Good governance, privatisation and ethno-regional conflict in Cameroon

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INTRODUCTION

By proclaiming that a 'crisis of governance' underlies 'the litany of Africa's development problems', the World Bank's 1989 report *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth* placed the concept of good governance at the heart of the donor agenda for Africa (World Bank 1989: 60). Painfully confronted at the time with the relative failure of its structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), the World Bank was inclined in this report to blame the weak, predatory and neo-patrimonial African states for the poor performance of structural adjustment rather than to question its own neo-liberal reform package. It therefore stressed the need not only for less but also for better government in African states.

But what is good governance and how is it to be promoted? The term remains rather vague. The World Bank (1992: 1) defines it in managerial terms as 'the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development'. Good governance was to flow from enhanced accountability within the public sector, transparency and openness in decision-making, the rule of law, and more efficient public management. World Bank officials also added the issue of capacity building to enable technocrats to initiate and implement market-based economic reforms as an essential element for good governance (Sandbrook 2000: 10-13).

Whereas the World Bank couched its interventions in the affairs of African countries in governance terms that enabled it to claim not to have preferences for particular types of regime, bilateral aid donors felt less inhibited in linking democracy to good governance. The latter sought to promote a liberal-democratic system through a combination of political conditionalities and financial support for democratisation initiatives and capacity building, such as the introduction of international election observation and the empowerment of non-government organisations. Although bilateral donors continuously stressed that democratisation had its intrinsic merits, it is beyond any doubt that they saw it primarily as a vehicle for promoting the more efficient implementation of structural adjustment measures. Democratisation was said to empower the electorate by providing it with mechanisms of a parliamentary and extra-parliamentary nature to check upon the ruling regime's neo-patrimonial practices and to participate in the decision-making process about necessary structural adjustment measures. This would contribute to the legitimisation of unpopular neo-liberal reforms among the population.

Clearly, the good governance discourse, propagated by the donor community generally and the World Bank in particular, represents an instrumentalist, managerial and technocratic approach to development. It aims at promoting the emergence of a more conducive and, in their view, more legitimate political environment, backed by the requisite administrative capacity, for the successful implementation of orthodox structural adjustment (Olukoshi 1998: 35). This approach entails an essentially depoliticised notion of governance. It narrates the proposed restructuring of African societies simply as a managerial and technical problem rather than as being contested and political. Disagreements and conflicts over the design and implementation of neo-liberal reforms are usually absent from any analysis, and development emerges as a neutral project guided by 'technical considerations of economy and efficiency, rather than ideological and political considerations' (Abrahamsen 2000: 143). When the World Bank and governance theorists do acknowledge conflict, they are usually in the habit of treating it solely, or primarily, as the result of 'selfish' and 'illegitimate' machinations of vested interests that are steeped in a variety of neo-patrimonial relations. In the end, this approach tends to insulate governance from the actual political process: persistent struggles for power, control over resources, as well as access to the decision-making process about the contested neo-liberal reforms. It tends in particular to gloss over the weak and dependent position of African states in the world capitalist system. The continent's strategic and economic marginalisation in the new world order and its dependence on foreign assistance have facilitated intervention and governance by international institutions and organisations to the extent that more and more decisions that determine the well-being of Africa's peoples are today being made outside the continent in the Washington offices of the Bretton Woods institutions. Power, in other words, is increasingly located outside the political community as conventionally defined by democratic theory, and beyond the reach of the democratic control of Africa's citizens (Abrahamsen 2000: 146-47).

While elected African governments have frequently tried to avoid, postpone, manipulate and dilute the imposed neo-liberal reforms, which tend to further undermine the patronage networks on which their power continues to rest and the limited legitimacy they still enjoy among the electorate, their dependence on continued financial assistance has generally led them to fall into line with the demands of their external constituency. Civil-society organisations that have either emerged or obtained a large measure of autonomy during political liberalisation are usually completely excluded from the decision-making process about neo-liberal reforms and have often displayed strong opposition to austere structural adjustment measures. Interestingly, in the absence of any powerful opposition parties in the African democratic transition, newly created ethno-regional associations have come to serve as the new intermediaries between the state and the electorate in a number of African states, including Cameroon (Kasfir 1998; Nyamnjoh & Rowlands 1998). Their leadership is determined to represent and defend ethno-regional interests during structural adjustment and often strives for a larger degree of ethno-regional autonomy and self-determination.

In this study I want to demonstrate these arguments with an extended case study of privatisation in Cameroon. Privatisation has become one of the cornerstones of the public-sector reforms imposed by the Bretton Woods institutions on Cameroon. In the first part of this study, I highlight the linkage between good governance and privatisation and its embeddedness in particular relations of power. In the second part, I focus on the vehement resistance of ethno-regional associations and other civil-society associations, in particular the trade unions, to the government announcement on 15 July 1994 of the privatisation of the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC), a huge agro-industrial parastatal located in the coastal area of Anglophone Cameroon. These organisations perceived the announced privatisation of this important regional parastatal as a further step towards ethno-regional marginalisation and a severe threat to their workers' welfare.

GOVERNANCE AND PRIVATISATION IN CAMEROON

Privatisation has become a key instrument in the structural adjustment programme and the good governance agenda imposed on Cameroon by the Bretton Woods institutions and bilateral donors. It is an essential part of the overall neo-liberal reform package aimed at creating transparency and accountability in the management of national affairs as well as a favourable environment for opening up the Cameroonian economy to market forces and private-sector development.

As in most other African countries (Grosh & Makandala 1994; Tangri 1999), the parastatal sector in Cameroon has grown rapidly since independence (Tedga 1990; Van de Walle 1994; Walker 1998). From a handful of public enterprises inherited from the British and French Trust Authorities at independence and reunification in 1961, the Cameroonian parastatal sector grew to 219 enterprises in the mid-1980s, employing approximately 100,000 people. Growth in public-sector ownership was the result of a series of economic and political factors, in particular statist conceptions of development, economic nationalism, and the need for political patronage (Tangri 1999: 19-22).

The 1960s was a period when ‘statism’ was a key feature of development thinking and strategy on the continent. The view that the state should be the prime motor of development was widely shared, and ownership and intervention by the state was accepted as the dominant development paradigm. State entrepreneurship was also strongly supported by western donors. For example, the enormous expansion of the Cameroonian agro-industrial parastatal in the post-colonial period was largely financed by the World Bank and other international financial institutions (Konings 1993a: 26).

Public-sector expansion was also encouraged by the fact that, at independence, Africa’s economies were characterised by a weak and subordinate indigenous private sector and foreign control. Most post-colonial governments tried to forestall the development of a national bourgeoisie, which they regarded as a potential political threat, and to reduce foreign dominance. Attaining greater ownership and control of the ‘commanding heights of the economy’ would enable them to influence the broad direction of national development. Subsequently, the parastatal sector came to be viewed as ‘national patrimony’ and its sale to foreigners was regarded negatively.

And, last but not least, state expansion afforded prebendal and patronage possibilities and was therefore seen by the African political elite as a valuable mechanism in the consolidation and maintenance of political power. According to Nicolas van de Walle (1994: 155-56), public enterprises in Cameroon ‘proved to be an ideal instrument to distribute state resources in the form of jobs, rents, power and prestige’, enabling the president to reward allies and co-opt opponents, and thus ‘secure his own power base’. A ‘patrimonial logic’ existed in many African post-colonial states (Chabal & Daloz 1999), but was particularly forceful in Cameroon, a country with stark ethno-regional cleavages (Ngayap 1983; Kofele-Kale 1986; Gabriel 1999). State resources could be used to forge the ethno-regional alliances necessary for national unity and political stability and to obviate the need for coercion. The political importance of state-owned enterprises is evident from the fact that the Cameroonian government used to subsidise parastatal-sector losses to the tune of some 150 billion CFA francs a year prior to the start of the economic crisis in the mid-1980s. Though many of Cameroon’s oil revenues were initially kept in secret bank accounts abroad, their primary function soon became the covering of parastatal deficits.

By virtually any measure of economic performance, the record of state-owned concerns has proved disappointing. Although by no means uniformly negative in their performance, public enterprises have been judged inefficient and unprofitable. The

Cameroonian government itself has regularly recognised the operating ineffectiveness of its parastatals but little noticeable improvement in public enterprises has occurred (Konings 1993a: 27). Remarkably, the international financiers who made a major contribution to parastatal expansion failed to raise any serious alarm about the dismal performance of Cameroonian public enterprises for a long time. This may be explained by the fact that they, like others, were impressed by the general performance of the Cameroonian economy which was viewed as one of the rare success stories in Africa, registering a phenomenal growth rate of 6-7 per cent between 1970 and 1986 (Konings 1996). It was not until the crisis in the Cameroonian economy in 1987 that the World Bank began to express its disillusionment with the performance of state enterprises, attributing their poor performance to the following factors:

> The causes of the bad results of the 60 enterprises, in which the state participates to a greater or less extent, are…the excessive size of the initial investments and the low earning capacity of the projects, over-employment, a too heavy administrative structure, the absence of clearly defined objectives and concomitant criteria of performance, and incentives for the management. These enterprises also suffer from the usual ills of public enterprises: the pursuit of social objectives without any direct financial compensation from the state, the politicisation of management and the interference of supervising ministries in the management, the slow reaction to developments in the market and the poor financial structure (World Bank 1987: 5).

Subsequently, in 1988/89, the Bretton Woods institutions forced the reluctant Biya government to adopt an SAP, making privatisation a cornerstone of their lending conditions. Privatisation intended to achieve at least three things.

1. It would contribute to solving the problem of rising budgetary deficits and in the process also generate revenue that could be used to pay off government debts. With few exceptions, state-owned enterprises had been operating at a loss. In 1984, they had operating losses of FCFA 65 billion, representing 1.5 per cent of GDP; the following year losses increased to FCFA 121 billion or 3 per cent of GDP. The situation continued to deteriorate. Between 1989 and 1994, state-owned enterprises accumulated debts of an additional FCFA 352 billion, bringing their total to over FCFA 750 billion or 22 per cent of GDP (Walker 1998: 263).
2. It would contribute to the depoliticisation of the economy through the dismantlement of state redistributive and welfare activities, which were lumped together as 'neo-patrimonial' or rent-seeking practices. These practices were held responsible for the various shortcomings of state-owned enterprises, in particular widespread corruption, political interference, political appointments, weak monitoring and overstaffing. Privatisation was thought to lead to greater transparency and accountability, to increase efficiency in the allocation of resources and to stimulate more economic competitiveness, all of which were expected to promote greater total factor productivity in the national economy.
3. It would contribute to the promotion of private enterprise and attract badly needed foreign capital. Generally speaking, privatisation could produce a desirable change in the balance of power between the state and the private sector.

Public enterprise reform and private-sector development have been designed in the offices of the Bretton Woods institutions. Like other structural adjustment measures, they have been accepted by virtually all bilateral donors and presented to African governments as the only way to development and economic growth. Even since the

Biya government was compelled in 1990 to introduce a certain measure of political liberalisation, including a multi-party system and a limited degree of freedom of press and association, there has been little local participation in the actual formulation of privatisation schemes. The degree of control exerted by donors and creditors, especially the Bretton Woods institutions, on these new democracies poses a challenge to key features of liberal democracy as commonly conceived in political theory in that it threatens to erode the right to national self-determination and self-government. This is a form of democracy characterised by local political emasculation, where the fine-tuning of externally directed policies is the best that can be hoped for and where voices of dissent are persistently overruled by the government's accountability to its financial sponsors (Abrahamsen 2000: 145). The result is what Mkandawire (1999) has termed 'choiceless democracies', democracies in which pronouncements in favour of economic liberalisation are the only political route available.

Strikingly, the donor community has been keen to resist any accusation of undue influence over domestic policy choices, and has eagerly promoted the notion of national ownership of SAPs. 'Ownership' implies that the Bretton Woods institutions no longer impose policies on African countries but merely put their superior economic knowledge and planning skills at the disposal of governments, which then make an autonomous decision as to whether to adopt the suggested policy measures. Clearly, such a discourse denies the fact that public enterprise reforms and private-sector development programmes have been subjected to little local debate and have usually not required legislative debate. These programmes are normally simply imposed after secret consultations with a few top national technocrats representing the government.

There is obviously a serious contradiction between the donors' ardent quest for the insulation of technocracy and their calls for greater accountability and transparency in economic affairs. There appear to be two main reasons for their preference to deal with insulated technocrats. First, they rightly assume that Africa's 'old guard' neo-patrimonial leaders are less inclined to faithfully implement structural adjustment because of its potential for undermining the clientelist networks on which their power rests. Technocrats, in contrast, are thought to be driven purely by considerations of competence and professionalism required for the effective design and implementation of economic reforms. Second, donors seem to feel that since adjustment requires unpopular sacrifices, in-camera negotiations with technocrats are preferable to a participatory decision-making process by which popular demands can derail 'necessary' reforms. Most newly elected African governments also appear to eschew popular input into adjustment programmes. Not only do they have limited room for manoeuvre in negotiations with the IMF, the World Bank and other lenders but they are also expected to implement any agreements as negotiated. Knowing that they will therefore be unable to satisfy some demands, presidents and their lieutenants avoid consultations they cannot control and ignore or undermine articulations of dissent and protest, such as opposition by civil-society organisations and independent newspapers.

Remarkably, although the donors are able to design and impose structural adjustment measures upon African governments, they appear to have less control over their actual implementation. There is considerable research and empirical evidence to suggest that African governments may sign documents initiating a privatisation programme without intending to ever execute it (Bennell 1997; Tangri 1999). For these government leaders, the need to continue financial assistance flows demands acquiescence to donor demands but the realities of the domestic political economy limit what is politically feasible. Under these circumstances, a strategy of initial acceptance followed by delay and obstruction may be the most effective.

Privatisation, in fact, represented a severe challenge to (i) the neo-patrimonial logic of the Cameroonian regime which laid a solid foundation for co-opting the various ethno-regional elite factions into the 'hegemonic alliance' (Bayart 1979) and thus secured a considerable measure of political stability in the post-colonial state; (ii) the post-colonial state's welfare concerns manifest, among others, in the creation of employment and relatively good conditions of service in the public sector; and (iii) the existing national sentiments, looking upon the parastatal sector as part of the 'national patrimony' (Campbell 2001).

One of the defensive tactics of Cameroonian government leaders has been the attempt to privatise state corporations and put them in their cronies' hands (Hibou 1999). Similar to other African countries (cf. Tangri & Mwenda 2001), the privatisation process in Cameroon thus reinforced patterns of patron-client relations which the exercise itself was supposed to eliminate. Little wonder then that the donors, including the World Bank, have recently expressed concerns about the politicisation of economic reforms (World Bank 1997, 2000).

Another tactic has been what Van de Walle (1993) has called 'the politics of non-reform'. In 1991 a World Bank mission provided an overview of the disappointing state of the Cameroonian government's efforts to reform and sell off state-owned enterprises: the delay in establishing government agencies to oversee the process, the government's reluctance to sell off anything but bankrupt or inconsequential enterprises, the in-fighting over which firms would be first to be sold or liquidated, and the foot-dragging over issuing tenders and establishing the criteria by which bids would be evaluated (Walker 1998: 4). Again, in its 1994 report *Adjustment in Africa: Reforms, Results, and the Road Ahead,* the World Bank asserted that in the area of privatisation, little progress had been made in Cameroon. The report constantly rated Cameroon on the bottom rungs of economic policy and adjustment performance, and it pointed out that the IMF had signed and cancelled three successive stand-by-agreements because of the government's failure to achieve negotiated targets (World Bank 1994).

The slow progress of the privatisation programme is clearly manifest in the actual number of privatisations that were executed between 1989 and 1996. To fulfil the terms of the structural adjustment loan negotiated between the Cameroonian government and the World Bank in 1989, the Cameroonian government completed an initial review of the parastatal sector over the following year, that culminated in a presidential decree in October 1990 designating an initial set of 15 enterprises (7 per cent of the total of 219) that were to be sold off. In July 1994, a second presidential decree added an additional 15 enterprises to the group destined for divestiture, most of them in the agro-industrial and transport sectors. However, as of mid-1996 only 10 of the 30 enterprises on the divestiture list had actually been sold.

While African governments have often tried to postpone or dilute the imposed privatisation programmes, civil-society organisations have frequently opposed their implementation as being harmful to their members' interests and have demanded a voice in the decision-making process (Olukoshi 1998; Konings 2002). One of the privatisations in Cameroon that sparked off virulent opposition from ethno-regional associations and pressure groups was that of the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC). The CDC was the most prominent of the 15 enterprises selected for privatisation in July 1994, being the largest agro-industrial parastatal in the country. Its estates are located in the coastal area of Anglophone Cameroon and its operation has been of great importance to regional development.

The CDC is the most important agro-industrial parastatal in the country with more than 100,000 hectares of land. It is one of the few agro-industrial enterprises in the world that specialises in a variety of crops – the four major ones being rubber, palm oil, tea and bananas. With the help of huge loans from several well-known financial institutions, including the World Bank, the International Development Association (IDA), the European Development Fund (EDF), the Commonwealth Development Corporation (Comdev) and the French *Caisse Centrale de Coopération Économique* (CCCE), it expanded its area under cultivation from 20,000 to 42,000 hectares following the achievement of independence and reunification in 1961. It is the country's second largest employer, surpassed only by the government, and formerly employed 25,000 workers. At present, it still employs about 12,500 permanent workers and a few thousand seasonal and casual workers (Konings 1993a).

The CDC is, furthermore, one of the country's oldest enterprises. Its history is closely linked with the political and economic history of Anglophone Cameroon. It was founded in 1946 but its roots can be traced back to the German colonial period (1884-1916) when many large-scale private plantations were created on the fertile, volcanic soils around Mount Cameroon in the present South West Province of Anglophone Cameroon. The establishment of a plantation economy in the region led to the expulsion of the original occupants of the land, notably the Bakweri, into prescribed native reserves (Matute 1990; Ardener 1996). With the British occupation in 1914/15, the property of German planters was confiscated and turned over to the Custodian of Enemy Property. When the British took over the administration of the area shortly afterwards, the plantations were merged and a government department was formed to manage them. By 1922, however, the British Mandate Authority had already decided to get rid of them, as the administrative costs of maintaining them was said to be prohibitive. It then seriously considered returning the plantation lands to the original owners but dropped the idea in the end. Instead, it came to the conclusion that it would be in the best interests of the territory and its inhabitants to put the plantations back in the hands of foreign private enterprise. At an auction held in London in November 1924, almost all the estates were bought back by their former German owners.

At the start of the Second World War, the German estates were again expropriated by the Custodian of Enemy Property. After the war, a decision had to be reached, once again, on how to dispose of the properties. The Bakweri chiefs and educated elite, organised in the so-called Bakweri Land Committee (BLC), immediately began agitating for the return of its ancestral lands. It sent several petitions, first to the British Crown and subsequently to the United Nations, as Britain had assumed responsibility for the territory, the so-called Southern Cameroons, under United Nations Trusteeship after the war. However, after considerable deliberations, the British Trusteeship Authority declined once again to surrender the ex-German plantation lands to their original owners (Molua 1985; Konings 1993a). Instead, it announced in November 1946 that they would be leased to a newly established statutory corporation, the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC).

The corporation came into being with the passage of two ordinances in December 1946. The first ordinance, the Ex-Enemy Lands (Cameroons) Ordinance no. 38 (1946), provided for the acquisition of the ex-German plantation lands which had been vested in the Custodian of Enemy Property for the duration of the Second World War. Under the terms of this ordinance, the governor of Nigeria, who was responsible for the administration of the Southern Cameroons, was to declare them 'native lands' and hold them in trust for the common benefit of all the inhabitants of the territory. The second ordinance, the Cameroons Development Corporation Ordinance no. 39 (1946), provided for the setting up of the corporation. All the lands acquired by the governor under the first ordinance were to be leased to this corporation for a period of sixty years. Significantly, the corporation was charged with a double responsibility: it was to develop and manage the approximately 104,000 hectares of estate lands in the interests of the people of the Trust Territory, and it was to provide for the spiritual, educational and social welfare of its employees. After fulfilling all its obligations, the corporation was to pay direct taxes to the government of Nigeria and all profits were to be used for the benefit of the people of the Trust Territory.

The CDC has been significant in the development of the Anglophone region. Students of plantation agriculture, such as Beckford (1972), have blamed the persistent poverty and underdevelopment of plantation economies on this mode of production. In the case of the CDC, however, this thesis finds little support. The corporation has been a major instrument of modernisation and is largely credited with whatever socio-economic development has occurred in Anglophone Cameroon. It has created employment for both men and women, has constructed numerous roads, supplied water and electricity, built and staffed schools, awarded a substantial number of scholarships, provided medical care for a large proportion of the local population, and has stimulated the supply of goods and services to itself and its workers. It played a key role in the commercialisation and modernisation of peasant production in the 1950s and in the establishment of regional smallholders' oil-palm and rubber schemes since the early 1960s (Ardener 1958; Konings 1993b). Of late, it has handed over a substantial part of its oil-palm plantations to local contractors. As a result, the CDC has been called the economic lifeline of Anglophone Cameroon.

The government announcement on 15 July 1994 of the privatisation of this important agro-industrial enterprise was all the more shocking to the Anglophone population since the CDC (i) had been one of the very few public enterprises in Cameroon to perform relatively well until the economic crisis; (ii) had been able to survive this crisis mainly because the management and workers had agreed to adopt a series of drastic adjustment measures aimed at reducing costs and increasing productivity; and (iii) was on the way to economic recovery following the 50 per cent devaluation of the CFA franc in early 1994 that made CDC products more competitive on the world market (Konings 1995).

The announced privatisation of the CDC prompted vehement protest actions in Anglophone Cameroon from various ethno-regional associations and pressure groups that had been either created or granted a large measure of autonomy in the wake of political liberalisation in December 1990. The following ethno-regional organisations have been the most active.

First, there are the various Anglophone associations that since 1993 have been operating under an umbrella organisation, the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC). The emergence of these movements can only be understood in the context of what has been called 'the Anglophone problem' (Konings & Nyamnjoh 1997, 2000; Eyoh 1998a). Several factors need to be taken into consideration in explaining the emergence and development of this problem. Its roots may be traced back as far as the partitioning, after the First World War, of the erstwhile German Cameroon Protectorate between the French and British victors, first as mandates under the League of Nations and later as trusts under the United Nations. The subsequent creation of territorial differences in language and cultural legacy laid the historical foundation for the construction of Anglophone and Francophone identities. An even more important factor was the form of state that the Francophone majority more or less imposed upon the

Anglophone minority during the constitutional negotiations for a reunified Cameroon in 1961. The Anglophone political elite had proposed a loose form of federation, which they though would be a safe guarantee of the equal partnership of both parties and of the preservation of the cultural heritage and identity of each. The Francophone political elite instead opted for a highly centralised form of federation that they considered merely a transitory phase in the establishment of a unitary state. By 1972, they had already succeeded in transforming the federal state into a unitary state. The most decisive factor, however, was the nation-state project after reunification. For the Anglophone population, nation-building has been driven by the firm determination of the Francophone political elite to dominate the Anglophone minority in the post-colonial state and to erase the cultural and institutional foundations of Anglophone identity. Gradually, this created an Anglophone consciousness: the feeling of being recolonised and marginalised in all spheres of public life and thus becoming second-class citizens in their own country. Anglophone grievances are numerous in the political, economic and cultural domains.

In the political domain, Anglophones complain of their exclusion from key positions in the government and public sector and their inferior role in the decision-making councils and organs. A general Anglophone complaint is that they are assumed to be fit only to play ‘deputy’ or ‘assistant’ to Francophones. In the economic domain, Anglophones complain of the Francophone-dominated state’s exploitation of their region manifest in a dismantlement of its enterprises, neglect of infrastructure, lack of public investment, and the rape and drain of economic resources. They claim in particular that their region has failed to benefit from its rich oil resources, the revenues of which are allegedly being used by the post-colonial state to ‘feed the bellies’ of its allies (Bayart 1989). In the cultural domain, Anglophones complain of the continuous attempts at ‘Frenchification’ or what Kofele-Kale (1986) has called ‘the Gallicising of public life’, that is the pre-eminence of French as the dominant language, and of inherited French institutions and bureaucratic practices in all aspects of state administration and public life, not least in Anglophone areas.

The co-optation of the Anglophone elite into the ‘hegemonic alliance’ and the autocratic nature of the post-colonial regimes prevented Anglophones from openly organising in defence of their interests until the political liberalisation process in the early 1990s. The newly created associations and pressure groups were able to place the Anglophone problem on the national and even international agenda, laying claims to self-determination and autonomy. While most of the Anglophone associations initially demanded a return to a two-state (Anglophone and Francophone) federation, the Biya government’s persistent refusal to enter into any meaningful negotiation forced them to consider secession and the creation of an independent Southern Cameroons state.

The government announcement of the CDC privatisation was seen by these Anglophone associations as a further step in the dismantling of the Anglophone colonial legacy by the Francophone-dominated state. As a consequence, they called upon Anglophones to forget about any internal differences and form a united front against attempts to sell the CDC to Francophone or French interests.

Besides the Anglophone associations, there were also the associations of the elite and chiefs in the South West Province of Anglophone Cameroon where most of the CDC estates are located. The most prominent South West associations were the South West Elite Association (SWELA) and the South West Chiefs’ Conference (SWECC). There is some overlap between these organisations, with some important South West chiefs also being members of SWELA (Konings 1997; Nyamnjoh & Rowlands 1998; Eyoh 1998b). Both associations claim to be non-political pressure groups, with their main aims being to promote the South West Province's socio-economic and cultural revival. The South West was to be restored to its former glory after having been marginalised by the Francophone-dominated state and subjected to the 'imperialism' of the other Anglophone province, the North West Province. Although both organisations supported most of the Anglophone grievances about Francophone domination, they equally claimed that the South West had been more disadvantaged than the North West in the post-colonial state in terms of distribution of strategic posts in the federation and the unitary state. Moreover, they stressed that the South West plantation economy had been massively invaded by North West migrants who had come to form the majority of the workers and managers on the plantations and even of the urban population in South West towns. They accused the North West 'settlers' of dominating and exploiting their province by 'grabbing the best land' and controlling the regional administration, business and trade (Konings 2001). This situation has often given rise to rivalry and conflict between the South West and North West elite. The South West elite and chiefs particularly feared that the newly created Anglophone movements' pursuit of either a return to a two-state federation or outright secession would lead to renewed South West domination by the entrepreneurial North West majority. They were therefore inclined to champion a ten-state federal system based on the existing ten provinces in Cameroon, which would retain the present separation between the South West and the North West Provinces, thus safeguarding the former's autonomy.

Despite such internal rivalries and conflicts within the Anglophone community, the South West elite and chiefs favoured a (temporary) alliance with the leadership of the Anglophone movements when the privatisation of the CDC was announced. This alliance was justified on the grounds of the corporation's immense contribution to the welfare and development of the Anglophone community as a whole.

And finally there was the Bakweri Land Committee (BLC), the organisation of the Bakweri chiefs and elite in Fako Division of the South West Province, whose main goal has continued to be the retrieval of their ancestral lands that were expropriated under German colonial rule for the purpose of plantation production and later, in 1946, leased by the British Trusteeship Authority to the CDC. The BLC felt particularly aggrieved by the announced privatisation of the CDC. It felt betrayed at not having been previously consulted about the corporation's privatisation and it warned the government that the CDC lands were Bakweri lands and thus could not be sold to non-natives without Bakweri consent and compensation. The BLC is being supported in its current struggles by both the South West and Anglophone associations.

In addition to the ethno-regional associations, there were other civil-society organisations in the region that resisted the privatisation of the CDC. The most important was the Fako Agricultural Workers' Union (FAWU) that is responsible for the representation and defence of the CDC workers' interests (Konings 1993a, 1995). Its president, Mr C.P.N. Vewessee, is one of the most prominent trade-union leaders in Cameroon, having played a significant role in the achievement of a large measure of trade-union autonomy in 1992. He insisted that the CDC could not be privatised without the FAWU being consulted, arguing that the workers had made personal sacrifices during the economic crisis to assist the corporation's recovery by accepting drastic cuts in salaries and fringe benefits and contributing to a compulsory savings scheme. Moreover, the union, he said, would resist any mass lay-offs and/or deterioration in the workers' conditions of service as a result of privatisation (Konings 1995).

And, finally, the Anglophone press has strongly condemned the announced privatisation. It has continued to defend the Anglophone cause and to inform the Anglophone population of the issues at stake.

ETHNO-REGIONAL PROTEST ACTIONS AGAINST CDC PRIVATISATION

During the economic crisis, starting in 1986-87, there were frequent rumours in Anglophone Cameroon that the Biya government was hoping to privatise the CDC and sell it to Francophone or French interests. The government strongly denied such rumours but Anglophones remained on the alert, ready to act if their regional patrimony was threatened.

In June 1992, for instance, it was rumoured that the French were interested in taking over the corporation after the Biya government, highly dependent on French support and aid, had managed to obtain a FCFA 7 billion low-interest loan for the ailing company from the French CCCE. Although this loan provided much-needed capital for investment purposes, the increased control over the corporation by France was highly resented by CDC workers and managers, as well as by the general public in Anglophone Cameroon. It was then reported in Anglophone newspapers that the CCCE wanted to take over the CDC oil-palm estates, which again resulted in widespread protests in Anglophone Cameroon. In July 1992, SWELA began to collect signatures for a petition against this alleged takeover.[1]

This outcry against expanded French control over the corporation contrasted sharply with Anglophone sentiments regarding previous and later transfers of the management of two major CDC crops to Anglo-American companies. Few protests were voiced in Anglophone Cameroon when the corporation entrusted the management of the banana sector to the American multinational Del Monte in 1987. And Anglophone newspapers even lauded the agreement between the CDC and (the British) Comdev in late 1992 which stipulated that management of the corporation's three tea estates be transferred to Comdev for a period of ten years. Anglophones argued that these two Anglo-American companies had wide experience in plantation management. Comdev had even had experience in Anglophone Cameroon, having satisfactorily managed the CDC from 1960 to 1974 (Konings 1993a: 41-45). Above all, Anglophones strongly believed that Anglo-American companies would be less inclined than French ones to dominate and exploit an Anglophone region and that their business culture fitted in well in Anglophone Cameroon.

When the government finally did announce the privatisation of the CDC on 15 July 1994, Anglophones were deeply incensed. All existing ethno-regional associations and opposition parties formed a united front to resist the government's decision. One Anglophone columnist, Mr Jing Thomas, captured the essence of Anglophone sentiments:

> The CDC is unlike any other corporation. It means native lands, especially those of the Bakweri. It means jobs for Cameroonians, especially the Anglophones. It is a symbol of Anglophone survival against all odds.... If the CDC falls....the last act of internal colonisation would have been completed.[2]

Anglophones once again alleged that privatisation of the CDC was 'an ill-disguised plot to hand over the corporation to the French and the Francophones' or 'a plan by Biya to compensate his "tribesmen" and allies with a slice of the parastatal cake'.[3] There were protest marches in Anglophone towns organised by SWELA and the Anglophone associations. Protesters carried banners with slogans such as 'France: Hands off Anglophones' and 'Hands off or we will burn the plantations'. The National Executive of the Cameroon Anglophone Movement (CAM), the most important Anglophone association, met on 30-31 July 1994 and condemned the CDC privatisation as a declaration of war against the people of Southern Cameroons and called upon Anglophones to observe 16 August as a day of protest and solidarity with the CDC.[4] SWELA thereupon declared 12 August as another day of solidarity with the CDC. Despite a ban on demonstrations on its solidarity day and a heavy police presence, a determined group of SWELA members led by Secretary-General Martin Nkemngu marched successfully to the governor's office where they presented a protest memorandum for the attention of the head of state.[5] At a press conference in Limbe (Victoria) on 20 August, the FAWU president, Mr C.P.N. Vewessee, declared that the union and the workers were totally against the dubious privatisation of the CDC. Since the workers had a joint financial stake in the corporation amounting to FCFA 5.5 billion, the privatisation could only be enforced on terms acceptable to the majority of the workers.[6] In August, the Biya government sent a delegation of high-ranking Anglophone allies to the capitals of the two Anglophone provinces to try to calm the population. They were jeered and asked whether they would 'benefit from the spoils'.

Unsurprisingly, the most vehement opposition in Anglophone Cameroon came from landowners. As soon as the privatisation of the CDC was announced, the Bakweri chiefs and elite mobilised to revive the moribund BLC and to adopt a common position with regard to the privatisation, which had been planned without any consideration having been given to the Bakweri land problem. Soon thereafter the BLC was renamed the Bakweri Land Claims Committee (BLCC).

On 23 July 1994, the Bakweri chiefs and elite met in Buea under the chairmanship of Paramount Chief S.M.L. Endeley of Buea and Paramount Chief F. Bille Manga Williams of Victoria (Limbe) to discuss the implications of the government's decision. They agreed to voice strong opposition to the announced privatisation on the grounds that the CDC lands were Bakweri lands and thus could not be sold to non-natives without Bakweri consent. After lengthy and passionate discussions, an *ad hoc* committee was elected by acclamation to assist the BLCC in preparing a detailed memorandum on the Bakweri position to be presented to the government and all other interested parties.[7]

Over 500 Bakweri chiefs, notables and elite gathered at the Buea Youth Cultural and Animation Center on 4 August 1994 and approved the memorandum drawn up by the *ad hoc* committee. In the memorandum, the Bakweri agreed that, if privatisation had to take place at all, it should be on the basis of 'a creative and enlightened partnership between the owners of the land on which the corporation operates and the providers of finance capital without which it would not be possible to run a modern, technologically sophisticated agro-industrial complex like the CDC'. They insisted that any privatisation plan be based on 'terms which recognise the ownership of land as a distinct variable which together with the cash make plantation agriculture possible; consequently, landowners deserve ground rent compensation in much the same way as the CDC was liable to pay ground rents for the use of the land'.[8] The memorandum was later presented to the provincial governor for onward transmission to President Biya. At the end of this historic meeting, the eminent Bakweri scholar and secretary of the *ad hoc* committee, Professor Ndiva Kofele-Kale, was designated counsel for the Bakweri people with instructions to present their case before the United Nations and other international fora.

The Bakweri case was strongly supported by the Anglophone movements. A powerfully worded petition to the head of state, co-signed by the Anglophone movements and the Bakweri chiefs, reiterated that the Bakweri had never relinquished ownership of the CDC lands and that the corporation could not be sold without Bakweri consent. It pointed out that the Bakweri had never been paid royalties for the use of their lands since the creation of the CDC in 1946 and also stressed that the Bakweri were not inclined to renew the 60-year CDC lease, thus reclaiming the CDC lands after its expiry in 2007.

Concerned about the mounting anger in the Anglophone region in general and the Bakweri community in particular, the Biya government decided to send a delegation of high-ranking Anglophone allies to the South West Province to appease the population. The delegation was led by Chief Ephraim Inoni, the Deputy Secretary-General at the Presidency, and the Chief of Bakingili, a village located on the territory of a Bakweri subgroup. The delegation met a number of Bakweri representatives in Buea to discuss the land problem. Though speaking on behalf of the government, Chief Inoni appealed to the Bakweri representatives not to forget that he was one of them. He acknowledged that there should have been prior contact between the government and the Bakweri before the announcement of the corporation's privatisation but he denied the widespread rumours in Anglophone Cameroon that the French and some high-ranking Francophones had masterminded the whole operation. While admitting that the financial situation of the corporation had improved after the 1994 devaluation of the CFA franc, he argued that privatisation would enable the corporation to obtain new capital for necessary investments in production and processing. The Bakweri Paramount Chief S.M.L. Endeley, who had always been a staunch supporter of the regime until the Bakweri land issue arose,[9] then took the floor. Amid thunderous applause he declared that he as the custodian of the ancestral lands and the Bakweri population as a whole were against the privatisation of the CDC. He requested that Chief Inoni report this to President Biya:

> We are in a country where we like to cheat ourselves, where government hands decisions through dictatorship... We say no, no [to privatisation], go and tell Mr Biya that he cannot afford to go down in history as the man who sold the CDC.[10]

After the government delegation returned to Yaoundé, no further government action took place concerning CDC privatisation but this apparent victory for Anglophone resistance turned out to be short-lived. In 1997 rumours of an imminent privatisation of the CDC became more and more persistent. In conformity with the agreement concluded with the IMF and the World Bank within the framework of the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in 1997, the privatisation of the CDC was expected to be launched soon. That the government, under severe pressure from the Bretton Woods institutions, was preparing the ground for the privatisation of the CDC could be seen from the speeches and interviews of leading government and CDC officials at the opening ceremony of the corporation's golden-jubilee celebration in Bota-Victoria on 1 December 1997. In his speech on that occasion, the newly appointed Prime Minister Peter Mafany Musonge, a Bakwerian himself who had been the CDC's general manager from 1988 to 1997, said:

> Since the traditional international funding agencies no longer finance corporations like CDC, the establishment should be prepared...to foster new business relationships to raise new money while the state plays the role of facilitator.... Traditional rulers within CDC's areas of operation, workers and other Cameroonians must understand perfectly well and make sure that peace reigns for conclusive investment.[11]

The CDC chairman, Mr N.N. Mbile, added that ‘privatisation should not scare us as we are confident that government will protect the interests of the Cameroonian people, the original landowners, the workers, new investors and the state itself’. Moreover, the CDC deputy general manager, Mr Richard Grey, then revealed that the highly reputable international consultancy firm Coopers and Lybrand had already been selected by the World Bank and the government to carry out a study into the privatisation of the CDC that would be completed by 30 June 1998. The Bakweri chiefs who attended the ceremony, notably Chief S.M.L. Endeley of Buea, were frustrated by these statements and revelations and condemned any future privatisation.[12]

The CDC was finally put up for sale in January 1999. Few protests were heard from the now almost dormant Anglophone movements (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2000). Their leadership’s only activity was to make a strongly worded statement on 10 April 1999 warning prospective CDC buyers to desist from investing in the purchase of the CDC. Bakweri chiefs and elite, however, quickly rallied again. In a meeting with South Western members of parliament and government, they denounced the privatisation of the CDC saying that the latter’s acceptance of the CDC sale ‘was tantamount to a betrayal of their people’.[13] The BLCC officially wrote to President Biya on behalf of the Bakweri people on 3 March 1999 requesting that it be included in the privatisation negotiations and that compensation be paid for the use of Bakweri lands. When rumours spread that various multinational companies like Fruitiers/Dole, Chiquita and Del Monte were already negotiating with individual government officials about the purchase of the whole or parts of the CDC at throwaway prices, the Bakweri in the diaspora once again addressed the head of state on 1 October 1999 in support of the BLCC position.[14]

Since no reply was forthcoming from the presidency, the BLCC, strongly supported by South West associations, like SWELA and SWECC, decided to raise national and international awareness by starting a high-profile public-relations campaign through the writing of open letters, petitions and newspaper articles and the use of the Internet. For this purpose, an interim bureau of the BLCC was set up in the United States in May 2000 to establish an effective, active and visible BLCC presence within the Bakweri and Cameroonian diaspora community and to open permanent lines of communication with all potential buyers of the CDC, donor agencies, NGOs and foreign governments directly or indirectly involved in the sale of the CDC. The BLCC-USA became very vocal, creating its own website on the Internet.[15] Its first action was to send a memorandum to the managing director of the IMF, Mr Horst Köhler, on 16 June 2000. In this memorandum, it warned him about the growing unrest among the Bakweri and threatened legal action should the privatisation of the CDC be pursued without BLCC involvement:

> As the current impasse in Zimbabwe and Kenya demonstrates, land expropriated from African natives by European colonialists a century ago is the source of much contemporary unrest and instability. All Cameroonians of goodwill bear witness that the Bakweri people have over the years opted for a peaceful resolution of the CDC Bakweri land problem. However, should the privatisation of the CDC go ahead without the input of the Bakweri on whose land most of the corporation’s agro-industrial activities are located, we preserve the right to seek legal redress against the government of the Republic of Cameroon, the IMF, the World Bank as well as all lessees who derive title to the land by whatever means, in any country of the world where such bodies are located.[16]

This was followed by massive pro-BLCC demonstrations in New York and Washington during the September 2000 United Nations Millennium Summit that was attended by a huge Cameroonian delegation led by President Paul Biya. As a result of these demonstrations and a flurry of other pro-BLCC activities on this occasion, the embarrassed Cameroonian delegation, along with leading donor agencies, were able to gauge the high levels of support for the BLCC within the entire Cameroonian diaspora community in the United States.

In a press release on 5 August 2000, the BLCC revealed that it was going to take its campaign for land restitution and compensation ‘a notch higher’ by seeking consultative status within the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It believed that the granting of consultative status would provide it with a global platform to proclaim its struggle for land rights, ‘bringing it into contact with other NGOs which claim to represent the interests of indigenous groups from around the world as well as with sympathetic UN members who have championed the cause of dispossessed people on the floor of the General Assembly and at the numerous ECOSOC meetings over the years’.[17] Soon afterwards, on 21 August 2000, the BLCC counsel, Professor Ndiva Kofele-Kale, was invited by the United Nations to make a representation on the Bakweri lands issue to the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva.

Following the government’s renewed call for tenders for the sale of the CDC in September 2000, the BLCC cautioned prospective buyers in an open letter as follows:

> It is our duty to advise you to think twice before you commit the resources of your shareholders in a venture that is still mired in controversy and whose promised financial and economic rewards may prove to be illusory in the long run.[18]

It became increasingly evident that the BLCC was finding it hard to defend Bakweri interests at the national level after ‘their own son’, Peter Mafany Musonge, was appointed prime minister in 1996. Without doubt, one of the main reasons for his appointment to this position was that President Biya regarded him, being an ex-CDC general manager and a Bakweri, as the most suitable candidate to handle the delicate issue of CDC privatisation.

The appointment of Musonge initially raised high expectations among the Bakweri. They were convinced that their son would pay particular attention to the land question and take Bakweri interests into consideration during any eventual sale of the CDC. Their expectations appeared to have a solid foundation because, in his former capacity as CDC general manager, Musonge had publicly declared during a 1994 radio interview that any privatisation of the CDC should be ‘not only economically effective but also socially equitable’. For that reason, indigenous landowners, workers and investors would be directly involved in this endeavour.[19] Once appointed prime minister however, he came under immense pressure from the IMF and his master, Paul Biya, to champion the economic advantages of CDC privatisation and to forget about the payment of compensation to Bakweri landowners. Unable to convince his ethnic group to give up its claim to what could possibly amount to tens of billions of CFA francs after more than fifty years of CDC existence, he is reported to have resorted to intimidation, using the Buea sub-prefect and the Fako prefect to that end.

In March 2000, the Buea sub-prefect, Mr Aboubakar Njikam, banned a BLCC general assembly meeting for which he had earlier given his approval. The prime minister appears quickly to have ordered a halt to the meeting when he learnt that compensation was high on the agenda but he failed to intimidate the committee, which eventually met on 15 April 2000. In June 2000, the Fako prefect, Jean-Robert Mengue Meka, accused it of being an illegal organisation and the committee was ordered to cease its activities. Two of the newly elected BLCC executives, Chief Peter Moky Efange (president) and Mola Njoh Litumbe (secretary-general), responded by telling Mengue Meka that he was acting illegally himself by claiming that the BLCC, which was founded as early as 1946, was an unlawful association. The prefect was reminded that the BLCC was a duly incorporated organisation that had been registered in accordance with the laws of the country and had been received by the South West governor in 1994 and could thus not now have its legality questioned.[20]

With the high profile publicity given to the BLCC both at home and abroad, the prime minister could no longer ignore the committee and its demands. He invited it to a working session in his Yaoundé office and on 4 October 2000, the BLCC leadership met with Musonge, Chief Ephraim Inoni, the Bakweri deputy general secretary at the Presidency and a number of other government officials. During this meeting Musonge conceded that the issues of land ownership and the payment of ground rents were legitimate demands but urged that these demands be pursued separately from the issue of privatisation. He argued that a hostile environment was being created by the BLCC protest campaign, which was scaring off potential investors.[21]

The BLCC delegation agreed with the prime minister that privatisation would be successful only in a peaceful atmosphere but it pointed out that the Bakweri protest actions, such as the UN Millennium Summit demonstrations, stemmed from a lack of government response to their pleas and representations. It stressed that Bakweri protest actions would inevitably continue until 'justice, equity, and legitimate rights of the Bakweri were met'. The delegation then reiterated the main BLCC demands, namely:

- that the government recognise that the lands occupied by the CDC were private property as defined by Part II of the 1974 Land Law and that the Bakweri were the legitimate owners of these lands;
- that the Bakweri be fully involved in the CDC privatisation negotiations to ensure that their interests were effectively protected;
- that ground rents be paid to a Bakweri land trust fund; and
- that the Bakweri, acting jointly or individually be allocated a specific percentage of shares in each of the privatised sectors of the corporation.[22]

While the BLCC was trying to embark on a dialogue with local and national authorities, it continued to caution potential CDC buyers and the Bretton Woods institutions against any privatisation of the corporation without the involvement of the landowners. The latter, in turn, brought strong pressure to bear upon the Cameroonian government to settle the privatisation imbroglio. In the wake of the reluctance of foreign companies to invest in the CDC, primarily because of the unresolved land issue, the government was compelled to reissue the CDC bid for tenders first on 1 January 2001 and then again on 1 January 2002. The government now appears to have accepted a privatisation construction that closely resembles the original proposal launched by Musonge when he was still CDC general manager, involving the landowners, the workers and the investors (see above). It intends to sell a majority stake in each CDC sector (rubber, oil-palm, tea and bananas) to foreign companies. However, the CDC lands will not be sold but offered on a long-lease basis to soothe the Bakweri landowners who fear the loss of their lands in the process. Other shares will be sold to the workers and Cameroonian interests, with the state maintaining a 10 per cent stake in each sector.[23]

CONCLUSION

In this study I have attempted to show that privatisation has become a cornerstone in the good governance-structural adjustment linkage formulated by the western donors and creditors and imposed upon African states. It is, in essence, an attempt to free state enterprises from ‘politics’, in particular from the government’s neo-patrimonial logic which is seen as the basic cause of their malfunctioning, to introduce transparency, accountability and the rule of law in policy-making and implementation needed for the efficient operation of market forces, and to redirect the state away from being an entrepreneur to being a promoter of private enterprise. Privatisation is also said to have a potentially liberating effect on civil society: it will empower the people by creating opportunities for private initiative and entrepreneurship.

My case study of the privatisation of the CDC in Anglophone Cameroon has provided sufficient evidence to substantiate our main thesis that the good governance-structural adjustment linkage, though largely framed in managerial and technical terms, is actually highly political, being embedded in particular relations of power, and ironically it often contradicts the liberal-democratic principles prescribed by the bilateral donors. In this respect, it has clearly demonstrated that:

- Privatisation schemes imposed by the Bretton Woods institutions tend to erode national sovereignty over basic economic policy decision-making despite the fact that these institutions usually try to depoliticise their interventions in African states by referring to their superior economic knowledge and technocratic skills. Moreover, the installation of a technocracy to implement ‘correct’ policies is an encouragement of authoritarian forms of governance: accounting to external agencies takes the place of accountability to legislatures and the electorate, democratic decision-making processes are circumvented, and a resulting ‘cult of secrecy’ discourages political debate and dialogue (Mkandawire 1999).
- Government leaders have constantly attempted to postpone and manipulate the implementation of privatisation schemes, which challenge the patronage system that forms a stabilising and uniting factor in the weak nation-state, undermine their limited popular legitimacy, and create ethno-regional opposition. Nevertheless, they have been eventually forced to comply so as not to forfeit any needed financial assistance.
- The government announcement of the privatisation of the CDC in Anglophone Cameroon has been particularly contested by various ethno-regional associations that have emerged during political liberalisation. Having been excluded from the decision-making process, they have strongly protested against their loss of control over ancestral lands and regional parastatals, which they considered as a renewed onslaught by the Francophone-dominated post-colonial state on the Anglophone cultural and economic heritage.

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NOTES

[1] *The Oracle*, vol. 1, no. 3, 1992, p. 2.
[2] *Fako International,* vol. 1, no. 2 (January), 1995, p. 18.
[3] *New African,* no. 326 (January), 1995, p. 25; and *Africa International,* nos 279/280 (January-February), 1995, p. 39.
[4] CAM, ‘Communiqué of the Enlarged Ex-Bureau Meeting, 30-31 July 1994 (mimeo); and CAM, ‘CAM Resolution on the Privatisation of the CDC’, 30-31 July 1994 (mimeo).
[5] *The Herald,* 18-21 August 1994, p. 7.
[6] *Cameroon Post,* 6-19 September 1994, p. 9.
[7] *Fako International*, vol. 1, no. 2 (January 1995), pp. 14-16.
[8] Memorandum of the Bakweri People on the Presidential Decree to Privatise or Sell the Cameroon Development Corporation, Buea, 27 July 1994.

[9] Chief S.M.L. Endeley is a brother of Dr E.M.L. Endeley and Mr D.M.L. Endeley who were leading figures in the BLC. He is a retired Chief Justice who acted, among others, as chairman of the ruling party, the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM), in Fako Division and chairman of the CDC before being appointed Paramount Chief of Buea in 1992. For his career, see Gwellem, J.F. (1985) *Cameroon Year Book 1985/86,* Limbe: Gwellem Publications: 113-14.
[10] Cited in *Fako International*, vol. 1, no. 2 (January 1995), p. 16.
[11] *The Post,* 5 December 1997, pp. 1-2.
[12] *Ibid.*
[13] Isaha'a Boh Cameroon, Bulletin no. 405.
[14] See Letter from the Bakweri around the World to President Paul Biya of Cameroon, dated 1 October 1999.
[15] See http://www.bakwerilands.org. Most of the documents quoted in this study can be found on this website.
[16] Letter from Dr Lyombe Eko, Executive Director of BLCC-USA, to Mr Horst Köhler, Managing Director of the IMF, dated 16 June 2000.
[17] Press Release no. blc/us/05/08/00, The BLCC to seek consultative status at the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
[18] BLCC, Open Letter to All Prospective Buyers of CDC Plantations, Buea, 12 October 2000.
[19] See *Cameroon Post,* 26 July-2 August 1994, pp. 12-13.
[20] BLCC, The BLCC refuses to stand down in the face of threats from Fako administrative authorities, Buea, 15 June 2000.
[21] Through such manoeuvres, Musonge succeeded, albeit temporarily, in dividing the BLCC into two camps: on the one hand, a majority faction led by its president, Chief Efange, which stood its ground, and, on the other, a minority faction led by the Bakweri Paramount Chief, Sam Endeley, which was more sensitive to Musonge's arguments. The latter accused the new BLCC executive of being too 'radical' and opposed its ongoing Internet campaign on the CDC's privatisation compensation.
[22] See Report of the Meeting of Prime Minister Mafany Musonge with BLCC Delegation, Yaoundé, 4 October 2000.
[23] See Privatisation of the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC): International Call for Tenders, Yaoundé: Ministry of Economy and Finance, 1 January 2001.
[25] *Fako International*, vol. 1, no. 2 (January 1995), p. 14.

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