Memory and Forgetting pp. 187-206

Ashforth, B. E., & Mael, F. (2004). Social identity theory and the organization. *Organizational identity: A reader*, 134-160. [Social identity theory and the organization](#)

Bennett, M. (1993). "Towards Ethnorelativism: A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity." *Education For the Intercultural Experience*, edited by R. Michael Paige, Intercultural Press, 1993, pp.21-72.

Brewer, M. & Miller, N. (1996). Intergroup Contact, Cooperation, and Competition: Does Togetherness Make Friends? In Intergroup Relations (pp. 107-133). Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole Publishing.

Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis at the Crossroads. (2017, November 6). Crisis Group. Retrieved February 25, 2023, from https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/250-cameroons-anglophone-crisis-crossroads

Cascais, A. (2021, January 10). *Separatism in Cameroon: 5 years of Violent Civil War*. DW.COM. Retrieved February 25, 2023, from https://www.dw.com/en/separatism-in-cameroon-5-years-of-violent-civil-war/a-59369417

Deutsch, M. (2006). Cooperation and competition. In M. Deutsch, P. T. Coleman, & E. C. Marcus (Eds.), *The handbook of conflict resolution: Theory and practice* (pp. 23–42). Wiley Publishing.

Fon, N. N. A. (2019). Official Bilingualism in Cameroon: An Endangered Policy? *African Studies Quarterly*, *18*(2), 55–66.

Kamé, B. P. (2018). *The anglophone crisis in Cameroon*. L'Harmattan.

Köpp, D. (2019, September 30). *Cameroon holds dialogue on the anglophone crisis* . dw.com. Retrieved February 25, 2023, from https://www.dw.com/en/cameroon-holds-dialogue-on-anglophone-crisis/a-50640762

Mack, J. (1983). Nationalism and the self. *Psychohistory Review, 11*(2-3), 47–69

Miller, J. B. (2007). "Domination and Subordination." *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States*, edited by Paula Rothenberg, Worth Publishers, 2007, pp. 107-116.

Rogers, Natalie. (2020) *Saving a language, preserving a culture*. UNM Newsroom. https://news.unm.edu/news/saving-a-language-preserving-a-culture

Smolicz, J. J. (1980). Language as a Core Value of Culture. RELC Journal, 11(1), 1-13.
https://doi.org/10.1177/003368828001100101

Spangler, B. (2003) *Competitive and cooperative approaches to conflict*, *Beyond Intractability*. Available at:
https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/competitive_cooperative_frames
(Accessed: February 25, 2023).

Chapter VI- Conclusion and Findings

Summary of findings

The Anglophone crisis in Cameroon is the result of various factors. It is deeply rooted in colonialism where the country was arbitrarily divided into two. The French Cameroon inherited the centralized governing system from France and the English Cameroons inherited a more liberal approach of governing. After independence followed by the reunification of both sides, we started seeing the consequences of binding a dominant French government with a minority English side. Series of systemic violence against the English- speaking minority came after the unification. Because colonialism breeds nationalism, we saw the rise of nationalist sentiments in both the English and the French side right after independence that intensified for Anglophones after years of marginalization. The excess of discrimination mixed with ethnocentrism that highlights a heavy power imbalance and the violent reaction of the government in the face of peaceful Anglophone protests shifted the big picture of the crisis from a fear of Anglophone's culture erasure to a power battle between the Francophone government and the Anglophone separatists or as they call themselves the Federal Republic of Ambazonia. The concepts of domination versus subordination of Miller blended with the concept of competition described by Deutsch set the scene for the perfect climate of a power heavy conflict.

All of this to say that both our hypotheses in Chapter I were right. Indeed, cultural issues are at the core of the Anglophone crisis. Cameroon is a fusion of two different cultures inherited from colonialism. With an ethnocentric Francophone government,

Anglophones have not been prioritized to say the least. The fear of having their culture slowly erased is what prompted protests of Anglophones. However, cultural issues are not the only factors that led to the eruption of the crisis. The hypothesis that best describes the conflict is: language discrimination and cultural issues mixed with power dynamic issues created the perfect condition for a violent protracted conflict and hence the worst condition for peace to flourish. Talking about peace, have there been any attempts by the international community to resolve the crisis?

The international community response to the crisis has been disappointing particularly the African Union (AU) response. Following visits by the AU chairperson in 2018 and 2019, the organization only put an emphasis on their "unwavering commitment to the unity and territorial integrity of Cameroon" (Beseng and al., 2023, p.98). This statement highlights their support of the Cameroonian government who wants to keep the country united and indivisible. Moreover, the AU's Peace and Security Council refused to place the Anglophone crisis on their agenda. Could it be because Cameroon is a member of the council? The AU has not made a concrete attempt to resolve the crisis. The United Nations (UN) is another organization that has failed to put the crisis on their agenda. Although the UN has called both sides to cease fire with a guarantee of humanitarian access, the Anglophone crisis has not been on the agenda of the UN Security Council (Beseng and al., 2023). The Swiss government is the only one that proposed a peace initiative offering mediation in March 2019. However, it never saw the light of day due to the refusal of the Cameroonian government to partake in it (Beseng and al., 2023). Other organizations like the Human Rights Watch and International Crisis Group have conducted research and offered policy recommendations to the Cameroonian government

(Mutah, 2022). Some international organizations are trying to contribute the best way they can to resolve the crisis. However, the Anglophone crisis needs more pressure and attention from the international community like the UN.

Some local figures that hold powerful positions have spoken about the Anglophone crisis in hope to shed light on the possibility of a peaceful dialogue between both parties. In the Catholic church, Archbishop Samuel Kleda who is the president of the bishop's conference, has spoken about the crisis highlighting dialogue as the path to reconciliation (Chimtom, 2018). However, many clergymen in the Anglophone side of Cameroon criticized him stating that he failed to mention important facts and to show the uniqueness of the Anglophone crisis(Chimtom, 2018). Religious figures could have a positive impact on the crisis if they could only join forces. If they come together, Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, priests of traditional religions and others, they could help to resolve the crisis if the conflicting parties, especially the Cameroonian government, give them free rein.

Moreover, the end of the crisis may require greater direct involvement of the traditional leaders of the regions concerned, in particular the "Fons" or village chiefs. They are traditional authorities vested with customary powers who, when they have remained faithful to their custom, are highly respected and have a real impact on their people. They could play a positive role in the return to peace if they are not subservient to politicians. Community-based initiatives to bring people together and train them in resilience could also help make local populations the first defenders of their freedom. The basis of the above solutions is the openness of the parties to conflict to peaceful transformation of conflict. This implies the recognition that all human lives are important,

that each social group is important and has the ability to manage local resources, the common good, and that our differences are riches to be put together in order to succeed.

Possible Outcomes of the crisis

The Anglophone crisis is an ongoing conflict that might have already drifted into the next 3 outcomes we are about to explain. This paper is looking at the crisis from its inception until 2022. The following possible outcomes are based on the analysis of the conflict within that time frame.

1. **Stalemate/ conflict stagnant**

Hurting stalemate is the first possible outcome. What will that look like? The conflict stays stagnant without any changes meaning it remains a low level insurgency filled with sporadic attacks from both sides. In this scenario, people are still dying and being displaced but none of the parties are winning. They are both hurting and losing members of their communities. Unfortunately, this can go on for a very long time. Looking at the crisis, this outcome somewhat reflects what has been happening between the end of 2017 and 2022. It is similar to the 'no war no peace' that occurred during the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict with clashes between parties that lasted 16 years (Musau, 2021, p.129). However, doesn't the crisis show signs of escalation?

2. **Escalation of crisis**

The escalation of the crisis is the second possible outcome of the crisis. The conflict can shift from low level insurgency to long standing war. The Cameroonian government has publicly ostracized the separatists as citizens of Cameroon. For the President of Cameroon, they are terrorists who are committing inhumane acts and are

going against the motto of Cameroon- united and indivisible. Picture an authoritarian government faced with a group of people that are disobeying their order to stand down by creating their own independent separate state. The Anglophone crisis can result in an ethnic cleansing perpetuated by the majorly Francophone government. They can make it their goal to eliminate these 'terrorists' and anyone associated with them. In a crisis climate, it can be difficult to differentiate who the 'enemy' really is so the Cameroon government may very well just kill any English-speaking person. How can they trust the words of Anglophones? This ethnic cleansing or shall I say genocide could in turn add more fuel into the Anglophone separatists. With more funding from other secondary parties like the Anglophone diaspora around the world, they could finance a war against the Cameroonian government. Moreover, they could get support from other African countries like Nigeria. If the conflict were to escalate to this scale, a multitude of lives will be lost.

Looking at the conflict since its inception until 2022, it seems like the conflict has been slowly escalating from peaceful protests to full blown stand offs between the government forces and the separatists. May 20th, 2022, which is a national holiday celebrating the unification of both Cameroons, was highlighted by a battle between the main parties. "The military says at least 28 separatists who vowed to disrupt celebrations in English-speaking regions of the majority francophone nation were killed in violent battles" (Kindzeka, 2022). On the opposite side, separatists claimed that they killed 24 Cameroon forces while enforcing a boycott of the national celebration (Kindzeka, 2022). Another article written in August 2022 calls attention to multiple clashes between both parties with many more lives lost (Kindzeka, 2022). Even though the conflict escalated, it

is still in this 'no war no peace' state marked by low levels of violence. In view of these events, the conflict has been escalating since 2016 and may have gotten a lot worse after 2022. So we ask ourselves, is there another outcome to the Anglophone crisis?

3. De-escalation of crisis

Federalism and its implementation

In view of the escalation of the crisis and the rising number of lives lost, some Anglophones demanded a return to federalism as a solution to the problem. Federalism is "a system of government in which the same territory is controlled by two levels of government. Generally, an overarching national government is responsible for broader governance of larger territorial areas, while the smaller subdivisions, states, and cities govern the issues of local concern" (Legal Information Institute). From 1961 to 1972, the British Cameroons and the French Cameroon "joined together to form the Federal Republic made up of two states, West Cameroon and East Cameroon" (Stark, 1976, p.423). On May 20th 1972, both states unified ending the federalism era. With the heat rising from the conflict, some Anglophones are demanding a return to that era as a solution to the crisis.

One proponent of federalism is Benjamin Akih who wrote a book on federalism as a solution to the Anglophone crisis. He says "peace is simply an emergent quality from the prevailing condition of justice. The restoration of justice can best be achieved by a return to federalism" (Akih, 2021, p.105-106). Akih (2021) summarizes the resolution into 3 steps: restoring federalism in West cameroon with additional state rights, designing a Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission to confront crimes committed since the inception of the crisis in 2016, and generating tangible plans to rectify systematic

marginalization of West Cameroon (p.78). He emphasizes that all of those steps will only

be possible with the assistance of a third party mediator. Elaborating on the

implementation of projects to correct marginalization, Fon (2019) lists concrete solutions

for the survival of bilingualism in Cameroon which in a way is the survival of cultures.

Like Akih, he suggests the creation of a "truth and reconciliation Commision" under the

National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism [that]

would provide a forum for victims of marginalization from both linguistic communities

to air injustices and heal divisions" (Fon, 2019, p.62). A return to federalism with

concrete projects of implementation looks like a considerable solution. However, it is

unclear if both parties would accept it as a solution especially since it goes against what

they are fighting for: the government of Cameroon wants to keep Cameroon unified and

the Anglophone separatists want to sever any ties with the government and create their

own recognized independent state. A third party mediator could help bring both parties

together but what if they cannot?

Separation of both parties:

Separation could possibly deescalate the crisis. Indeed, some Anglophones that

have lost trust in the Cameroonian government, asked for a separation of the two regions

(West and East Cameroon) in order to create an Anglophone only state. On October 1st,

2017, the English-speaking part of Cameroon was declared an independent state by the

separatist's leader, Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe (Cascais 2021). He called it The Federal

Republic of Ambazonia. Even though it is not a recognized state, the separatists see this

division as a viable solution to their grievances. With the Cameroonian government

categorical refusal of federalism, more people are sympathizing with the separatists

91

(Akih, 2021, p.35). However, separation can de-escalate the crisis only if the Anglophone separatists win the war against the Cameroonian government. This idea of war brings the concepts of a winner versus a loser and no one wants to lose, especially not the dominant Francophone government. As much as the permanent division of West Cameroon from East Cameroon could deescalate the crisis, it also could escalate the crisis.

Peaceful approach via mediation or via religious entities to meet the needs of both parties:

According to an article, the government should "consider seeking the support of an independent and trustworthy international third-party such as the UN or the Catholic Church to engage in a comprehensive mediation process with all relevant Anglophone actors in order to try and address the root causes of the current human rights crisis" (Pedneault, 2021). I believe an inclusive dialogue with all the parties concerned is the most important step to bring peace. Violence will only bring more violence. It is worth mentioning that in order for dialogue to happen, fighting needs to stop. It will not resolve the crisis but it will open a window of opportunity for dialogue to hopefully occur under safe conditions.

Another possible road to peace which also includes dialogue is building democracy while building peace. It is especially important as Cameroon appears as a democracy but in reality is a dictatorship. The Human Rights Watch recommends that the government respects freedom of assembly and expression (Pedneault, 2021). This goes hand in hand with a democratic society. Akih (2022) in his book about his vision of Cameroon after the presidency of Biya talks about integrating constitutional democracy which he explains is "majority rule that is constrained by a legal framework and sustained

by safeguarding institutions" (p.90). Akih goes on to list some advantages of constitutional democracy which includes the protection of minority rights and the promotion of equality in political and economic administration (p.90, 97). Courage, political will and consistency are needed to bring peace to Cameroon. Could a change in government bring about peace?

Removal of current President and Change of regime

President Paul Biya has been in his position since 1982. His four decades of ruling have been characterized by an authoritarian regime. Any opposition to him and his ruling whether it is through a protest or an interview is marked by unjustly reprimanding. Could his removal or resignation bring a positive change to the conflict? The long standing Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict provides a good model that could be applied to the crisis. As we mentioned earlier talking about stalemate, Ethiopia and Eritrea were in a 'no peace no war' zone for 16 years until 2018 when they ended the conflict and embraced peace (Musau, 2021). Regime change in Ethiopia was a factor that ripened the conflict for successful resolution. Indeed, the change of the Prime Minister to Abiy Ahmed "presented an opportunity for conflict resolution" (Musau, 2021, p.135). It wasn't just any change. It was positioning the right person that could handle the situation properly. In the case of Ethiopia, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's background reflected his ability to bring about peace. He possessed "Masters in transformational leadership and [a] doctorate in peace and security studies" coupled with experience as a "UN peacekeeper in Rwanda" (Musau, 2021, p.136). He was the right candidate for the position and it was quickly reflected by his actions. He took steps towards reconciliation starting with putting

93

in place a policy of reconciliation that included the release of prisoners in Ethiopia (Musau, 2021, p.135). On top of his peaceful actions, Prime Minister Ahmed had a clean slate so the Eritrean leader had no reason not to trust him. This might be what we need in Cameroon: a new regime qualified to carefully maneuver the Anglophone crisis. Because the conflict is historically rooted with Paul Biya as the President for more than four decades of that history, it is hard to dissociate his violent reprimanding actions with his promise for a peaceful united Cameroon. A new leader might put the crisis on a path to peace and reconciliation.

The unfolding and outcome of the Anglophone crisis will not only affect Cameroon but will also impact the African continent. In fact, many African countries are on the verge of a crisis and share some similarities in their colonial historical background. The fate of Cameroon could set as a blueprint for political change in some African countries. What would be the outcome? Would it be the removal of the President? If so, would it be a peaceful transition? Is political succession a possibility since President Biya has a son in politics? Some of these questions could unfold in the next few years and set the precedent for other African countries.

On a personal note, in the last few years, I have become familiar with the concept of restorative justice in my line of work that recognizes our humanness, even the one of the harm doers to all move towards justice. It allows us to live in what Archbishop Desmond Tutu calls ubuntu, botho. "It means the essence of being human. You know when it is there and when it is absent. It speaks about humanness, gentleness, hospitality, putting yourself out on the behalf of others, being vulnerable. It recognizes that my humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together" (Bowland, 2008,

p.303). I think it is important to remember our humanity and connectivity in a state of conflict as it brings us closer.

Writing this thesis was an eye opener on many levels. I started this journey as an arrogant proud Francophone. As I learned more about the history of Cameroon and the crisis itself, my pride and arrogance started disappearing. I was faced with the truth of years of marginalization Anglophones faced and were still facing. After looking at the first few years of the Anglophone crisis filled with atrocities from both sides of the conflict, I realized the importance of staying neutral in conflict resolution. It is a difficult task but necessary to see the whole picture and choose the path to peace despite the temptation of sticking to one side of a conflict. I would lie if I say I am a hundred percent neutral but I am trying to be. I recognize that just by being a Francophone, I hold more power than some Anglophones in Cameroon. My hope is that this thesis will have a positive impact on whoever reads it, especially Anglophones and Francophones in Cameroon. May they find the strength and courage to speak up against injustice and work together towards a peaceful future.

Considerations for additional work

While examining the Anglophone crisis, I realized that more research could be done. For instance, a quantitative study of the Anglophone crisis including interviews from people directly involved in the conflict could be a more accurate account of the crisis and bring more concrete solutions to the needs that are not being addressed. This study would have to be done in secrecy as freedom of expression is not respected in Cameroon. However, as dangerous as this type of study can be for the person conducting

it and its participants, I believe it is worth the risk to hear the people's narratives and

tailor a resolution to the crisis based on the people experiencing the conflict.

References

Aboh, A. (2024). *Nigeria's security problems deepen as Anglophone insurgency in
       Cameroon spills across border*. The Conversation.

       https://theconversation.com/nigerias-security-problems-deepen-as-anglophone-ins
       urgency-in-cameroon-spills-across-border-223078
Akih, B. K. (2021). *The West Cameroon Problem and its Solution: A Federalist
       Perspective*. Self Published.
Akih, B. K. (2022). *Cameroon After Paul Biya: More Internal Wars or Stability through
       Constitutional Democracy?*. Self Published.

Anderson, B. (1995) Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of

       Nationalism, 2nd edn, New York: Verso. ch.11. Memory and Forgetting pp.
       187-206
Ashforth, B. E., & Mael, F. (2004). Social identity theory and the organization.
       *Organizational
       identity: A reader*, 134-160. Social identity theory and the organization
Atanga, Mufor. (2011). *The Anglophone Cameroon predicament*. Langaa Research &
       Pub., CIG.
Atangana, M. R. (1997). French Capitalism and Nationalism in Cameroon. *African
       Studies Review*, *40*(1), 83–111. https://doi.org/10.2307/525034
Awasom, N. F. (2000). The Reunification Question in Cameroon History: Was the Bride
       an Enthusiastic or a Reluctant One? *Africa Today*, *47*(2), 91–119.
       https://doi.org/10.1353/at.2000.0027
Bennett, J. M. (1993). Toward Ethnorelativism: A Developmental Model of Intercultural
       Sensitivity. In R. M. Paige (Ed.), Education for the Intercultural Experience (pp.
       21-71). Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.
Bennett, J. M. (1998). Intercultural Communication: A Current Perspective.
       https://www.researchgate.net/publication/246501677_Intercultural_Communicati
       on_A_Current_Perspective
Beseng, M., Crawford, G., & Annan, N. (2023). From "Anglophone Problem" to
       "Anglophone Conflict" in Cameroon: Assessing Prospects for Peace. Africa
       Spectrum, 58(1), 89-105. https://doi.org/10.1177/00020397231155244

Bowland, S. Y. (2008). "What is Justice in Conflict Resolution Practice?" *Re-centering
       Culture
       and Knowledge in Conflict Resolution Practice*, edited by Mary Adams Trujillo,
       S.Y.
       Bowland, Linda James Myers, Philip M. Richards, and Beth Roy, Syracuse
       University Press, 2008, pp. 303-315.

Brewer, M. & Miller, N. (1996). Intergroup Contact, Cooperation, and Competition: Does Togetherness Make Friends? In Intergroup Relations (pp. 107-133). Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole Publishing.

Calhoun, L. (2001). REGARDING WAR REALISM. *International Journal on World Peace*, *18*(4), 37–61. Retrieved March 19, 2023, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/20753328

Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis at the Crossroads. (2017, November 6). Crisis Group. Retrieved October 3, 2022, from https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/250-cameroons-anglophone-crisis-crossroads

Cameroon: Separatist Abuses in Anglophone Regions. (2022, June 27). Human Rights Watch. Retrieved October 3, 2022, from https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/06/27/cameroon-separatist-abuses-anglophone-regions

Cascais, A. (2021, October 1). *5 years of Violent Civil War in Cameroon* . dw.com. Retrieved November 14, 2022, from https://www.dw.com/en/separatism-in-cameroon-5-years-of-violent-civil-war/a-59369417

Cascais, A. (2021, January 10). *Separatism in Cameroon: 5 years of Violent Civil War*. DW.COM. Retrieved February 25, 2023, from https://www.dw.com/en/separatism-in-cameroon-5-years-of-violent-civil-war/a-59369417

Chimtom, N. K. (2018, May 5). Experts call Church 'only hope' in Cameroon's 'Anglophone crisis.' *Crux*. https://cruxnow.com/global-church/2018/05/experts-calls-church-only-hope-in-cameroons-anglophone-crisis

Deutsch, M. (2006). Cooperation and competition. In M. Deutsch, P. T. Coleman, & E. C. Marcus (Eds.), *The handbook of conflict resolution: Theory and practice* (pp. 23–42).Wiley Publishing.

Encyclopedia Britannica, inc. (n.d.). *Buea*. Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved November 19, 2022, from https://www.britannica.com/place/Buea

Eyongetah, T. & Brain, Robert. (1974). A History of the Cameroon. Longman Group.
"German imperial Rule in Cameroon", taken from: Batey, George Eno: Effective modern history for colleges. Bamenda: NAB Ventures, 3rd ed. [3. Aufl.] ed., 2012 [2008], 25,30-32,39,40, in: WorldViews, ed. by the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, Braunschweig [2017]. http://worldviews.gei.de/open/CM_2008_Batey_EffectiveModernHistoryForColleges_25__30_32__39_40/1/eng/. Version 1

Fon, N. N. A. (2019). Official Bilingualism in Cameroon: An Endangered Policy? *African Studies Quarterly, 18*(2), 55-66.

Kamé, B. P. (2018). *The anglophone crisis in Cameroon*. L'Harmattan.

Kindzeka, M. E. (2022, May 20). Violence, lockdown, running battles paralyze Cameroon National Day in western regions. *Voice of America*. https://www.voanews.com/a/violence-lockdown-running-battles-paralyze-cameroon-national-day-in-western-regions/6582116.html

Kindzeka, M. E. (2022, August 2). Cameroon separatists killed and captured in days of fighting military forces. *Voice of America*. https://www.voanews.com/a/cameroon-separatists-killed-and-captured-in-days-of-fighting-military-forces-/6683718.html

Köpp, D. (2019, September 30). *Cameroon holds dialogue on the anglophone crisis*. dw.com. Retrieved February 25, 2023, from https://www.dw.com/en/cameroon-holds-dialogue-on-anglophone-crisis/a-50640762

Legal Information Institute. (n.d.). *Federalism*. Legal Information Institute. Retrieved November 19, 2022, from https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/federalism

LeVine, Victor. (1964). The CAMEROONS from Mandate to Independence. University of California Press.

Mack, J. (1983). Nationalism and the self. *Psychohistory Review, 11*(2-3), 47–69

Mapping Militant Organizations. "Ambazonia Defense Forces." Stanford University. Last modified April 2019. Retrieved November 19, 2022, from

https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/ambazonia-defense-forces

Miller, J. B. (2007). Domination and Subordination. In P. S. Rothenberg (Ed.), Race, Class, and Gender in the United States (7th ed., pp. 108-114). New York: Worth Publishers.

Musau, Berita Mutinda. (2021). "Seizing The Ripe Moment: A Critical Analysis of the Resolution of the Twenty Years Ethiopia-Eritrea Conflict in 2018." Journal of cmsd. Volume 6. https://journalofcmsd.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Seizing-The-Ripe-Moment.pdf

Mutah, J. (2022, November 8). Global responses to Cameroon's Anglophone crisis: the inadequate international efforts to end the world's most neglected conflict - The SAIS Review of International Affairs. *The SAIS Review of International Affairs* -. https://saisreview.sais.jhu.edu/cameroon-anglophone-crisis-global-response/

Ndille, R. N. (2020). Colonial Heritages, Educational Incompatibilities and the Challenges for a Reunified Cameroon: 1961–2016. *Historická Sociologie*, *12*(1), 33–47. https://doi.org/10.14712/23363525.2020.3

Ngoh, V. J. (1979). *The political evolution of Cameroon, 1884-1961*. Portland State University.

Njeuma, M. Z. (1989). *Introduction to the history of Cameroon : nineteenth and twentieth centuries*. St. Martin's Press.

Pedneault, J. (2021, September 6). *"these killings can be stopped"*. Human Rights Watch. Retrieved December 4, 2022, from https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/07/19/these-killings-can-be-stopped/abuses-government-and-separatist-groups-cameroons

Press Office. (n.d.). *Who we are*. https://www.ambazoniagov.org/index.php/about-us/who-we-are

Reporter, G. S. (2018, January 7). Cameroon separatist leader detained in Nigeria as unrest grows. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/07/cameroon-separatist-leader-julius-ayuk-tabe-detained-in-nigeria

Rogers, Natalie. (2020) *Saving a language, preserving a culture*. UNM Newsroom. https://news.unm.edu/news/saving-a-language-preserving-a-culture

Smolicz, J. J. (1980). Language as a Core Value of Culture. RELC Journal, 11(1), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1177/003368828001100101

Spangler, B. (2003) *Competitive and cooperative approaches to conflict*, *Beyond Intractability*. Available at: https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/competitive_cooperative_frames

Stark, F. M. (1976). Federalism in Cameroon: The Shadow and the Reality. *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne Des Études Africaines*, *10*(3), 423–442. https://doi.org/10.2307/483799

West Africa campaign. (n.d.). National Army Museum. https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/west-africa-campaign

WP Company. (2019, February 5). *Cameroon's crackdown on its English-speaking minority is fueling support for a secessionist movement*. The Washington Post. Retrieved October 17, 2022, from https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/world/cameroon-anglophone-crisis/

2016-11-28 University of Buea | Scholars at Risk. (2016, November 28). Scholars at Risk. https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2016-11-28-university-buea/