Mobility and exclusion: conflicts between autochthons and allochthons during political liberalisation in Cameroon

Konings, P.J.J.; Bruijn, M.E. de; Dijk, R.A. van; Foeken, D.W.J.

Mobile Africa

Changing patterns of movement in Africa and beyond

Edited by   Mirjam de Bruijn

Rijk van Dijk

Dick Foeken

Mobility and exclusion: Conflicts between autochthons and allochthons during political liberalisation in Cameroon

Piet Konings

Political liberalisation in Africa has often been accompanied by a somewhat paradoxical obsession with autochthony, leading to more or less violent forms of exclusion of migrants. South West Province, one of the two provinces in the Anglophone region of Cameroon, provides an interesting case study to illustrate this striking phenomenon. In an area where a plantation economy was established during German colonial rule, massive labour migration has been encouraged from elsewhere in the country, particularly from the other Anglophone province, North West Province. Following large-scale settlement of northwestern migrants in the South West, the 'autochthonous' population began to resent their increasing domination in demographic, economic and political terms. When the government and its regional allies felt threatened by widespread opposition and federalist/- secessionist tendencies in the Anglophone region during the political liberalisation process in the 1990s, they started exploiting existing tensions between the 'autochthonous' and 'allochthonous' populations to boost South-West identity, promote various forms of ethnic cleansing, and thus split the Anglophone front.

Introduction

It is striking and somewhat paradoxical that the current processes of globalisation and liberalisation often appear to restrict rather than to promote a free flow of people and labour. Throughout the world, various forms of exclusion of migrants can be observed, even of second and third-generation immigrants. Western countries are witnessing not only widespread attempts to control and regulate the increased flow of migrants, particularly from less-developed countries but also the development of serious tensions between 'autochthons' and 'allochthons', the former fearing loss of identity and preferential access to scarce resources such as employment, the growth of right-wing movements and parties and, in extreme situations, such as Bosnia, attempts at ethnic

cleansing (cf. Geschiere & Nyamnjoh 2000). In many parts of Africa, too, mobility appears to have become more and more problematic during economic and political liberalisation, as is manifest in the intensification of conflicts between people who claim to be indigenous to a certain territory and settlers or strangers, even long-standing migrants of the same nationality.

Economic and political liberalisation in Africa has created space for autochthons to articulate their long entrenched feelings about allochthonous domination in demo-graphic, economic and political terms. Their struggles for control over economic and political resources are mostly instigated or fuelled by political entrepreneurs. With the introduction of multipartyism, the ruling party and government often fear being outvoted during local and regional elections by 'strangers' who tend to support the opposition for the representation and defence of their interests. They are inclined to encourage a distinction between 'ethnic citizens' and 'ethnic strangers' rather than to emphasise national integration and national citizenship (Mamdani 1996). Such a strategy naturally serves the purpose of winning votes and consolidating power at national and regional levels.

Some of the struggles between autochthons and allochthons have occurred at the local level, notably over control of land (cf. Simo 1997; Mvondo 1998). Others have occurred at the national level between nationals and immigrants of African, Asian and European origin especially regarding control over employment and business. In Gabon, for instance, there have been violent actions by nationals against immigrants from neighbouring African countries, Lebanon and France (Gray 1998). Economic and political liberalisation in Tanzania has been accompanied by a rise in social tensions between Tanzanians and the prosperous Asian business community and calls for the indigenisation of the latter's property (Heilman 1998). Most clashes, however, appear to have taken place at the regional level, particularly where autochthonous ethnic groups feel dominated by allochthonous ethnic groups. One serious conflict between autoch-thonous and allochthonous ethnic groups took place in Rift Valley Province in Kenya between the Kalenjin and Maasai on the one hand, and the Kikuyu and Luo on the other (Médard 1996; Heilman 1998; Ogachi 1999). Another outbreak of violence occurred in 1993-1996 between the autochthonous ethnic minority groups and the allochthonous Banyarwarda (migrants from Rwanda) in Northern Kivou in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Mathieu & Tsongo 1998; Pourtier 1996).

Several conflicts between autochthons and allochthons have emerged during political liberalisation in Cameroon, albeit in most cases of a less violent nature than in Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo (cf. Socpa 1999; Tabapssi 1999). In this chapter the focus is on the deteriorating relations between autochthons and allochthons in the coastal forest area of Anglophone Cameroon, present-day South West Province (see Map 11.1). This province provides an interesting case study as it is one of the few regions along the West African coast where a plantation economy was established during the German colonial period (1884-1916) (Epale 1985; Konings 1993). The plantation economy stimulated large-scale labour migration to the coastal estates and, more importantly, increased the settlement of plantation labour in the area after retire-ment. This chapter considers why the current obsession with the autochthony-

allochthony issue in South West Province relates foremost to relations between the inhabitants of the two provinces of Anglophone Cameroon: autochthonous South Westerners versus allochthonous North Westerners. This is all the more surprising since political liberalisation has created space for the emergence and rapid growth of several Anglophone associations, stressing their Anglophone identity and solidarity. These movements have attempted to mobilise the Anglophone population as a whole against the Francophone-dominated unitary state, which is accused of 'marginalising, exploiting and assimilating' the Anglophone minority (All Anglophone Conference 1993), and demand a return to the federal state or outright secession (Konings 1996a; Konings & Nyamnjoh 1997). The South-West elite's fear of renewed North-West domination during political liberalisation was one of the main reasons for their incitement of the autochthonous minority against the dominant and exploitative northwestern settlers and their request for government protection.

The South-West plantation economy and labour mobility

The continuous support given by the German colonial state (1884-1916) to plantation production led to the large-scale expropriation of approximately 300,000 acres of very fertile volcanic soil around Mount Cameroon in the South West Province and the expulsion of the original occupants of the expropriated lands, in particular the Bakweri, to prescribed native reserves (Courade 1981/82; Molua 1985). Nearly all the estates in the area were held by German planters.

During the First World War, the British occupied the area and confiscated the German planters' estates. By 1922, however, the British Mandate Authority had already decided to get rid of them, as the administrative costs of maintaining them were prohibitive. It seriously considered returning the plantation lands to their original owners but finally dropped the idea. Instead, it was decided that it would be in the best interests of the territory and its inhabitants to place the plantations back in the hands of foreign private enterprise. They were put up for auction in 1922 and 1924. For a variety of reasons, the vast majority of the estates were bought back by the former German owners (Konings 1993). One notable exception was the estates acquired by the United Africa Company (UAC), a well-known Unilever subsidiary (Fieldhouse 1978 and 1994). After its foundation in 1929, the UAC took over three local estates from the African and Eastern Trading Company (AETC) and, in 1932, bought another estate from the West-afrikanische Handelsgesellschaft at Lobe. Its most important estates are located in today's Ndian Division of South West Province, bordering eastern Nigeria. Its estates came to be known as Pamol Ltd, the principal private agro-industrial enterprise in the country (Konings 1998).

At the beginning of the Second World War, the German estates were expropriated again by the Custodian of Enemy Property. After the war, a decision had to be reached once more on how to dispose of the properties. The educated Bakweri elite, organised in the so-called Bakweri Land Committee, immediately started to agitate for the retrieval of its ancestral lands. It sent several petitions, first to the British Crown and subse-

Map 11.1: Republic of Cameroon
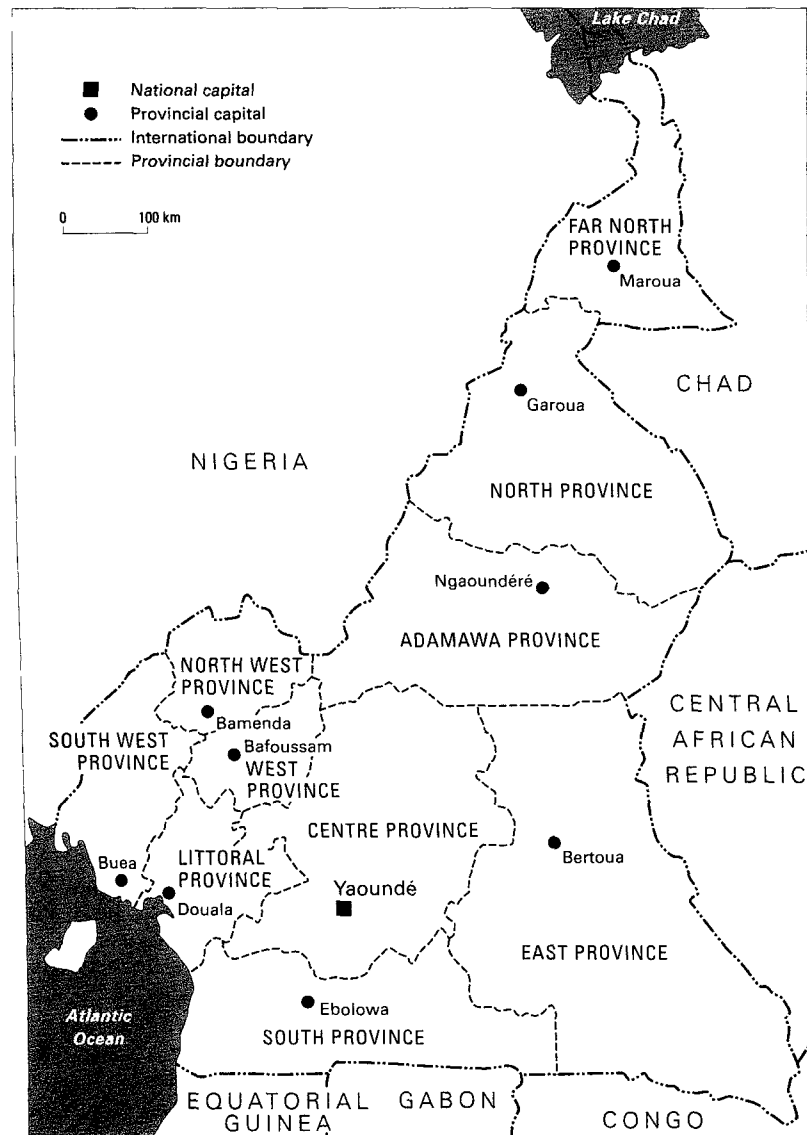
quently to the United Nations, as Britain had assumed responsibility for the administration of the territory under United Nations' Trusteeship after the war (Molua 1985). However, after considerable deliberation, the British Trusteeship Authority declined to surrender the ex-German plantation lands to their original owners and announced in November 1946 that the lands would be leased to a newly established statutory corporation, the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) (Ardener et al. 1960; Epale 1985; Konings 1993).

Plantation agriculture is labour-intensive and by 1914, German planters needed about 18,000 workers. Pamol's labour force gradually rose from 1,200 to 3,500. The CDC, the second largest employer in the country (being only surpassed by the government) initially employed between 20,000 and 25,000 labourers. Today it employs approximately 14,000 labourers (Konings 1993 and 1998). The procurement of a regular and adequate supply of labour was for a long time a major problem for plantation production. The German planters experienced almost insurmountable problems procuring sufficient labour from the local communities which were not only sparsely populated but also hated working for the expropriators of their land. This compelled them to import a considerable number of labourers from outside Cameroon, in particular from various West African countries (Rudin 1938; Rüger 1960). This imported labour, however, could not solve the acute labour problem. It also turned out to be expensive which was a major reason for its quick abandonment. The gradual opening up and pacification of the more densely populated areas of the interior revealed their enormous potential for solving the labour problem. The large majority of people in the interior, however, were not ready to accept voluntary labour contracts so various forms of coercion were employed during the entire German period to 'free' labour from the interior to the plantations. Initially, large numbers of men from rebellious areas were simply seized and sent to the plantations for up to six years as a kind of penal labour force, sometimes receiving no pay at all. Later on, a labour recruitment system was developed based on the continuous coercive pressures of private recruiters, local officials and suitably bribed African chiefs (Halldén 1968; Chilver 1971; Clarence-Smith 1989). Near the end of German colonial rule, limited head taxes and hut taxes were imposed which encouraged Africans to work on the plantations. Persons unable to pay taxes in cash would be turned over to private employers who paid the tax and the fee of ten Marks per head.

The most important inland recruitment areas were the Yaounde region and the Grassfields area, both in the Francophone part of Cameroon and occupied by the Bamileke, and present-day North West Province, part of the later Anglophone region and occupied by various ethnic groups closely related to the Bamileke. It was during the British Mandate period that a gradual transition occurred from forced to voluntary labour migration. This was facilitated by a variety of factors including the growing need for cash, improved conditions of service (especially the provision of land for food cultivation, the so-called 'chop farms') and active recruitment through ethnic, community and family networks.

There were initially remarkable differences between the CDC and Pamol concerning labour recruitment areas (Konings 1993 and 1998). When the CDC was established in

1946/47, it was faced with a serious decline in the supply of labour from Francophone Cameroon. Labour mobility from this area used to be encouraged by forms of forced labour imposed by the French (Kaptue 1986). By 1926 approximately 52% of the plantation labour force originated from the French Mandate area (Table 11.1). This figure gradually declined to only 1% in the 1980s. The efforts of the French Mandate Authority to stabilise labour within its home regions and to prevent it from leaving the French Mandate area greatly contributed to this decline. The expansion of more remunerative employment opportunities in Francophone Cameroon and the rising cost of living in Anglophone Cameroon in the aftermath of independence and reunification in 1961 brought about a further reduction in labour migration from Francophone to Anglophone Cameroon (Ndongko 1975). Apart from a temporary influx of labour from neighbouring eastern Nigeria (Ardener *et al.* 1960) and a steady labour force from South West Province, this decline was largely compensated for by an increasing number of labour migrants from North West Province. This province had a higher population density, was much later in developing cash-crop production, and lacked job opportunities outside the traditional sector.

Table 11.1: Regional composition of the CDC and Pamol labour forces (%)

	1926	1941	1950	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s
CDC							
North West Province	14.0	37.0	32.5	43.5	54.5	73.5	71.0
South West Province	33.0	27.5	33.0	25.0	38.0	24.5	27.0
Francophone Cameroon	52.0	25.0	13.0	4.5	5.0	1.0	1.0
Eastern Nigeria	1.0	10.5	21.5	27.0	2.5	1.0	1.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Pamol							
North West Province	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	5.0	27.0	41.8	54.0
South West Province	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	13.0	47.0	44.4	33.5
Francophone Cameroon	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1.7	1.7	1.3	1.0
Eastern Nigeria	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	80.3	24.3	12.5	11.5
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	100	100	100	100

Source: Konings 1993 and 1998

Pamol faced even more problems than the CDC in recruiting sufficient labour. Its main estates are located in one of the most marginalised areas of Cameroon where the cost of living is extremely high due to regular food shortages. Cameroonian workers were, consequently, inclined to seek employment on the CDC estates. In these circumstances, neighbouring eastern Nigeria readily became the main supplier of labour to the Pamol estates. In 1961, eastern Nigerians accounted for 80% of the total Pamol labour force (Table 11.1). Since independence and reunification, the dominant position of Nigerian workers on the Pamol estates has rapidly declined. However, managerial failure to recruit sufficient labour in Anglophone Cameroon formed an insurmountable obstacle to

the complete realisation of the government's Cameroonisation policy: in 1970 Nigerian workers still accounted for a quarter of the total Pamol labour force. From the 1970s onwards, a certain stabilisation in labour recruitment from Nigeria can be seen at around 12%. Under constant pressure to 'cameroonise', the management staged a renewed recruiting drive in Anglophone Cameroon, first in the nearby Ndian and Manyu Divisions of South West Province and later in various divisions of North West Province. As at the CDC, northwestern workers at present account for the majority of the labour force on the Pamol estates (54%).

Labour mobility and relations between autochthons and allochthons on the southwestern estates prior to political liberalisation

It is striking that there have been few serious clashes between autochthonous and stranger ethnic groups on the southwestern estates. Tensions between autochthons and allochthons are most likely to arise when stranger ethno-regional groups appear to occupy a dominant position on the estates.

The dominant position of eastern Nigerian workers on the CDC and particularly on the Pamol estates in the nationalist climate after the Second World War gave rise to serious frictions between autochthonous Anglophone Cameroonian workers and eastern Nigerian strangers. During the 1947-1960 period, Anglophone Cameroonian workers on the CDC and Pamol estates undertook a series of collective and informal actions aimed at the removal of Igbo and Ibibio supervisory staff and management (Konings 1993: 69 and 1998: 80), repeatedly calling upon management and government to promote a rapid Cameroonisation of the labour force and management staff. Since independence and reunification, former animosities between Anglophone Cameroonian and Nigerian workers appear to have largely subsided, probably because Nigerians have become a relatively small, stranger minority group on the estates, and are thus no longer perceived by Anglophone Cameroonians as a threat. During fieldwork, some Nigerian workers expressed the view that their best strategy was to assume a low profile so as not to encourage envy and arouse tensions (cf. Kleis 1975). Although conflicts have not disappeared altogether, the social distance between Nigerian and Cameroonian workers appears to have diminished (DeLancey 1973).

After the conflict between Anglophone Cameroonian and Nigerian workers, a new potential source of friction could be in relations between the autochthonous southwestern minority and the northwestern majority on the estates. Extended clashes between these two groups have not yet occurred. On the contrary, all researchers on estate labour agree that southwestern and northwestern workers usually live and work together peacefully (Ardener *et al.* 1960; DeLancey 1973; Kofele-Kale 1981; Konings 1993 and 1998). Both groups tend to organise not only on an ethnic but also on an inter-ethnic basis, as is seen in the membership of churches and trade unions. They have engaged from time to time in common struggles against managerial control and exploitation in the workplace. One reason for this unexpected phenomenon is the consistent policy of the management, as well as church and union leaders, to mobilise and organise workers on a multi-ethnic

basis. This policy seems to have created a certain measure of understanding and tolerance among the workers for each other's socio-cultural backgrounds, thus fostering bonds of companionship and friendship across ethno-regional boundaries. Another reason is the general use of Pidgin English, which has helped overcome communication barriers between the various ethnic groups. A third reason is the marked preference of workers themselves for ethnically-mixed living and working arrangements, partly stemming from their belief that witchcraft is most likely to occur among close relatives and tribesmen (Ardener *et al.* 1960; Konings 1993). The most important reason, however, appears to be the shared living and working conditions on the estates, which are classical examples of occupational communities. However, while relations between southwestern and northwestern workers appear to be more or less peaceful, relations between southwestern and northwestern *managers* have been marked by fierce conflicts caused by the persistent attempts of the southwestern managerial minority to establish control over agro-industrial enterprises located in 'their' region (see below).[1]

The effects of labour mobility on the relations between autochthons and allochthons in local communities in the South West appear to have been more dramatic. While initially most migrant workers returned to their region of origin after short spells of work on the estates, an increasing number gradually decided to settle in the South West after retirement. The CDC and Pamol management also proved incapable of accommodating all their workers in the labour camps on the estates and some workers were obliged to find accommodation in the villages and towns surrounding the estates. Settlers were soon joined by fellow members of their ethnic group who wanted to grow food or cash crops on the fertile lands or to become artisans, traders or employees in local enterprises. In some coastal districts, like Victoria District, the local population "almost became overwhelmed by these strangers even before the Second World War" (Gwan 1975). Indeed, strangers rapidly found themselves in the majority in local towns and villages.

Initially, strangers were welcomed by the local population and given land in usufruct, thus becoming more or less incorporated in the land-giving lineage. They were usually expected to provide a small recompense in kind as a token of appreciation for the land-giver. According to Ardener *et al.* (1960), the procedure for a stranger to have access to land in the Bakweri area was to provide a pig for the villagers. He was then accorded a usufruct without further payments of rents. Yet, it soon became evident that the local tenure system could not cope with the increasing flow of strangers and that local institutions were too weak to enforce the existing norms and rules. The system collapsed. A

---

[1] Unlike on the CDC and Pamol estates in Anglophone Cameroon, some severe clashes between autochthonous and stranger workers have reportedly occurred on agro-industrial enterprises situated in the southern part of Francophone Cameroon, especially on the SOSUCAM sugar estates at Mbandjock (Barbier *et al.* 1980; Ngend 1982). Two factors seem to be responsible for the violent confrontation between southern and northern workers on the latter enterprise in 1976. First of all, the existence of occupational and ethno-regional overlapping has always constituted a potentially explosive situation at SOSUCAM: the higher-paid jobs are occupied by the better-educated and skilled workers from the south and the less well-paid jobs by the uneducated and unskilled workers from the north. And secondly, the unskilled northern sugar-cane cutters tend to oppose any integrative efforts and prefer to live separately. These factors continue to create problems for the achievement of a peaceful coexistence between both ethno-regional groups, and do not encourage workers' solidarity.

land market quickly developed in those areas with important stranger concentrations (Meek 1957; Fisiy 1992). The resulting unprincipled access to land degenerated into numerous land disputes, especially in Victoria District where land shortages rapidly developed. Disputes arose because different villages sought to sell the same piece of land to strangers. Even strangers who had lived in an area for a long time could rent land to other strangers. A handful of local residents were gaining handsomely from this breakdown of customary tenure as they offered communal land to strangers for money.

Local chiefs and elders regularly protested to the British administration about the unscrupulous land-grabbing by strangers in their areas of jurisdiction but they did not usually obtain the expected support. The British authorities acknowledged the existing land problems but they did not bring about any structural change, not wanting to disturb the economic role of immigrants whose entrepreneurial spirit and hard work were said to compare favourably with the consumerist attitudes and laziness of the local population. In addition, the term 'native' was not clearly defined in the Native Lands and Rights Ordinance. In Section 2 a 'native' was defined as a person, one of whose parents was a member of any ethnic group indigenous to the British Mandate territory. The provision in Section 3 that "it shall not be lawful for any native holding a right of occupancy to sell, transfer possession, bequeath or otherwise alienate his title to a non-native except with the consent of the governor" therefore did not apply to any inhabitant of Anglophone Cameroon living in South West Province.

Land was not the only reason for the development of antagonistic relations between autochthons and strangers in local communities. The local population envied the settlers' success in agriculture, trade and other entrepreneurial activities. Moreover, they resented their frequent disrespect for local authority and customs, their regular seduction of local women and their alleged disinclination to invest in local development, preferring instead to transfer any accumulated capital to their region of origin (Ardener *et al.* 1960; Ardener 1962). It was generally believed that settlers were only interested in exploiting and dominating the local population, while continuing to be loyal to their own ethnic group, which was ultimately evidenced by their frequent desire either to return home at the end of their working life or to be buried in the land of their ancestors.

The simmering conflict between natives and strangers has sometimes exploded in the past, leading to various forms of ethnic cleansing. Strikingly, any violent conflict of this nature used to occur between autochthons and settlers originating from outside Anglophone Cameroon. As on the estates, the local population, often instigated by regional politicians (Kleis 1975; Amazee 1990), directed its anger after the Second World War at the eastern Nigerian settlers who had come to dominate the regional administration and trade. Particularly the Igbo became victims of verbal and physical attacks by frustrated local inhabitants and were often told to return home. Early in February 1948 the Bakweri Native Authority passed the following rules to control relations between natives and Igbo:

- Nobody is allowed to sell his or her house to an Igbo, neither may anybody give his or her house for rentage to an Igbo.
- No farmland may be sold to an Igbo or rented to an Igbo.

- Nobody may allow an Igbo to enter any native farm or forest for purpose of finding sticks for building or for any other purposes.
- Houses or farms already sold to an Igbo man shall be purchased by the Native Authority who will afterwards resell same to some suitable person.
- Nobody shall trade with Igbos for any thing of value or not.
- All landlords must ask their Igbo tenants to quit before 15 March 1948.
- No Cameroon woman is allowed to communicate with the Igbos in any form.[2]

An even more serious incident occurred in 1966 when a long-standing conflict between the local Bakossi and Bamileke immigrants in the Tombel area ended in a bloody confrontation. The Bamileke, inhabitants of the Francophone part of the Grassfields, are renowned in Cameroon for their mobility and entrepreneurial ethos (Warnier 1993; Tabapssi 1999). They had acquired a great deal of land in the Tombel area, often after having been employed as labourers on the CDC estates in the area and on the cocoa farms of the local peasantry (Levin 1980). After the 1950s, tensions developed between the local population and the Bamileke immigrants. The Bakossi had become jealous of seeing the Bamileke prosper on the land they had acquired in the area at low cost and land disputes erupted. Tensions increased further after the outbreak of the *Union des Populations du Cameroun* (UPC) rebellion in Francophone Cameroon in 1955 (Joseph 1977). The UPC received strong support in the Bamileke area and many Bamileke youths became UPC guerrilla fighters. UPC guerrilla warfare soon affected the Tombel area close to the border between Anglophone and Francophone Cameroon. UPC guerrillas started looting local farms and enterprises and kidnapping or killing any person unfortunate enough to cross their path. The Bakossi accused Bamileke farmers in the area of supporting and protecting their UPC brothers. In 1966, they began to hold meetings, in which Bakossi secret societies and medicine men played a significant role, in order to prepare themselves for an attack on the Bamileke settlers. When they heard on 31 December 1966 that UPC terrorists had killed five Bakossi, they immediately mobilised to take revenge. They, and particularly the Bakossi self-defence units that had been armed by the government to combat guerrilla attacks, went into action, killing no less than 236 Bamileke and setting fire to 181 Bamileke houses (Ngalame 1997; Ejedepang-Koge 1986).

No such incident has occurred since. The simmering conflict between autochthons and allochthons in the southwestern communities, however, continues to provide for explosive material that can easily be manipulated and used by political entrepreneurs.

The growing divide between the South-West and North-West elites in Anglophone Cameroon

In addition to the large-scale migration and settlement of North Westerners in South West Province, the growing divide between the South-West and North-West elites has contributed to the southwestern attack on northwestern strangers during current

economic and political liberalisation. This divide within the Anglophone elite must be attributed to the South-West elite's perception of increasing political domination of the North-West elite at the regional and national level since the end of the 1950s.

During the nationalist struggle after the Second World War, the Anglophone elite initially demonstrated a large degree of unity. They strongly resented the administration of the Trust Territory of the Southern Cameroons as a mere appendage of Nigeria and eastern Nigerian domination of the Southern Cameroonian economy. They first demanded a larger representation in the Nigerian administration and later regional autonomy. Interestingly, in the late 1940s the question of reunification of Anglophone and Francophone Cameroon cropped up in the programmes of the various Southern Cameroonian political movements and parties, raising the possibility of an alternative political option for the Southern Cameroons to escape from its subordinate position in the British-Nigerian colonial system and Igbo domination (Johnson 1970; Konings 1999a and 1999b).

From the mid-1950s onwards, nationalist leaders in the Southern Cameroons became increasingly divided. Different points of view on the political trajectory of the area tended to be reinforced by personality differences between the major political leaders, Dr Emmanuel Endeley and John Ngu Foncha,[3] and ethno-regional differences within the trust territory.

Endeley, a medical doctor by training, was from the South West, being a son of the Bakweri Paramount Chief at Buea (Geschiere 1993; Konings 1999b). He was the leader of the then-ruling South West-based Kamerun National Convention (KNC) party. Following constitutional changes leading to a growing autonomy of the Southern Cameroons in the Nigerian Federation, Endeley became Leader of Government Business in 1954 and the first Prime Minister of the Southern Cameroons in 1958. He moved from an anti-Nigeria and pro-reunification stand towards a more positive view of Nigeria when the Southern Cameroons became a quasi-region within Nigeria in 1954. His new position was even strengthened when the Southern Cameroons achieved full regional status in 1958. From his perspective, regional status seemed an adequate answer to the problems of Nigerian domination, the lack of Southern Cameroonian participation in the Nigerian political system, and economic stagnation. With regional status, Southern Cameroonians could rule themselves, maintain their ties with the British colonial legacy, and avoid the violence and chaos of the civil war going on in Francophone Cameroon after 1955 when the UPC was banned by the French authorities. Endeley's increasing championship of Southern Cameroonian integration into Nigeria received the tacit approval of the British authorities.

Endeley's opponent, John Ngu Foncha, was a teacher by profession and hailed from the Anglophone part of the Grassfields, present-day North West Province. Foncha had been a leading figure in Endeley's KNC until 1955, when he broke away to form his own party, the North West-based Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP). Foncha and his supporters blamed Endeley for no longer adhering to the original KNC programme of evolutionary reunification of the two Cameroons and for his new pro-

---

[2] Letter from Bakweri Native Authority, Buea, to Senior Divisional Officer, Victoria, dated 21 February 1948, in BNA, File PC/h (1948) 1, Conditions of Settlement.

[3] For a more detailed description of the lives and views of these outstanding early leaders in the Southern Cameroonian nationalist struggle, see Konings 1999b.

Nigerian stance. While Foncha's political views on the future of the Southern Came-
roons were not always consistent, he seems to have mostly crusaded for secession from
Nigeria and (eventual) reunification with Francophone Cameroon. Political dissension,
however, was not the only reason for Foncha's break with Endeley's party. He also
thought that a North West-based party was more likely to represent and defend north-
western interests than a South West-based party. Ethnically different from the coastal
forest peoples, the Grassfields had been socio-economically disadvantaged during the
colonial period through the more extensive development of education, infrastructure,
and agro-industrial and other enterprises in South West Province. Furthermore, South-
West leaders had a louder voice in political affairs than those from the North West.

With the approaching independence of Nigeria and Francophone Cameroon in 1960,
the 1959 elections became a relentless struggle for hegemony between the dominant
parties and leaders in the Southern Cameroons. It was generally understood that the
victor in these elections would be given a mandate to negotiate the political future of the
territory. During the election campaign the KNDP used various strategies to defeat the
KNC. First, it attempted to capitalise on the widespread 'Igbo scare' in the Southern
Cameroons, an issue that the KNC apparently underestimated. KNDP leaders alleged
that a vote for the KNC would mean the integration of the Southern Cameroons into
Nigeria and the continuation of Igbo domination. Second, the KNDP attempted to
present itself as a regional party, especially when campaigning in the more densely
populated and less-developed North West (Ebune 1992).

By employing such strategies, the KNDP was able to win the 1959 elections. On the
one hand, its victory was a political event with important consequences for South West-
North West relations. While the South-West elite had dominated the political scene in
the Southern Cameroons until the 1959 elections, the KNDP's victory signified the start
of North-West hegemony in the territory, with Foncha becoming Prime Minister of the
Southern Cameroons. Henceforth the North-West elite began to play a dominant politi-
cal and economic role in the region. In pre-empting for themselves the choicest jobs and
lands in South West Province, they provoked strong resentment among South Western-
ers (Kofele-Kale 1981; Ngwane 1994). South-West sentiments have been intensified by
the gradual success of entrepreneurial North Westerners in dominating most sectors of
South West Province's economy, in particular trade, transport and housing (Rowlands
1993). On the other hand, the KNDP's victory was so narrow, winning 14 out of the 26
seats, that it did not provide Foncha with a clear mandate to start negotiating the politi-
cal future of the Southern Cameroons at the United Nations. It was therefore agreed that
Endeley should not be left out of these negotiations.

Since Foncha and Endeley proved incapable of resolving their differences on the
political future of the Southern Cameroons, the UN General Assembly eventually
decided to hold a plebiscite on the issue in the trust territory and more or less imposed
the question to be asked. Do you want to achieve independence by joining Nigeria or by
reuniting with the Republic of Cameroon (the new name of former French Cameroon
after independence on 1 January 1960)?

The plebiscite was to be held on 11 February 1961. In the time preceding the
plebiscite the KNDP and the Cameroon Peoples' National Congress (CPNC) – an

alliance between Endeley's KNC and another South West-based party, N.N. Mbile's
Kamerun Peoples' Party (KPP), with the obvious aim of forming a united front against
the KNDP – used similar themes and tactics to win votes as during the 1959 elections.
While the KNDP tried to win votes by capitalising on widespread anti-Nigerian feelings
and vague sentiments of Cameroonian brotherhood, the CPNC singled out terrorism in
the Republic of Cameroon to scare Southern Cameroonians from voting for reunifica-
tion. The CPNC also tried to impress upon the electorate that reunification would mean
a complete change of language, system of government and way of life (Welch 1966;
Johnson 1970). Both parties also regularly appealed to ethno-regional sentiments and
loyalties. The latter created a great deal of tension between the local population and the
Grassfields settlers in South West Province and some southwestern politicians even
threatening to expel Grassfielders by force (Chem-Langhëë 1976). CPNC leaders were
often barred from campaigning in North West Province. In the end, the KNDP emerged
victorious from the plebiscite: 233,571 Southern Cameroonians voted for reunification
with the Republic of Cameroon while only 97,741 voted for integration into Nigeria.
The ratio of votes for and against reunification with Francophone Cameroon was
significantly higher in North West Province (3.5 to 1) than in South West Province (1.5
to 1) (Welch 1966). The results of the plebiscite reinforced the South West-North West
divide. The South West elite insisted that the KNDP's victory in South West Province
was due to the votes of northwestern workers and settlers there.

Following the plebiscite, a Bakweri cultural society, the Bakweri Molongo, claimed
that 'native strangers' had voted for reunification because they wanted to continue
dominating the Bakweri.

> Native strangers voted for reunification in the Victoria Division in order to seize the
> Bakweri lands, and in order to spite and over-run the Bakweri. We, the Bakweri, have
> voted for Nigeria because the Nigerian Constitution provides safeguards for the minori-
> ties which is what the Bakweri are (quoted in Chem-Langhëë 1976: 331).

The CPNC leaders strongly protested to the United Nations about the results that, to
them, were very unsatisfactory. They held that ethnic sentiments had played a crucial
role in influencing opinion during the plebiscite and called on the United Nations to
interpret the results on an ethnic basis. When an ethnic group voted in favour of union
with Nigeria or the Republic of Cameroon, it should be allowed to join the country of its
choice. Their appeal was rejected, however, and the United Nations accepted the results
as they stood.

The South West-North West divide manifested itself again when the Anglophone
elite entered into negotiations with the Francophone elite about the creation of a federal
state. Foncha headed the multi-party delegation to the constitutional talks held at
Foumban from 17 to 21 July 1961 (Konings 1999a). The delegation included many
KNDP ministers who were obviously inclined to limit the role of opposition politicians
in the deliberations (Ngoh 1990 and 1996). The Anglophone elite proposed a loose form
of federation with a large measure of autonomy for the two federated states, which, in
their view, would provide for the equal partnership of both parties and the preservation
of the cultural heritage and identity of each. The Francophone elite, on the contrary,

proposed a highly centralised form of federation that they considered to be merely a transitory phase to the total integration of the Anglophone region into a strong, unitary state. Capitalising on its stronger bargaining position since Francophone Cameroon was much larger and more developed than Anglophone Cameroon and, more importantly, it was already an independent state, the Francophone delegation was able to impose upon the Anglophone delegation its own conception of the future federal state. The consequences of these constitutional arrangements have been dramatic for the Anglophone population. For the latter, nation-building in the post-colonial state has been driven by the firm determination of the Francophone political elite to dominate and exploit the Anglophone minority and to erase the cultural and institutional foundation of Anglophone identity (Mukong 1990; Konings & Nyamnjoh 1997; Eyoh 1998a).

At present, the South-West elite is inclined to indict the North-West elite as co-architects with the Francophone elite of the post-colonial order marked by the blatant recolonisation and marginalisation of the Anglophone territory by the Francophone-dominated state. They point out that northwestern politicians were in control of the Federated State of West Cameroon (the then-named Anglophone Cameroon) during the 1961-1972 period, when multi-partyism and federalism were abolished, accusing them of self-interested betrayal of West Cameroonian autonomy and identity. Eyoh (1998a) rightly observed that this South-West narrative was characterised by an impressive dose of historical amnesia, willed acts of selective remembrance of the past so as to discount the responsibility of the South-West elite in what was a collective elite project.

The South West-North West divide was actually one of the decisive factors preventing the Anglophone elite from forming a united front against President Ahidjo's attempts to weaken the federal structure and undermine the autonomy and identity of West Cameroon. The speed with which the entire Anglophone political elite embraced the single-party concept is clear evidence of their lust for power and influence within the changing power constellation in the federal state (Kofele-Kale 1987).

Contrary to current attempts by the South-West elite to make the North-West elite fully responsible for the Anglophone predicament, Dr Endeley was the first to be converted to Ahidjo's idea of a one-party state. As the leader of West Cameroon's minority party, Endeley saw Ahidjo's plans not only as an opportunity for him to play a role in national politics but also as a means of preventing his party from being dominated by the majority KNDP. Moreover, he was inclined to embrace the one-party state as a way of escape for the South West from northwestern domination (Ngwane 1994). Rivalry among the West Cameroonian leaders provided an excellent opportunity for Ahidjo to dissolve West Cameroon's parties and to create a single party in 1966. The gradual co-optation of the Anglophone political elite into the 'hegemonic alliance' (Bayart 1979) and the autocratic nature of the Ahidjo regime largely explain why they did not resist the abolition of the federation in 1972. To reduce any danger of united Anglophone action against Francophone domination, Ahidjo decided to divide the erstwhile Federated State of West Cameroon into two provinces. This decision, masterfully informed by the internal contradictions within the Anglophone territory between the coastal forest people (South West Province) and the Grassfields people (North West Province), would

exacerbate these divisions that in future would serve as the Achilles' heel of most attempts at Anglophone identity and organisation.

The South-West elite's resentment at the continuing North-West domination in their region after the abolition of the federal state is reflected in their struggle for control over the CDC and Pamol. This struggle has often paralysed the CDC's administration and management (Konings 1996b and 1997). Since independence and reunification, the chairman of the CDC Board of Directors has usually been a South Westerner. Prominent South Westerners, like Chief Victor Mukete, Chief Sam Endeley, John Ebong Ngolle and Nerius Nomaso Mbile have all occupied this position. The daily management of the corporation, however, has become increasingly dominated by North Westerners. The appointment of a North Westerner, John Niba Ngu, as the first Cameroonian General Manager of the corporation in 1974 occurred on the advice of the CDC's external financiers but was strongly resented by the southwestern managerial and political elite. First, there were also some suitable southwestern candidates for the post, particularly Isaac Malafa, who used to be senior to Ngu in the corporation's hierarchy, having served as the Deputy General Manager for a couple of years. Second, the southwestern managerial elite feared that Ngu's appointment would reinforce northwestern domination over CDC management. Ngu's fourteen years in office (1974-1988) were marked by strong anti-North West feelings, he himself being regularly accused by the southwestern managerial elite of favouring his own countrymen. Ngu's severe conflicts with two of the southwestern chairmen of the CDC, Chief Victor Mukete and Chief Sam Endeley, have become almost legendary. Following considerable southwestern pressures, Ahidjo's successor to the presidency, Paul Biya, replaced Ngu in 1988 with Peter Mafany Musonge, a Bakweri. Ngu was then appointed Minister of Agriculture, a post that, incidentally, had meanwhile become Supervisory Minister of the CDC. In this capacity, Ngu continued to have influence in the CDC, thus denying his successor total freedom to carry out his duties. The southwestern managerial elite alleged that Ngu was using his brothers among the management staff to pester and remove Musonge. Together with other sections of the southwestern elite, they requested Musonge reduce North-West influence in the corporation.

An even more vehement conflict between the South-West and North-West elites developed in 1987 when Unilever decided to withdraw from plantation activities in Cameroon due to the government's refusal to support Pamol during the severe crisis facing the agro-industrial sector in the 1980s (Konings 1997 and 1998). Unilever then agreed to sell Pamol to a consortium of well-known northwestern businessmen with whom it had come into contact during mediation with the predominantly northwestern management staff. As soon as it became known that both parties had signed a contract, the South-West elite started agitating against the North-West takeover of Pamol, appealing to the state to intervene on their behalf. In a strongly worded petition, they declared categorically that they would never allow their ancestral lands, occupied by Unilever for decades, to be colonised and exploited by North Westerners. They claimed that a North-West takeover of Pamol would inevitably strengthen North-West domination over the South West. They therefore urgently appealed to the state to annul the contract between Unilever and the northwestern consortium and to support an eventual

South-West takeover of Pamol. The effective mobilisation of the regional elite was clearly a decisive factor in the ultimate success of the South-West political offensive. In the face of such a demonstration of unity and determination, the government did not dare to disappoint the South West, an area of vital importance to the national economy in terms of its oil, timber and agricultural resources (Ndzana 1987). When the government finally announced its decision to annul the contract between Unilever and the northwestern consortium, Unilever decided on 13 October 1987 to put the company into voluntary liquidation. Since then the South-West elite has made several attempts to buy Pamol.

Political liberalisation and the aggravation of the autochthony-allochthony issue in South West Province

Political liberalisation in the early 1990s fanned the rivalry between South-West and North-West elites in their struggle for power at the regional and national level. Out of fear of renewed North-West domination, the South-West elite, and especially the section that was closely connected with the regime in power, tried to stimulate South-West identity and organisation, even to the extent of inciting the autochthonous population in South West Province against the allegedly dominant and exploitative northwestern strangers or settlers.

The South-West elite became alarmed when the liberalisation of political space resulted in the rapid growth of both the North West-based opposition party, the Social Democratic Front (SDF), and several Anglophone movements which contested Francophone domination and demanded first a return to the federal state and later outright secession (Konings & Nyamnjoh 1997; Takougang & Krieger 1998). The growing popularity of these organisations immediately raised their suspicions of renewed North-West domination over the South West.

From a South-West point of view, such suspicions were not without foundation. The SDF was clearly a party organised and controlled by the North-West elite. Moreover, although the party, like the former KNDP, enjoyed less popularity among the autochthonous population in the South West than in the North West, it could nevertheless count on massive support from northwestern workers and settlers in the region. In addition, it soon became manifest that the SDF's frequent, and often violent, confrontations with the regime, turning the Anglophone region into a veritable hotbed of rebellion, had the paradoxical effect of advancing the political careers of northwestern politicians. The year 1992 witnessed first the appointment of a North Westerner, Simon Achidi Achu, as Prime Minister in an apparent attempt by the desperate regime to contain the enormous popularity of the SDF in the North West, and later the spectacular performance of the charismatic SDF chairman, John Fru Ndi, in the presidential elections.

Understandably, southwestern memories of northwestern domination in the Federated State of West Cameroon created resistance among the South-West elite against the Anglophone movements' advocacy of a return to a two-state (Anglophone/Franco-

phone) federal arrangement. Furthermore, although South Westerners dominated the leadership of the most important Anglophone associations, the vast majority of its members appeared to be SDF members. Little wonder that the South-West elite was inclined to perceive Anglophone associations as auxiliary organisations of the SDF.

Given their repeated failure to form a party of the same standing as the SDF, the South-West elite started to create regional associations to represent and defend South-West interests. This gave rise to the emergence of the South West Elite Association (SWELA) and the South West Chiefs' Conference (SWCC) (Nyamnjoh & Rowlands 1998; Eyoh 1998b; Konings & Nyamnjoh 1997; Konings 1999b).

SWELA was an attempt to unite all the existing elite associations in the South West into one single organisation. Its leadership continually claimed that SWELA was a non-political pressure group, the main aim of which was to promote South West Province's socio-economic development 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 'Grassfields imperialism'. Although the SWELA supported most of the Anglophone grievances about Francophone domination, it equally claimed that the South West had been more disadvantaged than the North West in the post-colonial state. Clearly, fear of renewed North-West domination was one of the underlying motives for its foundation. It came into existence after the launching of the SDF and the latter's subsequent expansion into South West Province. On several occasions, SWELA leaders, especially those closely allied with the ruling regime, issued public statements blaming the SDF for acts of violence and anti-government activities in the South West.

Strikingly, SWELA membership is restricted to citizens belonging to one of the region's autochthonous ethnic groups, a distinction which tended to exclude even second and third-generation immigrants from membership. This exclusion was based upon SWELA members' doubts about immigrants' loyalty to their region of settlement. After having been refused membership, Francophone immigrants subsequently formed an 'Eleventh Province' association. The name Eleventh Province is merely imaginary, as everybody knows that there are only ten provinces in Cameroon but by adopting the name Eleventh Province these immigrants expressed their marginalisation and their feelings of being recognised neither as Francophone nor as Anglophone citizens (Geschiere & Gugler 1998).

Following military brutalities in the South West during the government's 1993 anti-smuggling campaign, a split occurred in SWELA. On the one hand, there were those who maintained close links with the Biya regime and the ruling party, the Cameroon Peoples' Democratic Movement (CPDM), and who often displayed strong anti-northwestern sentiments. This so-called Inkatha SWELA was usually viewed as a CPDM appendage and a resurrection of VIKUMA, the propagated Victoria-Kumba-Mamfe alliance in the 1960s to destroy Grassfields domination. They opposed the two-state federal system proposed by the Anglophone movements and championed a ten-state federal system based on the existing ten provinces in Cameroon, which would retain the present separation between South West and North West Provinces, and thus safeguard the former's autonomy. On the other hand there were those who were more critical of government policies and often offered their allegiance to the opposition parties like the

South West-based Liberal Democratic Alliance (LDA) and the North West-based SDF. They advocated closer cooperation between the South-West and North-West elites as a necessary precondition for an effective representation of Anglophone interests, and strongly supported the Anglophone movements' demand for a return to a two-state federal system.

Given the intensification of the power struggles between the South-West and North-West elites during the political liberalisation process, the Biya government found it increasingly lucrative and politically expedient to tempt the peaceful and conciliatory South-West elite away from Anglophone solidarity with strategic appointments and the idea that their real enemy was the unpatriotic, ungrateful and power-mongering North-West elite. The following example illustrates how successful this divide-and-rule tactic was. In September 1993, nine southwestern chiefs travelled to Yaounde to pledge their unalloyed allegiance to President Biya. They told him that they strongly condemned any attempt to partition Cameroon on the basis of Anglophone and Francophone cultures and that they were alarmed at the numerous demonstrations, blackmail, civil disobedience, rebellious attitudes and recurrent activities to destabilise the state and the government, which they particularly attributed to the SDF. They asked the Head of State to transform the present ten provinces into ten autonomous provinces, and drew his attention to the fact that, after reunification, South West Province had been discriminated against in the distribution of strategic posts.[4]

In response to South-West complaints of North-West domination, Biya began to appoint some South Westerners to key positions in their own provinces. For example, Dorothy Njeuma was appointed Vice-Chancellor of the newly created Anglophone University of Buea and Becky Ndive was transferred from Yaounde to head the Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV) station in South West Province. Nevertheless, South Westerners still felt under-represented in the highest government offices and constantly requested that a South Westerner succeed the North Westerner, Simon Achidi Achu, as Prime Minister. So when, in September 1996, Biya appointed the CDC General Manager, Peter Mafany Musonge, as Prime Minister and maintained more South Westerners than North Westerners in key cabinet positions, "the people...went wild with excitement and jubilation and loudly praised the Head of State" for having at last listened to the cry of despair of South Westerners, who for over thirty-six years had been "confined to the periphery of national politics and socio-economic development". In the words of Musonge himself, this was "the first time in our history as a united nation that a South Westerner has been appointed prime minister", and South Westerners had "to come together to galvanise the second political awakening in South West Province" and "to strengthen our position and bargaining power".[5]

Government divide-and-rule tactics culminated in the 1996 constitution. While the previous (1972) constitution had emphasised national integration and equal rights of all citizens, including the right "to settle in any place and to move about freely", the new constitution promised special state protection for autochthonous minorities (Melone *et*

---

[4] See *The Herald*, 3-10 November 1993, pp. 1-3
[5] See 'Significance of P.M. Musonge's Appointment' by a member of the South West, Kome Epule, in *The Star Headlines*, 20 November 1966, p. 5

al. 1996; Konings & Nyamnjoh 2000). Significantly, it stretched the conventional notion of minorities to such ambiguous proportions that historical minorities like the Anglophones were themselves denied the status of minority, while any ethnic minority group that appeared to distance itself from the opposition could rely on government support. Not unexpectedly, the new constitution tended to boost South-West identity and fuel existing tensions between South Westerners and North Westerners.

The timing of its release was hardly accidental. It was promulgated only a few days before the 21 January 1996 municipal elections. The South-West pro-CPDM elite was shocked when the SDF won most key urban constituencies in their region. South West Province's Governor, Peter Oben Ashu, immediately blamed the settlers, who outnumbered the indigenes in most urban areas of the province, for the poor performance of the CPDM in the urban areas, and on several occasions he, and other members of the southwestern elite, ordered them to return home. Before the elections, Nfon Victor Mukete, the Bafaw Paramount Chief in Kumba, had used Bafaw vigilante groups to intimidate settlers in the Kumba municipal areas not to vote for the SDF. His action would be hailed subsequently by N.N. Mbile, one of the oldest political leaders in South West Province and at that time CDC chairman, at a joint conference of the South-West chiefs and elites in July 1999, and other traditional leaders were urged to emulate him.[6] The South-West elite immediately started demanding state protection for the autochthonous southwestern minority against the dominant and exploitative Grassfielders. Grassfields settlers were likened to scabies, a stubborn skin affliction commonly referred to in Pidgin English as *cam-no-go* (meaning an illness that cannot be cured or a visitor who would not leave). Appeals to the state for protection were often accompanied by threats of ethnic cleansing and the removal of strangers.

Straight after the elections, the government provided the required protection by appointing indigenous CPDM leaders as urban delegates in the municipalities won by the SDF. It is beyond any doubt that the Biya regime also rendered assistance after the municipal elections to the emergence of the so-called Grand Sawa movement,[7] an alignment of the ethnically-related coastal elite in South West Province and neighbouring Francophone Littoral Province on the basis of common feelings of exploitation by Francophone and Anglophone Grassfields settlers (Tatah Mentan 1996; Wang Sonné 1997; Yenshu 1998; Nyamnjoh & Rowlands 1998). This alignment came into being after the indigenous Sawa elite in Douala had staged government-condoned demonstrations against the Francophone Grassfielders, the Bamileke, who alone accounted for 70% of the Douala population, and who had provided for only one indigenous mayor out of the five councils in which they had won the municipal elections on an SDF ticket. The emergence of the Grand Sawa movement signified an important victory for the government in its divide-and-rule tactics. Evidently, it also had a devastating effect on

---

[6] See *The Herald*, 21 July 1999, pp. 1 and 3-4, for a detailed report on the conference held at the University of Buea on 17 July 1999.
[7] The term 'Sawa' was generally employed by natives of Douala who refer to themselves as coastal people. The term was subsequently extended to related coastal people in the Francophone Littoral Province and Anglophone South West Province. Of late, ethnic groups in Littoral and South West Provinces, living at a distance from the coast, have also come to identify themselves as such. See Yenshu 1998.

Anglophone identity and organisation, the Francophone-Anglophone divide becoming cross-cut by alliances that opposed the coastal people, the Grand Sawa, to the so-called Grand West, the alliance between the Anglophone and Francophone Grassfielders constituting the backbone of the major opposition party, the SDF.

To those who sought protection as minorities, the price to pay would increasingly be stated in no uncertain terms: Vote CPDM. This is exactly what the new Prime Minister, Peter Mafany Musonge, and other members of the southwestern elite were telling the people in the region. For example, on 21 March 1997, the Secretary-General of the SWCC, Chief Dr Atem Ebako, appealed to South Westerners to support the ruling party in the forthcoming parliamentary elections:

> Our communities, especially those in Fako and Meme Divisions, are swarmed by Cameroonians from other places and provinces...It is possible to have Cameroonians who are not indigenous to South West Province become representatives of South Western-ers...in local councils, parliament and government. This aspect of the evolution of the political life of South West Province, which became very obvious after the 21 January 1996 municipal elections, is most repulsive, resentful, indignant, and pre-occupying. Our choice is clear as we stated in the General Assembly meeting in Kumba on 8 March 1997. We called on all South Westerners and all their friends of voting age without exception to register and vote massively for the candidates of the CPDM party of President Paul Biya at the forthcoming parliamentary elections [8]

The autochthony-allochthony discourse has not only become an important ploy for political entrepreneurs in their struggles for power. It appears also to have become part and parcel of the people's daily lives in South West Province.

During elections, the southwestern pro-CPDM elites became accustomed either to excluding northwestern settlers from voting in South West Province or to bringing pressure to bear upon them to vote for the CPDM. According to the Cameroon Electoral Code,[9] every citizen may vote in a locality where he has been resident for at least six months or where his name is on the income-tax assessment list for a fifth consecutive year. Despite such rules, northwestern settlers, especially those who were known to be SDF supporters, were frequently barred from voting in their residential area and requested to do so in their region of origin (to find out on arrival that they were supposed to vote in their region of residence). Some southwestern opposition leaders appear to have supported this form of exclusion. For example, the Chairman of the LDA, Njoh Litumbe, stated in 1997 that the Electoral Code should define somebody's home. Such a definition would help clarify where somebody was supposed to vote. In his view, a person's home was where he would be buried.[10] During a meeting of the South-West elite in Limbe in February 1997 it was decided that strangers had to obtain a residence certificate as a precondition for being registered to vote, a decision that settlers immediately condemned as intended to favour the party in power (Yenshu

[8] See 'South West Chiefs' Conference on the Plight of South West Province', in *The Pilot Magazine*, May 1997, p 8
[9] See Republic of Cameroon, *Cameroon Electoral Code, 1997 Revised Edition*, Yaounde· Les Editions de l'Imprimerie Nationale, 1997
[10] *The Herald*, 31 March - 1 April 1997, p. 1

1998). Although this rule was in clear contravention of the Electoral Code, pro-CPDM officials and chiefs, like Governor Peter Oben Ashu and Chief Mukete of Kumba, continued to insist on these permits. Since the appointment of the CDC General Manager, Peter Mafany Musonge, as Prime Minister in 1996, CDC and Pamol workers (the majority of whom are North Westerners and SDF supporters) have been subjected to persistent CPDM pressure to support the new prime minister by voting CPDM. CDC workers were even forced to make compulsory contributions to the CPDM. The CDC senior staff were equally called upon to ensure that their subordinates voted massively for the CPDM so as to maintain Musonge in power. Otherwise they would jeopardise their jobs in the corporation.[11] Traditional secret cults, like Mawu in the Mamfe area and the Nganya juju in the Bakweri area, were used to intimidate northwestern pro-SDF settlers during elections.[12]

The autochthony-allochthony issue is also the subject of continuous discussion in academic circles and in the press. The Anglophone private press, which initially encour-aged Anglophone identity and solidarity, has become increasingly split along South West-North West lines. South-West papers, like *The Weekly Post, The Star Headlines* and *The Oracle* have been created to focus on regional issues of interest to South West Province and the SWELA, and to oppose the Grassfielders (both the settlers in South West Province and the autochthons in North West Province). Newer papers, like *The Beacon* and *Fako International*, have been created to attend more specifically to the political ambitions of the Sawa elite and to oppose Grassfields hegemony as a matter of policy. During election periods, the southwestern press sought, through the rhetoric of ethnic cleansing, to solve problems of political representation and to encourage a wide-spread antagonism of strangers as 'ruthless land grabbers', 'parasites' and 'traitors in the house'. North Westerners used the private press to fight back. In a similar manner, existing papers redefined their editorial focus, while new regional papers sprang up. The sheer volume of diatribes, commentaries, opinions and reports related to the autoch-thony-allochthony issue in northwestern papers, such as *The Post* and *The Herald*, are an indication of the recent obsession in the Anglophone area with this issue.

The autochthony-allochthony issue has also affected various institutions in South West Province. The Buea Anglophone University is headed by Bakweri who has used all means possible to maintain control over the predominantly northwestern students and lecturers. There is constant talk of Grassfields domination to the detriment of "sons and daughters of the soil".[13] Neither have the CDC and the Catholic Church escaped from the autochthony-allochthony phobia. When southwestern papers like *The Sketch* and *The Weekly Post*, both notorious for their anti-North West attitudes, informed the public that northwestern managers in the CDC had written a memo in which they accused the General Manager, Peter Mafany Musonge, of favouring his Bakweri kinsmen and victimising North Westerners, the Bakweri elite organised a march of shame in support of Musonge. Participants carried spears, machetes, guns and sticks, sang war songs and

[11] *Ibid*, 19-20 March 1997, p 1.
[12] *Ibid*, 14-17 March 1996, p. 4.
[13] See, for instance, *The Post*, 18 September 1997, p. 7, referring to the 'Bakweri Mafia', dominating the University of Buea

displayed placards like "Sack all these North-West managers", "CDC is our own", and so on.[14] The northwestern Catholic bishop of Buea Diocese, Pius Suh Awa, has been frequently charged in recent years with appointing more northwestern than southwestern priests in key positions in his diocese. The South-West Catholic population rebelled in 1996 when the bishop took action against a southwestern priest, Father Etienne Khumba, who had founded a healing church, the so-called Maranatha Movement, which attracted large numbers of Catholics but deviated, according to the bishop, from Catholic liturgical rites (Konings forthcoming). Following the priest's repeated refusal to obey orders, Bishop Awa excommunicated him and suspended his movement. In the 1996-1998 period, the South-West elite brought pressure to bear upon the bishop and regional authorities to leave Father Etienne and his movement alone and Father Etienne's followers regularly occupied the bishop's house and disrupted Catholic church services. After having been frequently warned by the South West Governor that he should obey his bishop's orders and stop his followers' actions, Father Etienne was eventually evicted from his house by security forces in 1998 and removed to North West Province where he was forced to stay in the house of a southwestern bishop.[15]

The autochthony-allochthony issue has exacerbated conflicts about land in local communities. It has even had an impact on marriages. Marriages between South Westerners and North Westerners are increasingly disapproved of, being seen as political and cultural aberrations.

Conclusion

The massive northwestern labour migration and the subsequent dominant northwestern position in the South West form the historical background for understanding the current position in the South West form the historical background for understanding the current regional obsession with autochthony and exclusion. Long-standing tensions between the autochthonous population and the northwestern settlers were exacerbated during political liberalisation in the 1990s when the regional pro-CPDM elite and the government began to champion various forms of ethnic cleansing. Obviously, such a strategy served the purpose of achieving or maintaining political power in a period when the Anglophone region was being transformed into a hotbed of opposition to the regime and newly emerging Anglophone organisations were demanding either a return to the federal state or outright secession.

The regional pro-CPDM elite has attempted not only to incite the autochthonous population against the northwestern settlers but also to amplify the differences between the two Anglophone provinces. They accuse the settlers of exploitation, land-grabbing and ingratitude to welcoming indigenes and hold them responsible for all political disturbances in South West Province, even going as far as insinuating that the poor performance at elections by the ruling CPDM and federalist/secessionist tendencies among Anglophones could be attributed wholly to settler opposition. Considering them-

[14] See *The Herald*, 21-24 July 1994, p. 3 and *The People's Voice*, May 1994, pp. 1 and 3-8.
[15] See, for instance, *The Oracle*, February-March 1998, pp. 32-35; and *The Herald*, 23-25 June 1998, pp. 1-2.

selves as having suffered greater disadvantage than North Westerners in the distribution of state power, they see more political capital in promoting southwestern identity and solidarity than Anglophone identity and solidarity. They are, therefore, inclined to construe the North-West elite as the greatest menace to the political fortunes of South West Province through a narrative of the post-colonial trajectory that indicts northwestern politicians as accomplices and beneficiaries of southwestern misfortunes.

The government in power has been actively involved in dividing the South-West and North-West elites, culminating in the promulgation of the 1996 constitution that promised state protection to autochthonous minorities. The regime has also encouraged the construction of new ethnic identities, in particular the Grand Sawa movement, an alignment of the ethnically-related coastal elite on the basis of common feelings of exploitation and domination by Grassfields settlers. While the autochthony-allochthony issue has increasingly become commonplace in both the public and private spaces of the South West, it has never been marked by such extreme forms of violence as in some other parts of Africa.

References

All Anglophone Conference 1993, *The Buea Declaration*, Limbe: Nooremac Press.

Amazee, V.B. 1990, 'The "Igbo Scare" in the British Cameroons, c. 1945-61', *Journal of African History* 31: 281-93.

Ardener, E. 1962, *Divorce and Fertility: An African Study*, London: Oxford University Press.

Ardener, E., S. Ardener & W.A. Warmington 1960, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, London: Oxford University Press.

Barbier, J.-C., G. Courade & J. Tissandier 1980, *Complexes Agro-industriels au Cameroun*, Paris: ORSTOM.

Bayart, J.-F. 1979, *L'Etat au Cameroun*, Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques.

Chem-Langhëë, B. 1976, 'The Kamerun Plebiscites 1959-1961: Perceptions and Strategies', PhD Thesis, University of British Columbia.

Chilver, E.M. 1971, 'Paramountcy and Protection in the Cameroons: The Bali and the Germans, 1889-1913', in P. Gifford & W.R. Louis (eds), *Britain and Germany in Africa Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule*, New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 479-511.

Clarence-Smith, W.G. 1989, 'From Plantation to Peasant Production in German Cameroon', in P. Geschiere & P. Konings (eds), *Proceedings/Contributions of the Conference on the Political Economy of Cameroon. Historical Perspectives*, Leiden: African Studies Centre, Research Report no. 35 (2 vols), pp. 483-502.

Courade, G. 1981/82, 'Marginalité Volontaire ou Imposée? Le Cas des Bakweri (Kpe) du Mont Cameroun', *Cahiers ORSTOM, sér Sci.Hum* 18 (3): 357-88.

DeLancey, M.W. 1973, 'Changes in Social Attitudes and Political Knowledge among Migrants to Plantations in West Cameroon', PhD Thesis, Indiana University.

Ebune, J.B. 1992, *The Growth of Political Parties in Southern Cameroons 1916-1960*, Yaounde: CEPER.

Ejedepang-Koge, S.N. 1986, *The Tradition of a People Bakossi*, Yaounde: SOPECAM.

Epale, S.J. 1985, *Plantations and Development in Western Cameroon, 1885-1975: A Study in Agrarian Capitalism*, New York: Vantage Press.

Eyoh, D. 1998a, 'Conflicting Narratives of Anglophone Protest and the Politics of Identity in Cameroon', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 16 (2): 249-76.

Eyoh, D. 1998b, 'Through the Prism of a Local Tragedy: Political Liberalisation, Regionalism and Elite Struggles for Power in Cameroon', *Africa* 68 (3): 338-59.

Fieldhouse, D.K. 1978, *Unilever Overseas: The Anatomy of a Multinational, 1895-1965*, London: Croom Helm.

Fieldhouse, D.K. 1994, *Merchant Capital and Economic Decolonization The United Africa Company 1929-1989*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Fisiy, C.F. 1992, 'Power and Privilege in the Administration of Law: Land Law Reforms and Social Differentiation in Cameroon', PhD Thesis, University of Leiden.

Geschiere, P. 1993, 'Chiefs and Colonial Rule in Cameroon: Inventing Chieftaincy, French and British Style', *Africa* 63 (2): 151-75.

Geschiere, P. & J. Gugler 1998, 'The Urban-Rural Connection: Changing Issues of Belonging and Identification', *Africa* 68 (3): 309-19.

Geschiere, P. & F.B. Nyamnjoh, 2000, 'Capitalism and Autochthony: The Seesaw of Mobility and Belonging', *Public Culture* 12 (2): 423-25.

Gray, C.J. 1998, 'Cultivating Citizenship through Xenophobia in Gabon, 1960-1995', *Africa Today* 45 (3-4): 389-409.

Gwan, E.A. 1975, 'Types, Processes and Policy Implications of Various Migrations in West Cameroon', PhD Thesis, University of California.

Halldén, E. 1968, *The Culture Policy of the Basel Mission in the Cameroons 1886-1905*, Uppsala: University of Uppsala, Studia Ethnographica Uppsaliensia 31.

Heilman, B. 1998, 'Who Are the Indigenous Tanzanians? Competing Conceptions of Tanzanian Citizenship in the Business Community', *Africa Today* 45 (3-4): 369-87.

Johnson, W.R. 1970, *The Cameroon Federation: Political Integration in a Fragmentary Society*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Joseph, R.A. 1977, *Radical Nationalism in Cameroon: Social Origins of the U.P.C. Rebellion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kaptue, L. 1986, *Travail et Main-d'Oeuvre au Cameroun Sous Régime Français 1916-1952*, Paris: Ed. L'Harmattan.

Kleis, G.W. 1975, 'Network and Ethnicity in an Igbo Migrant Community', PhD Thesis, Michigan State University.

Kofele-Kale, N. 1981, *Tribesmen and Patriots: Political Culture in a Poly-ethnic African State*, Washington D.C.: University Press of America.

Kofele-Kale, N. 1987, 'Class, Status, and Power in Post-reunification Cameroon: The Rise of an Anglophone Bourgeoisie, 1961-1980', in I.L. Markovitz (ed.), *Studies in Power and Class in Africa*, New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 135-169.

Konings, P. 1993, *Labour Resistance in Cameroon: Managerial Strategies and Labour Resistance in the Agro-industrial Plantations of the Cameroon Development Corporation*, London: James Currey / Heinemann.

Konings, P. 1996a, 'Le "Problème Anglophone" au Cameroun dans les Années 1990', *Politique Africaine* 62: 25-34.

Konings, P. 1996b, 'Privatisation of Agro-industrial Parastatals and Anglophone Opposition in Cameroon', *Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 34 (3): 199-217.

Konings, P. 1997, 'Agro-industry and Regionalism in the South West Province of Cameroon during the National Economic and Political Crisis', in P.N. Nkwi & F.B. Nyamnjoh (eds), *Regional Balance and National Integration in Cameroon: Lessons Learned and the Uncertain Future*, Yaounde: ICASSRT, pp. 289-305.

Konings, P. 1998, *Unilever Estates in Crisis and the Power of Organisations in Cameroon*, Hamburg: LIT Verlag.

Konings, P. 1999a, 'The Anglophone Struggle for Federalism in Cameroon', in L.R. Basta & J. Ibrahim (eds), *Federalism and Decentralization in Africa*, Freiburg: Institut du Fédéralisme, pp. 289-325.

Konings, P. 1999b, 'The "Anglophone problem" and Chieftaincy in Anglophone Cameroon', in E.A.B. van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal & R. van Dijk (eds), *African Chieftaincy in a New Socio-political Landscape*, Hamburg: LIT Verlag, pp. 181-206.

Konings, P. (forthcoming), 'Religious Revival in the Roman Catholic Church and the Autochthony-Allochthony Issue in the South West Province of Cameroon'.

Konings, P. & F.B. Nyamnjoh 1997, 'The Anglophone Problem in Cameroon', *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 35 (2): 207-29.

Konings, P. & F.B. Nyamnjoh. 2000, 'Construction and Deconstruction: Anglophones or Autochtones?' *The African Anthropologist* 7 (1): 5-32.

Levin, M.D. 1980, 'Export Crops and Peasantization: The Bakosi of Cameroon', in M.A. Klein (ed.), *Peasants in Africa: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, Beverly Hills/London: Sage Publications, pp. 221-41.

Mamdani, M. 1996, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Mathieu, P. & A.M. Tsongo 1998, 'Guerres Paysannes au Nord-Kivu (République Démocratique du Congo), 1937-1994', *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* XXXVIII, 150-152: 385-416.

Médard, C. 1996, 'Les "Conflits Ethniques" au Kenya: Une Question de Votes ou de Terres?' *Afrique Contemporaine* 180 (October-December 1996): 62-74.

Meek, C.K. 1957, *Land Tenure and Land Administration in Nigeria and the Cameroons*, London: HMSO.

Melone, S., A. Minkoa She & L. Sindjoun (eds) 1996, *La Réforme Constitutionnelle du 18 Janvier 1996 au Cameroun: Aspects Juridiques et Politiques*, Yaounde: Fondation Friedrich-Ebert/GRAP.

Molua, H.N. 1985, 'The Bakweri Land Problem 1884-1961: A Case Study', MA Thesis, University of Ibadan.

Mukong, A.W. (ed.) 1990, *The Case for the Southern Cameroons*, Uwani-Enugu: Chuka Printing Company Limited.

Mvondo, P.N. 1998, 'Le Régime Foncier Camerounais Face à l'Exigence Constitutionnelle de Préservation des Droits des Populations Autochtones', *Verfassung und Recht in Übersee* 31: 343-70.

Ndongko, W.A. 1975, *Planning for Economic Development in a Federal State: The Case of Cameroon, 1960-1971*, Munich: Weltforum Verlag.

Ndzana, V. Ombe 1987, *Agriculture, Pétrole et Politique au Cameroun: Sortir de la Crise?* Paris: Ed. L'Harmattan.

Ngalame, E.L. 1997, 'Bakossi and their Neighbours: A Study of Conflicts and Co-operation from Pre-colonial to 1976', Thèse de Doctorat de Troisième Cycle, University of Yaounde.

Ngend, J. 1982, 'Les Plantations de Cannes à Sucre de Mbandjock et Leur Influence Régionale', Thèse de Doctorat de Troisième Cycle, University of Bordeaux.

Ngoh, V.J. 1990, *Constitutional Developments in Southern Cameroons, 1946-1961: From Trusteeship to Independence*, Yaounde: CEPER.

Ngoh, V.J. 1996, *History of Cameroon since 1800*, Limbe: Presbook.

Ngwane, G. 1994, *The Anglophone File*. Limbe: Presbook.

Nyamnjoh, F.B. & M. Rowlands 1998, 'Elite Associations and the Politics of Belonging in Cameroon', *Africa* 68 (3): 320-37.

Ogachi, O. 1999, 'Economic Reform, Political Liberalisation and Economic Ethnic Conflict in Kenya'. *Africa Development* 24 (1-2): 83-107.

Pourtier, R. 1996, 'La Guerre au Kivu: Un Conflit Multidimensionnel', *Afrique Contemporaine* 180 (October-December 1996): 15-38.

Rowlands, M. 1993, 'Accumulation and the Cultural Politics of Identity in the Grassfields', in P. Geschiere & P. Konings (eds), *Itinéraires d'Accumulation au Cameroun*, Paris: Karthala, pp. 71-97.

Rudin, H.R. 1938, *Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914: A Case Study in Modern Imperialism*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Rüger, A. 1960, 'Die Entstehung und Lage der Arbeiterklasse unter dem deutschen Kolonialregime in Kamerun (1895-1905)', in H. Stoecker (ed.), *Kamerun unter Deutscher Kolonialherrschaft*, Berlin: Rütten and Loening, pp. 151-242.

Simo, J.A. Mope 1997, 'Land Disputes and the Impact on Disintegration in Contemporary Western Grassfields: Case Study of the Ndop Plain Chiefdoms', in P.N. Nkwi & F.B. Nyamnjoh (eds), *Regional Balance and National Integration in Cameroon: Lessons Learned and the Uncertain Future*, Yaounde: ICASSRT, pp. 225-241.

Socpa, A. 1999, 'L'Hégemonie Ethnique Cyclique au Nord Cameroun', *Africa Development* 24 (1-2): 57-81.

Tabapssi, F.T. 1999, 'Le Modèle Migratoire Bamiléké (Cameroun) et Sa Crise Actuelle: Perspectives Economiques et Culturelles', PhD Thesis, University of Leiden.

Takougang, J. & M. Krieger 1998, *African State and Society in the 1990s: Cameroon's Political Crossroads*, Boulder/Oxford: Westview Press.

Tatah Mentan, E. 1996, 'Constitutionalism, Press, and Factional Politics: Coverage of SAWA Minority Agitations in Cameroon', in S. Melone, A. Minkoa She & L. Sindjoun (eds), *La Réforme Constitutionnelle du 18 Janvier 1996 au Cameroun: Aspects Juridiques et Politiques*, Yaounde: Fondation Friedrich-Ebert/GRAP, pp. 182-98.

Wang Sonnè 1997, 'De la Dynamique de la Qualité d'Autochtone dans la Démocratisation au Cameroun: Cas de la Région de Douala', in D. Zognong & I. Mouiche (eds), *Démocratisation et Rivalités Ethniques au Cameroun*, Yaounde: CIREPE, pp. 179-99.

Warnier, J.-P. 1993, *L'Esprit d'Entreprise au Cameroun*, Paris: Karthala.

Welch, C.E. 1966, *Dream of Unity: Pan-Africanism and Political Unification in West Africa*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

Yenshu, E. 1998, 'The Discourse and Politics of Indigenous/Minority Peoples' Rights in Some Metropolitan Areas of Cameroon', *Journal of Applied Social Sciences* 1 (1): 59-76.