Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Neoliberal bandwagonism: civil society and the politics of belonging in Anglophone Cameroon

Konings, P.J.J.

Citation
Konings, P. J. J. (2009). *Neoliberal bandwagonism: civil society and the politics of belonging in Anglophone Cameroon*. Bamenda, Cameroon: African Studies Centre and Langaa Publishers. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/1887/22173

Version:	Not Applicable (or Unknown)
License:	Leiden University Non-exclusive license
Downloaded from:	https://hdl.handle.net/1887/22173

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Neoliberal Bandwagonism:

Civil society and the politics of belonging in Anglophone Cameroon

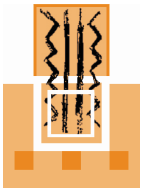
Langaa &
African Studies Centre

Neoliberal Bandwagonism:

Civil Society and the Politics of Belonging in Anglophone Cameroon

Piet Konings

Langaa Research and Publishing Common Initiative Group
PO Box 902 Mankon
Bamenda
North West Region
Cameroon
Phone +237 33 07 34 69 / 33 36 14 02
LangaaGrp@gmail.com
www.africanbookscollective.com/publishers/langaa-rpcig



African Studies Centre
P.O. Box 9555
2300 RB Leiden
The Netherlands
Phone +31 72 527 3372
asc@ascleiden.nl
www.ascleiden.nl

ISBN: 9956-558-23-0

© Langaa & African Studies Centre, 2009

Contents

Acknowledgements *viii*
Abbreviations *ix*
Map of the Republic of Cameroon *xi*

1 CIVIL SOCIETY IN ANGLOPHONE CAMEROON *1*
Introduction *1*
Towards an African version of civil society *2*
Neoliberal reforms, civil society and the politics of belonging in Anglophone Cameroon *5*
Organisation of the book *8*
Conclusion *11*

2 MOBILITY AND EXCLUSION: THE DEVELOPMENT OF AUTOCHTHONY MOVEMENTS IN THE SOUTH WEST PROVINCE *12*
Introduction *12*
The South West plantation economy and labour mobility *14*
Labour mobility and relations between autochthons and allochthons in the Southwestern estates prior to political liberalisation *17*
The growing divide between the South-West and North-West elites in Anglophone Cameroon *20*
Political liberalisation and the aggravation of the autochthony-allochthony issue in South West Province *27*
Conclusion *34*

3 AUTOCHTHONY AND ETHNIC CLEANSING IN THE SOUTH WEST PROVINCE: THE 1961 TOMBEL DISTURBANCES *35*
Introduction *35*
Factors underlying the 1966 Bakossi-Bamileke confrontation *39*
Bamileke mobility and encroachment on Bakossi land *40*
The UPC rebellion and insecurity in the Bakossi region *42*
The Bakossi elite and ethnic mobilisation *44*
The 1966 Bakossi-Bamileke confrontation in the Tombel area *47*
Conclusion *51*

4 THE MARANATHA MOVEMENT AND AUTOCHTHONY IN THE SOUTH WEST PROVINCE *53*
Introduction *53*
The emergence of the Maranatha movement crisis in the Buea diocese *57*
Vehement South West resistance against the victimisation of the autochthonous founder of the Maranatha movement *63*
Conclusion *70*

5 THE ENTRY OF ANGLOPHONE NATIONALISM INTO PUBLIC SPACE *72*
Introduction *72*
The emergence of anglophone nationalism in public space *75*
Bringing back Anglophone identity into historical space *80*
Creating space for Anglophone identity in arts *84*
Placing Anglophone identity in virtual space *85*
Expansion of Anglophone identity into legal space *87*
Experiencing Anglophone identity in everyday space *88*
Conclusion *91*

6 ANGLOPHONE STUDENTS AND ANGLOPHONE NATIONALIST STRUGGLES *92*
Introduction *92*
The vanguard role of Anglophone students in Anglophone nationalist struggles *95*
The Southern Cameroons Youth League (SCYL) *99*
President Biya's Youths (PRESBY) *102*
Conclusion *106*

7 UNIVERSITY OF BUEA STUDENTS ON STRIKE *108*
Introduction *108*
Authoritarian governance of the University of Buea *109*
The 2005 UB students' strike *113*
The 2006 UB students' strike *121*
Conclusion *125*

8 AUTONOMOUS TEACHERS' TRADE UNIONISM IN ANGLOPHONE CAMEROON, 1959-1972 *127*
Introduction *127*
Political and educational reforms in Anglophone Cameroon *132*
The role of the Southern Cameroons Union of Teachers *134*
The role of the West Cameroon Union of Teachers *139*
Conclusion *146*

9 ANGLOPHONE TEACHERS' ORGANISATIONS DURING CAMEROON'S POLITICAL LIBERALISATION *149*
Introduction *149*
The Teachers' Association of Cameroon (TAC): Defending regional interests versus the state *152*
The Cameroon Teachers' Trade Union (CATTU): Defending class interests versus the state *158*
Conclusion *165*

10 RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE STATE IN CAMEROON'S POSTCOLONY *168*
Introduction *168*
RCC-state relations in Cameroon during one-party rule, 1961-1990 *171*
RCC-state relations in Cameroon during political liberalisation, 1990-2007 *177*
Conclusion *184*

11 PRIVATISATION AND ETHNO-REGIONAL PROTEST IN ANGLOPHONE CAMEROON *186*
Introduction *186*
Governance and privatisation in Cameroon *188*
Privatisation of the CDC and ethno-regional opposition *192*
Ethno-regional protest actions against CDC privatisation *194*
Conclusion *204*

12 PRIVATISATION AND LABOUR MILITANCY IN ANGLOPHONE CAMEROON *205*
Introduction *205*
The Tole Tea Estate labour force prior to privatisation *206*
Growing labour militancy after the estate's privatisation *210*
Conclusion *218*

13 THE ANGLOPHONE CAMEROON-NIGERIA BOUNDARY: OPPORTUNITIES AND CONFLICTS *220*
Introduction *220*
The Anglophone Cameroon-Nigeria boundary during the British mandate and trust eras *222*
The Anglophone Cameroon-Nigeria boundary after reunification *226*
The Anglophone Cameroon-Nigeria boundary: Contesting sovereignty over Bakassi *231*
Conclusion *238*

References *239*
Index *255*

Acknowledgements

During my fieldwork in Cameroon I became indebted to a great number of people and unfortunately there is room to mention only a few of them here. I am particularly grateful to a considerable number of civil-society leaders and members who spent much of their precious time giving me an insight into the aims and strategies of their organisations. I highly appreciated the assistance offered by the late Prince Henry Mbayn of the Buea National Archives who provided me with access to relevant archives, papers and documents. I also benefited from the regular advice and support of some Cameroonian colleagues, in particular Benedict Nantang Jua and Robert Mbe Akoko. Francis Beng Nyamnjoh has been a constant source of friendship and intellectual stimulation. In fact, he was the one who inspired me to undertake this book project and complete it.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the African Studies Centre in Leiden which funded the entire project. Two members of this institute have been particularly helpful. I wish to thank Ann Reeves for copy-editing the text and Mieke Zwart for the lay-out work.

Abbreviations

AAC	All Anglophone Conference
ADDEC	*Association pour la Défense des Droits des Étudiants du Cameroun*
ADP	Association of Diocesan Priests
AETC	African and Eastern Trading Company
BDC	*Bloc Démocratique Camerounais*
BLC	Bakweri Land Committee
BLCC	Bakweri Land Claims Committee
BNA	Buea National Archives
CAM	Cameroon Anglophone Movement
CAMSA	Cameroon Students' Solidarity Association
CANSA	Cameroon Anglophone Students' Association
CAPSU	Cameroon Anglophone Public Servants' Union
CAPTAC	Confederation of Anglophone Parents-Teachers' Association of Cameroon
CATA	Catholic Teachers' Association
CATTU	Cameroon Teachers' Trade Union
CCCE	*Caisse Centrale de Coopération Économique*
CDC	Cameroon Development Corporation
COMDEV	Commonwealth Development Corporation
CPDM	Cameroon People's Democratic Movement
CPNC	Cameroon People's National Congress
CRTV	Cameroon Radio and Television
CTE	Cameroon Tea Estates
ENS	*École Normale Supérieure*
ENAM	*École Nationale d'Administration et de Magistrature*
EDF	European Development Fund
ESAP	Enhanced Structural Adjustment Programme
ECOSOC	(United Nations) Economic and Social Council
FAWU	Fako Agricultural Workers' Union
FECASE	*Fédération Camerounaise des Syndicats de l'Éducation*
FESER	*Fédération des Syndicats de l'Enseignement et de la Recherche*
FCFA	*Franc de la Communauté Financière Africaine*
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IDA	International Development Association
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INUCT	Independent Union of Cameroon Teachers
KNC	Kamerun National Congress
KNDP	Kamerun National Democratic Party

KPP	Kamerun People's Party
LDA	Liberal Democratic Alliance
NECC	National Episcopal Conference of Cameroon
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NUT	Nigerian Union of Teachers
NUCW	National Union of Cameroon Workers
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PCC	Presbyterian Church in Cameroon
PRESBY	President Biya's Youths
RCC	Roman Catholic Church
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SCAPO	Southern Cameroons People's Organisation
SCNC	Southern Cameroons National Council
SCUT	Southern Cameroons Union of Teachers
SCYL	Southern Cameroons Youth League
SDF	Social Democratic Front
SODECOTON	*Société de Développement du Coton*
SONEL	*Société Nationale d'Électricité*
SOSUCAM	*Société Sucrière du Cameroun*
SWECC	South West Chiefs' Conference
SWELA	South West Elite Association
SYNES	*Syndicat des Enseignants du Supérieur*
TAC	Teachers' Association of Cameroon
UAC	United Africa Company
UB	University of Buea
UBSU	University of Buea Students' Union
UN	United Nations
UPC	*Union des Populations du Cameroun*
VA	Voluntary Agency
VC	Vice-Chancellor
VIKUMA	Victoria-Kumba-Mamfe Alliance
WESCUT	West Cameroon Union of Teachers
WCTUC	West Cameroon Trades Union Congress

Map of the Republic of Cameroon

1

Civil society in Anglophone Cameroon

Introduction

This volume on the role of civil society in Africa, particularly in Anglophone Cameroon, is very topical since 'civil society' has become a popular concept in academic and policy-making circles on the African continent in the past two decades. The recent emergence in Africa of this concept, with its historical roots in Enlightenment Europe, has actually given rise to fierce debates among Africanists about its usefulness as an analytical construct and policy tool in a non-Western context (cf. Allen 1997; Lewis 2002).

In the first section of this introductory chapter I argue that a concept that is borrowed from Western discourse needs to be contextualised in a comparative manner to adequately capture and explain the African reality. I therefore attempt to shed more light on the nature of civil society in Africa by focusing on one of the neglected, or even totally rejected, aspects of civil society, namely its relationship with ethno-regionalism and the politics of belonging (Orvis 2001; Osaghae 2005; Nyamnjoh 2005). I stress that ethno-regional associations and movements are an integral part of civil society in Africa, being of even greater significance to the ordinary people than conventional civil-society organisations. In the second section, I attempt to show how the politics of belonging has pervaded most civil-society organisations that were created or revived during the current neoliberal economic and political reforms. The final section offers a concise description of the various essays included in this volume.

Towards an African version of civil society

Since the end of the Cold War, there has been a global ubiquity of the concept of civil society among researchers and activists, and a widespread assumption among policy-makers in different parts of the world about its global relevance in strengthening development and democracy. Clearly much of the current interest in civil society is closely linked to the global dominance of neoliberalism with its good-governance agenda that has stressed the need for less, but also for better, government in African states (Konings 2004c; Carmody 2007). The Bretton Woods institutions, foreign donors and their academic pathfinders seem to have reinvented the notion of civil society to serve their neoliberal doctrine, seeing it as the missing link between citizens and the state and the prime mover in desired neoliberal economic and political reforms (World Bank 2000; Harbeson *et al.* 1994). Donor support for the empowerment of (assumed) weak civic organisations in Africa has been a central point of this neoliberal agenda.

The neoliberal perspective, which proclaimed the dawn of a new democratic era, has been increasingly contested as being ideologically laden and too optimistic because it does not appear to reflect actual socio-political and economic processes in Africa. After an initially hopeful beginning, numerous failures of liberal democracy across the continent could be observed, as well as the survival of most of the African neopatrimonial and authoritarian regimes. It has also been pointed out that the neoliberal assumption of a close link between civil society and neoliberal economic and political reforms tended to obfuscate the complexity, scope and functions of civil society. After all, civil society existed before neoliberal reforms and will continue to exist after them (Kasfir 1998; Osaghae 2005). Paradoxically, there was also growing evidence that the prescribed strengthening of civil society could constitute an important means not only to realising neoliberal reforms but also to challenging and resisting neoliberal orthodoxies (Abrahamson 2000; Konings 2004c). Strikingly, optimists and pessimists alike have based their argumentation on Western notions of civil society and have thus been inclined to define (often implicitly) civil society in terms that were too narrow in the African context and to demand too much of it (Hutchful 1996; Orvis 2001).

Indeed how to define civil society and delineate its boundaries has been a persistent problem in African Studies (cf. Harbeson *et al.* 1994; Hann & Dunn 1996; Kasfir 1998; Comaroff & Comaroff 1999; Lewis 2002; Osaghae 2005). Most Africanists use the 'associational life' version of civil society, referring to those organisations, both formal and informal, that cohabit the public realm with the state and mediate relations between the individual (or household) and the state. In practice however, they do not usually include all such organisations in their definitions. By giving the concept of civil society a relatively narrow and normative meaning (Kasfir 1998), they restrict the core of civil society to a relatively limited set of organisations

with special characteristics. In this respect, Diamond's (1994, 1997) notion of civil society is quite representative of the associational school. He claims that it comprises the realm of organised social life that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting, autonomous of the state and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules. According to him, it is distinct from society in general in that it involves citizens acting collectively in a public sphere to express their interests, preferences and ideas, to exchange information, achieve mutual goals, make demands on the state, improve the structure and functioning of the state, and hold state officials accountable. Some authors restrict the notion of civil society even further by arguing that it is not only distinct from the state but also in conflict with it, and stress that it aims to counter the state's hegemonic ambitions (Bayart 1986; Bratton 1989, 1994; Fatton 1995; Haynes 1997).

Although there may be differences of opinion on the exact definition of civil society, members of the associational school agree that the core of civil society consists of modern, largely urban middle-class professional associations and organisations of workers, women, students, churches and especially non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with external links such as groups advocating human rights and civil liberties. In addition to fighting for the defence and protection of their own specific class interests, they are frequently portrayed as being the driving force behind and the guarantee of democratisation and the containment of the state.

It is striking how little the associational school captures of African society and politics. The need to think more broadly about the organisational and moral basis of civil society in the African context is supported by the Comaroffs (1999: 22) who stated that there is a 'Eurocentric tendency to limit civil society to a narrowly defined institutional arena'. There is also a need to look more realistically at state-civil-society relations in Africa that seem to be more intertwined than the associational school is willing to accept (Chabal & Daloz 1999).

To arrive at a more accurate picture of civil society in Africa, one has to expose the associational school's major shortcomings. The first is its tendency to exclude not only all unorganised protests and demands from civil society in Africa (cf. Monga 1995, 1996; Berman 1998; Mbembe 1992, 2001) but also much of associational life, namely ethno-regional associations and movements. This exclusion of the 'primordial public realm' (Ekeh 1975, 1994) from its definition of civil society may be largely attributed to the associational school's conviction that ethno-regional associations are hostile to civil and liberal democratic norms (cf. Harbeson *et al.* 1994; Kasfir 1998; Osaghae 2005). They are thought to be marked by ascribed membership and partisan and divisive tendencies that are often accompanied by violent conflict.

A few remarks are in order here. First, one should not overlook the fact that, unlike in ethnic groups, membership of ethno-regional associations displays a

certain degree of voluntarism. Of course, African ethno-regional associations do not resemble the ideal voluntary associations as they are imagined by the associational school. For the elite in particular, participation at some level is expected and failure to join or contribute adequately may result in informal social sanctions, including exclusion. Second, although ethno-regional associations may not function according to neoliberal norms and can be accused of being an obstacle to democracy, they appear to be of far more significance to the ordinary people in Africa than conventional civil-society organisations that are based on horizontal bonds and solidarities, and promoted by scholars and donors. This is due not only to the largely underdeveloped nature of most African economies, which has delayed the crystallisation of class differentiation and professional interest groups but, to an even larger extent, to the power of ethno-regional identity in Africa (Berman *et al.* 2004; Kasfir 1998). In a critical discussion of how civil society and ethnicity relate to democracy in Africa, Nyamnjoh (2005: 26) insists that the representation and defence of ethnic and communal interests for most Africans outweigh those of individual rights and freedoms as advocated by the proponents of neoliberal democracy. In most parts of Africa, an increase rather than a decrease in the politics of ethnic identity and belonging in the aftermath of political liberalisation has been observed. Numerous ethno-regional associations were then formed that made use of the opening of political space to represent the interests of their communities and compete for political and economic power. And maybe even more importantly, the conventional civil-society organisations, whose supposed resurgence was much vaunted, turned out to be riven with communal divisions or to be partly serving ethno-regional interests (cf. Azarya 1994).

A second shortcoming of the associational school is its tendency to define civil society strictly in terms of the autonomy of and confrontation with the state. This presupposes a sharp division between the constituents of civil society and the state, and forecloses an examination of the wide range of relations between state and civil society varying from confrontation to cooperation, bargaining and mutual exchange. Several Africanists have stressed that there is usually no strict dichotomy between the state and civil society in Africa but, instead, constant interpenetration and straddling. According to Chabal & Daloz (1999: 21-22), state and society are linked to sustain the vertical, infra-institutional and patrimonial networks that underpin politics on the continent. Through strategic offers of power, privilege and wealth to the leaders of the various interest groups, the state is often successful in stifling civil society.

A final shortcoming of the associational school is its tendency to employ a too-normative definition of civil society by equating 'civil' with 'civility' (Azarya 1994). Members of civil society are supposed to act according to pre-established rules of a civil nature, eschewing violence and respecting pluralism as well as individual and

communal rights. Underlying the school's insistence that actors in civil society must behave civilly is the apparent need to buffer democratic practices against hostile political conflict (Hyden 1996; Kasfir 1998). Authors like Callaghy (1994), Fatton (1995) and Lemarchand (1992) are skeptical of such a normative definition. They show that actual civil-society organisations frequently act without respect for existing norms and values, citing their potential for incivility, opportunism, cooptation and fragmentation. Molutsi (1999) notes that civil society can be disruptive and violent, particularly in a context of competition for limited resources when parochial social identities gain sway. Such critical comments caution against the associational school's regular attempts to demonise the state and deify civil society.

While the associational school perceives proper conduct as a characteristic of civil society, it would appear to be better to reject its normative view of civil society that presently prevents us from examining significant aspects of the public realm and to accept that civil society may contain a range of diverse values and intentions. Instead of equating civil with civility, it could be used to mean 'public' in the sense of citizens acting together (Kasfir 1998). Such a definition has the advantage of dropping any normative restriction to the notion, thus leaving room for 'an analysis of actually existing civil society so as to understand its actual formation, rather than as a promised agenda for change' (Mamdani 1996: 19).

Neoliberal reforms, civil society and the politics of belonging in Anglophone Cameroon

This volume focuses on the role of civil society in Anglophone Cameroon particularly during the era of global neoliberalism. I started doing research in Anglophone Cameroon in 1985 and soon afterwards became involved in assessing the role of civil society in the region.

For historical and political reasons, Anglophone Cameroon is an interesting area in which to research society-state relations. Its territory came into being following the partitioning of the erstwhile German Kamerun Protectorate (1984-1916) into British and French mandate and trust territories after the First World War (cf. Johnson 1970; Le Vine 1964, 1971; Benjamin 1972; Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003). Significantly, the British territory, which was administered as an integral part of Nigeria, was much smaller than the French, comprising only a fifth of the total area and population of the former German colony. Separate colonial state formation and the development of territorial differences in languages and cultural legacies laid the spatial and historical foundations for the construction of Anglophone and Francophone identities. The fact that one part of Anglophone Cameroon, which came to be called the Southern Cameroons, voted for reunification with Francophone Cameroon rather than for integration into Nigeria in a UN-organised referendum

on 11 February 1961 cannot be explained in simple terms as a long-awaited reunion of people separated by arbitrarily imposed colonial borders (see Chapter 5).

It was not long before the Anglophone population began to resent reunification with Francophone Cameroon. It became dissatisfied with the form of state that the Francophone majority had imposed on the Anglophone minority during the constitutional negotiations for reunification. The Anglophone political elite had proposed a loose form of federation that it considered a guarantee of equal participation for both parties and the preservation of the cultural heritage and identity of each. Contrary to Anglophone expectations, the Francophone political elite opted for a highly centralised form of federation that it saw as a mere transition phase in the creation of a unitary state and by 1972 the federal state had been replaced by a unitary state. The Anglophone population felt they were being re-colonised by the Francophone-dominated post-colonial state and that they were becoming second-class citizens in their own country.

While under one-party rule, any form of association outside the party was strictly controlled by the state or even forbidden for the sake of national unity and development. However, political liberalisation in Anglophone Cameroon after December 1990 was marked by the resurgence of civil society with a rapid growth in conventional civil-society organisations and ethno-regional associations and movements. What was even more significant was that the development of civil society was accompanied by an obsession with the politics of belonging that was built around an 'ideology of home' and stressed the importance of belonging to a particular ethno-regional community (Geschiere & Nyamnjoh 2000; Konings 2001; Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003; Nyamnjoh 2005). The politics of belonging thus posed a major challenge to the post-colonial nation-state project, leading to exclusionary conceptions of nationality and citizenship that were seen as a severe hindrance to the institutionalisation of neoliberal reforms. In fact, the politics of belonging became so pervasive during economic and political liberalisation that it tended to penetrate the entire range of associational life. It clearly became an essential part of those ethno-regional associations and movements that either fought for the recognition and representation of their members' deeply entrenched feelings of communal injustices or, in some instances, tried to defend and enlarge communal advantages. Unexpectedly, it also affected in one way or another most of the conventional civil-society organisations that aimed to protect their members' interests against the nefarious effects of economic crisis and economic liberalisation and/or demanded more democratic space and rights.

Civil-society organisations in Anglophone Cameroon embraced one of the two opposing forms of the politics of belonging in the region. The first was a feeling of belonging to the Anglophone community. The construction of an Anglophone identity that united people in the Anglophone territory across ethno-regional

boundaries was based not only on a common colonial heritage but also on growing tension between the Anglophone and Francophone communities in the aftermath of reunification in 1961 (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003). Many people in the region actually believe that reunification led to an increased marginalisation of the Anglophone minority in the nation-state project, which was controlled by the Francophone political elite, and endangered their cultural heritage and identity. Political liberalisation created a space for the emergence of a range of Anglophone associations and movements of various size, organisational coherence and strength that served as channels for the regional population's protests against the allegedly subordinate position of Anglophones in the Cameroonian post-colonial state. They demanded self-determination and autonomy and wanted to reintroduce federalism and secession to the political agenda. Anglophone associations and movements quickly became the gravest threat to President Biya's national integration project and although the Biya government has constantly ignored Anglophone demands, it is somewhat surprising that most Anglophone leaders have continued to preach peaceful negotiation with the state rather than resorting to violence.

The second form of belonging in the region is a feeling of belonging to an autochthonous community. The autochthony discourse, which became widespread across the African continent during economic and political liberalisation, expresses the claim to have come first in an area, leading to the sometimes violent exclusion of supposed 'strangers' and forms of ethnic cleansing (Geschiere & Nyamnjoh 2000; Konings 2001; Geschiere 2009). It reflects the ethno-regional cleavages and tensions within the Anglophone community itself, particularly between South West Province (the coastal-forest area) and the inland savannah area (the so-called Grassfields) that is now North West Province. South West Province offers an interesting case study into the effects of the autochthony discourse. The massive migration of Grassfields migrants and their settlement in South West Province where a plantation complex was established under German colonial rule strained relations with the autochthonous population that felt overwhelmed by the rapid expansion of these settlers on their territory. They came to deeply resent their perceived domination in demographic, economic and political terms. It is astonishing to see how easily the regime in power abandoned its old slogans of national integration and citizenship during economic and political liberalisation, choosing instead to encourage these localist autochthonous associations and movements. It undoubtedly saw its support as an effective way of staying in power and dividing the Anglophone opposition, which seemed to form a solid front in the early 1990s. The South West autochthons, in turn, became the regime's staunchest supporters.

Organisation of the book

This volume consists of twelve essays that are based on articles I have written in the course of the new millennium and deal in one way or another with civil society and the politics of belonging in Anglophone Cameroon. While a few chapters are about the role of civil society during the late-colonial and early post-colonial periods and serve as historical background to current developments, most are on the role of civil society during the present period of neoliberal economic and political reform.

The first three essays analyse autochthony associations and movements in South West Province. Chapter 2 provides an historical review of autochthony movements in the region, showing that autochthony discourses and actions intensified during economic and political liberalisation when the government and its regional allies felt threatened by widespread opposition and federalist/secessionist tendencies in Anglophone Cameroon. They then started exploiting existing tensions between the autochthonous and allochthonous populations to boost a South-West identity and organisation, promote ethnic cleansing and thus split the Anglophone front.

Chapter 3 describes one of the most dramatic autochthony movements in the history of South West Province, and one that has largely escaped scholarly attention, namely the bloody war in Tombel District in 1966 between the autochthonous Bakossi and Bamileke settlers from the Francophone part of the Grassfields. The degree of violence and ethnic cleansing was unprecedented and left deep wounds in relations between South Westerners and Grassfielders.

Chapter 4 explores the emergence and spread of a Pentecostalism-inspired revival movement within the Roman Catholic Church in the 1990s that caused a bitter and protracted crisis in South West Province. The so-called Maranatha movement and mainline Catholicism were viewed by both parties as being incompatible, which almost led to a schism within the church. Initially only an internal church dispute, this gradually became an explosive issue in the region when the politics of belonging, fuelled by the government and the regional elite during political liberalisation, became pervasive.

The following chapter, Chapter 5, focuses on Anglophone associations and movements and examines the historical process leading to the emergence of Anglophone nationalism in public space during Cameroon's current process of liberalisation. It stresses that Anglophone nationalism poses a severe threat to the post-colonial state's nation-building project, which has been driven by the firm determination of the Francophone political elite to dominate the Anglophone minority and erase the cultural and institutional foundations of Anglophone identity. Persistent attempts by the Francophone-dominated state to control newly created Anglophone movements have made Anglophone nationalists resort to less obtrusive forms of resistance, creating public space for an Anglophone identity and nationhood in historical, artistic, virtual, legal and everyday domains.

The remaining chapters describe conventional civil-society groups and associations. Although these organisations attempt to represent and defend their particular interests, they tend to be deeply influenced by the politics of belonging too. Chapters 6 and 7 concentrate on Anglophone students, with Chapter 6 arguing that the current generation of Anglophone students in Cameroon, due to their Anglophone identity, feel more marginalised during the economic crisis and economic liberalisation than their Francophone counterparts. While they are inclined to hold the Francophone-dominated regime responsible for their predicament, they have nevertheless displayed a rather ambivalent attitude towards the state. On the one hand, there are students who are seen in Anglophone circles as rebels and heroes. They have played a vanguard role in Anglophone protest and, following political liberalisation, have formed the leadership of the most militant Anglophone nationalist movement. However on the other hand, there are students who are seen as predators and victims of the regime and who are prepared to join the youth militia created by the regime to combat Anglophone organisations in exchange for a share in the ever-diminishing state resources.

Chapter 7 focuses on two recent violent strikes by Anglophone students in the University of Buea (UB), the only English-speaking university in Cameroon. The deepening crisis in African universities has had grave consequences for students who are facing a dramatic deterioration in their living and study conditions and bleak prospects for future employment. Moreover, the authoritarian management style and political control prevailing in most universities form formidable obstacles for students wishing to voice their grievances and organise in defence of their interests. UB students seem not to be resigned to their fate and instead have displayed growing activism during economic and political liberalisation. They went on strike in an attempt to improve their unsatisfactory conditions and to create democratic space within and outside the university. What was peculiar to the UB strikes was that they were inspired by the Anglophone students' feelings of marginalisation and oppression by the Francophone-dominated state.

Chapters 8 and 9 deal with Anglophone teachers' organisations. Chapter 8 assesses the role of teachers' unions in Anglophone Cameroon between 1959 and 1972, when the federal state was replaced by a unitary state and trade unionism in Cameroon was subordinated to the state. In this period, both the government and the union leadership in Anglophone Cameroon championed trade-union autonomy and responsibility, a trade-union model that had been introduced and propagated by the British Trusteeship Authority to discourage trade-union involvement in political activities. The chapter highlights the changing relationship at this time between the state and teachers, from one of relative harmony to growing tension and conflict.

Chapter 9 shows that it was not until political liberalisation in the early 1990s that there were renewed attempts to form autonomous teachers' organisations in Anglo-

phone Cameroon in spite of a continuously hostile political environment. Two new organisations with clearly differing objectives and strategies were set up. The first was a professional association that was primarily interested in defending regional interests, in particular preserving the Anglophone educational legacy and improving the conditions of service of its Anglophone members. The second was a trade union that championed class above regional interests. Striving for reforms across the entire Cameroonian educational system and improvements in service for all Cameroonian teachers, it has established alliances with teachers' unions in Francophone Cameroon. Faced with apparent government insensitivity to their demands, both organisations have displayed a high degree of militancy. It is argued that their failure to achieve important gains has been due not only to repressive, divisive and clientelist government strategies but also to certain weaknesses within the organisations.

Chapter 10 offers evidence of a remarkable shift in relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the post-colonial state in Cameroon, from relative harmony in the one-party era to frequent conflicts in the current era of political liberalisation. And even more importantly, it shows that church leaders failed to achieve a united stand on socio-political issues in both periods due to personal rivalries and ethno-regional cleavages. The most important ethno-regional divisions have been those between Francophones and Anglophones in the country as a whole and between the Beti and Bamileke in the Francophone part of the country. Generally speaking, Anglophone bishops have become the most outspoken critics of the authoritarian and corrupt Biya regime and have regularly voiced concerns about the 'Anglophone problem', appealing to President Biya to enter into dialogue with Anglophone movements.

Chapters 11 and 12 study the protest actions of various civil-society organisations in Anglophone Cameroon against externally imposed attempts to privatise a huge regional agro-industrial parastatal, the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC). Chapter 11 argues that, in this particular case, civil-society organisations in the region decided to forget their differences and form an alliance to forestall the privatisation of an enterprise that was of vital importance to regional development. And Chapter 12 shows that, following the privatisation of the CDC tea estates, the most militant opposition has come from the tea workers whose already precarious living and working conditions deteriorated even further due to the secretive and corrupt privatisation scheme.

Chapter 13 focuses on the ambiguous nature of the Anglophone Cameroon-Nigeria border. On the one hand, it has historically and for economic reasons never constituted a real barrier to the cross-border movement of labour and goods. The large Nigerian migrant community in Anglophone Cameroon has been able to benefit from formal and informal cross-border trade for a long time. Unsurprisingly, the dominant position of Nigerian 'strangers' in this community's commercial sector has

been a continuous source of violent conflict with the autochthonous Anglophone population. On the other hand, the border has seen regular skirmishes between Cameroon and Nigeria, culminating in a protracted war over the sovereignty of the oil-rich Bakassi peninsula in the 1990s. The 2002 International Court of Justice verdict in favour of Cameroon has been vehemently contested by Anglophone secessionist movements and the Nigerian residents of Bakassi who make up the vast majority of the peninsula's population. Both claim ownership of Bakasssi.

Conclusion

The first part of this chapter explored some of the different positions relating to the relevance of the notion of civil society in Africa. Rejecting arguments that the concept has little or no meaning outside its Western origins and critical of the sometimes crude export of the concept by Western development donors seeking to build good governance, I pleaded for an adaptive view of civil society in Africa. In sharp contrast to the widely held view that ethno-regional associations are anathema to civil society and should accordingly be excluded from it, I argued that they are an important part of civil society in Africa. A focus on ethno-regional associations shows why the emphasis on the 'autonomous agentic individual' freed from ethnic and communal loyalties, which informs Western conceptions of civil society, needs to be mellowed in the light of the African reality where communitarian ties remain quite strong (Osaghae 2005; Nyamnjoh 2005).

The remainder of the chapter highlighted how the politics of belonging has pervaded ethno-regional associations and conventional civil-society organisations during economic and political liberalisation. An overview of the organisation and content of this volume was then presented. The various essays, based on intensive research in the region over a considerable period of time, will hopefully allow a deeper understanding of the distinct forms taken by civil-society actors and actions in Anglophone Cameroon. The need for such detailed research, which is often lacking in studies of civil society in Africa, was stressed by the Comaroffs (1999: 4): 'There is a need to focus less on high levels of rhetoric, abstraction and ahistorical generalisation and [to] produce more close-up observation'. This volume attempts to do just this.

2

Mobility and exclusion: The development of autochthony movements in the South West Province

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 migrants. 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 demographic, economic and political terms. Their struggles for control over economic and political resources are mostly instigated or fuelled by political entre-

preneurs. 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 the national and regional level.

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 of 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 autochthonous and allochthonous ethnic groups took place in the 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. This province provides an interesting case study as it is one of the few regions along the West African coast in which 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 retirement. This chapter considers why the current obsession with the autochthony-allochthony issue in the South West Province relates foremost to the 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 emer-

gence 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 for 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 soils around Mount Cameroon in the South West Province and the expulsion of the original occupants of the expropriated lands, in particular the Bakweri (Matute 1990; Ardener 1996), into 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, 1994). After its foundation in 1929, the UAC took over three local estates from the African and Eastern Trading Company (AETC) and, in 1932, another estate from the *Westafrikanische Handelsgesellschaft* at Lobe. Its most important estates are located in the present 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 1998a).

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 (BLC), immediately started to agitate for the retrieval 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 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, 1998a). 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 in the Yaoundé region and in the Grassfields area, both in the later Francophone part occupied by the Bamileke and in the later Anglophone part 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, 1998a).

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 per cent of the plantation labour force originated from the French Mandate area (Table 2.1). This figure declined to only 1 per cent 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 2.1 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, 1998a.

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. Cameroo-

nian 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 per cent of the total Pamol labour force (Table 2.1). 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 per cent. 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 form at present the majority on the Pamol estates (54 per cent).

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 and management staff (Konings 1993: 69, 1998a: 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 the 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, 1998a). 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 by the southwestern managerial minority to establish control over agro-industrial enterprises located in 'their' region (see below).[1]

---

[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-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.

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: 321), 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 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 alienated 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 the South West Province.

Land was not the only reason for the development of antagonistic relations between autochthons and strangers in the 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 their 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 or physical attacks by the frustrated local inhabitants and were often told to return home (see Chapter 13).

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 (see Chapter 3). 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, 1999b).

From the mid-1950s onwards nationalist leaders in the Southern Cameroons became increasingly divided. Different point of views 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,[2] 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 Congress (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 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 since 1955 when the *Union des Populations du Cameroun* (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, the 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

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

(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-Nigerian stance. While Foncha's political views on the future of the Southern Cameroons 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 northwestern 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 political 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 Westerners (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 political 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 questions to be asked. These questions were limited to two: 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 achieving 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 they did during the 1959 elections. While the KNDP tried to win votes by capitalising on widespread anti-Nigeria feelings and vague sentiments of Cameroonian brotherhood, the CPNC singled out terrorism in the Republic of Cameroon to scare Southern Cameroonians from voting for reunification. 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 were 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 the North West (3.5 to 1) than in the South West (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 minorities which is what the Bakweri are (quoted in Chem-Langhëë 1976: 331).

The CPNC leaders strongly protested to the United Nations against 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; Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003). The delegation included many KNDP ministers who were obviously inclined to limit the role of opposition politicians in the deliberations (Ngoh 1990, 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 period 1961-1972, when multi-partyism and federalism were abolished, accusing them of self-interested betrayal of West Cameroon 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 of 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 about 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, 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 of 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, 1998a). 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 the 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, going 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 of 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/Francophone) federal arrangements. 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 Asso-

ciation (SWELA) and the South West Chiefs' Conference (SWECC) (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 has 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. 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 advo-

cated closer co-operation 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 Yaoundé 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.[3]

In response to South-West complaints of North-West domination, Biya began to appoint some South Westerners to key positions in their own province. For example, Dorothy Njeuma was appointed Vice-Chancellor of the newly created Anglophone University of Buea and Becky Ndive was transferred from Yaoundé 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 South West 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 were '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

[3] See *The Herald*, 3-10 November 1993, pp. 1-3.

come together to galvanise the second political awakening in South West Province' and 'to strengthen our position and bargaining power'.[4]

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 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 the 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.[5] 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 affection commonly referred to in Pidgin English as *came-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 move-

---

[4] 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.

[5] 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.

ment,[6] 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 per cent 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 a 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 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 SWECC, Chief Dr Atem Ebako, strongly 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 Westerners ... 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.[7]

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.

---

[6] The term 'Sawa' was generally employed by natives of Douala to 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 the Littoral and South West Provinces, living at a distance from the coast, have also come to identify themselves as such. See Yenshu (1998).

[7] See 'South West Chiefs' Conference on the Plight of South West Province'. In: *The Pilot Magazine,* May 1997, p. 8.

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,[8] 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.[9] 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 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.[10] 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.[11]

The autochthony-allochthony issue is also the subject of continuous discussion in academic circles and in the press. The Anglophone private press, which initially encouraged 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

---

[8] See Republic of Cameroon (1997), *Cameroon Electoral Code, 1997 Revised Edition,* Yaoundé: Les Éditions de l'Imprimerie Nationale.

[9] *The Herald,* 31 March - 1 April 1997, p. 1.

[10] *Ibid.,* 19-20 March 1997, p. 1.

[11] *Ibid.,* 14-17 March 1996, p. 4.

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 widespread antagonism to 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 autochthony-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 (Nyamnjoh 2005).

The autochthony-allochthony issue has also affected the various institutions in South West Province. The Buea Anglophone University is headed by Bakweri who have 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'.[12] 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 displayed placards like 'Sack all these North-West managers', 'CDC is our own', and so on.[13] The northwestern Catholic bishop of Buea Diocese, Pius Suh Awa, has been frequently charged 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 masses of Catholics but deviated, according to the bishop, from Catholic liturgical rites (see Chapter 4).

The autochthony-allochthony issue has exacerbated conflicts about land in the 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.

---

[12] See, for instance, *The Post,* 18 September 1997, p. 7, referring to the 'Bakweri Mafia', dominating the University of Buea.

[13] See *The Herald,* 21-24 July 1994, p. 3; and *The People's Voice,* May 1994, pp. 1 and 3-8.

Conclusion

The massive northwestern labour migration and the subsequent dominant northwestern position in the South West form the historical background for understanding the current regional obsesssion 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 themselves 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.

3

Autochthony and ethnic cleansing in the South West Province: The 1966 Tombel disturbances

Introduction

Since the 1990s growing attention has been paid in the literature to the rapid spread of autochthony discourses on the African continent, leading to the sometimes violent exclusion of supposed 'strangers' and various forms of ethnic cleansing (cf. Mamdani 1998; Geschiere & Nyamnjoh 2000; Dozon 2000; Ceuppens & Geschiere 2005). Most authors tend to attribute the recent obsession with the 'politics of belonging' in Africa and elsewhere to processes of globalisation. They refer in particular to recent processes of political and economic liberalisation and the threat that multi-party politics poses to authoritarian regimes. The renewed importance of elections makes 'belonging' a central issue. Groups that claim to be autochthonous in a certain territory fear being outvoted by strangers, and questions such as who can vote where, or even more importantly, who can stand as a candidate, become points of fierce contestation.[1]

In many African countries, authoritarian regimes have been quick to use notions of autochthony as a major strategy to divide and defeat the opposition (Bayart *et al.* 2001). Indeed, it is striking how easily these regimes have abandoned the post-independence ideals of national integration, nation building, and national citizenship in their desperate efforts to stay in power in the face of massive opposition. They are

[1] Of course, it is often not easy to know who the 'real' autochthons are, particularly in urban centres. For the problematic notion of autochthony, see for example Geschiere & Jackson (2006).

increasingly inclined to encourage the distinction between 'ethnic citizens' and 'ethnic strangers' and to stimulate autochthony movements (Mamdani 1996). It is worth noting, for instance, that the Biya government in Cameroon promulgated a new constitution in 1996 that offered government support to autochthony movements. In telling contrast to the previous (1972) constitution that emphasised national integration and the equal rights of all citizens, including the right 'to settle in any place and to move around freely', the new constitution promised special state protection for autochthonous minorities (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003). However, it soon became evident that this promised government support remained restricted to those autochthonous minorities that appeared to distance themselves from the opposition.

While acknowledging an intensification of autochthony issues in the globalisation era, as evidenced by their penetration to the very heart of national politics, some scholars nevertheless emphasise the long history of these tensions in Africa, sometimes going back even as far as pre-colonial times (Lentz 2003; Arnaut 2004). It would be too simplistic to explain the upsurge of autochthony during the 1990s merely in terms of political manipulation by African regimes. Such manipulation can be successful only because it appeals to deep emotional feelings from below as a result of long-standing autochthony-allochthony divisions in society.

There is now a growing body of literature on the historical development of antagonistic relations between the autochthonous population of Cameroon's South West Province and Grassfields settlers and their implications for the current democratic constellation (see Chapter 2). There is, however, a remarkable lacuna in the existing literature. One can look in vain in Cameroonian history books for a narrative of one of the most dramatic and shameful precursors to the upsurge of autochthony in the South West Province during political liberalisation in the 1990s: the so-called Bakossi-Bamileke war that occurred in the Tombel area of this province a few years after independence and reunification.[2] The degree of violence and ethnic cleansing in this confrontation between the local Bakossi and Bamileke settlers was unprecedented in the history of autochthony conflicts in the South West Province. Even during the democratisation era when some government officials and regional pro-CPDM leaders regularly exhorted the autochthonous population to chase the 'came-no-goes' from their home area, physical violence turned out to be sporadic in the region. The degree of violence in the Bakossi-Bamileke war was all the more striking because the first president of Cameroon, Ahmadou Ahidjo, was inclined to condemn autochthony discourses and conflicts in his persistent efforts to balance the delicate ethno-regional relations in the country and achieve national unity, which he perceived as an essential precondition for national development and

[2] For casual remarks on the 1966 Tombel disturbances, see Le Vine (1971: 155-157); Ejedepang-Koge (1986: 128-130); Ngoh (1996: 244-246).

reconstruction (Ahidjo 1964, 1980; Nkwi & Nyamnjoh 1997). Any organisation or action to promote autochthonous interests was likely to be seen as subversion and severely punished.

Given the fact that there were similar tensions between the autochthonous population and Grassfields settlers in other areas of the South West Province, I try to explain in this chapter why this simmering conflict eventually gave rise to ethnic cleansing in the Tombel area. Like other South Westerners, the Bakossi had come to resent the massive settlement of Grassfielders in their area and the latter's increasingly dominant access to land and other economic resources.[3] According to my informants, the Bakossi youth were even more determined than their elders to regain the Bakossi lands from Grassfielders by any means. They actually blamed their elders for having sold these lands to settlers on such a large scale, thus circumscribing their range of possibilities for securing a sustainable livelihood. What made the land factor an even more explosive issue in the Tombel area than in other parts of the South West Province was the start of guerrilla warfare by the radical nationalist party, the UPC, after it was banned in the French trust territory in 1955 (Joseph 1977; Mbembe 1996). Located on the border with Francophone Cameroon, the Tombel area experienced many hardships when guerrilla fighters started to seek refuge there and the government troops regularly extended its military activities from Francophone Cameroon to the Anglophone Cameroon's border zones (Ejedepang-Koge 1986). What was even more important was that a substantial proportion of the guerrilla fighters originated from the Francophone part of the Grassfields.[4] According to my informants, many Bakossi wrongly believed that the guerrilla war was almost exclusively a Bamileke affair. As a result, they were quick to criminalise the Bamileke identity and brand all Bamileke as either terrorists or guerrilla sympathisers in spite of the fact that some Bamileke settlers also suffered regular guerrilla raids for food and rendered assistance in warding off guerrilla attacks.[5] It is beyond doubt that the perceived alliance between the Bamileke and the *maquis* was a major reason for the Bakossi's final decision to resort to ethnic cleansing and drive the Bamileke settlers from their lands by violent means.

Interestingly, some scholars claim that Bamileke settlers had become victims of earlier violent autochthony conflicts in Francophone Cameroon for the same reasons, notably in the Bulu/Beti, Duala, and Bamun regions (Prouzet 1974; Fogui

---

[3] Access to land has been one of the principal factors in the emergence of autochthony movements in Cameroon and elsewhere in Africa. See for instance Socpa (2006); Chauveau (2000); and Lentz (2003).

[4] For the ethnic composition of the UPC guerrilla forc, see Joseph (1977); Mbembe (1996) and Terretta (2005).

[5] According to various informants, Ahidjo's Minister of Defence, Sadou Daouda, contributed greatly to the criminalisation of the Bamileke identity when he publicly accused the Bamileke of being *maquisards*.

1990; Lele 1995; Rohde 1997). They provide concise reports of the following three cases that occurred after the outbreak of the UPC guerrilla war in 1955. In the period between 1956 and 1958/59, the autochthonous population of the Bulu towns of Sangmelima and Ebolowa destroyed and pillaged the shops of Bamileke migrants, attacked the owners and, in some cases, raped their wives. In 1960, the autochthonous population of the city of Douala, the Duala, burnt down an entire quarter of the city inhabited mainly by Bamileke. Twenty Bamileke lost their lives in the fire, many others were injured, and about 5,000 were left homeless. In the same year, in reaction to the death of a number of members of the local population in a clash with Bamileke *maquisards,* a Bamun armed gang killed over 100 Bamileke in the Bamun town of Foumbot and in the neighbouring Bamileke chiefdom of Bamendjing. Unlike the Bakossi involved in the later Bamileke massacre in the Tombel area in 1966, the Bamun perpetrators of the 1960 killings were never brought to justice. This may be due to the fact that the raid was sanctioned by the Sultan of Bamun, who supported the Ahidjo regime and the French in their struggle against the UPC guerrillas. A reliable source revealed that the Sultan had subsequently received several severed Bamileke heads as a token of success.[6]

A final reason for the Bakossi decision to take the law into their own hands and resort to ethnic cleansing was their belief that they could not rely on the government of the Federated State of West Cameroon for assistance. Like most of their counterparts elsewhere in the South West Province, the Bakossi modern and traditional elite did not stop lamenting the fact that the West Cameroonian government, which was dominated by the political elite from the North West Province, was serving mainly Grassfields interests and was punishing them for their continued support of the southwestern opposition and their vote against the reunification of Anglophone and Francophone Cameroon in the 1961 UN-organised plebiscite. They began to create and revive organisations, including secret societies,[7] to prepare the local population for war with the Bamileke settlers.

In this chapter, I focus on relations between the local Bakossi and the Bamileke settlers in the Tombel area. Although there were also frequent conflicts over land between the autochthonous population and settlers from the Anglophone part of the Grassfields, very few North Westerners were killed during the massacre. That the Bakossi largely singled out the Bamileke among the Grassfielders for their bloody attack appears to be for the following reasons. First, although there are no reliable statistics, the Bamileke settlers were far more numerous in the Tombel area than the North Westerners. In the town of Tombel, which is the area's most important trading centre, the Bamileke already constituted the majority of the popu-

---

[6] *West Africa,* 20 May 1967, p. 672.

[7] Secret societies have always played a significant role in Bakossi society. See Ejedepang-Koge (1986) and Balz (1995).

lation. Second, in the Tombel area, as elsewhere in Cameroon, the Bamileke are even more renowned and feared than the North Westerners for their high mobility and their dynamism and entrepreneurial spirit (Dongmo 1981; Warnier 1993; Rowlands 1993). Several studies have stressed that the Bamileke region is a densely populated area marked by chronic land scarcity, a strictly hierarchical organisation, and a kinship system that allows for the inheritance of the total family property to one successor only. This forces many young people to migrate in search of greener pastures. Moreover, these Bamileke migrants are socialized, from childhood, into an ascetic life style and a set of entrepreneurial values that emphasise hard work, thrift, savings and investment in expanded production rather than consumption. This partly explains their economic success in localities of settlement (cf. Tabapssi 1999; Socpa 2002). Understandably, autochthonous ethnic groups are inclined to resent Bamileke settlers' dominance in economic and, in many instances, demographic terms, which threatens their very existence and identity. And last but not least, the Bamileke were more likely than the North Westerners to be identified by the local Bakossi as being in league with the UPC guerrillas.

In this chapter, I first analyse the underlying factors behind the outbreak of the Bakossi-Bamileke war in the Tombel area and then present a narrative of the subsequent ethnic cleansing and government attempts to restore peace.

The study is based on a number of interviews with both Bakossi and Bamileke informants in the course of my research in Cameroon, starting in 1985. Although somewhat contradictory, these informants, who mostly insisted on anonymity, were able to relate their versions of the event and it soon became clear that the subject is still a sensitive issue even after so many years. During my last period of fieldwork in Cameroon in 2005, I was fortunate to be able to consult the just-released government and security files on the Tombel disturbances in the Buea National Archives (BNA). These files were extremely helpful in constructing what happened during this violent confrontation and filled in the gaps in the information supplied by my informants.

Factors underlying the 1966 Bakossi-Bamileke confrontation

The Bakossi-Bamileke confrontation, which occurred in the Tombel area on 31 December 1966 was one of the most violent incidents in the early post-colonial era. It painfully demonstrated to the Ahidjo regime that its official discourse about national unity and national integration, which was intended to encourage Cameroonians to feel at home wherever they decided to settle (Alima 1977; Bayart 1979; Fogui 1990), had not had the desired effect. In this section, I describe the three principal factors that were responsible for the violent uprising of the autochthonous Bakossi against the Bamileke settlers.

Bamileke mobility and encroachment on Bakossi land

According to Dongmo (1981), the Bamileke started to migrate individually and in small groups to the Mungo Valley between 1910 and 1930 in search of land and work on the recently established cocoa plantations there. The Mungo Valley, which became the oldest and most important region of Bamileke agricultural colonisation (Eckert 1999), lies between the Bamileke highlands and the coastal area. Following the partitioning of the former German Kamerun Protectorate after the First World War, the Mungo River came to form the border between the French and British mandate areas (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003). This new border also divided the various ethnic groups living in the Mungo Valley, including the Bakossi. Ejedepang-Koge (1986) convincingly showed that the Bakossi on both sides of the frontier nevertheless continued to maintain close relations.

There were some specific reasons for Bamileke migration to the British part of the Mungo Valley, and notably to the Tombel area of West Bakossi. This area was contiguous to the Bamileke region, sparsely populated, and its fertile volcanic soils were particularly suited to agricultural production. Moreover, migration to the British side of the border enabled the Bamileke to escape from the oppressive laws and forced labour prevailing on the French side (Kaptue 1986). Generally speaking, the British authorities welcomed the influx of migrants from French Cameroon during the mandate and trusteeship eras. They formed a substantial proportion of the work force needed on the large-scale plantations established in the coastal-forest region of the British territory (the present South West Province) during the German colonial period, and greatly contributed to regional development, especially in cash crop production and commercial activities (Konings 1993). In addition, there was no language problem as the local population and the migrants could communicate in Pidgin English.

There is ample evidence that the local population, too, welcomed the Bamileke migrants. Several sources mention that the first Bamileke settlers in the Tombel area were invited by the Bakossi paramount chief, Fritz Ntoko-Epie, who played a pioneering role in the regional development of cocoa production (Ejedepang-Koge 1986: 203; Ngalame 1997: 232). He gave the migrants land to cultivate and in return the new settlers provided him with free labour on his farms.

More and more Bamileke settled in the Tombel area where land was in abundance and of little value. Many bought land there after having worked for some time as labourers on either the regional large-scale plantations or local peasant farms (Levin 1980). The entrepreneurial Bamileke migrants did not only acquire virgin forest land for the production of cash and food crops, but also took over existing cocoa and coffee farms from the local peasants who frequently lacked the financial resources to pay them for their labour input. Following reunification in 1961, Anglophone Cameroon became a main supplier of foodstuffs to the neighbouring

urban centres in Francophone Cameroon (Ndongko 1975). Together with the expansion of cocoa and coffee production, the demand for local foodstuffs led to a considerable increase in the value of land. Little wonder then that the Bakossi population became jealous of the Bamileke settlers who were prospering on lands they had acquired at low cost.[8] Tensions between both groups soon grew, especially because the Bamileke had become an equally dominant force in the regional economy – in commerce and transport in particular. Negative stereotypes emerged that have since become common parlance in the Tombel area. The Bakossi stygmatised the Bamileke as 'unscrupulous, land-grabbing invaders', while the Bamileke labeled the Bakossi as 'lazy and careless people more interested in consumption than in production'.

When the acquisition of new farmlands became more problematic in the area, the Bakossi resorted to strategies to regain access to land. The first was to contest ownership and leasing arrangements. Their argument was straightforward: indigenous land could not be alienated from the community. So the Bamileke settlers who had acquired land from Bakossi peasants in return for their labour, or who had purchased land directly, now learned that they did not in fact own the land, even if it had had perennial and cash crops on it, since indigenous land could not be sold and acquired on a personal basis.[9] The second strategy was to sue the Bamileke landowners and get more money or to reclaim the land. The Bamileke accused the Bakossi of conspiring with court members since most court members were autochthons. This is evident in the following statements to the senior district officer for Kumba Division by two court members who attended a court case in which a Bamileke farmer, Johnny Kamgang, sued the previous Bakossi owner, Ben Nyame, for reclaiming the land he had previously purchased from him:

> Chief Jacob Ekwoge, court member of Ngusi Customary Court and Mr Zacheus Soko, Appeal Court member made corroborative statements that these two land cases between Johnny Kamgang and Ben Nyame in which they as court members observed that the course of equity and justice was distorted by corruption and as a result Kamgang lost one of the cases but he was awarded a portion of the farm which is now being claimed by Ben Nyame of Ebonji. They further disclosed that Ben Nyame influenced

---

[8] The senior district officer for Kumba Division reported in 1967 that the Bamileke settlers had bought land in the Tombel area at almost a fifth of its post-reunification value. See Senior District Officer, Kumba, Summary of events which culminated to the Disturbances in the Tombel Area of Bangem Subdivision on 31 December 1966, in Buea National Archives (BNA), File Pc/a 1966/1, Tombel Disturbances.

[9] For similar arguments by the autochthonous population in other parts of Cameroon and in Ivory Coast, see Socpa (2006) and Woods (2003). For an extensive discussion of individual and collective land ownership in the Bakossi area, see Ejedepang-Koge (1986: 241-248).

> the decision of the courts in each stage up to the appellate level by District Officer Ntui who was his personal friend.[10]

After the December 1966 ethnic cleansing in the Tombel area, Ben Nyame was accused of murdering Johnny Kamgang.

The Bamileke settlers complained that the Bakossi attempt to deprive them from their purchased land was a grave violation of President Ahidjo's desire for national unity:

> We believe in national unity. In this respect, we believe that every Cameroonian has a right to settle anywhere and carry on his lawful business in any part of the Federation.[11]

The Bakossi naturally appeared insensitive to this complaint, being first and foremost interested in regaining their lands. In fact, the land issue tended to unite them. Since their previous strategies for reclaiming their lands had given rise to numerous land conflicts in which Bakossi claims had proved to be only marginally successful, they now started to consider a different solution, namely ethnic cleansing.

The UPC rebellion and insecurity in the Bakossi region

Tensions between the autochthonous Bakossi and Bamileke settlers intensified after the outbreak of the UPC rebellion in Francophone Cameroon in 1955 because many *maquisards* belonged to the Bamileke ethnic group. The rebellion affected the Bakossi region in various ways. First, fearing violence, a growing number of Bakossi resident in Francophone Cameroon fled to be with their kinsmen in Anglophone Cameroon. They claimed that they had been maltreated by UPC 'terrorists', all of whom according to them, were Bamileke. Second, the UPC guerilla fighters used to seek refuge on the Anglophone side of the Mungo River and often used the Bakossi forests and hills as a hiding place and safe base for launching attacks on government forces in Francophone Cameroon. The Bakossi then started accusing the Bamileke settlers of either being terrorists themselves or protecting the UPC guerrilla fighters. They even alleged that the Bamileke settlers tended to support the guerrillas in an effort to usurp all their ancestral lands. Third, following the extension of the state of emergency from Francophone Cameroon to Anglophone Cameroon after reunification on 1 October 1961, the UPC rebellion rapidly abated. The government was now in a better position to control the guerrilla movements, kill or capture guerrilla fighters, and cut off their supplies. The shrinking number of guerrilla fighters then

---

[10] See Letter from Senior District Officer, Kumba, to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government, Buea, 21 June 1967, in BNA, File Pc/a 1966/1, Tombel Disturbances.

[11] Memorandum presented to the Prime Minister of West Cameroon by the Bamileke Welfare Union in Connection with the Tombel Disturbances, in BNA, File Pc/a 1966/1, Tombel Disturbances.

changed tactics. While they had previously concentrated on attacking government troops, government buildings and supposed close allies of the 'neo-colonial' administration, they now started raiding local farms and markets for food, kidnapping local youths who could be employed in the guerrilla force and killing local people, in particular those who tried to defend themselves against such raids or were suspected of informing the government about the guerrillas' whereabouts. Several Bakossi became victims of the guerrilla fighters' change of tactics.[12] One of the immediate consequences was the development of deep feelings of hatred and enmity towards the Bamileke guerrilla fighters and the settlers. A growing number of Bakossi started to call for revenge.

Soon after a raid by guerrilla fighters on the market in Ndum village in the Tombel area on 14 December 1965,[13] the Bakossi paramount chief Richard Mambo Ntoko,[14] and some prominent members of the Bakossi elite publicly denounced the West Cameroonian government's lack of protection against guerrilla attacks. And they subsequently requested that the senior divisional officer for Kumba Division form self-defence units in the Bakossi villages armed by the government.[15] In support of their request, they said that such groups were necessary since the prevailing state of emergency in the area prohibited the local people from possessing arms and ammunition to counteract guerrilla attacks. At a meeting in early January 1966 with Bakossi chiefs and leading members of the Bakossi and 'stranger' communities, the senior district officer agreed in principle to the idea on condition that the selection of their members be based on the multi-ethnic composition of the area and that the new recruits be given adequate training by the police.[16] In August 1966, the government authorised the senior district officer to issue arms and ammunition to the

---

[12] For security reports on the various guerrilla attacks in the Tombel area after the start of the UPC rebellion in Francophone Cameroon in 1955, see BNA, File Pc/f 1962/1, Subversive Activities in Tombel Subdivision: The Events that led to the Disturbances in Tombel Subdivision; and BNA, File Pc/f 1966/2, Terrorism: The Bakossi Revenge December 1966-1968.

[13] Senior District Officer, Kumba, Summary of events which culminated to the Disturbances in the Tombel Area of Bangem Subdivision on 31 December 1966, in BNA, File Pc/a 1966/1, Tombel Disturbances; and several security reports in BNA, File Pc/f 1961/1, Subversive Activities in Tombel Subdivision: The Events that led to the Disturbances in Tombel Subdivision.

[14] Chieftaincy in the Bakossi acephalous societies was largely a colonial creation. The position of paramount chief has consistently been contested in some parts of the Bakossi region. For an extensive discussion on chieftaincy in the region, see Ejedepang-Koge (1986: 74-85).

[15] See Senior District Officer, Kumba, Summary of events which culminated to the Disturbances in the Tombel Area of Bangem Subdivision on 31 December 1966, in BNA, File Pc/a 1966/1, Tombel Disturbances; and Report from Director of SEDOC and National Security, Jean Fochive, to Minister of Armed Forces, 26 January 1967, in BNA, File Pc/f 1966/2, Terrorism: The Bakossi Revenge December 1966-1968.

[16] Senior District Officer, Kumba, Summary of events which culminated to the Disturbances in the Tombel Area of Bangem Subdivision on 31 December 1966, in BNA, File Pc/a 1966/1, Tombel Disturbances.

newly formed self- defence units. This was done in spite of complaints by the Bamileke settlers that they had been denied membership and that these units were predominantly used by the Bakossi as a weapon to intimidate and terrorise them. For instance, in a petition presented to the senior district officer for Kumba Division, they lamented:

> We are in constant fear because of the attitude of Bakossi Cameroonians and their Auto Defence Units. They beat us, stop us from going to our farms, force us to go to bed at 7 o'clock, force our bars to be closed when it is not the stipulated time, harvest our crops, search our houses at night and remove people and beat them up, seize their particulars and drag them to the army and call them terrorists. Every Cameroonian other than a Bakossi man is a terrorist. Since the formation of the Auto Defence Units, which they refused us to join, tension has been higher than ever. We were refused to join because the intention is to use these to intimidate us. We are frank when we say in no distant future this area will be full of a lot of unrest.[17]

Attempts by the senior district officer for Kumba Division to expel irresponsible members from the self-defence units and persuade the Bamileke settlers to join them blatantly failed. Even those Bamileke who had been initially prepared to join these units now vehemently dismissed the idea because they had come to realise the potential threat these units posed to the settler community.[18] Henceforth, the government simply ignored any warnings by Bamileke settlers, the security forces, and local administrators that the self-defence units were going to be used to attack the Bamileke and drive them off Bakossi lands.[19]

The Bakossi elite and ethnic mobilisation

The Bakossi elite played a major role in fueling regional sentiments against the Grassfielders. Just as their counterparts elsewhere in the South West Province, the majority of the Bakossi elite were alarmed when the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) – with its main base in the Anglophone part of the Grassfields – won the elections in the British Trust territory of Southern Cameroons. Feeling overwhelmed by the massive migration and settlement of Grassfielders, they already saw the seizure of power by the KNDP as the start of Grassfield hegemony in their region. They stressed that the people in the Anglophone and Francophone parts of

---

[17] A Petition Presented by the Non-Bakossi Speaking Cameroonians Resident in Kumba Eastern Region to the Senior District Officer, Kumba, 27 July 1966, in BNA, File Pc/a 1966/1, Tombel Disturbances.

[18] Senior District Officer, Kumba, Summary of events which culminated to the Disturbances in the Tombel Area of Bangem Subdivision on 31 December 1966, in BNA, File Pc/a 1966/1, Tombel Disturbances.

[19] A Petition Presented by the Non-Bakossi Speaking Cameroonians Resident in Kumba Eastern Region to the Senior District Officer Kumba, in BNA, File Pc/a 1966/1, Tombel Disturbances.; and Senior District Officer, Kumba Division, to the Federal Inspector of Administration, 5 August 1966, in BNA, File Pc/a 1966/1, Tombel Disturbances.

the Grassfields were ethnically related and therefore inclined to form a political alliance, as evidenced by the widespread support of the Bamileke settlers for the KNDP. They quickly started to accuse the KNDP leadership and especially the first KNDP Prime Minister, John Ngu Foncha, of victimising South Westerners for their opposition to the new government by excluding them from political-bureaucratic appointments and economic opportunities for capital accumulation. Soon after the KNDP's 1959 victory, the Bakossi elite began to mobilise the regional population in support of the Cameroon People's National Congress (CPNC), created by the merger of the two major South West-based political parties, in an effort to contest more effectively the allegedly hegemonic tendencies of the Grassfielders.[20]

The existing conflict between the Bakossi elite and the KNDP deepened in the time preceding the UN-organised plebiscite in the British Trust Territory on 11 February 1961 when the population was to decide upon its political future after the end of the British Trusteeship. The Bakossi elite then exhorted the regional population to vote in favour of the CPNC option for integration in Nigeria and to reject the KNDP's option for reunification with Francophone Cameroon. They claimed that integration in Nigeria would be more beneficial to the Bakossi as it would exempt them from the violence and chaos of the UPC rebellion in Francophone Cameroon and enable them to seize their land from the Bamileke settlers who would then be redefined as *de jure* foreigners.[21]

There was a bitter end to Bakossi dreams of a better future in Nigeria when the majority of the Anglophone population voted for reunification with Francophone Cameroon in the plebiscite. After reunification the Bakossi became subject to growing insecurity as a result of guerrilla attacks and a continued loss of land to Bamileke migrants. The Bakossi elite not only blamed the KNDP government for a lack of concern for the Bakossi predicament but also began to use existing and newly formed organisations for the representation and defence of Bakossi interests against the Grassfielders.[22]

After the start of the UPC guerrilla warfare in Francophone Cameroon in 1955, a secret society called *Nwan'Ngoe* was founded in Muamena, a Bakossi village on the Francophone side of the Mungo River. Its original purpose was to protect local

---

[20] For an extensive discussion of these issues, see Konings & Nyamnjoh (2003) and Mbile (2000).

[21] Fuimu N. Kari, Assistant Secretary II, An Analysis of the Causes of the Tombel Disturbances of 31 December 1966, in BNA, File Pc/f 1966/3, The Tombel Disturbances: The events that led to the killings and destruction of property on 31 December 1966.

[22] *Ibid.* See also Senior District Officer, Kumba, Summary of events which culminated to the disturbances in the Tombel Area of Bangem Subdivision on 31 December 1966, in BNA, File Pc/a 1966/1, Tombel Disturbances; and report from J.N. Viyuoh, ASP Buea (on Tour), to the Director of Federal Security, Yaoundé, 13 October 1962, in BNA, File Pc/f 1962/1, Subversive Activities in Tombel Subdivion: The events that led to the disturbances in Tombel Subdivision. For some of these organisational efforts, see also Ngalame (1997).

people from guerrilla attacks, in particular through organising inoculation by traditional medicine men to make them bullet proof. The society's fame soon spread to the Anglophone side of the river where it was used by the elite for political ends. Dissatisfied with the plebiscite results, the Bakossi elite were able to persuade *Nwan'Ngoe* to send one of their prominent members, Francis Ajebe-Sone, to the U.N. General Assembly to plead for a reinterpretation of the plebiscite results on an ethnic basis: where an ethnic group had voted in favour of union with Nigeria or Francophone Cameroon, it should be allowed to join the country of its choice. However, the appeal was dismissed and the U.N. accepted the results as they stood.[23] Following the renewed defeat of the CPNC in the 1962 general elections, the Bakossi elite tried to use *Nwan'Ngoe* as an instrument to convert KNDP members to the CPNC. They convinced traditional medicine men to refuse inoculation to any KNDP member unless they denounced their party and declared support for the CPNC. Moreover, they insisted that all inoculated Bakossi sever their relations with Grassfielders who had appropriated their ancestral lands and voted for reunification with Francophone Cameroon.[24]

Frustrated by the increasingly marginal role of the CPNC in parliament, one leading member of the Bakossi elite, Prince Walter Mesumbe Wilson, strove to unite the southwestern elite into an extra parliamentary opposition movement. On 30 August 1964, he founded VIKUMA – an acronym for Victoria, Kumba and Mamfe, the then existing administrative districts in the South West – in an attempt to terminate Grassfield dominance in the entire South West and even to separate the South West from the North West. He was also the editor of *The Spokesman,* a journal that became VIKUMA's mouthpiece. Because of its virulent attacks on the KNDP, its xenophobic obsession with autochthony and inciting the southwestern population against the Grassfielders, *The Spokesman* was banned by the KNDP government in 1965. However, a new journal, *The Citizen,* emerged soon afterwards, reviving the spirit of VIKUMA. Although VIKUMA failed to become a major political force in the South West because of internal divisions among the regional political elite, it was to play a significant role in the mobilisation and organisation of the Bakossi popula-

---

[23] Fuimu N. Kari, Assistant Secretary II, An analysis of the causes of the Tombel Disturbances on 31 December 1966, in BNA, File Pc/f 1966/3, The Tombel Disturbances: The events that led to the killings and destruction of property on 31 December 1966. See also Konings & Nyamnjoh (2003: 39-40).

[24] Senior District Officer, Kumba, Summary of events which culminated to the disturbances in the Tombel Area of Bangem Subdivision on 31 December 1966, in BNA, File Pc/a 1966/1, Tombel Disturbances.

tion in retrieving its ancestral lands, culminating in the December 1966 Tombel disturbances.[25]

The 1966 Bakossi-Bamileke confrontation in the Tombel area

On 31 December 1966, there was a violent uprising of the autochthonous Bakossi against the Bamileke 'invaders' and 'terrorists' that affected a large part of the Tombel area. Most Bakossi insist that this was a spontaneous action in the wake of an allegedly renewed *maquisard* attack on Bakossi citizens and property, but there is substantial evidence that this uprising was the result of long term planning. Preceding the Tombel disturbances, the regional administration received several reports from local government officials, security officers and Bamileke settlers that the autochthonous Bakossi were preparing themselves for a war with the Bamileke settlers.

Some of these reports mentioned that the Bakossi elite and VIKUMA leaders were holding secret meetings to plan and organise ethnic cleansing. These reports increased in December 1966 and they even alleged that the VIKUMA president, Prince Walter Wilson, had visited several colleges in November with a view to informing Bakossi students of the upcoming events and enlisting their participation in the planned Bamileke massacre.[26]

Other reports mentioned that the Bakossi elite and VIKUMA leaders were also making use of traditional channels, such as traditional medicine men, oath taking and secret societies, to mobilise and protect potential Bakossi warriors for their approaching battle with Bamileke settlers. Some of these reports refer to the increased activities of local traditional medicine men who specialised in producing medicines that were believed to make Bakossi fighters immune to bullets and machete strokes and to give them courage and a killer's mentality. As one Bakossi fighter later explained: 'You did not fear, you had no scruples, you became like a devil' (Balz 1995: 322). Two of these medicine men, Sango Adolf Ngole and Sango Madibo, built up a special reputation that attracted many clients (Ngalame 1997: 253-55; Balz 1995: 322). Sango Adolf Ngole was in the habit of providing Bakossi fighters not only with protective medicines but also with magic fighting sticks or rods that were only to be used in war. Again, other reports stress the vital role of *Mwankum,* a traditional secret male society that is responsible for the maintenance of order and morality in Bakossi society and is only active at night (Ejedepang-Koge 1986; Balz 1995). According to informants, *Mwankum* had cautioned its members

---

[25] Fuimu N. Kari, Assistant Secretary II, An analysis of the causes of the Tombel Disturbances on 31 December 1966, in BNA, File Pc/f 1966/3, The Tombel Disturbances: The events that led to the killings and destruction of property on 31 December 1966.

[26] Report from Security Service, Kumba, to the Director of Federal Security, 6 February 1967, in BNA, File Pc/f 1966/2, Terrorism: The Bakossi Revenge December 1966-1968.

that the Grassfield people were preparing a war against the Bakossi people and ordered them to assemble to take appropriate measures to defend themselves. The solemn oath sworn by all members bound them together and prevented them from betraying any of the actions they were going to take against the Bamileke settlers (Balz 1995: 270).

Given such preparations, it is understandable that the Bakossi throughout the Tombel region were able to react immediately and simultaneously when, on the morning of 31 December 1966, a Land Rover traveling from Tombel to Nyassoso was attacked by a group of unknown persons near the village of Mbule. Four of the seven passengers were killed, including three Bakossi. Although the assailants escaped and were never identified, the Bakossi claimed that they were Bamileke terrorists and called for revenge.[27]

A Bakossi militia was rapidly formed, consisting mainly of members of the self-defence units assisted by students enjoying their Christmas holidays and other Bakossi men. Armed with guns, cutlasses, spears and magical sticks, they went on a rampage and started slaughtering as many Bamileke as possible, setting fire to their houses, looting their property and stealing their money. The senior district officer for Kumba Division who visited the area a few hours later described the scene as follows:

> In all the villages that I visited, I found corpses lying indiscriminately along the roads, in the gutters, on the farms behind the houses and some burnt in the houses…. It should be noted that if it were not for the timely intervention of the forces of law and order, the whole Tombel town should have been reduced to ashes and the number of casualties should have been alarming. By the time that soldiers and police arrived on the scene, most of the assailants had fled, some to Kumba Urban Town and others to the interior of Bakossi villages.[28]

It is beyond doubt that, at least for some members of the militia, the massacre provided a unique opportunity to settle scores and to reshuffle lost property.

Although the Bakossi elite and VIKUMA leaders did not participate directly in the massacre, the Bamileke survivors later charged that some of them had been indirectly involved in this barbaric act. The Bakossi paramount chief's driver had transported members of the self-defence units from one village to another and the driver of the district officer of Tombel, a Bakossi himself, had been distributing petrol to

---

[27] On the basis of later investigations into the matter, it cannot be excluded that the Bakossi themselves had engineered the attack. Some security officers strongly suspected that the Bakossi might have sacrificed some of their fellow men to justify subsequently resorting to ethnic cleansing. See report from Extraordinary Co-ordination Meeting in the Office of the Senior District Officer, Kumba, 17 January 1967, in BNA, File Pc/a 1966/1, Tombel Disturbances.

[28] Senior District Officer, Kumba, Summary of events which culminated to the disturbances in the Tombel Area of Bangem Subdivision on 31 December 1966, in BNA, File Pc/a 1966/1, Tombel Disturbances.

the militia in order to set fire to Bamileke houses and had joined them from time to time during the massacre. Moreover, these two leaders had failed to inform the senior district officer for Kumba Division of the gravity of the situation.[29]

It would, however, be a serious error to assume that all the autochthonous Bakossi supported the Bamileke massacre. There were actually some cases of heroic resistance to the ethnic cleansing both before and during the violent uprising, and a few Bakossi were even murdered for their alleged betrayal of the interests of their own ethnic group.[30] The chief of Ngusi, Jonas Metuge, was reportedly rescued just in time by the police when the militia attempted to kill him after he tried to stop the massacre and the setting fire to houses in his village.[31] Moreover, some Bakossi saved the lives of their Bamileke neighbours by hiding them in their houses – an indication that personal friendships still existed in the midst of general hatred and hostility (Ngalame 1997).

It took police and army reinforcements a few hours to bring the situation under control. By then, 236 Bamileke settlers had been killed and 181 Bamileke houses had been burnt down. The senior district officer then ordered the arrest of all persons involved in the incident. Security forces then started to round up any able-bodied Bakossi men in the area and took them to the *Brigade Mixte Mobile* (BMM) in Kumba for further interrogations. Those who confessed to having been involved in the massacre – often after being severely tortured – appeared before a Military Tribunal in Yaoundé. Eventually, 143 Bakossi men were brought to trial. The accused, remarkably, tried to justify the massacre as an act of Bakossi self-defence against Bamileke *maquisards*. This strategy failed when the military court accepted the argument of the public prosecutor that 'conflicts about land' and 'Bakossi envy of Bamileke entrepreneurial success' were the main motives for the massacre (Rhode 1997: 247). In the end, seventeen of the accused were sentenced to death by firing squad, thirty-seven were released for lack of evidence, and the remainder were sentenced to longer or shorter terms of imprisonment, seventy-five of them for life.[32]

Following the verdicts on 13 May 1967, there were numerous complaints among both the Bakossi and the Bamileke. The Bakossi were particularly shocked that

---

[29] Report from Extraordinary Meeting in the Office of the Senior District Officer, Kumba, 17 January 1967, in BNA, File Pc/a 1966/1, Tombel Disturbances.

[30] Report from Lt. Norbert Kake, Commander of Gendarmerie Kumba, 1 January 1967, in BNA, File Pc/f 1966/2, Terrorism: The Bakossi Revenge December 1966-1968; and Report from Security Service, Kumba, to the Director of Federal Security, 6 February 1967, in *ibid.*

[31] Report from B.T. Patcher, Ag. SSP, Buea, to Assistant Commissioner of Police (on Tour), Kumba, 9 January 1967, in BNA, File Pc/a 1966/1, Tombel Disturbances.

[32] Senior District Officer, Kumba, Summary of events which culminated to the disturbances in the Tombel Area of Bangem Subdivision on 31 December 1966, in BNA, File Pc/a 1966/1, Tombel Disturbances. See also Ngalame (1997: 260).

those who were condemned to death were to be publicly executed in Tombel but were relieved when it was later announced that the death penalty would not be carried out because of a presidential amnesty. The Bamileke, on the other hand, were dissatisfied with the trial and verdict and wondered why the Bakossi elite had not been arrested and tried, why only seventeen Bakossi had been condemned to death for participating in the gruesome massacre, and why no compensation was to be paid for the Bamileke lives and property lost during the Tombel disturbances.[33]

Unsurprisingly, tensions ran high between the autochthonous Bakossi and Bamileke survivors following the massacre, and living together became almost impossible. The atrocities committed by the security forces that were supposed to maintain order in the area – rape of women, theft of coffee, arbitrary arrests, abusive application of curfew measures, and so on – were an extra complicating factor.[34] There was a mass evacuation of both ethnic groups from the affected villages, and autochthons and settlers sent their wives and children to safer places outside the Tombel area. In addition, there were persistent rumours that the Bamileke in Francophone Cameroon were organising reprisals.

The government then decided to convene several meetings between representatives of the two ethnic groups aimed at reconciliation, but it soon became apparent that the Bamileke survivors were unwilling to cooperate. For instance, the government proposed creating a rehabilitation committee charged with community work so that those who were homeless as a result of the incident could be housed. Unlike the autochthonous Bakossi, the Bamileke settlers simply refused to take part in community work, saying that they did not want to work with their relatives' murderers.

Given this situation, the government requested the intervention of the association of Bamileke residents in Anglophone Cameroon, the so-called Bamileke Welfare Union, to help convince its members in the Tombel area to cooperate with the government in its determined efforts to restore peace to the region.[35] The Bamileke Welfare Union reacted positively to government request and appealed to its members to remain calm and to cooperate with the government instead of taking the law

---

[33] Report from Security Service, Kumba, to the Director of Federal Security, 6 February 1967, in BNA, File Pc/f 1966/2, Terrorism: The Bakossi Revenge December 1966-1968; Memorandum Presented to the Prime Minister of West Cameroon by the Bamileke Welfare Union in Connection with the Tombel Disturbances, 13 March 1967, in BNA, File Pc/a 1966/1, Tombel Disturbances; Mr S.B. Diffang, District Officer, Bangem, to Senior District Officer, Kumba, 7 August 1967, in BNA, File Pc/f 1966/2, Terrorism: The Bakossi Revenge December 1966-1968.

[34] Mr Jean-Claude Ngoh, Federal Inspector of Administration, to Police Commissioner, Buea, 27 February 1967, in BNA, File Pc/a 1966/1, Tombel Disturbances.

[35] Senior District Officer, Kumba, to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government, Buea, 21 June 1967, in BNA, File Pc/a 1966/1, Tombel Disturbances.

in their own hands. Eventually, this appeal had the desired effect and reconciliatory efforts were resumed.[36]

Peace gradually returned to the Tombel area following the implementation of a series of government measures, including continued peace talks, assurances about protecting lives and property, anti-terrorist campaigns, 'dog swearing' (*cadi*),[37] and the formation of joint councils in the villages. Over time, the autochthonous population and the Bamileke settlers began to communicate again and even participate in multi-ethnic associations and unions, such as the traditional *njangi* rotating credit associations (DeLancey 1977), cooperatives, and religious associations. Although the Bakossi criminalisation of the Bamileke settlers disappeared with the end of all guerrilla activities by the beginning of the 1970s, tensions between both groups nevertheless continued because of continuing Bakossi resentment of Grassfield dominance in their region.

Conclusion

This chapter highlights the long history of autochthony movements in Cameroon, focusing on the so-called Bakossi-Bamileke war in the immediate post-colonial era that has so far largely escaped scholarly attention. It has identified several factors that help explain the unprecedented violence that marked the confrontation between the autochthonous Bakossi and Bamileke 'strangers'. One factor was what the Bakossi styled the Bamileke 'invasion' of their area: the 'unscrupulous' Bamileke had settled in large numbers in the area, grabbed their lands and had begun to dominate food and cash-crop production as well as local commerce. Another factor was what the Bakossi perceived as Bamileke provocation: the Bamileke settlers were suspected of supporting the regular *maquisard* attacks in Bakossi territory and even of being terrorists themselves. A final factor was the fueling of existing anti-Bamileke sentiments among the local population by the Bakossi elite in their struggle for power. The latter founded a number of traditional and modern associations for the purpose of contesting Grassfield hegemony which played a significant role in the planning and organisation of the ethnic cleansing that took place on 31 December 1966,

---

[36] Senior District Officer, Kumba, to Federal Inspector of Administration, Buea, 15 March 1967, in BNA, File Pc/a 1966/1, Tombel Disturbances; Chief of Service, Federal Security, Kumba, to the Director, Federal Security, 16 March 1967, in BNA, File Pc/f 1966/3, The Tombel Disturbances: The Events that Led to the Killings and Destruction of Property on 31 December 1966.

[37] *Cadi* was an anti-terrorist ritual attended by state officials and the community. It involved an obligatory public confession, an oath of loyalty to the government, and a promise to give up all acts of wrong doing and violence. What was characteristic of this ceremony was that oath taking was accompanied by the burial of a live black dog. After the ceremony, the participants were often given an attestation that they could present at police checkpoints. See Bayart (1979: 204) and Terretta (2005: 49).

using traditional channels to mobilise the local population for war with the Bamileke settlers.

This chapter has shown the vital contributions made by traditional medicine men and secret societies in the bloody incident. Several Bakossi informants referred to the magic concoctions and sticks produced by the medicine men that enabled the fearless Bakossi warriors to wipe out the mighty Bamileke. They also insisted that all the Bakossi men who participated in the violent confrontation had done so not on their own account but on behalf of their own ethnic group, bound together by the solemn oath of *Mwankum*. Oral traditions among the Bakossi even claim that the perpetrators of the Bamileke massacre were invisible men, the so-called *edimekol,* who were believed to be invincible. That is why so many Bakossi maintain that those who were indiscriminately arrested after the Tombel disturbances, were actually innocent men (cf. Ngalame 1997: 245).

The violent Tombel incident clearly left deep wounds. Many Grassfielders came to perceive the Bakossi as murderers who, just like other South Westerners, envied their hard work and economic achievements. Many South Westerners instead came to see the Bakossi as heroes who had stopped the expansion of Grassfield hegemony in their area. These mutually hostile feelings constituted a lasting foundation for the upsurge in autochthony in the South West Province during political liberalisation in the 1990s when government officials and the regional pro-government elite started inciting the local population against the 'came-no-goes' who were allegedly supporting the major Grassfield opposition party.

4

The Maranatha movement and autochthony in the South West Province

Introduction

Religious revival movements of various sorts have had a profound impact on the public realm of many African countries in the last decennia (cf. Ellis & ter Haar 1998: 193). Although there is a growing body of literature on the subject, revival movements within the mainline churches, as Ranger (1996) has rightly remarked, have been understudied. In this chapter I focus on a recent revival movement within the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) in the South West Province of Anglophone Cameroon that appears to have been inspired by the expansion of Pentecostalism in the area. This movement, popularly known as the Maranatha movement, emerged in Bonjongo, a remote village located between Buea and Limbe, but it rapidly attracted a large following from outside the village and eventually almost caused a schism within the southwestern RCC. It became a particularly explosive issue when it was exploited for political ends, becoming part of the autochthony-allochthony conflict fuelled by the regional and national political elite during political liberalisation in the 1990s.

Given the dramatic rise and spread of the so-called 'Pentecostal', 'charismatic' or 'born-again' churches among the Christian population in Africa in the last few decades, it is not surprising that they quickly became a source of inspiration for the introduction of certain innovations and the birth of revival movements within the mainline churches. Several scholars have attempted to analyse Pentecostal ideology and practices and to explain the spectacular growth of the Pentecostal churches in Africa and elsewhere (cf. Gifford 1993a, 1998; Haynes 1996; Meyer 1999; Van Dijk 2000; Corten & Marshall-Fratani 2001). Despite significant differences in their doctrine, liturgy, organisation and social base, they usually emphasise personal con-

version as a distinct experience of faith ('being born again'), the centrality of the Holy Spirit, the spiritual gifts of glossolalia and faith healing, and the efficacy of miracles. Marshall (1995: 245) has highlighted the great appeal and evangelical zeal of the born-again movement: 'its idiom of rebirth is central not only to the individual's experience of his faith and the new opportunities it provides both spiritually and materially, but is a powerful metaphor for its mission within the Christian community and nation'. Pentecostalism has converted an increasing number of 'nominal' Christians and all mainline churches have come under pressure to adopt Pentecostal forms of religious expression in their liturgy.

It is, however, noteworthy that Pentecostal expansion in Cameroon is a more recent phenomenon than in many other African countries, mainly for political reasons. The Cameroonian post-colonial state used to discourage, to put it mildly, any form of association, in its determined efforts to establish total control over civil society (Bayart 1979). Unlike the established churches, newly created sects and churches found it hard to be registered as a legal organisation by state security (Mbuy 1994). It was not until the introduction of political liberalisation in December 1990 that freedom of (religious) association was enacted. Henceforth, the growth of Pentecostalism has gathered pace and was particularly promoted by Nigerian preachers and Cameroonians who had lived in Nigeria. Pentecostalism became most popular in Anglophone Cameroon which borders Nigeria, shares a common language, and has a relatively large Nigerian immigrant population (Akoko 2007a).

In the 1990s, Christians in the South West Province of Anglophone Cameroon witnessed the emergence of some born-again inspired revival movements within their principal churches, the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC) and the RCC. The founders of these movements blamed the hierarchy of these churches for being more preoccupied with material concerns than with spiritual values. They decided to create charismatic prayer groups, which appeared to adopt several Pentecostal elements. Their introduction of a more personal form of spirituality and their claims of faith healing and deliverance from 'demon possession and evil attacks' in particular appealed to many Christians. Although these movements rapidly became a source of controversy within the churches, the hierarchies did not immediately intervene. As in other parts of the world, mainstream churches in Cameroon are by no means uniform bodies; on the contrary, they allow considerable variety in the articulation and practices of faith and the incorporation of elements from other religions as long as they are compatible with the basic tenets of doctrine and liturgy. It was not until the hierarchies had come to the conclusion that the new revival movements deviated from orthodoxy and posed a serious threat to the unity and peace within the churches that they decided to ban them.

The PCC revival movement was launched by the Rev. Dr Michael Bame Bame in the English-speaking Bastos congregation in Yaoundé at the beginning of 1990

(Akoko 2007b).[1] The founder was born in the North West Province of Anglophone Cameroon and was one of the most outstanding theologians and pastors in the PCC.[2] He claimed that his decision to found a revival movement stemmed from a spiritual experience in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1987-88 when he and his wife underwent prayer-healing sessions in a church manifesting the powers of the Holy Spirit. His movement later came to be called the 'Pilot Revival Prayer Group in Cameroon', soon spreading to Anglophone Cameroon, where it attracted a substantial number of followers. Gradually, the PCC hierarchy became more and more suspicious of the movement's teachings and liturgical practices which appeared to be dangerously close to Pentecostalism (Kor 1997). Subsequently, in April 1994, the PCC Synod issued 'Guidelines' for revival in which it acknowledged that every church needed revival, but equally pointed out that PCC revival 'was not to be an imitation of Pentecostalism' nor should it 'adopt Pentecostal mannerisms', and no exclusive claims about baptism by immersion or glossolalia would be permitted (Umenei 1995: 24-25). Since these guidelines were ignored by the revival's founder, the synod committee resolved on 11 April 1995 that 'pastors, elders and other church leaders of the PCC who in the name of "revival" are engaged in doctrinal and liturgical practices which are not in consonance with those of the PCC, shall be asked to desist from such practices, latest 31 December 1995'. Anyone who did not comply would be dismissed if they were a pastor, and would lose their leadership position in the case of elders. This resolution was confirmed by the PCC synod of 1996 in Bamenda. Consequently, most Christians and pastors who were involved in the revival decided to return to the fold. A stubborn group in the Bastos PCC congregation led by the Rev. Dr Bame Bame defied all directives and pleas to reconsider their ways. Several attempts by the PCC leadership, at various levels, to strike a compromise and establish peace were rebuffed by the group and after all attempts at reconciliation had been blatantly rejected by the Yaoundé group, the synod committee, meeting in April 1997 in Kumba, decided to ban the group forthwith (Kor 1997). This signified the end of revival and Rev. Dr Bame Bame later resigned from the PCC.

Significantly, the PCC has always recognised that there are certain tensions and rivalries in the Anglophone region between the coastal-forest people, the present South West Province and the people from the northern Grassfields, the present North West Province. The church has thus two different women's centres, and two different youth centres – even two different bibles (Gifford 1998: 281). Its constitu-

---

1 In the 1970s another revival had been launched in the same congregation. This born-again movement, founded by Dr Zacharias Fomum, a lecturer at the University of Yaoundé and son of a Presbyterian pastor, caused a split in the PCC. Dr Fomum then established his Christian Missionary Fellowship International.

2 For his life story, see Kor (1997).

tion admits this tension in stipulating that the moderator and the synod clerk 'shall not be indigenes of one and the same province'. It has also been customary for the leadership of the church to rotate between the South West and the North West, and serious conflicts have occurred when this custom was not respected. Nasoh (1998) provides evidence that the PCC revival movement in the Bastos congregation largely degenerated into just such a South West-North West conflict. Southwestern members of the congregation felt that the new revival movement was a North West scheme to rob the southwestern pastor, Rev. Dr Isaac Elangwe, of his legitimate right to lead one of the most prestigious PCC congregations. Consequently, they were inclined to disapprove of any alignment with Rev. Dr Bame Bame against one of their 'sons of the soil'. Rev. Dr Elangwe and southwestern elders of the congregations actually became the most vocal opponents of the revival movement.

The RCC revival movement, which is the focus of our study, emerged almost at the same time as that in the PCC. It was founded by a southwestern priest, Father Etienne Khumbah, in the Diocese of Buea, the only RCC diocese in the South West Province prior to 1999. His Maranatha movement had a much greater impact in the South West Province than the PCC revival movement, attracting not only a larger membership but also arousing stronger regional emotions, since it tended to extend the then prevailing autochthony-allochthony discourse in the region from the socio-economic and political domains to the religious domain. Many southwestern faithful came to support the founder not only in his claims to offer spiritual renewal and faith healing but also in his apparent challenge to the allegedly North West-dominated hierarchy in the Buea Diocese. The widespread belief in the South West Province that an autochthonous priest was being 'victimised' by a northwestern bishop on charges of having founded a 'born-again'-like revival movement tended to transform this originally internal church dispute into a vehement, and often violent, regional conflict about allochthonous dominance. The regional elite quickly mobilised in defence of this 'illustrious son of the soil'. The extravagant imagery of war and martyrdom used by the southwestern press to discuss the founder's struggle with the RCC hierarchy marked the beginning of a process of myth making which reached its climax when he was forcibly evicted from his residence and home region by the military.

I have already explained the current obsession in the South West Province with the 'autochthony-allochthony' issue (see Chapter 2). For our further discussion, it is important to observe that the RCC hierarchy in Cameroon has regularly opposed the increasing politicisation of ethnicity and the politics of belonging in the country.

For example, in November 1996,[3] the National Episcopal Conference of Cameroon issued a pastoral letter on tribalism in which it declared:

> To love one's tribe is a good thing. However, attachment to one's tribe becomes a real evil when one excludes others, persecutes them, deprives them of their rights, assassinates them, instigates one ethnic group against another for personal or economic ends. Thus we see these days anonymous tracts, bearing clearly tribalistic messages, sometimes supported by biblical quotations, circulating in our country, inciting one group to rise up against another, under the pretext of self defence and the 'protection of minorities'.

Some members of the RCC clergy in the South West Province, too, have strongly condemned the politics of belonging. One of their targets was the governor of the South West Province, Peter Oben Ashu, who was one of its principal protagonists. For example, in one of his outrageous speeches the governor invited the autochthonous people in the South West to transform themselves into elephants, which is part of the southwestern belief system, in particular of the Bakweri (Ardener 1959), and destroy the farms and food crops of northwestern settlers.[4] Some priests stationed in Buea, the capital of the South West Province and residence of the governor, were particularly in the habit of severely criticising the governor's xenophobic remarks during their sermons. The governor, a Catholic himself, was so offended by the criticisms that he refused to attend church services for a while.

Given the RCC leaders' persistent condemnation of the autochthony-allochthony discourse, it was a shocking and traumatic experience for them when the politics of belonging pervaded the church itself during the Maranatha movement crisis, the wounds of which will take a long time to heal fully.

The emergence of the Maranatha movement crisis in the Buea diocese

To those familiar with the situation within the RCC in the South West Province, it did not come as a complete surprise that the Maranatha movement crisis opened a Pandora's box with the expression of underlying South West-North West contradictions.[5] There was already a widespread feeling among southwestern Catholics that their region was dominated by North Westerners not only in the political and economic domains but also in the religious realm. Although the RCC had started its missionary activities in the South West under German colonial rule, it eventually

---

[3] See 'Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of Cameroon to Christians and to All Men and Women of Goodwill on Tribalism', Yaoundé, 16 November 1996, reproduced in *Cameroon Panorama,* 422 (February), 1997, pp. 20-22.

[4] Governor Peter Oben Ashu's xenophobic remarks were given wide publicity, notably in the northwestern private press like *The Post* and *The Herald.*

[5] This section is based on my reading of numerous letters and newspaper articles concerning the Maranatha movement conflict, as well as on interviews with participants in the conflict.

established firmer roots in the North West (Mveng 1990; Njeuma 2000). In 1996, when the Maranatha movement crisis arose, there was only one Catholic diocese in the entire South West Province, the Buea Diocese, while the North West already had two dioceses, those of Bamenda and Kumbo. Even more significantly, the Buea diocese was not fully autonomous, being part of the ecclesiastical province of Bamenda where the archbishop resided. Moreover, compared with the North West, the South West had few indigenous Catholic priests and, as a consequence, a considerable number of northwestern clergymen were active in the Buea diocese and actually occupied various strategic positions there. In 1996 the top four positions in the diocesan hierarchy were still held by North Westerners: first, His Lordship Pius Suh Awa, bishop; second, Mgr James Tobia, vicar-general; third, Father George Nkuo, Catholic education secretary; and fourth, Mgr Lucas Atang, the most senior priest.

Understandably, the dominant position of the northwestern clergy in the diocese created a potentially explosive situation when the government and the regional elite started fanning the autochthony-allochthony issue in the South West during political liberalisation. The conflict that developed in the course of 1996 between the southwestern founder of the Maranatha movement, Father Etienne Khumbah, and his northwestern bishop, His Lordship Pius Suh Awa, sparked off South West-North West arguments in the diocese.

Father Etienne is a Bangwa, an Anglophone subgroup of the Bamileke (Brain 1972; Dongmo 1981) that resides in the present Lebialem Division of the South West Province. The RCC forms the major mainstream religious organisation in the area and most southwestern priests hail from there. Father Etienne is the most senior Bangwa priest, having been ordained in 1975, and was actually the first indigenous priest to be ordained by Pius Awa following his installation as bishop of the Buea diocese in 1973.[6]

It was not until 1991 when he was stationed in Bangem that Father Etienne founded the Maranatha Family of Jesus Prayer Group, popularly called the Maranatha movement, 'to protect the Bangem youths against the invasion of sects'.[7] He presented his new movement as one of the numerous charismatic Bible prayer groups that had in the meantime emerged within the RCC in Cameroon and elsewhere to bring about a religious renewal in the church by encouraging individual spirituality through Bible reading, prayer, fasting and so on, and to stem the growing influence of sects, in particular the Pentecostal or born-again movements (Haynes 1996; Gifford 1993a, 1998). Although Bishop Awa never signed any document to express his official approval of the Maranatha movement, he nevertheless allowed it

---

[6] For Bishop Awa's life story, see Nkea (1996) and Njeuma (2000).

[7] *The Oracle* 3 (1), 1998, p. 32. For the RCC battle against the 'sects', see Mbuy (1994).

to function, trusting that Father Etienne would stick to the RCC teachings and rites and strengthen individual spirituality among the faithful.

A few years later, in 1994, Father Etienne was transferred to Bonjongo to act simultaneously as parish priest and Principal of St Paul's Higher Technical and Commercial College. This transfer can be seen as proof that Father Etienne still enjoyed the full confidence of his bishop at that time. Bonjongo is a village of great historical significance to the RCC in Anglophone Cameroon and Bishop Awa maintained a special relationship with this locality. Bonjongo, or *Engelberg* (Hill of Angels) Parish, was founded by the Pallotine Fathers in 1904 as the first Catholic mission station in Anglophone Cameroon (Mveng 1990; Njeuma 2000), and Bishop Awa invested a lot of money in the construction, expansion and renovation of a number of Catholic institutes there, including St Paul's Higher Technical and Commercial College, the Novitiate of the Brothers of St Martin de Porres and a convent for the Congregation of the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus. He also made arrangements for his own retirement there. Since 1984, he had transformed Bonjongo into a diocesan pilgrimage centre.

It was in Bonjongo that Father Etienne's Maranatha movement started to become well known, and its fame spread throughout the South West Province and even to other provinces in Cameroon. The change in its official name from Maranatha Family of Jesus Prayer Group to Maranatha Family of Jesus Healing Ministry shows the increasing importance of faith healing in the movement. Father Etienne soon built up a reputation as a 'healing priest', attracting many followers, Catholics and non-Catholics alike. A growing number of his followers claimed to have been healed by the priest of various sorts of illness, devil attacks and witchcraft through prayer, fasting and the use of holy water. Like the Pentecostal churches, Father Etienne appeared to take deliverance from evil and occult forces more seriously than the mainline churches (Meyer 1999; Van Dijk 2000). His followers also stressed how his innovations in the church services, which appeared to incorporate some born-again elements such as clapping, dancing, speaking in tongues and ecstasy, and his teachings were effecting a spiritual renewal within the RCC and their personal conversion. They quickly began to condemn the allegedly materialist outlook and amoral behaviour of the RCC authorities and clergy. This led to a growing division within the RCC in the South West Province. Several (violent) clashes between Maranatha and non-Maranatha members within the Catholic community were reported in Bonjongo and elsewhere in the South West. The growing popularity of the 'Apostle Founder' and the crisis that his movement brought about in the RCC in the South West show some striking similarities with Archbishop Milingo's healing ministry in Zambia (Ter Haar 1992).

Confronted with frequent charges that his movement deviated from RCC doctrine and liturgy, Father Etienne wrote to his bishop in June 1995 describing the

objectives and practices of his movement and requested the bishop's written approval. A month later the bishop returned all the documentation provided by Father Etienne without comment or approval. It became increasingly evident that the bishop and clergy were opposed to the continued existence of the movement, which had divided the faithful of the diocese into two hostile camps. Becoming painfully aware of this situation, Father Etienne no longer sought the advice of his bishop and refused to attend any meetings of diocesan clergy organisations.

Strikingly, on 22 September 1996, a diocesan committee of eminent Catholics chaired by Dr S.N. Lyonga that had been asked by the bishop to investigate the matter submitted a generally positive report on the founder and his movement.[8] It stressed that Father Etienne was a dedicated priest who had strengthened the spiritual life of the faithful and had won back many Catholics through the innovations he had brought about in his church services. It even attacked the bishop for 'anathematising the Maranatha movement's much cherished innovations' which had increased the participation of the faithful in the liturgy, while he himself had introduced several northwestern cultural elements into southwestern church services, like gun firing, the wearing of northwestern vestments, and the use of the northwestern peace branch at lectionary processions. The committee demanded more tolerance and understanding from the bishop.

Apparently the committee's positive report had no effect whatsoever on the bishop's determination to intervene. On 26 December 1996 the bishop wrote to Father Etienne, informing him of his transfer to Bishop Rogan College, the minor seminary in Buea, without any indication of his function there. The following day he sent Father Etienne another letter, announcing the suspension of the Maranatha Movement. There were many reasons for this suspension, including the fundamentalist use of the Bible and the introduction of certain innovations in the liturgy which, according the bishop, were not only more born-again than Catholic but also 'offensive to the decorum and sacredness of the liturgy'. He stressed that Father Etienne had never received any authorisation of the competent ecclesiastical authority to execute his self-proclaimed healing ministry, nor had the rites of such a ministry ever been approved. He accused the priest of pretending that he himself rather than Christ was healing people and prohibited him from receiving consultation fees for his healing ministry, 'even if they were spontaneously offered'. He also blamed the priest for devoting more time to healing than to administering the college. Finally, he requested Father Etienne to discourage any form of 'superstitious' use of holy water: 'water is blessed in large quantities and distributed indiscriminately to Catholics and non-Catholics alike, and people have come to believe that only water blessed by you is valid and effective'. The bishop stated that the

[8] This report can be found in *The Star Headlines,* 16 January 1998, p. 5.

Maranatha movement had caused a split among the faithful and turned its members against the hierarchy.[9]

When Father Etienne communicated the bishop's message to his followers on 28 December 1996 they were outraged, claiming that the bishop's arguments for suspending the movement were completely unfounded. They interpreted Father Etienne's transfer as a disciplinary measure aimed to encourage his withdrawal from the movement. They alleged that the hidden motive for the bishop's action was the hierarchy's envy of Father Etienne's growing popularity: his success had not only led to a substantial decline in the number of parishioners and in the incomes of the various parishes but it also constituted a challenge to northwestern hegemony in the diocese. More and more South Westerners, they said, would like Father Etienne to become the first southwestern bishop in the Buea diocese.[10] Southwestern papers and journals such as *The Star Headlines, The Weekly Post* and *The Oracle,* notorious for their anti-North West editorial line, devoted much attention to the issue. They strongly sympathised with Father Etienne, calling him a southwestern martyr who was being persecuted by his northwestern superior.

On the same day, chiefs in the Bonjongo area and Maranatha members protested in various ways. In a letter to the bishop the chiefs stressed that Father Etienne had not only raised the quality of teaching and the number of students in St Paul's Higher Technical and Commercial College to an unprecedented level but had also revived Catholic worship in the local community to an unparalleled extent. They requested the bishop to listen to the voice of his flock and act as a father by exhibiting tolerance, patience and understanding at all times. The Maranatha faithful acted in a less conciliatory way. Some besieged Father Etienne's residence to prevent him from leaving Bonjongo. A tight security network was set up, comprising young local men. Although the priest frequently claimed that he was being held hostage by the local community, prohibiting him from obeying his bishop, he was apparently paying the security guards himself, and the thugs intimidated any outsider who dared to approach the priest. Other Maranatha faithful stormed the bishop's house in Small Soppo, Buea. The situation was brought under control only by the timely intervention of the South-West governor, Peter Oben Ashu, who organised a conciliatory meeting a few days later, on 30 December, attended by the bishop, four Maranatha delegates and himself. During the meeting Bishop Awa appealed to the delegates to be peaceful and wait for his final decision on 4 January 1997. In the meantime he would discuss the matter with Father Etienne.

The bishop, however, did not keep his promise, for two reasons. First, a delegation mandated by him to advise Father Etienne was mishandled by the priest's secu-

---

[9] *The Oracle* 3 (1), 1998, pp. 32-33. See also 'Pastoral Letter to All Faithful of the Diocese of Buea on the "Maranatha Prayer Group"'. In: *Cameroon Panorama,* 422, February 1997, pp. 8-13.

[10] *The Star Headlines,* 31 October 1997, p. 9.

rity guards on 2 January. The delegation consisted of three major southwestern Catholic leaders: His Lordship Cornelius Fontem Esua, bishop of the Kumbo diocese in the North West Province, who is a Mbo, an ethnic group sharing boundaries with the Bangwa, and is generally known as Father Etienne's age mate and spiritual mentor; Mrs Dorothy Atabong, a relative of Bishop Esua and leader of the Catholic Women's Association in the Buea diocese; and Mr Gabriel Mbua Mofoke, a Bakweri and chairman of the Bonjongo Parish Council. The latter two had also been members of the Lyonga Committee that had previously commended Father Etienne and his Maranatha movement (see above). The delegation tried to persuade the priest to obey his bishop and move to Bishop Rogan College. Suspecting at a certain moment that the delegation wanted to kidnap the priest, the security guards started attacking its members physically and forced them to leave Bonjongo. While Father Etienne initially denied any mishandling of the delegation, he later apologised to Bishop Esua.

Remarkably, one of the delegation members, Mr Mofoke, nevertheless continued to deny that any such incident had ever occurred. His denial and his increasing identification with the Maranatha movement were particularly painful to Bishop Awa. Mr Mofoke had long been a close friend and as a result had become chief contractor of the Bonjongo parish, chairman of the Bonjongo parish council and a member of the board of governors of St Paul's Higher Technical and Commercial College. In fact, nothing could be done in the Bonjongo parish without his involvement. It was only after his public denial of the security guards' attack on Bishop Esua that Mr Mofoke fell out of favour with his friend Bishop Awa. He then openly took Father Etienne's side, assuring him of his support. It is widely believed that he was largely responsible for the prolongation of the crisis by encouraging Father Etienne not to comply with the bishop's demands. Apparently he expected his new alliance with Father Etienne to be advantageous in economic and political terms.

A second reason was the subsequent day's flight from the village of Father Celestine Diang, the priest in charge of the brothers' novitiate and the spiritual leader of the sisters' convent in Bonjongo, allegedly following threats on his life. He had also convinced the reverend brothers and sisters they should leave because of the prevailing insecurity in the area for non-Maranatha members. According to Maranatha members, Father Diang, a North Westerner, had been posted in Bonjongo by Bishop Awa to spy on Father Etienne's activities. They also accused him of regularly insulting local women during his sermons, calling them dirty and immoral for having 'ten children by ten different fathers'. They even alleged that Father Diang had once remarked that 'if Father Etienne continued to refuse to go to Bishop Rogan College, he would arrive there one day in a coffin'. Alarmed by the

constant threats to the lives of the clergy and himself, Bishop Awa asked the commander of the gendarmerie at Buea to take the matter up.

The situation escalated rapidly. On 8 January 1997, the Association of Diocesan Priests (ADP) unanimously decided to dismiss Father Etienne as its chairman and suspend his membership until he was reconciled with his bishop and his ADP colleagues. The ADP expressed its support for the bishop's intervention which, it said, was long overdue. Strikingly, it elected another Bangwa priest, Father Charles Leke, as its new chairman. Since the latter was neither the most senior nor the most qualified priest to succeed Father Etienne, it was evident that he owed his election mainly to his ethnic identity. Bishop Awa had already previously employed a similar strategy. In reaction to threats by the Bonjongo community on the life of Father Etienne's successor, he had appointed another Bangwa priest, Father George Jingwa Nkeze, as parish priest and principal of St Paul's Higher Technical and Commercial College in Bonjongo. Father Nkeze not only came from the same village as Father Etienne but was also his cousin. Clearly, this policy of appointing Bangwa priests to positions previously held by Father Etienne was intended to show the outside world that even his own ethnic brothers fully supported the hierarchy's punitive measures. In addition, this policy sought to secure the protection of the Bangwa population against any attempts on the lives of the newly appointed priests by Bonjongo people and Maranatha members. The most dramatic action of the diocesan hierarchy, however, occurred on 18 January 1997 when Bishop Awa wrote a pastoral letter to all the faithful in the diocese in which he announced the banning of the Maranatha movement and the placement of the Bonjongo parish and Father Etienne under canonical interdict.[11] This was the first time in the history of the RCC in Cameroon that the hierarchy had employed such drastic measures against a priest, a parish and a revival movement. The same day the bishop informed the South West governor, Peter Oben Ashu, of the measures. He pointed out to the governor that access to the Bonjongo Catholic Mission had been blocked by a large group of vicious thugs. He therefore sought the governor's assistance in 'weeding out this painful situation so that peace and normal life may return to the Catholic Mission in Bonjongo'.

Vehement South West resistance against the victimisation of the autochthonous founder of the Maranatha movement

Following the interdict, the Bonjongo community and the Maranatha movement intensified their campaign of threatening the bishop and the diocesan clergy. They also sent numerous petitions to President Paul Biya, the southwestern Prime Minister, Peter Mafany Musonge, the Minister of Education, the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio

[11] 'Pastoral Letter to All Faithful of the Diocese of Buea on the "Maranatha Prayer Group"'. In: *Cameroon Panorama,* 422, February, 1997, pp. 8-13.

and the Pope. In their petition to the Pope they accused the bishop of managing the diocese 'along ethnocentric lines', 'discouraging reconciliation as much as possible', and 'displaying unwarranted power drunkenness and favouritism towards his northwestern accomplices'. They urged the Pope 'to take a stand, advise and instruct in the biting issue, consider erecting two dioceses out of the Buea diocese and elevate the present Buea diocese to an ecclesiastical province, and to grant Bishop Awa a deserved retirement before he has time to destroy our diocese any further'.[12]

Unsurprisingly, such virulent attacks on the bishop and the clergy did not help resolve the issue. On the contrary, they made the bishop even more determined to show his authority. Since Father Etienne still refused to leave Bonjongo, the bishop approached the South West governor again for assistance. On 22 January 1997, he requested the governor's assistance in having Father Etienne 'surrender anything of Bonjongo parish as well as of St Paul's Higher Technical and Commercial College to the competent ecclesiastical authority of the Buea diocese and move out of the premises of the parish as well as that of the college with immediate effect'. Increasingly concerned with the threat that the Maranatha movement crisis posed to public order, the governor reacted positively to the bishop's request. Instead of using force, he attempted to convince the priest of the need to obey his bishop, as canonical law demanded. He subsequently wrote to Father Etienne twice, appealing to him to comply with the instructions of his bishop and leave Bonjongo peacefully before 10 February 1997. The two letters were simply ignored by the priest.

Given the deteriorating situation, the South-West elite decided to intervene and appeal to the bishop to resolve the crisis through dialogue rather than through canonical law and punitive measures. Two of its eminent members, Mola Njoh Litumbe, son of the first Presbyterian pastor in Buea and chairman of the South West-based opposition party, the Liberal Democratic Alliance (LDA), and Fon Njifia of Lebang, Fontem, a first-class Bangwa chief and a devout Catholic, took up the mission. At first their intervention appeared to be successful. On 19 February Litumbe came to the following agreement with Bishop Awa: Father Etienne's transfer to Bishop Rogan College would be annulled and he would instead be transferred to a parish of his own choice. In a meeting with Fon Njifia the following day the bishop confirmed his agreement with Litumbe, but when the chief subsequently brought Father Etienne to the bishop for a final settlement of the long-standing conflict, he was embarrassed to learn that the bishop in the meantime had unilaterally changed the agreement. Father Etienne would now be required to go on leave for some three or four months before choosing a suitable parish. Worse, the bishop left for Rome the same day without granting Father Etienne leave.

---

[12] *The Oracle* 3 (1), 1998, p. 34.

The South-West governor, who had awaited the results of this conciliation attempt, was no longer prepared to seek a peaceful solution. On 27 February, he issued an order that Father Etienne was to be evicted immediately from the Bonjongo Mission premises by the forces of law and order. He warned that any person who attempted to oppose the 'inevitable' expulsion would be arrested and detained for fifteen days, renewable. His order also banned Father Etienne from ever setting foot on Bonjongo soil again without the explicit permission of his bishop.

The governor's stern order shocked the South West population. Furious about his disgraceful alignment with a northwestern bishop, South Westerners questioned whether such an order could ever have been issued in the North West Province. In a petition addressed to Prime Minister Peter Mafany Musonge, Chief Ephraim Inoni, Mr John Ebong Ngolle and other top southwestern government officials, the Bonjongo chiefs and their subjects strongly protested against the colonising attitude of the North Westerners in the Buea diocese and blamed the governor for his use of force in settling a religious crisis, an action they said they would vehemently oppose. They pointed out that Father Etienne had an estimated following of 60,000 people who would be prepared to show their anger about the government's behaviour in the forthcoming parliamentary and presidential elections. With the apparent approval of the head of state, Chief Ephraim Inoni, a Bakweri chief and deputy secretary general at the Presidency who had studied at St Paul's Higher Technical and Commercial College, then decided to overrule the governor's eviction order. Inoni is said to have faulted the governor for his inconsistent conduct in the diocesan crisis, trying to settle the issue at one time through dialogue and at another by force. He also cautioned the governor against meddling in church matters.[13] Following Inoni's intervention, crowds thronged the streets of Bonjongo, Buea, Limbe and other localities in the South West, chanting songs of praise to Almighty God. While thanking Chief Inoni for his timely intervention, the Bonjongo chiefs called on him to order an investigation into the Bonjongo crisis and arrive at a lasting solution.

Subsequently, on 4 July 1997, Prime Minister Peter Mafany Musonge sent a delegation to the South West to investigate the Bonjongo affair and make recommendations acceptable to both parties. The delegation, however, failed to find a solution to the conflict. In its report, it stated that Father Etienne continued to be held hostage by the Bonjongo community, which prevented him from obeying his bishop. On the other hand, Bishop Awa had refused to adhere to the delegation's recommendation to let the priest stay in Bonjongo for another eighteen months so that tempers could cool. The Prime Minister was obviously not pleased with the failure of his intervention.

---

[13] *The Herald,* 4-6 April 1997, p. 3.

Following this failure, Bishop Awa brought even more pressure to bear upon Father Etienne and the Bonjongo community. In a diocesan communiqué issued on 8 August 1997 he extended the canonical interdiction to St Paul's Higher Technical and Commercial College and transferred the college from Bonjongo to the Catholic Mission Diocesan Centre in Mutengene. Father Etienne strongly opposed the transfer and sought to run it as a community venture. He made a desperate attempt to dissuade parents from sending their wards to Mutengene.[14]

It was not until a visit by the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio that the bishop was prepared to make some concessions. In a diocesan message on 4 September 1997, the bishop lifted the interdict imposed on the Bonjongo parish, 'out of pastoral solicitude for the many ordinary and innocent Catholics of Bonjongo', but added that the Maranatha movement continued to be banned. He also announced that Father Etienne's transfer to Bishop Rogan College had long been revoked. He had addressed a letter to the priest, informing him that as of 1 September 1997 he could take leave in a parish of his own choice anywhere in the ecclesiastical province of Bamenda. After his leave and the subsequent lifting of his interdict, he would be given a new appointment outside Bonjongo. Father Etienne, however, disregarded his bishop's offer.

Since the prospects of a final settlement of the protracted conflict appeared to be bleak, the diocesan priests eventually decided to make an attempt to end the stalemate. In a letter read in all the parishes of the diocese on 11 January 1998, the ADP requested the parishioners to join the diocesan priests in a sit-in prayer session in Bonjongo on 17 and 18 January. This action aimed to force Father Etienne to leave. The Catholic chaplain of the University of Buea called on students to come out 'in jeans'. This appeal was interpreted by the Bonjongo chiefs as an invitation to students to prepare themselves for a battle with Father Etienne's militia and to evict the priest from Bonjongo forcibly.[15]

Straight after the announcement, the South West governor Peter Oben Ashu, and two leading diocesan priests – the bishop's secretary, Father Andrew Nkea, a Bangwa, and the Catholic education secretary, Father George Nkuo, a North Westerner – went to Yaoundé to brief the government authorities on what the Buea diocese had resolved to do should Father Etienne not leave, voluntarily or forcibly, by 17 January. The two priests met the Prime Minister, Peter Mafany Musonge, and the deputy secretary-general at the Presidency, Chief Ephraim Inoni, who were regarded as supporters of Father Etienne. They also met the recently appointed Minister of Territorial Administration, Mr Samson Ename Ename. Fearing a violent confrontation between pro-Bishop Awa and pro-Father Etienne factions in Bonjongo and elsewhere in the South West, Mr Samson Ename Ename instructed the

[14] *The Post,* 8 August 1997, p. 3.

[15] *The Post,* 14 January 1998, pp. 1-3.

South West governor to evict Father Etienne from Bonjongo 'through the use of reasonable force'.[16]

One day before the ADP-planned day of action, on 16 January, 300 soldiers invaded Bonjongo. Convinced that the government had sent troops to stop 'Awa's Reverend Fathers' from taking the healing priest away, Father Etienne's followers and sympathisers started celebrating. They soon realised their error. Father Etienne, who offered no resistance, was evicted from his residence and escorted to the house of Bishop Esua in Kumbo in the North West Province.[17]

The South-West elite immediately started mobilising after this dramatic event. On 22 January, they held a stormy meeting in Yaoundé to decide on an appropriate response to the military eviction of Father Etienne from Bonjongo, which, they alleged, was mandated by Bishop Awa. Inspired by the initiative of the Lebialem Cultural and Development Association (LECDA) it was proposed, as an initial measure, to boycott all Catholic church services in the province 'until Father Etienne was returned to the Buea diocese'.[18] The next day, southwestern Maranatha sympathisers met in Muyuka. In an ultimatum issued at the end of the meeting, they gave the bishop a deadline, 15 February 1998, to reinstate Father Etienne as parish priest in the South West or face the consequences. The participants indicted him for his lack of concern for the Buea diocese as well as for South Westerners. They maintained that he had a secret agenda to bar South Westerners from entering the major and minor seminaries. This, they claimed, was intended to ensure the continued hegemony of North Westerners over South Westerners. They appealed again to the Holy See 'to raise the Buea diocese to the level of an Ecclesiastical Province headed by an indigenous archbishop'.[19] Many Sunday masses throughout the South West Province were subsequently disrupted by angry Maranatha members, especially those originating from the Bangwa area, who threatened the officiating priests and accused the bishop of conniving with the governor.

After the eviction of Father Etienne the Bangwa chiefs and elite became the leading force in southwestern resistance. On 5 February the Fon of Lebang, Fontem, requested the Catholic authorities return Father Etienne to 'where he belonged', or he would find it hard to control any form of agitation by his subjects.[20] A few days later, the Bangwa chiefs and elite held an extraordinary meeting in which they resolved to ban Bishop Awa, Father George Nkuo (the Catholic education secretary), and three Bangwa priests – Fathers Andrew Nkea (the bishop's secretary), George Nkeze (Principal of St Paul's Higher Technical and Commercial

---

16 *The Post,* 20 January 1998, p. 1.

17 *The Herald,* 28-29 January 1998, p. 3.

18 *The Herald,* 23-25 January 1998, p. 3.

19 *The Herald,* 11-12 February 1998, p. 3.

20 *The Star Headlines,* 5 February 1998, pp. 1 & 3.

College) and Charles Leke (Kumba Town parish priest and ADP chairman) – from executing any priestly functions in Lebialem Division.

Faced with increasing Bangwa protests, the South-West governor, Peter Oben Ashu, held a 'peace meeting' on 31 March 1998 to reconcile Bishop Awa and Father Etienne. The meeting was attended by Bishops Awa and Esua and a considerable number of the Bangwa elite. Father Etienne, who had not been invited by the governor, was conspicuous by his absence. During the meeting the governor lamented that 'the many recent threats on Bishop Awa's life were the handiwork of Bangwa people', and he cautioned against any further actions: 'Enough is enough. The time has come for me to crack down on Bangwa elements who get themselves involved in this matter'. He said he was well aware of the great popularity Father Etienne enjoyed within the Bangwa community but he stressed that 'it would be in the interest of the priest and the Bangwa community to maintain calm and peace'. He threatened to arrest Father Etienne 'if he continued to write apology letters while inciting his people from behind'. The meeting ended in a fierce confrontation between the governor and the Bangwa elite. The latter challenged the governor's right to intervene in a basically internal Catholic affair and strongly condemned his attempt to single out the Bangwa community for his wrath on a matter that affected the entire Buea diocese.[21]

Curiously, in the months following Father Etienne's eviction from Bonjongo a relatively large number of deaths occurred among the diocesan clergy, including that of Father Sylvester Suh Ngwa, rector of Bishop Rogan College in Buea and a cousin of the bishop. His death, like that of his colleagues, was generally interpreted as a result of witchcraft practices by Maranatha members. While Father Charles Leke in his homily during the requiem mass left no one in any doubt that some Christians were responsible for Father Ngwa's death, even going as far as accusing the grieving congregation of 'shedding crocodile tears', medical authorities in Yaoundé attributed it to the *laissez-faire* attitude of the diocesan hierarchy in handling the treatment of the priest.[22]

In June 1998, Father Etienne was transferred from the bishop's house in Kumbo to the Cistercian monastery in Mbengwi in the Bamenda Archdiocese. In correspondence to Bishop Awa and the South West administration during his stay in Kumbo and Mbengwi, Father Etienne appeared to be prepared to reconcile himself with his religious and worldly superiors. He apologised for 'the assault on Bishop Esua' and for 'not heeding the kind advice of the South-West governor, Peter Oben Ashu'. In letters addressed to Bishop Awa in April 1998, he dissociated himself from those who used the Bonjongo crisis 'to settle their individual or collective

---

[21] *The Herald,* 3-5 April 1998, pp. 1 & 3.

[22] *The Herald,* 15-16 April 1998, pp. 1-2, and 28-29 October 1998, p. 4. The author attended Father Ngwa's funeral.

scores': 'I found myself used as a scapegoat or stepping-stone to their ends'. At the same time, he requested the bishop lift the canonical sanctions and pledged in principle to 'renew my loyalty and obedience to the teaching, sanctifying and governing authority of the Catholic Church as a whole and you and your successors. In particular I ask Your Lordship Pius Awa to forgive me for any wrong caused you'.[23] As a result of all his 'confessions, apologies and regrets', Bishop Awa lifted the interdict on Father Etienne on 29 August 1998 but maintained the canonical penalty of suspension of the execution of priestly functions.

The lifting of the interdict was greeted with relief by most Catholic faithful, who were eager to have peace and unity restored in the diocese. Still, there is some evidence that not all diocesan priests were happy with the bishop's new reconciliatory attitude. Some fifteen of the over thirty diocesan priests met secretly in Mutengene soon thereafter and expressed 'dismay about recent events which have shaken so many of the Catholic faithful and Catholic religious persons and clergy alike'. The solution was 'not to welcome Father Etienne again in our diocese as a priest'. 'He should rather be sent to Rome for discipline' and 'severe sanctions should be given to all his supporters in our diocese'.[24]

The bishop nevertheless continued with his conciliatory efforts. On 1 October 1998, he informed Father Etienne of the willingness of the new South-West governor, Peter Acham Cho,[25] to allow his return to the South West as long as 'it would not constitute an occasion for new upheavals and disturbance of public peace'. Unfortunately, the priest refused to heed the bishop's request of sending a letter to the governor in which he would guarantee that on his return he would refrain from all activities that could directly or indirectly cause a breach of peace in the province. Having realised that there was a deadlock, Bishop Awa wrote to Father Etienne on 28 January 1999 that he was no longer prepared to continue with his reconciliatory efforts:

> Enough is enough. Therefore by this letter, I permit you to have your freedom, to go wherever you want, stay there for as long as you like until you feel ready to submit and to do what you are told. I take no further responsibility to follow you wherever you go. You are free to discuss the place of your residence with the Minister and Governor who took you out of the diocese (Ngoh 2000: 141).

This shows that the Maranatha movement crisis that had almost led to a schism in the RCC in the South West Province was not yet over. Still, the prospects of a return to normality in the diocese are not totally bleak. Father Etienne was eventu-

---

[23] *Cameroon Panorama,* 444, December 1998, pp. 16-19; *The Herald,* 27-29 November 1998, p. 1.

[24] *The Herald,* 18-20 September 1998, p. 2.

[25] The new governor was a North Westerner. He was determined to stop the autochthony-allochthony discourse in the South West Province fuelled by his predecessor. Apparently he considered this discourse to be harmful to the advancement of the ruling party's interests in the region.

ally allowed by the administration to return to the South West, where he is quietly living in his father's house in Bolifamba near Buea. And, even more importantly, on 22 February 1999, the Pope created a new diocese, the Mamfe diocese, in the South West Province. He later appointed a South Westerner, His Lordship Francis Teke Lysinge, as its first bishop. Evidently, these events gave rise to great celebrations in the province. Although many South Westerners were inclined to perceive the creation of the new South-West diocese and the appointment of a southwestern bishop as a direct result of the Maranatha movement crisis, it was Bishop Awa himself who had submitted the application for another diocese in the South West Province as far back as 1985, during the Pope's maiden visit to Cameroon.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to show that the emergence of the Maranatha movement and its increasing politicisation were closely connected with the process of political liberalisation. Political liberalisation provided space for Pentecostal expansion in the South West Province which had previously been blocked by the extremely repressive Cameroonian postcolonial state. Pentecostal teachings and practices seemed to provide an adequate answer to the widespread quest for a more personal form of spirituality and soon gave rise to a 'pentecostalisation' of the principal mainline churches and the emergence of some revival movements within those churches, including the Maranatha movement. This movement appeared to adopt several Pentecostal elements such as charismatic prayer sessions and faith healing which strongly appeal to the faithful. It soon became manifest that mainstream Catholicism and the revivalist Maranatha movement were viewed by both parties as incompatible and thus unable to coexist under one and the same authority, almost leading to a schism within the RCC in the South West Province

Political liberalisation also provided space for the voicing of long-standing autochthonous grievances about domination and exploitation by northwestern settlers fanned by the government and the regional elite. The Maranatha movement was increasingly perceived in the region as an autochthonous protest movement against northwestern domination over the RCC in the South West Province, its founder being supported by the regional elite and population in his struggle against the RCC hierarchy. It is beyond any doubt that the close link between the born-again inspired revival movement and the autochthony-allochthony issue was responsible for the deep and protracted crisis in the southwestern RCC.

It is important to observe that this autochthony-allochthony issue has not only affected the RCC in the South West Province. Despite repeated statements of condemnation by the Cameroonian bishops, the 'politics of belonging' has also cropped up in the RCC in the Francophone part of the country, where there have been vehement autochthonous protests against the appointment of allochthonous

bishops. That Bamileke bishops have been the particular object of autochthonous protests is mainly due to the fact that, just like the ethnically related North Westerners in the South West Province, the mobile and entrepreneurial Bamileke (Dongmo 1981; Warnier 1993) are perceived by the indigenous population in various areas of Francophone Cameroon as dominant and exploitative invaders. As early as 1987, a group of indigenous priests was strongly protesting against the appointment of a Bamileke auxiliary bishop in the Douala Archdiocese (Bayart & Mbembe 1989). Again, in July 1999, the appointment of a Bamileke bishop, His Lordship André Wouking, then president of the National Episcopal Conference, as Archbishop of Yaoundé was greeted with indignation by the autochthonous Beti elite, clergy and faithful, and various attempts were made to postpone his enthronement (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2000). Apparently the autochthonous Douala and Beti clergy and elite were determined to forestall the extension of alleged Bamileke dominanance from the economic and political domains to the religious domain.

5

The entry of Anglophone nationalism into public space[1]

Introduction

In February 2002, we were sitting in a bar in Buea, the capital of the South West Province of Anglophone Cameroon, watching the Cameroon-Mali football semi-final in the African Cup of Nations that was being relayed in Cameroon by a French television channel. The winner of the match was to play Senegal, which had already qualified for the final by defeating Nigeria. What struck us most during the match was the sudden change in attitude of our fellow viewers. Initially, they appeared to identify strongly with the national team, as was manifest in their comments on the prowess of Cameroon's 'Indomitable Lions'. However, as soon as the French commentator noticed that, whatever the outcome of the match, '*la finale sera une affaire francophone*', almost reflexively and in unison, they shouted: 'Cameroon is not a Francophone country!' Suddenly any identification with the national team seemed to have disappeared. Even a later remark by the commentator that one of the Cameroonian players was an Anglophone failed to change the mood and restore their enjoyment of the match.

The reaction of the Anglophone spectators reminded us of Hobsbawm's observation (1990: 143) that the 'imagined communities of millions seem more real than a team of eleven named people' and demonstrates the importance of identity politics in Cameroon. It also makes for an interesting comparison with the disengagement of the extreme nationalist leader Jean-Marie le Pen from the French national team

[1] Dr Nantang Jua is the co-author of this study.

due to its multicultural character: '*Je ne me reconnais pas dans cette équipe*'. However, it clearly problematises Fardon's 'football argument'. With specific reference to the widespread identification in Africa with national football teams, he posits the development of national feelings 'in all states that have been independent for more than thirty years... The annexation of a neighbouring state, no matter how modest, would soon show the reality of "national" identities' (Fardon 1996: 94). To a large extent, the Cameroonian situation reflects Cahen's thesis (1999) that African identification with national teams is simply an expression of the habit of living together in the same republic or, even better, of 'constitutional patriotism' (Habermas) rather than of a strongly crystallised national consciousness. The imagination of a nation (Anderson 1983) usually requires a much longer historical process than Fardon is willing to accept – a process that state policies can only reinforce but never entirely determine. Cahen cautions that it would be an '*erreur senghorienne*' to assume that the state would precede the nation, in the sense of 'producing' or at least 'preparing' the nation. In his view, the state can only serve as a midwife for *nationisme*, the agenda of an ultra-minor elite to rapidly 'fabricate' the nation. This is a project that is different from nationalism and opposed to existing ethnic and national identities (Cahen 1999: 153-155). That the Cameroonian post-colonial state's nation-building project has failed is clearly evidenced by the fact that nationalist feelings are still rife in Anglophone territory more than forty years after reunification with Francophone Cameroon.

This study argues that the entry of Anglophone nationalism into public space during political liberalisation in the 1990s has posed a severe threat to the post-colonial nation-building project. Several Anglophone associations and pressure groups emerged that have protested against Anglophone marginalisation, assimilation and exploitation by the Francophone-dominated state in the post-colonial state. They proved capable of placing the 'Anglophone problem' on the national and international agenda, laying claims to self-determination and autonomy in the form first of a return to the federal state and later the creation of an independent state.

Strikingly, both Francophone scholars and politicians have been inclined to perceive Anglophone nationalism as an unexpected, recent invention (Donfack 1998; Menthong 1998). They appear to have been convinced that the post-colonial state's imposition of a project of *nationisme* upon the existing ethnic and national identities had effectively wiped out most traces of 'Anglophoness', or what Edwin Ardener (1967: 292) referred to as a 'distinctively British Cameroonian way of life', from the public space. This is evidenced by a recent statement from the former Vice-Prime Minister in charge of Housing and Town Planning, Hamadou Mustapha:

'*A un moment donné effectivement, on a commencé à oublier que les Anglophones étaient là; on a eu l'impression que les Anglophones s'étaient déjà francophonisés*'.[2]

Francophone scholars and politicians also tend to attribute the emergence of Anglophone nationalism in the public space mainly to the mobilisation efforts of a few discontented elites who were denied a place at the 'dining table' during political liberalisation (cf. Sindjoun 1995; Nkoum-Me-Ntseny 1996; Menthong 1998). Their explanation in terms of opportunist entrepreneurs in search of a political market comes close to the government position on Anglophone nationalism. Probably on the assumption that government strategies of control, notably the frequent use of state violence, divide-and-rule tactics, and the co-optation of some Anglophone elites into the regime, would be effective, they claim that Anglophone nationalism will never witness an exponential growth in the public arena (cf. Sindjoun 1995: 114).

In sharp contrast to such views, the first part of this chapter attempts to show that Anglophone nationalism is neither a recent invention nor a mere elitist project. It is instead the result of a long historical process of identity formation, going back as far as the beginning of colonialism when two territorial communities were created each with its own distinct cultural legacy. As Susungi (1991) aptly observed, one of its immediate consequences has been that the reunification episode was far from being the reunion of two prodigal sons who had been unjustly separated at birth, but was more like a loveless marriage arranged by the United Nations between two people who hardly knew each other. The most decisive factor in the construction of an Anglophone identity, however, has turned out to be the post-colonial nation-state project that led Anglophones to imagine Cameroon as a prison rather than as a nation.

The second part of the chapter describes how, in the face of persistent attempts by the Francophone-dominated state to contain the Anglophone danger and control Anglophone organisation, Anglophones resorted to less visible and controllable forms of protest in the 1990s, creating space for Anglophone identity and nationhood in national history, the arts, the international courts, in everyday life and even on the Internet. In this section, particular attention is devoted to what Billig (1995) has called 'banal nationalism' – the representations and symbols of nationhood that are taken for granted such as flags, names, dates and language. The latter are often overlooked in the orthodox conceptions of nationalism that tend to concentrate on more spectacular forms such as separatist and extreme nationalist movements (cf. Azaryahu & Kook 2002).

---

[2] See *Jeune Afrique Economie,* 207, 20 November 1995, p. 3.

The emergence of Anglophone nationalism in public space

Several authors have tried to explain the emergence and development of what has come to be called the 'Anglophone problem' (cf. Konings & Nyamnjoh 1997, 2000, 2003; Eyoh 1998a; Jua 2003a). Most agree that its roots may be traced back as far as the partitioning, after World War One, of the erstwhile German Kamerun Protectorate (1884-1916) between the French and English victors, first as mandates under the League of Nations and later as trusts under the United Nations. As a result of this partitioning, the British acquired two narrow and non-contiguous regions in the western part of the country, bordering Nigeria. The southern part and the focus of our study was christened Southern Cameroons, and the northern part became known as Northern Cameroons.[3] Significantly, the British territory was much smaller than the French, comprising only about one fifth of the total area and population of the former German colony (Mbuagbaw *et al.* 1987: 78-79). The partitioning of the territory into English and French spheres had some significant consequences for future political developments. Importantly, it laid the historical and spatial foundation for the construction of Anglophone and Francophone identities in the territory. The populations in each sphere came to see themselves as distinct communities, defined by differences in language and inherited colonial traditions of education, law, public administration and worldview. Second, while French Cameroon was incorporated into the French colonial empire as a distinct administrative unit, separate from neighbouring French Equatorial Africa, the British Cameroons was administered as part of Nigeria, leading to the blatant neglect of its socio-economic development and the increasing migration of Nigerians, notably the Igbo, to the Southern Cameroons where they came to dominate the regional economy.

With the approaching independence of Nigeria in 1960, the population of the British trust territory was to decide on its political future. It soon became evident that the majority of the Southern Cameroonians would opt for the creation of an independent state (Awasom 2000; Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003). That their expressed wish was eventually not honoured must be attributed to two main factors. First, internal divisions among the Anglophone political elite prevented them from rallying behind the majority option in the territory. Second, and even more importantly, the United Nations refused, with the complicity of the British, to put the option of an independent Southern Cameroons state to the voters in the UN-organised plebiscite of 11 February 1961, on the grounds that the creation of another tiny state was politically undesirable (and likely to contribute to a further 'Balkanisation' of Africa) and economically unviable (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003).

---

[3] During the 1961 UN-organised plebiscite, the Northern Cameroons voted for integration into Nigeria. For the history of the Northern Cameroons, see for instance Le Vine (1964) and Welch (1966).

Being deprived of this preferred option, Southern Cameroonians were given what amounted to Hobson's choice, that is a 'choice' they had to accept whether they liked it or not: independence by joining Nigeria or reunification with Francophone Cameroon, which had become independent in 1960 under the new name of the Republic of Cameroon. In the end, they chose the lesser of the two evils. Their vote in favour of reunification appeared to be more a rejection of continuous ties with Nigeria, which had proved to be harmful to Southern Cameroonian development, than a vote for union with Francophone Cameroon, a territory with a different cultural heritage and at the time involved in a violent civil war (Joseph 1977).

By reuniting with the former French Cameroon, the Anglophone political elite had hoped to enter into a loose federal union as a way of protecting their territory's minority status and cultural heritage (Konings & Nyamnjoh 1997, 2003). Instead, it soon became evident that the Francophone political elite preferred a highly centralised, unitary state as a means of promoting national unity and economic development. While the Francophone elite received strong support from the French during the constitutional negotiations, the Anglophone elite was virtually abandoned by the British, who deeply resented the Southern Cameroons option for reunification with Francophone Cameroon (Awasom 2000). As a result, a rumour quickly spread through the region that Charles de Gaulle looked upon the Southern Cameroons as 'a small gift of the Queen of England to France' (Milne 1999: 432-448; Gaillard 1994). In the end, during the constitutional talks at Foumban in July 1961, the Francophone elite was only prepared to accept a highly centralised federation, which was regarded merely as a transitional phase to a unitary state. Such a federation demanded relatively few amendments to the 1960 constitution of the Republic of Cameroon. Interestingly, Pierre Messmer (1998: 134-135), one of the last French high commissioners in Cameroon and a close advisor of President Ahmadou Ahidjo, pointed out that he and others knew at the time that the so-called federal constitution provided merely a 'sham federation', which was 'safe for appearance, an annexation of West Cameroon (the new name of the former Southern Cameroons)'.[4]

Under the new constitution, West Cameroon lost most of the limited autonomy it had enjoyed as part of the Nigerian federation (Ardener 1967; Stark 1976). Even worse, a few months after reunification, Ahidjo created a system of regional administration in which West Cameroon was designated as one of six regions, basically ignoring the political character of the country. These regions were headed by powerful federal inspectors who, in the case of West Cameroon, in effect overshadowed the prime minister with whom they were in frequent conflict concerning jurisdiction

[4] Following reunification, the Federal Republic of Cameroon consisted of the federated state of East Cameroon (former French Cameroon) and the federated state of West Cameroon (former Southern Cameroons).

(Stark 1976). Besides, the West Cameroon government could barely function since it had to depend entirely on subventions from the federal government that controlled the major sources of revenue. When, in 1972, Ahidjo created a unitary state in blatant disregard of constitutional provisions, there was in reality little left of the federation, except perhaps in name (Benjamin 1972). What many regarded as one of the last visible symbols of the 1961 union was removed in 1984 when Ahidjo's successor, Paul Biya, abolished the appellation 'United Republic of Cameroon' and replaced it with 'Republic of Cameroon', which significantly was the name of the Francophone part of the country when it became independent in 1960.

An even more decisive factor for the development of the Anglophone problem, 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 (Eyoh 1998a). Several studies have shown that Anglophones have regularly been relegated to inferior positions in the national decision-making process and have been constantly underrepresented in ministerial as well as senior and middle-level positions in the administration, the military and parastatals (cf. Kofele-Kale 1986; Takougang & Krieger 1998**).** A few recent examples seem to substantiate Anglophone allegations of systematic discrimination in the recruitment for government posts. In February 2003 it was announced that there were only 57 Anglophone youths among the more than five thousand new recruits joining the police academies.[5] The next month records show that there were only 12 Anglophones among the 172 new recruits into the Customs Department. And, even more significantly, these Anglophones were only given junior staff positions while all the senior staff positions went to Francophones.[6] There is also general agreement that Anglophones have been exposed to a carefully considered policy aimed at eroding their language and institutions even though Francophone political leaders had assured their Anglophone counterparts during the constitutional talks on reunification that the inherited colonial differences in language and institutions were to be respected in the bilingual union. And, last but not least, the relative underdevelopment of the Anglophone region shows that it has not benefited sufficiently from its rich resources, particularly oil. Gradually, this created an Anglophone consciousness: the feeling of being recolonised and marginalised in all spheres of public life and thus of being second-class citizens in their own country.

While there is a general tendency among Anglophones to blame the Francophone elite for the entire Anglophone problem, it cannot be denied that Anglophone political leaders bear an important share of the responsibility for the Anglophone

---

5 *The Herald,* 17 February 2003.

6 *The Herald,* 22 March 2003.

predicament. Apparently, when they realised that their influence within the federated state of West Cameroon was beginning to be whittled down, the federal arrangements no longer suited their designs. They started competing for Ahidjo's favours and aspiring to positions of power within the single party and the federal government and eventually within the unitary state, thus blatantly neglecting the defence of West Cameroon's autonomy and interests (Kofele-Kale 1986; Eyoh 1998a).

The co-optation of the Anglophone elite into the 'hegemonic alliance' (Bayart 1979) 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 Anglophone movements were then able to place the Anglophone problem on the national and international agenda.[7] While the Buea Declaration, issued after the historic First All Anglophone Conference (AAC I) in April 1993, still called for a return to a two-state federation, the Biya government's persistent refusal to enter into any negotiations caused a growing radicalisation of Anglophone movements. In the so-called Bamenda Proclamation, adopted by the Second All Anglophone Conference (AAC II) held in Bamenda from 29 April to 1 May 1994, it was stipulated that 'should the government either persist in its refusal to engage in meaningful constitutional talks or fail to engage in such talks *within a reasonable time*, the Anglophone leadership would proclaim the revival of the independence and sovereignty of the Anglophone territory and take all measures necessary to secure, defend and preserve the independence, sovereignty and integrity of the said country' (Konings & Nyamnjoh 1997: 218-220).

Following the AAC II, the Anglophone movements provocatively re-introduced the name of Southern Cameroons to refer to the Anglophone territory so as to 'make it clear that our struggles are neither of an essentially linguistic character nor in defence of an alien colonial culture ... but are aimed at the restoration of the autonomy of the former Southern Cameroons which has been annexed by the Republic of Cameroon'.[8] The umbrella organisation of all the Anglophone movements was subsequently named the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC). The SCNC leadership soon adopted a secessionist stand, striving for an independent Southern Cameroons state through peaceful negotiation with the regime, the 'sensitisation' of the regional population and a diplomatic offensive. Widespread euphoria could be felt in Anglophone Cameroon when a SCNC delegation returned from a mission to the United Nations in 1995. During rallies attended by huge crowds in several Anglophone towns, the delegation displayed a large UN flag, claiming it had

---

[7] For the various Anglophone movements, see Konings & Nyamnjoh (2003).

[8] SCNC press release reprinted in the *Cameroon Post,* 16-23 August 1994, p. 3.

received it from the UN to show that the Southern Cameroons was still a UN trust territory and that independence was only a matter of time.[9]

From 1996 onwards, however, Anglophone movements appeared to rapidly lose their initial momentum. Two factors were mainly responsible for this unfortunate development. First, the Biya government proved capable of neutralising the Anglophone movements to a large extent by employing a number of long-standing tactics including divide-and-rule, co-opting Anglophone leaders into the regime, and severe repression. Second, there was the problem of leadership. With the resignation of the founding fathers from the leadership, the SCNC lacked competent and committed leadership. Given the leadership problem and the government's persistent reluctance to enter into any negotiations, a conflict developed within the Anglophone movements between the doves – those who continued to adhere to a negotiated separation from *La République du Cameroun*[10] – and the hawks – those who had come to the conclusion that the independence of Southern Cameroons would only be achieved through armed struggle. The Southern Cameroons Youth League (SCYL) in particular opted for the latter strategy (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2000).

However, it would be a grave error to assume that the Anglophone movements became fully paralysed or even defeated by divisive and repressive government tactics and their own organisational and strategic shortcomings. Of late, Anglophone struggles appear to have acquired a new impetus. On 30 December 1999, Justice Frederick Alobwede Ebong, a SCNC activist with close ties to the SCYL, took over the Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV) station in Buea, proclaiming the restoration of the independence of the Ex-British Southern Cameroons. This was followed by the nomination of a provisional government and the announcement of a coat of arms, a flag and a national anthem (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003).

Significantly, owing to these and previous events, an increasing number of pro-government Anglophone and Francophone elite now acknowledge, after long years of public denial, that there is indeed an Anglophone problem. In January 1999, President Paul Biya for the first time admitted, albeit in a dismissive fashion, that

---

[9] The SCNC leaders alleged (i) that the proper procedures for the enactment and amendment of the federal constitution had not been followed by Ahidjo; and (ii) that Francophone Cameroon had seceded from the union in 1984 when the Biya government unilaterally changed the country's name from the United Republic of Cameroon to the Republic of Cameroon – the name of independent Francophone Cameroon prior to reunification. From this perspective, they often claimed that the Trust Territory of Southern Cameroons had never really ceased to exist or had been revived. They therefore still believed in continued UN responsibility for the Southern Cameroons. See Konings & Nyamnjoh (2003).

[10] Reference to the incumbent regime as the government of *La République du Cameroun,* the name adopted by Francophone Cameroon at independence, has become a key signifier in the replotting of the country's constitutional history as a progressive consolidation of the recolonisation and annexation of Anglophone Cameroon by the post-colonial Francophone-dominated state. See Eyoh (1998a: 264).

such a problem existed, even if he perceived it as one created by a handful of hot-heads and vandals. Still, he has not yet shown any interest in negotiating with Anglophone movements in spite of regular appeals by Anglophone, Francophone and international dignitaries to solve the Anglophone problem through dialogue.[11]

Faced with determined attempts by the Biya government to control Anglophone organisations and deconstruct the Anglophone identity, Anglophone nationalists have increasingly adopted less visible and less controllable strategies to place the Anglophone problem in the public space.

Bringing back Anglophone identity into historical space

The regime and organic scholars (cf. Ahidjo 1964; Forje 1981; Fogui 1990) have often attempted to historicise Cameroon only in terms of its present mobilisation needs, in particular the construction of a national consciousness as part of the nation-building project.[12] They are, therefore, engaged in an impressive dose of historical amnesia – willed acts of selective remembrance of the past so as to erase Anglophone identity and heritage from national history. Anglophone nationalist leaders and scholars, in turn, have quickly recognised the importance of rediscovering Anglophone history as an invaluable political resource in combating the regime and raising the consciousness of the Anglophone population. They have therefore attempted to bring back Anglophone identity into the historical space, strongly contesting some of the myths created by the regime and organic scholars. We have only room here for a few examples.

One myth is that 'Cameroon has always been one and no more'.[13] In creating this myth, the regime and organic scholars attempt to dismiss the role of the colonial state in 'inventing' Cameroon itself and in creating two distinct communities on Cameroonian territory. Unlike Ardener (1967), they are arguing that Cameroon was already in existence before colonial rule and that colonialism only fostered a rupture in the pre-colonial conviviality and cordiality traditions that were 'determining ancestral values'. Consequently, Anglophones should 'transcend historical barriers' and

---

[11] For example, during his visit to Cameroon in May 2000, the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan pleaded for dialogue between the Anglophone and Francophone leaders.

[12] Monga (1996: 89) noted that the Council of Higher Education and the National Council on Cultural Affairs in Cameroon stipulated that the role of the intellectual was to contribute in a concrete way to the formation of a national consciousness.

[13] This claim was once again made by the Minister of Defence, Ahmadou Ali, in his address to the National Assembly in April 2000. See *The Herald,* 7 April 2000, p. 3. Recently, a renowned Cameroonian political scientist and member of cabinet, Elvis Ngolle Ngolle, argued in *The Post* (22 January 2001) that 'Cameroon came into existence before the colonial master split us into two. Thank God, in 1961, we came together again because what God has put together, man was not supposed to put asunder'. Though the concepts of nation and state are confounded in this argument, it has good political purchase among those who argue that Cameroon predated the colonial state.

return to the original situation in which all people in Cameroon lived together amicably and peacefully (Nkoum-Me-Ntseny 1996). Anglophone nationalists have instead constantly argued that the colonial state was far more important than the (largely mythical) pre-colonial state in mapping out the historical trajectory of the post-colonial state (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003).

A second myth is that reunification signified a long-awaited reunion of people separated for many years by arbitrarily imposed colonial borders and thus was warm-heartedly and freely embraced by both parties (cf. Donfack 1998: 35). Anglophone nationalists have instead provided sufficient evidence that the people in both territories were reluctant to reunite. Not only had the two communities gone through two completely different colonial experiences prior to reunification but they had also lived longer apart than together in a body politic. The idea of reunification, which had been mainly propagated by the radical nationalist party in Francophone Cameroon, the UPC, and Francophone immigrants in Anglophone Cameroon (Joseph 1977; Awasom 2000), had for a long time remained a mere slogan in Anglophone Cameroon and had simply been rejected by the French colonial administration and the majority of the Francophone political elite. Many Anglophones did eventually vote for reunification but only after they had been forced by external forces to abandon their preferred option of creating an independent state. The idea of unification was not debated in Francophone governmental circles until February 1958 when the French High Commissioner, Jean Ramadier, assured Alcam, the territory's parliament, of 'independence as well as the union of the two Cameroons' – most probably a tactical strategy to appropriate the cherished slogans of the UPC rebels and deprive them of their ideological platform. His caution that these issues fell within the reserved competence of the French government was superfluous because Anglophone Cameroon was *terra incognita* to the parliamentarians. Even when Ahmadou Ahidjo replaced André-Marie Mbida as prime minister in the course of that year, reunification was still seen as '*un ajout du haut commissaire*' (Gaillard 1994: 84-89). Even on the eve of the UN-organised plebiscite in Anglophone Cameroon in February 1961, reunification remained low on Ahidjo's list of political preferences which, according to a United States intelligence report, were as follows: (i) to lose in both the Southern and Northern Cameroons; (ii) to win in the Northern Cameroons where his ethnic and religious brothers, the Fulbe Muslims, were in power, and to lose in the Southern Cameroons ruled by an elite with close ethnic ties to his opponents in the southwestern part of Francophone Cameroon; (iii) to win in both regions; or (iv) to win in the Southern Cameroons and lose in the Northern Cameroons.[14] This shows that Ahidjo, whose power position was still weak in Francophone Cameroon in the time preceding reunification, was more

[14] US State Department, *Intelligence Report,* 8423, 10 March 1961.

concerned with reinforcing his electoral base than with reunification *per se* (Awasom 2000; Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003). He did not want to upset the current situation and thereby cause a shift in power relations.

A third myth is that the 1961 Foumban Conference was a historic event where estranged brothers mutually agreed upon a federal constitution for a reunified Cameroon. However, for Anglophone nationalists, the conference was an occasion where the Francophone majority used its superior bargaining strength to control negotiations and enforce a form of federation far below Anglophone expectations. Lack of respect by Francophones for even the minimal 'consensus' arrived at in Foumban has been traumatic for Anglophones and has come to play an essential role in their collective identity and psychopathology.

A fourth myth is that the unitary state was the outcome of the massive vote by the Cameroonian people as voluntarily expressed in the 1972 referendum. Anglophone nationalists have instead pointed out that, given growing Anglophone disillusionment with the union, the referendum results were more likely a manifestation of the regime's autocratic nature than of the Anglophone population's support. In other words, fear prevented Anglophones from expressing their objective interests. The ballot box was far from secret, election results were fixed beforehand, and it was neither politically wise nor politically safe to hold and express views different from those of the president, let alone oppose in word or deed any of his plans or actions. In 1991, Solomon Tandeng Muna, who was prime minister of the federated state of West Cameroon and vice-president of the federal republic at the time of the referendum, admitted in a radio interview that he had not dared to reveal to Ahidjo the true feelings of Anglophones about the referendum because it would have been tantamount to signing his own death warrant (Boh & Ofege 1991: 16).

Strikingly, Anglophone nationalists have also been deeply concerned with naming and the removal of historical documents by the government. Although such issues may initially appear somewhat 'banal', they turn out to be closely connected with the symbolic construction and preservation of Anglophone identity and heritage.

Anglophone nationalists refuse to recognise the government's designation of 20 May, the date of the inauguration of the unitary state in 1972, as the country's National Day. Since the early 1990s, they have continued to boycott celebrations, declaring it a 'Day of Mourning' and a 'Day of Shame'. They also indict the regime for declaring 11 February, the day of the 1961 plebiscite, as Youth Day. They see the persistent failure of the government to highlight the historical significance of this day as a conscious attempt to reconfigure the nation's history. They have thus called upon the Anglophone population to mark 11 February as the 'Day of the Plebiscite' and 1 October as the 'Day of Independence' as alternative days of national celebration. On these days, Anglophone activists have frequently attempted

to hoist the federation, the United Nations or independent Southern Cameroons flags – attempts that were often brutally challenged by the security forces.

Anglophones have also continuously resisted government attempts to change the historical names of localities in their territory. They have particularly opposed the change of name of Victoria, a coastal town named after Queen Victoria (Courade 1976), into Limbe, the name of a river that flows through the town. This renaming of localities in Anglophone Cameroon has often been presented as a government attempt to promote what Mobutu has referred to in Zaire as '*authenticité*'. Government failure to implement a similar policy in Francophone Cameroon is clear proof that its avowed goal was to erase the Anglophone identity and history.[15] Anglophone nationalists have re-introduced the name of Victoria during political liberalisation. Even Anglophones who tend to support the government's project of *nationisme* seem to be ambivalent in their attitude towards renaming. While they usually attempt to erase the name Victoria from the public space, they sometimes appear to align with the 'subversives' by respecting the name of the local football club, Victoria United, and maintaining the name of their own local college network, the Victoria Old Boys' Association (VOBA).

Whatever the motivation, the removal of certain documents by the central government from the archives in Buea was also seen by Anglophones as an attempt to erase the institutional memory of Anglophone Cameroon. Anglophone perception was strengthened by the belief that the archives were a repository for documents that could give the regional population an insight into what really transpired before, during and after the Foumban Conference. It was even rumoured that one of these documents envisaged secession should Anglophones be discontent with the outcome of the conference after a stipulated period of time. Remarkably, in the wake of the death in 1999 of John Ngu Foncha, the Anglophone architect of reunification, another rumour rapidly spread in Anglophone Cameroon that this particular document, almost the holy grail of Anglophone nationalism, which the government wanted to remove from the Buea archives, had actually been in the custody of Foncha after reunification. He was said to have handed it over to Augustine Ngom Jua, his successor as prime minister in 1965. Following Jua's dismissal in 1967, it would have been recovered from his office, sealed, and returned to Foncha who had hidden it in a relative's grave in the Mankon Catholic cemetery in Bamenda. Ambassador (retired) Henry Fossung, a leader of one of the SCNC factions, claimed that Foncha had given it to him shortly before his death. Arguably, this is a variant of 'grave digging' by a leader in quest of legitimacy. However, it acquires some respectability when it is placed in the perspective of a deep Anglophone concern with its past and identity.

---

[15] It is quite revealing that memories of French colonisation are carefully preserved, manifest in names like Avenue Général de Gaulle in Douala.

Creating space for Anglophone identity in arts

Art forms, as Karin Barber (1987: 4) has observed, 'do not merely reflect an already constituted consciousness, giving us a window to something already fully present, they are themselves important means through which consciousness is articulated and communicated'. Confronted with severe state repression, Anglophone nationalists have resorted to the arts to create public space for the Anglophone problem and raise Anglophone consciousness and action. In this section, we focus on Anglophone dramatists and performers who have played a major role in this respect (Lyonga *et al.* 1993; Ako 2001).

Among the growing number of Anglophone playwrights,[16] two in particular have identified with the Anglophone struggles: Bate Besong and Epie Ngome. Bate Besong, Anglophone Cameroon's most versatile and charismatic playwright and poet, has always maintained that the Anglophone creative writer 'must arouse his Anglophone constituency from the apathy and despair into which it has "sunk" and transform his writing into "hand grenades" to be used against Francophone oppressors' (Ngwane 1993: 35). A cursory overview of his own writing leaves one in no doubt that Bate Besong has lived up to his own prescriptions. His *Beasts of No Nation* (1990) is a bitter indictment of the Francophone exploitation of the Anglophones who are reduced to 'night soilmen' (a metaphor for slavery). Throughout the play, the Francophones are presented as reckless destroyers of the nation because of their unbridled appetites and moral insensitivity. They are 'ravenous wolves' or 'roaring lions' seeking to devour all that crosses their path. They are 'locusts' who 'eat tons of green'. They are 'thieves of no nation' who belong to a secret cult of 'greed, grab and graft'. The exploited 'Anglos', however, are going to demand their full civil rights or, what the dramatist calls, their 'identification papers'. The narrator, a kind of priest who will lead the down-trodden Anglos to the New Jerusalem, makes it clear that they will have their freedom – perhaps a nation of their own – or death. And the leitmotiv that runs through the play is: 'A hero goes to war to die' (cf. Ako 2001).

For his part, Epie Ngome in *What God Has Put Asunder* (1992) uses an extended marriage metaphor to denounce the union between Anglophone and Francophone Cameroon and the unitary state. It is the story of Weka, a child brought up in an orphanage run by Reverend Gordon and Sister Sabeth. When Weka reaches marriageable age, two suitors ask for her hand in marriage. One is Miché Garba and the other Emeka, who grew up in the orphanage with Weka. Despite Emeka's solid claims over Weka as a childhood friend, Garba has his way although Weka accepts him reluctantly. Weka soon discovers that Garba is no good: he maltreats and

[16] For a discussion of the role of Anglophone writers and dramatists in the Cameroonian literature in the post-reunification Cameroonian literature, see for instance Lyonga *et al.* (1993).

neglects her and cannot tolerate her questioning attitude. He exploits the rich cocoa farms left by her father and squanders the money on his concubines. When she can stand him no longer, Weka escapes with her children to her father's compound to rebuild his dilapidated house and their shattered lives. Garba pursues her there, threatening to forcefully take them back to his house.

Clearly, the marriage metaphor relates to the political union between Anglophone Cameroon and its Francophone counterpart, with Weka standing for the former West Cameroon, Emeka for Nigeria, and Garba for *La République du Cameroun*. Weka's parents represent the British government that relinquished responsibility over the Southern Cameroons. Reverend Gordon and the orphanage stand for the United Nations trusteeship mandate over Southern Cameroons. Garba's neglectful but exploitative attitude towards Weka represents the attitude of the Francophone leadership towards Anglophone Cameroon, behaviour that has come to represent the central grievance in what Anglophones have identified as the Anglophone problem in Cameroon (Ambanasom 1996: 218-222). The major suffering inflicted by Miché Garba on Weka symbolises the creation of the unitary state in 1972:

> Once the festivities were over, he brought a fleet of trucks and bundled all my children and me out of our house. His drivers gathered all our staff trampling and damaging many things etc. ... and so he forced me to settle in with him. Since then, he has been forcing my children to learn his own mother tongue and to forget mine with which they grew up; I must abide by the customs of his clan, not mine, and ... in short he has simply been breathing down my neck since then (Ngome 1992: 53).

Both playwrights have contributed in no small way to the overall education of Anglophones, which will only be achieved, as Bate Besong highlights in his *Requiem for the Last Kaiser* (1991), when Anglophones 'will break the chains that hold them in bondage' and 'choose the side of the long suffering people of Agidigi (Anglophone Cameroon)'.

Anglophone plays by these and other writers have been made accessible to ordinary Cameroonians by various theatre groups including the Yaoundé Theater Troupe and the Flame Players (Doho 1996). They have not only played in Yaoundé and other Francophone towns, but have also toured both Anglophone provinces and some groups have even performed in Europe. Plays staged by the Mountain Mourners in Germany have contributed inordinately to bringing the Anglophone plight to international attention.

Placing Anglophone identity in virtual space

Following political liberalisation, the Anglophone private press served for some time as the standard bearer of Anglophone nationalism (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2000; Nyamnjoh 2005). Unsurprisingly, the government quickly sought to muzzle it as part of its strategy to erase Anglophone identity from public space. In reaction, 'new

creoles' have emerged among Anglophone nationalists – men who have access to virtual space, enabling them to contest the state's power of policing speech (cf. Anderson 1995). The Anglophone youth in the diaspora, notably in the United States, have underscored the importance of the Internet. The SCNC-North America (NA) has actually played a vanguard role in creating websites on the Internet:[17] The name of the main site was changed[18] in July 2001 as 'part of its ongoing strategy to unite the forces of Southern Cameroons' liberation in the diaspora and on the home front', providing them as well as visitors with 'a one-stop-source to learn and update themselves about Southern Cameroons, one of the only African countries still under colonialism and seeking for ways to effect its independence'.[19] It is considered to be the largest Cameroonian site, receiving, at its peak, more than 500 hits a day. It registered more than 700 members in its first month of existence.[20]

Since its members were regularly engaged in ideological and strategic warfare, the management of the site decided to introduce gate keeping, seeking to orient discussions towards the achievement of the independence of Southern Cameroons. To this end, it became more and more preoccupied with fostering political correctness, going to the extent of 'unsubscribing' members with alternative views.

The site's new policy is to raise Anglophone consciousness and to promote the visibility of the Anglophone cause inside and outside Cameroon. One of its most successful activities has been the posting of declassified documents from the British archives, which provide ample evidence of the alleged British betrayal of the Southern Cameroons in the pre-reunification era. It aimed to make the Cameroonian and British people aware of the refusal of the British government to protect Southern Cameroonian interests against the Ahidjo regime supported by the French and to solicit their support for the renewed struggle for the independence of Southern Cameroons.

Interestingly, the raising of consciousness is often combined with action. For example, the site reported extensively on what happened during and after the SCNC-organised celebrations of 'Independence Day' on 1 October 2001, thus frustrating the government's attempts to control information to the outside world and cover up certain activities. Despite government orders banning all demonstrations throughout the Anglophone region, a considerable number of SCNC activists decided to march in the North West Province of Anglophone Cameroon on that day, defying the massive police and army presence. At Kumbo, five peaceful demonstrators were killed and many more were injured. Over 200 SCNC activists were arrested in Bamenda and elsewhere, including the new SCNC leaders. Signifi-

---

17 http://www.southerncameroons.org or scncforum@yahoo.groups.com.

18 It was changed to http://www.yahoo.groups.com/group/BSCNation.

19 Cited in http://www.yahoo.groups.com/group/BSCNation/messages/ 975 and 5977.

20 Interview with the moderator on 23 May 2002.

cantly, when Anglophone magistrates eventually ordered the release of the detainees, court orders were flouted by the regime. The BSCNation site sent this information to other websites as a form of e-protest. Pressure for the release of the detainees was reinforced by its management's organisation of a protest march on the Cameroon Embassy in Washington. This combination of virtual and real modes of protest eventually caused the Cameroonian government to release the activists.

Another example of cooperation between the site management and the SCYL in May 2002 was a spectacular action called 'Operation Stamp Your Identity'. Eighteen thousand bumper stickers calling for the creation of a federal republic in Anglophone Cameroon were printed in the United States and sent to Anglophone Cameroon. They were symbolically flagged in Anglophone towns on 20 May 2002, the day that Cameroon celebrated its 30th anniversary of the unitary state.

These examples show how cooperation between the new creoles and activists has proved to be successful in advancing the Anglophone cause and raising the consciousness of the national and international community.

Expansion of Anglophone identity into legal space

Anglophone nationalism still lacks international recognition. This has prevented Anglophone nationalists from presenting their case before international courts. Several attempts to sue Britain in British courts for its 'treacherous' role during the decolonisation process have been to no avail. However, the decision of the Nigerian and Cameroonian governments to submit their dispute over the oil-rich peninsula of Bakassi to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague for adjudication in 1994 offered Anglophone nationalists an opportunity to access legal space (see Chapter 13). They claimed that Bakassi was neither a part of Cameroon nor of Nigeria but instead belonged to the Southern Cameroons.

In 2001, the Ex-British Southern Cameroons Provisional Administration created a new body, the Southern Cameroons People's Organisation (SCAPO), for the specific purpose of pursuing legal avenues to address 'the claims of the peoples of Southern Cameroons to self-determination and independence from *La République du Cameroun*'. SCAPO, led by the SCNC chairman and chancellor of the provisional administration Dr Martin Luma, and Dr Kevin Gumne, rapidly filed a lawsuit against the Nigerian government in the Federal High Court in Abuja 'for the purpose of obtaining judicial relief to restrain the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria from treating or continuing to treat or regard the Southern Cameroons or the people of that territory as an integral part of *La République du Cameroun*'.[21] SCAPO had two reasons for taking Nigeria to court in its legal battles for the recognition of an independent Southern Cameroons state. First, the trust territory of

[21] Cited in http://yahoo.groups.com/group/BSCNation/message/6830.

Southern Cameroons had been administered by Britain as an integral part of Nigeria. Consequently, SCAPO was inclined to regard Nigeria as a co-conspirator with Britain in the process that led to the annexation of the Southern Cameroons by *La République du Cameroun*. Second, Nigeria had ratified the OAU Banjul Charter of Human Rights that lays down in Article 20 the right of all colonised or oppressed people to free themselves from the bonds of domination by resorting to any means recognised by the international community.

In the end, SCAPO scored a landmark victory when, in March 2002, the Nigerian Federal High Court ruled that 'the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be compelled to place before the ICJ and the UN General Assembly and ensure diligent persecution to the conclusion the claims of the peoples of Southern Cameroons to self-determination and their declaration of independence'. It also placed a perpetual injunction, restraining 'the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria from treating the Southern Cameroons and all the peoples of the territory as an integral part of *La République du Cameroun*'.[22]

This ruling may pave the way for international recognition of the Anglophone struggle for the creation of an independent state. Yet, it cannot be overlooked that Nigeria had an interest in the court's ruling if one takes into account the ongoing hearings in the Bakassi case at the ICJ. This was clearly recognised by the Nigerian Federal High Court when it ordered the Nigerian government to submit to the ICJ the question of whether it is the Southern Cameroons and not *La République du Cameroun* that ought to share a maritime boundary with the Federal Republic of Nigeria?

Experiencing Anglophone identity in everyday space

Anglophones are daily reminded of their national identity and homeland in language, in individual and collective experiences, and in stereotyping. They tend to perceive themselves as different from Francophones and are equally categorised and treated as 'others' by Francophones, manifest already in the constant use of 'we' and 'they' in everyday speech for designating or delineating each other's homeland (Billig 1995: 93-95). Undoubtedly, feelings of being different tend to raise the individual and collective consciousness of Anglophones in everyday space and to create open or secret support for Anglophone movements.

Given the widespread belief in the country that Anglophones have become the greatest danger to the regime's nation-building project and even to the regime itself during political liberalisation, it is not surprising that the Francophone political elites are inclined to exclude them from the homeland and incite the Francophone population against them. The Lord Mayor of Yaoundé, Emah Basile, referred to Anglo-

[22] *West Africa,* 31 March 2002, p. 19.

phones as 'enemies in the house'. As such, they should either voluntarily 'go across our borders' as Mbombo Njoya, the former minister of territorial administration and present Sultan of Foumban, once remarked or be chased away (Ngniman 1993: 51). Francophones tend to refer to Anglophones as 'Anglo-fools', Biafrans or Nigerians. By using the term Biafran, they are expressing their strong belief that Anglophones are inclined to be secessionists. By using the term Nigerian, they point to the colonial link between the Southern Cameroons and Nigeria. We recently heard the story that when told by a visitor that he hailed from Kumba, the economic capital of the South West Province in Anglophone Cameroon, the Cameroonian Ambassador to Belgium, Isabelle Bassong, exclaimed: '*Oh, Kumba, donc vous êtes moitié Nigerienne et moitié Camerounais*'.

Even Anglophones who speak impeccable French and have lived in Francophone Cameroon for a long time are constantly reminded of the fact that they are different. A young, well-educated Anglophone woman interviewed by Eyoh (1998a: 263) expressed her frustration with the situation as follows:

> No matter how bilingual you are, if you enter an office and demand something in French, because of your accent, the messenger may announce your arrival simply as 'une Anglo' or respond in a manner to mock. You know that stereotypes are a normal part of life in Cameroon and the world over. But the constant reminder that as an Anglophone you are different creates the impression that we are second-class citizens. That is what irritates Anglophone elites. You can imagine the frustration of older and less educated Anglophones who have to deal with a bureaucracy which operates mostly in French and state officials who are so rude to the people they are supposed to serve.

In a column of a well-known Cameroonian paper, *Le Messager,* a French journalist reports the experience of a young Anglophone who had just returned to Cameroon after a five-year stay in South Africa and was made to feel like a stranger in his own so-called bilingual country. When he came to pay in a large bakery in Douala, he received a cool reception from one of the Francophone cashiers: 'What do you want? Stop speaking English. We don't speak that language here. Return to where you come from, John Fru Ndi'.[23]

Anglophone identity and consciousness are raised by almost daily confrontations with overbearing Francophone government officials and oppressive Francophone gendarmes and structures both in the Francophone region and in their own region. Francophone prefects and sub-prefects posted in Anglophone Cameroon often do not speak a word of English and tend to behave like *chefs de terre* or part of *commandement* (Mbembe 2001: 106-17), relegating, just as in the colonial era, the Anglophone population to the position of subjects rather than citizens (Mamdani 1996). Moreover, Anglophone 'subversives' are regularly tried in Francophone rather than

[23] John Fru Ndi is the charismatic Anglophone founder and chairman of the largest opposition party in Cameroon, the Social Democratic Front (SDF). See *Le Messager,* 30 November 2001, p. 6.

in Anglophone courts and are subjected to different treatment in Francophone cells than Francophone prisoners. Following a conflict over a love affair between a villager and a Francophone gendarme officer in the North West Province of Anglophone Cameroon, he and several other villagers were arrested by gendarmes and subsequently charged with being SCNC activists. In clear violation of Cameroon's Penal Code, they were neither imprisoned on Anglophone territory where the arrests had taken place nor tried under common law. They were instead transferred to a prison in Bafoussam, a town in Francophone Cameroon. The gendarmes told them: 'You will be judged in Bafoussam. You say you hate France and anything French, but you have no choice'. They were instantly and provocatively reminded of their otherness in prison when the Francophone authorities told them that 'Anglophones can never receive the same treatment as Francophones, even in hell' (Jua 2003a).

Unsurprisingly, stereotypes are commonplace in Cameroon to mark the assumed differences in values and attitudes between Anglophones and Francophones. In an article on Francophone 'Anglophobia', Ngome (1993: 28) provided some striking examples of such stereotyping:

> Anglophones see Francophones as fundamentally fraudulent, superficial and given to bending rules: cheating of exams, jumping queues, rigging elections and so on... The Francophones are irked by what they see as the Anglophone air of self-righteousness and intellectual superiority.

In his pamphlet *The Path to Social Justice,* Ngam Chia (1990: 2) stresses the Francophone 'neo-colonial' mentality that compares most unfavourably with Anglophone independent-mindedness:

> The Francophone psycho-social background is neo-colonised and as such one must not expect them to be as independent-minded as the Anglophones. For instance, Anglophones see themselves as people who can live without depending on Britain and France for aid, but the Francophones do not even believe that they can run a simple administration in the civil service without the so-called expert direction from France. To blame them, nevertheless, is to condemn the deep French cultural alienation of Francophone Cameroon.

Anglophone leaders have made use of such stereotypes to rally the Anglophone population behind them in their pursuit of autonomy, either in the form of a return to the federal state or outright secession. For example, the 1993 Buea Declaration tended to blame the 'wicked' Francophones as a whole for the plight of the 'poor' Anglophones, and compared both in rather idealised terms: the former, in full solidarity, were seen to agree among themselves about oppressing the latter who, by their very nature, were considered peace-loving, open to dialogue, and committed to freedom (All Anglophone Conference 1993: 29-30). Of course, such a demagogic approach – which is commonplace in ethno-regional discourse – seems to highlight the seemingly insurmountable gap between Anglophones and Francophones that

allegedly prevents both parties from living together peacefully in the union. This approach may be efficient in mobilising Anglophones but has hardly helped their struggles against their real enemy, the Francophone-dominated unitary state that has allies and opponents in all parts of the country. In addition, it tends to project a frozen and geographically restricted idea of being Anglophone, denies the existence of various ethnic links between Francophones and Anglophones, and creates serious obstacles to any Francophone sympathy for the Anglophone cause (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003).

Conclusion

In this chapter, it has been argued that the entry of Anglophone nationalism into the public space during political liberalisation has posed a major challenge to the post-colonial state's nation-building project. More than anything else, it has questioned whether Cameroon has indeed progressed from a state of national unity to one of national integration (Biya 1987). Little wonder that it has formed the start of a vehement collision course with the government in power whose head, Paul Biya, has repeatedly remarked '*Le Cameroun sera uni ou ne sera pas*' ('Cameroon is one and must remain united').

One has, however, to be extremely careful when claiming that Anglophone nationalism, which has been crucial to the course of democratisation in Cameroon and has placed Anglophones at the centre of the political debate, is a recent invention by some disgruntled Anglophone elites. Ample evidence has instead been provided here to show that Anglophone nationalism is, in fact, the result of a long process of Anglophone identity formation and is currently feeding on the multiple grievances of Anglophones in the post-reunification era.

Although Anglophone resistance has been a permanent feature of Cameroon's post-colonial biography (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003), it was not until political liberalisation that the Anglophone elite started mobilising and organising the regional population. Capitalising on traumatic Anglophone experiences of 'otherness' and second-class citizenship in the Francophone-dominated post-colonial state, they began to lay claims to autonomy and self-determination, in the form first of a return to a federal state and later in the creation of an independent state. Confronted with persistent government attempts to deconstruct Anglophone identity and to suppress Anglophone organisation, Anglophone nationalists have increasingly resorted to less obtrusive forms of resistance, creating public space for Anglophone identity and nationhood in the historical, artistic, virtual, legal and everyday domains.

6

Anglophone university students and Anglophone nationalist struggles

Introduction

The dramatic changes that have been affecting the position of university students in African countries since the 1980s are being highlighted in an increasing number of studies (cf. Kpatinde 1991; Cruise O'Brien 1996; Lebeau 1997; Federici *et al.* 2000; Zeilig 2007). Students in the first decades following African independence belonged to the most privileged group in the political system and were assured the desired elite status after graduation, but successive generations have been faced with deteriorating living and study conditions on campuses and bleak prospects after graduating.

African universities are in deep crisis nowadays (cf. Lebeau & Ogunsanya 2000; Nyamnjoh & Jua 2002). Academic standards have been falling rapidly because the universities lack the basic infrastructure needed to cope with the massive growth in the student population (Mbembe 1985; Tedga 1988; Lebeau 1997; Konings 2002a) and the severe economic crisis and the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) are aggravating the situation further. The increasing withdrawal of state support for universities, university students and university graduates is seen in the drastic cuts in university budgets, the imposition of tuition fees and additional levies on the student population, and a virtual halt in the recruitment of new graduates into already over-sized state bureaucracies (Caffentzis 2000). Many graduates are finding themselves obliged to defer their entry into adulthood indefinitely as they are unable to achieve economic independence, to marry and start a family of their own. They are also being forced to abandon their aspirations for elite status.

Given these conditions, the question to be posed is: how is the current generation of African university students reacting to their growing marginalisation? Most of the existing studies (cf. Kpatinde 1991; Federici 2000; Amutabi 2002) claim that these students have refused to become a 'lost' or 'abandoned' generation (Cruise O'Brien 1996: 56). To bring about the needed reforms in the university and society at large they have instead become engaged in struggles against the corrupt and authoritarian political elite whom they hold responsible for their predicament and have received the support of other groups including secondary school students, their teachers, and organised labour, all of whom feel equally marginalised by the state (Bratton & Van de Walle 1992; Albert 1995). In a few countries they have been at the forefront of struggles for political liberalisation (Smith 1997) but in most they have increased the intensity of their struggles after the introduction of political liberalisation. It has created more space for students to voice their multiple grievances, to organise and to establish alliances with newly founded opposition parties and civil society organisations. While in the past, with few exceptions, African student protest was sporadic, today it has become endemic in many countries, continuing year after year in spite of frequent closures of the universities in what appears to have become protracted warfare. Federici & Caffentzis (2000: 115-150) have published a chronology of African university students' struggles between 1985 and 1998 that provides an impressive list of the violent confrontations between students and the forces of law and order in African states.

Some of the existing studies also attempt to explain why both parties appear to prefer violence to dialogue and negotiations in solving student problems. They emphasise that government authorities continue to look upon students as 'minors' or 'cadets' who, according to African tradition, should listen to their elders and simply obey orders. These officials therefore often fail to take students and their grievances seriously and usually refuse to create channels of regular communication or to enter into peaceful negotiations. They continue to present students as a privileged and unproductive minority group that, on the basis of state largesse, is being offered the opportunity to prepare itself for its future leading role in national reconstruction. Consequently, students are expected to express their gratitude to the state through 'responsible' behaviour, devoting their time to study and not to politics (Mbembe 1985: 53).[1] In these circumstances, the use of violence has different meanings for the different actors. For students, it is often the only means of pressing home their demands to the government authorities. For government officials, it serves as a deterrent to the cadets from engaging in any similar 'irresponsible'

[1] Although they have often warned students that the university is a temple of learning and not a haven of politics, one-party and military regimes have never discouraged student motions and demonstrations of support. They have often even encouraged the creation of a youth wing at universities.

behaviour in the future. As a result of increasing student activism, African governments have been inclined to treat students as if they were their countries' major enemies, turning campuses into war zones. Police intervention and the occupation of campuses by security forces are becoming routine in many places and so is the presence of intelligence officers and police informants in classrooms (Federici 2000; Amutabi 2002; Konings 2002a).

While the existing body of literature has helped to underscore the growing importance of student politics in Africa, it nevertheless tends to present a one-sided picture, usually considering students as a homogeneous group, notably rebels and heroes. The situation is obviously more complex. Besides the rebels, there are students who tend to conform to the state model of student behaviour which the President of Cameroon, Paul Biya, defined in 1991 as follows: '*La politique aux politiciens, l'école aux écoliers*' (Konings 2002a). They usually project themselves as responsible students who refuse to participate in any form of student activism, claiming that they have no other interest than advancing their academic careers. In addition, there are students who are designated as victims and predators alike. Unlike the rebels, they still appear to have faith in the state as a vehicle for upward mobility. They belong to the group of citizens that, as Bratton (1989: 414-415) has acutely observed, 'remains drawn to the state, because, even in diminished circumstances, it remains a major source of spoils and one of the available channels for getting what little there is to get'. They are eager to seek favours from the state in exchange for their expressed loyalty to the regime and its ideology and their offers of rendering services to the state. This is a group of clients that can be easily manipulated by the ruling regime to do any 'dirty work', especially in recruiting for the militia that were created by the state to combat student rebels and other opponents of the regime.

In this chapter, I focus on Anglophone students in Cameroon, who feel even more marginalised than their Francophone counterparts because of the allegedly second-class citizenship of Anglophones in the post-colonial Francophone-dominated state. In the first section, I argue that Anglophone students have played a vanguard role in Anglophone protest actions in the wake of Paul Biya's accession to power in 1982. In the second section, I show that two new Anglophone youth organisations have emerged during political liberalisation, in which students are playing a leading role. These organisations clearly differ in their attitude towards the Francophone-dominated state.

On the one hand, there is the Southern Cameroons Youth League (SCYL) that has identified itself with the Anglophone struggle to such an extent that its members are even prepared to defer their entry into adulthood and elite status until the 'Anglophone problem' has been solved. It agrees with the leadership of the newly created Anglophone movements on the main aim of the Anglophone struggles – namely the creation of an independent Anglophone state – but it disagrees with

their strategy of realising this objective. In sharp contrast to the Anglophone elite who have continued to pursue independence through peaceful negotiations, the SCYL opted for armed struggle after Paul Biya's persistent refusal to enter into any meaningful negotiations with the Anglophone movements.

On the other hand, the President Biya's Youths (PRESBY) has claimed to be opposed to the Anglophone struggle, having expressed its undivided loyalty to President Biya and his 'New Deal' ideals in exchange for a share in the ever-diminishing pool of state resources, thus facilitating their entry into adulthood and elite status. PRESBY has been transformed by the regime into a militia that intimidates and terrorises the SCYL and other Anglophone organisations.

The vanguard role of Anglophone students in Anglophone nationalist struggles

In the wake of the limited degree of liberalisation that Paul Biya introduced after assuming power in November 1982 (Takougang & Krieger 1998: 76-78), Anglophone students at the University of Yaoundé were the first to voice long-standing Anglophone grievances. Their initiative can be explained by the many hardships they experienced at the University of Yaoundé – the only university in Cameroon until the 1993 university reforms (Konings 2002a). Though officially a bilingual institution, the University of Yaoundé has clearly remained a Francophone institute. Not only is the university based on the French university system but courses are mostly given in French, thus putting the English-speaking students at a disadvantage.

Government announcements of educational reforms in 1983 fuelled discontent among Anglophone students, which eventually led to their spontaneous organisation. In September of that year, the Minister of National Education promulgated an order modifying the Anglophone General Certificate of Education (GCE) examination by making it similar to the *Baccalauréat*. The order was apparently intended to facilitate the entry of Anglophone students into professional and technical institutes in Cameroon, which were exclusively based on the French system. Anglophone students, however, interpreted the proposed reform as a subtle attempt by the Francophone-dominated state to absorb the Anglophone educational system. They maintained that the problem of Anglophone exclusion from the country's professional and technical institutes could not be resolved by assimilation but rather by the creation of institutes based on the English system.

The students used the unpopular educational reform issue to express some of their other grievances, including the dismissal of Dr Bisong, an Anglophone lecturer in the Faculty of Law and Economics, simply because he refused to yield to pressure by Francophone students to teach in French. In a petition addressed to the Minister of National Education, they took up the matter as follows:

> With regard to the University of Yaoundé, we strongly condemn the discrimination in the teaching languages as glaringly exemplified by the ignominious suppression of the accountancy courses offered in English by Dr Bisong for the sole reason that such courses were offered in English. The Francophone students of the department had protested to the Chancellor of the University that such important courses could not be delivered in English. Immediately Dr Bisong was accused of inefficient delivery of his lessons and they were handed over to a Francophone lecturer. The inefficiency was surely the use of the wrong language and not the substance of academic stuff delivered.[2]

They demanded his immediate and unconditional reinstatement, and called for a more rigorous policy of bilingualism based on justice, equality and academic honesty.

They then began to demonstrate and boycott classes. Instead of looking for ways to solve their problems, government and university authorities initially tried to crush the students' actions by using extreme police brutality. This strengthened the students' belief that the authorities had no genuine concern for their plight. The situation did not calm down until eleven days later when students were informed that the Anglophone president of the National Assembly, Solomon Tandeng Muna, along with other Anglophone political elites, was to transmit an important message to them from the head of state. During the meeting, Muna said that the head of state was requesting that the students go back to class and pursue their studies while their grievances and other matters affecting their education received appropriate attention. He stressed that none of them would be allowed to raise any questions about the president's message because no parliamentarian would even dare to do so. Expecting the students' respect either as the president of parliament where their parents met to discuss important issues, or at least as their 'white-haired grandfather', he asked them to applaud the president's message and to go back to class calmly and quietly, adding that 'a word to the wise is enough'. But the most radical students were not yet willing to listen to their elders and questioned the authenticity of the message since no written statement signed by the president had been handed over to the students during the meeting. They only agreed to call off the strike when the full presidential message was broadcast nationwide in the evening, announcing the installation of a commission of highly qualified and experienced Anglophones and Francophones to look into the students' grievances. It is striking that no report has ever been published by this commission and that Anglophone struggles for the preservation of the GCE have continued to the present day (Nyamnjoh 1996: 19-39).

In an open letter in 1985, Anglophone students urgently appealed to their parents 'to assume squarely their responsibilities before history concerning the grave [Anglophone] identity situation and help solve the problem'. They summed up the

---

[2] Petition of English-speaking students from the University of Yaoundé to the Minister of National Education, dated 19 November 1983, reproduced in Mukong (1990: 26).

Anglophone population's multitude of grievances and those of the Anglophone students in particular and requested their parents take immediate action: 'apart from drawing up a new constitution, justice also requires the establishment of a fully-fledged English-speaking university based on the educational principles we cherish'. Should their parents fail to solve the Anglophone problem, they threatened to resort to violent action in the future.[3] Apparently, this letter was not supported by the entire Anglophone student population. A group calling itself 'The Anglophone Students of the New Deal',[4] strongly protested against the behaviour of students 'who falsely claim that the Anglophone community is being oppressed and threaten to disturb the scarcity and peace of our United Kingdom'. These 'subversive' elements should instead 'take stock of the achievements of the Man of the New Deal [Paul Biya] towards better integration of all ethnic and linguistic communities'. Most probably, this protest action had been organised by the then single party that used some Anglophone students to discredit their colleagues and the Anglophone cause in exchange for immediate or future rewards.[5]

Relations between Anglophone students, the government and university authorities rapidly deteriorated from the early 1990s onwards. On 26 May 1990, a group of students, most of them Anglophones, marched in support of launching the SDF in Bamenda and the introduction of multipartyism in the country. The government press accused them of singing the Nigerian national anthem (Kamto 1993). The implication of this false claim was that Anglophones did not see themselves as Cameroonians but rather as Nigerians or – even more common in government discourse – secessionist Biafrans. Subsequently, the gendarmes harassed and brutalised the demonstrators, looted their property and arrested about three hundred of them. This march by Anglophone students incited disaffection and resentment among the autochthonous Beti population on and off campus, which tended to support the ruling CPDM party led by President Biya, who was himself a Beti.[6] Some Beti landlords even threatened to remove Anglophone students from their houses. To forestall any further student protests, the regime stationed gendarmes permanently on campuses.

---

[3] Open letter to all English-speaking parents of Cameroon from the English-speaking students of the North West and South West Provinces, dated 20 August 1985, reproduced in Mukong (1990: 109-119).

[4] After assuming power in 1982, paul Biya promised the Cameroonian people a New Deal.

[5] The Anglophone Students of the New Deal, 'Open Letter to the Cameroonian Patriotic Students of the North West and South West', reproduced in Nyamnjoh (1996: 64-68).

[6] It is important to emphasise here that the name 'Beti' as an ethnic label is a historically circumscribed construct and subject to constant change. Since the 1980s, the term has come to cover a number of ethnic groups in the Centre and South Provinces of Cameroon, in particular the Bulu and Eton or Ewondo. President Biya belongs to the Bulu group. See Socpa (2002).

As I have shown elsewhere (Konings 2002a), the political liberalisation process that started in December 1990 not only created space for students to organise in defence of their interests but also tended to encourage a further polarisation among student factions along party and ethno-regional lines. On the one hand, there emerged what was initially called the National Coordination of Cameroon Students that later changed its name to the Students' Parliament or simply 'Parliament'. It was by far the largest student union on campus. The core of its membership and leadership was formed by Anglophone and Bamileke students who, in common parlance, are often referred to as 'Anglo-Bami' students. Parliament soon came under the influence of the opposition parties, notably the SDF. It agreed with the opposition that the regime had to be overthrown in order to bring about real change in society at large and within the university in particular. Anglophone members also participated in the Anglophone struggles. Following AAC I and the Buea Declaration in 1993, they created the Cameroon Anglophone Students' Association (CANSA), which operated under the umbrella of the SCNC and participated in various actions undertaken by the SCNC. Parliament members often presented themselves as revolutionaries who were prepared to use all the means at their disposal, including demonstrations, strikes and acts of vandalism, should the regime and the university authorities fail to listen to or give in to their demands.

On the other hand, a Committee for Self-Defence, a vigilante group or militia, was set up by the regime to counteract the actions of Parliament. Its membership and leadership was mainly made up of Beti students. Nevertheless, some students from other ethnic groups were also part of the Self-Defence group, for example, a few of its leaders were Anglophone and Bamileke students. They and other non-Beti members were recruited by the regime to give the public the impression that the Self-Defence group was not an exclusively Beti affair but an organisation of responsible students who were prevented from peacefully continuing their studies by the political actions of Parliament 'rebels' and 'vandals'. The Self-Defence group was well rewarded for its services: its members were given cash and, in some cases, free accommodation. A few leaders were even given lucrative jobs after graduation despite the freeze on public-sector employment. Since the Committee for Self-Defence was made up of only a small minority of students, they were allowed to carry weapons – clubs, knives and pistols – to attack Parliament members and sympathisers. It usually worked closely with other, even more extremist, Beti vigilante groups on campus, particularly the self-styled Direct Action group that openly declared that the University of Yaoundé was on Beti land and thus should fall under Beti control. It declared that the Anglo-Bami students should either recognise Beti control or 'go home'. Following the formation of the Committee for Self-Defence and the Beti vigilante groups, which received logistic support from the forces of law

and order, Parliament created its own commandos to fight these hostile groups and to protect its members.

The University of Yaoundé barely functioned from 1990 to 1996, with university life being repeatedly paralysed by student protests and unprecedented violent confrontations between the two camps. I mention here only the three most important confrontations. The first was in 1991 when Parliament members marched in support of the opposition parties' call for the holding of a sovereign national conference and an unconditional general amnesty for political prisoners and exiles. The second took place in 1993 after Parliament's protest against the introduction of university tuition fees and the third occurred in 1996 following Parliament's resistance to the university authorities' imposition of special levies on students in addition to tuition fees (Konings 2002a).

Interestingly, from the mid 1990s Parliament and the Self-Defence group became the cradle of two new Anglophone youth groups which turned out to be fierce opponents in the on-going Anglophone struggle: on the one hand, the Southern Cameroons Youth League (SCYL) and on the other, President Biya's Youths (PRESBY). Both groups sought to strengthen their positions by extending their membership from the Anglophone university student population to other sectors of well-educated Anglophone youths who were facing similar educational and employment problems. These included university graduates, university dropouts and other sections of the educated youths, many being either unemployed or scraping together a meagre existence in the informal sector.

The Southern Cameroons Youth League (SCYL)

The SCYL was founded in Buea on 28 May 1995 to reinforce the role of the educated Anglophone youth in the Anglophone struggle. It vowed to 'revive, defend, protect and preserve the independence and sovereignty of the once nation, the Southern Cameroons' and to serve as the militant youth wing of the SCNC.[7] Its original leadership was largely made up of Anglophone members of Parliament and its membership was composed of 'young people who do not see any future for themselves and who would prefer to die fighting than continue to submit to the fate imposed on Southern Cameroons by *La République du Cameroun*'.[8] SCYL members perceived the creation of an independent Southern Cameroons state as the only avenue to a better future for themselves and the Anglophone population as a whole. They were even in the habit of swearing under oath to make the necessary sacrifices for the achievement of this goal and to never betray the Anglophone cause. Their

---

[7] SCYL, 'Seventh Anniversary of the SCYL', BSCNation, 27 May 2002.

[8] See Mr Fidelis Chiabi, chairman of the former Anglophone Youth Council, in *Cameroon Post,* 1-2 February 1994, p. 7.

fanatical commitment to the Anglophone struggle actually gave them a new feeling of self-esteem.

In 1996, soon after its foundation, the SCYL began to express its discontent with the Anglophone movements' rapid loss of momentum. It blamed the new SCNC leadership chaired by Henry Fossung, a retired ambassador, for its armchair approach to Southern Cameroons' independence as evidenced by its failure to mobilise the Anglophone population in the face of increasing government repression and its continued advocacy of dialogue with the Francophone-dominated state in spite of the Biya government's persistent failure to enter into meaningful negotiation with the SCNC. Having learnt from their Parliament days that violence was the only means of pressing home their demands with the autocratic Biya regime, the SCYL leaders declined to adhere to the SCNC motto of 'the force of argument' any longer. They instead adopted a new motto, namely 'the argument of force', which expressed their determination to achieve the independence of Southern Cameroons through armed struggle. Little wonder then that the relationship between the SCYL and the SCNC became even more strained.

While preparing for action in both Anglophone provinces, the SCYL was unexpectedly faced with the detention of its chairman, Mr Ebenezer Akwanga, following the failure of its members to steal explosives from the Razel Company in Jakiri in the North West Province during the night of 23-24 March 1997. It immediately reacted by attacking some military and civil establishments in the North West Province between 27-31 March. According to official reports, three gendarmes and seven unidentified assailants were killed in these operations. The government paper, the *Cameroon Tribune,* claimed that 'nearly 500 people had been trained to enable that part of the country to secede' and another newspaper, the pro-government *Le Patriote* went even further, claiming that '2000 gangsters had been trained to effect the liberation of Southern Cameroons'.[9] Not even the passage of time has enabled the truth of these charges to be ascertained. Government repression of this ill-planned revolt was out of all proportion. It ruthlessly killed, tortured, raped and arrested hundreds of local men and women, and forced many others to go into exile. Above all, it seized the opportunity to clamp down on the SDF and the SCNC, accusing both organisations of being responsible for the uprising.[10] A considerable number of SCNC and SCYL members were arrested and imprisoned in Yaoundé. Some died

---

[9] Cited in *L'Expression,* no. 107, 8 April 1997, p. 8.

[10] In a report that was full of factual errors and based on spurious evidence, *Jeune Afrique Economie* supported the Biya government's allegation that the SCNC was responsible for the revolt. See *Jeune Afrique Economie,* no. 239, 14 April 1997, p. 8. The journal's support of the Biya government's allegation is not altogether surprising. Professor Titus Edzoa, a former Secretary-General at the Presidency, once revealed that the journal was used for public relations purposes by the regime. To this end, the regime had funded the journal to the tune of FCFA 1.5 billion (or US$ 3 million).

while in prison and others were not brought to trial until 1999 when they were not treated as political prisoners but were charged with criminal offences (Ball Maps 2002).

The SCNC chairman, Henry Fossung, who had gone into hiding after the revolt, publicly denied any SCNC involvement, insisting 'that the SCNC motto "the force of argument and not the argument of force" has remained today as valid as yesterday'.[11] He instead claimed that the incident had been orchestrated by a desperate government in an attempt to frustrate the legitimate struggles of the Southern Cameroons people to restore their independence. Strikingly, following the revolt, the SCNC leadership appeared to be even less inclined to sensitise and mobilise the Anglophone population. It was only after the proclamation of independence by Justice Frederick Ebong on 30 December 1999 that a more committed and radical leadership seized power in the SCNC.

There is sufficient proof that state brutality and torture have failed to dampen the SCYL tenacity and fervour to achieve its objectives. One indication is the following submission of SCYL President Ebenezer Akwanga before the military tribunal in Yaoundé in 1999:

> I am the National President of the SCYL. Our fathers who took us into reunification have told us that its terms are being grossly and flagrantly disrespected. I believe in the SCNC which is fighting a just cause, to see how the violation of the terms of reunification can be corrected (*The Post,* 19 July 1999).

Another indication is the publication by the SCYL of a document entitled 'The Southern Cameroons Independence is Here and Now' in which the SCYL champions a 'people's war' which 'has to be aggressive, not cool and cautious, bold and audacious, violent, and an expression of icy, disdainful hatred'. In furtherance of this goal, it reaffirms its commitment to the Anglophone cause: 'Nothing can stop us, we are not intimidated by the spectre of repression; today it is me, tomorrow it would be you'.[12]

Confronted with severe repression in Cameroon, the SCYL was forced underground. Like the *Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance* (MFDC*)* in Senegal (De Jong 2001: 211-215), it has almost become a secret society for security purposes. During my fieldwork I only succeeded in meeting some of its leaders through the intermediary of a high-ranking SCNC leader and even during the actual interviews I received little information about the size, organisational set-up, weapons and plans of the SCYL. I discovered later that most SCYL members lack this knowledge themselves and simply wait for instructions from their local leaders. Having become painfully aware that their organisation still lacked the necessary

---

[11] *Le Messager,* 23 April 1997, p. 8.

[12] *The Post,* 15 May 2000, p. 3. For a reiteration of this position, see *The Post,* 24 February 2001, p. 3.

weapons and training to engage in regular guerrilla warfare against the large and well-equipped Cameroonian armed forces,[13] the SCYL leaders apparently decided after the dismal failure of the 1997 revolt to temporarily resort to less controllable forms of action (Jua & Konings 2004). For instance, on 1 October 2002 when Southern Cameroonians were celebrating their independence day, the Secretary-General of the SCYL, Lucas Cho Ayaba, who is living in exile in Germany, together with other SCYL members and sympathisers, took over the Cameroonian embassy in Bonn and hoisted the Southern Cameroonian flag on top of the building.[14]

The SCYL leadership in exile has discovered the importance of the Internet, using it to raise Anglophone consciousness and promote the visibility of the Anglophone cause in the Cameroonian and international community, thus frustrating the regular attempts of the Francophone-dominated state to control information to the outside world and cover up its frequently brutal repression of SCNC and SCYL actions. The Cameroonian government still sees the SCYL as the most dangerous Anglophone movement. It has therefore become the main target not only of the security forces but also of the newly created youth militia.

President Biya's Youths (PRESBY)

PRESBY was founded in Yaoundé in 1996 as the successor of the Committee for Self-Defence that had been operating at the University of Yaoundé. It was an attempt by the regime to transform a local, almost exclusively Beti, militia into a nationwide militia to fight opponents of the regime, including the SCYL. To attract a nationwide membership, it shifted the objective of the new group from the protection of Beti interests to the promotion of President Biya's New Deal policies, which became the regime's ideological basis after Biya's accession to power.

Soon after Paul Biya succeeded Ahmadou Ahidjo as president on 6 November 1982, he proposed a New Deal to the Cameroonian people. The New Deal policy guidelines were political liberalisation, rigour and moralisation, and national integration. They were intended to bring about a state characterised by a larger degree of individual liberty and a freer exchange of ideas, the judicious and stringent management of public affairs, transparency and public accountability by government officials, as well as a total absence of ethno-regional particularism and favouritism (Biya 1987; Krieger & Takougang 1998). It quickly became evident, however, that the New Deal policy guidelines were mere slogans, probably used by Biya to distance himself from Ahidjo's shadow (Konings 1996c: 250). Political liberalisation proved

---

[13] Although government authorities regularly allege that Anglophone leaders have imported large quantities of weapons, the 1997 SCYL revolt was carried out with bows and arrows, hunting guns and a few pistols captured from gendarmes.

[14] SCYL, 'Today is Independence Day', *BSCNation,* 1 October 2002.

to be limited. Corruption and mismanagement in public life reached unprecedented levels, and Transparency International designated Cameroon as the most corrupt country in the world in 1998. National integration turned out to be an ideological justification for effacing and assimilating the Anglophone cultural legacy. Moreover, there was a growing monopolisation of economic and political power by the Beti, the president's ethnic group. The ruling CPDM party has nevertheless continued to present Paul Biya as the 'Man of the New Deal' and to praise his wonderful achievements.

Since its foundation, PRESBY has indeed extended its influence to all regions in Cameroon, recruiting members among similar youth groups such as the SCYL. In 2001, it was estimated that the new organisation comprised 120,000 members and 7,900 officials (Fokwang 2002: 13). Despite its national claims, it should not be forgotten that the Beti still continue to control the organisation to a large extent and Beti members residing in various regions of the country have been used as vectors for expanding its sphere of influence, mostly initiating the launch of local chapters in their areas of residence. While autochthonous youths have adopted leadership roles at the local level, Beti youths still occupy most leadership positions at the national level. PRESBY's founder and self-imposed president, Philomon Ntyam Ntyam, is a Beti and other members of this ethnic group occupy three-quarters of the seats in PRESBY's National Bureau.

Far from being an apolitical organisation as it has continued to claim, PRESBY is clearly affiliated to the ruling party. Not only is Philomon Ntyam Ntyam, a member of the Central Committee of the CPDM but members of the group are also sooner or later expected to obtain CPDM membership cards. It enjoys widespread support and patronage from the CPDM elite. CPDM bigwigs openly attend and fund elections in the various local organs of PRESBY and when PRESBY in the South West Province organised a seminar in Mutengene in September 2001, Prime Minister Peter Mafany Musonge, a South Westerner himself, requested that all the heads of regional ministries contribute to its funding. In Cameroon, where officials owe their appointments to the President or Prime Minister, such a request is tantamount to an order (Jua 2003b).

PRESBY members appear not to have lost faith in the neo-patrimonial state, the essence of which two leading Anglophone government members, Prime Minister Simon Achidi Achu (1992-1996) and his successor Peter Mafany Musonge (1996-2004),[15] have defined as follows: 'politics na njangi'[16] and 'the politics of scratch my

[15] Their appointment in the 1990s shows that the Anglophone problem has, paradoxically, enhanced the chances of pro-government Anglophone elites being appointed to government posts which used to be reserved for Francophones only. Obviously the decision to improve the position of Anglophones in the state apparatus is designed to belie charges that they only play second fiddle in the Francophone-dominated unitary state, and simultaneously to attract new members of the Anglophone elite into the hegemonic alliance.

back, I scratch yours', both meaning *quid pro quo* or 'one good turn deserves another' (Konings & Nyamnjoh 1997: 214). Unlike SCYL members, the Anglophone members of PRESBY publicly declare that they are being prepared to support and forcibly defend the Francophone-dominated unitary state in exchange for favours, including admission to the prestigious *grand écoles* like the *École Nationale Supérieure* (ENS) and *École Nationale d'Administration et de Magristature* (ENAM), employment in the civil service and public sector, and assistance in the setting up or expansion of business – favours which are often denied to non-members nowadays. They tend to look upon PRESBY as a vehicle through which they can lobby for a share in the national cake and thus obtain access to adulthood and even elite status. PRESBY leaders have constantly emphasised reciprocal exchange. For example, during a trip to Bui Division in the North West Province in September 2001, Mr Roger Penandjo, one of PRESBY's leaders responsible for national missions, is said to have promised government favours to youths of the division who joined the organisation. He then presented thirty forms to PRESBY members who had the minimum qualification of GCE Advanced Level to apply for Bangladeshi scholarships. After the presentation, he told his audience: 'So you see that it is only when you join PRESBY that you can have these opportunities' (Fokwang 2002: 12).

It should, however, be noted that, compared to SCYL members, PRESBY members tend to show less commitment to their organisation's objectives. During my interviews, some confessed that they 'support the Anglophone cause with their hearts in private, but pretend to speak against it in public to protect their positions'.[17] They claimed that they had joined PRESBY for no other reason than to get sinecures, pointing out that even their elders in power, including the Man of the New Deal, Paul Biya, did not live up to the lofty ideals of the New Deal. In their view, the latter only displayed 'rigour in corruption', perceiving the state as a source of spoils to be plundered without remorse.

Moreover, a considerable number of PRESBY members were disappointed when they discovered that the number and range of prebends offered by their organisation were limited. This largely explains the fluid nature of the organisation's membership, the continuous struggles for power among its leadership, and the emergence of new youth groups – with objectives similar to those of PRESBY – eager to gain access to state resources by any means possible.

Although the PRESBY leadership often created the illusion that all the members would be rewarded for their services, the reality was, to paraphrase the Bible, that, in the end, many were called but few were chosen. This situation had an ambivalent effect on the organisation's membership: on the one hand, a number of the existing

---

[16] This is a Pidgin-English expression meaning 'politics is like a rotating credit association'.

[17] More and more Anglophone CPDM members are making similar confessions nowadays. See *The Post,* 7 February 2000, p. 3.

membership decided to resign from the organisation, their hopes never having been fulfilled, but on the other, the relatively few success stories attracted new members.

Unsurprisingly, access to the state was guaranteed mostly to the group's leadership. Due to PRESBY's strategic position as a militia in the patron-client networks in Cameroon, its leaders tend to be regarded as power brokers who can hold people to ransom and are feared even by provincial governors. Leadership positions are highly contested as was demonstrated by the power struggles in the South West Province in 2000. The Regional Secretary, Enow Charles Eseme, accused the Regional Coordinator, Mayengi Thomas Kendi, of being involved in criminal activities. He alleged that Kendi was in the habit of extorting money from young people who wanted to migrate to Europe and the United States in search of greener pastures, promising them that he would use his influence to obtain visas for them. Eventually, Eseme was able to replace him at the helm of the organisation, but once in power he embarked on similar activities. Exploiting his supposed connections with the regime, he extorted money from the various parastatals in the South West Province as well as from state employees by either threatening them with punitive transfers or by promising them promotions. In 2000, the North West chapter of PRESBY spent the entire year fighting over leadership positions, which eventually resulted in the resignation of its president (Jua 2003b).

Similarly, a group of leaders who had been working closely with the National President of PRESBY blamed him for 'eating' alone and decided to form an organisation of their own, the so-called Youths for the Support of Those in Power (YOSUPO). The objective of this new group, they claimed, was to extend youth support from President Paul Biya to the entire leadership of the ruling regime. The initiative was followed by the creation of other youth groups such as *L'Association des Camerounais Biyaristes* (ACB), the Movement for Youths of the Presidential Majority (MYPM) and the *Jeunesse Active pour Chantal Biya* (JACHABI) (Fokwang 2002).[18] Against this background, one can begin to understand the lack of cooperation between these organisations in spite of their similar objectives. Evidently, cooperation would reduce the political space of these organisations and the leverage of their leaders.

Since its foundation, PRESBY has been used by the Francophone-dominated state to counteract the activities of Anglophone movements and parties such as the SDF, the SCNC and particularly the SCYL. It has been regularly engaged in using violence to disrupt their meetings, rallies and demonstrations and to terrorise their individual members. Like the former Committee for Self-Defence, PRESBY members are armed and receive active and open support from the security forces.. One of their actions in early January 2001 received a lot of publicity, occurring as it did

[18] Chantal Biya is the president's wife.

just a few days before the Franco-African Summit in Yaoundé. On that occasion, PRESBY members disturbed a peaceful SDF rally and attacked participants in the presence of security forces.[19] Since the declaration of Southern Cameroons' independence by Justice Frederick Ebong on 30 December 1999 and the subsequent revival of SCNC and SCYL activities, PRESBY members have been openly requested by CPDM and government officials to clamp down on Anglophone secessionists – a request they have promised to carry out religiously.

Conclusion

The importance of student politics in Africa during economic and political liberalisation cannot be underestimated. The present generation of African students is not only being confronted with growing marginalisation during economic liberalisation but has also acquired more space during political liberalisation to articulate its grievances and to organise in defence of its interests against the ruling political elite whom it holds responsible for its predicament.

My case study of Anglophone students, however, cautions against treating students as a homogeneous category. Although the Anglophone students of today feel even more marginalised because of their Anglophone identity than their Francophone counterparts, they have actually displayed a rather ambivalent attitude towards the Francophone-dominated state. On the one hand, there are students who are seen as rebels by the regime and as heroes by the Anglophone population. They first played a vanguard role in Anglophone protests and later, during the political liberalisation era, joined the Anglophone struggle for an independent Anglophone state, which they saw as a precondition for a better future for themselves and the Anglophone community as a whole. Having learnt during the heyday of 'Parliament' at the University of Yaoundé that violence is a more effective weapon than dialogue to press home demands with the autocratic state, the leaders of the most militant Anglophone organisation, the SCYL, soon opted for armed struggle to achieve the desired independence. This caused a generational conflict within the Anglophone movement itself, the Anglophone elite clinging to a strategy of achieving independence through dialogue with the regime in spite of the Biya government's persistent refusal to enter into any meaningful negotiation with the Anglophone movements.

On the other hand, there are students who are seen by the Anglophone population as both predators and victims of the regime. They are prepared to support and defend the Francophone-dominated unitary state in exchange for a share in the ever-diminishing state resources. The regime, in turn, expects them to join the newly

[19] See *The Post,* 15 January 2001, p. 3 and *Le Messager,* 15 January 2001, p. 5.

created militia organisations such as the Committee for Self-Defence and PRESBY, with a view to challenging the Anglophone associations and parties.

Studies of student politics in other African countries such as Ethiopia (Tiruneh 1990), Nigeria (Lebeau & Ogunsanya 2000), South Africa (Seekings 1993) and Senegal and Mali (Wigram 1993) provide evidence that the ambiguity of student politics is not restricted to Cameroon alone.

While PRESBY has greatly expanded its membership among the educated Anglophone youth in recent years, the role of the SCYL instead appears to have been drastically reduced. Following the government's brutal repression of the SCYL's ill-planned 1997 revolt, most of its leaders have either been imprisoned or have fled the country. Of course, this does not mean that the government has finally defeated the SCYL. It is still operating underground and is engaged in a variety of Internet and boycott activities. One of its actions was the spectacular liberation in 2003 of its chairman, Mr Ebenezer Akwanga, from the Kondengui maximum security prison in Yaoundé where he was serving a 20-year jail sentence for secessionist activities. Nevertheless, severe government repression of SCYL activities has discouraged the educated Anglophone youth from joining the organisation. The SCYL will, therefore, inevitably continue to occupy a minority position within the Anglophone movements that are predominantly trying to solve the 'Anglophone problem' through peaceful negotiations.

7

University of Buea students on strike

Introduction

Faced with a deepening crisis in their universities (see Chapter 6), African students have demonstrated a growing activism and militancy. They have been engaged in numerous, often violent, strikes for improvements in their living and study conditions and the introduction of a democratic culture in the universities and society as a whole, including the right to express their views, organise in student unions and participate in university management (cf. Amutabi 2002; Konings 2002a; Zeilig 2007).

This chapter focuses on two recent violent student strikes at the University of Buea (UB) in the South West Province. This university, set up in 1993 in the wake of higher education reforms and based on the Anglo-Saxon educational system, is the country's only English-speaking university. The presidential decree establishing the UB raised Anglophone hopes that their university was going to enjoy a large measure of academic freedom and autonomy and would be endowed with a democratic management style. However, it soon turned out that the UB was not going be any different from the other newly established universities that continued to be modelled on the Francophone university system with its excessive centralisation, authoritarian management style and political control (Jua & Nyamnjoh 2002; Awasom 2005). Given the fact that by the time the UB opened, the Anglophone region had become a hotbed of rebellion against the ruling regime (Takougang & Krieger 1998; Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003), the government was not keen to keep to the terms of the decree establishing the UB, preferring authoritarian to democratic governance so as to ensure political control and loyalty to the regime.

Evidence is provided in this chapter that most of the UB students' demands during the 2005 and 2006 strikes were similar to those of students in other Cameroonian and African universities, namely an improvement in their living and study conditions and the introduction of a democratic culture in the universities and society as a whole. What was peculiar to their strike actions however, and notably the 2006 strike, was their protest against the alleged marginalisation of Anglophones in general and Anglophone students in particular in the Francophone-dominated post-colonial state (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003).

As I have argued in Chapter 6, Anglophone university students have tended to be more militant than their Francophone counterparts since reunification in 1961, feeling more marginalised and oppressed because of their Anglophone identity. They have actually played a vanguard role in the Anglophone struggle for the preservation of the Anglo-Saxon educational system and the creation of an English-language university. They also became strong supporters of the Anglophone clamour for autonomy either in the form of a return to the federal state or outright secession.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first describes the creation of the UB and the development of its authoritarian management style. The second part discusses the two student strikes in 2005-2006. The study is based on extensive reading of primary and secondary sources, in particular reports of these strikes in Cameroonian newspapers, and a number of interviews with the main actors.

Authoritarian governance of the University of Buea

The University of Buea (UB) was born at a time of deepening economic and political crisis that affected the country as a whole and the system of higher education in particular from the mid-1980s onwards. Until 1993, there was only one university in Cameroon, the University of Yaoundé, which had been set up in 1962. Though officially a bilingual institution, the University of Yaoundé clearly remained a Francophone institute. Not only was it based on the French university system but courses were mainly given in French, thus putting English-speaking students at a disadvantage (Konings 2002a, 2005a; Awasom 2005).

The administrative structure of the university was modelled on the French tradition with its excessive centralisation, and it became almost a replica of the one-party system initiated in 1966. The university's administration appeared to be predominantly geared towards political control with, for example, national security agents, disguised as students, spying on both students and lecturers. There was no clear separation between politics and academics. All appointments at the university, from the rector to messengers and cleaners, were political appointments and for a university career, loyalty to the regime was more important than intellectual merit (Nyamnjoh 1999). The university was administered in an authoritarian manner with little

dialogue between the university authorities and the academic staff and students. Unlike in some other West and Central African states (Konings 2004a), lecturers and students were not allowed to organise in defence of their interests. The so-called student delegates or representatives – those responsible for imposing the decisions of the university authorities on students while taking note of those who complained (Dibussi 1991: 16; Mbu 1993: 107) – were not elected by students after 1986 but instead were appointed by the administration. Worse still, they tended to become informants who pointed out subversives to the regime in times of crisis. A lack of participation in university affairs created the impression among students that strikes were the only avenue to change in the university.

By 1990, there were explosive problems in higher education. The number of students had increased from 35 in 1962 to 10,000 in 1982 and 41,000 by 1990 (Mehler 1998: 59; Mbu 1993: 82) but the university infrastructure was only able to cope with at most 7,000 students. Lecture rooms, libraries, laboratories and office space for lecturers were inadequate and lacked the necessary equipment. And the university hostel could only offer accommodation to a limited number of students. So students were forced to rent rooms at exorbitant prices in the so-called mini-cities around the university. These problems were compounded by the deepening economic crisis characterised by a depleted state treasury, the late and irregular payment of student bursaries and staff salaries, and a low rate of execution of the university budget. During the political liberalisation process, which started in 1990, students and lecturers began to organise in autonomous unions. Besides trying to represent and defend their members' interests, these unions also demanded the implementation of democratic reforms at the university and in society as a whole (Konings 2002a, 2004a).

To help solve the university crisis, the government eventually decided to decentralise university education, against the advice of the World Bank, which strongly discouraged the creation of new tertiary educational institutions during structural adjustment. Presidential decree no. 93/026 of 19 January 1993, which launched a number of higher education reforms, established six state universities in different regional centres and spelled out their governance structures and regulations (Njeuma *et al.* 1999). Four were to be bilingual: the University of Yaoundé I (Centre Province), the University of Yaoundé II (Centre Province), the University of Douala (Littoral Province) and the University of Dschang (West Province). Of the two remaining universities, the University of Ngaoundere (Adamawa Province) was to be a French-speaking institution and the University of Buea (South West Province) was to be English-speaking. In an apparent attempt to meet the World Bank's cost-saving demands in higher education, the decree eliminated state bursaries to students and demanded that students pay annual tuition fees of FCFA 50,000.

Significantly, the presidential decree stipulated that the UB's governance structure would be unique in the sense that it would be based on Anglo-Saxon traditions and values. In sharp contrast to the newly established universities in Francophone Cameroon, the UB was therefore to enjoy the freedom to elect its principal officers from the Vice-Chancellor to the Heads of Department and to determine its academic orientation without overbearing government interference (Awasom 2005). It is widely believed in Anglophone Cameroon that the creation of an Anglo-Saxon university in Buea, with a relatively large measure of autonomy and democratic governance, was one of the Francophone-dominated regime's main strategies to placate Anglophones and gain admission to the Commonwealth of Nations.

However, it soon became evident that the regime did not intend to implement the regulations in the presidential decree and establish an alternative university system in Anglophone Cameroon. In fact, as a result of widespread opposition in Anglophone Cameroon to the regime in power, the government became more interested in introducing the Francophone university system of authoritarian governance and political control into the UB than the Anglo-Saxon university system of democratic governance and academic freedom and autonomy.

By 1990 widespread popular discontent with the ruling regime could be observed in Anglophone Cameroon. The majority of the Anglophone population held the corrupt, authoritarian regime responsible for the severe economic crisis and the draconian structural adjustment measures, resulting in a loss of its legitimacy. Taking advantage of widespread Anglophone resentment of their allegedly second-rate citizenship in the Francophone-dominated unitary state, John Fru Ndi, a charismatic Anglophone leader, launched the first opposition party, the Social Democratic Front (SDF), in Bamenda, the capital of the North West Province in Anglophone Cameroon in May 1990. The SDF quickly became the country's major opposition party, extending its influence from Anglophone Cameroon to many parts of Francophone Cameroon (Konings 2004b). The year the UB was established was also the start of political organisation and agitation in Anglophone Cameroon for constitutional reforms. Newly created Anglophone nationalist movements began to demand first a return to the federal state and later outright secession (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003). The Southern Cameroons National Congress (SCNC) became the spearhead of the Anglophone strive for an independent Anglophone state. Moreover, the Anglo-Saxon UB was unsurprisingly going to be hit by similar problems as other state universities during the continuing economic crisis and economic liberalisation. As the World Bank had previously warned, the 1993 university reforms created serious problems concerning the funding of basic infrastructure to match the surging enrolment levels at the six newly created state universities. As in the other state universities, UB students and teachers were dissatisfied with their deteriorating living and working conditions. Students vehemently opposed some of the 1993

university reform measures, in particular the abolition of scholarships and the introduction of tuition fees. Besides a heavy workload, teachers faced financial problems: there were regular delays in the payment of their salaries and, even worse, incomes were dramatically affected when, in 1993, there was a drastic 60-70 per cent cut in civil servants' pay, followed by a 50 per cent devaluation of the CFA Franc in January 1994.

In its determined efforts to establish control over any form of opposition at the newly created UB, the regime did not hesitate to violate the provisions of the presidential decree establishing the UB by appointing all the principal university officials and making their tenure of office indefinite. The first Vice-Chancellor (VC) was Dr Dorothy Limunga Njeuma who belonged to the local Bakweri ethnic group and was a member of the Political Bureau of the ruling party, the CPDM, and a former Vice-Minister of National Education. According to the presidential decree, the VC was supposed to be appointed for a fixed tenure of four years (which could be renewed once) and from among members of the 'professorial rank of Anglo-Saxon training following recommendation of the UB Senate and Council'. Contrary to these provisions, Dr Njeuma was an associate professor who was appointed by the regime without any recommendation from the university's Senate and Council and her tenure of office turned out to be indefinite since she was still the UB's VC in 2005 (Jua & Nyamnjoh 2002; Awasom 2005).

In her characteristically authoritarian style of governance, Dr Njeuma started to police the production of critical scholarship, intimidate and persecute members of opposition parties and organisations, and crush student and teachers' unions (Jua & Nyamnjoh 2002; Schmidt-Soltau 1999). The right of students to form unions and go on strike was recognised under the 1990 political liberalisation legislation and, as a result, the UB authorities allowed a students' union, the so-called University of Buea Students' Union (UBSU), to operate on campus. During the 1993-1995 period however, the UBSU staged a number of strikes to try to safeguard student rights and in protest against the UB administration's attempts to raise tuition fees. The UB authorities reacted by taking a series of punitive measures. Firstly, following the initial student strike in 1993, Dr Njeuma ordered students and their parents to sign an undertaking never to indulge in strike actions. Secondly, student leaders were dismissed from the university and refused admission to any state university in Cameroon. Strikingly, a number of these dismissed student leaders, like Ebenezer Akwanga, formed the very militant Anglophone nationalist movement in 1995, the Southern Cameroons Youth League (SCYL), with the aim of achieving an independent Anglophone state through armed struggle (Konings 2005a). And thirdly, the UBSU was banned from the UB in 1995. Subsequently, the UB authorities introduced what the teachers' union later described as a 'compartmentalised, de-

pendent and ineffective faculty representation of students'.[1] These student faculty representatives tended to be seen by the student population as part of the existing political control system within the university.

During Dr Njeuma's time in office, the UB administration was equally hostile towards the local branch of the university teachers' union, the *Syndicat des Enseignants du Supérieur* (SYNES) that was founded in June 1991 as the first autonomous trade union in the Cameroonian public service (Konings 2004a). The SYNES was subject to severe government repression until 1997 on the pretext that civil servants were legally prohibited from forming trade unions. But even after eventual government recognition of the union, Dr Njeuma continued to stymie SYNES activities as well as intimidate and punish local branch leaders and members, even dismissing some assistant lecturers for being members of SYNES.

Dr Njeuma succeeded in establishing a large measure of control over the university community for a considerable period of time by effectively using the carrot and stick method but in 2005 UB students began to revolt against their unsatisfactory living and working conditions and the university authorities' authoritarian governance style. To achieve their goals, they demanded recognition of the revived students' union and the removal of Dr Njeuma as the VC of the university.

The 2005 UB students' strike

On 27 April 2005, UB students joined the strike action initiated by their colleagues in Cameroon's oldest university, the University of Yaoundé I. Since the start of the political liberalisation process in the early 1990s, students at the University of Yaoundé had been organising into unions in an attempt to improve their living and working conditions and promote a democratic culture in the university and society as a whole. This led them into a series of violent confrontations with the forces of law and order and the newly created ethnic militia that were closely allied to the regime in power (Konings 2002a).

When these strike actions failed to deliver the students' most essential demands, a few University of Yaoundé students decided to change tactics and, advocating non-violent actions, went on hunger strike. The first hunger strike began on 29 September 2004, less than two weeks before the 11 October presidential elections. A tiny group of five students that was to call itself the *Association pour la défense des droits des étudiants du Cameroun* (ADDEC), led by Mouafo Djontu, resorted to this extreme form of action with a view to bringing pressure to bear on presidential hopefuls to commit themselves to an improvement in student conditions if elected. In a document entitled 'Five Points of the Cameroonian Students' Rights Association on the Plight of Students to the Political Elite', ADDEC called for the formulation of a

[1] Synes, UB Branch, 'Communiqué on the UB Crisis', in *The Post,* 29 April 2005.

student status, the withdrawal of the FCFA 50,000 tuition fee, the re-introduction of scholarships (at least for research students), the election of rectors, deans and other university officials, and the creation of a national body to oversee competitive government examinations. This first hunger strike was simply ignored by the political elite.

Six months later, on 13 April 2005, the same group embarked on a second hunger strike after having written an open letter to the Head of State in which they raised similar grievances and equally called for better conditions for studying, of assessment, accommodation and food. Although the government and university authorities continued to ignore their demands, growing sympathy could be observed for the hunger strikers among the student community. On 20 April, a group of sympathisers went on strike over specific grievances, in particular the provision of drinking water and better toilets. They were soon joined by other students who were shocked by the university rector's allegation that the strikers were non-students who were pursuing a political agenda. Almost the whole student population took to the streets, blocking the traffic and defying heavily armed troops after the government-controlled radio and television stations started broadcasting provocative statements. In response to the ADDEC leadership's appeal, they tried to avoid violence. Desperate attempts by the government to break the strike by giving fake student leaders an opportunity on television to strongly condemn and call off the strike did not have the desired effect. When the government finally realised that the strike could only be ended by peaceful negotiation, it had already moved beyond the confines of the University of Yaoundé I.[2] By the end of April, students in five of the six state universities were on strike, the only exception being students at the University of Ngaoundere.

On 27 April, UB students joined their striking colleagues in Yaoundé on what they termed a 'solidarity strike'.[3] It would appear that that morning five students from the University of Yaoundé had been in Buea to enlist support for their strike. In sharp contrast to the strike at the University of Yaoundé I, the strike at the UB rapidly took on a violent character.[4] It was initially more or less spontaneous but lacked any effective leadership and coordination because of the absence of a real students' union that could have controlled its membership, represented its interests and entered into peaceful negotiations with the university authorities. The existing body of student representatives from the various UB faculties lacked legitimacy and confidence among the student community and played no role in the strike. The chairperson of the college of presidents of student representatives, Elvis Damsi, even confessed that the strike started without his knowledge and that the strikers

---

2 See 'Cameroon Students on Hunger Strike', *Afrol News,* 25 April 2005.

3 *The Post,* 2 May 2005.

4 *The Herald,* 17 May 2005.

refused to tell him why they had gone on strike, accusing him and his colleagues of being spies for the university authorities.[5] A second reason for the outbreak of violence was that the authoritarian university and government officials lacked the necessary tact and patience to manage the strike. Their attempts to crush the strike and their repeated refusal to enter into peaceful negotiations had the unintended effect of prolonging the strike and fuelling student violence. The provocative and brutal behaviour of the forces of law and order also encouraged the students' violent response.

When the strike started, the VC of the UB, Dr Dorothy Njeuma, was on an official assignment abroad and in her absence, the UB Registrar, Dr Herbert Endeley, who had been a target of previous student attacks during strikes at the UB because of his proven lack of tact and arrogance, made an abortive attempt to placate the disgruntled students. Following his failure to enter into dialogue with the strikers, the UB authorities decided to call upon the forces of law and order to bring the situation under control.

According to a number of observers, the predominantly Francophone security forces were out to teach the Anglophone students an unforgettable lesson. After the students had ignored the UB Registrar's warning not to leave the campus, violent clashes took place between the students, who had barricaded the streets round the university, and the security forces. Several students were wounded and arrested. Students then went on the rampage on the campus, damaging a number of vehicles and destroying a lot of university property. In response, the security forces attacked the students, breaking into student hostels in the nearby Molyko neighbourhood and severely beating the inhabitants, destroying and looting their property, and making arrests. The next day the strikers decided to march on the South West Governor's office to demand the release of their imprisoned colleagues but they were prevented from reaching it by combat-ready police at a road blockade. In the subsequent confrontation, two students were shot dead by the police.

In this grave situation, some of the informal student leaders of the strike revived the University of Buea Students' Union (UBSU), which had been banned after the 1995 student strike. Five of the six UBSU leaders were students in the Political Science Department, which was the reason why the VC, Dr Njeuma, later accused the department's lecturers of indoctrinating their students in the dangerous ideologies of revolution and rebellion. The UBSU's president, Walter Onekon Angwere, then claimed that the newly formed students' union was ready to enter into dialogue with the university authorities and put forward the students' grievances in a peaceful way. Some of the initial UBSU demands reiterated previous ADDEC demands: the abolition of tuition fees (FCFA 53,000 at the UB compared to FCFA 50,000 at

[5] *The Post,* 4 May 2005.

other state universities), the offer of repeat examinations on all courses, the granting of scholarships to post-graduate students, the upgrading of the library and laboratories and an extension to the lecture halls, the provision of better-quality food and drinking water as well as adequate toilets, and the recruitment of better-qualified teaching staff, whose working conditions also had to be improved.[6]

Dr Njeuma, who in the meantime had returned to Cameroon, bluntly refused to enter into dialogue with the UBSU leaders. She declined to recognise the newly revived UBSU, stressing that its leadership was self-proclaimed and had bad intentions and, unlike the student representatives from the various UB faculties, UBSU leaders had not been elected by the students and, above all, had violated UB regulations by engaging in violent strike actions. For these and other reasons, including personal safety, she simply ignored any UBSU invitation to talk to the strikers at their meetings. The only concession she was willing to make was to receive some of the strikers' representatives in her office.

In reaction to the VC's authoritarian behaviour and continued police violence, the UBSU leadership added some new demands, calling for the immediate replacement and transfer of the long-serving VC, recognition by the university authorities of the revived students' union, an immediate government report on the killing of the two UB students during the strike, the release of all detained students, and the immediate withdrawal of the forces of law and order from the campus. Interestingly, they also requested the removal of an allegedly dreadful 'shrine' that, according to them, was strategically located near the university's entrance. They claimed that this shrine, where they believed dogs were burned alive, was being deliberately used by the VC to spiritually intimidate opponents of the university authorities. There is ample evidence that students actually feared to go past this shrine during the strike.[7]

The UBSU leadership continued to dismiss any allegations that the strike was politically motivated. Some members of the South West elite saw it as a manifestation of the existing South West-North West divide and conflict within the Anglophone community in general and the UB in particular (see Chapter 2). According to them, North Westerners formed the majority of the student population and teaching staff at the UB, and they were using the strike to establish North West hegemony in a South West university. The local Bakweri elite, who dominated the UB administration, were particularly shocked when they discovered that the Vice-President of the UBSU, Alain Martin Nako, was a Bakweri. The apparent involvement of Bakweri students in the strike largely undermined their claims that the strike was a North West plot. Other circles, especially government officials, alleged that either the major Anglophone opposition party, the SDF, or the Anglophone secessionist movement, the SCNC, was involved in the strike. They pointed out that the SCNC

---

[6] *The Herald,* 17 May 2005.

[7] *The Post,* 23 May 2005.

had strongly condemned the killing of Anglophone students by the predominantly Francophone security forces. Although Anglophone sentiments were undoubtedly raised by the government's different approach to student strike action in the Francophone and Anglophone areas – peaceful negotiations at the University of Yaoundé I and repressive actions at the UB – there is no evidence of any direct SCNC involvement in the strike.[8]

A second round of violence broke out on 5 May following the objection of the South West Governor, Thomas Ejake Mbonda, to an earlier announcement that students would escort the corpse of Gilbert Nforlem Forbi, one of the students killed by the security forces, from the Buea mortuary to Mile 17 Motor Park – a distance of some ten kilometres – from where it would be transported to Bamenda for burial. Despite vehement student protest, the Governor announced that the escort was to end at Bongo Square, just a kilometre from the mortuary. When the peaceful procession arrived at Bongo Square, he ordered the police to prevent the students from escorting the hearse any further by using water cannons to disperse them. With their plan to march right up to Mile 17 Motor Park frustrated, the angry students went on a rampage. They barricaded the main roads in town, set fire to tyres along the road, destroyed lamp posts that were waiting to be installed along the Buea two-lane road and succeeded in razing a police jeep hidden behind a travel agency at Mile 17 Motor Park. It was to avoid further confrontation with the students that heavily armed police removed the corpse of the other slain UB student, Aloysius Amboeur Duhuanja, from the mortuary during the night of 10 May and, amid high security, took it to Ekona where they handed it over to the aggrieved parents.[9]

Faced with the university authorities' failure to bring the student strikes at the state universities under control, President Paul Biya decided to intervene once again. He had earlier offered two subventions, amounting to approximately FCFA 5 billion, to these universities to resolve their most urgent problems. On 13 May he appointed a commission led by a former minister, David Abouem à Tchoyi, to investigate the situation in the state universities from 16 May to 9 June. However, when it visited the UB on 18-19 May, the UBSU leadership declared that it was going to discuss their problems with the commission only after the VC had come to meet the strikers and entered into dialogue with them. Since the VC refused to do so, the commission was bound to leave the UB without having held any talks with students. It is noteworthy that, as in previous inspection commissions appointed by the government, the David Abouem à Tchoyi Commission's report was never made public.[10]

---

[8] See 'Making the SCNC Scapegoat in the University of Buea Crisis', *Postwatch,* 2 June 2005.

[9] *The Post,* 9 May 2005.

[10] *The Post,* 7 July 2005.

In the meantime, the VC had started instructing students to return to classes but made this resumption of classes conditional upon them signing an undertaking of good conduct, in which they would pledge to abide by the university's rules and regulations. What angered students even more was that the forms to be filled for this purpose could only be acquired after the payment of FCFA 2,000. In reaction, the UBSU leadership warned students not to sign such an undertaking, bearing in mind the union's motto: 'No dialogue, no classes'. In sharp contrast to the UBSU, some newly established rival groups, like the UB Association for the Promotion of Non Violence (UBAPNOV) and the UB branch of the Cameroon Students' Solidarity Association (CAMSA) called on students to go back to classes and 'to avoid making themselves hostage of mates who don't seem to care about the future'.[11] The university hierarchy reportedly held meetings with these rival groups but when the large majority of the students supported the UBSU stand, the VC started threatening the strikers. In a press release, she instructed students to go back to classes on 23 May, otherwise they would be considered as having withdrawn from the university. The UBSU leadership's response to this threat was to circulate tracts on 22 May that appealed to the strikers not to heed the VC's press release.

A few days later, on 24 May, another bloody clash between students and the security forces took place. As had been the pattern during the strike, the students had rallied that morning at their meeting points near the university gates, which they had named 'Jerusalem' and 'Bethlehem'. Apparently convinced that the security forces had lost control of the strike, South West Governor Thomas Ejake Mbonda ordered them to disperse the strikers. This led to renewed violent confrontations between both parties and, at a certain point, the security forces started shooting with live ammunition. A passing taxi driver was shot dead, several students received bullet wounds and many others were arrested. The students, in turn, attacked members of the security forces, seized their guns and ammunition, and set fire to a police personnel carrier.[12]

The next day the local branch of SYNES again strongly condemned the violence employed by students and the forces of law and order during the protracted strike, in particular the security forces' use of live ammunition. It stressed that the UB crisis had gone on for too long because of an absence of dialogue and called on all lecturers and students to stay at home until the crisis was resolved.[13]

Since the UB administration appeared to be unwilling to enter into any dialogue with the students, the Minister of Higher Education, Professor Jacques Fame Ndongo, finally decided to intervene in an effort to end the protracted strike. On 27

---

[11] *The Post,* 27 May 2005.

[12] *The Post,* 30 May 2005.

[13] Synes, UB Branch, 'Communiqué on UB Stalemate'. In: *The Post*, 30 May 2005. See also Synes, UB Branch, 'Communiqué on the UB Crisis', in *The Post*, 29 April 2005.

May he arrived in Buea and invited the students to meet him. After just a few hours of negotiations on the basis of a memorandum drawn up by the UBSU leadership, the Minister and the students had agreed upon most of the students' demands. These included the legal authorisation and recognition of the UBSU, the granting of immunity to all strike leaders, a withdrawal of the security forces from the campus, a reduction in the tuition fees from FCFA 53,000 to FCFA 50,000, an increase in the number of courses in the re-sit examination programme, a reduction in the price of food in the university restaurant from FCFA 150 to FCFA 100, the withdrawal of the VC's order that students should sign an undertaking of good conduct before the resumption of classes, the provision of better toilets, water taps and public address systems in the lecture halls by the administration, and the installation of a joint student-administration committee to run the affairs of the university. Both parties also agreed to a resumption of classes on 30 May.[14]

Most people thought that things would return to normal at the UB after this agreement but new tensions soon arose in relations between the students and the VC. On 8 June, the students started boycotting classes for two reasons. First, the VC had brought forward the start of the second-semester examinations from 23 June to 15 June. The students had instead expected an extension of the semester following their month-long strike action and they saw the VC's action as a punitive measure. Second, the VC had continued to oppose any recognition of the UBSU and strongly believed that the agreement between the UBSU and the Minister of Higher Education condoned the UBSU's violent strike actions and its defiance of duly constituted authority. She prohibited any UBSU meeting on campus and regularly threatened its leadership.

Shaken by the students' renewed strike action, the VC sent a delegation led by the Deputy VC, Professor Vincent Titanji, to meet the strikers. After listening to their grievances, Professor Titanji announced that the second- semester examinations had now been rescheduled to begin on 21 June. He also claimed that the UB administration had already recognised the UBSU but the students demanded proof of this recognition and insisted that the VC should sign and publish a statement acknowledging recognition of the students' union.[15]

At the behest of the VC, the UB Senate decided on 3 August that the annual convocation ceremony when degrees are awarded to UB graduates would be suspended. The decision seemed to have been taken as a result of student misconduct during the strike but the cancellation of the convocation ceremony came directly on the heels of a VC proposal that the strike leaders and lecturers, who were suspected of having supported or instigated the students' strike, were to be identified and punished. The UBSU leadership strongly condemned the Senate's decision to cancel

[14] UBSU Memorandum, 'UBSU-Minesup Accord', in *The Post*, 2 June 2005.

[15] *The Herald,* 10 June 2005.

the 2005 convocation ceremony, calling it a serious violation of the 'Anglo-Saxon tradition'. It recalled having written a letter of apology to the Head of State, local government and the university authorities for the damages and inconvenience caused by the strike.[16]

The VC became even more dissatisfied with the students' behaviour when she was informed that the 'illegal' UBSU had addressed a memorandum to the Head of State. And even worse, in this memorandum its leadership had 'dared' to request that he abolish the FCFA 50,000 university tuition fee and publish the findings of both the commission of enquiry into the killing of the two UB students during the strike and the David Abouem à Tchoyi fact-finding commission into the state of affairs in all state universities.[17]

On 26 August, the VC organised a press conference at which the UB authorities publicly reacted to the crisis that had affected the university. In her preliminary remarks on the crisis, the VC stated that the agreement signed by the Minister of Higher Education and the UBSU leadership on 27 May was 'without consultation with the university authorities and could be described as a measure to prevent thousands of innocent students from losing a whole academic year', implying that some of the points of the agreement were not binding. She then berated the entire student body for 'its uncouth and unruly behaviour' during the strike but the UBSU faced even greater odium. According to her, the UBSU was 'an illegal, self-proclaimed insurgent student group' that had masterminded the violent strike and had constantly demonstrated an attitude towards her person of 'absolute defiance, insults, mud-slinging and character assassination which mimicked the attitude of some teaching staff'. While putting most of the blame on the students and their leaders, she suspected that some members of the UB teaching staff and political movements had incited the students to engage in this violent strike.[18]

On 10 September, President Paul Biya again intervened in the university crisis. He nominated former ministers as presidents of newly created administrative councils in the six state universities, most probably in an attempt to reinforce political control.[19] Professor Peter Agbor Tabi, a former Minister of Higher Education who had become notorious for his extreme authoritarianism and brutal repression of student revolts at the University of Yaoundé and the University of Buea in the 1990s (Konings 2002a), was appointed president of the UB administrative council. President Biya also seized this occasion to either punish or reward the university rectors for their role during the strike. The rectors of the University of Yaoundé I and the University of Dschang were dismissed, while the UB's VC, Dr Njeuma, was

---

[16] *The Post,* 22 August 2005.

[17] *The Post,* 5 September 2005.

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] *La Nouvelle Expression*, 12 September 2005.

promoted to rector of the country's largest and oldest university, the University of Yaoundé I. Professor Cornelius Lambi, the then Dean of the Faculty of Management and Social Sciences at the UB, was appointed VC of the UB to replace Dr Njeuma. During his installation on 13 September, the Minister of Higher Education, Professor Jacques Fame Ndongo, told him to enforce the qualities of social dialogue, good governance and cooperation in the Anglo-Saxon-oriented UB.[20]

Professor Lambi did indeed do his utmost to improve the UB administration's relations with the UBSU, regularly inviting its leadership to discuss matters affecting the students. In his end-of-year speech, he announced that the UB administration had decided not only to organise the annual convocation ceremony but also to recognise the UBSU.[21] UBSU elections were subsequently organised with the assistance of the UB authorities, and David Abia, a political science student, was elected as the student union's president.

The 2006 UB students' strike

On 27 November 2006 UB students went on strike again because of the Minister of Higher Education's intervention in the competitive entrance examinations to the UB's newly created Medical School, which was planning to offer places to only sixty first-year students. After the written examinations, the VC of the UB, Professor Cornelius Lambi, had signed a list of 127 candidates for admission to the oral examinations, all of them Anglophones. Shortly afterwards, the Minister of Higher Education, Professor Jacques Fame Ndongo, imposed a new list upon the UB authorities that included an additional 26 Francophone candidates.[22]

The students were furious about the Minister's intervention. They perceived it as attempted fraud by a high-ranking government official at a time when both the government and the UB's administration were engaged in various anti-corruption campaigns. They therefore insisted that the original list be maintained and said that they were going on strike in solidarity with the Anglophone candidates whose chances of admission had been reduced by the Francophone-dominated regime's addition of undeserving Francophone candidates. From the original 876 candidates who took the written examinations, no fewer than 600 Anglophones had scored higher than the best Francophone.

The students' anger was fuelled by the VC's reaction to the new list. They had expected him to reject the new list outright and maintain the original that he had already signed. The VC instead told them that he had made a 'monumental error' by signing the original list:

---

[20] *The Post,* 16 September 2005.

[21] *The Post,* 20 December 2005.

[22] *The Post,* 1 December 2006.

> This was the first time of organising an examination that directly recruits trainees into public services. I want to apologise that I caused the problem because I signed a list that the minister was supposed to endorse.[23]

Curiously, although the VC was taking the blame, the wording creating the Faculty of Medicine lacked any clause about the Minister signing the list of candidates to be admitted to the oral examination. It only stipulated that the Minister was to endorse the final list of successful candidates after the oral examinations. Unsurprisingly, many observers were therefore inclined to believe that, although the VC had been entitled to sign the original list, he did not dare to tell the truth.

The UBSU leadership used the opportunity to voice other grievances. In a memorandum, it denounced the formidable hike in tuition fees for a number of post-graduate studies, the payment of FCFA 1,000 for the collection of transcripts, and the poor quality of the food in the UB restaurant.

Soon after the strike started on the morning of 27 November, the VC, who had built up a good relationship with the students in the course of his career, came out to address the strikers and eventually succeeded in calming them down by promising he would look into all their grievances. The situation changed dramatically in the afternoon, however. Probably under pressure from the Minister of Higher Education, the VC then announced on the radio that all the candidates on the Ministry's list were to come for oral examinations at the Central Administration building. When the students later got wind of this, they assembled at the examination venue. After desperate calls for the orals to be stopped, the embittered students overturned and destroyed the cars of lecturers parked in front of the building. The new Pro-Chancellor, Professor Peter Agbor Tabi, then arrived on the scene in an attempt to placate the students but they refused to listen to him, recalling his excesses in controlling students when he had been the Minister of Higher Education, and chased him away. They said that they would continue their strike until the original list of 127 candidates was re-introduced. They also demanded the immediate publication of the findings of the presidential commission that had investigated the killing of the two UB students during the April-May 2005 strike.

On the evening of 29 November, heavily armed riot police went onto the university campus and began beating up students and firing tear gas. As the police descended, the students dispersed and streamed onto the main road in the Molyko neighbourhood, pulling down kiosks, billboards and other structures and setting them on fire. The police followed and a running battle ensued. More tear gas was fired and the students replied with a volley of stones. That was when shots rang out, killing two students. Police violence continued the next day when they attacked and

---

[23] *The Post,* 29 November 2006.

wounded several students and even a number of people who lived and worked in Molyko.[24]

In a communiqué issued on 30 November and signed by the Secretary-General in the Prime Minister's office, Jules Doret Ndongo, the regime first and foremost blamed the VC of the UB for his irregular publication of the original list of 127 Anglophone candidates. Some members of the regime began to accuse him of having incited an Anglophone war against Francophones and even of being a SCNC member himself. As had been the case during the April-May 2005 strike, the regime tried to justify the killing of two more UB students by fabricating a 'police self-defence' narrative:

> A violent mob armed with machetes, stones and locally-made hunting guns, invaded the university campus with the 'strong determination' to ransack the university computer centre. After being pushed back by the forces of law and order, the assailants turned their attention to the Molyko police station firing at the police. Two of the assailants were killed as the police defended themselves.[25]

The regime then ordered an investigation into the events and called upon the Minister of Higher Education to take all the measures necessary for a resumption of classes, to make sure that the process and the existing rules for admission into higher education institutions were respected, and to punish anybody who was involved in acts of violence and vandalism.

In a communiqué on 1 December, the Minister of Higher Education, Jacques Fame Ndongo, tried to further explain why he had added 26 Francophone candidates to the original list signed by the VC of the UB. According to him, he was obliged not only to respect the existing rules and regulations which the VC of the UB, as he himself had publicly acknowledged, had violated but also to take into account the ethnic balance, which was a guarantee of national integration and stability (cf. Nkwi & Nyamnjoh 1997). This made UB students and other Anglophones wonder why the regime seemed to be more concerned with the principle of ethnic balance in Anglophone tertiary institutions than in Francophone ones.[26] Apparently, in an effort to placate the UB students and the Anglophone population as a whole, the Minister later announced that the number of first-year students to the UB Medical School would be increased from sixty to eighty-six.

Although students had failed to forestall the holding of oral examinations for admission to the UB School of Medicine, they still refused to adhere to the UB administration's decision to resume classes on 7 December. The student union, however, seemed to be increasingly inclined to end the strike through peaceful

---

[24] *Ibid.*

[25] See 'When history repeats ttself: The Government spin machine and the UB crisis', *Scribbles from the Den,* 21 December 2006.

[26] *Mutations,* 8 December 2006.

negotiation. UBSU leaders made such negotiations conditional on the prior release of their comrades who had been arrested by the police during the strike, and the withdrawal of the forces of law and order from the campus. While the UB authorities rejected the union's preconditions, they did agree on the need for negotiations and called upon certain Anglophone personalities known for their intellectual authority and moral integrity to bring the striking students to the negotiating table and mediate between both parties. The Regional Secretary of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms, Christopher Tiku Tambi, played an outstanding role as mediator and was instrumental in reaching a 'package deal'.

As part of this deal, the South West Governor, Louis Eyeya Zanga, finally agreed on 8 December to release five UBSU leaders and twelve students who had been picked up by the police during the strike. The UBSU leadership then started negotiations with the UB administration, which led to the signing of an agreement on 12 December. The Memorandum of Agreement for resolving the UB strike stated that:

> … a plea be forwarded by the UB authorities to the government requesting the publication of findings for students who were shot during the April-May 2005 strike and the November-December 2006 strike, payment of hospital bills for students injured during the strike, absolute and unconditional immunity to all the UB students for acts committed during the strike and complete evacuation of the forces of law and order from the campus as the UB students promise a high degree of responsibility void of violence and vandalism.

Following this agreement, David Abia, the UBSU president, appealed to the students to resume classes but the students refused to do so, arguing that a number of student grievances had not yet been resolved.[27]

On 14 December, a presidential decree dismissed Professor Lambi from the office of VC and nominated Professor Vincent Titanji, one of the UB Deputy VCs, as his successor. With the renewed assistance of Christopher Tiku Tambi, Professor Titanji succeeded in reaching a final agreement with the UBSU on 30 December. In this agreement, the UB authorities conceded to most students' demands, except their demand to maintain the original list of 127 Anglophone candidates for the Medical School. During the strike, the UB Pro-Chancellor, Professor Peter Agbor Tabi, had constantly stressed that 'the ministerial list of 153 candidates was not negotiable'.[28] The most important points were that the UB authorities agreed to grant immunity to students who had destroyed public and private property during the strike; to reduce the tuition fees for all post-graduate programmes to FCFA 50,000 and to refund all post-graduate students who had paid more than that amount; to offer transcripts to students at no cost (extra copies of transcripts, however, were to be paid for at the normal price of FCFA 1,000 each); to table a request

---

[27] *The Post,* 15 December 2006.

[28] *Mutations,* 8 December 2006.

for the publication of the findings of the presidential commissions that investigated the killings of the UB students in the 2005 and 2006 strikes; and to offer the UBSU an office on the university premises. The students, in turn, agreed to resume classes on 3 January 2007.[29]

Conclusion

This study has shown that the recent violent student strikes at the UB were first and foremost an expression of widespread student unrest and protest in Africa in an era of economic and political liberalisation (cf. Federici & Caffentzis 2000; Zeilig 2007). Having become frustrated by the dramatic deterioration in their living and study conditions and the lack of democratic space within and outside the university, UB students had come to see strike action as the only way to demonstrate their grievances to the authoritarian government of Cameroon and the university authorities.

What was unique to the UB students' activism and raised their militancy was their feeling of being more marginalised and oppressed than their Francophone counterparts because of their Anglophone identity. They vehemently resisted the Francophone-dominated post-colonial state's attempt to transform the newly created UB, which was based on the Anglo-Saxon university system, from a space of freedom and democratic governance into one of domination and political control over Anglophone 'rebels' and dissidents. They engaged in a series of violent strikes between 1993 and 1995, leading not to the desired improvement in their position but instead to the banning of their leaders and union from the UB. They strongly condemned the Francophone Minister of Higher Education's attempt in 2006 to add a number of Francophone students to the original list of only Anglophone students who had achieved admission to the oral examinations for entry to the newly established UB Medical School. They were shocked by the brutal repression of their strike actions in 2005 and 2006 by the predominantly Francophone security forces that resulted in several deaths and many students being wounded.

While the students understandably failed to bring about substantial changes in their predicament during the ongoing economic crisis and structural adjustment and to overturn the authoritarian state's imposition of a new list of successful candidates for admission to the oral examinations of the UB Medical School, they nevertheless succeeded in winning a number of important concessions. The most significant gain was the government and university authorities' eventual recognition of the revived student union that created new democratic openings in the prevailing authoritarian governance of the university. The UBSU proved itself capable of negotiating a

[29] *The Post,* 9 January 2007.

settlement to the 2005 and 2006 strikes that was acceptable to the authorities and students alike.

8

Autonomous teachers' trade unionism in Anglophone Cameroon, 1959-1972

Introduction

The role of African trade unions during decolonisation and in the immediate post-independence period has been viewed in different ways. Some Africanists appeared pessimistic about the ability of trade unions to play a significant economic and political role (cf. Kilby 1967; Bratton 1973), and Roger Scott (1967) even doubted the need for trade unions in Africa at all. This group particularly stressed that trade unions tend to be small in Africa – organising only a tiny minority of the working population – and that, in many instances, they were subordinated to the state in the aftermath of independence for the sake of national development, undermining their claims to represent workers, and turning trade union leaders into a privileged and often corrupt 'labour aristocracy'. It is interesting to observe that similar arguments have cropped up again in studies on the role of African trade unions during the current process of economic and political liberalisation (cf. Thomas 1995; Hutchful 2002).[1]

Perhaps the most influential article supporting this pessimistic view was by Berg and Butler in 1964. They argued that the political importance of trade unionism during decolonisation had been exaggerated and that trade unions were usually preoccupied with economic demands and collective bargaining. Union success in improving their workers' lot had been very limited and, after independence, they had become increasingly subdued by the ruling party and the state, transforming them from 'consumer' into 'production' organisations (Berg & Butler 1964).

---

[1] For an incisive critique on these arguments, see Beckman (2002).

Berg and Butler's dismissal of the 'conventional wisdom' of political trade unionism has been severely criticised and I want to restrict myself here to those elements that are directly relevant to my further discussion.[2] First, they are inclined to use a very narrow definition of 'politics', largely equating it with alliances to the existing nationalist parties, which enables them to mainly discard the previous orthodoxy of close relations between the unions and nationalist parties during decolonisation. However, even if the unions were able to maintain a large measure of autonomy during decolonisation, their strike actions, though primarily 'economist' in motivation, were likely to have become 'political' in terms of both their immediate and long-term effects and their interpretations by others. Second, it is by no means clear that a lack of constant cooperation between unions and political parties is evidence either of political apathy or political impotence. On the contrary, it may attest to a degree of political sophistication. Many trade union leaders were conscious of the need to preserve a power base independent of the nationalist movement even where they were in agreement with common anti-colonialist objectives. They often perceived trade union autonomy as a safe guarantee for not only the representation and defence of their members' interests but also for the prevention of any political conflicts and divisions within the unions themselves. Third, the picture of party ascendancy and union clientage is too simple an explanation for the variety of union-party relationships in post-colonial Africa. These relationships include, certainly, those of party control but they also encompass relationships of partnerships or a degree of union independence. And finally, Berg and Butler are inclined to see organised labour as a homogeneous and monolithic bloc. They fail to take into consideration possible conflicts between the various unions and the central labour organisation on the one hand, and between trade union leaders and the rank and file on the other. For instance, the co-optation of national union leaders after independence does not necessarily imply that local leaders and members were also effectively controlled (cf. Bates 1971; Konings 1993). When Berg and Butler make references to interest groups within the trade union movement, they use them to illustrate trade union weaknesses.

While admitting that African trade unions do have a number of shortcomings, some Africanists appeared more optimistic about their economic and political role (cf. Cohen 1974; Sandbrook & Cohen 1975; Freund 1988; Cooper 1996). They usually referred to specific factors that guarantee trade unions an exceptional position among civil-society organisations. First, union members may account for only a small proportion of the working population in Africa but they are usually concentrated in the cities and are active in strategically important sectors of the economy and administration. As such, they can exercise considerable political power, being

[2] For an elaborate critique on Berg and Butler's work, see Cohen (1974: 240-257) and Sandbrook & Cohen (1975).

potentially capable of paralysing the economy and administration, and threatening the regime in power. Second, trade unions are among the oldest civil-society organisations, with a long history of struggle against oppressive and exploitative regimes. They have often played a significant role in the fight for independence. Although subject to state control in the postcolonial era, they have nevertheless proved themselves capable of calling general strikes against corrupt, elitist and authoritarian regimes in several African countries.[3] On such occasions, they were even able to mobilise support beyond their own membership. Small producers and traders in the expanding informal sector, who usually maintain close relations with workers, were particularly inclined to support their actions. The trade unions, in turn, tended to represent the interests of these unorganised popular strata, serving as their spokesmen (Sandbrook & Cohen 1975: 208-214; Freund 1988). They have also played a leading role in establishing wider alliances in civil society for economic gains and political changes, in particular with students and academic staff unions and professional associations. Third, trade unions have often enjoyed a higher degree of international solidarity than other civil-society organisations. International trade-union organisations and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva have done a great deal in terms of providing organisation, finance and training, and defending union rights.[4]

To test the views of these two schools of thought on the economic and political role of African trade unions in the late colonial and immediate post-independence period, I focus in this chapter on a teachers' trade union in Anglophone Cameroon. This union, which was first called the Southern Cameroons Union of Teachers (SCUT) and later the West Cameroon Union of Teachers (WESCUT), came into existence in 1959 after it separated from the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) and was dissolved in 1972. Compared to other African trade unions, the role of teachers' unions during decolonisation and in the immediate post-independence period has been studied in very little depth. Most of the existing reports on teachers' trade unions in West Africa are descriptive and were often commissioned by the unions themselves.[5] Even worse, the SCUT and WESCUT have escaped scholarly attention altogether. This is all the more surprising given the renewed interest in recent years in the history of Anglophone identity formation and organisation (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003; Eyoh 1998a).

This study shows that, as in the thesis of Berg and Butler, the SCUT and WESCUT strongly disapproved of any close links with the nationalist parties and the government, and were able to preserve their autonomy longer than Berg and

---

[3] For a report on general strikes in postcolonial Africa, see Sandbrook (1982).

[4] Support for this more optimistic view can also be found in some recent studies on African trade unions. See for instance Beckman & Sachikonye (2000) and Konings (2003b).

[5] See, for instance, Smyke & Storer (1973) and Asiedu-Akrofi (1971).

Butler assumed. It was not until the creation of the unitary state in Cameroon in 1972 that the union was merged into a national teachers' trade union that was subordinated to the state for the sake of national unity and economic reconstruction. Unlike the thesis of Berg and Butler however, autonomous teachers' trade unions, like the SCUT and WESCUT, appear to have had considerable bargaining power. Berg and Butler overlooked the fact that the African trade union scene was not marked by only small, weak trade unions. In addition to this predominant type of trade union, there has also been a very small minority of large and strong trade unions. Teachers' trade unions usually belong among the latter group, displaying a remarkable capacity to organise a large proportion of teaching staff. Moreover, teachers' trade unions occupy a strategic position in society. Their members, living and working both in the rural and urban areas, are capable of paralysing the entire educational system. Their bargaining power was even increased by the late colonial and post-independence governments' keen interest in the rapid expansion of education. Teachers' unions also constituted an exceptional type of trade union in the sense that their membership was educated and commanded high status during the colonial period and in the immediate post-independence period. This augmented their bargaining power and teachers' trade unions were in the habit of bringing pressure to bear on the government through newspaper releases and letters to parliamentarians and government officials. They were able to maintain formal and informal lines of communication with government officials, many of whom were former teachers themselves. They were regularly consulted by the government on educational policies and their conditions of service, and were often invited to sit on public educational boards and committees. Although teachers' trade unions were not directly represented in the legislature, their interests were represented in parliament by a large number of elected members.

In the first part of this chapter, I attempt to place the emergence and development of autonomous teachers' trade unionism in Anglophone Cameroon within its proper historical context and will show that its formation and activism closely followed the political and educational developments in the territory that was first called Southern Cameroons during the British mandate and trust era (1922-1961) and later West Cameroon during the federation era in the aftermath of independence and reunification (1961-1972). Its membership clearly reflected the prevailing educational development and organisation in the territory at the time. By the end of the British trusteeship era there were still very few secondary schools and teacher-training colleges. The vast majority of the union membership was therefore made up of primary-school teachers. Moreover, schools were almost exclusively managed by the so-called Voluntary Agencies (VAs), in particular the missions. This, together with the fact that teachers in the public service were not allowed to unionise, explains why all union members were VA teachers.

In the second part of this chapter, I focus on relations between the government and the union, showing that two major issues were likely to strain these relations, namely trade union autonomy and union struggles for improvements in members' poor conditions of service. It is important to emphasise that both the government and the union leadership championed trade union autonomy with regard to the existing political movements and parties – a trade union model that had been introduced and propagated by the British Trusteeship Authority to discourage trade union involvement in political activities, and had been generally accepted by trade unions in Anglophone Cameroon. However, given the tense rivalry and bitter struggles for power between the ruling party and the opposition both before and after reunification, the ruling party and its supporters were inclined to interpret any trade union actions, and strikes in particular, as manifesting union support for the opposition, and to punish union leaders for their anti-government activities. The union leadership constantly denied any union involvement in party politics, claiming that its members were free to choose their own political allegiances.

While the issue of trade union autonomy lost most of its relevance after the establishment of a one-party state in 1966, the issue of improvements in teachers' conditions of service remained a constant source of conflict between the union and the government. Even during the British trusteeship era, VA teachers had begun to complain about their 'catechist' salaries and disparities between their salaries and those of government teachers. After reunification, there was even greater discontent when they were confronted with a sharp fall in income and status due to astronomical price rises and huge inequalities between their salaries and those of their Francophone counterparts (Ndongko 1975). They therefore brought pressure to bear on their union leadership to display a higher degree of militancy in defence of their interests against the government, which subsidised the VAs in the form of grants-in-aid. In accordance with the trade union model introduced by the British Trusteeship Authority, the union leadership was inclined to solve problems in a responsible way, i.e. through negotiation and collective bargaining. Strikes were resorted to only if all other mechanisms for a peaceful settlement were exhausted.

Although the government generally sympathised with the VA teachers' plight, it was experiencing growing problems in meeting their demands due to ever-rising educational costs. After independence and reunification, the Cameroonian government started to allocate substantial funds to the educational sector, mainly for developmental and egalitarian reasons (Boyle 1999). Generally speaking however, gains were more impressive in quantitative than in qualitative terms. It soon became evident that the government simply lacked the financial means to continue subsidising educational expansion and teachers' salaries, and this resulted in rapidly falling educational standards and declining motivation among teachers (Mbembe 1985; Ndongko & Tambo 2000). Unsurprisingly, the government's repeated failure to im-

prove teachers' conditions of service fuelled union members' discontent and caused the union leadership to make regular strike threats.

This study is based on various primary and secondary sources. Despite repeated attempts, I have failed to trace the union's own files. Most of the interviewed former trade union leaders and members suspected that these files had been destroyed after the union's dissolution in 1972. Fortunately, the Buea National Archives (BNA) have preserved valuable material. The administrative files dealing with state-union relations were of pivotal importance to my study, all the more so because the teachers' trade unions in Anglophone Cameroon and Nigeria were inclined to pay much more attention to the government than to the VA authorities (Abernethy 1969: 112-117). This is hardly surprising given the fact that the government was primarily responsible for educational policies and the financing of the educational sector. The BNA security files on the union were another rich source of information. These files contain meticulous reports of trade union meetings and activities, especially after the one-party state was set up in 1966. Newspapers and the House of Assembly Debates were also available in the BNA and provided data on teachers and the role of the union. And finally, I interviewed several former union members and leaders, government officials and VA authorities between 1998 and 2003. This enabled me to confirm the data acquired from the archives and to get new insight into union activities.

Political and educational reforms in Anglophone Cameroon

During the British mandate and trust era, the Southern Cameroons was administered as an integral part of Nigeria, leading to a blatant neglect of its socio-economic development and the increasing migration of Nigerians, notably Igbo, to the Southern Cameroons where they came to dominate the regional economy (see Chapter 13).The increasing peripheralisation of the Southern Cameroons, which became as it were 'a colony within a colony (Nigeria)', was also manifest in the educational domain.

Until 1954, educational policies were formulated by the Nigeria Education Department in Lagos. Public investment in the educational sector continued to be low, especially during the mandate era, and was mainly geared to the expansion of primary education. As late as 1939, there were no secondary schools in British Cameroon and pupils in the region had to go to Nigeria if they wanted to attend secondary school. The British authorities largely delegated the management of schools to the so-called Voluntary Agencies – the Native Authorities, the plantations (between 1952 and 1960), and particularly the missions. The VAs were responsible, among other things, for the building and maintenance of schools and the recruitment of teachers. Their activities were financed by government subsidies in the form of grants-in-aid, school fees, and gifts from Europe and the United States

(Courade & Courade 1977; Ngoh 1996; Ndongko & Tambo 2000). By the end of the British trusteeship period, there were 470 schools in the region with an enrolment of 76,411. Almost 90 per cent of these schools were managed by the missions. All of the secondary schools were mission-owned but fewer than 1 per cent of the pupils between the ages of fourteen and eighteen continued their education beyond primary level (Courade & Courade 1977; Yufanyi 1992).

After the Second World War, Southern Cameroonian nationalists soon began to attack the region's peripheral position in the British-Nigerian colonial system and Igbo dominance (Ebune 1992; Ngoh 1996). They initially claimed a larger representation of the regional elite in the Nigerian administration and, later, regional autonomy. In response to this pressure, the British authorities gradually increased Southern Cameroonian representation in the various Nigerian state institutions. Following successive constitutional changes, they granted the Southern Cameroons a quasi-regional status and a limited degree of self-government in 1954, and full regional status within the Federation of Nigeria in 1958 (Awasom 1998; Ngoh 2001). Consequently, an autonomous Board of Education for the Southern Cameroons was set up in Buea, the regional capital, in 1954, with authority equal to that of boards in other regions of Nigeria. This led to a considerable expansion of primary, secondary and teacher-training establishments (Booth 1996: 162).

Following independence and reunification in 1961, the new constitution called into being the Federal Republic of Cameroon that consisted of the federated state of East Cameroon (the former French Cameroon) and the federated state of West Cameroon (the former Southern Cameroons). Significantly, the new constitution granted almost total authority to the federal state. Primary education was one of the few responsibilities left to the individual federated states.[6] While the post-reunification era was marked by rapid educational expansion, the organisation of the educational system was essentially unchanged from the British mandate and trust eras. Primary education in West Cameroon continued to be mainly organised by the VAs, especially the missions. The missions were also empowered to open teacher-training colleges and other colleges of secondary education. The federal government agreed to continue paying grants-in-aid. This practice was carefully monitored and the amounts were published annually, but grants were often late and largely insufficient to cover increasing educational costs, aggravating the problems for the VAs of paying teachers' salaries (Booth 1996: 225). In 1965 the West Cameroon government introduced an education tax to assist with teachers' salaries and to support a free primary-education scheme for classes one to four (Tambo 2003: 24). Several attempts by the federal government to streamline the country's educational system, by making school curricula and structures in the Anglophone and Francophone

[6] For other responsibilities, see Ardener (1967) and Stark (1976).

sectors similar, failed miserably. The Anglophone elite tended to oppose harmonisation attempts, perceiving them as an expression of the Francophone-dominated state's hegemonic and assimilative tendencies (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003). For the same reason, there were few attempts to promote bilingualism in Anglophone schools.

The federated state of West Cameroon had only a short existence. Following the establishment of the one-party state in 1966, Ahidjo started to consolidate his hold on West Cameroon by repressing any opposition and restricting the supply of positions of power to supporters of a strongly centralised state among the Anglophone elite. When, in May 1972, Ahidjo created a unitary state in blatant disregard of constitutional provisions, there was in reality little left of the federation, except perhaps in name (Benjamin 1972).

The role of the Southern Cameroons Union of Teachers

Teacher organisation and activism in the Southern Cameroons closely followed political developments in the region. Until 1959, VA teachers in the Southern Cameroons belonged to the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT), a trade union founded back on 8 July 1931 (Smyke & Storer 1973; Abernethy 1969; Onwuka 1982). The NUT was generally regarded as one of the best-organised unions in Nigeria, with branches in almost every town in Nigeria and the Southern Cameroons (Verdzekov 1969: 268). In 1947, the Governor of Nigeria paid a glowing tribute to the leaders of the NUT for their sense of responsibility in conducting the business of their union (Yesufu 1962: 97). In October 1958, the British Trade Union Congress (TUC), which maintained close links with the NUT, underscored some of the reasons for the union's remarkable success:

> One has been the high educational standards of its members and another the continuity of service of its higher officials. The present president, Mr Alvan Ikoku, and the general secretary, Mr E.E. Esua, have both given many years of service to the union and have played a big part in the development of education in Nigeria.[7]

At the end of 1958, the NUT claimed a total membership of 47,500 in Nigeria and the Southern Cameroons.

Following the Second World War, teachers in the Southern Cameroons gradually began to dissociate themselves from the NUT. Although they had a representative on the union's executive board, they nevertheless felt that the union was not adequately representing and defending their specific grievances. Their disenchantment with the union might also have been part of the widespread anti-Nigerian feeling that prevailed in the Southern Cameroons at the time due to the region's marginali-

[7] Quoted by Yesufu (1962: 97).

sation in the British-Nigerian colonial system and its domination by Nigerian migrants.

When the Southern Cameroons acquired full regional status within the Nigerian Federation in 1958 and its government became entirely responsible for educational affairs, teachers in the territory stopped paying their dues to the NUT and started advocating the creation of a separate teachers' union.[8] In Nigeria, the process of regionalisation had forced the NUT to reorganise into autonomous regional associations, with the Northern Regional Teachers' Association drifting further away from its southern counterparts (Smyke & Storer 1973: 169-201). In the Southern Cameroons, the process of regionalisation eventually led to the emergence of a new union that cut all links with the NUT. At a general meeting in Nchang on 4 March 1959, Southern Cameroonian teachers adopted a motion calling for the dissolution of the NUT in their territory and the formation of the SCUT. By launching a separate organisation, teachers in the territory felt that they could better deal with their own government, whose educational policies might differ from other Nigerian regions. Mr D.A. Wan-Obi was elected as the first General Secretary of the new organisation.[9] The most important objectives of the new union were: (i) to enter into collective bargaining with their employers on matters affecting the interests of the teaching profession; (ii) to cooperate with the government, the Department of Education, the Board of Education and all other educational agencies with a view to raising the standard of education and the teaching profession; (iii) to secure effective representation on the Board of Education and in the Legislative Assembly in the territory; and (iv) to arrange uniform salary scales and improve the conditions of service of all teachers in the territory irrespective of denominational differences.[10]

The union had no trouble in securing recognition and registration. In 1959, the North West-based Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) had been voted into power (see Chapters 2 and 5). Unsurprisingly, the KNDP government was inclined to perceive the formation of the SCUT as a manifestation of support from the largest enlightened group in the territory – the teachers – for its secessionist stand towards Nigeria and quickly recognised the new union. On 27 May 1960, the union was registered under the trade union ordinance.[11]

---

[8] See Letter from the General Secretary of the SCUT to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Social Services, dated 30 June 1960, in BNA, File Si (1959) 11, West Cameroon Union of Teachers.

[9] In 1965, Mr Wan-Obi went to the United Kingdom on study leave. Mr J.N. Tamen took over as Acting General Secretary and was elected to the position of General Secretary in his own right in 1967.

[10] See SCUT, *Constitution, Rules and Regulations* (Ibadan, 1960).

[11] Letter from the General Secretary of the SCUT to the Minister of Social Services, dated 9 June 1960, in BNA, File Si (1959) 11, West Cameroon Union of Teachers.

The SCUT leadership, however, felt it necessary to explain to the government and Cameroonian citizens that the formation of the union had not been motivated by any partisan political calculations. Like the NUT, the SCUT strongly adhered to the trade union model introduced by the British colonial administration, which might be best described as 'free, but responsible trade unionism': trade unions should preserve their autonomy with regard to the nationalist parties and solve their conflicts with the employers in a cordial manner, i.e. through negotiation and collective bargaining rather than through strikes.[12] In July 1959, the union's General Secretary, Mr Wan-Obi, published a booklet entitled *Basic Facts about the Southern Cameroons Union of Teachers*, in which he outlined the 'veritable' reasons for the union's formation and stressed its commitment to the colonial model of 'free, but responsible trade unionism' (Verdzekov 1969: 272).

Relations between the SCUT and the government remained quite cordial until the end of 1960 when the KNDP began to suspect the union of hidden support for the main opposition party, the South West-based Cameroon People's National Congress (CPNC), which championed the integration of the Southern Cameroons into Nigeria (see Chapter 5). The KNDP's initial suspicions of the union's hidden support for the opposition arose from a general strike called by the SCUT that lasted from 19 October to 2 November 1960. It was the first strike by teachers in Southern Cameroons history but given the political climate prevailing in the territory at that time it was almost impossible for the union to escape charges that the strike was politically motivated. The all-important plebiscite was only three months away and the 'secession' versus 'integration' campaign was at its height. In this context, the KNDP government and its supporters saw the strike principally as a political action meant to discredit the ruling party that stood for secession and reunification and to strengthen the opposition that stood for integration into Nigeria.

It is necessary to trace the succession of events leading up to the strike to understand fully the reasons for the increasingly strained relations between the union and the government, culminating in government accusations of the union's alliance with the opposition. At the union's Annual Conference in Kumba in April 1960,[13] the union executive was directed to meet the Minister of Social Services, who was also responsible for education, with a view to solving urgent matters. The most important issues to be discussed were the replacement of the NUT representative[14] on the territory's Board of Education by a SCUT representative, the payment to VA

---

[12] The freedom to use strikes as a weapon should be resorted to only if other means of settling disputes, including conciliation and arbitration, have failed. See Konings (1993: 107-110).

[13] Report of the Annual Conference of the SCUT held in Kumba in April 1960, in BNA, File Si (1959) 11, West Cameroon Union of Teachers.

[14] According to my informants, the NUT representative was a high-ranking KNDP official who was strongly opposed to the new teachers' union.

teachers of the 15 per cent salary increase award recommended by the Mbanefo Commission[15] with effect from 1 September 1959 and the need to bridge the gap in salaries between government and VA teachers.[16] The union leadership should also call upon the government to explore the possibility of setting up a negotiating committee on which the government, the VAs and the union would be represented. This committee would help bring VA teachers' salaries in line with those of government teachers.

No agreement was reached on any of these points during a meeting between the Minister of Social Services and union representatives in Buea on 23 July 1960.[17] After the meeting, the union's General Secretary pointed out to the Minister that his members were so disappointed with the result that they were considering going on strike:

> If your ministry continues to treat us in this manner, my union members may resort to take the offensive and will not regret the attendant consequences. Teachers in the voluntary agencies are also human beings. They should not only exist but should live. It is therefore most unfair to retain them permanently on salaries below starvation level.[18]

Since the Minister appeared unwilling to enter into any further negotiations, the union executive met in Batibo in August 1960 to deliberate on the union's line of action. It was resolved that if the Minister remained adamant, the union would first announce a trade dispute. Should the Department of Labour fail to reconcile both parties, the union would then call a strike.

On 19 September 1960 the union declared a trade dispute. While the Minister still refused to make any concessions, the Labour Department made an eleventh-hour attempt to avert the strike by inviting union representatives for a meeting with the Minister in Buea on 18 October 1960, i.e. on the very eve of the strike. Union representatives had received strict instructions to insist that the union would not call off the strike unless the Minister was ready to accept its demands. However, they eventually yielded to the minister's firm stand that the union claims could be considered only after an unconditional industrial peace had been restored. A joint communiqué was issued to declare that the strike had been called off but, given the lack of adequate communications, it was agreed that at least three days would be needed to inform teachers of the outcome of the meeting.

---

[15] The Mbanefo Commission was set up in 1959 to review civil servants' salaries in Northern and Eastern Nigeria as well as in the Southern Cameroons. See Smyke & Storer (1973: 200-202) and Cohen (1974: 80-83).

[16] For the differences in salaries between government and VA teachers, see, for instance, Cameroons Report for the Year 1958, 233-234.

[17] See Letter from Mr Wan-Obi, General Secretary of the SCUT, to the Minister of Social Services, dated 4 August 1960, in BNA, File Si (1959) 11, West Cameroon Union of Teachers.

[18] Letter from Mr Wan-Obi, General Secretary of the SCUT, to the Minister of Social Services, dated 24 July 1960, in *ibid*.

Rumours of the union's 'capitulation' spread rapidly across the territory and all sorts of interpretations were attributed to it. Some teachers accused the leadership of having been bribed to call off the strike.[19] These accusations and the grave pressures that the rank and file brought to bear led the union's General Secretary to send a letter to the Senior Labour Officer in Buea on the night of 18 October in which he declared the communiqué that had been jointly signed earlier that day was null and void. Consequently, the strike took its course and there was an almost total stoppage of work in all schools in the region until 2 November.

The union leadership's sudden volte-face tended to confirm the KNDP's suspicions that the CPNC was behind the union's strike action. The party leadership became even more convinced of CPNC involvement in the strike when various members alleged that it was politically motivated. However, the government let it be known that it was ready to negotiate with the union and negotiations started on 1 November, with the Senior Labour Officer as chairman. These negotiations lasted three days, by which time the union had won a number of concessions. The NUT representative on the Board of Education was to be replaced by a SCUT representative. The VA teachers would be awarded a 15 per cent increase in salaries in accordance with the recommendations of the Mbanefo Commission with effect from 1 September 1959. Moreover, as soon as the political future of the Southern Cameroons was determined by the 11 February 1961 plebiscite, negotiations were to re-open between the union and the government to review teachers' salary scales. In addition, a committee was to be formed of representatives of the employers (the VAs), the union and the government, to serve as a permanent organ of communication and consultation.[20]

On the other hand, the union leadership was forced to accept that strikers would not receive any pay for the days they were on strike.[21] To the union's consternation, a certain number of teachers who had either boycotted the strike or presented it as political were later rewarded by the government in the form of appointments to executive posts within the educational sector. Henceforth, some teachers shied away from joining the union, fearing that the government might perceive their union membership as support for the opposition, which could compromise their chances of advancement. At a meeting of the union's general assembly in Mankon-Bamenda from 20 to 22 May 1961 and in the presence of the Minister of Social Services, the

---

[19] Interview with some former union members in Buea on 15 November 2003.

[20] SCUT, Trade Dispute, November 1960, in BNA, File Si (1959) 11, West Cameroon Union of Teachers.

[21] For some years the union continued to plead for compensation for VA teachers for their loss of pay during the 1960 general strike.

union's General Secretary endeavoured to dispel the view that the strike had been declared for any motives other than industrial ones.[22]

The role of the West Cameroon Union of Teachers

Following the establishment of the Federal Republic of Cameroon on 1 October 1961, the SCUT changed its name to the West Cameroon Union of Teachers (WESCUT). The WESCUT claimed a membership of over 3,500 out of a total of about 5,000 teachers in West Cameroon, making it one of the largest post-reunification trade unions in the territory (Konings 1998a). It was affiliated to the West Cameroon Trades Union Congress (WCTUC), the World Confederation of Organisations of the Teaching Profession (WCOTP), and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) (Verdzekov 1969: 289). All these organisations were strongly committed to 'free, but responsible trade unionism' and supported the WESCUT in various ways, in particular through training and funding.

Soon after its change of name, the union's relations with the ruling KNDP became even more strained when campaigning started for the West Cameroon Legislative Assembly elections that were to be held on 31 December 1961 – the first such elections following independence and reunification.

It is well known that a considerable number of teachers in Africa were striving for elite membership either by attaining the appropriate educational qualifications or through political channels (cf. Lloyd 1966). Both before and after reunification, teachers in Anglophone Cameroon played an active role in politics, and they actually constituted the largest single group in successive legislatures. All the prime ministers of the Federated State of West Cameroon, namely J.N. Foncha, A.N. Jua and S.T. Muna, began their careers as school teachers.

It was, therefore, not surprising that a large number of teachers stood as candidates in the 1961 West Cameroon Legislative Assembly elections, either as independents or on the platform of the established parties. Various members of the WESCUT leadership were elected to the opposition, including Mr E.E. Ngome, president of the union's Victoria Branch and Mr D.B. Munyongo, secretary of the Kumba Branch, both of whom were members of the union's National Executive Committee. Although one of the union's objectives was representation in the state legislature, there is no indication that the union as such patronised their candidatures. Their decision to contest the elections on the CPNC platform was entirely their own. Nonetheless, since many of the union leaders within and outside the legislature were opposition members, the KNDP's suspicions that the union was in league with the CPNC seemed to receive further confirmation. The union itself had clearly failed to take the political realities in West Cameroon into account when it

[22] *Cameroon Times*, 31 May 1961.

elected its national executive in Kumba some time before the 1961 legislative elections. As it turned out, nearly all the members of the union's National Executive Committee were CPNC supporters, albeit on personal title. Some former trade union leaders even told me that

> the political allegiance of the union's executive and the large number of union members became very embarrassing. At one time when the union leaders came to Buea for a meeting with government representatives, they hurriedly asked a teacher, who was a known KNDP supporter, to join the union delegation to give it at least a semblance of neutrality.[23]

Following the elections, the KNDP government decided to penalise those teachers who wished to continue teaching after having failed to enter the legislature on a CPNC ticket. The Secretary of State for Primary Education ruled that they were to lose three annual increments. Such a penalty was not acceptable to the union and was the subject of meetings between the union and the government until the end of the 1960s.[24] Over the course of time, however, the suspicions hanging over the union seemed to dissipate.[25] The ruling party came to look upon the union as a responsible body with whom it could work and it became customary for the Secretary of State for Primary Education to address the union's Annual Conference to urge teachers to join the union and encourage the union to work for improvements in its members' conditions of service.[26] Together with the introduction of the check-off system in 1962,[27] improved relations with the government strengthened the union's bargaining position. Moreover, union members and leaders who had a seat in the West Cameroon House of Assembly were used to representing teachers' interests during its various sessions. Debates in the House of Assembly touched upon questions such as the status of the teaching profession, salaries and conditions

---

[23] Interview with some former trade union leaders in Bamenda on 25 November 1998. See also Verdzekov (1969: 279-282).

[24] For example, one of the resolutions of the 1966 WESCUT Annual Conference was 'that the VA teachers who contested the 1961 elections in the West Cameroon House of Assembly should be restored to their normal increments and the arrears paid from the date they lost their increments'. See Resolutions of the Annual Conference of the WESCUT in Victoria from 24 to 25 August 1966, in BNA, File Si (1965) 2, West Cameroon Union of Teachers.

[25] In July 1962, the union's General Secretary called upon the Prime Minister 'to take the union into confidence rather than to treat it with suspicion'. See Letter from the General Secretary of the WESCUT to His Excellency, Vice-President Hon. J.N. Foncha, dated 20 July 1962, in BNA, File Si (1959) 11, West Cameroon Union of Teachers.

[26] See Government Press Release No. 3457, 3 August 1964.

[27] The check-off system is a system whereby the worker authorises the employer to deduct his union dues from his monthly salary and to transfer them directly to the union. WESCUT dues were deducted at the rate of FCFA 5 per FCFA 1,000.

of service of VA teachers, the role of teachers in local government councils and the check-off system.[28]

In its first years of existence, the WESCUT devoted a great deal of time to solving two particular issues. The first was the lump-sum payment of compensation to VA teachers. On the eve of reunification, the Nigerian government had paid out a lump sum to Southern Cameroonians who had served in the Nigerian public service to compensate for the loss of certain benefits. Unlike their counterparts in public schools, VA teachers had not received any such compensation. The position of the West Cameroon government was that VA teachers were not entitled to compensation on the grounds that they had not been directly employed by the Nigerian government, but rather by the Voluntary Agencies.[29] Union members became even more embittered after Prime Minister John Ngu Foncha allegedly stated in the House of Assembly that his government was not committed to paying a lump sum in compensation to VA teachers because of their participation in the 1960 general strike.[30] Despite several union representations, the government refused to give in. However, this did not discourage the union leadership from raising the issue again in the years to come.[31]

The second issue was the union's growing dissatisfaction with the functioning of the West Cameroon Education Consultative Council created after the 1960 general strike. Since the council was merely acting as an advisory body without any formal authority, the union demanded the establishment of a negotiating committee in 1964. The request was equally rejected by the government.[32]

The union leadership, however, focused more and more on the poor conditions of service in West Cameroon schools that negatively affected the morale and commitment of teachers. In the past, teachers commanded respect and enjoyed a high status in the territory, as elsewhere in Africa (cf. Abernethy 1969; Berry 1985), but now their status was rapidly decreasing due to poor conditions of service. An increasing number of teachers were devoting more time to furthering their studies than to teaching and were looking for better-paid jobs in either the public or private sector. At its General Conference in August 1964, the union stressed that

> The teachers' poor conditions of service place the union in a very difficult position, because whenever it appeals to its members to do their best and raise the falling educational standard in our primary schools, the response is that they will not do anymore

---

[28] See, for instance, House of Assembly Debates, February 1963, 161-63.

[29] *Ibid.*

[30] Letter from the General Secretary of the WESCUT to His Excellency, Vice-President Hon. J.N. Foncha, dated 20 July 1962, in BNA, File Si (1959) 11, West Cameroon Union of Teachers.

[31] See, for instance, Resolutions of the Annual Conference of the WESCUT in Victoria from 24 to 25 August 1996, in BNA, File Si (1965) 2, West Cameroon Union of Teachers.

[32] See Letter from the General Secretary of the WESCUT to the Secretary of State for Education, dated 1 April 1964, in BNA, File Si (1959) 11, West Cameroon Union of Teachers.

> than what they are doing since neither the government nor the state recognises them as being of any use to the community. Unless salaries are reasonable and attractive it will be impossible to obtain quality teachers for quality teaching.[33]

The union leadership demanded not only an increase in salaries but also the removal of existing inequalities in teachers' remuneration.

There were first of all substantial differences in salaries and benefits between teachers in West and East Cameroon. Teachers in West Cameroon continued to receive much lower salaries than their counterparts in East Cameroon in spite of the 'harmonisation' of prices in the wake of reunification (Ndongko 1975). The union therefore insisted on a 'harmonisation' of salaries. In 1966, West Cameroonian teachers were granted an interim award of 10 to 15 per cent, but the award barely bridged the existing gap in salaries between West and East Cameroon. Second, there were substantial differences in remuneration between government and VA teachers. For example, in 1969, a government grade III teacher in West Cameroon received a monthly salary of FCFA 26,090, while his VA counterpart received no more than FCFA 10,500. Moreover, from 1968 onwards, VA teachers were regularly confronted with long delays in the payment of their salaries and certain allowances such as fees for invigilating and marking examinations, which caused them a great deal of hardship. The union then began to protest strongly against this practice. At the end of the 1969/70 school year, teachers refused to mark examination scripts because they had not yet received their invigilation and marking fees for the previous school year. They insisted in Pidgin English: 'Money for left hand, red pen for right hand'.[34]

The West Cameroonian government regularly acknowledged that union demands were justified, but it equally stressed its growing problems in financing any improvements in teachers' conditions of service. Following reunification, there had been an enormous expansion in the number of educational institutions in West Cameroon, which had subsequently placed a severe strain on the state budget (Courade & Courade 1977). In the ten years between 1959 and 1969 the budget for primary schools increased from FCFA 113 million to FCFA 466 million, while that for teacher training rose from FCFA 30 million to FCFA 102 million. In the 1969/70 financial year, the cost of teachers' salaries was estimated at FCFA 1,020,423,000 and the total cost of primary education and teacher training amounted to 31 per cent of the state budget.[35]

---

[33] Resolutions adopted by the WESCUT at its General Conference in Bamenda from 28 to 29 August 1964, in BNA, File Si (1964) 1, West Cameroon Union of Teachers.

[34] See Note of Information, National Security, Buea Special Branch, dated 29 July 1970, in BNA, File Qe (1967) 10, Teachers Unions Security Reports 1967-72.

[35] Minutes of a meeting held at the Secretariat of State for Primary Education on 21 August 1970, with a delegation of the WESCUT, in BNA, File Si (1965) 2, West Cameroon Union of Teachers.

The union had made numerous representations to the government about the VA teachers' poor conditions of service, apparently without any success. As a result, union members became increasingly dissatisfied with the performance of its leadership, even accusing it of having been bought over by the government. They intended to pass a vote of no confidence in President S.T. Tataw and General Secretary J.N. Tamen during the union's General Conference in Kumba in December 1970 for their persistent failure to declare a trade dispute as earlier mandated by the union.[36] Given this situation, the union's General Secretary J.N. Tamen saw no other option than to declare a trade dispute between the West Cameroon government and the VA teachers on 28 October 1970. He called upon the Labour Delegate to mediate, claiming that 'teachers are now treated as beggars and second-class citizens'. He threatened to call a strike the following school term should the Labour Delegate's conciliation attempt fail to bring about a substantial improvement in teachers' deplorable conditions of service.[37] The union had two major points of dispute. First, there were the irregularities in salary payments to VA teachers. On the day of the declaration of a trade dispute, many teachers had not received their full salaries since July 1970. And second, there was the question of the non-payment of the 4 per cent and 3 per cent salary increases awarded by President Ahidjo in March 1969 and January 1970 respectively. While nearly all the country's workers had already received these awards, teachers were still awaiting payment in spite of the Secretary of State for Primary Education's firm assurance in April 1970 that this was about to take place.

The union felt the outcome of the Labour Delegate's conciliation attempt was not satisfactory. The government had blatantly failed to keep to its promise that VAs would receive the funds needed to meet their obligations to the teachers prior to 22 December 1970. The union leadership then gave up hope that another promise, namely that the Labour Delegate would bring pressure to bear upon the government to pay the arrears of the 4 per cent and 3 per cent salary-increase awards within the second term of the 1970/71 school year, would be kept.[38]

On 31 January 1971, the union's National Executive Committee met in Kumba to discuss its line of action. The Labour Delegate, Mr E.K. Lottin, who was in attendance then disclosed that President Ahidjo had made a substantial subvention of FCFA 330 million for the payment of VA teachers' salary arrears. Although the union's executive members expressed their appreciation for 'the Head of State's

---

[36] See Note of Information, National Security, Special Branch Mamfe, dated 29 October 1970, in BNA, File Qe (1967) 10, Teachers Unions Security Reports 1967-72.

[37] See Letter from the General Secretary of the WESCUT, Mr J.N. Tamen, to the Labour Delegate, dated 28 October 1970, in BNA, File Si (1965) 2, West Cameroon Union of Teachers.

[38] Letter from the General Secretary of the WESCUT to the Labour Delegate, dated 30 December 1970, in BNA, File Si (1965) 2, West Cameroon Union of Teachers.

magnanimous gesture', they nevertheless resolved to set a deadline for the payment of the arrears, having learnt from experience that the government could not be fully trusted: should payment have not occurred before 21 February 1971, the union would call a one-day 'token strike' the next day. They also reminded the Labour Delegate of an earlier promise he made during his conciliation efforts that he would use his good offices to ensure the payment of the arrears of 4 per cent and 3 per cent salary-increase awards during the second school term. They made him understand in no uncertain terms that if he failed, teachers would not resume work on 19 April 1971, the first day of the third term.[39]

In spite of the union's ultimatum, it was not until the evening of Sunday 21 February 1971 that the General Secretary of the WESCUT, who was touring the Grassfields, received a message from the Labour Delegate that the government was about to pay the salary arrears, requesting him to call off the token strike action planned for the following day. Although he had the Labour Delegate's message broadcast the next morning, many teachers did not receive the message and went on strike. He therefore pleaded with the Labour Delegate that, given the circumstances, strikers should not lose that day's pay. At the same time, he stressed that the union's planned strike action on 19 April would not be called off unless the government had previously paid the arrears of 4 per cent and 3 per cent salary-increase awards.[40]

On 8 and 9 April 1971, the union's Annual Conference was held in Nkambe. The main topic of discussion was the government's failure to pay the arrears of the salary-increase awards before the end of the second term, as previously agreed. In his address to the delegates, the Labour Delegate stressed that lack of payment was mainly due to the ever-increasing costs of financing education in the Federated State of West Cameroon and the government's inability to pay. He therefore called for patience until a solution was found and cautioned the delegates that the planned strike would be illegal because the union had not fully exhausted the legal machinery for conciliation and arbitration, including resort to the Labour Court.[41]

Tempers began to run high when the union president, Mr S.T. Tataw, proposed a postponement of the planned strike action with a view to having it legalised. Some delegates strongly opposed his proposal. Considering 'the genuineness of the teach-

---

[39] Letter from the General Secretary of the WESCUT to the Honourable Secretary of State for Primary Education, dated 3 February 1971, in *ibid*. See also Note of Information, National Security, Special Branch Kumba, dated 31 January 1971, in BNA, File Qe (1967) 10, Teachers Unions Security Reports 1967-72.

[40] Letter from Mr J.N. Tamen, General Secretary of the WESCUT, to the Labour Delegate, dated 17 March 1971, in BNA, File Si (1965) 2, West Cameroon Union of Teachers.

[41] An address delivered by Mr E.K. Lottin, Labour Delegate and Regional Inspector of Labour and Social Insurance for West Cameroon, to the 11th Annual Delegates Conference of the WESCUT on 8 April 1971, in *ibid*.

ers' plight', they pleaded that the union should go on strike on the planned date irrespective of the consequences.

> Things seem to be getting better for other workers and worse for the teachers. They seem to live in a world of unfulfilled promises. Our cup is now full and we should not regret to die as martyrs of old and to create a page in the history of names to be remembered by children yet unborn.

Accusing the others of being cowards, they left the hall and refused to participate in the on-going deliberations.[42] The majority of the delegates, however, were inclined to support the union president, objecting to any industrial action without legal backing. It was finally decided that the union's National Executive Committee should meet in Kumba on 15 May 1971 to fix a new date for the strike, after consultations with its rank and file.[43]

In the end, the strike did not take place. Just a few days before the planned meeting of the union's executive in Kumba, on 11 May 1971, the Labour Delegate organised conciliatory talks during which it was decided to send the union's claim to the Labour Court. Even before the court had passed judgment, the government agreed to pay. At a meeting with union representatives on 4 December 1971, the government agreed that the payment of the arrears of the salary-increase awards would occur between 1 July 1972 and 30 June 1974. It also agreed to pay teachers on a new salary scale with effect from 1 January 1972 – an issue that had been a matter of dispute for many years.[44]

On 7 and 8 April 1972, the union held what turned out to be its last annual conference in Mankon-Bamenda. A series of long-standing issues were discussed at the conference, including the government taking over all primary schools from the VAs. There were several reasons for the union's championing such a takeover. The VAs continued to have problems paying their teachers regularly and a lack of funds had also forced the VAs to close a growing number of schools and to lay off teachers. The union highly appreciated the fact that the government had recently taken over most of these schools and re-instated about 3,000 teachers. And above all, a government takeover of VA schools would signify an end to all the existing disparities in conditions of service between VA and public school teachers.[45] Other long-

---

[42] Note of Information, National Security, Nkambe Branch, 15 April 1971, in BNA, File Qe (1967) 10, Teachers Unions Security Reports 1967-72.

[43] Resolutions of the Annual Conference of the WESCUT in Nkambe from 8 to 9 April 1971, in BNA, File Si (1965) 2, West Cameroon Union of Teachers.

[44] See letter from the Labour Delegate, Mr E.K. Lottin, to the Secretary-General of the Secretariat of State for Finance, dated 12 May 1971; and brief notes on the meeting with the Executive Committee of the WESCUT to discuss outstanding issues held on 4 December 1971, in *ibid.*

[45] A memorandum submitted by the National Executive Committee of the WESCUT to His Excellency the Vice-President and Prime Minister of West Cameroon, dated 1 September 1971, in *ibid.*

standing issues that were discussed included the codified conditions of service for teachers and the introduction of a provident fund scheme. The delegates called for their immediate implementation.[46]

About five weeks later, on 20 May 1972, President Ahidjo abolished the federation and replaced it with a unitary state. Soon afterwards, the West Cameroon and East Cameroon teachers' unions merged.[47] The new national teachers' union became part of the single central labour organisation in the United Republic of Cameroon, the National Union of Cameroon Workers (NUCW), which was subordinated to the state (Konings 1993: 35-38).

Conclusion

This study of the role of teachers' unions in Anglophone Cameroon during the late colonial period and early post-independence era is opportune for a variety of reasons. First, it fills a gap in the existing literature on trade unions in West and Central Africa. Compared to other trade unions, teachers' unions have largely escaped scholarly attention even though teachers have played a significant role in society. Secondly, the study highlights the changing relationship between the state and teachers in this period: from one of relative harmony to growing tensions and conflicts. During colonial rule, teachers played an essential intermediary role in the colonial state's 'civilising mission' and enjoyed a high social status in society. In the late colonial period, the ruling nationalist party, the KNDP, strongly commended the separation of Southern Cameroonian teachers from their Nigerian 'mother union' and the subsequent formation of their own trade union, which it perceived as a manifestation of their support for its secessionist stand towards Nigeria. However, following the rapid educational expansion in the immediate post-independence period and concomitant budgetary problems, a deepening conflict was bound to develop between the state and teachers' organisations about teachers' deteriorating living and working conditions and their declining social prestige.

And, last but not least, this study contributes to the ongoing debate on the role of civil society in African states (cf. Harbeson *et al.* 1994; Monga 1996; Chabal & Daloz 1999; Lewis 2002). Existing studies point out that there were wide variations in union performance during decolonisation and the early post-independence period (cf. Sandbrook & Cohen 1975; Gutkind *et al.* 1978; Freund 1988). One therefore has to be extremely careful when making generalisations – either pessimistic or optimis-

---

[46] Resolutions of the 12th Annual Conference of the WESCUT held in Mankon (Mezam Division) on 7-8 April 1972, in *ibid.*

[47] The General Secretary of the WESCUT, Mr J.N. Tamen, proposed the name of National Trade Union of Cameroon Teachers (NTUCT) for the merged trade unions. See Note of Information, National Security, Special Branch Buea, dated 21 July 1972, in BNA, File Qe (1967), Teachers Unions Security Reports 1967-72.

tic – about the economic and political role of trade unions in Africa. This study has demonstrated that teachers' trade unions in Anglophone Cameroon have been able to play a more significant role than the school of pessimists would be willing to admit.

Firstly, the SCUT and WESCUT were able to preserve their autonomy longer than pessimists expected. This was mainly due to the fact that both the trade union leadership and Anglophone nationalist parties strongly adhered to the colonial trade-union model of 'free, but responsible trade unionism', which they saw as an ideal model for regulating relations between teachers and the state.[48] However, their championing of this model did not preclude regular tensions and conflicts between the two parties. Any actions and strikes for an improvement in teachers' living and working conditions were seen as being political in nature by the ruling party and actually had important political ramifications for the government, challenging its educational and wage policies. Nevertheless, the ruling party never seriously considered establishing control over trade unionism in the territory and preferred to solve any conflicts through negotiation with the union leadership (Konings 1993). In sharp contrast to other West African countries like Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast where teachers' trade unions succeeded in maintaining a certain degree of autonomy with regard to the state (Duncan-Adanusa 1997; Anugwom 2002; Proteau 2002; Bianchini 2004), the WESCUT eventually proved unable to resist the Ahidjo regime's hegemonic and corporatist tendencies. In 1972, it was dissolved and its membership was incorporated in a national state-controlled teachers' trade union for the sake of 'national development and unity'.

Secondly, the SCUT and WESCUT had considerably more bargaining power than pessimists assumed. Teachers' trade unions are among the largest and strongest trade unions in Africa, not only occupying a strategic position in the national educational system but also enjoying privileged access to the press, parliament and government in the representation and defence of their members' interests. The SCUT and WESCUT have been able to win a number of concessions even though the government found it hard to finance the rapidly expanding educational sector. Confronted with a sharp fall in income and status after independence and reunification, the rank and file was inclined to bring considerable pressure to bear upon its 'responsible' leadership to resort to striking when institutionalised bargaining procedures failed to deliver the desired goods.

Previous studies on Anglophone Cameroon appear to have completely overlooked the fact that, from 1959 to 1972, teachers' trade unionism in the territory was an important source of inspiration and reference for future generations of Anglophone teachers. The SCUT and WESCUT championing of trade union autonomy

[48] This was also the case in other British West African colonies. See, for instance, Smyke & Storer (1973) and Asiedu-Akrofi (1971).

and improvements in their members' conditions of service continued to appeal to Anglophone teachers during the one-party unitary state when teachers' trade unionism became state-controlled. It was not until political liberalisation in the early 1990s that Anglophone teachers were able to make a renewed attempt to create autonomous trade unions (Konings 2005b). Remarkably, relations between the new unions and the government turned out to be more hostile during political liberalisation than during the British trusteeship and federation eras for two main reasons. First, the ruling regime refused to recognise autonomous trade unions, trying to maintain the model of state-controlled unionism that had prevailed during the one-party state. And secondly, it was inclined to respond to trade-union actions for an improvement in teachers' conditions of service, which had dramatically deteriorated during the severe economic crisis and structural adjustment, by evasive and repressive tactics rather than through negotiations.

9

Anglophone teachers' organisations during Cameroon's political liberalisation

Introduction

As elsewhere in Africa, political liberalisation in Cameroon in the early 1990s created more space for teachers to organise and defend their interests vis-à-vis the state. This led to unprecedented levels of militant action on the part of teachers, which have received hardly any attention in the existing literature (cf. Woods 1996; Proteau 2002; Anugwom 2002; Bianchini 2004). Teachers occupy a strategic but increasingly precarious position in African societies, and an assessment of their organisational strength in their frequent confrontations with the state authorities during political liberalisation appears to be relevant to current debates about the role and power of civil society in Africa (cf. Bayart 1986; Harbeson *et al.* 1994; Monga 1996; Chabal & Daloz 1999; Lewis 2002).

This chapter focuses on the role of two newly created teachers' organisations in Anglophone Cameroon that I studied as part of a long-standing project on the history of Anglophone identity formation and organisation (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003). These are by far the most important teachers' organisations in the region, recruiting members mainly among teachers in secondary schools. The longer-established organisation is a professional association, the Teachers' Association of Cameroon (TAC), while the other is a more recently established trade union, the Cameroon Teachers' Trade Union (CATTU).

The grave problems facing teachers in Cameroon as a whole and Anglophone Cameroon in particular have presented an enormous challenge to the new organisa-

tions. First, there is the deepening crisis in the educational sector in Cameroon (see Chapters 6 and 8). It is common in Cameroon to hear people say, 'There is a shortage of everything in our schools except students'. The severe economic crisis and the subsequent structural adjustment programmes have aggravated the situation with an increasing withdrawal of state support for the educational sector.

Second, teachers are experiencing poor living and working conditions in Cameroon. Unsurprisingly, the deteriorating conditions of service in the educational sector have negatively affected the morale and commitment of teachers who are expected to teach a growing number of students under deplorable working conditions and with little remuneration for this demanding work. Even worse, during the economic crisis, they were faced with regular delays in the payment of their basic salaries and various allowances and, in some cases, with drastic cuts in their already meagre salaries. Teachers are, therefore, inclined to hold the corrupt and authoritarian post-colonial regimes responsible for their predicament. In the past, teachers commanded respect and enjoyed a high status in African societies (cf. Foster 1965; Berry 1985), but now their status has been diminished by the drastic decline in their living and working conditions. During my interviews with trade-union leaders in Cameroon, they lamented the fact that 'teachers have become the laughing-stock of society'.

And third, there is the question of the preservation of the Anglophone educational legacy in the Francophone-dominated post-colonial state, which is an essential element of the so-called 'Anglophone problem' (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003). There is a widespread belief among Anglophone teachers and other sections of the regional population that nation-building after reunification in 1961 was driven by the Francophone political elite's firm determination to dominate the Anglophone minority and to wipe out the cultural and institutional foundations of Anglophone identity. One of their multiple grievances is the alleged Francophone attempt to assimilate, and even dismantle, their educational legacy.

It soon became evident that the newly created teachers' organisations in Anglophone Cameroon had to operate in a hostile political environment. Even during political liberalisation, the regime continued to pose severe obstacles to any organisation that championed autonomy versus the state in the representation of its members' interests. Two separate phases in the political liberalisation process in Cameroon can be distinguished. The first was dubbed *démocratie avancée* (advanced democracy) by the regime,[1] starting in December 1990 with the replacement of the

[1] The concept of advanced democracy implies that Cameroon already had some form of democracy prior to political liberalisation. Indeed, after his accession to power in 1982, president Paul Biya introduced limited democratic reforms within the one-party state. See for instance Takougang & Krieger (1998: 76-85).

one-party state with a multi-party system and the introduction of a certain degree of freedom of speech and association.

Frightened by the subsequent upsurge in oppositional politics, the ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) led by President Paul Biya did its utmost to stay in power (Konings 1996c; Takougang & Krieger 1998). Any newly created political party and organisation was obliged to seek state approval and registration, while the regime tried to gain or maintain control over existing organisations. A good example is the Cameroon labour movement which had become subordinated to the state after independence and reunification. Although the new Labour Code of 1992 provided for trade union autonomy versus the state, the Biya regime took a number of measures to guarantee the continuing incorporation of trade unionism into the state, including the manipulation of trade union elections in favour of party members, intimidation and even the imprisonment of opposition trade union leaders and the sponsoring of rival trade union organisations with close links to the state (Konings 2003b, 2007b). In addition, any organisation that was seen as a threat to peace and stability, national unity or the regime in power was subjected to brutal repression.

The second phase in the political liberalisation process was dubbed *démocratie apaisée* (pacified democracy) by the regime, starting in 1997 when the regime scored an overwhelming victory over the opposition during fraudulent parliamentary and presidential elections. Pacified democracy signified a shift in government controlling strategies from confrontation to collaboration with the opposition, usually presented in terms of achieving a consensus or national reconciliation. Although it never completely abandoned its repressive and divisive tactics, the regime now started making overtures to opposition parties and militant organisations in an effort to co-opt their leaders into the state by offering them lucrative posts and a slice of the national cake. Significantly, pacified democracy gave rise to various forms of opportunistic behaviour among opposition leaders and civil society organisations in their pursuit of what Bayart (1989) has aptly called 'the politics of the belly'. One that seemed to offer the best prospects for being invited by the regime to what is called in Cameroon *la mangeoire nationale* (the national dining-table) was to pose as a *farouche opposant* (fierce opponent) of the regime in public while conniving with it in secret.

In this chapter, I assess how much the two Anglophone teachers' organisations have been able to achieve during both phases of the political liberalisation process in Cameroon. In this connection, it must be remembered that these organisations clearly differed in their objectives and strategies. The older of the two organisations, the TAC, tended to be mainly interested in regional objectives, namely the struggle for the preservation of the Anglophone educational legacy and an improvement in the conditions of service of its Anglophone membership only. It never attempted to

establish any alliance with Francophone teachers' organisations. In sharp contrast to the TAC, the CATTU championed class above regional interests. It aimed at effecting reforms in the Cameroonian educational system as a whole and improving the conditions of service of all Cameroonian teachers. For this purpose, it has built up alliances with various teachers' trade unions in Francophone Cameroon where trade unionism in the educational sector is extremely fragmented.

The Teachers' Association of Cameroon (TAC): Defending regional interests versus the state

The Teachers' Association of Cameroon (TAC) emerged in the early days of political liberalisation when the Anglophone elite started mobilising and organising the Anglophone population to defend its interests within the Francophone-dominated post-colonial state. Several associations were created to voice the numerous Anglophone grievances about Francophone domination, assimilation and exploitation, and hey eventually established an umbrella organisation, the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) that strove for the creation of an independent state in Anglophone Cameroon.

In addition to these associations that aimed to represent broad-based Anglophone interests, a number of auxiliary associations emerged that claimed to represent the interests of specific strata among the Anglophone population. They included the Cameroon Anglophone Students' Association (CANSA), the Anglophone Common Law Association, the Association of Anglophone Journalists, the Cameroon Anglophone Public Servants' Union (CAPSU), the Anglophone Youth Council, the Anglophone Women's League, and TAC.

The TAC was founded on 25 April 1991 by a group of Anglophone high school teachers, from both the private and public sectors, who had come together to discuss the problems they faced as General Certificate of Education (GCE) examiners. Their discussions focused in particular on the non-payment of certain fees and allowances. They finally resolved that all dues owed to GCE examiners for the 1984-90 period – including marking fees and out-of-station allowances – must be paid by the Ministry of National Education before correction of the 1991 scripts started. 'Money for left hand, red pen for right hand', they stated in Pidgin English. At the end of the meeting, they decided to organise themselves into a professional association, TAC, for the defence of their interests. The TAC's subsequent application for registration was approved by the state, giving it legal status in Cameroon. Its membership gradually grew to about 3,500.[2]

Soon after its foundation, the TAC became increasingly concerned with how the GCE examinations were being arranged in Anglophone Cameroon. Since the Minis-

[2] See *Cameroon Now,* 5-12 June 1991, p. 3.

try of National Education had taken over the running of the GCE examinations from the University of London in 1976 (Ndongko & Nyamnjoh 2000: 246), some alarming developments had occurred. First, there had been attempts by Francophone Ministers of National Education in the 1980s to 'harmonise' the Anglophone GCE with the Francophone *baccalauréat*. Fierce resistance from Anglophone students and parents to these Francophone onslaughts on the Anglophone educational legacy forced the government to repeal the proposed educational reforms (Nyamnjoh 1986: 19-86).

Second, by 1990, there was ample evidence that the Ministry of National Education was managing the GCE examinations poorly, leading to severe abuse of the system and numerous irregularities in the conduct of these examinations. Francophone officials attempted to establish control over the GCE examinations, even though most either lacked competence or neglected their responsibilities. Financial problems compounded the situation; and during the deteriorating economic crisis, the ministry proved unable to pay the University of London, which had continued to assist it in various ways, for example, by drafting the syllabi, moderating, supplying consultants and external examiners and training Cameroonian personnel. In 1990, the University of London decided to suspend its cooperation with the ministry as a result of debts amounting to FCFA 350 million. The consequences were disastrous. The examinations rapidly began to lose their traditional high standards and reputation as gross errors were made at all levels. It was only a matter of time before their credibility started to fall as well (Nyamnjoh 1996: 11-12; Ndongko & Nyamnjoh 2000: 248).

Teachers publicly complained about the falling standards of GCE examinations, and the TAC soon broadened its objectives to include the creation of an autonomous GCE Board as a matter of utmost urgency. This board was supposed to take over the running of the GCE examinations and other examinations in the Anglophone school system in Cameroon from the Department of Examinations within the Ministry of National Education. In fact, the TAC made the marking of the 1992 examinations dependent on the government installing such a board.

In the struggle for the establishment of an autonomous GCE Board, the TAC received much-needed support from Anglophone parents, students, churches, the private press and the newly created Anglophone associations and opposition parties. All were convinced that the TAC's struggle was of great importance to the preservation of Anglophone education and identity. In the course of the struggle, the existing Anglophone Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) formed an umbrella organisation, the so-called Confederation of Anglophone Parent Teacher Associations of Cameroon (CAPTAC) (Boyle 1999).

I have already described in some detail the protracted struggle in 1992-93 between the TAC and the government over the installation of an autonomous GCE

Board (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003: 166-172; see also Nyamnjoh 1996). It suffices to say here that the government used all kinds of intimidating and delaying tactics to create panic and disunity among teachers. For example, in September 2003, the Minister of National Education, Dr Robert Mbella Mbappe, ordered the armed forces to take the GCE examination scripts from Anglophone Cameroon to Francophone Cameroon. The minister was furious that Anglophone teachers were still refusing to start marking after he had finally made some important concessions to the TAC demands for the installation of an autonomous GCE Board. During the night of 14 September 1993, soldiers secretly broke into the two marking centres in Anglophone Cameroon and took the scripts to Yaoundé. It was several days before the minister actually admitted that the scripts were in Yaoundé. With the assistance of various government officials, the minister then started recruiting new markers, some of them Francophone students, who were often not properly qualified for the job. Recruiters and markers appear to have been well rewarded for their work, with a budget of FCFA 600 million having been reserved for this purpose. At the same time, Mbella Mbappe and other government officials continued to tell Anglophone teachers to start marking in Yaoundé or face the consequences. The vast majority of the Anglophone examiners, however, simply ignored these threats, and Anglophone parents, organised by the CAPTAC, warned the minister that they would never accept the results of GCE examinations marked by unqualified staff. CAPTAC and TAC members subsequently staged demonstrations to force the government to enter into renewed negotiations with the TAC.[3]

On 25 October 1993, the TAC and the Anglophone community savoured a rare moment of triumph when the board was finally installed in Buea.[4] Later, Andrew Azong-Wara, the TAC's president, was nominated as its first registrar. His subsequent recruitment of a number of other TAC leaders for various functions within the board made it resemble a TAC venture. Immediately after the board's installation, Anglophone teachers took over the marking of the GCE scripts in Yaoundé but they soon discovered that almost the entire budget for marking had already been allocated to the former examiners appointed by the Minister of National Education. Determined not to endanger the board's continued existence, the teachers then decided to mark without payment. Although the marking period resulted in much personal hardship, including problems with paying for food and transport to and from the marking centres, they still persevered.

---

[3] A large demonstration by Anglophone parents in Yaoundé on 12 October 1993 was brutally dispersed by the security forces. See coverage in the *Cameroon Post,* 20-27 October 1993, especially the report on the Yaoundé demonstration by Julius M. Wamey entitled 'The GCE Saga: *Vidi Aquam* (I saw water)'.

[4] For the text of application creating the GCE Board, see Nyamnjoh (1996: 179-192).

Unfortunately, following this remarkable achievement in the first period of its existence, the TAC rapidly began to decline in influence from 1994 onwards. The first signs of its decay were already visible during a general strike in the public service that lasted from 8 December 1993 until 10 March 1994. While the TAC had formed a united front during the protracted struggles for an autonomous GCE Board, this strike demonstrated a widening gap between its leadership and the rank and file.

The strike was a clear protest action by civil servants against the drastic cuts (amounting to 60-70 per cent) in their salaries in 1993, the non-payment of their September-October 1993 salaries, and the 50 per cent devaluation of the CFA franc in January 1994 (Konings 2003b). It was supported by several newly created trade unions in the public sector, such as teachers' trade unions in Francophone Cameroon and the Cameroon Public Servants' Union (CAPSU) in Anglophone Cameroon, whose membership also included a number of public school teachers. Although many TAC members participated in the strike, their leaders immediately dissociated themselves from it for a variety of reasons. First, the TAC had been founded to achieve some limited objectives which were mainly of a regional nature: to protect the professional interests of the Anglophone GCE examiners and to strive for the establishment of an autonomous GCE Board. It was never meant to act as a trade union whose objectives tend to be much wider and geared at bringing about reforms in the national educational system and defending the interests of all teachers in matters such as living and working conditions. Second, the TAC president, Andrew Azong-Wara, was also active as the GCE Board's registrar. This double responsibility would apparently become a potential source of conflict. Following the TAC's persistent championship of an autonomous GCE Board, Azong-Wara appeared eager to show the public and the regime that the TAC was more capable of managing the GCE examinations than its predecessor. He thus strongly disapproved of a protracted strike that could thwart the successful conduct of these examinations.

After consultations with the prime minister in early February 1994, the TAC leaders attempted in vain to call off the strike. The rank and file bluntly told them that they could not call off a strike that they had never supported. Azong-Wara had once been looked upon in Anglophone Cameroon as a hero after the TAC's historic victory in the struggle for an autonomous GCE Board. Now angry teachers even accused him of having been bribed by the prime minister to adopt a pro-government stand. Although the rank and file refused to resume work, the TAC's leadership nevertheless declared on the radio that its members had agreed to call off the strike.[5]

[5] See Oben (1994: 137) and *The Herald,* 14-16 February 1994.

The rank and file lost even more confidence in Azong-Wara's leadership in 1996 when he played a dubious role in two strikes called by trade unions of public school teachers in Anglophone and Francophone Cameroon. These strikes were aimed primarily at bringing pressure to bear on the government to sign a special statute for teachers in the public service, which would imply a significant improvement in their conditions of service, and to pay the two-month salary arrears owed to civil servants since 1993. The first strike started on 12 April 1996 and involved a boycott of the end-of-year examinations. Mindful of the grave consequences of this boycott, the Biya government quickly announced the introduction of a new statute. The teachers, however, dismissed it as falling far below their expectations and decided to continue the strike. Azong-Wara again refused to support the strike and even managed to hold all the end-of-the-year examinations, thus forcing the teachers' trade unions to call off the strike.

The second strike took place at the beginning of the new school year in September 1996. Remarkably, Azong-Wara decided to support the strike this time. Apparently, his support was closely connected with persistent rumours that the government was about to establish control over the GCE Board. By personally moving into the field to supervise the teachers' strike, Azong-Wara intended to regain the rank and file's confidence, which would be needed to challenge any future government encroachment on the GCE Board's relative autonomy. To pacify the strikers, President Paul Biya signed a decree on 28 September 1996 in which he granted teachers three categories of allowances. Although Azong-Wara acknowledged the serious shortcomings of the decree, he nevertheless withdrew his support for the strike. TAC members called him a traitor and demanded his resignation from the association's presidency.[6]

The government took advantage of the rank and file's loss of confidence in Azong-Wara to bring about his downfall as registrar of the GCE Board on 12 March 1997. Various charges were brought against him, notably the misappropriation of funds and repeated refusals to have the board externally audited, his management of the board as an appendix of TAC as evidenced by his almost exclusive employment of TAC members and sympathisers, and his support of the teachers' strike in September 1996 that prevented students from properly preparing for examinations.[7] The principal reason for his downfall, however, seems to have been his persistent defence of the preservation of an autonomous GCE Board. The new administrators, Dr Herbert Endeley (chairman) and Dr Omer Yembe (registrar) were staunch members of the ruling CPDM, and were inclined to support the government's policy of regaining control over the GCE Board. Dr Endeley, the registrar of the University of Buea, had been chairman of the commission of enquiry

---

[6] *The Herald,* 3-5 January 1997, pp. 1-2.

[7] *Ibid.,* 13-15 June 1997.

in the 1996 GCE examination leakage that, according to many Anglophones, was engineered by the government itself to discredit the autonomous GCE Board. Significantly, when interviewed on this point during a television programme on 18 August 1996, Endeley suggested that part of the organisation and the running of the GCE examinations be handed back to the government.[8] The government could, therefore, be sure that the new holders of power on the GCE Board would implement the provisions of a secret decree (no. 97/046) signed by President Biya on 5 March 1997 that 'placed the GCE Board under the authority of the Minister in charge of National Education'.[9]

Following his dismissal, Azong-Wara was not reinstated in his position as teacher, or redeployed. Nevertheless, he refused to resign as president of the TAC in spite of regular pressure from the rank and file to do so. Although from time to time he undertook initiatives to revive the once vibrant TAC, the organisation has not played any significant role in Cameroonian politics since 1997.[10] Azong-Wara himself has increasingly turned his energies and intellect to the Anglophone struggle for the creation of an independent Anglophone state (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003: 172).

Since the mid-1990s, the GCE examiners, who formed the TAC's initial core, have protested against the low remuneration they receive for their services. This situation resulted mainly from the fact that the government tended to withhold the necessary subventions to the newly created GCE Board in its persistent attempts to cripple it. While the GCE examiners were initially prepared to make sacrifices for the smooth and successful running of the board, for which they had fought so long, they gradually started demanding full payment of their allowances in conformity with the rules and regulations of the Ministry of Finance. In 1998, they bluntly told the management of the GCE Board:

> The Board has taken us for a ride after we had collectively fought for it. ... If we decided to sacrifice for the board, it was because we wanted to consolidate our gains. It did not in any way mean that we had opted for a path of slavery where we are deprived of an economic entitlement clearly defined by law.[11]

Since the mid-1990s, every year has seen protest actions by the GCE examiners, with demonstrations, strikes and the boycotting of marking examination scripts. The examiners have become even more determined to get their dues because 'the GCE

---

8 *Cameroon Post,* 27 August - 2 September 1996, p. 2.

9 The new decree gave the Minister of National Education overall power to control the board. It thus contrasts sharply with the text of application creating the GCE Board of 15 October 1993 that granted the minister only supervisory powers. See Nyamnjoh (1996: 180).

10 For Azong-Wara's initiatives to revive TAC, see *The Herald,* 21-22 September 1998, and 9-11 February 2001.

11 *The Herald,* 24-26 July 1998, pp. 1-2.

Board registrar and his deputies reserve for themselves a large proportion of the meagre government subventions and registration fees, while the examiners who are doing the invigilation and marking only receive "catechist" allowances'.[12] They are also annoyed that the management is trying to exclude suspected radicals and troublemakers from the annual marking exercise. As a result, the successful running of the GCE examinations has become increasingly problematic for the GCE Board.

The Cameroon Teachers' Trade Union (CATTU): Defending class interests versus the state

In 1996, five years after the creation of the TAC, a new teachers' organisation, the CATTU, was formed in Anglophone Cameroon. Unlike the TAC, which was a professional organisation whose main objectives were the defence of GCE examiners and the establishment of an autonomous GCE Board in Anglophone Cameroon, the CATTU was a trade union that aimed to improve the living and working conditions of the teaching profession as a whole and to bringing about educational reforms in Cameroon. The CATTU recruits its membership from among public school teachers in Anglophone Cameroon, most of them high-school teachers like its founder, Simon Nkwenti. At present, it claims a membership of 5,743, of which only 1,762 pay union dues.[13]

From the very start, the CATTU's status has been precarious. Like most other trade unions in the civil service, it is not legally recognised by the government, and existing Cameroonian legislation on the formation of trade unions in the civil service is complicated, and even contradictory. The 1992 Labour Code generally excludes civil servants from forming trade unions. Nonetheless, Law no. 68/LF/19 of 18 November 1968 still provides for the legal existence of trade unions in the civil service, provided that the of the Minister of Territorial Administration has granted prior approval. The problem is that such approval is rarely given in spite of the political liberalisation process. The few trade unions in the civil service that have obtained approval and registration were either created or controlled by the government itself. A further deterrent to the formation of trade unions in the civil service is the 1992 Labour Code that exposes leaders of unregistered trade unions to legal persecution. The Biya government has also simply ignored repeated International Labour Organisation (ILO) demands that civil servants be given the right to unionise in conformity with conventions signed by Cameroon. Due to the government's persistent refusal to legalise and register their organisations, leaders and members of civil service trade unions have been liable to intimidation, incarceration and even

[12] *Ibid.,* 14-15 June 1999, pp. 1 and 3.

[13] FECASE, 'Effectifs des Syndicats Membres de la FECASE', Yaoundé, 15 September 2003.

torture during the period of advanced democracy, especially when they were engaged in militant actions.

The founder of the CATTU, Simon Nkwenti, has also frequently been a victim of state brutality because of his 'illegal' trade-union activities. Before forming the CATTU, he was secretary-general of the Cameroon Public Servants' Union (CAPSU), which played an important role in the 1993-94 general strike by civil servants during which Nkwenti was detained and tortured. As a result, he became well known and popular in educational circles,[14] and this, together with the growing neglect of Anglophone teachers' interests by the TAC and the CAPSU, were some of his main reasons for forming a new trade union for teachers. But, as many of my informants insisted, his personal ambitions in this endeavour should not be underestimated. He clearly perceived the creation of a union of his own as an important step in his attempt to gain power and influence.

Nkwenti promised public school teachers that his union would fight for an improvement in their deplorable living and working conditions. Soon after its foundation, the CATTU became one of the main actors in the 1996 strikes that were primarily aimed at forcing the government to sign a special statute for teachers in the public service. When Nkwenti threatened to call another strike in April 1997, he was summoned by the regional administration and ordered to revoke the planned strike action. He was immediately detained when he refused to do so and spent a long time in prison in extreme circumstances.[15]

It was not until the end of 1997 with the coming into being of pacified democracy that a certain relaxation was observed in the hostile relations between the government and the 'illegal' teachers' trade unions. On 7 December 1997, Robert Mbella Mbappe, who was strongly opposed to any form of dialogue or negotiation with the teachers' trade unions, was dismissed from his position as Minister of National Education. His successor, Charles Etoundi, himself a teacher, appeared instead to be prepared to discuss educational reform measures and teachers' conditions of service with the unions on a more or less regular basis.

To strengthen the CATTU's bargaining position, Nkwenti sought to gain support from other teachers' organisations. He was well aware that an alliance with the TAC in Anglophone Cameroon was impossible. As discussed above, TAC pursued more limited objectives than the CATTU and, even more importantly, relations between the two organisations were marred by competition between their leaders. The TAC's president, Azong-Wara, found it difficult to accept that the CATTU had attracted a considerable number of discontented TAC members. He also held Nkwenti in low esteem, seeing him as an opportunist who was using trade unionism to advance his

---

[14] *The Herald,* 10-13 March 1994, p. 2.

[15] *Ibid.,* 7-8 May 1997, and 4-5 June 1997, p. 3.

own career. Nkwenti, in turn, accused Azong-Wara of mismanagement when he was registrar of the GCE Board.[16]

Unable to forge any linkages with Anglophone teachers' organisations, Nkwenti then turned to Francophone Cameroon where trade unionism in the educational sector was fragmented. Since political liberalisation in the early 1990s, more than ten teachers' trade unions have emerged in the public service in Francophone Cameroon, the majority of them having started in a similar way to CATTU. Their leaders had broken away from the mother union to form a union of their own, not because of ideological or strategic differences but rather because of the personal ambitions of individuals who saw creating a new union as a possible avenue to increased power within union circles and, as was often the case during the period of pacified democracy, to a post of responsibility in the educational sector.

Cherishing similar ambitions, it is not altogether surprising that Nkwenti approached some of these Francophone leaders to form a trade union federation. On 15 July 1998, they agreed on the formation of the *Fédération Camerounaise des Syndicats de l'Éducation* (FECASE). Initially, this new federation comprised three members: the CATTU and two Francophone trade unions, namely the *Syndicat National Autonome de l'Éducation et de la Formation* (SNAEF) and the *Organisation Nationale des Enseignants du Cameroun* (ONEC). Two other Francophone trade unions joined the federation during FECASE's first congress in Limbe in January 2002, the *Organisation Nationale des Enseignants d'Éducation Physique et Sportive* (ONEEPS) and the *Syndicat National des Enseignants du Primaire et de la Maternelle* (SNEPMA-FECASE). At this congress, Nkwenti was elected general secretary of FECASE.

Conscious of the FECASE leaders' personal ambitions, the government has often attempted to win them over by offering bribes or lucrative appointments. A considerable number of FECASE leaders have been appointed principals or vice-principals as well as inspectors of education or divisional delegates. Nkwenti, for example, was appointed vice-principal of Government Bilingual High School Mendankwe in Bamenda and a member of the anti-corruption division in the Ministry of National Education. Following their appointments to government posts, FECASE leaders have refused to resign from their trade union functions in spite of frequent pressure from the rank and file. Like Nkwenti, they claim that they can carry out both responsibilities satisfactorily, denouncing any accusations that acceptance of government posts would necessarily imply a betrayal of teachers' struggles.[17]

The FECASE's counterpart on the opposite end of the trade union spectrum is the *Fédération des Syndicats de l'Enseignement et de la Recherche* (FESER), which was founded in 1994. It comprises three unions whose main base is in Francophone

[16] *Ibid.,* 21 January - 2 February 1997.

[17] *The Post,* 14 September 2001.

Cameroon, namely the *Syndicat National des Enseignants du Supérieur* (SYNES), the *Syndicat National Autonome de l'Enseignement Secondaire* (SNAES), and the *Syndicat National des Enseignants du Primaire et de la Maternelle* (SNEPMA-FESER). Together with the TAC, these unions are the oldest in the educational sector, having been created immediately after political liberalisation in the early 1990s, and they have participated in the major public-service strikes since their foundation. Some FECASE members, like the SNAEF and the SNEPMA-FECASE, are breakaway unions. The FESER is generally considered more radical than the FECASE in the sense that it is prepared to undertake more assertive actions than the FESER to achieve its objectives and is less inclined to compromise with the regime. Compared to the FECASE, the FESER is subject to more repressive government strategies including the suspension of salaries, punitive transfers, dismissals and imprisonment. Unlike their FECASE counterparts, FESER leaders have been disinclined to accept government bribes and appointments.

It is beyond doubt that the rivalry between these two federations has regularly forestalled the formation of a united teachers' front against the government, a situation encouraged by government divide-and-rule tactics. One sometimes has the impression that they are fighting each other instead of the government. This dynamic is manifest, for example, in the FESER leaders' frequent refusal to support any actions of what they called FECASE 'sell-outs'. Nkwenti has made several appeals for united action, as he did in a letter addressed to Jean Kamdem, the secretary-general of the SNAES, in November 2001, when he pleaded for unity:

> Comrade, this plea for unity is not a call for uniformity. There will be inevitable differences, but if our sole objective is to fight to improve the working conditions of the Cameroon teachers, then there is a need to bury all our differences.[18]

Some newly created trade unions have also called upon FESER and FECASE leaders to act together for their memberships' benefit. One of them was the Independent Union of Cameroon Teachers (INUCT) in Anglophone Cameroon that was founded on 1 September 2001. The INUCT was a breakaway union from the CATTU led by Gerald Ndukong, former CATTU secretary in the Mezam Division of North West Province. Ndukong attributed the formation of the new union to the growing dissatisfaction of a large number of CATTU members with Nkwenti's style of leadership. He said that Nkwenti had been ruling the CATTU as if it were his personal property. The CATTU's constitution, drawn up by Nkwenti, was never debated and the CATTU has held no elections since it was organised. Nkwenti even refused to hand over the baton to someone else after he was appointed vice-principal of Government Bilingual High School Mendankwe. Ndukong also alleged that Nkwenti had increasingly used the CATTU for his personal ends, lobbying for

[18] This letter was published in *The Post,* 26 November 2001.

government positions at the expense of its membership. He stressed that the INUCT, the new union, would maintain its autonomy with regard to both federations but would do its utmost to bring all the unions together in the struggle for an improvement in teachers' working and living conditions.[19]

These internal divisions within trade unionism in the educational sector were barely visible while Charles Etoundi was Minister of National Education. He invited all the teaching unions to the negotiating table in an attempt to reach a final agreement on their major demands following the 1993 public service strike, namely a special statute for government teachers.

Eventually, on 26 January 2000, they agreed upon a new statute and its text of application laid down the negotiated changes in teachers' conditions of service. The most important were:

- The reclassification of the teaching staff according to the civil service index. In this exercise, the highest index for each category of teacher was moved significantly upwards, implying a considerable improvement in their career prospects and salaries.
- The fixing of certain allowances for teachers: FCFA 50,000 as a technical allowance, FCFA 40,000 as teaching and evaluation allowances, and FCFA 50,000 as a documentation and research allowance.
- The minister reportedly turned down some other union demands, in particular an increase in housing allowances and special benefits for teaching in remote areas.[20]

Despite repeated assurances by Charles Etoundi and his successor, Professor Joseph Owona, that the President was about to sign the agreement, nothing happened. The leaders of the two trade union federations then decided to bury their differences and form a united front to put pressure on the president to sign the agreement.[21] They called for strike actions and the boycotting of examinations. Still, it was not until 5 December 2000 that President Biya finally signed the new statute. The union leaders, however, were perplexed when they discovered that he had failed to sign the text of application, which was supposed to specify the financial effects of the modified conditions of service for teachers.

Having fought for a reassessment of teachers' conditions of service since the drastic 1993 salary cuts, union leaders now decided to force the government to sign the text of application. They became even more determined when, soon afterwards, President Biya signed the new statute and the text of application for other categories of civil servants – notably magistrates, the army and the police. Unsurprisingly, they immediately interpreted this action as renewed proof of the government's lack of

---

[19] *The Post,* 7 December 2001, pp. 1 and 3; *The Herald,* 1 May 2003.

[20] *Le Messager,* 7 January 2002, p. 7.

[21] *The Post*, 10 April 2000.

concern for the deplorable living and working conditions of those who taught the country's political elite. They accused the government of discriminatory behaviour.[22]

The years 2001-2003 were characterised by a multitude of union protest actions including a series of intermittent strikes, the boycotting of examinations and demonstrations on national holidays like Youth Day (11 February), Labour Day (1 May) and Teachers' Day (5 October), and the sending of petitions to President Biya, parliamentarians and international teachers' organisations. One remarkable action, which the Minister of National Education Joseph Owona strongly condemned as being 'illegitimate' and even 'amoral',[23] was the so-called 'Operation 20/20' whereby students were given the maximum score of 20/20 for each test or examination. This action was initiated by the FESER unions but was later adopted by the CATTU and other FECASE members as well. While most of these actions caused a total collapse of the already struggling education system, the government did not give in. One reason was that the two trade union federations rarely undertook united actions due to continued mistrust between FESER and FECASE leaders. On certain occasions, they even tried to sabotage each other's planned actions. The government also employed various strategies to contain teachers' protests and to divide union leaders.

The government regularly called on teachers and their trade unions to exercise patience, promising that the text of application would soon be signed and that its financial implications would be taken care of in the following budget. For example, on 7 December 2001, the Minister of National Education tried to call off a planned strike at the beginning of the new school year by assuring union leaders that:

> Things are on course. I think that the financial advantages of the special statute for teachers are introduced in the 2001-2002 state budget. In fact, we hope that in the coming days, we will have the text of application of the decree signed by the President of the Republic in the special statute for teachers. So, I once more appeal to the teachers to exercise patience.[24]

On these occasions, the government was also appealing to the professional conscience of teachers and their patriotic spirit, asking them to take into consideration the future of 'our youth', who might suffer as a result of frequent protest actions.

The government also tried to persuade teachers that, although it had their best interests at heart, it could not satisfy their demands due to a lack of funds. For example, during a meeting with trade union leaders on 23 October 2001, Prime Minister Peter Mafany Musonge tried to convince them that the current economic

---

[22] *The Herald*, 27 July 2003.

[23] *La Nouvelle Expression*, 5 June 2002, pp. 6-7; *Mutations*, 11 July 2002, p. 11 and *Cameroon Tribune*, 1 August 2002, pp. 1-2.

[24] *The Post*, 10 September 2001, pp. 1 and 3.

crisis in Cameroon did not allow the government to pay in one go all the benefits that they had negotiated with the former Minister of National Education, Charles Etoundi, on 26 January 2000. The government could only gradually improve upon their conditions of service when the funds, coming from the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, were forthcoming.[25] Still, the government was prepared to make some minor financial concessions with a view to ending the protracted strikes and, on 4 February 2002, President Biya signed Decree no. 2002/040 announcing an increase in the technical allowances for high-school teachers from FCFA 12,000 to FCFA 25,000 and those of primary-school teachers from FCFA 5,000 to FCFA 17,500, which still fell far short of the technical allowances stipulated in the 26 January 2000 agreement between the Ministry of National Education and the trade unions.

The government also continued to use both the carrot and the stick to establish control over the unions. It has regularly attempted to win over trade union leaders, in particular those of the FECASE, by offering them bribes and lucrative appointments. Since 2000, FECASE members have been receiving subventions from the state for their 'proper functioning'.[26] The government has also never hesitated to resort to intimidation and repressive tactics. One such example occurred on 28 September 2001, when FECASE leaders and members were restrained by the security forces from staging a protest march to the Prime Minister's office.[27] And on 12 December 2001, the Minister for Special Duties, Dr Peter Abety, requested that principals in Bamenda denounce the series of strikes organised by CATTU members, whom he presented as supporters of the opposition and Anglophone secessionist movements, and dismiss any radical union leaders.[28] FESER members in particular have remained subject to punitive transfers, arbitrary suspensions of salary, administrative queries, and sporadic arrests.[29]

Following the trade unions' blatant failure to have the text of application signed by the government, the leader of the CATTU and the FECASE, Simon Nkwenti, declared the 2002-2003 school year to be 'a year of truce', leading to the postponing of all militant actions. This would give the government the opportunity to fully concentrate on what it had always claimed to be a necessary precondition for the signing of the text of application: the allocation of HIPC funds to the educational sector in the 2003-2004 budget. Nkwenti threatened the government, saying that the trade unions would devise new forms of protest should it fail to allocate the funds.

---

[25] *La Nouvelle Expression*, 28 October 2001. For the HIPC initiative in Cameroon, see Tamba (2001).

[26] *La Nouvelle Expression*, 5 September 2003.

[27] *The Post*, 1 October 2001, pp. 1 and 3.

[28] *Ibid.*, 14 December 2001, p. 3.

[29] See *Weekly Post*, 11-17 October 2001, p. 3.

When the year had passed without any government action, FECASE and FESER leaders both vowed to mobilise their union members, parents and students to vote against the ruling party's candidate in the 2004 presidential elections.[30]

On 12 May 2004, FECASE and FESER decided to coordinate teachers' trade unions nationally and organised concerted actions to help resolve the problems facing teachers and the country's educational system.[31] The national coordination team eventually planned a new wave of intermittent strike actions. Teachers would stop work from Wednesday to Saturday every week as of 6 October 2004 – just five days before the presidential elections.[32] Strike actions continued throughout the 2004-2005 school year in spite of the intimidatory tactics of the educational authorities, who were in the habit of calling upon secondary-school principals to submit the names of absentee teachers for sanctioning.[33] The government, however, has not yet given in to the demands of the strikers, in particular the signing of the text of application for a new teachers' statute, claiming that it still lacks the necessary funds to meet their demands.

Conclusion

In sharp contrast to various other West African post-colonial states, like Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso, where teachers' organisations have managed to preserve a certain degree of autonomy from the state (cf. Asiedu-Akrofi 1971; Smyke & Storer 1973; Proteau 2002; Bianchini 2004), existing independent teachers' organisations in Cameroon were rapidly subordinated to the state after independence and reunification (Konings 2003b, 2007b). It was not until political liberalisation in the early 1990s that teachers were able to make a renewed attempt to form autonomous organisations. For teachers in public schools in particular, such organising has nevertheless remained a risky undertaking since they were barred by existing legislature from forming trade unions.

The newly created teachers' organisations soon transformed the crisis-ridden educational sector into a fierce battlefield between teachers and the government. Due to apparent government insensitivity to the plight of teachers, the teachers displayed a high degree of militancy and undertook a variety of actions including demonstrations, regular boycotts of examinations and intermittent strikes to pressure the government to negotiate on educational reforms and improvements in teachers' deplorable working and living conditions. Despite their militancy, they have achieved only limited gains, not only because of the government's repressive,

---

30 *The Teachers' Voice* 2, 50 (2003), p. 1.

31 *The Herald*, 1 June 2004.

32 *La Nouvelle Expression*, 7 October 2004.

33 *The Herald*, 1 November 2004.

divisive and clientelist tactics but also because of weaknesses within trade unionism in Cameroon itself.

The resurgence of autonomy and militancy in teachers' organisations in the Anglophone part of Cameroon was first manifested by the TAC. Supported by a large majority of the Anglophone population in its struggle to preserve its Anglophone educational legacy, the TAC scored a historic victory in 1993 when it forced the Francophone-dominated state to accept the creation of an autonomous GCE Board. Its victory, however, was short-lived since the government made clever use of the TAC's rapid loss of momentum to re-establish a large measure of control over the board. There were two reasons for the TAC's decline. First, its leadership became part of the management of the GCE Board, thus being more involved in the successful conducting of the GCE examinations than in the representation of its members' interests. Second, the TAC was initially founded to represent the interests of its core membership, namely the GCE examiners. The non-examiners, who joined the organisation later, rapidly lost confidence in the leadership when it refused to support the strikes organised by other teachers' organisations demanding an improvement in their members' living and working conditions. But even the TAC's core membership became increasingly dissatisfied with their leaders' performance when they – in their capacity as managers of the GCE Board – failed to pay the legally prescribed allowances for marking GCE examinations.

Feeling betrayed by their leadership, many TAC members opted to join the CATTU, a new teachers' organisation in Anglophone Cameroon. This union appeared to offer brighter prospects than the TAC for the defence of teachers' interests. CATTU displayed a higher degree of militancy than the TAC regarding teachers' desires for an improvement in their unbearable living and working conditions, as evidenced by its various actions aimed at forcing the government to introduce a new teachers' statute. Moreover, the CATTU had considerably augmented its bargaining position by establishing alliances with Francophone teachers' trade unions. Nevertheless, CATTU members, too, became disappointed in their leadership when it failed to deliver the goods. They allege that their leaders have mostly failed to establish a sustained united front with other teachers' organisations against the government because of personal ambitions and animosities. Above all, they accuse their leaders of adopting a militant position when lobbying for lucrative government posts and bribes, thus becoming easy prey for government manipulation after fulfilling their personal ambitions. Eventually, such dissatisfactions gave rise to a split in the CATTU. A substantial number of its disgruntled members formed a new organisation, the INUCT, thus further fragmenting teachers' trade unionism in Cameroon.

The widespread loss of the rank and file's confidence is evidenced by their increasing refusal to participate in militant union actions and their primary reliance on

informal modes of resistance against their deplorable conditions. Some are no longer prepared to be 'duty conscious' and are often absent, arguing 'little work for little pay'. Others try to combine teaching with a variety of informal income opportunities both during and after working hours to secure a livelihood. Most teachers are now involved in agricultural and commercial activities, and these commercial activities at times even invade school premises. It has become commonplace, particularly during breaks, to see female teachers selling foodstuffs, sweets and drinks to students as well as second-hand clothing, underwear, shoes and other goods to colleagues and parents (Niger-Thomas 2000). Many teachers are equally engaged in the sale of 'polycops' (photocopied lecture notes) to students. Since they are inclined to constantly refer to their polycops during classes, students feel obliged to buy them. Teachers are also increasingly organising private classes and demanding tuition fees from students. Private classes used to be given to a few, mostly less-gifted, students but now almost all students seem to attend them, being well aware that teachers are usually putting more effort into their private classes than into regular school classes. Some teachers are also involved in corrupt practices, such as selling marks to students. And finally, a growing number of teachers are applying for better-paid jobs in the public service, in particular in the police and the army. Together with militant trade-union actions, these informal methods of resistance have contributed to the severe decline in educational standards in Cameroonian schools.

10

Relations between the Roman Catholic church and the state in Cameroon's postcolony

Introduction

Two distinct views have emerged of the socio-political role of mainline Christian churches in the African postcolony in the past decades. The first seems quite pessimistic. Several Africanists look upon these churches as vestiges of imperialism and allies of authoritarian rule (cf. Mbembe 1988; Bayart 1993; Gifford 1993b, 1994; Haynes 1996, 2004). They allege that, in the wake of their widespread support for colonial rule, these churches have become increasingly appropriated by the postcolonial state, providing it legitimacy either tacitly or explicitly. They advance the following main arguments to uphold this view.

It has been claimed that church and state leaders in Africa show common interests and sentiments, and form, with other well-positioned social groups such as businessmen, an informal coalition of elites who seek to exercise hegemonic control over society. Bayart (1993), in particular, maintains that Christian churches are governed in a similar way as African postcolonial states. Like the political elite, church leaders are driven in their search for power, wealth and status by what he calls 'the governmentality of the belly' – a predatory style of governance characterised by clientelist relationships and corruption. Due to similarities in governing style, it has been relatively easy for the state to co-opt churches and encourage them to support the status quo by way of favours and privileges.

Others argue that church leaders have rapidly become convinced that they could protect institutional interests more expeditiously in a climate of good rather than poor relations with the authoritarian postcolonial state. In a situation where the

churches were eager to retain what they had, including a prominent role in the provision of education, medical facilities and, more generally, religious freedom, social influence and material prosperity, it appeared sensible not to challenge government policies in the open but instead choose the route of discreet lobbying to effect the desired changes of policies (Haynes 1996: 117). Church leaders were well aware that the increasingly authoritarian political elite had already restricted the operations of non-religious civil-society organisations that could endanger their position of power.

The other view of the socio-political role of mainline Christian churches in the African postcolony tends to be more optimistic. It regards churches as the masthead of civil society, pointing to their proven capacity to challenge authoritarian regimes, urging reform, advocating socio-political change and even presiding over change itself. Various Africanists refer to the central leadership role of mainline Christian churches in the democratisation movements that emerged on the African continent in the era of global neo-liberal reforms (cf. Gifford 1995; Constantin & Coulon 1997; Phiri 2001; Sabar 2002). Like the pessimistic school of thought, they advance divergent arguments in support of their position.

In his earlier work on state-church relations in Cameroon, Bayart (1972, 1973) concludes that when the state suppresses political opposition groups and thus creates a vacuum in the system, churches tend to assume the functions of these organisations, leading to confrontation between the state and the church. He argues that the churches are the only civil society organisations that enjoy relative autonomy from the postcolonial hegemony: they remain 'zones of freedom' in an otherwise oppressive political environment. According to him, the churches are virtually a 'state within a state' and authoritarian African regimes appear reluctant to strive for their subordination to the state. While this particular claim seems a little exaggerated, it makes the point that churches in many African states effectively rival the state in the delivery of social services. Phiri (2001) has attempted to show the relevance of Bayart's model in his study of church-state relations in Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. The relatively autonomous churches in these countries did confront the state after it had pulverised civil-society groups that would have otherwise played this role. Once civil society was liberated, however, they tended to withdraw from the political arena to their less visible and more traditional pastoral functions.

Other authors try to show the key role of the mainline Christian churches in civil society in a different way from Bayart and Phiri. They stress that these churches are the only civil-society organisations that enjoy a high level of legitimacy in society. Moreover, they have the institutional and organisational structures, communication resources, leadership capability and transnational contacts necessary to resist or even rival the state (Médard 1997; Buijtenhuijs & Reynierse 1993).

Clearly, these contrasting views are ideal types. In reality, the contrast may not be as stark, and the situation in each country may be considerably more complex than a simple reduction to church-state alliances or conflict might suggest (Longman 2005). The existing body of literature also indicates that the role of the mainline Christian churches has varied over time, with country and within the church itself.

In this chapter, I focus on the socio-political role of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) in Cameroon's postcolony. The RCC was introduced into Cameroon in 1890 and is now the country's largest mainline Christian group. It has been estimated that about 25 per cent of Cameroon's population identify with this church (Episcopal Sub-Commission for Church History 1995). Significantly, while all other mainline Christian churches in the country tend to have a regional base, the RCC is truly a national church. At present, it is divided into five ecclesiastical provinces (Bamenda, Bertoua, Douala, Garoua and Yaoundé) with twenty-three dioceses.

There has been a gradual shift in the RCC's socio-political role in the postcolonial state from cooperation to conflict. Relations between the RCC and the state seem to be highly polarised nowadays as a result of their differing perceptions and interpretations of what constitutes a viable road map for the much-hoped-for democratic and social transformation. However, church-state relations remain complex because they tend to reflect the country's unresolved ethno-regional contradictions. In fact, there are various ethno-regional cleavages within the National Episcopal Conference of Cameroon (NECC) that regularly prevent the bishops from taking a united stand on socio-political issues (Bayart & Mbembe 1989; Gifford 1998; Konings 2003c; Médard 2004). Bayart and Mbembe (1989) allege that these ethno-regional conflicts among church leaders are essentially 'shadow theatre' and hide the 'politics of the belly'. The ethno-regional element masks the church leaders' search for an increase in their power position and their share in what Cameroonians call the 'national and ecclesiastical cake'.

At present, the principal ethno-regional division within the NECC is between bishops of Beti ethnic origin who are regarded as being sympathetic to the Beti-dominated regime, and bishops of Bamileke and Anglophone origin who are seen as hostile to the regime (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003). The Bamileke, who are renowned in Cameroon for their high degree of mobility and entrepreneurial spirit, form the major economic power bloc and are viewed by the Beti as a threat to their political power. Anglophones feel marginalised in the Francophone-dominated postcolonial state in socio-cultural, economic and political terms and are striving for a return to a federal state or outright secession.

This study is based on extensive reading of primary and secondary sources, close observation of church activities since 1985, and interviews with church members and their leaders.

RCC-state relations in Cameroon during one-party rule, 1961-1990

The relationship between the RCC and the authoritarian one-party state came to be marked by cooperation and complementarity after some initial frictions (cf. Bayart 1972, 1973, 1979; Médard 1997. This relationship can undoubtedly be partly explained by reference to its colonial roots.

Although it would be a grave error to simply identify the missionary project with colonialism, it is certain that both enterprises were basically supportive of each other. The RCC needed colonial rule for the successful implementation of its evangelising mission, while the colonial administration relied to a large extent on the RCC to carry out tasks such as education and health and to create a sense of moral order. In the case of Cameroon, it is interesting to observe that, following the post-First World War partitioning of the former German Kamerun Protectorate into French and British mandate territories, the new power holders expelled the German missionaries and replaced them with missionaries from their home countries (Messina & van Slageren 2005). They apparently felt that missionaries of the same nationality as the colonial rulers would be more reliable partners in the new political constellation.

The usual cooperation between the two partners did, of course, not prevent tensions and frictions entirely. In Francophone Cameroon, for example, there were fierce disputes between the missions and the mandate authority on the newly introduced matrimonial law and educational policies. The 1930 decree on the installation of secondary mission posts under the command of indigenous catechists, which aimed to slow down the growing influence of the missions among the local population, and the 1933 decree that tried to control religious practices both also created tensions (Ngongo 1982; Messina & van Slageren 2005). In some cases, the churches also acted as the 'spokesmen of the ordinary people',[1] denouncing abuses like forced labour. Such conflicts, however, never disturbed the generally good relations between the two partners.

In sharp contrast to the Protestant mission, the RCC appeared to support the colonial regime when it vehemently opposed the radical nationalist party, the UPC, which started guerrilla warfare in the mid-1950s (Joseph 1977). In an Episcopal letter in April 1955, RCC leaders strongly condemned the UPC for its allegedly communist doctrine and its violent actions, some of which were directed at church property and church members.

Following independence and reunification in 1961, the RCC was faced with the authoritarian regime of Ahmadou Ahidjo, a Muslim Fulbe from northern Cameroon, who introduced a highly centralised administration, a one-party system and an

[1] Bayart (1972) and Ngongo (1982) speak of the '*fonction tributienne*' of the churches during colonial rule.

extremely repressive security machinery. Initially, there were some mutual suspicions. RCC leaders feared a forced islamisation of southern Cameroon by the northern Muslim president but such fears soon proved to be without foundation since Ahidjo was by no means a Muslim fanatic. On the contrary, he highly respected the constitution that promulgated a separation between state and religion. Ahidjo, in turn, was unsure of the RCC position towards his regime since most of the RCC leaders had supported one of the main opposition parties, the *Bloc Démocratique Camerounais* (BDC) led by prominent Catholics such as Dr Aujoulat and André-Marie Mbida. His suspicions increased when, in February 1962, *L'Effort Camerounais,* an RCC weekly publication, revealed the so-called 'train affair', in which a number of political prisoners had died from asphyxiation while being transported by train from Douala to Yaoundé. Father Fertin, a Frenchman and the journal's editor, was subsequently expelled from the country. Archbishop Jean Zoa of Yaoundé protested but this turned out to be his last protest action during the one-party era.

Such initial suspicions gradually disappeared when both sides sought to come to a rapprochement by cementing personal relations. One essential precondition for this warming of relations was that RCC leaders were to abandon the church's prophetic and moral mission in society and stop openly criticising the authoritarian regime. That the RCC leaders were prepared to do so could be attributed to the fact that they had come to highly value Ahidjo's determined pursuit of nation-building and national development. As Archbishop Zoa once declared in an interview:

> Despite the dictatorial tendencies of Ahidjo's policies, his concern with national unity and his attachment to peace were fundamental factors for national construction. The church must help him and encourage him in this option (Messina 2000: 224).

Clearly, this rapprochement was to mutual advantage. On the one hand, it enabled Ahidjo to avoid open conflict with the RCC, being well aware that churches occupied a potentially powerful position in society. To reassure RCC leaders of his good intentions, he surrounded himself with influential Christian leaders and established diplomatic relations with the Vatican in 1966. On the other hand, the rapprochement also benefited RCC leaders in the sense that it forestalled a total integration of church associations in the one-party state, similar to what had happened to other civil-society organisations. In addition, it allowed them to focus on the defence of church interests. In this respect, two problems were of particular concern to the church authorities, namely schools and the position of the church in northern Cameroon.

In 1968, a crisis developed in state-RCC relations regarding confessional primary schools. For various reasons, the majority of the political and bureaucratic elite urged the regime to abolish confessional primary education or, at least, to tighten its control over it. RCC leaders themselves appeared to be divided on the issue. Arch-

bishop Zoa of Yaoundé was in favour of a partial transfer of Catholic primary schools to state control, mainly for financial reasons, and in return for this offer, he demanded an extension of religious education to all public schools. Bishop Mongo of Douala and Bishop Ndongmo of Nkongsamba were opposed to Archbishop Zoa's stand. They tended to look on free confessional primary education as an obstacle to totalitarianism, a safeguard for better-quality education and, above all, an instrument of evangelisation. They therefore pleaded for the preservation of confessional education through an increase in public subventions and parental fees. Eventually Ahidjo intervened and proposed a compromise that forestalled a rupture between the RCC and the state. The state would not nationalise confessional primary education and state subventions to confessional schools would even be raised somewhat. Ahidjo fixed a minimum wage for Catholic teachers who had been on strike demanding higher wages, as well as the conditions and modalities for a partial transfer on the request of one or both parties. RCC leaders, in turn, dropped their demand for an extension of religious education to public schools (Bayart 1972, 1973, 1979).

A second problem in RCC-state relations was the position of Christianity in northern Cameroon. The regional state apparatus in northern Cameroon was dominated by the Muslim Fulbe minority, President Ahidjo's own ethnic group. It was trying to promote Islam and the use of Fulfulde among the majority Kirdi (non-Muslim) population and suspected the Christian churches of strengthening anti-Fulbe feelings among the Kirdi. All kinds of administrative measures were taken to prevent the church's growth but it would be wrong to classify these anti-Christian activities as manifestations of systematic religious persecution. Cameroon was designated as a lay state in its constitution, which means that, by law, no religious group could receive privileges. The harassment depended entirely on the intentions and feelings of individual regional administrators. Hence, the degree of pressure put on the churches and their members varied considerably from one district to another. In several parts of northern Cameroon, tensions resulted in open violence. In some areas, Christians were forced to convert to Islam, catechists were threatened, molested or chased away, and churches burnt down (Schilder 1994). RCC leaders, like Archbishop Zoa, lodged complaints with Ahidjo about the situation of Christians in the north and in an attempt to maintain cordial relations with RCC leaders, Ahidjo intervened when violence broke out. However, he never endeavoured to bring about real change in state-church relations in the north (Bayart 1972; Médard 1997).

Another issue that put relations between the RCC and the state to the test was the so-called 'Bishop Ndongmo affair'. Enthroned as bishop of the Nkongsamba Diocese in 1964, Albert Ndongmo was to become the only member of the National Episcopal Conference of Cameroon (NECC) who continued to oppose the authoritarian Ahidjo regime. Ndongmo was a Bamileke who later confessed that he

had supported the goals but not necessarily the methods of the radical nationalist party, the UPC, that by the time of his enthronement as bishop was still continuing its guerrilla warfare in the Bamileke region. He persistently championed the defence of fundamental liberties and a certain degree of pluralism, and disapproved of Cameroon's support for the Nigerian military junta in the Biafra war. He regularly castigated the regime and the national security apparatus for their repressive activities, and undertook initiatives to have political prisoners freed. In one of his sermons, he threatened that he would urge his diocesan faithful not to pay taxes if 'diabolical' torture and repression persisted. He created a journal, *L'Essor des Jeunes,* which defied the 1962 subversive decree and censorship with its political criticisms. In August 1970, he was arrested on charges of being associated with Ernest Quandie, a Bamileke tribesman and one of the last remaining leaders of the UPC rebellion, and of being implicated in a plot to overthrow the Ahidjo regime. In January 1971, a military court sentenced him to death by firing squad.

Shortly after his arrest, on 8 November 1970, there was a meeting of the NECC in Bamenda, during the course of which the internal divisions between the bishops on this issue became manifest. The papal pro-nuncio Gallina exhorted all bishops to support their arrested colleague unconditionally. Archbishop Zoa of Yaoundé vehemently disapproved of the pro-nuncio's stand, claiming that the latter was not entitled to impose any position whatsoever on this delicate matter upon the NECC. He continuously stressed that the Bishop Ndongmo affair was not a manifestation of any antagonism between the RCC and the state, but was about an individual crime (which implied that he was convinced of Bishop Ndongmo's guilt). He is generally believed to have left Bishop Ndongmo to his fate because of ethno-regional and personal rivalries.

Strikingly, the Bishop Ndongmo affair fuelled existing Fulbe Muslim hostilities towards the RCC in northern Cameroon because the regional authorities accused the church of being involved in an attempt to murder President Ahidjo and seize power. Ahidjo himself did not take advantage of the Bishop Ndongmo affair and attack the church and bring it fully under state control. Instead, he once again tried to avoid conflict with the RCC and granted the bishops audiences to discuss the matter. He discretely expelled the pro-nuncio from the country for alleged partiality in the affair. And, above all, he commuted Bishop Ndongmo's sentence to life imprisonment. Bishop Ndongmo was sent to the notorious concentration camp for political prisoners in Tchollire (Mukong 1985) but was freed after five years, just before an election. This gave Ahidjo the opportunity to show himself in a good light but the pardon was probably part of an agreement between the state and the Vatican that allowed Bishop Ndongmo to leave Cameroon for Rome. After living in Rome for a few years, he moved to Canada where he adopted Canadian citizenship. He died there in 1992 but his body was taken back to Cameroon and was buried

amid much pomp and ceremony in Nkongsamba Cathedral (Bayart 1979; Gaillard 1994; Gifford 1998).

After the Bishop Ndongmo affair, there was a long and peaceful coexistence between the RCC and the state. RCC leaders and associations merely focused on evangelising and their social tasks – a situation that was promoted by fear of the growing repression on the part of the authoritarian Ahidjo regime. Church activities and services came under the close supervision of the secret police, and the Catholic press, which had enjoyed a larger measure of freedom than other press organs, also gradually became affected by state censorship. The editor of *L'Essor des Jeunes,* Mr Lingo, was imprisoned for his critical articles. In September 1974, two issues of *L'Effort Camerounais* were seized: the first because it carried a picture of Colonel Ojukwu, the leader of the breakaway Republic of Biafra during the Nigerian civil war, and the second because it contained an article denouncing the seizure of the previous issue. Eventually, both journals were forced to stop publishing.

It was not until the end of the Ahidjo regime that the Anglophone bishops in Cameroon lodged protests against long-standing socio-political evils. That these bishops dared to openly protest against the regime was not altogether surprising. Anglophones held the regime responsible for the growing 'marginalisation, assimilation and exploitation' of their region in the Francophone-dominated postcolonial state – the so-called Anglophone problem. Since the late British trusteeship period they had come to highly value the autonomy of civil society and political freedom (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003; Ndi 2005). However, in 1977, the two leaders of the newly created Ecclesiastical Province of Bamenda in Anglophone Cameroon, Archbishop Paul Verdzekov of Bamenda and Bishop Pius Awa of Buea, issued a pastoral letter in which they publicly denounced the rampant bribery and corruption prevalent in the country.[2] Following his enthronement as Bishop of Yagoua in northern Cameroon, Christian Tumi, an Anglophone, began to condemn Christian persecution in the region, which he perceived as a blatant violation of the constitutional provisions on religious freedom. This brought him into conflict not only with the regional state authorities but also with Archbishop Zoa of Yaoundé who feared that Tumi's actions would disturb existing peaceful relations with the state (Tumi 2006).

The sudden transfer of power from Ahmadou Ahidjo to Paul Biya in November 1982 raised expectations among the Cameroonian population in general and the Catholic population in particular. Paul Biya was a Catholic, an ex-seminarian even, who entertained close relations with a number of RCC leaders, especially those from his own ethnic group, the Beti.[3] Moreover, his message of 'Renewal' that aimed at

---

[2] P. Awa & P. Verdzekov, Joint Pastoral Letter on Bribery and Corruption, Bamenda, 1977.

[3] In fact, the RCC is the dominant Christian church in the Beti region (Ngongo 1982; Mveng 1990). As a result, the Biya government expected the RCC to maintain cordial relations with the

introducing a limited measure of political liberalisation, moralisation and riguour (Takougang & Krieger 1998) strongly appealed to RCC leaders since it appeared to directly attack the two main vices of his predecessor's regime: authoritarianism and corruption. In addition, following an attempted coup in 1984 by the presidential guard which was then mainly under the command of Fulbe Muslims from northern Cameroon, President Biya put an end to Muslim Fulbe domination and Christian persecution in northern Cameroon.

For some time, RCC leaders regularly expressed their support for the new government, despite the fact that it became increasingly evident that the regime was only ready to bring about marginal reforms in the existing political system (Konings 1996c; Takougang & Krieger 1998). For example, in their pastoral letter of 15 January 1988 on 'the commitment of the laity in the life of the nation', the bishops saw the introduction of a competitive system in the one-party state, which allowed more than one candidate in electoral constituencies to run for party positions or legislative seats, as notable democratic progress. They called upon the faithful to cast their votes during the 1988 parliamentary elections, arguing that political involvement was a biblical obligation for every Christian. They maintained that voting in compliance with the gospel would result in the right people – honest and competent citizens who were ready to use their talents in the service of the common good – being elected.[4]

A prelude to the development of antagonistic relations between the RCC and the state during political liberalisation was the RCC leaders' growing discontent with the government's inconsistent policies on subventions to Catholic schools. The 1976 and 1987 laws on private education had abolished the existing government's grants-in-aid to approved voluntary agencies and replaced them with government subventions to all private agencies, confessional and non-confessional alike, all of which came under the umbrella of 'private education'. The problem was that the government unilaterally and arbitrarily decided the amount of annual subventions. Moreover, following the severe economic crisis in 1986/87, public subventions to Catholic schools had witnessed a significant reduction and payments tended to be irregular, creating enormous difficulties for the Catholic education authorities to continue financing Catholic education. As a result of the new laws, glaring inequalities emerged between public and private education with free education for students in

state. Some of the leading Beti ideologues, such as Professor Mono Ndjana, even pleaded for the RCC and the state to merge (Pokam 1987). Indeed, until political liberalisation in 1990, the RCC leaders broadly identified with the regime. Archbishop of Yaoundé Jean Zoa, himself a Beti, became the personification of the entente between the RCC and the regime in this period.

[4] Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of Cameroon to all their Faithful and to all their Fellow Citizens of Goodwill on 'The Involvement of Lay People in the Life of the Nation', Ngaoundere, 15 January 1988. All the pastoral letters of the NECC and individual bishops can be found in various issues of *Catholic Panorama* and *L'Effort Camerounais*.

public schools and fee-paying education for students in private education. In spite of similar qualifications, teachers in public schools enjoyed much higher salaries than those in private schools (Ecclesiastical Province of Bamenda 1991; Ndongko & Tambo 2001). Given this situation, the NECC produced a pastoral letter in January 1989[5] in which it drew attention to the various problems facing Catholic education and called upon the government and the faithful to help rescue Catholic schools from collapse. RCC leaders intensified their protest actions against these deplorable government policies on private education during the era of political liberalisation. Political liberalisation, in fact, enabled the RCC to use its relative autonomy to resume its prophetic and moral role in society in response to the long-standing socio-economic and political grievances of its members and other Cameroonians and their clamour for change.

RCC-state relations in Cameroon during political liberalisation, 1990-2007

By 1990 Cameroon was marked by a severe economic and political crisis. The majority of the population was inclined to hold the increasingly corrupt and authoritarian Biya regime responsible for the deepening economic crisis, resulting in further loss of legitimacy. And with the end of the Cold War and the move towards democratisation in Eastern Europe, Cameroonians − like Africans elsewhere − looked upon these changes as an added incentive for demanding greater political reforms, including the introduction of multiparty democracy (Konings 1996c; Takougang & Krieger 1998). Given these circumstances, one could observe not only a growing dissent within the ruling class but also a more critical attitude towards the state on the part of the RCC (Akoko & Oben 2006).

Strikingly, although RCC leaders attempted to present a united front in public, they could not totally conceal their internal divisions, particularly those along ethno-regional lines where the Anglophone-Francophone divide seemed to dominate. Like other members of the Anglophone elite, Anglophone bishops became even more critical of the regime during political liberalisation, which created space for Anglophones to voice their long-standing grievances about Francophone dominance and organise in associations and political parties (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003). Many Francophone bishops originated from the Beti region and thus tended to be more favourably disposed towards the regime in which their tribesmen dominated.

Students of Cameroonian politics agree that two Anglophone RCC leaders, Cardinal Christian Tumi and Archbishop Paul Verdzekov of Bamenda, have played a more prominent role in the country's political liberalisation process than other

[5] Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of Cameroon on the Plight of Catholic Education, 1989.

NECC members. This made them frequent targets of vehement government attacks. The appointment of an Anglophone, Christian Tumi, the then archbishop of Garoua, as the first Cameroonian cardinal in 1988 appears not to have been well received by the regime and many of the faithful and clergy in the Beti region, including Archbishop Jean Zoa of Yaoundé who had been the leading figure in the RCC during the post-reunification period. Tumi's new appointment proved to be a turning point in RCC-state relations: a growing shift from cooperation to conflict. The outspoken cardinal soon became one of the most notable figures in public life, especially after his transfer in 1991 from the distant Garoua archdiocese to Douala archdiocese, which had become a hotbed of rebellion against the regime (Takougang & Krieger 1998). Although an Anglophone, Tumi studied in France and is completely bilingual. Even outside the RCC he has exerted considerable moral authority. He was constantly being tipped as a potential chairman whenever a national forum on politics or the constitution seemed imminent. He came to be widely perceived as a formidable challenger to President Paul Biya were he to stand as a presidential candidate and has been regularly urged by the opposition to stand as their joint candidate. Compared to Cardinal Tumi, Archbishop Verdzekov's demeanour is quiet but his convictions are just as forceful and he is, therefore, contentious in the eyes of the government. Archbishop Verdzekov is reputed to be one of the leading defenders of human rights in Cameroon (Atanga 2001) and, with Cardinal Tumi, he has continued to engage the church in public life, to the discomfort of the state.

The internal divisions within the NECC were particularly visible during the early phase of political liberalisation. Following government suppression of an attempt to create a multiparty system in early 1990, the ruling party, the CPDM, organised marches against a 'precipitate introduction of multiparty democracy' that ended on 30 March with a mass in Yaoundé Cathedral. According to the CPDM organisers, this mass was intended 'to pray for peace' and was celebrated by Archbishop Zoa. The media and the opposition, however, immediately interpreted the event as an expression of the archbishop's support for the regime and the one-party system, and in an interview given afterwards, Cardinal Tumi seemed to agree with this interpretation, stating that he himself would never have officiated at such a service. Obviously irritated by the cardinal's statement, Archbishop Zoa accused him of interfering in matters of the Yaoundé diocese that were not within his jurisdiction (Titi Nwel 1995; Messina 2000).

Apparently, the Anglophone bishops welcomed the official launch of the country's first opposition party, the Social Democratic Front (SDF), in Bamenda in Anglophone Cameroon on 26 May 1990. However, they deeply regretted the killings on that occasion of six SDF supporters by the security forces. Significantly, the

events of 26 May created political awareness among Cameroonians and increased demands for the legalisation of a multiparty system in Cameroon.

While RCC leaders still seemed to disagree on the preferred political system for the country, they agreed about the causes and effects of Cameroon's economic crisis. On 3 June, a week after the 26 May events, the Catholic bishops published a historic pastoral letter on the economic crisis.[6] It was quite critical of the regime and noted that the church could no longer remain silent in the light of the ordeal that the nation's economic crisis had placed on innocent individuals and families. The prelates attributed the crisis to 'structures of sin'. These entailed not only the unjust economic world order but also the predatory behaviour of the political elite: the notorious embezzlement of public funds, individual tax arrears amounting to hundreds of billions of CFA francs, and the egoism of the rich and powerful who were working against the 'smallest of the small' in Cameroon and elsewhere.

Unsurprisingly, the media perceived the pastoral letter as a vitriolic attack on the government and accused the bishops of interfering in activities beyond their competence, namely the economy. Although that letter made no reference to multipartyism, Cardinal Christian Tumi used a press conference on 11 June to condemn the Bamenda killings and call for the creation of a multiparty system.[7] He also appealed to the administration for an end to censorship and a change in the policy that had led to the country's economic crisis. In reaction, Archbishop Zoa indicated in an interview with the state-owned *Cameroon Tribune* that Cardinal Tumi was only expressing his personal opinion and not that of the RCC in Cameroon.

Following mounting internal and external pressure, President Paul Biya introduced political liberalisation measures in December 1990 that included the introduction of a multiparty system and a certain degree of freedom of association and the press. Despite such measures, the first phase of the political liberalisation process was characterised by violence between the regime and the opposition, all the more so because the government constantly refused to give in to the radical political opposition's major demand for the holding of a national sovereign conference similar to those held in some other African countries (Eboussi Boulaga 1993; Takougang & Krieger 1998).

Given these circumstances, RCC leaders started calling for peace, dialogue and reconciliation. On 12 April 1991, the NECC condemned 'the hardening of attitudes and the acts of provocation and repression which would only aggravate an already

---

[6] Pastoral letter of the Episcopal Conference of Cameroon concerning the Economic Crisis which the Country is Undergoing, Whit Sunday, 3 June 1990.

[7] Cardinal Christian Tumi, Texte Intégral de la Conférence de Presse Donné à Yaoundé, Yaoundé, 11 June 1990.

grave situation' and the bishops urged all believers to pray for peace in Cameroon.[8] In response to the bishops' message, RCC communities organised special prayers for peace on the last Sunday of April 1991. Cardinal Christian Tumi contacted the opposition parties in an attempt to persuade them to enter into dialogue with the government. His conciliatory efforts contributed to the start of Tripartite talks between the state, opposition parties and representatives of civil society on 30 October 1991 that were aimed at breaking the political impasse and halting the violence by reaching a consensus. During the Tripartite talks, he was subjected to verbal assaults from the regime for his position on certain issues, for example the lowering of the voting age from 21 to 18 years, and he, like several other political and religious leaders from Douala, later deplored the way the Tripartite talks had been manipulated and abused by the regime (Titi Nwel 1995: 178).

In the period leading up to the presidential elections in October 1992, Cardinal Tumi issued a pastoral letter in which he said he deeply regretted the lack of free and fair elections following independence and called upon the people to vote competent and morally upright people into power.[9] Although his appeal received wide publicity, these elections did not turn out to be either free or fair. And, even more importantly, after the elections the government imposed a state of emergency in Bamenda, the home base of John Fru Ndi, the SDF's charismatic chairman who claimed that Paul Biya had stolen victory from him. On 29 November 1992, the Archbishop of Bamenda, Paul Verdzekov, strongly condemned the government for the mass arrests and torture of SDF militants during the state of emergency.[10] He then came under severe attack from the Minister of Communication, Augustin Kontchou Kouomegni, but he received the firm support of the NECC.[11]

With Archbishop Zoa from Yaoundé, Cardinal Tumi participated in the 1993-94 constitutional talks but, unlike Archbishop Zoa, he disagreed with most of the proceedings and finally walked out. Since then, the RCC prelates have frequently addressed burning socio-political issues in sermons, press interviews and pastoral letters signed by the NECC or bishops. By so doing, they have filled a lacuna left by the political opposition, which either became more or less incorporated into the regime or proved ineffective. They focused in particular on corruption, tribalism, justice and peace, good governance, criminality and security, elections and poverty reduction.

---

[8] NECC, Appeal of the Bishops of Cameroon to all Cameroonians concerning the Present Situation of the Country, Yaoundé, 12 April 1991.

[9] Cardinal Christian Tumi, To all Christians and Men of Goodwill, Douala, 2 September 1992.

[10] Archbishop Paul Verdzekov, Message to all Christians, Bamenda, 29 November 1992.

[11] NECC, Statement of the Standing Committee of the Bishops of Cameroon, Mvolye-Yaoundé, 11 December 1992.

The RCC leaders have addressed corruption on several occasions. In September 2000, the NECC issued a pastoral letter arguing that the economic problems facing the country were being compounded by the dishonesty of corrupt government officials who were diverting national resources for their own benefit and transferring public funds to private accounts in foreign banks.[12] During their *ad limina* visit to the Pope in March 2006, the bishops demanded the restitution of all pillaged funds.[13] Strikingly, they also tried to eradicate corruption among the faithful. For instance, on 12 January 2004, they launched a programme in 'the fight against corruption through schools' (FACTS) that was targeted at primary and secondary schools.

In a pastoral letter in November 1997, the bishops exposed tribalism as a means to achieving political ends at a time when the regime was attempting to incite the 'autochthonous' ethnic minority groups against 'settlers' with the aim of winning votes and consolidating power. They referred to 'anonymous tracts, bearing clearly tribalistic messages, sometimes supported by biblical quotations, circulating in the country inciting one group to rise up against another under the pretext of self-defence and the protection of minorities'. [14]

In their Episcopal letters of 1997 on 'Justice and Peace' and that of 1998 on 'Good Governance', the bishops raised the issue of the concentration of executive power and the judiciary's lack of independence. They argued that the concentration of power was responsible for the weakening of the administration, the legislature and the judiciary, and advocated a judicial system that would function freely without intervention from the executive. They also asked the state to ensure the moral integrity of those who administered justice. In 2003, the bishops expressed concern over the way the government was managing the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) funds. For want of transparency, they called on the government to involve the church in the management of these funds, stressing that HIPC policies demanded the participation of civil society in this initiative. The bishops made this call amid allegations that top government officials were embezzling money from the funds.

With persistent election malpractices since the institution of multiparty democracy, the bishops, at their 2003 conference, called for a complete overhaul of the electoral process. They stated that the church stood for an independent electoral commission in which all political parties would participate freely and fairly. In 2006,

---

[12] Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of Cameroon to Christians and all People of Goodwill on 'Corruption', 3 September 2000.

[13] See *Mutations,* 30 March 2006 and *Le Messager,* 27 March 2006.

[14] NECC, Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of Cameroon to Christians and to all Men of Goodwill on Tribalism, Yaoundé, 6 November 1997. For the regime's attempts to fuel feelings of autochthony, see Geschiere & Nyamnjoh (2000) and Konings & Nyamnjoh (2003).

the NECC's Justice and Peace Commission devised two draft proposals to amend the electoral laws. These proposals were subsequently sent to parliament. The bishops also regularly exhorted the faithful to vote. Seeing voting as a Christian duty, they decided to create an election observation force of their own to safeguard free and fair elections.

RCC leaders also continued to protest against the government's dwindling support for Catholic education, maintaining that there was a dire need for increased and prompt payment of public subventions.[15] They were also forced to put pressure on the government because of regular strike actions by the Catholic Teachers' Association (CATA) for an increase in their low salaries, especially when compared to those of teachers in public schools.[16]

The bishops also made political statements on an individual basis. Anglophone church leaders, like Cardinal Tumi and Archbishop Verdzekov, have regularly voiced concerns about the 'Anglophone problem' (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003). In November 2001, Cardinal Tumi appealed to President Biya to enter into dialogue with the Anglophone secessionist movement, the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) and, in accordance with the 1996 constitution, introduce a large measure of decentralisation in the country as a solution to the marginalisation of Anglophones. He predicted that the SCNC would become more militant should the government continue to ignore the plight of Anglophones.[17] So serious was the prelate about the unenviable position of Anglophones that he said that if it was the prerogative of Cameroonians to choose a cardinal, it would not have been him.

Unsurprisingly, such interventions by RCC leaders in the economic and political domain regularly provoked severe confrontations with the regime, and the outspoken Cardinal Tumi was the primary target of government attacks (Tumi 2006). One such confrontation between the regime and Cardinal Tumi occurred in 2000 when the cardinal denounced the massive extra-judicial killings in Douala perpetuated by the infamous Operational Command – a military force installed by the government to fight the city's mounting crime wave. In response, the Minister of Territorial Administration, Ferdinand Koungou Edima, accused the cardinal in an open letter of lying, being unpatriotic, wanting to run for the post of president in the Republic of Cameroon, supporting thieves and armed robbers, violating the principle of the separation between state and church, having little respect for those who governed the country, insidiously trying to mislead the Cameroonian people and the international community concerning efforts made by the government to pull the country out of its economic crisis and insecurity, questioning the organisation of elections, not being humble, and being tribalistic (Tumi 2006).

---

[15] See, for instance, *The Post,* 30 March 2006 and 23 April 2007.

[16] See, for instance, *The Herald*, 24 November 1993 and 17 April 2004.

[17] *The Herald,* 28-29 November 2001, pp. 1 and 3.

Another such confrontation occurred in 2003 when the then Minister of Communication, Professor Jacques Fame Ndongo, tried to discredit the cardinal for having made a number of allegations: firstly, that power in Cameroon had been confiscated by one tribe (the Beti), and, secondly, that elections were so poorly organised that they could inevitably lead to civil war (Tumi 2006).

As a result of regular confrontations between the regime and the RCC, most people in Cameroon hold the regime responsible for the murder of several RCC clergymen, nuns and other employees during the political liberalisation era. Since some of these murders occurred in the archdiocese of Yaoundé, Archbishop Zoa became increasingly critical of the regime before his death in March 1998 (Messina 2000). Generally speaking however, Francophone bishops have remained more reluctant than their Anglophone counterparts to condemn the corrupt and authoritarian regime. A clear example is the new Archbishop of Yaoundé, Victor Tonye Bakot. It is widely believed that the regime has wasted no time in trying to woo the new archbishop onto the government's side against the assumedly unrelenting hostility of Cardinal Tumi. While Cardinal Tumi, in an interview with *Radio France International*, condemned the 11 October 2004 presidential elections as being badly flawed due to the disenfranchisement of voters and multiple voting, Archbishop Bakot, the then NECC president, hailed the election as a major step towards the consolidation of Cameroon's democracy.[18] On 12 May 2006, Archbishop Bakot again did not oppose the regime's prohibition of a press conference by Monsignor Patrick Lafon, Secretary-General of the NECC, on RCC proposals for an amendment to the country's electoral laws.[19]

Finally, it is necessary to stress that several clergymen and their followers have played a prominent role in raising people's consciousness and attacking the corrupt and authoritarian regime. Internationally well-known Cameroonian theologians, such as Engelbert Mveng, Jean-Marc Ela and Fabien Eboussi Boulaga, have written extensively on the need to liberate the African people from various forms of oppression.[20] Some have paid dearly for their role. Mveng was murdered in 1995 and Ela had to flee the country as a result of repeated murder threats.

Several priests, particularly in Anglophone Cameroon, have regularly been accused by the regime of being partisan and belonging to the opposition. For example, the Minister of Special Duties, Peter Abety, an Anglophone and Catholic himself, declared on 23 June 1996 that a priest in his constituency was saying nothing about the gospel during his Sunday services but spent all his time attacking the government and himself. He warned that should the priest continue to attack the regime, he too would walk up to the pulpit and talk politics. He vowed to fight

---

[18] *The Herald,* 1 November 2004.

[19] *Le Messager,* 15 May 2006.

[20] For a summary of their ideas, see Zalot (2002).

anybody who dared to stop him. Two days earlier, the CPDM deputy for Bui Division in Anglophone Cameroon, Evaristus Nsambam, had shouted at Father Charles Mbuntum during mass for allegedly campaigning for the opposition. He seemed to have been angered by the fact that the priest was reading the bishops' pastoral letter of 15 December 1995 that called for free and fair elections during the upcoming municipal elections in January 1996.[21]

A significant development was the emergence of a new kind of RCC laymen's association. In addition to the older associations, which were mainly involved in religious and socio-economic activities, new associations were founded that were geared at political activities. The most important ones were the Justice and Peace movement and the Movement of Christian Action against Torture (ACAT) (Atanga 2001).

Conclusion

RCC-state relations in Cameroon's postcolony have turned out to be more complex than the pessimistic and optimistic schools of thought originally assumed. This study has argued that these relations cannot be simply reduced to either alliance or conflict for two main reasons.

First, RCC-state relations have changed over time. There has been a remarkable shift in the church's socio-political role from apparent cooperation in the one-party era to growing conflict in the political liberalisation era. The RCC refrained from criticising the regime in public during one-party rule to forestall its total subordination to the state, as had happened to other civil-society organisations, and to safeguard its relative freedom to execute its 'basic' – religious and social – functions. It instead opted to settle any institutional conflicts by meeting the Head of State, with whom several bishops had come to maintain close relations. It was not until political liberalisation that the church started to use its relative freedom to play a central role in the ongoing struggle for the establishment of a truly democratic society, all the more so because other civil-society organisations and even many opposition parties were silenced by the state's persistent clientelist and repressive tactics.

Second, RCC-state relations have continued to be pervaded by some of the major 'evils' in society: ethno-regional cleavages which, as some pessimistic scholars with extensive research experience in Cameroon like Mbembe (1988) and Bayart (1993) have persuasively demonstrated, tend to be closely connected to the 'politics of the belly'. Such evils have regularly prevented church leaders from taking a united stand against the corrupt and authoritarian regime both in the one-party era and during political liberalisation. The most important ethno-regional divisions have been those between Francophones and Anglophones in the country as a whole and between the

[21] *The Herald,* 3-5 January 1997, p. 8.

Beti and Bamileke in the Francophone part of the country. Although the actions of some moral authorities among RCC leaders, notably the Anglophone Cardinal Tumi and Archbishop Verdzekov, have undoubtedly helped create socio-political awareness among the church community and even beyond, the NECC's failure to arrive at a common stand has contributed to the fact that democracy in Cameroon is still predominantly characterised by cosmetic rather than substantial changes.

11

Privatisation and ethno-regional protest in Anglophone Cameroon

Introduction

Privatisation has become a key instrument in the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) and the good governance agenda imposed on Africa 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.

Since public enterprises are considered to have performed dismally, African governments are under considerable pressure from international donors to sell them off to domestic and foreign private investors. Several authors, however, have observed that the actual number of privatisations has remained modest in Africa (cf. Bennell 1997; Tangri 1999; Van de Walle 2001). They point to various technical and financial constraints as well as to socio-political influences to explain this curious finding. Interestingly, some factors reflect the same political concerns that led to the creation of so many public enterprises in the years after independence: an inability to attract foreign investment to politically and economically unstable African nations, the absence of a well-developed domestic entrepreneurial class, and the pursuit of patron-client relationships by African 'neo-patrimonial' states. Some authors also highlight the resistance to privatisation by civil society, in particular by professional bodies, student organisations and trade unions, since privatisation often

involves the sale of public property to well-placed nationals or to foreign enterprises, and generally results in massive lay-offs of workers (cf. Olukoshi 1998; Konings 2002b).

Strikingly, in sharp contrast to the existing literature, international donors are inclined to blame almost exclusively the weak, predatory and neo-patrimonial African states for the poor performance of structural adjustment in general and public-sector reforms in particular and they stress the need not only for less but also for better government in Africa. 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).

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 the 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 (Sandbrook 2000: 10-13). The bilateral donors, however, soon linked democracy to good governance. Although they continuously stressed that democratisation had its intrinsic merits, they undoubtedly saw it primarily as an instrument 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. In my study of privatisation in Cameroon, I argue instead that the good governance-structural adjustment linkage, though largely framed in managerial and technical terms, is highly political, being embedded in particular relations of power, and contested. Ironically, it often contradicts the liberal-democratic principles prescribed by bilateral donors.

Decisions about privatisation in Cameroon are taken by the Bretton Woods institutions and implemented after secret consultations with a small group of national technocrats representing the government. 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 Cameroonian citizens (Abrahamsen 2000: 146-147). While the elected Cameroonian government has frequently tried to avoid, postpone, manipulate and dilute privatisations, which tend to further undermine the patronage networks on which its power continues to rest and the limited legitimacy it still enjoys among the electorate, its dependence on continued financial assistance has eventually led it to fall into line with the demands of its external constituency. Civil-society organisations in Cameroon 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 privatisation. Interestingly, in the absence of any powerful opposition parties in the Cameroonian democratic transition, newly created ethno-regional associations have come to serve as the new intermediaries between the state and the electorate (Nyamnjoh & Rowlands 1998; Kasfir 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 chapter I focus on the vehement resistance of ethno-regional associations 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.

Governance and privatisation in Cameroon

As in most other African countries (Grosh and 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 sector in the post-colonial period was largely

financed by the World Bank and other international financial institutions (Konings 1993: 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 seen by the African political elite as a valuable mechanism in the consolidation and maintenance of political power. According to Van de Walle (1994: 155-156), 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 (Nyamnjoh 1999; 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 FCFA 150 billion 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 1993: 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 1996c). It was not until the unprecedented crisis in the Cameroonian economy in 1987 that the World Bank began to express its

disillusionment with the performance of state enterprises (World Bank 1987). 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. First, 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). Second, 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. Third, 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 forward 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. Mkandawire (1999) has coined the term 'choiceless democracies' to refer to democracies where the fine-tuning of externally directed policies is the best that can be hoped for.

Remarkably, although 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; Van de Walle 2001). For these government leaders, the need to continue financial assistance flows obliges 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, represents a severe challenge to 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 secures a considerable measure of political stability in the post-colonial state.

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 the 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 fulfill 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, including the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC). However, as of mid-1996 only 10 of the 30 enterprises on the divestiture list had actually been sold. Under mounting pressure from the Bretton Woods institutions, the Cameroonian government has displayed a firmer commitment to accelerate the privatisation process from 1997 onwards (Konings 2007a).

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 2002b). 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), whose estates are located in the coastal area of Anglophone Cameroon.

Privatisation of the CDC and ethno-regional opposition

The CDC is one of the country's oldest enterprises, being created in 1946/47, and its history is closely linked with the political and economic history of Anglophone Cameroon (see Chapter 2). It is still the largest agro-industrial parastatal in the country. 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, after the government, the largest employer in the country, with a current labour force of about 14,500 (Konings 1993).

Above all, the CDC has made a major contribution to regional development 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 1993). 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.

It is therefore not surprising that when the government announced the privatisation of this important agro-industrial enterprise on 15 July 1994, Anglophones were deeply incensed. 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.[1]

The announced privatisation of the CDC 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 1995a). It 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) (see Chapter 5). 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). Although there are certain rivalries and conflicts between these South West associations and the Anglophone movements (see Chapters 2 and 5), 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.

---

[1] *Fako International,* vol. 1, no. 2 (January), 1995, p. 18.

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 (see Chapter 2). 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 (Konings 2003a).

In addition to the Anglophone and South West 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 1993, 1995a). 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 1995a).

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

Following the government announcement of the CDC privatisation on 15 July 1994, all existing ethno-regional associations and opposition parties rallied to form a united front to resist the government's decision. They 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'.[2] 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

[2] *New African,* no. 326 (January), 1995, p. 25; and *Africa International,* nos 279/280 (January-February), 1995, p. 39.

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.[3] 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.[4] At a press conference in Limbe 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.[5]

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 Limbe to discuss the implications of the government's decision. 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.[6]

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 vehemently opposed 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 and compensation.[7] The memorandum was later presented to the provincial governor for onward transmission to President Biya. At the end of this historic meeting, the eminent

---

[3] 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).

[4] *The Herald,* 18-21 August 1994, p. 7.

[5] *Cameroon Post,* 6-19 September 1994, p. 9.

[6] *Fako International*, vol. 1, no. 2 (January 1995), pp. 14-16.

[7] Memorandum of the Bakweri People on the Presidential Decree to Privatise or Sell the Cameroon Development Corporation, Buea, 27 July 1994.

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,[8] 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.[9]

---

[8] 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 J.F. Gwellem (1985) *Cameroon Year Book 1985/86,* Limbe: Gwellem Publications, 113-114.

[9] Cited in *Fako International,* vol. 1, no. 2 (January 1995), p. 16.

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. For example, on that occasion the CDC deputy general manager, Mr Richard Grey, 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.[10]

The CDC was finally put up for sale in January 1999. The leadership of the Anglophone movements immediately warned prospective CDC buyers to desist from investing in the purchase of the CDC. At a meeting with South Western members of parliament and government, the Bakweri chiefs and elite denounced the privatisation of the CDC saying that the latter's acceptance of the CDC sale 'was tantamount to a betrayal of their people'.[11] 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.[12]

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

---

[10] *The Post,* 5 December 1997, pp. 1-2.

[11] Isaha'a Boh Cameroon, Bulletin no. 405.

[12] See Letter from the Bakweri around the World to President Paul Biya of Cameroon, dated 1 October 1999.

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.[13] 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.[14]

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'.[15] Soon afterwards, on 21 August 2000, the BLCC counsel, Professor Ndiva Kofele-Kale, was invited by the

---

[13] See http://www.bakwerilands.org. Most of the documents quoted in this study can be found on this website.

[14] Letter from Dr Lyombe Eko, Executive Director of BLCC-USA, to Mr Horst Köhler, Managing Director of the IMF, dated 16 June 2000.

[15] Press Release no. blc/us/05/08/00, 'The BLCC to seek consultative status at the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)'.

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.[16]

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, the then general manager of the CDC, 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.[17] 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. This put the Bakweri in an awkward position. On the one hand, they refused to withdraw their claims to the CDC lands. On the other hand, however, they fully realised that they were obliged to operate carefully in this matter so as not to undermine Musonge's post as prime minister, which they saw as a key to prebendal politics and Bakweri socio-economic development.

Unable to convince his ethnic group to give up its claim to compensation, Musonge 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

---

[16] BLCC, Open Letter to All Prospective Buyers of CDC Plantations, Buea, 12 October 2000.

[17] See *Cameroon Post,* 26 July-2 August 1994, pp. 12-13.

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 long ago 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.[18]

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.[19]

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

---

[18] BLCC, The BLCC refuses to stand down in the face of threats from Fako administrative authorities, Buea, 15 June 2000.

[19] 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.

- that the Bakweri, acting jointly or individually be allocated a specific percentage of shares in each of the privatised sectors of the corporation.[20]

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. On 19 October 2001, a group of the Anglophone elite in the diaspora, including a large number of Bakweri, addressed a letter to the managing director of the IMF, in which they cautioned him against the perils of going ahead with the privatisation of the CDC without the involvement of the landowners:

> We hope that the IMF will not unwittingly become a signatory to what is certain to become an important public policy fiasco. As an organisation that supports and encourages transparency and accountability in all its dealings, we hope that the IMF will expect no less from Cameroon. The IMF must insist that proper consultation of the people, especially the relevant stakeholder groups, be undertaken before the future of this important agro-industrial complex is determined. ... The unilateral privatisation of the CDC without proper consultation ... cannot provide a viable and sustainable solution to the country's economic problems.[21]

To the consternation of the Anglophones in general and the Bakweri in particular, it was announced in October 2002 that the three CDC tea estates had been sold to a South African consortium, Brobon Finex PTY Limited. One of these estates, the Tole Tea Estate, was located in the Bakweri area (Konings 1995b). Brobon Finex would run the tea sector under the name Cameroon Tea Estates (CTE).

The privatisation agreement between the Cameroonian government and Brobon Finex was on the following terms. The Cameroonian government was to hand over 65 per cent of its shares to Brobon Finex which, in turn, would sell 5 per cent of its shares to its personnel. Brobon Finex was to expand the tea production area from about 1500 to 3000 hectares in the next 15 years and carry out an investment programme estimated at FCFA 8 billion over the next 10 years. It was also to reimburse the FCFA 1.1 billion owed by the CDC tea estates. It further agreed not to lay off any worker, to maintain and even improve the existing health, education and accommodation facilities, and to continue buying produce from local contract farmers. Finally, in conformity with the government privatisation policy of agro-industrial enterprises, land would be excluded from the transaction.

At the signing of the convention on 18 October 2002, the executive chairman of Brobon Finex, Derrick Garvie, declared that his company would demonstrate within a few years that the government's act of confidence had not been misplaced, for no

---

[20] See Report of the Meeting of Prime Minister Mafany Musonge with BLCC Delegation, Yaoundé, 4 October 2000.

[21] See http://www.bakwerilands.org/land problem.htm, 'The Bakweri Land Problem: A Historical Review'.

efforts or expense would be spared in the rapid development of the tea sector in Cameroon. He assured the continuous employment of the existing labour force, adding that even more workers would be recruited for the expansion programme.[22]

The BLCC immediately expressed its 'total bewilderment' at the sale of the CDC tea estates without any consultation or compensation of the landowners in spite of previous deliberations between the committee and the government.[23] The secessionist umbrella organisation of the Anglophone movements, the SCNC, claimed that the Francophone-dominated state had 'no *locus standi* whatsoever to privatise, sell or transfer the CDC tea estates located within the territorial boundaries of Anglophone Cameroon to South Africans or to any other person'.[24] In March 2000, the unions had warned the government that the 1992 Labour Code provided that, in the event of privatisation, workers would be consulted as to whether they would prefer to be paid off before negotiating new contracts with the new employer.[25]

Soon afterwards, the privatisation of the CDC tea estates became a national scandal when evidence emerged that it was going to benefit first and foremost a handful of politically well-connected elites at the expense of the public treasury and the native landowners. From his own revelations, it has become clear that this privatisation had been masterminded by John Niba Ngu, a former CDC general manager and minister of agriculture, who is generally known as a close friend of President Biya. He used both his technical knowledge and his many connections within the regime's highest levels to design the privatisation of the CDC tea estates. While experts had conservatively estimated the value of the three tea estates at between FCFA 5 billion and FCFA 10 billion, Ngu managed to bring down the price to FCFA 1.5 billion. Less than three months later, the CTE sold tea stocks worth FCFA 4.6 billion. In return for his excellent services, the Brobon Finex Board appointed him general manager with a monthly salary and fringe benefits amounting to FCFA 4 million and, according to Ngu, allocated him 5 per cent of the CTE's share capital (although this was later contested by the Board of Brobon Finex).[26]

There were also growing doubts about the takeover of the CDC tea estates by the South African consortium Brobon Finex. It became increasingly evident that the real owner of the CTE was Alhadji Baba Ahmadou Danpullo, an extremely wealthy Mbororo from the North West Province, who was apparently using Brobon Finex as a front. Danpullo is a well-known cattle rancher and businessman in Cameroon with an international network stretching as far as South Africa. He is also a member

---

22 *The Herald,* 20 October 2002.

23 See *The Herald,* 21 October 2002.

24 BSCNation, 1 November 2002, 'Privatisation of the CDC or part thereof by *La République du Cameroun* is illegal and unacceptable'.

25 *The Post,* 8 August 2006.

26 *The Herald,* 27 February 2003.

of the Central Committee of the ruling party, the CPDM. Interestingly, Danpullo had been previously involved in another privatisation scandal in Cameroon, namely the attempt to sell the *Société de Développement du Coton* (SODECOTON), a huge parastatal in Northern Cameroon, which was on the same privatisation list as the CDC in 1994. Danpullo was among the small group of politically well-connected elite, most of them originating from Northern Cameroon, who managed to buy the company at a give-away price. The deal was eventually cancelled by the government following popular outcry and intervention by external donors, in particular France and the World Bank (Takougang & Krieger 1998: 169-180). Apparently, he had put John Niba Ngu, who was looking for a South African financier for his privatisation scheme of the CDC tea estates, into contact with Brobon Finex. Curiously, although he was not a signatory to the convention between the Cameroonian government and Brobon Finex, he paid the price for the takeover of the CDC tea estates to the public treasury and has since been engaged in other financial transactions on behalf of the CTE.

Investigations by the BLCC in South Africa found that Brobon Finex exists in name only and has no office premises. Its chairman, Derrick Garvie, was indeed known in South African business circles but not in connection with Brobon Finex. This raised suspicions that Brobon Finex was merely a straw company.[27] Some of my informants alleged that Danpullo made use of the Brobon Finex construction because it improved his chances of acquiring the tea estates, being well aware that the government was increasingly inclined to sell large, strategic state enterprises to foreign companies. It also enabled him to whitewash part of his ill-gotten capital. After being initially designated by the Brobon Finex Board as a major shareholder, he gradually started acting as the chairman of the CTE Board, while the South African Brobon Finex Board members became less visible in Cameroon.

In January 2003, the BLCC threatened to sue Brobon Finex in South Africa for trespassing on Bakweri property without the prior knowledge of the owners. In addition, it called upon the government to revoke the controversial privatisation of the CDC tea estates and 'to open meaningful discussions with the BLCC with a view to achieving an equitable resolution of the Bakweri land problem'.[28] With growing evidence of financial malpractice in the privatisation of the CDC tea estates, President Biya instructed Prime Minister Peter Mafany Musonge and the security forces to investigate the matter.[29] The outcome of these investigations has never been made public but it is widely believed that Danpullo had been using his political network to the full to settle the matter and had been engaged in bribing the investigators. Moreover, it would appear that President Biya himself has some serious alle-

[27] *Ibid.,* 18 January 2003; and 27 February 2003.

[28] *Ibid.,* 8 January 2003.

[29] *Ibid.,* 27 February 2003.

gations to answer about personally authorising the transfer of CDC tea estates to his friends.

Conclusion

Privatisation has become a cornerstone of the good governance-structural adjustment linkage formulated by 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 that 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.

This study seems to largely confirm widespread evidence that both African governments and civil-society organisations are inclined to oppose externally imposed privatisation schemes. Cameroonian government officials have constantly attempted to postpone and manipulate the implementation of such schemes, which challenge the patronage system that forms a stabilising and uniting factor in the weak nation-state, undermine their limited popular legitimacy, and provoke ethno-regional protest. Although their heavy dependence on western donors for continued financial assistance eventually forced them to comply, they then attempted to sell state corporations to members of the 'hegemonic alliance' at give-away prices. The various ethno-regional associations that have emerged in Anglophone Cameroon during political liberalisation have persistently contested any attempts to privatise the CDC. 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 their regional economic heritage.

12

Privatisation and labour militancy in Anglophone Cameroon

Introduction

There is a growing body of literature on privatisation that discusses how, for various reasons, privatisation practices have had mixed results in Africa, and have often been fraught with serious problems and controversy (cf. Mkandawire 1994; Bennell 1997; Campbell White & Bhatia 1998; Tangri 1999; Van de Walle 2001; Pitcher 2002; Rakner 2003). Most authors attribute the problems of privatisation in Africa not only to numerous technical and financial constraints but also to the fact that privatisation did not present as big a break with the previous dynamics of the post-colonial state as the Bretton Woods institutions and bilateral donors had expected. Cameroon is a clear example of privatisation's failure to free the parastatal sector from the government's neo-patrimonial logic (see Chapter 11).

Some authors have indicated that the problems of privatisation in Africa are equally due to fierce opposition by various civil-society organisations (cf. Olukoshi 1998; Beckman & Sachikonye 2001; Konings 2003a, 2003b, 2007a). Although World Bank studies have come to recommend the involvement of civil society in neo-liberal economic reforms, arguing that their participation in policy-making would ensure ownership, credibility and sustainability of the reform process (World Bank 1992, 1995; Rakner 2001), there is ample evidence that civil-society organisations tend to be excluded from the decision-making process, probably because of their expected resistance to the allegedly harmful effects of externally imposed privatisation schemes on their members. Several civil-society organisations have vehemently denounced the sale of the national and regional patrimony to both

western multinationals and nationals closely connected with African regimes (Tangri 1999; Konings 2003b, 2007a).

Remarkably, hardly any detailed studies have been published on the response of African workers to privatisation in West-Central Africa.[1] This is all the more surprising because privatisations of large, strategic public enterprises in Cameroon and other African countries have often been followed by militant protests by workers against massive lay-offs and deteriorating conditions of service.

In this chapter, I show that the privatisation of the CDC tea estates has generated not only persistent regional protest (see Chapter 11) but also protracted strikes by estate workers. I will focus on one of the three privatised tea estates, the Tole Tea Estate in the coastal area of Anglophone Cameroon, which differs from the other two in the sense that its labour force has been composed mainly of women workers since its creation in the mid-1950s. I have studied this estate in some depth during several, longer and shorter, fieldwork periods since the mid-1980s (cf. Konings 1993, 1995a, 1995b, 1998b). Various research methods have been employed. I consulted the existing primary and secondary sources in libraries and archives. I carried out a few surveys among the workers and observed their daily activities for some months. And finally, I interviewed a large number of workers, managerial staff members, trade-union leaders, government officials and other relevant informants.

The chapter consists of two sections. The first section gives a brief analysis of the Tole Tea Estate's labour force and its actions during the economic crisis that faced the CDC prior to privatisation. The second section describes the growing militancy of Tole Tea Estate workers following a dramatic deterioration in their conditions of service in the aftermath of the estate's privatisation. This resulted in work coming to a complete standstill at the estate for a large part of 2006.

The Tole Tea Estate labour force prior to privatisation

The construction in 1954 of the Tole Tea Estate, which is located near Buea, the capital of the South West Province, marked a turning point in the history of the CDC. This was the first estate to produce tea and, more importantly, to recruit predominantly female labour. Upon completion of the estate, the management decided to employ women to pick the tea, the main activity in tea cultivation (Konings 1995b, 1998b). Tea picking had widely come to be identified as 'women's work', with vast numbers of women having been recruited on tea estates in Asia and elsewhere on the assumption that female pickers were more productive, more docile and cheaper than their male counterparts (Elson & Pearson 1984). If women in Asia were plucking tea, why couldn't women in Cameroon? Moreover at the time the

[1] There are some more detailed studies on workers' response to privatisation in the southern part of Africa. See, for instance, Larmer (2005, 2007), Pitcher (2002) and Zeilig (2002).

Tole Tea Estate was starting out, women – mostly the wives of estate workers, or women from the surrounding villages – were already working on the CDC estates on a casual or seasonal basis. The management was also confronted with a serious shortage of male labour on the plantations during the 1950s, due to the spread of non-estate coffee and cocoa production locally, and hiring women helped to solve the tea estate's labour problem.

For a long time management efforts to recruit an adequate supply of permanent women pickers proved disappointing. The recruitment drive created a direct threat to the customary patriarchal control of female labour. In 1952, shortly before the Tole Tea Estate was set up, Phyllis Kaberry (1952) published her classic study of women in the Bamenda Grassfields, the present-day North West Province of Anglophone Cameroon, which constituted the traditional labour reserve for the coastal plantations. She highlighted the contradictory position of women in society. While on the one hand, there was a general recognition that women played an indispensable role as child bearers and food producers, on the other, they were subordinated to patriarchal controls. This contradiction in the position of women may not be as puzzling as it appears at first sight. Control over women's vital productive and reproductive labour constituted the basis of men's prestige, power and wealth in society. In a more recent study of women in the Bamenda Grassfields, Goheen (1993: 250) observes that:

> Women grew the food crops and were expected to provide the necessities of daily life from their farms. Women's productive labour freed men to participate in (lucrative) trading networks; their reproductive labour increased the size of the household and thus the status and the labour force of the male head. Any surplus value women produced over and above that required for household needs and petty barter was in the hands of men, who retained all the profits.

Male elders and chiefs therefore had a vested interest in keeping women's productive and reproductive labour confined to their local communities and were inclined to resist female migration and wage employment.

Gradually, however, this patriarchal opposition could not forestall an increasing flow of labour to the new estate. In 1986/87, the year the economic crisis started in Cameroon, the estate was employing 1,600 permanent workers, 65 per cent of them women. Some female workers (32 per cent) were women who had accompanied their husbands to the estate, but most were women without husbands, who had escaped the control of the male elders in their local communities and were eager to establish an autonomous existence. Some of them were young, single women who had no access to land, but were expected to work as unpaid labour on their family farms. The majority were older women who, following the break-up of a marriage or the death of their husband, had lost relatively secure usufruct rights. Rather than becoming dependent on the family elders for their survival, they preferred to migrate to the estate where they could be sure of a regular monthly income.

Women who sought employment on the estate were, by and large, illiterate or at least poorly educated. Plantation labour is one of the rare employment opportunities in the capitalist sector for this category of women. Female estate workers therefore had a high stake in plantation labour, especially since most of them were not only without a husband (Bryceson 1980) but were also household heads with children to support. They were deeply dependent on their income from plantation work for the reproduction of their families. As a result, they tended to be highly committed to their jobs, becoming increasingly stabilised (cf. Safa 1979: 447-448). Over 60 per cent of the Tole women have been employed on the estate for more than ten years.

Generally speaking there is a clear division of labour between men and women on the estate, both in the field and in the factory. Whilst women are usually responsible for the picking, the men do what management and male workers alike consider the heaviest jobs in the field, including pruning the tea bushes, spreading fertiliser, planting new fields, and nursery establishment and maintenance. In the factory there are very few women and the machinery is operated exclusively by male workers. Whilst the sexual division of labour in the factory is more or less fixed, it is more flexible in the fields. This flexibility is closely connected with the central position picking has in estate operations and the seasonal shifts in the demand for pickers. During the peak period, all available labour is mobilised by management for plucking. If the female workers are unable to complete the work, male workers with less experience in picking, such as weeders and pruners, are asked to assist as are a number of casual workers, especially women from the surrounding villages. During the slack period, female workers are often assigned to other jobs in the fields, like weeding.

All this shows that the estate labour force is by no means a homogeneous group. A distinct division can be observed, based mainly on gender, occupation and ethno-regional division, but for various reasons these divisions have never created deep, protracted conflicts among the labour force. The Tole Tea Estate appears to be a classic example of an occupational community where the population shares similar living and working conditions (Konings 1995a). Nor have these divisions within the Tole labour force kept workers from engaging in common actions in the promotion of their interests. They actually display an ambivalent attitude towards plantation labour: they value it since it provides them with a regular source of income but they harbour an acute feeling of exploitation and subordination in the labour process.

As in other parts of the world (Loewenson 1992; Jain & Reddock 1998), estate workers receive low remuneration for their arduous work. To limit myself here to field workers, tea pluckers were earning an average net monthly wage of between FCFA 30,000-40,000 prior to the economic recession. Some pickers were unable to earn this much, however, mainly due to a linkage between the remuneration of workers and the system of task work prevailing on the plantations. Completion of

the daily task set by management entitled a worker to the basic daily wage. Non-completion was punished by a pro-rata payment, a proportion of the wage equivalent to the proportion of the task completed.

The management has never denied that workers receive low cash wages but it has continually stressed that the variety of non-cash benefits supplied by the corporation, such as accommodation, medical care and a plot for food cultivation, supplement their incomes. Some remarks are in order here however. The clinic lacks qualified personnel and suffers regular shortages of essential drugs, and during my fieldwork I found that only 57 per cent of the workers had been allocated land free of charge for food production. The remaining workers had to rent land from local peasants.

The exploitation of workers intensified during the economic recession. To save the company from total collapse, CDC management and the Fako Agricultural Workers' Union (FAWU) agreed to adopt a series of adjustment measures. On 23 August 1987 they agreed upon a substantial intensification of task work. The daily quota required from tea pickers was increased from 26 kg to 32 kg of green leaves during the peak season. This was accompanied by a redoubled managerial crusade against 'undisciplined and unproductive' workers. As the corporation's financial position continued to deteriorate, management proposed further austerity measures to the union leadership.

Following negotiations, a new agreement was signed on 6 January 1990 and entailed drastic cuts in the wages and fringe benefits of all workers, amounting to some 30 to 40 per cent of their previous income. Henceforth the workers would be obliged to make substantial contributions towards the range of services that the corporation had previously supplied free of charge, such as housing, water, electricity and medical facilities. The most draconian measure was the introduction of a compulsory savings scheme, forcing workers to save at least 15 per cent of their basic wages until 1994 to aid the corporation's recovery. The union leadership had expected the workers' increased output and financial sacrifices to forestall, or at least minimise, any retrenchment. However this proved to be wishful thinking. The management soon embarked on mass lay-offs and between 1986/87 and 2002 the labour force on the Tole Tea Estate shrank from 1,600 to 768.

As I have shown in more detail elsewhere (Konings 1995b, 1998b), the Tole Tea Estate has been characterised by a long history of workers' militancy that has challenged the pervasive managerial assumption that female workers are more docile than their male counterparts (Elson and Pearson 1984). Time and again, the CDC management was forced to admit that 'the Tole Tea Estate is one of the most troubled spots on the CDC plantations' and that 'output on the estate has remained almost pathetically low' (Konings 1995b: 86). Confronted with close cooperation between management and the union leadership in the planning and implementation

of austere adjustment measures during the economic recession, the response of Tole workers became more complex and varied (Konings 1995a). Some workers opted for a single strategy, others for several strategies, either simultaneously or consecutively. A growing number of workers became survival-oriented in the climate of insecurity. They were inclined to acquiesce in whatever economic recovery measures management might introduce, for the sake of keeping their jobs. They tried to impress management with above-average output, and avoided conflicts with their supervisors.

Some workers still relied on the bargaining strength of the state-controlled trade union for the protection of their interests but most lost whatever confidence they had ever had in their union leadership. They tended to bypass the union and lodge their individual and collective complaints with the Provincial Delegation of Labour in Buea, which was usually perceived by workers as a neutral intermediary between management and labour. The department was overburdened with work, often resulting in long delays in settling disputes.

Unexpectedly, the majority of workers continued to resort to both informal and collective protest actions that were directed against their intensified exploitation and subordination in the labour process. A decline could nevertheless be seen in the number of collective actions. This is understandable because in times of economic crisis, strikes are more likely to elicit severe managerial reprisals in the form of summary dismissals than in times of prosperity. Significantly, the decline of collective actions appeared to have been compensated for by an increase in the number and intensity of informal actions, which were difficult for the state and management to control even during the economic crisis. These included output restrictions, sabotage and involvement in illegal income-generating activities. Some women did not stick to the picking standards; they added bad leaves to the good ones, a practice which enabled them to complete their task more quickly and achieve more weight and income. Others stole tea from the factory and sold it to middlemen. The management frequently lamented the fact that the theft of tea had reached unprecedented levels since the economic crisis and was causing the company serious losses. Still other women cut or pruned the tea bushes for firewood. These and other illegal activities were not only expressions of protest but also provided welcome supplements to the women's meagre incomes.

Growing labour militancy after the estate's privatisation

Neither the government nor the CDC management had felt it necessary to inform the Tole Tea Estate workers of the planned privatisation of their workplace so they only got to know of it via the media. Being aware that privatisations in Cameroon had been usually accompanied by retrenchments and a deterioration in workers' conditions of service, they became extremely worried about their future despite

assurances given by the new owners during the signing of the privatisation agreement that the existing labour force and their conditions of service on the estate would be maintained. Shortly after the estate's privatisation on 18 October 2002 (see Chapter 11), one of the women pluckers expressed the widespread anxieties of the workers as follows:

> I am not sure whether we are going to enjoy similar conditions as under the CDC. I am rather afraid that we are going to suffer when the new owners have installed themselves. Nobody appears to be willing to enlighten us on the effects of privatisation and our new status. One simply asks us to wait.[2]

The workers became even more alarmed when the 'real' owner of the newly established Cameroon Tea Estates (CTE), Alhadji Baba Ahmadou Danpullo, decided in November 2002 to transfer 23 managerial staff from his business enterprises in Douala to his new company, probably because he expected them to be more loyal to him than the ex-CDC managerial staff. His decision created serious problems on the estate. First, these newly appointed managers were all Francophones who had great difficulty in communicating with the Anglophone estate managers and workers. Moreover, given the deepening Anglophone-Francophone divide in the country (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003), it was hardly surprising that their appointment was generally interpreted on the estate as a highly provocative attempt to establish Francophone domination of a former Anglophone enterprise. As one of these Francophone managers told me:

> The Francophones are looked upon here as invaders. The Anglophones have not digested the fact that the tea sector of the CDC has come under the control of French-speaking Cameroonians. One has therefore the impression that they will do everything to chase us from the company.[3]

Second, although lacking any experience in tea production, these newly appointed managers rapidly started usurping the functions of the ex-CDC managerial staff and lording over them and the workers. This behaviour fuelled existing tensions and promoted workers' solidarity and militancy. Without the knowledge of the first CTE general manager, John Niba Ngu, these Francophone managers engaged in dubious financial transactions that resulted in a lack of funds for the improvement of estate facilities and workers' conditions of service. Their lack of experience and their frequent frictions with Anglophone managers and workers soon caused a serious decline in tea production.

---

[2] Interview with a woman picker at the Tole Tea Estate, 21 November 2002.

[3] Interview with a Francophone CTE manager at the Tole Tea Estate, 13 December 2002.

From 29 December 2002 to 4 January 2003, the estate workers staged a first strike against the new CTE management.[4] They asserted that their conditions of service had declined following privatisation. Their social-security contributions had not been transferred to the National Social Security Fund since 1996, medical care was not being provided, ambulances and factory tractors had broken down, sceptic tanks were not being emptied, and the November 2002 wages had not yet been paid to all the field workers. Many workers also protested against the sudden dismissal on 4 January 2003 of the CTE general manager, John Niba Ngu, and his replacement by his Francophone deputy general manager, Mahamat Alamine Mey. While the Brobon Finex Board insisted that Ngu had been fired because of his previous unilateral decision to dismiss all the newly hired inexperienced and unpopular Francophone managers, the workers instead claimed that he had been fired because of his policy of improving their conditions of service. During a meeting with some of the Brobon Finex board members on the same day, their shop stewards or 'staff representatives' as they are called in Cameroon (Konings 1993, 1995b) were told not to meddle in the sacking of their former general manager and to ensure the workers returned to work, while the CTE management looked into all their problems. On that occasion, the board members ordered the immediate payment of any salary arrears and made the following promises: the CTE would increase workers' salaries by April 2003, raise their conditions of service to the standards prevailing on the tea estates in Kenya and elsewhere, and provide them with toilet and medical facilities as well as protective clothing and boots. A few days later, the new CTE general manager, Mahamat Alamine Mey, signed a protocol agreement with the president of the FAWU, Cornelius Vewessee, reassuring the workers that all their acquired rights would be preserved.

On 17 June 2003, the estate workers staged another strike in protest at what they termed 'poor working conditions and humanitarian neglect'.[5] They felt particularly aggrieved by the abrupt cancellation of several allowances and bonuses they had been enjoying under the CDC and the constant lack of medical facilities on the estate. Although an amount of FCFA 650 was deducted from their monthly wages for medical care, they were forced to go to the CDC hospitals where they were charged the same as all other non-CDC personnel. Apparently representing the feelings of most estate workers, a 52-year-old widowed tea plucker lamented the fact that:

---

[4] Interview with Mathias Anyacheck, staff representative at the Tole Tea Estate, 29 November 2003. For press reports of this strike, see *The Herald*, 6 January 2003; and *Le Messager*, 9 January 2003.

[5] Interview with some staff representatives at the Tole Tea Estate, 29 October 2003. For a report of this strike, see *The Herald*, 18 June 2003.

> The abolition of several allowances has drastically reduced my income. My monthly wage has dropped from FCFA 40,000 to FCFA 22,000. I am not even sure if I will get this little amount. One always finds pretexts to cut my present wage. One speaks of taxes to be paid, absenteeism, indiscipline and so on. At present, I am torn between resigning and revolt. I would like to leave but I wonder how I could then raise my children.[6]

Despite growing worker discontent, the chairman of Brobon Finex, Derrick Garvie, still presented an optimistic picture of the company's future during the celebrations to mark the first anniversary of the CTE on 18 October 2003. He once again stressed that one of the principal managerial objectives was 'to make CTE a clear example of the success story of privatisations'.[7]

Soon after the first anniversary celebrations, in December 2003, the CTE management implemented a controversial reorganisation. Some staff representatives pointed out how a number of the proposed reorganisation measures went against the 1992 deregulated Labour Code, and they attributed the absence of any state intervention in the matter to the close links between top government officials and Alhadji Baba Ahmadou Danpullo. The reorganisation exercise started with a 50 per cent slash in workers' wages and the withdrawal of remaining allowances. When workers reacted to this dramatic decline in their income by resorting to protracted strike action on 8 January 2004, the management used this 'illegal' strike as a pretext for implementing two further measures. It immediately dismissed 268 workers without paying their leaving benefits, and started recruiting new workers from outside Anglophone Cameroon. Among the dismissed workers were a number of staff representatives. The CTE management simply refused to seek authorisation for their dismissal from the Ministry of Labour as required by the Labour Code. It then changed almost the entire labour force – with the exception of 90 workers – from being permanent workers into casual and temporary workers. These measures were accompanied by the introduction of a labour regime that became more and more despotic (Burawoy 1985), while banning trade unionism from the estate and ignoring the staff representatives.

Furious about these measures, the workers continued to strike until 5 February 2004 when the Minister of Labour, Professor Robert Nkili, decided to intervene. Immediately after his mediation and settlement of the dispute, it became evident that the management was unwilling to respect his instructions about refraining from 'wrongful terminations of contracts and unacceptable wages and terms of employment'. It started introducing new reorganisation measures that led to a further deterioration in workers' conditions of service. It notified the tea pluckers that their daily task would be increased to 32 kg in the slack season and 45 kg in the peak

---

[6] Interview with a tea picker at the Tole Tea Estate, 29 October 2003.

[7] See *The Post*, 20 October 2003.

season. The workers then decided to stay away from work on 10 February. In retaliation, management announced an additional slash in wages.

Given these developments, the living and working conditions on the estate became so deplorable that workers started complaining that 'the takeover of the tea estate by Brobon Finex had re-introduced slavery in this part of the country'.[8] While the CTE management was celebrating the company's second anniversary on 23 October 2004, the workers circulated tracts in which they called for the return of John Niba Ngu as general manager to save the company from total collapse. They deplored their loss of benefits and the social amenities they had enjoyed under the CDC, the fall in the quality of their tea, and the abandonment of certain sections of the plantation which, they said, had fallen out of use.[9]

In the course of 2005, the workers became increasingly desperate. They regularly appealed to the government to return the estate to the CDC, stressing that Alhadji Baba Ahmadou Danpullo was focusing his attention and capital on his newly constructed 4,000-hectare tea estate in Ndawara in the North West Province which, he boasted, was making use of the latest technology. Irrespective of its 35 per cent stake in the CTE, the government remained silent, apparently unconcerned about the decrease in tea production and the workers' declining conditions of service. Feeling abandoned by the government, the workers gradually lost faith in any future improvement in their predicament under CTE management. Significantly, while many of them appeared to be no longer interested in keeping their jobs at any costs, they did not want to resign before all their dues had been paid since these would enable them to repay their debts and invest in a new future.[10] Their growing consciousness of a common interest in fighting for their accrued rights became a source of solidarity and militancy. This was clearly manifest in 2006 when a protracted strike action – probably the longest in Cameroon's labour history – paralysed all the estate's activities for almost an entire year.

On 18 January 2006, the workers started the new year with a short warning strike. They had been informed that the Minister of Labour was on a working visit to Buea and the next day they intercepted him during his tour and told him that the sale of their estate to Brobon Finex had not been good for them. They had become exposed to untold hardships following privatisation, and were unable even to send their children to school. The minister replied that he had refrained from any earlier intervention on their behalf because he had expected their problems to be solved at the company level. He asked them to go back to work while he 'solved all their

---

8 See *The Post*, 13 September 2004.

9 *The Post*, 25 October 2004; and *The Herald*, 1 November 2004.

10 *The Post*, 13 September 2005.

problems'. He was going to meet Prime Minister Ephraim Inoni with a view to reconsidering the privatisation of the CDC tea estates.[11]

Nothing more was heard of the minister after he left Buea and on 26 February 2006 the workers announced that they had no other choice than to go on strike due to 'the inhuman working conditions we are subjected to by the CTE management'. They stressed that they would not resume work until they had been paid the following benefits:

> severance payment from CDC to date; accrued leave allowances from 2003 to 2006; good separation bonuses, [their] own 5 per cent shares in the CTE as spelt out in the privatisation agreement; [their] social insurance dues; [their] credit union contributions which were never transferred by the CTE to the credit union; and balances owed to retrenched workers since January 2004.[12]

Notably, by the start of this strike a new spokesman for the workers had emerged on the estate who acted in close cooperation with the existing staff representatives. This new spokesman, Blasius Mosoke, was not a worker but a manager, being one of the estate's field assistants. He told me that two major factors were responsible for his siding with the workers during the strike. First, similar to the workers, he felt he had been maltreated by the newly recruited Francophone managers after privatisation. His relationship with the CTE management had become particularly strained after he refused to provide the names of the workers involved in the first strike in 2006. Just like the workers, he had considered resigning after being paid his leaving benefits. Second, he felt obliged to fight not only for himself but also for the workers because he thought that the core of the estate labour force was predominantly made up of poorly educated women who were incapable of representing their own interests effectively.[13]

During a crisis meeting in Limbe on 29 March that was attended by representatives of the regional administration, management and workers, the newly appointed French general manager of the CTE, Jean-Pierre Croze, disclosed that he intended to close the estate for three months during the ongoing strike in order to replace the machines in the tea factory, at a cost of approximately FCFA 3.5 billion. He then offered the workers FCFA 14.9 million which, he said, represented part of their accrued benefits. The staff representatives, however, rejected his offer, saying that the workers would instead prefer the immediate payment of all their benefits.[14]

Not long after this meeting, on 8 April, the strikers started blockading the Tole-Sasse road. This had the intended consequence of forestalling the re-opening of

---

[11] *The Post,* 25 January 2006.

[12] *The Post,* 17 March 2006.

[13] Interview with Mr Blasius Mosoke at the Tole Tea Estate, 15 March 2006. See also *The Post*, 25 September 2006.

[14] *Le Messager*, 30 March 2006; and *Cameroon Tribune*, 12 April 2006.

some local elitist colleges after the Easter holidays. The workers' argument was simple: if they prevented students from going to school, their parents, who belonged to the cream of the Cameroonian elite, would be likely to bring pressure to bear on the government to meet their demands.[15] Indeed, on 12 April, the Minister of Labour organised another crisis meeting in Buea. During heated discussions, he failed to persuade workers' representatives to accept the CTE management's initial offer of FCFA 14.9 million, while the remainder of their accrued benefits would be paid progressively. However in the end, he succeeded in reaching a compromise. Both parties in the dispute agreed that all the accrued benefits would be paid out three months later. In the meantime, each party would start calculating the total amount and then compare their findings with payment coming in July.[16]

After this agreement, three significant events occurred. First, there was an attempt by the CTE owners to continue selling tea stocks during the ongoing strike. In the night of 25 April, a number of soldiers tried to remove bags of processed tea from the estate's factory. It soon transpired that Alhadji Baba Ahmadou Danpullo had hired these soldiers to transport the tea to one of his lorries that was parked in Buea. Incensed workers attacked the soldiers and damaged their truck, defying warning shots. Seeking revenge for the failure of this lucrative undertaking, soldiers tried to arrest Blasius Mosoke, the estate's field assistant and the workers' spokesman. In response, the workers warned the military that they would not take it lying down if anything happened to Mosoke.[17]

Second, there was an attempt by the Bakweri elite to buy the estate. Claiming that it was extremely worried about the ongoing crisis in one of the most important regional enterprises, the management of the Bakweri transport and shipping company Fakoship announced on 14 July its intention to take over the Tole Tea Estate. However, its offer was immediately dismissed by the chairman of Brobon Finex, Derrick Garvie, who said that 'as the owner of the estate, his company had the sole right to let it go fallow, dismiss workers, dismantle machines, close it down and sell it without the government or anybody else interfering in its affairs'.[18] Alhadji Baba Ahmadou Danpullo strongly condemned the offer as being another expression of Bakweri opposition to his company. He repeatedly declared that the crisis on the estate was not due to managerial lapses but to the political machinations of the Bakweri elite who continued to incite workers against the management with the aim of undermining the company and serving their own interests.[19]

---

[15] *The Post*, 29 April 2006 and 16 August 2006; and *Cameroon Tribune,* 12 April 2006.

[16] *The Post*, 19 April 2006.

[17] *The Post,* 1 May 2006.

[18] *The Post,* 8 August 2006.

[19] *The Post,* 8 August 2006; and 12 September 2006.

Third, the most spectacular event was the workers' decision to besiege the CDC Head Office in Bota-Limbe. They had been frustrated by the government's failure to respect the agreement reached in the crisis meeting on 12 April and while they had made their own calculations of their accrued benefits, the three-month deadline had passed without any government response. On 26 July, between 500 and 800 men, women and children from the Tole Tea Estate occupied the CDC Head Office, demanding FCFA 2.3 billion in accrued benefits. The president of FAWU aptly described the symbolic meaning of their occupation:

> The protesters presently camped at the CDC Head Office have not behaved violently because they have come back to where they were, to express that the marriage to which they were given, had not been successful because the new husband seems to have another wife in Ndawara [referring to Danpullo's newly created tea estate in that locality] and is not taking care of them. So they have come back to their father. CDC is their father.[20]

Although the provincial governor and the CDC general manager ordered them to leave, the workers nevertheless resolved to stay on until a definitive solution to their problems was found. Only the personal intervention of President Biya persuaded the workers to call off their protest action on 4 August, and Prime Minister Ephraim Inoni was asked to mediate. He set up an *ad hoc* committee composed of government, management and worker representatives that was presided over by the Minister of Labour in order to calculate the amount owed to the strikers and ensure its prompt payment.[21]

The committee started work on 7 August. Following its own calculations, it did not accept the workers' 'exorbitant' demand of FCFA 2.3 billion and instead proposed a meagre sum of FCFA 169 million. After recalculation, it agreed upon a figure of FCFA 308 million, which the workers still considered far below their expectations. Payment was to take place in the following two weeks but curiously it was again postponed. It was only after mounting labour unrest that the regional administration announced 30 August as the day of payment.

However when on that day the workers gathered outside the offices of the Provincial Delegation of Labour in Buea to receive payment, they were informed that none would take place in the absence of an accurate list. In response, the workers went on the rampage in Buea, erecting road blocks on the main road to Kumba and Douala and tearing down billboards along the road. Clashes between workers and the police led to 30 workers being taken to hospital and a passer-by reportedly being hit by a stray bullet.

A few days later, on 2 September, the regional authorities summoned the workers to collect their dues. Since the authorities proved unwilling to publish a list of bene-

---

[20] *The Post,* 8 August 2006.

[21] *Ibid.*

ficiaries and the amount each of them was going to receive, the workers simply refused to turn up. It was for two reasons that they finally began collecting their dues on 11 September. First, their leaders had been continuously exposed to death threats by the administration, leaving them with no choice but to comply. Second, the workers' united front had been broken after workers at the Tole Credit Union secretly collected some FCFA 2.2 million.[22] Most of the workers were embittered because they had been hoodwinked into accepting miserly sums and declared that they were no longer prepared to work on the estate.

A month later, all the workers who had been paid off had – either voluntarily or forcibly – left the Tole Tea Estate labour camp.[23] Some had returned to their villages of origin, while others had moved to neighbouring villages to try to eke out a new existence. Those who still wanted to work on the estate were told by CTE management that they had to apply for new contracts. On 1 October, youths hired by the management on a contract basis started pruning the overgrown tea bushes. Tea picking is expected to restart in the course of 2007.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided ample evidence that the most militant opposition to the privatisation of the CDC tea estates has come from the workers. There are two main reasons for this. The Tole Tea Estate labour force, mainly composed of women, has always been marked by a high degree of militancy and despite certain internal divisions, Tole workers tend to display a remarkable solidarity in the defence of their interests. This is promoted by their residence in 'occupational communities' where they share similar living and working conditions, speak a *lingua franca* (Pidgin English) and can easily communicate with each other (Ardener *et al.* 1960). Second, they firmly believe in the efficacy of militant action. The illiterate and poorly educated workers have always placed less faith in institutionalised bargaining procedures than the relatively moderate union leadership that is largely recruited from among the clerks and supervisory staff. The regular failure of these procedures to achieve workers' aims, together with the establishment of state control over the trade unions, has strengthened their belief in militant action as the only way to bring management to its knees and redress long-standing grievances (Konings 1993, 1995b).

It would be wrong to conclude that the Tole Tea Estate workers' militant actions against the privatisation of the CDC derived from their opposition to privatisation *per se*. Their leaders told me that workers had no quarrel with the idea of privatisation, claiming that they fully understood the logic behind such an exercise,

---

[22] *The Post,* 15 September 2006.

[23] *The Post,* 20 October 2006.

namely 'the transfer of inefficiently run parastatals to more efficiently run private enterprises'. They stressed that the workers had become vehemently opposed to the privatisation of the CDC for the following reasons:

- They regarded the privatisation of the CDC as a provocation of the Bretton Woods institutions and the government to the Anglophone community in general and the Anglophone workers in particular. They pointed out that the CDC had the reputation of being one of the few relatively well-managed parastatals. This also explained their frequent demand during the disastrous privatisation exercise for a return to their mother company.
- They strongly condemned the secretive and corrupt nature of the CDC privatisation as well as the blatant absence of any consultation of workers and trade unions in the process (see Chapter 11).
- Above all, they quickly discovered that the new owners' promise of safeguarding and even improving workers' rights and benefits was not going to be respected. Confronted by deplorable living and working conditions after privatisation, they gradually lost interest in keeping their jobs at any cost and resumed informal and collective actions. Furthermore, determined to receive all their accrued benefits before resigning, they engaged in protracted strike actions that paralysed all the activities on the estate.

In sharp contrast to popular resistance to neo-liberal reforms in some other African countries (cf. Zeilig 2002), Tole Tea Estate workers received little support from those civil-society organisations in the region that claimed to be equally opposed to the privatisation of the CDC, in particular the trade unions and various Anglophone associations. The management had banned trade unionism from the estate, and the Anglophone associations seemed to be first and foremost preoccupied with their own specific grievances. Given these circumstances, the militant actions of the Tole Tea Estate workers were bound to remain local expressions of anger and outrage. There appears to be only one notable Cameroonian example of a broader coalition of popular forces against privatisation practices. This occurred after the takeover of *La Société Nationale d'Electricité* (Sonel) in 2001 by the American multinational AES-Sirocco. This American multinational dismally failed to keep to its promise of guaranteeing an uninterrupted supply of electricity. Various parts of the country have suffered from electricity rationing and regular power cuts, resulting in a reduction of economic output and hardships for consumers. This, together with excessive increases in the price for electricity and massive lay-offs of workers, has led to several strikes and boycotts by its workers and numerous demonstrations and court cases by consumers. Although the workers and consumers eventually failed to achieve the departure of the Americans, they were able to gain important concessions from the privatised company, including new recruitment of workers, better conditions of service, increased investments in regular power supplies and replacement of American top managers by Cameroonians (Konings 2007a).

13

The Anglophone Cameroon-Nigeria boundary: Opportunities and conflicts

Introduction

Of late, Africanists have developed a renewed interest in the study of colonially negotiated borders, and the remarkable increase in boundary disputes between and within African states has been the focus of several recent studies (cf. Nugent & Asiwaju 1996; Bach 1999; Mbembe 1999; Herbst 2000; Nugent 2002; Bennafla 2002). For a long time after independence border skirmishes and wars between African states were relatively rare, and governments more or less adhered to the sacrosanct nature of the boundaries inherited from colonial times (the principle of *uti possedetis jus*), as laid down in the 1963 OAU Charter. At present, however, African states are involved in numerous boundary disputes, such as those between Ethiopia and its neighbours in the Horn of Africa (Abbink 1998, 2003), between Nigeria and its neighbours, and between the Democratic Republic of Congo and its neighbours. According to Mbembe (1999: 9), most of these disputes have their origins 'not in the desire to make an ethno-cultural space coincide with the space of the state, but rather in the struggle to control resources considered to be vital'. Moreover, the recent political liberalisation process has created more space for separatist and irredentist movements within African states as evidenced in Senegal (Casamance), in Cameroon (the Anglophone region), in Angola (the Cabinda enclave), and in Namibia (the Caprivi Strip) (cf. Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003).

Other studies focus on African border regions. They maintain that African boundaries are essentially permeable, constituting no significant barrier to the cross-border movement of labour and goods. They even claim that African boundaries stimulate formal and informal cross-border trade, representing zones of opportuni-

ties for capital accumulation (Fanso 1986; Nugent & Asiwaju 1996; Bennafla 2002). Nonetheless, they point out that relations between host and migrant communities in these areas are mostly not without conflict. Severe confrontations may even occur when the 'autochthonous' or 'national' population sees 'strangers' and 'foreigners' as a threat in demographic, economic and political terms. Such confrontations are often instigated or fanned by political entrepreneurs (cf. Konings 2001).

This chapter focuses on the Anglophone Cameroon-Nigeria boundary, a study of which enables the two approaches outlined above to be combined. On the one hand, this border has become a continuous bone of contention between the Cameroonian and Nigerian states since soon after independence. Regular border skirmishes raised international attention in the 1990s when the two sides became involved in a protracted war over the sovereignty of the Bakassi peninsula – an area rich in oil reserves. On the other hand, this border has never hindered the large-scale circulation of people and goods in the borderlands. The focus in the chapter is on the massive Nigerian migrant community in Anglophone Cameroon and its exploitation of the economic opportunities offered by its host region and cross-border trade.

The chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, I argue that there was no real boundary between Anglophone Cameroon and Nigeria during the British mandate and trust eras when Anglophone Cameroon was administered as an integral part of Nigeria. This resulted in the large-scale migration of Nigerians, in particular those originating from the densely populated Igbo region, to Anglophone Cameroon. Due to their higher level of education and business acumen, Igbo migrants soon came to dominate the local public service and economy. It is beyond doubt that local resentment of Igbo dominance, fuelled by Anglophone Cameroonian nationalist leaders, was one of the principal reasons for the majority vote in the so-called Southern Cameroons for reunification with Francophone Cameroon rather than for integration into Nigeria during the 1961 UN-organised plebiscite.

In the second section, I show that the reunification of Anglophone and Francophone Cameroon created a real border between Anglophone Cameroon and Nigeria, leading to a dramatic change in the identity and economic opportunities of the Nigerian migrants. Henceforth, they were not only transformed from citizens into foreigners but were also excluded from a wide range of employment activities. Unexpectedly, these profound changes have neither stopped nor reduced Nigerian migration. On the contrary, the flow of Nigerians to Anglophone Cameroon even appears to have increased. Nigerian migrants seem to be taking advantage of the different monetary systems on both sides of the border and the extremely favourable exchange rate of the CFA franc compared to the Nigerian naira to specialise in formal and informal cross-border trade. Employing their ethnic networks that stretch from Anglophone Cameroon to Nigeria, they have acquired a dominant

position and, in some cases, even a monopoly in the Anglophone Cameroonian commercial sector. They have also devised certain strategies to cope with repeated harassment by the local authorities and the forces of law and order and with their status as a foreign, but economically dominant, minority group in Anglophone Cameroonian society.

In the third section, I first outline some of the underlying reasons for the frequent border disputes between the Cameroonian and Nigerian states since independence, culminating in the Bakassi conflict in the 1990s, and then explore their impact on relations between the Anglophone Cameroonian and Nigerian immigrant populations. Subsequently, I explain why the 2002 International Court of Justice (ICJ) verdict on the Bakassi conflict in favour of Cameroon has been hotly contested by both the Nigerian inhabitants of the Bakassi peninsula and Anglophone secessionist movements.

The Anglophone Cameroon-Nigeria boundary during the British mandate and trust eras

Following the First World War, the erstwhile German Kamerun Protectorate (1884-1916) was partitioned between the British and French victors, first as 'mandates' under the League of Nations and later as 'trusts' under the United Nations. In sharp contrast to the French Cameroons which was incorporated into the French colonial empire as a distinct administrative unit separate from neighbouring French Equatorial Africa, the tiny British Cameroons was governed as an integral part of the Eastern Region of Nigeria. There was every indication, particularly in the period preceding reunification, that Britain intended to integrate it fully into Nigeria despite its distinct status as a trust territory (Awasom 1998).

The British method of administration had important consequences for future political developments. First, it created the appearance that Nigeria, rather than Britain, was the colonial power ruling the Southern Cameroons. It was not, therefore, surprising that the nationalist struggles in the Southern Cameroons after the Second World War had more an anti-Nigeria than an anti-colonial character. Second, it gave rise to the increasing peripheralisation of the Southern Cameroons, becoming as it were a 'colony within a colony' (Nigeria). Being administered as a mere appendage of Nigeria, the Southern Cameroons was starved of development funds and its economy remained centred around the plantations that had been established under German rule (Ardener *et al.* 1960; Konings 1993). There was not even a separate budget for the Southern Cameroons until 1954 when it achieved a quasi-regional status and a limited degree of self-government (Le Vine 1964: 201; Mbuagbaw *et al.* 1987: 86-87). Third, and maybe even more significantly, it abolished the existing border between the former German Kamerun Protectorate and Nigeria, resulting in the free movement of goods and labour. The Southern Cameroons-

Nigeria connection offered many economic and other opportunities for the inhabitants of the frontier regions, albeit in varying degrees (Chiabi 1986, 1997).

There is considerable evidence that Eastern Nigerians have benefited more than Southern Cameroonians from the absence of any real border between the two regions (Amazee 1990; Weiss 1996, 1998). There was a growing migration of Eastern Nigerians, in particular the Igbo, to the 'greener pastures' in Southern Cameroons. Migration became instrumental in escaping from widespread land scarcity in their densely populated areas and providing the necessary manpower and trading circuits in the underdeveloped Southern Cameroons, often encouraged by the colonial authorities. Nigerian migrants could take advantage of the higher level of education in their home region due to earlier Christianisation.

Migrants started working in the various agro-industrial enterprises in the Southern Cameroons, notably the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) and Pamol, both of which had inherited the former German plantations in the area (see Chapter 2). Since the 1940s there has been a spectacular increase in the Nigerian plantation labour force. In the 1950s Nigerians, especially Igbo, comprised roughly 25-30 per cent of the CDC labour force and 80 per cent of the Pamol workforce (Konings 1993, 1998a). Many of these workers settled in the Southern Cameroons. They acquired land for food farming and cash cropping, originally on a usufruct basis, by providing village elders with a token payment. Although the transfer of land was not intended to be permanent, Nigerians were able, with the increase in the value of land and the formalisation of land tenure, to secure titles and set themselves up as landlords (Fisiy 1992; Kleis 1975, 1980).

A growing number of them used their earnings from plantation labour to launch small-scale trading enterprises, selling food and durable goods in the vicinity of the plantations. Gradually, Igbo came to dominate the market trade in local foodstuffs and imported goods, as well as the transport industry and the retail and wholesale distribution of palm oil in an area centred on Kumba, Tiko and Victoria (Limbe). In these towns, large numbers of Nigerians entered the restaurant business or became involved in photography, baking, tailoring, shoemaking, bicycle repairs and a variety of other small enterprises. In the Kumba area, they were the principal buyers of cocoa, which in time became Southern Cameroons' major export crop (Kleis 1975, 1980). And, last but not least, their higher level of Western education enabled them to occupy the majority of the white-collar supervisory and managerial positions on the plantations and in the Southern Cameroons civil service.

The dominant position of the Igbo in the regional economy and administration was deeply resented by the local population leading to an explosive situation after the Second World War when regional politicians started exploiting the 'Igbo scare' in nationalist struggles (Amazee & Oben 1989; Amazee 1990). As a result, Igbo became the victims of verbal and physical attacks by frustrated local inhabitants and

were told to return home. They were accused, usually fancifully, of every vice under the sun: bribery, corruption, narcotics, adulterating palm wine and medicines, counterfeiting, theft, profiteering, seducing local women, cannibalism, sorcery, disrespect of local customs and authorities, and so on (Amazee 1990; Ardener 1962).

It would appear that the Ardeners somewhat underestimated the degree of Igbophobia among the Southern Cameroonian population (Ardener *et al.* 1960). For example, in February 1948, the Bakweri Native Authority passed the following regulations with the aim of controlling relations between the 'autochthonous' population and the 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 purpose.
- Houses or farms already sold to an Igbo man shall be purchased by the Native Authority, which will afterwards resell same to some suitable person.
- Nobody shall trade with Igbos for anything of value or not.
- All landlords must ask their Igbo tenants to quit before 15 March 1948.
- No Cameroonian woman is allowed to communicate with the Igbos in any form.[1]

Compared to the massive Nigerian migration to the Southern Cameroons, relatively few Southern Cameroonians found their way to Nigeria. They were usually students, teachers, journalists, petty traders, businessmen or employees in Nigerian firms. While they rarely rose to positions of influence in Nigeria, the Nigerian experience had a significant effect on the emergence of Southern Cameroonian nationalism. Prominent Southern Cameroonian nationalist leaders like Emmanuel Endeley, Paul Kale, John Ngu Foncha, Nerius Mbile and Samson George received part or all of their political education in Nigeria (cf. Ebune 1992; Chiabi 1997; Ngoh 1996, 2001).

Southern Cameroonian nationalists soon began to exploit the problems caused by both the British Cameroons-Nigeria boundary and the British-French Cameroons boundary. They attacked the subordinate position of the Southern Cameroons in the British-Nigerian colonial system and the dominant position of the Igbo in the Southern Cameroons. They initially claimed a larger representation of the Southern Cameroonian elite in the Nigerian administration and, later, regional autonomy. In response to their pressure, the British authorities gradually increased Southern Cameroonian representation in the Nigerian administration after the Second World War. Following successive constitutional changes, they granted the Southern Cameroons a quasi-regional status and a limited degree of self-government in 1954,

[1] 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'.

and in 1958 full regional status within the Federation of Nigeria (Awasom 1998; Ngoh 2001; Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003). For part of the Southern Cameroonian elite this was the reason to shift from an anti-Nigerian stance towards a more positive view of Nigeria. From their perspective, regional status seemed a satisfactory answer to the problem of Nigerian domination, the lack of Southern Cameroonian participation in the Nigerian political system, and economic stagnation.

Interestingly, from the late 1940s onwards the question of reunification cropped up in the programmes of the various Southern Cameroonian pressure groups and newly created parties, raising the possibility of an alternative political option for the Southern Cameroons to escape from its subordinate position in the colonial system and from Igbo domination. A number of factors underpinned their reunification campaign. There was the emergence of the 'Kamerun idea' among some members of the Southern Cameroonian elite – the belief that the period of German rule had created a Cameroon identity or nation (Welch 1966: 158-188; Johnson 1970: 42). Some authors have pointed out that this idea hardly corresponded with reality, since German colonial rule had been too short to create a Cameroon identity among the multiplicity of ethnic groups on its territory (Ardener 1967; Chem-Langhëë & Njeuma 1980). Kofele-Kale (1980), however, argued that it was not the reality of the German experience but rather the memories (factual or otherwise) or myths that inspired the Southern Cameroonian elite to start advocating reunification. To strengthen their arguments, the elite often referred to the close relationship that existed between ethnic groups on both sides of the British-French Cameroons border. This boundary, they stressed, was regarded as an unnecessary inconvenience by the frontier people in this area because it restricted the free movement of people belonging to the same ethnic group.

The idea of reunification appears to have been much more popular among Francophones than among Anglophones (Awasom 2000; Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003). Its devoted and consistent flag-bearers were loyalists of the UPC, the radical nationalist party in French Cameroon (Joseph 1977; Mbembe 1996), and Francophone immigrants in the Southern Cameroons who saw reunification principally as a way of eradicating discrimination by the British Administering Authority and removing their second-class citizenship in the Southern Cameroons (Amazee 1994; Njeuma 1995; Awasom 2000). Significantly, the Southern Cameroons elite largely regarded the reunification idea in the first instance as an effective means of bringing pressure to bear upon the British trusteeship administration to grant their territory either a larger measure of autonomy within the Nigerian Federation or separation from Nigeria altogether. Although the Southern Cameroonian population ultimately voted by a majority of seven to three in favour of union with the former French Cameroons during the 1961 UN-organised plebiscite, there is overwhelming evidence to suggest that if a third alternative of either independence or continued

trusteeship had been put forward, it would have been considered in a favourable light (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003).

Being deprived of this preferred option by the United Nations with the complicity of the British, the Southern Cameroonian population was given what amounted to Hobson's choice: independence by joining Nigeria or reunification with the then independent Republic of Cameroon. The eventual vote in favour of reunification appeared to be more of a rejection of continuous ties with Nigeria than a vote for union with Francophone Cameroon. While most Southern Cameroonians dismissed outright integration into Nigeria because of the territory's previous neglect and domination by the Igbo under Nigerian colonial administration, they were also reluctant to join Francophone Cameroon, fearing that reunification might result in domination by the Francophone majority and loss of their cultural heritage and identity. In the end, the majority of Anglophones opted for the lesser of the two evils because the ruling party in the Southern Cameroons, the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP), had assured them that the constitutional provisions for a reunified Cameroon, namely the creation of a loose federation, would guarantee equality of both partners and the preservation of their cultural legacies (Awasom 2000; Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003).

The Anglophone Cameroon-Nigeria boundary after reunification

The reunification of Anglophone and Francophone Cameroon in 1961 created an international boundary between Anglophone Cameroon and Nigeria. One of the immediate consequences of this was a dramatic change in the legal status and economic opportunities of the substantial number of Igbo and other Nigerian migrants residing in Anglophone Cameroon (Kleis 1975, 1980; Weiss 1998).

Being redefined as *de jure* foreigners, Nigerian migrants no longer enjoyed equal rights and opportunities as Anglophone Cameroonian citizens, which seriously weakened their socio-political position in society. Even second- or third-generation Nigerian migrants were now obliged to obtain a residence permit, the cost of which had increased considerably over the course of time. Official government charges rose from FCFA 10,000 in the 1960s to FCFA 83,000 in 2002, but the actual costs were much higher since local officials demand substantial bribes before they will issue a permit.[2] Understandably, Nigerian migrants have been inclined to interpret this sharp rise in price as one of the government's ways of stopping the flow of migrants from Nigeria to Cameroon and as a method of chasing out the existing Nigerian migrant community living in Cameroon. Indeed, a growing number of them appear to be unable to meet the rising costs of a residence permit. In a recent communiqué, Cameroonian immigration officers claimed that less than 50 per cent

[2] See *The Post,* 7 October 2002, p. 6.

of Nigerian migrants are in possession of the required documents.[3] Inevitably, this has made them subject to frequent police controls and extortion. They maintain, with some justification, that they are more liable to police harassment and intimidation than Cameroonians and that this is depriving them of their normal mobility. To avoid such humiliating treatment, some have become engaged in either producing fake documents or purchasing Cameroonian identity cards from the relevant authorities.

At the economic level, the redefinition of Nigerians as foreigners has meant a drastic reduction in previously available opportunities. The post-reunification government has acted to restrict the activities of Nigerians in a number of ways. They have been almost entirely phased out of state corporations, including the huge agro-industrial parastatal, the CDC, and the civil service, while private enterprises have been responding to government pressures to 'Cameroonise' their labour force (Konings 1993, 1998a). State authorities have also banned Nigerians from participating in certain lucrative trading activities, such as playing the role of middleman in the cocoa trade or engaging in the wholesale trade of palm oil, and from operating inter-urban taxis.

Faced with the gradual disappearance of such activities, the majority of Nigerian migrants have begun to concentrate on trade and business in Anglophone Cameroon. Since the mid-1960s, they have strengthened their already dominant position in the commercial sector in the major towns of Anglophone Cameroon: their share in this sector varies from 85 per cent in Tiko to 75 per cent in Kumba and 70 per cent in Mamfe and Victoria (Limbe) (Weiss 1996: 45). They also dominate the fish industry: the majority of the fish sold in Anglophone Cameroon are caught by Nigerians living in the region's coastal areas, including the Bakassi peninsula. Some Nigerians have continued to excel in the production of foodstuffs and cash crops, especially cocoa and coffee.

Remarkably, the introduction of an international boundary between Anglophone Cameroon and Nigeria appears not to have reduced but instead to have promoted the flow of labour and goods from Nigeria to Anglophone Cameroon in spite of the change in the legal status and employment opportunities of Nigerian migrants. The influx of Nigerians has increased because of the favourable exchange rate between the naira and the CFA franc: the coexistence of a fluctuating and a quasi-permanently falling naira and a stable and convertible CFA franc has tended to stimulate Nigerians to work in Anglophone Cameroon and to engage in formal and informal cross-border trading activities (Weiss 1998; Bennafla 2002). The development of extensive contraband activities was encouraged by the absence of efficient border controls and the complicity of customs officers and other state authorities in such

[3] *The Herald,* World Edition, 5 April 2003.

lucrative activities (Fodouop 1988; Bennafla 2002). The smuggling of highly subsidised Nigerian petrol (known as *fédéral*, *funge* or *zoua-zoua* in Cameroon) was undoubtedly one of the most financially rewarding activities in the 1980s and the early 1990s (Herrera 1998).

There appears to be a striking difference between Cameroonian citizens and Nigerian migrants in the organisation of formal and informal cross-border trade. Cameroonians, like the entrepreneurial Bamileke, tend to operate largely on an individual basis (Geschiere & Konings 1993; Warnier 1993; Niger-Thomas 2000). In sharp contrast, Nigerians, and particularly the Igbo, tend to cooperate along ethnic lines, making full use of their extensive ethnic networks on both sides of the border. They group together on a village or clan basis in order to control the entire trading circuit: the provision, transportation, declaration,[4] and distribution of goods. Evidently, collective enterprise enables them to take advantage of economies of scale, to incur lower costs than their Cameroonian counterparts, to set competitive prices for their goods, and to dominate or monopolise the trade in certain goods including cloth, cosmetics and pharmaceutical products, spare parts for cars, ironware and household utensils.

Since reunification, Anglophone Cameroonians appear to have adopted a rather ambivalent attitude towards the increased flow of Nigerian migrants and their commercial success. On the one hand, they point to their common colonial heritage and language and the existing ethnic ties between some of the border peoples which have created a special bond between Anglophone Cameroonians and Nigerians. As one of them said: 'We are like brothers and sisters and are bound to live in peace and harmony'. Indeed, at the individual level, one can observe the development of long-standing friendships and cordial relations. Members of both groups often participate in the same institutions and associations such as churches and social, sports and youth clubs, and they apparently mix well. Anglophone Cameroonians also tend to acknowledge that the extensive Nigerian commercial presence gives them access to a large variety of goods at competitive prices, which is obviously advantageous in the current situation of economic crisis and low purchasing power.

On the other hand, Anglophone Cameroonians do not consider Nigerians as having equal rights in their country. Following the redefinition of Nigerians as *de jure* foreigners after reunification, they feel empowered towards the Nigerian minority, being convinced that, if necessary, Nigerians can be always be brought into line by reminding them of their alien status or by calling on the authorities (cf. Kleis 1975: 287). In response, Nigerians now usually prefer to keep a lower profile in society than in the colonial era so as to avoid attracting the attention of the local population and the authorities. Anglophone Cameroonians also strongly resent the renewed

[4] They often tend to bribe custom officers to sign official documents that provide them with legal coverage for under-valued goods and, in some cases, even for goods other than those declared.

Nigerian domination of the commercial sector in their region and envy their commercial success, being in favour of an extension of the government's policy of Cameroonisation into the commercial sector. This widespread resentment was manifest in 1988 when the central market in Kumba, where approximately two-thirds of trading stalls are occupied by Nigerians, was twice set on fire. Stereotypes of Nigerians and Igbophobia are commonplace. Nigerians are still often looked upon as exploiters, crooks and sorcerers. One of the glaring manifestations of persistent Igbophobia in Anglophone Cameroon was the spreading of rumours and accusations in the 1990s of Igbo involvement in the disappearance or theft of sex organs, sometimes even leading to mob molestations of the accused.[5]

That such hostile feelings towards the Nigerian migrant community are not simply motivated by ethno-regional sentiments towards an alien community but rather by economic considerations, in particular resentment of economic dominance, is clearly demonstrated by the attitude of Anglophone Cameroonians towards the Igbo during the Nigerian civil war. When the Igbo became involved in an armed struggle with the Gowon regime for the establishment of an independent Biafran state, the outpouring of public sympathy for their cause was surprisingly large in Anglophone Cameroon. It is remarkable that the Anglophone Cameroonians who had continued to revile Igbo domination in their midst now embraced their cause, even when such support was against the official policy of the Ahidjo government, which was unswervingly pro-Gowon. Undoubtedly, the plight of the Igbo, their persecution under Hausa/Fulani hegemony, and their pursuit of an independent state elicited powerful human feelings of brotherhood among Anglophone Cameroonians who themselves had started to regret their reunification with the Francophone majority and their increasing marginalisation under another Fulani leader, Ahmadou Ahidjo (Kofele-Kale 1981: 39-41; Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003).

The press and the regime have often exhibited hostile sentiments towards the Nigerian migrant community. They have claimed that the number of Nigerian migrants amounts to three or four million – a figure that they consider a threat to national security when taking into account Cameroon's total population of an estimated twelve million (Nkene 2000, 2001; Sindjoun 2002). A more realistic figure of the Nigerian migrant community is provided by some Cameroonian demographers with their estimate of about one million.[6]

The regime has exacerbated existing tensions in various ways. It is inclined to indict Nigerian migrants as 'economic saboteurs' and 'political subversives'. During the economic crisis, it has frequently made the Nigerian 'exploiters' scapegoats for the country's economic ills. Since the outbreak of the Bakassi conflict, it has attempted to turn the local population against Nigerian 'invaders', despite the fact that

[5] See, for instance, *Le Messager,* 1 November 1996.

[6] See *The Post,* 12 December 1999.

Nigerian migrants mostly refuse to express their opinions in public. Following the emergence of the Anglophone secessionist movements in the 1990s, the regime has often presented the Nigerian 'Anglos' as the 'natural allies' of the Anglophone 'Biafrans' (Nkene 2000). As a result, it has increased its intimidating and extortionist tactics against the Nigerian migrant community. Nigerian migrants, for their part, have displayed a large measure of flexibility and dynamism, proving themselves capable of reacting rapidly and efficaciously to changes in their economic and political environment.

Beginning in the mid-1960s, the Ahidjo regime took a number of steps aimed at disrupting the Igbo framework of socio-political organisation and expressions of ethnic solidarity. Legislation was brought in that banned ethnic organisations, including the powerful Igbo Union which functioned as an exceptionally effective instrument in regulating the activities of its members, undertaking self-help projects, and lobbying for Igbo interests within the territory. The authorities also outlawed the celebration of Igbo Day, an event that glorified the ethnic identity and achievements of the Igbo people and inconvenienced Anglophone Cameroonians by bringing commerce to a virtual standstill. Finally, the security forces demolished Igbo Union Hall in Kumba, which had long served as a centre for Igbo activities – an action that Anglophone Cameroonians applauded as symbolising the dismantling of Igbo hegemony in their territory (Kleis 1975, 1980).

Following the Biafran civil war, the Igbo increasingly joined the Nigerian Union in Cameroon, which is legally recognised. This association does not exist in Nigeria and can be regarded as a typical diaspora phenomenon. The association has become a powerful pressure group in the defence of Nigerian interests against the Cameroonian authorities (Weiss 1998; Nkene 2000), and it serves as a vehicle for integrating Nigerians more fully into Anglophone Cameroonian society. Conscious of the fact that local authorities are unlikely to resist bribes, the 'big men' and elected chiefs among the Nigerian migrant community are in the habit of offering them substantial amounts of money to maintain mutual cordial relationships and to protect themselves and other members of the migrant community against police harassment. Since the introduction of multipartyism in the early 1990s, they also sponsor the major parties during elections to win their support once they are in power. In the last instance, and having suffered severe maltreatment at the hands of either the local population or the police, Nigerian migrants have resorted to public protest actions such as demonstrations or closing their businesses for some time (Nkene 2000, 2001).

Confronted with an increasingly hostile political environment and a dramatic change in economic opportunities in the wake of the 50 per cent devaluation of the CFA franc in 1994, many Nigerian migrants have been considering returning home. The precarious political and economic situation in Nigeria, however, has prevented

most of them from doing so. Instead they prefer to seek new ways to adjust to the changed conditions in their host country and, if necessary, to rely on the traditional survival strategies offered by the continued strong ethnic networks, solidarity and mutual support among Nigerian migrants in Anglophone Cameroon.

The Anglophone Cameroon-Nigeria boundary: Contesting sovereignty over Bakassi

The Anglophone Cameroon-Nigeria border has been a regular source of conflict between the Cameroonian and Nigerian states since reunification (cf. Anene 1961; Weladji 1974/75; Nwokedi 1984/85; Owolabi 1991; Ngoh 1996). Similar to other colonially negotiated boundaries, this border, and especially the maritime border, has neither been entirely unambiguously defined nor satisfactorily demarcated (Asiwaju 1998: 254). Undoubtedly, sovereignty over the Bakassi peninsula has been the major bone of contention in the long history of Anglophone Cameroon-Nigeria boundary disputes.

The Bakassi peninsula covers a territory of approximately 1,800 square kilometres and is part of the Ndian Division of the South West Province. It is an underdeveloped and not easily accessible area and can only be reached by boat. Moreover, cultivation is extremely difficult because most of the area is marshy. The latest Cameroon census in 1987 estimated its population at 8,563. Recent estimates, however, suggest a considerably higher population of between 200,000 and 300,000.[7] Although existing reports differ as to its population density, they all agree that the vast majority are Nigerian, eking out an existence as fishermen. Not unexpectedly, the peninsula also used to be a haven for informal cross-border trade.

In the 1990s, the Bakassi peninsula suddenly became hot news in the international media when the long-standing dispute between the Cameroonian and Nigerian states over territorial sovereignty erupted into a war. Remarkably, all the existing studies tend to focus solely on the two major stakeholders in the conflict, the Cameroonian and Nigerian states, their violent confrontations, and the subsequent international attempts at mediation (cf. Essombo 1995; Mbome 1996; Weiss 1996; Ngoh 1996; Bekong 1997; Asiwaju 1998; Mgbale 2001). They completely overlook the stakes of other parties in the conflict, in particular the Nigerian migrant community and the Anglophone Cameroon secessionist movements.

The two major stakeholders base their territorial claims on various arguments and here only the most important ones are outlined. The territorial claims of the Cameroonian state are largely founded on the Anglo-German agreement of 11 March 1913, which defined the Bakassi peninsula as part of the German Kamerun Protec-

[7] See *Mutations,* 25 February 2001, pp. 7-10; and *The Post,* 17 November 2003, pp. 1 and 3.

torate. Cameroonian claims have been given added weight by the 1975 Maroua Declaration signed by President Ahidjo and General Gowon. This declaration, though never ratified by Nigeria, clearly recognised Cameroonian sovereignty over Bakassi (International Court of Justice 2002). Moreover, there is ample evidence that there was a certain measure of Nigerian acceptance of Cameroonian claims in the time preceding the outbreak of the violent conflict in the 1990s. In that period, various Nigerian scholars and authorities publicly confirmed Cameroonian sovereignty over the disputed territory and Nigerian maps tended to locate the Bakassi peninsula within Cameroonian territory (Essombo 1995).

The territorial claims of the Nigerian state are based on historical consolidation and the actual exercise of sovereignty after independence with the acquiescence of Cameroon (International Court of Justice 2002). The Nigerian government has often declared that subjects of the chiefs of Old Calabar have been occupying the peninsula from pre-colonial times (Akak 1999). It claims that, following independence, these chiefs have transferred their title to the peninsula to the Nigerian state which has exercised sovereignty over Bakassi ever since without any sign of protest from Cameroon. As proof of its postcolonial exercise of sovereignty, it refers to a number of practices on the peninsula, including the collection of taxes, the widespread use of Nigerian currency, the possession of Nigerian passports by Bakassi residents, and the presence of schools and health centres subsidised by the Nigerian state.

From the mid-1960s onwards, the Joint Cameroon-Nigeria Border Commission tried to help resolve the Bakassi conflict and other boundary disputes, but very little was achieved. Agreements concluded by the two governments were either contested or denounced outright and the failure to resolve their border differences brought the two states to the brink of war in 1981 (Nwokedi (1984/85); Owolabi 1991; Bekong 1997). Two factors appear to have hampered any peaceful solution.

The first factor was the frequent mutual mistrust shown between the leaders of both states, going back to pre-reunification days. The territorial losses suffered during the 1961 plebiscite in the British Cameroons created deep and long-lasting bitterness in relations. Against the expectations of the Francophone Cameroonian and Nigerian leaders, the Southern Cameroons then voted for reunification with Francophone Cameroon, and the Northern Cameroons for integration into Nigeria. Ahidjo, in particular, was aggrieved by the loss of the British Northern Cameroons that was of the same ethnic and religious extraction as his home region, the northern part of Francophone Cameroon. Instead of strengthening his position, the plebiscite results appeared to weaken it. He strongly suspected that the Southern Cameroons vote for reunification would cement an alliance between the Southern Cameroonian elite and the ethnically related opposition in the southwestern part of Francophone Cameroon (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003: 40). He accused the British-

Nigerian colonial administration of having manipulated the elections in the British Northern Cameroons to its own advantage and took the matter to the International Court of Justice in The Hague and the United Nations, but lost his case. For several years, he declared the anniversary of that verdict a day of mourning, to the displeasure of Nigerian leaders. Ahidjo was also reluctant to improve relations with his neighbour because he was inclined to perceive the close cultural and historical connections between Nigeria and Anglophone Cameroon as a potential threat to reunification and his pursuit of a strong central state and national unity. He was particularly worried that the connection might encourage secession among the Anglophone Cameroonian population, all the more so because there was a growing dissatisfaction among the Anglophone Cameroonian minority with the Francophone hegemonic tendencies after reunification (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003: 51-75).

Nevertheless, Ahidjo's support of the Gowon regime during the Biafran civil war did bring about a temporary improvement in bilateral relations. This led to an intensification of border talks, eventually resulting in the 1975 Maroua Declaration that delimited the maritime boundary between Anglophone Cameroon and Nigeria and recognised Cameroonian sovereignty over Bakassi (Owolabi 1991; Mbome 1996). The overthrow of the Gowon regime in a military coup five weeks after concluding this accord was clearly connected with the terms of this agreement, since the new military leader, Mohammed Murtala, immediately blamed Gowon for allowing Nigerian territory to pass to Cameroon and refused to ratify the agreement. This new stance infuriated Ahidjo who accused Nigeria of acting in bad faith, and subsequently declined to enter into any further negotiations with the Nigerian authorities as long as he remained the head of state of Cameroon. It is reported that General Murtala 'threatened that rather than accept the outrageous 1975 award, Nigeria would go to war if the Cameroonians refused to negotiate' (Nwokedi 1984/85: 51). Bilateral relations barely improved under Ahidjo's successor, Paul Biya, mainly because of continuing border problems.

A second, and even more important, factor that continued to thwart a peaceful solution of the Bakassi conflict was the geo-strategic and economic importance of the peninsula. Bakassi is not only of vital interest for controlling access to the port of Calabar, which is currently being developed as Nigeria's Export-Processing Zone and the Eastern Command Headquarters of the Nigerian Navy, but it also has rich hydrocarbon and fish resources (Asiwaju 1998: 254).

After the repeated failures to resolve the Bakassi conflict peacefully, the Nigerian government eventually sought a military solution. In the early 1990s, the Nigerian army had already undertaken a few temporary infiltrations into the Bakassi peninsula (Mbome 1996; Ngoh 1996), but on 21 December 1993 it occupied some parts under the pretext of protecting the Nigerian population from harassment and maltreat-

ment at the hands of the Cameroonian gendarmes.[8] In reaction, Cameroonian troops attacked the Nigerian occupation force, which resulted in several deaths and large-scale destruction of property. The fighting continued intermittently as both sides increased the quantity and quality of their weapons in the disputed zone. Ngniman (1996) made a detailed report of all the military events that took place between 1993 and 1996. In February 1996, the Nigerian occupation forces clashed again with Cameroonian troops.

A number of initiatives were taken to prevent the dispute from escalating and to bring both parties to the negotiating table, including pressure from France motivated by its determination to safeguard its various interests in both states (Mgbale 2001: 175), mediation by the Togolese President Eyadema, and the adoption of resolutions by the United Nations and Organisation of African Unity, apparently with little success. On 29 March 1994, the Cameroonian government filed an application with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague instituting proceedings against Nigeria for violently contesting Cameroon's sovereignty over the Bakassi peninsula. It was not until 10 October 2002 that the court ruled in favour of Cameroon, ordering Nigeria to withdraw expeditiously and without condition its administration and its armed forces and police from the peninsula (International Court of Justice 2002). The court, however, reminded the Cameroonian government of its pledge at the hearings that it would 'continue to afford protection to Nigerians living on the Bakassi peninsula'. It also rejected Cameroon's request that Nigeria be held responsible for the damages caused by its occupation of Bakassi.

On 5 September 2002, just a month before the court's verdict, the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan had met the two heads of state, Olusegun Obasanjo and Paul Biya, in Paris in the presence of the French President Jacques Chirac. On that occasion, the two African leaders pledged to comply with the court's verdict, irrespective of its ruling. After the announcement of the verdict, however, Nigeria initially appeared to reject the ICJ's ruling. It was even reported that it was deploying more troops to Bakassi and taking a head count of Nigerian indigenes on the peninsula.[9]

Concerned about these developments, the UN Secretary-General intervened again, inviting the two leaders to a meeting in Geneva on 15 November 2002 to work out how to comply peacefully with the ICJ verdict. This intervention led to the revival of the Joint Cameroon-Nigeria Border Commission. In a communiqué issued after the summit, it was specifically stated that this commission 'would

---

[8] While this action was primarily aimed at establishing control over Bakassi, Nigerian charges of the serious maltreatment of Nigerian residents are not without foundation. There is evidence that Cameroonian gendarmes made their lives unbearable. Several reports mention various threats they received, including threats to throw babies into the sea so as to extort money from their mothers. See *The Post,* 21 October 2002, p. 5.

[9] *The Herald,* World Edition, 5 April 2003.

consider all the implications of the ICJ verdict, including the need to protect the rights of the affected population in both countries'.[10] The commission would, among other things, be entrusted with the task of demarcating the land and maritime boundaries between the two countries. It would also make recommendations on additional confidence-building measures such as the holding of regular meetings between local authorities, government officials and heads of state, and devising projects to promote joint economic ventures and cross-border cooperation, to forestall inflammatory statements or declarations on Bakassi by either side, and to encourage troop withdrawals and the eventual demilitarisation of the peninsula.

Since this time, the commission has been meeting every two months in the capitals of both states. After a difficult start, progress has been made, including Nigeria's offer to construct a cross-border road connecting Ikom and Mamfe, and the implementation of the demarcation of the boundary. One of the issues that impeded a major breakthrough was the Nigerian refusal to withdraw troops from Bakassi until the protection of the legitimate rights of the Nigerian population on the peninsula were ensured. Cameroon, however, proved unwilling to accord Nigerian residents in the area special privileges or status.[11] By the end of 2003, Nigeria announced that it was finally prepared to hand over the Bakassi peninsula to Cameroon in May 2004, but negotiations on the position of Nigerian residents after the transfer are still ongoing.[12]

Understandably, Nigerian migrants in Anglophone Cameroon have been reluctant to voice their opinion about the ICJ verdict in favour of Cameroon. In a sense, they have even appeared to be happy with the decision, since the Bakassi conflict had tended to intensify anti-Nigerian sentiments among the local population and incite police harassment. Given the deterioration in mutual relations during the conflict, leaders of the Nigerian Union had made several representations to the local authorities to express their concern about the war between the two countries, their commitment to a peaceful solution to the conflict and especially their desire to live in peace with Cameroonians (Mgbale 2001: 83).

In sharp contrast to other Nigerian migrants in Anglophone Cameroon, Nigerian residents of Bakassi were not afraid to express their support for the Nigerian army's occupation of the peninsula, and strongly contested the ICJ verdict. On various occasions, their political leaders and traditional rulers have called upon the Nigerian government to maintain control over Bakassi. They even threatened to secede from Nigeria and create an independent Bakassi state should the Nigerian government fail

---

[10] *BSCNation*, 19 December 2002.

[11] *The Herald,* World Edition, 8 August 2003.

[12] *The Post,* 3 November 2003, pp. 1 and 3.

to protect their interests.[13] For example, in November 2003, Mr Joe Atene, the Bakassi representative in the Cross River State House of Assembly, publicly declared that the Nigerian residents of Bakassi would regard a unilateral handing over of the peninsula by the Nigerian government to Cameroon as a serious betrayal:

> We have always been Nigerians, and if Nigeria now decides to turn its back to us, we may not have any other option than to pursue self-determination. We will not be part of Cameroon.[14]

There appear to be several reasons for their fierce resistance to Nigeria's handing over of Bakassi to Cameroon. First, they firmly believe that such a transfer would imply 'complete neglect and abandonment' of the peninsula, pointing out that Nigeria rather than Cameroon has been making a significant contribution to territorial development.[15] Second, they are not prepared 'to subject themselves to the bondage of Cameroonian gendarmes'.[16] And, above all, they claim ownership of the Bakassi lands – a claim strongly rejected by the Cameroonian residents. For instance, the leader of the Bakassi Indigenes Development and Cultural Association (BIDCA) stressed, following the ICJ verdict, that even the first Nigerian settlers recognised and respected autochthonous control over Bakassi lands:

> Ntun-Umor and Prince Asibong (Archibong), being the first settlers representing the present Akwa Ibom and Cross River States in Nigeria respectively consulted our founding fathers at Isangele town and undertook a blood-oath before being allowed to settle.[17]

Following the Nigerian government's recent decision to hand over Bakassi in May 2004, President Obasanjo cautioned the Nigerian Bakassi community that he would not tolerate any separatist tendencies.[18]

The ICJ verdict has also been fiercely contested by the various Anglophone movements that emerged during the political liberalisation process in Cameroon in the early 1990s (see Chapter 5). Since the violent confrontations between Cameroon and Nigeria over the Bakassi peninsula, their umbrella organisation, the SCNC, has constantly emphasised that Bakassi is neither a part of Cameroon nor of Nigeria but instead belongs to the Southern Cameroons.

In March 2002, a newly formed Anglophone organisation, the Southern Cameroons People's Organisation (SCAPO), scored a landmark victory in its legal battles

---

[13] See, for instance, *The Post*, 1 November 2002, p. 11; 17 November 2002, pp. 1 and 3; 3 November 2003, pp. 1 and 3; *The Guardian Post*, 14 November 2002, p. 2; and *The Heron*, 6-12 November 2003.

[14] *The Post*, 17 November 2003, p. 3.

[15] *The Guardian Post*, 14 November 2002, p. 2.

[16] *The Post*, 1 November 2002, p. 1.

[17] *The Herald*, 15-17 November 2002.

[18] *Ibid.*, 21-23 November 2003.

for the recognition of an independent Southern Cameroons state when the Nigerian Federal High Court in Nigeria ordered the Nigerian government to submit to the ICJ the question of whether it was the Southern Cameroons and not *La République du Cameroun* that ought to share a maritime boundary with the Federal Republic of Nigeria (see Chapter 5). Clearly, the implication is that the ICJ cannot adjudicate in the dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon over the Bakassi peninsula without first clarifying the international status of the Southern Cameroons. It is only after such a clarification that a decision can be made about sovereignty over Bakassi. Regrettably, despite numerous requests by Anglophone secessionist movements, this clarification has not yet appeared. The Nigerian government has not been prepared to execute the Federal High Court's judgment nor has the ICJ been ready to suspend proceedings in the Bakassi case pending determination of the international status of the Southern Cameroons.

It is interesting to observe that the Anglophone leadership, which in the past strongly condemned Nigerian domination of the Southern Cameroons, is tending to support Nigerian opposition to the ICJ verdict. Following press reports that the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan was about to discuss the ICJ decisions with the heads of state of Cameroon and Nigeria in Geneva, the chairman of the SCNC and chancellor of the Ex-British Southern Cameroons Provisional Administration wrote to him on 12 November 2002 as follows:

> While we share your anxiety for good neighbourliness between Nigeria and *La République du Cameroun,* the people of the Southern Cameroons, under the banner of the SCNC, wish to make their stand on the disputed territory abundantly clear … Our problem is undoubtedly that of preference for the Federal Republic of Nigeria to continue to retain the Bakassi Peninsula until the State of the Southern Cameroons shall be restored. Then we shall ourselves negotiate the retrieval of Bakassi from the hands of Nigeria, in a process we believe shall be very friendly and easy as not to require arbitration. We share a common Anglo-Saxon political culture with Nigeria by virtue of having been governed by Great Britain together as a single entity for half a century … On the other hand, the people of the Southern Cameroons do not want *La République du Cameroun* to lay hands on our Bakassi inheritance.[19]

Since the establishment of the Joint Cameroon-Nigeria Border Commission, the leadership of the Anglophone secessionist movements has made it clear on a regular basis that the independent state of Southern Cameroons will not be bound by any agreements reached by the two states on the maritime border that have ignored the state of Southern Cameroons and its people.[20] It has also petitioned the United

---

[19] Letter from Dr Martin Luma, National Chairman of the SCNC, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Buea, 12 November 2002.

[20] *BSCNation*, 1 January 2003, 'End of the year Message by Southern Cameroons People's Organisation (SCAPO), 31 December 2002'.

Nations and influential diplomatic missions in the country against its exclusion from the commission.

Conclusion

Unlike most previous research on African boundaries, this study of the Anglophone Cameroon-Nigeria border focuses on both state and local levels. This approach has made it possible not only to highlight the mutual influence of these two levels on socio-economic and political relations in the Anglophone Cameroon border zone but also to demonstrate the ambiguous nature of the boundary itself. Such an ambiguity appears to be characteristic of other African boundaries as well, making them potentially fascinating areas of research (Nugent & Asiwaju 1996; Nugent 2002).

On the one hand, the Anglophone Cameroon-Nigeria border has served as a zone of opportunities for many years, posing no real barrier to the cross-border movement of goods and people. For historical and economic reasons, Anglophone Cameroon has attracted an increasing flow of Nigerian migrants, in particular Igbos. Having been largely excluded from other economic activities in the post-reunification era, these migrants have concentrated on the potentially lucrative formal and informal cross-border trade. Capitalising on their close ethnic networks on both sides of the border, they have achieved a dominant position in Anglophone Cameroon's commercial sector.

The Anglophone Cameroon-Nigeria boundary has, on the other hand, served equally as a source of conflict. First, there have been persistent tensions between the host community and the large Nigerian migrant community. The Anglophone Cameroonian population has always strongly resented Nigerian dominance of local trading circuits, which has led to various forms of Igbophobia and humiliating police harassment. The political elite and local government authorities have fuelled local hostile sentiments for their own ends, such as their attempt to shift responsibility for the present economic and political crisis to Nigerian exploitative and subversive activities. They have even not hesitated to extort huge sums of money from the alien minority group. Tensions between the host and migrant communities have tended to be aggravated when there was a crisis in bilateral relations between Cameroon and Nigeria, such as in the case of grave border disputes. Second, there have been frequent conflicts between the Cameroonian and Nigerian states about the colonially negotiated boundary, culminating in the war over the sovereignty of the oil-rich Bakassi peninsula in the 1990s. The ICJ's verdict in favour of Cameroon has been vehemently contested by the Anglophone secessionist movements, and by the Nigerian residents of Bakassi who make up the vast majority of the peninsula's population. Both claim, for various reasons, ownership of Bakassi.

References

ABBINK, J. (1998), 'Briefing: The Eritrean-Ethiopian border dispute', *African Affairs* 97(389): 551-565.

ABBINK, J. (2003), 'Ethiopia-Eritrea: Proxy wars and prospects of peace in the Horn of Africa', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 21(3): 407-425.

ABERNETHY, D.B. (1969), *The political dilemma of popular education: An African case*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

ABRAHAMSEN, R. (2000), *Disciplining democracy: Development discourse and good governance in Africa*, London/New York: Zed Books.

AHIDJO, A. (1964), *Contribution à la construction nationale,* Paris: Présence Africaine.

AHIDJO, A. (1980), *Anthologie des discours 1957-1979,* Paris: Nouvelles Éditions Africaines.

AKAK, E.O. (1999), *Who owns Bakassi?,* Calabar: Edigraph Communications.

AKO, E.O. (2001), 'Nationalism in recent Cameroon Anglophone literature', *Epasa Moto* 1(4): 3-28.

AKOKO, R.M. (2007a), *"Ask and you shall be given": Pentecostalism and the economic crisis in Cameroon*, Leiden: African Studies Centre.

AKOKO, R.M. (2007b), '"You must be born-again": The pentecostalisation of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 25(2): 299-315.

AKOKO, R.M. & T.M. OBEN (2006), 'Christian Churches and the democratization conundrum in Cameroon', *Africa Today* 52(3): 25-50.

ALBERT, I.O. (1995), 'University students and the politics of structural adjustment in Nigeria'. In: T. Mkandawire & A. Olukoshi, eds, *Between liberalisation and oppression: The politics of structural adjustment in Africa*, Dakar: Codesria, 374-392.

ALIMA, J.B. (1977), *Les chemins de l'unité; Comment se forge une nation: L'Exemple Camerounais*, Paris: ABC.

ALL ANGLOPHONE CONFERENCE (1993), *The Buea declaration,* Limbe: Nooremac Press.

ALLEN, C. (1997), 'Who needs civil society', *Review of African Political Economy* 73: 329-337.

AMAZEE, V.B. (1990), 'The "Igbo scare" in the British Cameroons, c. 1945-61', *Journal of African History* 31: 281-293.

AMAZEE, V.B. (1994), 'The role of the French Cameroonians in the unification of Cameroon, 1916-1961', *Transafrican Journal of History* 23: 195-234.

AMAZEE, V.B. & F.M. OBEN (1989), 'The Igbo (Ibo) menace in Mamfe (Manyu) division, 1916 to 1961', *Revue Science and Technology, Social Sciences Series* 6(3-4): 63-89.

AMBANASOM, S.A. (1996), 'Pedagogy of the deprived: A study of the plays of Victor Epie Ngome, Bole Butake & Bate Besong', *Epasa Moto* 1(3): 218-227.

AMUTABI, M.N. (2002), 'Crisis and student protest in universities in Kenya: Examining the role of students in national leadership and the democratization process', *African Studies Review* 45(2): 157-178.

ANDERSON, B. (1983), *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism*, London: Verso.

ANDERSON, J. (1995), 'Comment: Cyberites, knowledge workers and new creoles on the superhighway', *Anthropology Today* 11(4): 13-15.

ANENE, J.C. (1961), 'The Nigeria-Southern Cameroons boundary', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 2(2):186-195.

ANUGWOM, E. (2002), 'Cogs in the wheel: Academic trade unionism, government, and the crisis in tertiary education in Nigeria', *African Studies Review* 45(2): 141-155.

ARDENER, E. (1959), 'The Bakweri elephant dance', *Nigeria* 60: 31-38.

ARDENER, E. (1962), *Divorce and fertility: An African study,* London: Oxford University Press.

ARDENER, E. (1967), 'The nature of the reunification of Cameroon'. In: A. Hazlewood, ed., *African Integration and Disintegration,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 285-337.

ARDENER, E. (1996) *Kingdom on Mount Cameroon: Studies in the history of the Cameroon Coast 1500-1970,* Providence/Oxford: Berghahn Books, Cameroon Studies, Vol.1 (edited by S. Ardener).

ARDENER, E., S. ARDENER & W.A. WARMINGTON (1960), *Plantation and village in the Cameroons,* London: Oxford University Press.

ARDENER, S.G. (1958), 'Banana co-operatives in Southern Cameroons'. In: *Conference Proceedings,* Ibadan: Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, 10-25.

ARNAUT, K. (2004), 'Performing displacements and rephrasing attachments: Ethnographic explorations of space, mobility in art, ritual, media and politics', Ph.D. Thesis, University of Ghent.

ASIEDU-AKROFI, K. (1971), *Teachers' associations in Ghana,* Cape Coast: Cape Coast University Press.

ASIWAJU, A.I. (1998), 'The Bakassi Peninsula crisis: An alternative to war and litigation'. In: G.H. Blake, M.A. Pratt & C.H. Schofield, eds, *Boundaries and energy: Problems and prospects,* Dordrecht: Kluwer Law International, 251-274.

ATANGA, L.M. (2001), 'Civic associations and an emerging human rights culture in Anglophone Cameroon 1990-2000'. In: D. Maugenest & J.-D. Boukoungou, eds, *Vers une société de droit en Afrique Centrale (1990-2000),* Yaoundé: Presses de l'UCAC, 45-65.

AWASOM, N.F. (1998), 'Colonial background to the development of autonomist tendencies in Anglophone Cameroon', *Journal of Third World Studies* 15(1): 168-183.

AWASOM, N.F. (2000), 'The reunification question in Cameroon history: Was the bride an enthusiastic or a reluctant one?', *Africa Today* 47(2): 91-119.

AWASOM, N.F. (2005), 'Globalization and academic freedom in Cameroon with focus on the Anglo-Saxon university of Buea'. In: A. Bubtana, ed., *Proceedings of the academic freedom conference on problems and challenges in Arab and African countries, Alexandria (Egypt), 10-11 September 2005,* Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 99-115.

AZARYA, V. (1994), 'Civil society and disengagement in Africa'. In: J.W. Harbeson, D. Rothchild & N. Chazan, eds, *Civil society and the state in Africa,* Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 83-100.

AZARYAHU, M. & R. KOOK (2002), 'Mapping the nation: Street names and Arab-Palestinian identity: Three case studies', *Nations and Nationalism* 8(2): 195-213.

BACH, D.C., ed. (1999), *Regionalisation in Africa: Integration and disintegration*, Oxford: James Currey.

BALL MAPS, O. (2002), *Every morning just like coffee: Torture in Cameroon,* London: Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture.

BALZ, H. (1995), *Where the faith has to live: Studies in Bakossi society and religion, Part I: Living together*, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag.

BARBER, K. (1987), 'Popular arts in Africa', *African Studies Review* 30(3): 1-78.

BARBIER, J.-C., G. COURADE & J. TISSANDIER (1980), *Complexes agro-industriels au Cameroun,* Paris: ORSTOM.

BATES, R.H. (1971), *Unions, parties and political development: A study of mineworkers in Zambia*, New Haven: Yale University.

BAYART, J.-F. (1972), 'Les rapports entre les églises et l'état du Cameroun, de 1868 à 1971', *Revue Française d'Études Politiques Africaines* 80: 79-104.

BAYART, J.-F. (1973), 'La fonction politique des églises au Cameroun', *Revue Française de Science Politique* 23(2): 514-536.

BAYART, J.-F. (1979), *L'État au Cameroun*, Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques.

BAYART, J.-F. (1986) 'Civil society in Africa'. In: P. Chabal, ed., *Political domination in Africa: Reflections on the limits of power,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 109-125.

BAYART, J.-F. (1989), *L'État en Afrique: La politique du ventre*, Paris: Fayard.

BAYART, J.-F. (1993), 'Les églises chrétiennes et la politique du ventre'. In: J.-F. Bayart, ed., *Religion et modernité politique en Afrique noire*, Paris: Karthala, 129-160.

BAYART, J.-F., P. GESCHIERE & F.B. NYAMNJOH (2001), 'Autochthonie, démocratie et citoyenneté en Afrique', *Critique Internationale* 10: 177-194.

BAYART, J.-F. & A. MBEMBE (1989), 'La bataille de l'archdiocèse de Douala', *Politique Africaine* 35: 77-84.
BECKMAN, B. (2002), 'Trade unions and institutional reform: Nigerian experiences with South African and Ugandan comparisons', *Transformation* 48: 83-115.
BECKMAN, B. & L.M. SACHIKONYE, eds (2000), *Labour regimes and liberalization: The restructuring of state-society relations in Africa*, Harare: University of Zimbabwe.
BEKONG, N.J. (1997), 'International dispute settlement: Land and maritime boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria – Origin of the dispute and provisional measures', *African Journal of International and Comparative Law* 9(2): 287-310.
BENJAMIN, J. (1972), *Les Camerounais occidentaux: La minorité dans un état bicommunautaire,* Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal.
BENNAFLA, K. (2002), Le *commerce frontalier en Afrique Centrale: Acteurs, espaces, pratiques*, Paris: Karthala.
BENNELL, P. (1997) 'Privatization in Sub-Saharan Africa: Progress and prospects during the 1990s', *World Development* 25(11): 1785-1803.
BERG, E.J. & J. BUTLER (1964), 'Trade unions'. In: J.S. Coleman & C.G. Rosberg, eds, *Political parties and national integration in Tropical Africa,* Berkeley: University of California Press, 340-381.
BERMAN, B., D. EYOH & W. KYMLICKA, eds (2004), *Ethnicity and democracy in Africa,* Oxford: James Currey.
BERMAN, F.B. (1998), 'Ethnicity, patronage and the African state: The politics of uncivil nationalism', *African Affairs* 97(388): 305-310.
BERRY, S. (1985), *Fathers work for their sons: Accumulation, mobility and class formation in an extended Yorùbá community*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
BESONG, B. (1990), *Beasts of no nation,* Limbe: Nooremac Press.
BESONG, B. (1991), *Requiem for the last kaiser,* Calabar: Centaur Press.
BIANCHINI, P. (2004), *École et politique en Afrique Noire,* Paris: Karthala.
BILLIG, M. (1995), *Banal nationalism,* London: Sage Publications.
BIYA, P. (1987), *Communal liberalism,* London/Basingstoke: Macmillan.
BOH, H. & N. OFEGE (1991), *Prison graduate: A true story of Cameroon Calling*, Calabar: Apcon Ltd.
BOOTH, B.F. (1996), *The Mill Hill Fathers in West Cameroon: Education, health and development, 1884-1970*, Betherda: International Scholars Publication.
BOYLE, P.M. (1999), *Class formation and civil society: The politics of education in Africa*, Aldershot: Ashgate.
BRAIN, R. (1972), *Bangwa kinship and marriage,* London: Cambridge University Press.
BRATTON, H.L. (1973), *Power and politics in Africa,* London: Longman.
BRATTON, M. (1989), 'Beyond the state: Civil society and associational life in Africa', *World Politics* 41(3): 407-429.
BRATTON, M. (1994), 'Civil society and political transitions in Africa'. In: J.W. Harbeson, D. Rothchild & N. Chazan, eds, *Civil society and the state in Africa,* Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 51-81.
BRATTON, M., & N. VAN DE WALLE (1992), 'Popular protest and political reform in Africa', *Comparative Politics* 24: 419-442.
BRYCESON, D. (1980), 'The proletarianization of women in Tanzania', *Review of African Political Economy* 17: 4-27.
Burawoy, M. (1985), *The politics of production: Factory regimes under capitalism and socialism*, London: Verso.
BUIJTENHUIJS, R. & E. RIJNIERSE (1993), *Democratization in Africa South of the Sahara, 1989-1992*: *An overview of the literature,* Leiden: African Studies Centre, Research Report, no. 51.
BUIJTENHUIJS, R. & C. THIRIOT (1995), *Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1992-1995: An overview of the literature*, Leiden/Bordeaux: ASC/CEAN.
CAFFENTZIS, G. (2000), 'The World Bank and education in Africa'. In: S. Federici, G. Caffentzis & O. Alidou, eds, *A thousand flowers: Social struggles against structural adjustment in African Universities,* Trenton/Asmara: Africa World Press, Inc., 3-18.
CAHEN, M. (1999), 'L'État ne crée pas la nation: La nationalisation du monde', *Autrepart* 10: 151-170.

CALLAGHY, T.M. (1994), 'Civil society, democracy, and economic change in Africa: A dissenting opinion about resurgent societies'. In: J.W. Harbeson, D. Rothchild & N. Chazan, eds, *Civil society and the state in Africa,* Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 231-253.

CAMPBELL WHITE, O. & A. BHATIA (1998), *Privatization in Africa*, Washington, DC: World Bank.

CARMODY, P. (2007), *Neoliberalism, civil society and security in Africa*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

CEUPPENS, B. & P. GESCHIERE (2005), 'Autochthony: Local or global?: New modes in the struggle over citizenship and belonging in Africa and Europe', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34: 385-407.

CHABAL, P. & J.-P. DALOZ (1999), *Africa works: Disorder as political instrument,* Oxford: James Currey.

CHAUVEAU, J.-P. (2000), 'Question foncière et construction nationale en Côte d'Ivoire: Les enjeux silencieux d'un coup d'état', *Politique Africaine* 78: 94-125.

CHEM-LANGHËË, B. (1976), 'The Kamerun plebiscites 1959-1961: Perceptions and strategies', Ph.D. Thesis, University of British Columbia.

CHEM-LANGHËË, B. (1997), 'Anglophone-Francophone divide and political disintegration in Cameroon: A psychohistorical perspective'. In: P.N. Nkwi & F.B. Nyamnjoh, eds, *Regional balance and national integration in Cameroon: Lessons learned and the uncertain future*, Leiden/Yaoundé: ASC/ICASSRT, 88-99.

CHEM-LANGHËË, B. & M.Z. NJEUMA (1980), 'The Pan-Kamerun movement, 1949-1961'. In: N. Kofele-Kale, ed., *An African experiment in nation-building: The bilingual Cameroon Republic since reunification*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 25-64.

CHIA, N. (1990), 'The path to social justice', Bamenda (mimeo).

CHIABI, E.M. (1986), 'The Nigerian-Cameroonian connection: A study of the historical relationship and its effect on Anglophone Cameroon', *Journal of African Studies* 13(2): 59-68.

CHIABI, E.M. (1997), *The making of modern Cameroon: A history of substate nationalism and disparate union, 1914-1961*, Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

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, 479-511.

CLARENCE-SMITH, W.G. (1989), 'From plantation to peasant production in German Cameroun'. 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), 483-502.

CLARENCE-SMITH, W.G. (1993), 'Plantation versus smallholder production of cocoa: The legacy of the German period in Cameroon'. In: P. Geschiere & P. Konings, eds, *Itinéraires d'accumulation au Cameroun*, Paris: Karthala, 187-216.

COHEN, R. (1974), *Labour and politics in Nigeria 1945-71*, London: Heinemann.

COMAROFF, J.L. & J. COMAROFF, eds, (1999), *Civil society and the political imagination in Africa: Critical perspectives*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

CONSTANTIN, F. & C. COULON, eds (1997), *Religion et transition démocratique en Afrique,* Paris: Karthala.

COOPER, F. (1996), *Decolonization and African society: The labor question in French and British Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

CORTEN, A. & R. MARSHALL-FRATANI, eds (2001), *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America*, London: Hurst and Company.

COURADE, C. & G. COURADE (1977), *Education in Anglophone Cameroun, 1915-1975,* Yaoundé: ONAREST.

COURADE, G. (1976), *Victoria-Bota: Urban growth and immigration*, Yaoundé: ONAREST.

COURADE, G. (1981/82), '*Marginalité volontaire ou imposée?: Le cas des Bakweri (Kpe) du Mont Cameroun', Cahiers ORSTOM, sér.Sci.Hum.* 18(3): 357-388.

CRUISE O'BRIEN, D.B. (1996), 'A lost generation?: Youth identity and state decay in West Africa'. In: R. Werbner & T. Ranger, eds, *Postcolonial identities in Africa,* London: Zed Books, 54-74.

DAVIES, I. (1966), *African trade unions,* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

DE JONG, F. (2001), 'Modern secrets: The power of locality in Casamance, Senegal', Ph.D. Thesis, University of Amsterdam.

DELANCEY, M.W. (1973), 'Changes in social attitudes and political knowledge among migrants to plantations in West Cameroon', Ph.D. Thesis, Indiana University.
DELANCEY, M.W. (1977), 'Credit for the common man in Cameroon', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 15(2): 316-322.
DIAMOND, L. (1994), 'Rethinking civil society: Towards democratic consolidation', *Journal of Democracy* 5(3): 4-17.
DIAMOND, L. (1997), 'Civil society and the development of democracy', Estudio Working Paper 101, Madrid: Center for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences, Juan March Institute.
DIBUSSI, T. (1991), 'What UniYao students really want', *Cameroon Life* 1(9): 16-17.
DOHO, G. (1996), 'Théâtre universitaire et instances en post-colonie', *Epasa Moto* 1(3): 240-249.
DONFACK, L. (1998), 'Le renouveau de la question fédérale au Cameroun', *Penant* 108(826): 30-61.
DONGMO, J.-L. (1981), *Le dynamisme Bamiléké,* Yaoundé: CEPER (2 vols).
DOZON, J.-P. (2000), 'La Côte d'Ivoire entre démocratie, nationalisme et ethnonationalisme', *Politique Africaine* 78: 45-63.
DUNCAN-ADANUSA, I.T. (1997), 'Trade union development and capacity-building in teacher organisations: The case of the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT)', M.A. Thesis, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague.
EBOUSSI BOULAGA, F. (1993), *Les conférences nationales en Afrique Noire: Une affaire à suivre*, Paris: Karthala.
EBUNE, J.B. (1992), *The growth of political parties in Southern Cameroons 1916-1960*, Yaoundé: CEPER.
ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCE OF BAMENDA (1991), *Catholic education (objectives, problems and prospectives),* Yaoundé: SOPECAM.
ECKERT, A. (1999), 'African rural entrepreneurs and labor in the Cameroon Littoral', *Journal of African History* 40(1): 109-126.
EJEDEPANG-KOGE, S.N. (1986), *The tradition of a people: Bakossi,* Yaoundé: SOPECAM.
EKEH, P.P. (1975), 'Colonialism and the two publics in Africa: A theoretical statement', *Comparative Studies on Society and History* 17(1): 91-112.
EKEH, P.P. (1994), 'Historical and cross-cultural contexts of civil society in Africa', Paper presented at USAID Workshop on 'Civil Society, Democracy and Development in Africa', Washington, DC, June.
ELLIS, S. & G. TER HAAR (1998) 'Religion and politics in sub-Saharan Africa', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 36(2): 175-201.
ELSON, D. & R. PEARSON (1984), '"Nimble fingers make cheap workers": An analysis of women's employment in Third World export manufacturing'. In: P. Waterman, ed., *For a New Labour Internationalism*, The Hague: Ileri, 120-141.
EPALE, S.J. (1985), *Plantations and development in Western Cameroon, 1885-1975: A study in agrarian capitalism*, New York: Vantage Press.
EPISCOPAL SUB-COMMISSION FOR CHURCH HISTORY (1995), *The African synod and the church in West and Central Africa,* Yaoundé: Ama.
ESSOMBO, J.E. (1995), 'Considérations juridiques sur le différend frontalier de la péninsula de Bakassi', *African Journal of International and Comparative Law* 7(1): 98-128.
EYOH, D. (1998a), 'Conflicting narratives of Anglophone protest and the politics of identity in Cameroon', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 16(2): 249-276.
EYOH, D. (1998b), 'Through the prism of a local tragedy: Political liberalisation, regionalism and elite struggles for power in Cameroon', *Africa* 68(3): 338-359.
FANSO, V.G. (1986), 'Traditional and colonial African boundaries: Concepts and functions in inter-group relations', *Présence Africaine* 139(3): 58-75.
FARDON, R. (1996), '"Destins croisés": Histoire des identités ethniques et nationales en Afrique de l'Ouest', *Politique Africaine* 61: 75-97.
FATTON, R. Jr (1995), 'Africa in the age of democratization: The civic limitations of civil society', *African Studies Review* 38(2): 67-99.
FEDERICI, S. (2000), 'The new African student movement'. In: C.B. Mwara, S. Federici & J. McLaren, eds, *African visions: Literary images, political change and social struggle in contemporary Africa*, Westport: Greenwood Press, 49-66.

FEDERICI, S. & G. CAFFENTZIS (2000), 'Chronology of African university students' struggles: 1985-1998'. In: S. Federici, G. Caffentzis & O. Alidou, eds, *A thousand flowers: Social struggles against structural adjustment in African universities,* Trenton/Asmara: Africa World Press, Inc., 115-150.

FEDERICI, S., G. CAFFENTZIS & O. ALIDOU, eds (2000), *A thousand flowers: Social struggles against structural adjustment in African universities,* Trenton/Asmara: Africa World Press, Inc.

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', Ph.D. Thesis, University of Leiden.

FODOUOP, K. (1988), 'La contrebande entre le Cameroun et le Nigeria', *Cahiers d'Outre-Mer* 41(161): 5-25.

FOGUI, J.-P. (1990), *L'Intégration politique au Cameroun: Une analyse centre-péripherie,* Paris: Librairie Générale de Droit et de Jurisprudence.

FOKWANG, J. (2002), '"An unlimited generation?": Youth, intersubjectivity and the state in Cameroon', Paper presented at the Conference on 'Understanding Exclusion, Creating Value: African Youth in a Global Age', Dakar: Codesria, 7-10 June (mimeo).

FORJE, J.W. (1981), *The one and indivisible Cameroon: Political integration and socio-economic development in a fragmented society*, University of Lund: Department of Politics.

FOSTER, P. (1965), *Education and social change in Ghana,* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

FREUND, B. (1988), *The African worker*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

GABRIEL, J.M. (1999), 'Cameroon's neopatrimonial dilemma', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 17(2): 173-196.

GAILLARD, PH. (1994), *Ahmadou Ahidjo (1922-1989)*, Paris: Jalivres.

GESCHIERE, P. (1993), 'Chiefs and colonial rule in Cameroon: Inventing chieftaincy, French and British style', *Africa* 63(2): 151-175.

GESCHIERE, P. (2009), *The perils of belonging: Autochthony, citizenship, and exclusion in Africa and Europe*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

GESCHIERE, P. & J. GUGLER (1998), 'The urban-rural connection: Changing issues of belonging and identification', *Africa* 68(3): 309-319.

GESCHIERE, P. & S. JACKSON (2006), 'Autochthony and the crisis of citizenship: Democratization and the politics of belonging', *African Studies Review* 49(2): 1-7.

GESCHIERE, P. & P. KONINGS, eds (1993), *Itinéraires d'accumulation au Cameroun,* Paris: Karthala.

GESCHIERE, P. & F.B. NYAMNJOH (2000), 'Capitalism and autochthony: The seesaw of mobility and belonging', *Public Culture* 12(2): 423-452.

GIFFORD, P., ed. (1993a), *New dimensions in African Christianity,* Ibadan: Sefer.

GIFFORD, P. (1993b), *Christianity and politics in Doe's Liberia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

GIFFORD, P. (1994), 'Some recent developments in African Christianity', *African Affairs* 93(373): 513-524.

GIFFORD, P., ed. (1995), *The Christian Churches and the democratisation of Afric*a, Leiden: Brill.

GIFFORD, P. (1998), *African Christianity: Its public role*, London: Hurst.

GOHEEN, M. (1993), 'Les champs appartiennent aux hommes, les récoltes aux femmes: Accumulation dans la région de Nso'. In: P. Geschiere & P. Konings, eds, *Itinéraires d'accumulation au Cameroun*. Paris: Karthala, 241-271.

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

GROSH, B. & R.S. MAKANDALA, eds (1994), *State-owned enterprises in Africa,* Boulder/London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

GUTKIND, P.C.W., R. COHEN & J. COPANS, eds (1978), *African labor history,* Beverly Hills: Sage.

GWAN, E.A. (1975), 'Types, processes and policy implications of various migrations in West Cameroon', Ph.D. 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.
HANN, C. & E. DUNN, eds (1996), *Civil society: Challenging western models,* London: Routledge.
HARBESON, J.W., D. ROTHCHILD & N. Chazan, eds (1994), *Civil society and the state in Africa,* Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
HAYNES, J. (1996), *Religion and politics in Africa,* London: Zed Books.
HAYNES, J. (1997), *Democracy and civil society in the Third World: Politics and new political movements*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
HAYNES, J. (2004), 'Religion and democratization in Africa', *Democratization* 11(4): 66-89.
HEILMAN, B. (1998), 'Who are the indigenous Tanzanians?: Competing conceptions of Tanzanian citizenship in the business community', *Africa Today* 45(3-4): 369-387.
HERBST, J. (2000), *States and power in Africa: Comparative lessons in authority and control*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
HERRERA, J. (1998), 'Du "Fédéral" et des "Koweïtiens": La fraude de l'essence Nigériane au Cameroun', *Autrepart* 6: 181-202.
HIBOU, B. (1999), 'The "social capital" of the state as an agent of deception'. In: J.-F. Bayart, S. Ellis & B. Hibou, eds, *The criminalization of the state in Africa,* Oxford: James Currey, 69-113.
HOBSBAWM, E. (1990), *Nations and nationalism since 1780,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
HUTCHFUL, E. (1996), 'The civil society debate in Africa', *International Journal* 51(1): 54-77.
HUTCHFUL, E. (2002), *Ghana's adjustment experience: The paradox of reform,* Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.
HYDEN, G. (1996), 'The challenge of analysing and building civil society', *Africa Insight* 26(2): 92-106.
INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE (2002), *Case concerning the land and maritime boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria,* The Hague: International Court of Justice, General List no. 94.
JAIN, S. & R. REDDOCK., eds (1998), *Women plantation workers: International experiences*, Oxford/New York: Berg.
JOHNSON, W.R. (1970), *The Cameroon federation: Political integration in a fragmentary society*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
JOSEPH, R.A. (1977), *Radical nationalism in Cameroun: Social origins of the U.P.C. rebellion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
JUA, N. (2003a), 'Anglophone political struggles and state responses'. In: J.-G. Gros, ed., *Cameroon: Politics and society in critical perspectives,* Lanham: University Press of America, 87-110.
JUA, N. (2003b), 'Differential responses to disappearing transitional pathways: Redefining possibility among Cameroonian youths', *African Studies Review* 46(2): 13-36.
JUA, N. & P. KONINGS (2004), 'Occupation of public space: Anglophone nationalism in Cameroon', *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* XLIV (175): 609-633.
JUA, N. & F.B. NYAMNJOH (2002), 'Scholarship production in Cameroon: Interrogating a recession', *African Studies Review* 45(2): 179-204.
KABERRY, P.M. (1952), *Women of the Grassfields: A study of the economic position of women in Bamenda, British Cameroons*, London: HMSO.
KAMTO, M. (1993), 'Quelques réflexions sur la transition vers le pluralisme politique au Cameroun'. In: G. Conac, ed., *L'Afrique en transition vers le pluralisme politique,* Paris: Economica, 209-236
KAPTUE, L. (1986), *Travail et main-d'oeuvre au Cameroun sous regime Français 1916-1952*, Paris: L'Harmattan.
KASFIR, N. (1998), 'The conventional notion of civil society: A critique'. In: N. Kasfir, ed., *Civil society and democracy in Africa: Critical perspectives,* Special Issue of *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 36(2): 1-20.
KILBY, P. (1967), 'Industrial relations and wage determination: Failure of the Anglo-Saxon model', *Journal of Developing Areas* 1(4): 489-520.
KLEIS, G.W. (1975), 'Network and ethnicity in an Igbo migrant community', Ph.D. Thesis, Michegan State University.
KLEIS, G.W. (1980), 'Confrontation and incorporation: Igbo ethnicity in Cameroon', *African Studies Review* 23(3): 89-100.

KOFELE-KALE, N. (1980), 'Reconciling the dual heritage: Reflections on the "Kamerun idea"'. In: N. Kofele-Kale, ed., *An African experiment in nation-building: The bilingual Cameroon Republic since reunification*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 3-23.

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. (1986), 'Ethnicity, regionalism, and political power: A post-mortem of Ahidjo's Cameroon'. In: M.G. Schatzberg & I.W. Zartman, eds, *The political economy of Cameroon*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 53-82.

KOFELE-KALE, N. (1987), 'Class, status, and power in postreunification 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, 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.

KONINGS, P. (1995a), 'Plantation labour and economic crisis in Cameroon', *Development and Change* 26(3): 525-549.

KONINGS, P. (1995b), *Gender and class in the tea estates of Cameroon*, Aldershot: Avebury.

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 and Comparative Politics* 34(3): 199-217.

KONINGS, P. (1996c), 'The post-colonial state and economic and political reforms in Cameroon'. In: A.E. Fernández Jilberto & A. Mommen, eds, *Liberalization in the developing world: Institutional and economic changes in Latin America, Africa and Asia,* London: Routledge, 244-265.

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*, Leiden/Yaoundé: ASC/ICASSRT, 289-305.

KONINGS, P. (1998a), *Unilever estates in crisis and the power of organizations in Cameroon*, Hamburg: LIT Verlag.

KONINGS, P. (1998b), 'Women plantation workers and economic crisis in Cameroon'. In: S. Jain & R. Reddock, eds, *Women plantation workers: International experiences*, Oxford/New York: Berg, 151-65.

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, 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, 181-206.

KONINGS, P. (2001), 'Mobility and exclusion: Conflicts between autochthons and allochthons during political liberalization in Cameroon'. In: M. de Bruijn, R. van Dijk & D. Foeken, eds, *Mobile Africa: Changing patterns of movement in Africa and beyond,* Leiden/Boston: Brill, 169-194.

KONINGS, P. (2002a), 'University students' revolt, ethnic militia and violence during political liberalization in Cameroon', *African Studies Review* 45(2): 179-204.

Konings, P. (2002b) 'Structural adjustment and trade unions in Africa: The case of Ghana'. In: A.E. Fernández Jilberto & M. Riethof, eds, *Labour relations in development,* London/New York: Routledge, 311-336.

KONINGS, P. (2003a), 'Chieftaincy and privatisation in Anglophone Cameroon'. In: W. van Binsbergen, ed., *The dynamics of power and the rule of law: Essays on Africa and beyond,* Hamburg: LIT Verlag, 79-99.

KONINGS, P. (2003b), 'Organised labour and neo-liberal economic reforms in West and Central Africa', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 21(3): 447-471.

KONINGS, P. (2003c), 'Religious revival in the Roman Catholic Church and the autochthony-allochthony conflict in Cameroon', *Africa* 73(1): 31-56.

KONINGS, P. (2003d), 'Privatisation and ethno-regional protest in Cameroon', *Afrika Spectrum* 38(1): 5-26.

KONINGS, P. (2004a), 'Trade-union activism among university teachers during Cameroon's political liberalisation', *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 13(3): 289-311.

KONINGS, P. (2004b), 'Opposition and social-democratic change in Africa: The Social Democratic Front in Cameroon', *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 42(3): 289-311.

KONINGS, P. (2004c), 'Good governance, privatisation and ethno-regional conflict in Cameroon'. In: J. Demmers, A.E. Fernández Jilberto & B. Hogenboom, eds, *Good governance in the era of global neoliberalism: Conflict and depolitisation in Latin America, Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa,* London/New York: Routledge, 306-330.

KONINGS, P. (2005a), 'Anglophone university students and Anglophone nationalist struggles in Cameroon'. In: J. Abbink & I. van Kessel, eds, *Vanguard or vandals: Youth, politics and conflict in Africa,* Leiden: Brill, 161-188.

KONINGS, P. (2005b), 'Assessing the power of newly created teachers' organisations during Cameroon's political liberalisation', *Journal of Higher Education in Africa* 3(2): 130-153.

KONINGS, P. (2005c), 'The Anglophone Cameroon-Nigeria boundary: Opportunities and conflicts', *African Affairs* 104(415): 275-301.

KONINGS, P. (2006), 'African trade unions and the challenge of globalisation: A comparative study of Ghana and Cameroon'. In: C. Phelan, ed., *The future of organised labour: Global perspectives*, Oxford/Bern: Peter Lang, 361-395.

KONINGS, P. (2007a), 'The neoliberalising African state and private capital accumulation: The case of Cameroon'. In: A.E. Fernández Jilberto & B. Hogenboom, eds, *Big business and economic development: Conglomerates and economic groups in developing countries and transition economies under globalisation,* London: Routledge, 251-273.

KONINGS, P. (2007b), 'Trade unionism in Cameroon: From crisis to revitalisation'. In: C. Phelan, ed., *Trade union revitalisation: Trends and prospects in 34 countries,* Oxford/Bern: Peter Lang.

KONINGS, P. & F.B. NYAMNJOH (1997), 'The Anglophone problem in Cameroon', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 35(2): 207-229.

KONINGS, P. & F.B. NYAMNJOH (2000), 'Construction and deconstruction: Anglophones or autochtones?' *The African Anthropologist* 7(1): 5-32.

KONINGS, P. & F.B. NYAMNJOH (2003), *Negotiating an Anglophone identity: A study of the politics of recognition and representation in Cameroon*, Leiden/Boston: Brill.

KOR, B. (1997), *Revival palaver in Bastos,* Yaoundé: Cockcrow Press.

KPATINDE, F. (1991), 'Que veulent les étudiants?', *Jeune Afrique* 1593(11-16 July): 22-24.

LARMER, M. (2005), 'Reaction and resistance to neo-liberalism in Zambia', *Review of African Political Economy* 103: 29-45.

LARMER, M. (2007), *Mineworkers in Zambia: Labour and political change in post-colonial Africa*, London/New York: Tauris Academic Studies.

LEBEAU, Y. (1997), *Étudiants et campus du Nigéria,* Paris: Karthala.

LEBEAU, Y. & M. OGUNSANYA, eds (2000), *The dilemma of post-colonial universities,* Ibadan: IFRA/Africa Book Builders.

LELE, J. KAGO (1995), *Tribalisme et exclusions au Cameroun: Le cas des Bamiléké*, Yaoundé: Les Éditions du CRAC.

LEMARCHAND, R. (1992), 'Uncivil states and civil societies: How illusion became reality', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 30(2): 177-191.

LENTZ, C. (2003), '"Premiers arrivés" et "nouveaux venus": Discours sur l'autochtonie dans la savane Ouest-Africaine'. In: R. Kuba, C. Lentz & C.N. Somda, eds, *Histoire du peuplement et relations interethniques au Burkina Faso,* Paris: Karthala, 113-134.

LEVIN, M.D. (1980), 'Export crops and peasantization: The Bakosi of Cameroun'. In: M.A. Klein, ed., *Peasants in Africa: Historical and contemporary perspectives,* Beverly Hills/London: Sage Publications, 221-241.

LE VINE, V.T. (1964), *The Cameroons: From mandate to independence,* Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press.

LE VINE, V. (1971), *The Cameroon Federal Republic,* Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press.

LEWIS, D. (2002), 'Civil society in African contexts: Reflections on the usefulness of a concept', *Development and Change* 33(4): 569-586.

LLOYD, P.C., ed. (1966), *The new elites of Tropical Africa,* London: Oxford University Press.
LOEWENSON, R. (1992), *Modern plantation agriculture: Corporate wealth and labour squalor*, London/New Jersey: Zed Books.
LONGMAN, T. (2005), 'Churches and social upheaval in Rwanda and Burundi: Explaining failures to oppose ethnic violence'. In: N. Kastfelt, ed., *Religion and African civil wars,* London: Hurst, 82-101.
LYONGA, N., E. BREITINGER & B. BUTAKE, eds (1993), *Anglophone Cameroon writing,* Bayreuth African Studies 30: Weka no. 1.
MAMDANI, M. (1996), *Citizen and subject: Contemporary Africa and the legacy of late colonialism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
MAMDANI, M. (1998), *Understanding the crisis in Kivu: Report of Codesria mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo*, Dakar: Codesria.
MARSHALL, R. (1995), "'God is not a democrat": Pentecostalism and democratisation in Nigeria'. In: P. Gifford, ed., *The Christian Churches and the democratisation of Africa,* Leiden: Brill, 239-260.
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.
MATUTE, D.L. (1990), *Facing Mount Fako: An ethnographic study of the Bakweri of Cameroon*, Milwaukee: Omni Press.
MBEMBE, A. (1985), *Les jeunes et l'ordre politique en Afrique noire*, Paris: L'Harmattan.
MBEMBE, A. (1988), *Afriques indociles: Christianisme, pouvoir et état en société postcoloniale*, Paris: Karthala.
MBEMBE, A. (1992), 'Provisional notes on the postcolony', *Africa* 62(1): 3-37.
MBEMBE, A. (1996), *La naissance du maquis dans le Sud-Cameroun, 1920-1960*, Paris: Karthala.
MBEMBE, A. (1999), 'At the edge of the world: Territoriality, and sovereignty in Africa', *Codesria Bulletin* 3-4: 4-16.
MBEMBE, A. (2001), *On the postcolony,* Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press.
MBILE, N.N. (2000), *Cameroon political story: Memory of an authentic eye witness*, Limbe: Presbyterian Printing Press.
MBOME, F.X. (1996), 'Les Relations entre le Cameroun et le Nigeria: L'Affaire Bakassi', *Afrique 2000* 25: 45-60.
MBU, A.N.T. (1993), *Civil disobedience in Cameroon,* Douala: Imprimerie Georges Frères.
MBUAGBAW, T.E., R. BRAIN & R. PALMER (1987), *A history of the Cameroon,* Harlow: Longman.
MBUY, H. TATAH (1994), *Sects, secret societies and new religious movements in modern Cameroon*, Bamenda: Neba Publishers.
MÉDARD, C. (1996), 'Les conflits "ethniques" au Kenya: Une question de votes ou de terres?', *Afrique Contemporaine* 180 (October-December): 62-74.
MÉDARD, J.-F. (1997), 'Les églises protestantes au Cameroun, entre tradition autoritaire et ethnicité'. In: F. Constantin & C. Coulon, eds, *Religion et transition démocratique en Afrique,* Paris: Karthala, 189-220.
MÉDARD, J.-F. (2004), 'Territoires, identités et politique: Le cas des églises protestantes au Cameroun'. In: G. Séraphin, ed., *L'Effervescence religieuse en Afrique: La diversité locale des implantations religieuses chrétiennes au Cameroun et au Kenya,* Paris: Karthala, 171-196.
MEEK, C.K. (1957), *Land tenure and land administration in Nigeria and the Cameroons*, London: HMSO.
MEHLER, A. (1998), 'Cameroun and the politics of patronage'. In: D. Birmingham & Ph. Martin, eds, *History of Central Africa: The contemporary years since 1960,* London: Longman, 43-65.
MELONE, S., A. MINKOA SHE & L. SINDJOUN, eds (1996), *La réforme constitutionnelle du 18 Janvier 1996 au Cameroun: Aspects juridiques et politiques*, Yaoundé: Fondation Friedrich-Ebert/GRAP.
MENTHONG, H.-L. (1998), 'La question locale dans le débat constitutionnel au Cameroun: Chassé-croisé entre unité et pluralisme', *Africa Development* 23(1): 5-40.
MESSINA, J.-P. (2000), *Jean Zoa: Prêtre, archevêque de Yaoundé*, Paris: Karthala.
MESSINA, J.-P. & J. VAN SLAGEREN (2005), *Histoire du Christianisme au Cameroun: Des origines à nos jours*, Paris: Karthala.
MESSMER, P. (1998), *Les blancs s'en vont: Récits de décolonisation*, Paris: Albin Michel.
MEYER, B. (1999), *Translating the devil: Religion and modernity among the Ewe in Ghana*, London: Edinburgh University Press.

MFOULOU, J. (1978), 'The Catholic Church and Cameroonian nationalism'. In: E. Fashole-Luke *et al.*, eds, *Christianity in independent Africa,* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
MGBALE, M.H. (2001), 'La politique Camerounaise de résolution pacifique de la crise de Bakassi: Une approche réaliste et transnationaliste', Thèse de Doctorat de Troisième Cycle, Yaoundé: Institut des Relations Internationales du Cameroun.
MILNE, M. (1999), *No telephone to heaven,* Stockbridge: Meon Hill Press.
MKANDAWIRE, T. (1994), 'The political economy of privatisation in Africa'. In: G.A. Cornia & G.K. Helleiner, eds, *From adjustment to development in Africa: Conflict, controversy, convergence, consensus?*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 192-213.
MKANDAWIRE, T. (1999), 'Crisis management and the making of "choiceless democracies"'. In: R. Joseph, ed., *State, conflict, and democracy in Africa,* Boulder/London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 119-135.
MOLUA, H.N. (1985), 'The Bakweri land problem, 1884-1961: A case study', M.A. Thesis, University of Ibadan.
MOLUTSI, P. (1999), 'The interaction between state and civil society in Southern Africa: Prospects for peace and security'. In: L. Wohlgemuth, S. Gibson, S. Klasen & E. Rothchild, eds, *Common security and civil society in Africa,* Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 176-197.
MONGA, C. (1995), 'Civil society and democratisation in Francophone Africa', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 33(3): 359-379.
MONGA, C. (1996), *The anthropology of anger,* Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
MUKONG, A.W. (1985), *Prisoner without a crime,* Limbe: Alfresco.
MUKONG, A.W., ed. (1990), *The case for the Southern Cameroons,* Uwani-Enugu: Chuka Printing Company Limited.
MVENG, E., ed. (1990), *The Catholic Church in Cameroon: 100 Years of evangelization*, Rome: Presso Grafiche Dehoniane.
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: 343-370.
NASOH, E. BUSAM (1998), 'The revival crisis in PCC Bastos-Yaoundé', B.T. Dissertation, Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Kumba.
NDI, A. (2005), *The golden age of Southern (West) Cameroon: Impact of Christianity*, Bamenda: Maple Fair Services.
NDONGKO, T.M. & F.B. NYAMNJOH (2000), 'The Cameroon General Certificate of Education Board'. In: T.M. Ndongko & L.I. Tambo, eds, *Educational development in Cameroon, 1961-1999: Issues and perspectives,* Platteville: Nkemnji Global Tech, 246-256.
NDONGKO, T.M. & L.I. TAMBO, eds (2000), *Educational development in Cameroon, 1961-1999: Issues and perspectives*, Platteville: Nkemnji Global Tech.
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: Éd. 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 Yaoundé I: Department of History.
NGEND, J. (1982), 'Les plantations de cannes à sucre de Mbandjock et leur influence régionale', Thèse de Doctorat de Troisième Cycle, University of Bordeaux.
NGNIMAN, Z. (1993), *Cameroun: La démocratie emballée,* Yaoundé: Éditions Clé.
NGNIMAN, Z. (1996), *Nigeria-Cameroun: La guerre permanente,* Yaoundé: Éditions Clé.
NGOH, V.J. (1990), *Constitutional developments in Southern Cameroons, 1946-1961: From trusteeship to independence*, Yaoundé: CEPER.
NGOH, V.J. (1996), *History of Cameroon since 1800,* Limbe: Presbook.
NGOH, V.J. (2000), 'The period of Bishop Pius Suh Awa 1973'. In: M.Z. Njeuma, ed., *A pilgrimage of faith: History of Buea diocese,* Bamenda: CPI, 119-145.
NGOH, V.J. (2001), *Southern Cameroons, 1922-1961: A constitutional history*, Aldershot: Ashgate.
NGOME, V.E. (1992), *What God has put asunder,* Yaoundé: Pitcher Books Ltd.

NGOME, V.E. (1993), 'Anglophobia', *Focus on Africa* 4(3): 27-29.
NGONGO, L. (1982), *Histoire des forces religieuses au Cameroun*, Paris: Karthala.
NGWANE, G. (1993), *Bate Besong (or the symbol of Anglophone hope),* Limbe: Nooremac Press.
NGWANE, G. (1994), *The Anglophone file,* Limbe: Presbook.
NIGER-THOMAS, M. (2000), "*Buying futures": The upsurge of female entrepreneurship crossing the formal and informal divide in Southwest Cameroon*, Leiden: Centre for Non-Western Studies.
NJEUMA, D. *et al.* (1999), 'Reforming a national system of higher education: The case of Cameroon', A report of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa, Buea: University of Buea.
NJEUMA, M.Z. (1995), 'Reunification and political opportunism in the making of Cameroon's independence', *Paideuma* 41: 27-37.
NJEUMA, M.Z., ed. (2000), *A pilgrimage of faith: History of Buea diocese*, Bamenda: CPI.
NKEA, A. (1996), *"Ut cognoscant te": The life and work of his lordship Bishop Pius Suh Awa on the occasion of his episcopal silver jubilee*, Douala: Éditions Universelles.
NKENE, B.-J. (2000), 'Les immigrés Nigérians à Douala: Problèmes et stratégies des étrangers en milieu urbain', *Law and Politics in Africa, Asia and Latin America* 33(1): 43-59.
NKENE, B.-J. (2001), 'Les étrangers, acteurs de la vie politique Camerounaise: L'expérience des immigrés Nigérians dans la ville de Douala', *Polis: Cameroonian Political Science Review* 8: 87-121.
NKOUM-ME-NTSENY, L.-M.M. (1996), 'Dynamique de positionnement Anglophone et libéralisation politique au Cameroun: De l'identité à l'identification', *Polis: Cameroonian Political Science Review* 1: 68-100.
NKWI, P.N. & F.B. NYAMNJOH, eds (1997), *Regional balance and national integration in Cameroon: Lessons learned and the uncertain future*, Leiden/Yaoundé: ASC/ICASSRT.
NUGENT, P. (2002), *Smugglers, secessionists and loyal citizens on the Ghana-Togo frontier*, Oxford: James Currey.
NUGENT, P. & A.I. ASIWAJU, eds (1996), *African boundaries: Barriers, conduits and opportunities*, London/New York: Frances Pinter.
NWOKEDI, F. (1984/85), 'The politics of Inter-African boundary conflicts: A study of Nigeria and her francophone neighbours', *The Quarterly Journal of Administration* 19(1-2): 45-60.
NYAMNJOH, F.B. (1996), *The Cameroon GCE crisis: A test of Anglophone solidarity*, Limbe: Nooremac.
NYAMNJOH, F.B. (1999), 'Cameroon: A country united by ethnic ambition and difference', *African Affairs* 98(390): 101-118.
NYAMNJOH, F.B. (2005), *Africa's media, democracy and the politics of belonging*, London/New York: Zed Books.
NYAMNJOH, F.B. & N. JUA (2002), 'African universities in crisis and the promotion of a democratic culture: The political economy of violence in African educational systems', *African Studies Review* 45(2): 1-26.
NYAMNJOH, F.B. & M. ROWLANDS (1998), 'Elite associations and the politics of belonging in Cameroon', *Africa* 68(3): 320-337.
OBEN, A.H. (1994) 'Trade unionism and professional associations'. In: Fondation Friedrich-Ebert, *Le syndicalisme dans le processus de démocratisation,* Yaoundé: Imprimerie Saint John, 135-141.
OGACHI, O. (1999), 'Economic reform, political liberalization and economic ethnic conflict in Kenya', *Africa Development* 24(1-2): 83-107.
OLUKOSHI, A. (1998), *The elusive prince of Denmark: Structural adjustment and the crisis of governance in Africa*, Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Research Report no. 104.
ONWUKA, U. (1982), 'The Nigeria Union of Teachers: 1930-65'. In: B.I. Obichere, ed., *Studies in Southern Nigerian history,* London: Cass, 127-153.
ORVIS, S. (2001), 'Civil society in Africa or African civil society?', *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 36(1): 17-39.
OSAGHAE, E.E. (1998), 'Structural adjustment, civil society and national cohesion in Africa', Harare: AAPS Occasional Paper Series 2(2).
OSAGHAE, E.E. (2005), 'Civil society and ethnicity in Africa', *Politeia* 24(1): 64-84.
OWOLABI, A.O. (1991), 'Nigeria and Cameroon: Boundary disputes and the problem of border security', *African Notes* 15(1-2): 39-47.

PHIRI, I. (2001), *Proclaiming political pluralism: Churches and political transition in Africa*, Westport, Connecticut: Praeger.
PITCHER, M.A. (2002), *Transforming Mozambique: The politics of privatization, 1975-2000*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
POKAM, S. (1987), *La philosophie politique trahie: Le monofacisme*, Paris: Silex.
POURTIER, R. (1996), 'La guerre au Kivu: Un conflit multidimensionnel', *Afrique Contemporaine* 180 (October-December): 15-38.
PROTEAU, L. (2002), *Passions scolaires en Côte d'Ivoire: École, état et société*, Paris: Karthala.
PROUZET, M. (1974), *Le Cameroun,* Paris: Librairie Générale de Droit et de Jurisprudence.
RAKNER, L. (2001), 'The pluralist paradox: The decline of economic interest groups in Zambia in the 1990s', *Development and Change* 32(3): 521-543.
RAKNER, L. (2003), *Political and economic liberalisation in Zambia 1991-2001*, Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute.
RANGER, T.O. (1986), 'Religious movements and politics in Sub-Saharan Africa', *African Studies Review* 29(2): 1-69.
ROHDE, E. (1997), *Grundbesitz und landkonflikte in Kamerun*, Hamburg: LIT Verlag.
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, 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 & Loening, 151-242.
SABAR, G. (2002), *Church, state and society in Kenya: From mediation to opposition 1963-1993*, London: Frank Cass.
SAFA, H.I. (1979), 'Class consciousness among working class women in Latin America: A case study in Puerto Rico'. In: R. Cohen, P.C.W. Gutkind & P. Brazier, eds, *Peasants and proletarians: The struggles of Third World workers*, London: Hutchinson & Co (Publishers) Ltd, 441-459.
SANDBROOK, R. (1982), *The politics of basic needs: Urban aspects of assaulting poverty in Africa*, London: Heinemann.
SANDBROOK, R. (2000), *Closing the circle: Democratization and development in Africa*, Toronto: Between the Lines.
SANDBROOK, R. & R. COHEN, eds (1975), *The development of an African working class: Studies in class formation and action*, London: Longman.
SCHILDER, C. (1994), *Quest for self-esteem: State, Islam, and Mundang ethnicity in Northern Cameroon*, Leiden: African Studies Centre.
SCHMIDT-SOLTAU, K. (1999), *Cameroon: Living on the edge of a volcano,* Douala: Tencam Press.
SCOTT, R.D. (1967), 'Are trade unions still necessary in Africa?', *Transition* 7(2): 27-31.
SEEKINGS, J. (1993), *Heroes or villains: Youth politics in the 1980s*, Johannesburg: Ravan Press.
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,* Leiden/Yaounde: ASC/ICASSRT, 225-241.
SINDJOUN, L. (1995), 'Mobilisation politique du pluralisme culturel et crise de l'état-nation au Cameroun'. In: I. Mane, ed., *État, démocratie, sociétés et culture en Afrique,* Dakar: Éditions Démocraties Africaines, 87-115.
SINDJOUN, L. (2002), *Sociologie des relations internationales Africaines*, Paris: Karthala.
SMITH, Z.K. (1997), 'From demons to democrats: Mali's student movement 1991-1996', *Review of African Political Economy* 72: 249-263.
SMYKE, R.J. & D.C. STORER (1973), *Nigeria Union of Teachers: An official history,* Algonac: Reference Publications.
SOCPA, A. (1999), 'L'Hégemonie ethnique cyclique au Nord Cameroun', *Africa Development* 24(1-2): 57-81.

SOCPA, A. (2002), 'Démocratisation et autochtonie au Cameroun: Trajectoires régionales divergentes', Ph.D. Thesis, University of Leiden.
SOCPA, A. (2006), 'Bailleurs autochtones et locataires allogènes: Enjeu foncier et participation politique au Cameroun', *African Studies Review* 49(2): 45-67.
STARK, F.M. (1976), 'Federalism in Cameroon: The shadow and the reality', *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 10(3): 423-442.
SUSUNGI, N.N. (1991), *The crisis of unity and democracy in Cameroon* (no publisher mentioned).
TABAPSSI, F.T (1999), 'Le modèle migratoire Bamiléké et sa crise actuelle: Perspectives économique et culturelle', Ph.D. Thesis, University of Leiden.
TAKOUGANG, J. & M. KRIEGER (1998), *African state and society in the 1990s: Cameroon's political crossroads,* Boulder/Oxford: Westview Press.
TAMBA, I., ed. (2001), *Cameroon: Stakes and challenges of the HIPC Initiative,* Yaoundé: Presses Universitaires d'Afrique.
TAMBO, L.I. (2003), *Cameroon national education policy since the 1995 Forum*, Limbe: Design House.
TANGRI, R. (1999), *The politics of patronage in Africa: Parastatals, privatisation and private enterprise*, Oxford: James Currey.
TANGRI, R. & A. MWENDA (2001), 'Corruption and cronyism in Uganda's privatization in the 1990s', *African Affairs* 100(398)*:* 117-133.
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,* Yaoundé: Fondation Friedrich-Ebert/GRAP, 182-198.
TEDGA, P.J.M. (1988), *L'enseignement supérieur en Afrique noire Francophone: La catastrophe?,* Paris: L'Harmattan.
TEDGA, P.J.M. (1990), *Enterprises publiques, état et crise au Cameroun*, Paris: L'Harmattan.
TER HAAR, G. (1992), *Spirit of Africa: The healing ministry of Archbishop Milingo of Zambia*, London: Hurst.
TERRETTA, M. (2005), '"God of independence, God of peace": Village politics and nationalism in the *maquis* of Cameroon', *Journal of African History* 46(1): 75-101.
THOMAS, H., ed. (1995), *Globalization and Third World trade unions*, London: Zed Books.
TIRUNEH, F. (1990), *The Ethiopian students: Their struggle to articulate the Ethiopian revolution*, Chicago: Nyala Type.
TITI NWEL, P. (1995), 'The churches and the democratic upheaval in Cameroon 1982-1993'. In: P. Gifford, ed., *The Christian Churches and the democratisation of Africa*, Leiden: Brill, 168-187.
TUMI, CARDINAL C.W.S. (2006), *The political regimes of Ahmadou Ahidjo, Paul Biya and Christian Tumi, Priest*, Macacos S.A.
UMENEI, A. (1995), *Focus on revival,* Limbe: Presbook Press.
VERDZEKOV, P.B. (1969), 'The relationship between trade unions and political parties in West Cameroon', Ph.D. Thesis, Pontifical University Gregoriana.
VAN DE WALLE, N. (1993), 'The politics of nonreform in Cameroon'. In: T.M. Callaghy & J. Ravenhill, eds, *Hemmed in: Responses to Africa's economic decline,* New York: Columbia University Press, 357-397.
VAN DE WALLE, N. (1994), 'The politics of public enterprise reform in Cameroon'. In: B. Grosh & R.S. Makandala, eds, *State-owned enterprises in Africa,* Boulder/London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 151-174.
VAN DE WALLE, N. (2001), *African economies and the politics of permanent crisis, 1979-1999*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
VAN DIJK, R. (2000), 'Christian fundamentalism in Sub-Saharan Africa: The case of Pentecostalism', Occasional paper, University of Copenhagen, Centre of African Studies.
WACHE, F.K. & V.A. FUALEFEH (1993), 'The untold story of the All Anglophone Conference: Anglophones, fed up with their marginalisation and second-class status, meet in Buea and map strategies for durvival', *Cameroon Life* 2(8): 8-31.
WALKER, S.T. (1998), 'Both pretense and promise: The political economy of privatization in Africa', Ph.D. Thesis, Indiana University.

WANG SONNE (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,*Yaoundé: CIREPE, 179-99.

WARNIER, J.-P. (1993), *L'Esprit d'entreprise au Cameroun,* Paris: Karthala.

WEISS, T.R. (1996), 'Migrations et conflits frontaliers: Une relation Nigeria-Cameroun contrariée', *Afrique Contemporaine* 180: 39-51.

WEISS, T.L. (1998), *Migrants Nigérians: La diaspora dans le Sud-Ouest du Cameroun*, Paris: L'Harmattan.

WELADJI, C. (1974/75), 'The Cameroon-Nigeria border', *Abbia* 27-28: 157-172; and 29-30: 163-194.

WELCH, C.E. (1966), *Dream of unity: Pan-Africanism and political unification in West Africa*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

WIGRAM, S. (1994), 'Elites, vanguards and vandals: The political role of students in Senegal and Mali (1968-1993)', M.Sc. Thesis, London School of Oriental and African Studies.

WOODS, D. (1996), 'The politicization of teachers' associations in Côte d'Ivoire', *African Studies Review* 39(2): 113-129.

WOODS, D. (2003), 'The tragedy of the cocoa pod: Rent-seeking, land and ethnic conflict in Ivory Coast', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 41(4): 641-655.

WORLD BANK (1987), *Cameroon country economic memorandum,* Washington, DC: World Bank.

WORLD BANK (1989), *Sub-Saharan Africa: From crisis to sustainable growth*, Washington, DC: World Bank.

WORLD BANK (1992), *Governance and development,* Washington, DC: World Bank.

WORLD BANK (1994), *Adjustment in Africa: Reforms, results and the road ahead*, New York: Oxford University Press.

WORLD BANK (1995), *World Development Report 1995: Workers in an integrated world*, Washington, DC: World Bank.

WORLD BANK (1997), *The state in a changing world,* New York: Oxford University Press.

WORLD BANK (2000), *Can Africa claim the 21st Century?,* Washington, DC: World Bank.

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.

YESUFU, T.M. (1962), *An introduction to industrial relations in Nigeria,* London: Oxford University Press.

YUFANYI, E. (1992), 'Mission schools in present day Cameroon in trouble waters', Paper presented at the 12th Annual Sectorial Conference of North West Education, 12 March 1992.

ZALOT, J.D. (2002), *The Roman Catholic Church and economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Lanham: University Press of America.

ZEILIG, L., ed. (2002), *Class struggle and resistance in Africa,* Cheltenham: New Clarion Press.

ZEILIG, L. (2007), *Revolt and protest: Student politics and activism in Sub-Saharan Africa*, London/New York: Tauris Academic Studies.

Index

Achu, Simon Achidi · 27, 29, 103
Africa · 1-4, 11, 12, 14, 34-38, 53, 73, 75, 88, 89, 94, 106, 107, 125, 127-129, 139, 141, 146, 147, 149, 168, 169, 186, 187, 189, 191, 194, 202, 203, 205, 206, 220, 222
Ahidjo, Ahmadou · 25, 26, 36, 37-39, 42, 76, 78-82, 86, 102, 134, 143, 146, 147, 171-175, 229, 230, 232, 233
Akwanga, Ebenezer · 100, 101, 107, 112
All Anglophone Conference (AAC) · 14, 78, 90, 98
allochthonous · 8, 12, 13, 56, 70
allochthony · 13, 27, 32, 33, 34, 36, 53, 56-58, 69, 70
Anglophone Cameroon · 1, 5, 6, 8-11, 13, 16-18, 20, 24, 37, 40, 42, 50, 53-55, 59, 72, 78, 79, 81, 83-87, 89, 111, 127, 129-132, 139, 146, 147, 149, 150, 152, 154, 155, 158, 159, 161, 166, 175, 178, 183, 186, 188, 192, 193, 195, 196, 202, 204-207, 213, 220-222, 226-231, 233, 235, 238
Anglophone problem · 10, 73, 75, 77-80, 84, 85, 94, 97, 103, 107, 150, 175, 182
Annan, Kofi · 80, 234, 237
Ashu, Peter Oben · 30, 32, 57, 61, 63, 66, 68
assimilation · 73, 95, 152, 175
association · 6, 28, 50, 54, 104, 151, 156, 184, 190, 195, 200, 230
  Anglophone · 7, 8, 14, 27, 73, 107, 153, 193, 194, 219
  ethno-regional · 1, 3, 6, 11, 188, 192-194, 204
  professional · 3, 10, 129, 149, 152
  South West · 193, 194, 197
Association pour la défense des droits des étudiants du Cameroun (ADDEC) · 113-115
associational · 2-6
  life · 2, 3, 6
  school · 3-5
autochthonous · 7, 8, 11, 13, 17, 18, 27, 28, 30, 34-39, 41, 42, 47, 49-51, 56, 57, 63, 70, 97, 103, 181, 221, 224, 236
autochthony · 7, 8, 12, 13, 27, 32-37, 46, 51-53, 56-58, 69, 70, 181
autonomous · 3, 9, 11, 29, 58, 110, 113, 130, 133, 135, 148, 153, 155, 156, 158, 165, 166, 169, 207
autonomy · 4, 7, 9, 21, 24, 25, 28, 73, 76, 78, 90, 91, 108, 109, 111, 128, 129, 131, 133, 136, 147, 150, 151, 156, 162, 165, 166, 169, 175, 177, 188, 193, 194, 224, 225
Awa, Pius Suh · 33, 58, 59, 61-70, 175
Azong-Wara, Andrew · 154-157, 159

Bakassi · 11, 87, 88, 221, 222, 227, 229, 231-238
  peninsula · 11, 221, 222, 227, 231, 233-238
Bakossi · 8, 20, 36-52
Bakweri · 14, 19, 21, 23, 26, 32, 33, 57, 62, 65, 112, 116, 193-201, 203, 216, 224
Bakweri Land Claims Committee (BLCC) · 195, 197-203
Bakweri Land Committee (BLC) · 14, 194-196
Bamenda · 55, 58, 66, 68, 78, 83, 86, 97, 111, 117, 138, 140, 142, 145, 160, 164, 170, 174, 175, 177-180, 207
  Proclamation · 78
Bamileke · 8, 10, 15, 20, 31, 36-42, 44, 45, 47-52, 58, 71, 98, 170, 173, 185, 228
Bamun · 37
Bangwa · 58, 62-64, 66-68
Besong, Bate · 84, 85
Beti · 10, 37, 71, 97, 98, 102, 103, 170, 175, 177, 178, 183, 185
Biafra · 174, 175
Biya, Paul · 7, 10, 26, 28-31, 36, 63, 77-80, 91, 94, 95, 97, 100, 102, 104-106, 117, 120, 150, 151, 156-158, 162-164, 175, 177-180, 182, 190, 194-199, 202, 203, 217, 233, 234
border · 10, 37, 40, 220-223, 225, 227, 228, 231-233, 235, 237, 238
  colonial · 6, 81
boundary · 88, 220-222, 224-227, 231-233, 235, 237, 238
Bretton Woods institutions · 2, 186, 187, 190, 192, 197, 201, 205, 219
British · 5, 9, 14, 15, 19, 21, 40, 44, 45, 73, 75, 76, 79, 85-87, 130-133, 134-136, 147, 148, 171, 175, 188, 194, 221, 222, 224-226, 232, 237
  administration · 19
  authorities · 19, 21, 40, 132, 133, 224
  Cameroon · 73, 75, 132, 222, 224, 232
Brobon Finex · 201-203, 212-214, 216
budget · 110, 142, 154, 163, 164, 222
Buea · 21, 33, 39, 41, 42, 45, 49-51, 53, 56-58, 60-68, 70, 72, 78, 79, 83, 90, 98, 99, 111, 114, 117, 119, 132, 133, 137, 138, 140, 142, 146, 154, 175, 195, 196, 199, 200, 206, 210, 214-217, 224, 237
  Declaration · 78, 90, 98

Cameroon Anglophone Movement (CAM) · 195
Cameroon Anglophone Public Servants' Union (CAPSU) · 152, 155, 159

Cameroon Anglophone Students' Association (CANSA) · 98, 152
Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) · 10, 15-19, 25, 29, 30, 32, 33, 188, 192-204, 206, 209-212, 214, 215, 217-219, 223, 227
Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) · 28, 30-32, 34, 36, 97, 103, 104, 106, 112, 151, 156, 178, 184, 196, 203
Cameroon People's National Congress (CPNC) · 23, 24, 45, 46, 136, 138-140
Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV) · 29, 79
Cameroon Tea Estates (CTE) · 201-203, 211-216, 218
Cameroon Teachers' Trade Union (CATTU) · 149, 152, 158-161, 163, 164, 166
chief · 40, 43, 48, 49, 62, 64, 65
chieftaincy · 43
churches · 3, 18, 53, 54, 59, 70, 153, 168-173, 228
  mainline · 53, 59, 70
citizenship · 6, 7, 91, 94, 111, 174, 225
  national · 13, 35
civil · 1-6, 8-11, 21, 29, 54, 76, 84, 90, 93, 100, 104, 112, 113, 128, 137, 146, 149, 151, 155, 156, 158, 159, 162, 169, 172, 175, 180, 181, 183, 184, 186, 192, 194, 204, 205, 219, 223, 227, 229, 230, 233
  servants · 112, 113, 137, 155, 156, 158, 159, 162
  service · 90, 104, 158, 162, 223, 227
  war · 21, 76, 175, 183, 229, 230, 233
civil society · 1-6, 8, 11, 54, 93, 129, 146, 149, 151, 169, 175, 180, 181, 186, 205
  African version of · 2
civility · 4, 5
class · 3, 4, 6, 10, 64, 77, 89, 91, 94, 96, 143, 152, 158, 177, 186, 225
colonial · 5-8, 10, 13, 14, 21, 22, 24, 28, 34, 36, 39, 40, 43, 51, 54, 73-75, 77-81, 89-91, 94, 109, 125, 128-130, 133, 135, 136, 146, 147, 150, 152, 165, 168, 171, 188, 189, 191, 193, 204, 205, 220, 222-226, 228, 232, 233
  administration · 81, 136, 171, 226, 233
  rule · 80, 146, 168, 171
colonialism · 74, 80, 86, 171
Committee for Self-Defence · 98, 102, 105, 107
conditions of service · 10, 15, 130-132, 135, 140-143, 145, 148, 150, 151, 156, 159, 162, 164, 194, 206, 210-214, 219
Confederation of Anglophone Parents-Teachers' Association of Cameroon (CAPTAC) · 153, 154
constitution · 30, 34, 36, 56, 76, 79, 82, 97, 133, 161, 172, 173, 178, 182

Danpullo, Baba Ahmadou · 202, 203, 211, 213, 214, 216, 217
de Gaulle, Charles · 76, 83
decolonisation · 87, 127-129, 146
democracy · 2, 4, 150, 151, 183, 185, 187
  advanced · 150, 159
  liberal · 2, 190
  multiparty · 177, 178, 181
  pacified · 151, 159, 160
democratic · 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 36, 108-111, 113, 125, 150, 170, 176, 184, 187, 188
  culture · 108, 109, 113
  norms · 3
  space · 6, 9, 125
democratisation · 3, 36, 91, 169, 177, 187
devaluation · 112, 155, 193, 196, 230
development · 2, 5, 6, 11, 12, 20, 22, 36, 43, 73, 75-77, 79, 109, 130, 134, 176, 184, 186-190, 193, 202, 222, 227, 228, 236
  economic · 28, 29, 75, 76, 132, 199
  educational · 130
  political · 75, 134, 222
  regional · 10, 40, 192
diaspora · 86, 197, 198, 201, 230
domination · 7, 12, 20-22, 25-28, 33, 34, 70, 88, 125, 135, 176, 225, 226, 229
  Francophone · 25, 27, 28, 152, 211
  Nigerian · 21, 225, 229, 237
  North West · 14, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29
donor · 187, 191, 198
Douala · 31, 38, 71, 83, 89, 110, 170, 172, 173, 178, 180, 182, 211, 217

East Cameroon · 76, 133, 142, 146
Ebong, Frederick Alobwede · 25, 65, 79, 101, 106
economic crisis · 6, 9, 92, 110, 111, 125, 148, 150, 153, 164, 176, 177, 179, 182, 189, 193, 194, 206, 207, 210, 228, 229
education · 22, 58, 66, 67, 75, 85, 96, 108-110, 123, 130, 132-136, 142, 144, 153, 160, 163, 169, 171, 172, 176, 182, 201, 221, 223, 224
educational · 10, 95, 97, 99, 108-110, 130-135, 138, 139, 141, 142, 146, 147, 150, 151, 153, 155, 158-162, 164-167, 171
  legacy · 10, 150, 151, 153, 166
  reforms · 95, 132, 153, 158, 165
  sector · 131, 132, 138, 147, 150, 152, 160-162, 164, 165
  system · 10, 95, 108, 109, 130, 133, 147, 152, 155, 165
elections · 13, 22, 23, 27, 30-32, 34, 35, 44, 46, 65, 90, 103, 113, 121, 139, 140, 151, 161, 165, 176, 180, 182-184, 230, 233
Electoral Code · 32
Eleventh Province · 28
elite · 4, 6, 8, 14, 20, 24, 26-28, 30, 31, 34, 38, 44-46, 52, 56, 58, 67, 68, 70, 71, 73, 76, 81, 92, 94, 95, 103, 104, 116, 133, 139, 172, 191, 193-195, 197, 203, 216, 224, 225, 232
  Anglophone · 20, 21, 24, 25, 74, 76, 78, 89, 91, 95, 103, 106, 134, 152, 177, 201
  Bakossi · 43-48, 50, 51
  Bakweri · 14, 33, 116, 216
  Francophone · 24, 76, 77, 79

North-West · 20, 22, 24-27, 29, 34
political · 6-8, 24, 25, 38, 46, 53, 75-77, 81, 88, 93, 96, 106, 114, 150, 163, 168, 169, 179, 189, 238
Sawa · 31, 33
South-West · 20, 22-27, 29, 30, 32, 64, 67
empowerment · 2
Endeley, Emmanuel · 21, 23, 25, 156, 195, 196, 200, 224
Endeley, Herbert · 115, 156
Endeley, Samuel · 25, 26, 196, 200
enterprise · 10, 14, 18, 190, 193, 211, 228
foreign · 187
private · 14, 190, 204, 219, 227
public · 186, 188, 189, 193, 206
regional · 216
ethnic · 3, 7, 8, 11-13, 15, 17-20, 24, 28, 30, 31, 33-40, 42-44, 46-52, 57, 62, 63, 73, 81, 91, 97, 98, 103, 112, 113, 123, 170, 173, 175, 181, 199, 221, 225, 228, 230-232, 238
balance · 123
cleansing · 7, 8, 12, 20, 30, 33-39, 42, 47-49, 51
group · 3, 13, 15, 17-20, 24, 28, 31, 39, 40, 42, 46, 49, 50, 52, 57, 62, 97, 98, 103, 112, 173, 175, 199, 225
networks · 221, 228, 231, 238
ethnicity · 4, 56
ethno-regional · 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 17, 18, 21, 23, 36, 90, 98, 102, 170, 174, 177, 184, 186, 188, 189, 191-194, 204, 208, 229
cleavages · 7, 10, 170, 184, 189
conflicts · 170
interests · 4, 188
sentiments · 23, 229
Etoundi, Charles · 159, 162, 164
exclusion · 3, 4, 7, 12, 28, 32, 34, 35, 95, 238
exploitation · 18, 31, 34, 70, 73, 84, 152, 175, 208-210, 221

Fako Agricultural Workers' Union (FAWU) · 194, 195, 209, 212, 217
Fako Division · 194, 196
federal · 6, 9, 14, 24, 25, 27, 28, 34, 73, 76, 78, 79, 82, 87, 90, 91, 109, 111, 133, 170
government · 77, 78, 133
state · 6, 9, 14, 24, 25, 27, 34, 73, 90, 91, 109, 111, 133, 170
Federal Republic of Cameroon · 76, 133, 139
federalism · 7, 24
Federated State of West Cameroon · 24, 25, 27, 38, 139, 144
federation · 6, 24, 25, 76, 78, 82, 83, 130, 134, 146, 148, 160, 226
Fédération Camerounaise des syndicats de l'éducation (FECASE) · 158, 160, 161, 163-165
Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement et de la recherché (FESER) · 160, 161, 163-165
Foncha, John Ngu · 21-24, 45, 83, 139-141, 224
Fossung, Henry · 83, 100, 101
Foumban · 24, 76, 82, 83, 89
France · 13, 76, 90, 178, 183, 194, 203, 234
Francophone Cameroon · 5, 6, 10, 16, 18, 21-24, 37, 38, 41-43, 45, 50, 71, 73, 76, 79, 81, 83, 84, 89, 90, 111, 152, 154-156, 160, 161, 171, 221, 226, 232
freedom · 26, 54, 69, 84, 90, 108, 111, 125, 136, 151, 169, 175, 179, 184, 190
of association · 179
of press · 190
French · 5, 16, 21, 23, 37, 38, 40, 72, 75, 76, 81, 83, 86, 89, 90, 95, 109, 110, 133, 171, 188, 192-194, 196, 211, 215, 222, 224, 225, 234
authorities · 21
Fulbe · 81, 171, 173, 174, 176

Garvie, Derrick · 201, 203, 213, 216
General Certificate of Education (GCE) · 95, 96, 104, 152,-158, 160, 166
GCE Board · 153-158, 160, 166
German · 5, 7, 13-15, 40, 57, 75, 171, 194, 222, 223, 225, 231
colonial rule · 7, 15, 57, 194, 225
Kamerun Protectorate · 5, 40, 75, 171, 222, 232
globalisation · 12, 35, 36
good governance · 11, 121, 180, 186, 187, 204
Grand West · 31
Grassfields · 7, 8, 15, 21, 23, 25, 28, 30, 31, 33, 34, 36-38, 44, 55, 144, 207
guerrilla · 37, 38, 42, 43, 45, 51, 102, 171, 174

harmonisation · 134, 142
Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) · 164, 181
hegemonic alliance · 25, 78, 103, 191, 204
human rights · 3, 178

identity · 6-8, 12, 24, 25, 34, 37, 39, 72, 74, 80, 82, 83, 88, 91, 96, 153, 221, 225-227
Anglophone · 6-9, 14, 24, 25, 31, 32, 34, 74, 77, 80, 82-85, 87-89, 91, 106, 109, 125, 129, 149, 150
ethnic · 4, 63, 230
ethno-regional · 4
South-West · 8, 27, 30
Igbo · 17, 20, 21, 22, 75, 132, 133, 221, 223-226, 228-230
independence · 16, 17, 22, 23, 25, 35, 36, 75, 78, 79, 81, 86-88, 92, 95, 99, 100-102, 106, 127-131, 133, 139, 146, 147, 151, 165, 171, 180, 181, 186, 188, 189, 192, 220-222, 225, 226, 232
independent state · 24, 73, 75, 81, 88, 91, 152, 229, 237
Independent Union of Cameroon Teachers (INUCT) · 161, 166
Inoni, Ephraim · 65, 66, 196, 200, 215, 217
International Court of Justice (ICJ) · 11, 87, 88, 222, 232-238

International Labour Organisation (ILO) · 129, 158
International Monetary Fund (IMF) · 191, 197-199, 201
Islam · 173

Jua, Augustine Ngom · 72, 75, 83, 90, 92, 102, 103, 105, 108, 112, 139

Kamerun idea · 225
Kamerun National Congress (KNC) · 21-23
Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) · 21-25, 27, 44-46, 135, 136, 138-140, 146, 226
Kamerun People's Party (KPP) · 23
Khumba, Etienne · 33
Kirdi · 173
Kofele-Kale, Ndiva · 18, 22, 25, 77, 78, 196, 198, 225, 229
Kumba · 30-32, 41-51, 55, 68, 89, 136, 139, 143-145, 217, 223, 227, 229, 230

labour · 10, 12-19, 34, 40, 41, 93, 127, 128, 146, 151, 192, 202, 205-211, 213-215, 217, 218, 220, 222, 223, 227
  female · 206, 207
  forced · 16, 40, 171
  male · 207
Lambi, Cornelius · 121, 124
land · 13, 15, 16, 19, 20, 33, 34, 37, 38, 40-42, 45, 49, 98, 195, 196, 198-201, 203, 207, 209, 223, 235
  ancestral · 14, 26, 42, 46, 47, 194, 196, 204
  disputes · 19
  ownership · 41, 200
language · 23, 40, 54, 74, 75, 77, 88, 89, 96, 109, 228
Liberal Democratic Alliance (LDA) · 28, 32, 64
liberalisation · 6-8, 12, 13, 17, 27, 70, 93, 95, 102, 106, 148-150, 177, 179, 184
  economic · 6, 9, 35, 106, 111
  political · 4, 6-13, 20, 29, 34, 36, 52-54, 58, 70, 73, 74, 78, 83, 85, 88, 91, 93, 94, 98, 102, 106, 110, 112, 113, 125, 127, 148-152, 158, 160, 161, 165, 176-179, 183, 184, 188, 190, 193, 204, 220, 236
Limbe · 32, 53, 65, 83, 160, 195, 196, 215, 217, 223, 227
Lottin, Ernest Kalle · 143-145

Mamfe · 28, 32, 46, 70, 143, 227, 235
Manyu Division · 17
maquis · 37
maquisard · 47, 51
Maranatha Movement · 8, 33, 53, 56, 60, 62
marginalisation · 7, 9, 24, 28, 73, 93, 106, 109, 135, 175, 182, 188, 229
Mbappe, Robert Mbella · 154, 159
Mbile, Nerius Namaso · 23, 25, 30, 45, 224
media · 178, 179, 210, 231
Meme Division · 31
migrant · 10, 19, 221, 226, 229-231, 238
migration · 7, 20, 40, 44, 75, 132, 207, 221, 223, 224
  labour · 13, 15, 16, 34
militancy · 10, 108, 125, 131, 165, 166, 205, 206, 209-211, 214, 218
minority · 13, 17, 18, 25, 30, 76, 93, 98, 107, 127, 130, 173, 181, 200, 222, 228, 233, 238
  Anglophone · 6-8, 14, 24, 77, 150
  autochthonous · 14
mobility · 12, 16, 17, 39, 40, 94, 170, 227
  labour · 14, 19
movement · 10, 31, 34, 46, 53-64, 66, 69, 70, 128, 184, 220, 222, 225, 238
  Anglophone · 8, 10, 27, 28, 78-80, 88, 94, 100, 102, 105-107, 193, 196, 197, 202, 236
  labour · 151
  nationalist · 9, 74, 111, 112, 128
  revival · 8, 53, 54, 56, 63, 70
  secessionist · 11, 116, 164, 182, 222, 230, 231, 237, 238
Mukete, Victor · 25, 30, 32
multiparty · 177-179, 181
  democracy · 177, 178, 181
  system · 178, 179
Muna, Solomon Tandeng · 82, 96, 139
Muslim · 171, 173, 174, 176
Musonge, Peter Mafany · 26, 29-33, 63, 65, 66, 103, 163, 199-201, 203

national · 6, 7, 13, 20, 25-27, 29, 30, 35, 36, 39, 42, 53, 72-74, 76-80, 82, 87, 88, 91, 93, 97, 99, 102-104, 109, 114, 123, 127, 128, 130, 140, 146, 147, 151, 155, 163, 165, 170, 172, 174, 178, 179, 181, 186, 187, 189, 190, 197, 199, 201, 202, 205, 221, 229, 233
  development · 36, 127, 147, 172, 189
  integration · 7, 13, 30, 35, 39, 91, 102, 123
  sovereign conference · 179
  unity · 6, 36, 39, 42, 76, 91, 130, 151, 172, 189, 233
National Episcopal Conference of Cameroon (NECC) · 57, 170, 173-183, 185
nationalist · 9, 17, 21, 37, 72, 74, 80, 81, 92, 95, 111, 112, 128, 129, 136, 146, 147, 171, 174, 221-225
  leader · 21, 72, 80, 221, 224
nation-building · 8, 24, 73, 77, 80, 88, 91, 150, 172
nation-state project · 6, 7, 74, 77
Ndi, John Fru · 27, 89, 111, 175, 180
Ndian Division · 14, 231
Ndongmo, Albert · 173-175
Ndongo, Jacques Fame · 118, 121, 123, 183
neoliberal · 1, 2, 4, 6, 8
  reforms · 2, 6
neoliberalism · 2, 5
neopatrimonial · 2
New Deal · 95, 97, 102, 104

Ngome, Epie · 84, 85, 90, 139
Ngu, John Niba · 21, 25, 45, 83, 141, 202, 203, 211, 212, 214, 224
Nigeria · 5, 10, 14, 16, 17, 21-24, 45, 46, 54, 72, 75, 85, 87-89, 107, 132-137, 146, 147, 165, 220-222, 224-227, 230-238
Nigerian · 10, 17, 18, 20-23, 54, 76, 87-89, 97, 129, 133,-135, 141, 146, 174, 175, 221-238
Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) · 129, 134-136, 138
Njeuma, Dorothy Limunga · 29, 58, 59, 110, 112, 113, 115, 116, 120, 225
Nkwenti, Simon · 158-161, 164
non-governmental organisation (NGO) · 3
North West · 7, 13, 16, 17, 20-30, 32-34, 38, 46, 55-58, 61, 62, 65-67, 69, 71, 86, 90, 97, 100, 104, 105, 111, 116, 135, 161, 202, 207, 214
North West Province · 7, 16, 17, 21, 23, 25, 28, 33, 38, 55, 62, 65, 67, 86, 90, 100, 104, 111, 161, 202, 207, 214
North Westerners · 13, 20, 22, 25, 26, 29, 30, 32, 33, 34, 38, 57, 65, 67, 71, 116
Ntoko-Epie, Fritz · 40

oil · 11, 26, 77, 87, 189, 192, 221, 223, 227, 238
one-party state · 25, 131, 132, 134, 148, 150, 151, 171, 172, 176
organisation · 8, 11, 25, 27, 28, 31, 37, 39, 46, 51, 53, 54, 58, 78, 87, 95, 98, 101, 103-105, 107, 111, 129, 130, 133-135, 149-153, 157, 158, 166, 182, 193, 194, 200-202, 228, 230, 236
  Anglophone · 9, 34, 74, 80, 91, 95, 106, 236
  ethnic · 230
  ethno-regional · 193
  labour · 128, 146
  student · 186
Owona, Joseph · 162, 163

Pamol · 14-19, 25, 26, 32, 223
parastatal · 10, 188, 189, 191, 192, 194, 203, 205, 227
  sector · 188, 189, 191, 205
parliament · 31, 46, 81, 96, 130, 147, 182, 197
party · 6, 10, 21-25, 27, 31, 32, 35, 46, 78, 93, 97, 98, 103, 109, 111, 128, 131, 138, 147, 148, 151, 171, 176, 178, 184, 190, 216
  nationalist · 37, 81, 146, 171, 174, 225
  opposition · 27, 31, 52, 64, 89, 111, 116, 136, 178
  ruling · 13, 28, 31, 69, 103, 112, 127, 131, 136, 140, 147, 165, 178, 196, 203, 226
pastoral letter · 57, 63, 175-177, 179-181, 184
patronage · 103, 188, 189, 204
Pentecostal · 53-55, 58, 59, 70
Pentecostalism · 8, 53-55
plantation · 7, 13-16, 26, 194, 208, 214, 223
  economy · 13, 14
  labour · 13, 16, 208, 223
  lands · 14, 15
  work · 208
plebiscite · 23, 24, 38, 45, 46, 75, 81, 82, 136, 138, 221, 225, 232
politics of belonging · 1, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 35, 56, 57, 70
power · 4, 7, 13, 25, 27, 29, 30, 32, 34, 35, 44, 51, 64, 78, 81, 86, 91, 94, 95, 97, 101, 102, 104, 105, 111, 113, 128-131, 134, 135, 147, 149-151, 157, 159, 160, 168-171, 174, 175, 180, 181, 183, 187-190, 207, 219, 222, 228, 230
  economic · 4, 170
  political · 34, 103, 128, 170, 189
Presbyterian · 54, 55, 64
Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC) · 54-56
President Biya's Youths (PRESBY) · 95, 99, 102-105, 107
press · 32, 56, 57, 78, 85, 97, 106, 118, 120, 147, 153, 175, 179, 180, 183, 194, 195, 198, 212, 229, 237
privatisation · 10, 186-188, 190-206, 210-212, 214, 215, 218, 219
protest · 10, 70, 74, 87, 97, 99, 109, 112, 125, 142, 155, 157, 163, 164, 172, 175, 177, 182, 186, 193, 194, 200, 206, 210, 212, 217, 230, 232
  Anglophone · 9, 94, 106
  Bakweri · 200
  ethno-regional · 204
  student · 93, 97, 99, 117
public · 2, 3, 5, 8, 28, 33, 34, 49, 51, 53, 62, 64, 69, 72-75, 77, 79, 80, 83-85, 91, 98, 100, 102, 104, 113, 117, 119, 122, 124, 130, 141, 145, 151, 152, 155, 156, 158,-162, 165, 167, 173, 176-179, 181, 182, 184, 186-189, 193, 197, 201-203, 206, 221, 229, 230
  enterprise · 186, 188, 189, 193, 206
  realm · 2, 3, 5, 53
  sector · 104, 152, 155, 187
  space · 8, 72-75, 80, 83-85, 91
  sphere · 3

recolonisation · 24, 79
referendum · 5, 82
regime · 7, 9, 10, 25, 27, 28, 30, 34, 38, 39, 74, 78-80, 82, 86-88, 94, 95, 97, 98, 100, 102, 105, 106, 108, 109, 111-113, 123, 129, 147, 148, 150, 151, 155, 161, 170-173, 175, 184, 187, 191, 196, 202, 213, 229, 230, 233
  authoritarian · 2, 35, 111, 129, 169, 171, 172, 183, 184
  Francophone-dominated · 9, 111, 121
repression · 79, 84, 100, 101, 102, 107, 113, 120, 125, 151, 174, 175, 179
Republic of Cameroon · 23, 24, 32, 76-79, 182, 198, 226
République du Cameroun · 79, 85, 87, 88, 99, 202, 237
reunification · 5-7, 16, 17, 21-23, 25, 29, 36, 38, 40-42, 45, 46, 73, 74, 76, 77, 79, 81, 83, 84, 86, 91, 101, 109, 130, 131, 133, 136, 139, 141, 142,

147, 150, 151, 165, 171, 178, 188, 192, 221, 222, 225-229, 231, 232, 238
Roman Catholic · 8, 10, 53, 170
Roman Catholic Church (RCC) · 8, 10, 53, 54, 56-59, 63, 69, 70, 170-177, 179-184

salary · 135, 137, 138, 140, 142-145, 156, 162, 164, 202, 212
Sawa · 30, 31, 33, 34
secession · 7, 14, 22, 27, 34, 83, 90, 109, 111, 136, 170, 233
secret · 32, 38, 45, 47, 52, 67, 82, 84, 88, 101, 151, 157, 175, 187, 189
  bank account · 189
  cult · 32, 84
  decree · 157
  meetings · 47
  societies · 38, 47, 52
security forces · 44, 50, 83, 94, 102, 105, 115, 117-119, 125, 154, 164, 178, 203, 230
settler · 34, 44
  Bamileke · 8, 36-42, 44, 45, 47, 49-51
  Grassfields · 23, 30, 31, 34, 36, 37
  northwestern · 14, 32, 34, 57, 70
Social Democratic Front (SDF) · 27-30, 32, 89, 97, 98, 100, 105, 111, 116, 178, 180
South West · 7, 8, 12-14, 16-38, 40, 44, 46, 52-59, 61, 63-70, 72, 89, 97, 103, 105, 108, 110, 115-118, 124, 136, 193, 194, 196, 197, 200, 206, 231
South West Chiefs' Conference (SWECC) · 28, 31, 193, 197
South West Elite Association (SWELA) · 28, 33, 193, 194, 197
South West Province · 7, 8, 12-14, 16, 17, 20, 22, 23, 25, 27-38, 40, 44, 52-59, 67, 69, 70, 72, 89, 97, 103, 105, 108, 110, 193, 194, 196, 206, 231
South Westerner · 8, 13, 22, 25, 27, 29-31, 34, 37, 45, 52, 61, 65, 67, 70, 103
Southern Cameroons · 5, 21-23, 44, 75, 76, 78, 79, 81, 83, 85-89, 94, 99-101, 106, 111, 112, 129, 130, 132-138, 152, 182, 193, 195, 221-226, 232, 236, 237
Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) · 78, 79, 83, 86, 87, 90, 98-102, 105, 111, 116, 117, 123, 152, 182, 193, 202, 236, 237
Southern Cameroons People's Organisation (SCAPO) · 87, 88, 236, 237
Southern Cameroons Union of Teachers (SCUT) · 129, 135-139, 147
Southern Cameroons Youth League (SCYL) · 79, 87, 94, 95, 99-107, 112
sovereignty · 11, 78, 99, 221, 231-234, 237, 238
state · 2-9, 24-30, 34, 36, 42, 43, 51, 54, 65, 73-76, 78-82, 84, 86, 87, 89, 91-96, 99-106, 110-112, 114, 116, 117, 120, 125, 127, 129, 130, 132-134, 139, 142, 146-152, 159, 163-166, 168-182, 184, 188-191, 193, 195-197, 202-204, 210, 213, 218, 220, 227, 229, 232-235, 237, 238
  African · 2, 93, 110, 146, 169, 187, 204, 220
  Anglophone · 94, 106, 111, 112, 157
  Cameroonian · 231
  colonial · 5-8, 10, 14, 24, 28, 54, 73, 77, 80, 91, 109, 125, 146, 150, 152, 165, 189, 191, 204, 205
  federal · 6, 9, 14, 24, 25, 27, 34, 73, 90, 91, 109, 111, 133, 170
  postcolonial · 70, 168, 170, 175
stranger · 17-19, 43, 89
  ethnic · 13, 36
strike · 9, 55, 96, 108, 109, 112-116, 118-125, 128, 132, 136-138, 141, 143-145, 155, 156, 159, 162, 163, 165, 173, 182, 212-216, 219
structural adjustment programme (SAP) · 150, 186, 190
student · 92-94, 97-99, 106-110, 112-117, 119-121, 123-125, 186
  Anglophone · 9, 94-97, 106, 109, 115, 117, 125, 153
  Francophone · 95, 96, 125, 154
Syndicat des enseignants du supérieur (SYNES) · 113, 118, 161

Tamen, John Ngu · 135, 143, 144, 146
teacher · 21, 130, 133, 140, 142, 157, 159, 162
Teachers' Association of Cameroon (TAC) · 149, 151-159, 161, 166
Tole Tea Estate · 201, 206-213, 215-219
  workers · 206, 210, 218, 219
Tombel · 8, 20, 35-52
  disturbances · 35, 36, 39, 47, 50, 52
trade union · 9, 10, 18, 113, 127-132, 134-136, 139, 140, 146, 147, 149, 151, 152, 155, 156, 158-166, 186, 194, 210, 213, 218, 219
  leadership · 147
  model · 131, 136
trade unionism · 9, 127, 128, 130, 136, 139, 147, 151, 152, 159-162, 166, 213, 219
trust territory · 21, 23, 79, 87, 222
  British · 75
  French · 37
trusteeship · 40, 85, 130, 131, 133, 148, 175, 225
Tumi, Christian Cardinal · 175, 177-180, 182, 183, 185

Union des populations du Cameroun (UPC) · 21, 37-39, 42, 43, 45, 81, 171, 174, 225
unitary state · 6, 9, 14, 24, 76-78, 82, 84, 85, 87, 91, 103, 104, 106, 111, 130, 134, 146, 148
United Kingdom · 97, 135
United Nations (UN) · 5, 15, 23, 24, 38, 45, 74, 75, 78-81, 83, 85, 88, 196, 198, 200, 221, 222, 225, 226, 233, 234, 237, 238
United Republic of Cameroon · 77, 79, 146
university · 9, 92, 93, 95-99, 108-120, 122, 123, 125
  management · 108
  students · 92, 93, 109

teachers · 113
University of Buea · 9, 29, 30, 33, 66, 108-110, 112, 115, 117, 120, 156
University of Buea Students' Union (UBSU) · 112, 115-122, 124, 125
University of Yaoundé · 55, 95, 96, 98, 99, 102, 106, 109, 110, 113, 114, 117, 120

Verdzekov, Paul · 134, 136, 139, 140, 175, 177, 180, 182, 185
Vewessee, Cornelius · 194, 195, 212
Victoria · 19, 23, 28, 46, 83, 139-141, 197, 223, 224, 227
Victoria-Kumba-Mamfe Alliance (VIKUMA) · 28, 46-48
violence · 4, 7, 8, 13, 21, 28, 34, 36, 42, 45, 51, 74, 93, 100, 105, 106, 114,-118, 122-124, 173, 179, 180
voluntary agency (VA) · 130-132, 134, 136-138, 140-143, 145

wage · 147, 173, 207, 208, 213
Wan-Obi · 135-137
West Cameroon · 24, 25, 38, 42, 43, 50, 76, 78, 82, 85, 129, 130, 133-146
West Cameroon Union of Teachers (WESCUT) · 129, 135-147
West Province · 7, 13, 22, 23, 28, 30, 31, 33, 34, 36, 37, 56-59, 70, 71, 100, 105, 110
Wilson, Walter Mesumbe Prince · 46, 47
women · 3, 20, 50, 55, 57, 62, 100, 192, 206-208, 210, 211, 215, 217, 218, 224
workers · 3, 10, 15, 17-19, 23, 27, 32, 127, 129, 143, 145, 187, 192-195, 199, 202, 206-219, 223
World Bank · 2, 110, 111, 187, 189, 191, 192, 197, 198, 203, 205

Yaoundé · 15, 29, 32, 45, 49, 54, 57, 66-68, 71, 85, 88, 95, 100-102, 106, 107, 109, 110, 113, 114, 120, 154, 158, 170, 172-176, 178-181, 183, 197, 200, 201
youth · 9, 37, 55, 86, 93, 94, 99, 102-105, 107, 163, 228
militia · 9, 102

Zoa, Jean · 172-176, 178-180, 183