

# **Africana Studia**

REVISTA INTERNACIONAL DE ESTUDOS AFRICANOS  
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF AFRICAN STUDIES

**Centro de Estudos Africanos**  
Universidade do Porto

# **AFRICANA STUDIA**

**Revista Internacional de Estudos Africanos/ International Journal of African Studies**

**Email:** africanastudia@letras.up.pt

**N.º de registo:** 124732

**Depósito legal:** 138153/99

**ISSN:** 0874-2375

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.21747/0874-2375/afr>

**DOI Africana Studia n.º 33:** <https://doi.org/10.21747/0874-2375/afr33>

**Editor/Entidade proprietária:** Centro de Estudos Africanos da Universidade do Porto  
FLUP – Via Panorâmica s/n – 4150-564 Porto

**Email:** ceaup@letras.up.pt

**NIF da entidade proprietária:** 504045466

**Diretor:** Maciel Morais Santos (ceaup@letras.up.pt)

**Secretariado:** Carla Delgado

**Revisão gráfica e de textos:** Henriqueta Antunes

**Sede da Redação:** FLUP – Via Panorâmica s/n – 4150-564 Porto

**Tiragem:** 200 exemplares

**Periodicidade:** semestral

**Design capa:** Sersilito

**Execução gráfica:** Sersilito-Empresa Gráfica, Lda.

**Conselho científico/Advisory Board:** Adriano Vasco Rodrigues (CEAUP), Alexander Keese (U. Genève/CEAUP), Ana Maria Brito (FLUP), Augusto Nascimento (FLUL), Collette Dubois (U. Aix-en-Provence), Dmitri Bondarenko (Instituto de Estudos Africanos – Moscovo), Eduardo Costa Dias (CEA-ISCTE), Eduardo Medeiros (U. Évora), Emmanuel Tchoumtchoua (U. Douala), Fernando Afonso (Unilab/CEAUP), Jean Gormo (U. Maroua/CEAUP), Joana Pereira Leite (CESA-ISEG), João Garcia (FLUP), José Carlos Venâncio (U. Beira Interior), Malyn Newitt (King's College), Manuel Rodrigues de Areia (U. Coimbra), Manzambi V. Fernandes (Faculdade de Letras e Ciências Sociais de Luanda/CEAUP), Martin Rupiya (UNISA-Pretória), Michel Cahen (IEP–U. Bordéus IV), Mohammed Nadir (CEAUP), Nizar Tadjiti (U. Tetouan/CEAUP), Paul Nugent (U. Edimburgo), Paulo de Carvalho (Faculdade de Letras e Ciências Sociais de Luanda), Philip Havik (IHMT) e Suzanne Daveau (U. Lisboa).

**Conselho editorial/Editorial Board:** Ana Maria Guedes, Anabela Gonzalez Reis, Carla Delgado, Celina Silva, Flora Oliveira, Francisco Topa, Jorge Ribeiro, Maciel Santos, Mourad Aty, Nur Rabah Latif, Rui da Silva e T. P. Wilkinson.

**Venda online:** <http://www.africanos.eu/ceaup/loja.php>

**Advertência:** Proibida a reprodução total ou parcial do conteúdo desta publicação (na versão em papel ou eletrónica) sem autorização prévia por escrito do CEAUP.

*Africana Studia* é uma revista publicada com arbitragem científica.

*Africana Studia* é uma revista da rede Africa-Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies (AEGIS).

**Capa:** Protests against the government's marginalization of Anglophone Cameroon. The green plant is a symbol of peace in Southern Cameroons. Southern Cameroons, 2017. Photo by an unknown amateur photographer.

# Africana Studia

REVISTA INTERNACIONAL DE ESTUDOS AFRICANOS  
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF AFRICAN STUDIES

N.º 33 – 1.º semestre – 2020

## Índice

Editorial ..... 5

### **Camarões do Sul – Estado Federal ou Amazónia?**

#### **Camarões – ascensão e queda da Federação**

La transhumance politique et la réunification au *Southern Cameroons*: 1949-1960 .. 9  
**Mokam David**

The Anglophone Question in Cameroon: Historical Context and Evolution from  
“Everyday” Resistance to Armed Conflict, 1961-2017 ..... 17  
**Confidence Chia Ngam et Reymond Njingti Budi**

Stages and changing *Modus Operandi* of Anglophone Separatists in Cameroon since  
1984 ..... 33  
**Joseph Lon Nfi**

The Structure of the Post-Colonial State and the survival of the Anglophone Educa-  
tion at the origins of the Cameroon Civil War ..... 43  
**Joseph Lon Nfi**

#### **Ambazonia ou o projeto Camarões? – o momento atual**

Failed Decolonization of Africa and the Rise of New States: Cartography of the War  
in Southern Cameroons Ambazonia ..... 53  
**Roland Ngwatung Afungang**

A inação das Comunidades Económicas Regionais no contexto da crise nos Cama-  
rões: Um retorno ao passado? ..... 77  
**Guilherme Ziebell de Oliveira e Nilton César Fernandes Cardoso**

History Never Dies, How Silent Past Returns: Southern Cameroons/“Ambazonia” .. 95  
**Gallous Atabongwoung**

Problème anglophone et conflits mémoriels au Cameroun ..... 111  
**Emmanuel Tchumtchoua**

## Entrevista

- Obadiah Mua ..... 131  
**Interview led by Roland Ngwatung Afungang and Maciel Santos**

## África em debate – Poderes e identidades

- Espaces oubliés dans les paysages de l’histoire du Cameroun: Essai d’interprétation  
des valeurs symboliques du cimetière allemand de Yaoundé (1888-1912) ..... 139  
**Martin Raymond Willy Mbog Ibock**
- Mercenaries or Peacekeepers? Comparing Executive Outcomes and ECOMOG in  
Sierra Leone ..... 153  
**Antonino Adamo**

## Notas de leitura

- Cartographier, combattre, tromper, informer: missions délicates! ..... 173  
**René Pélissier**
- Esclarecendo René Pélissier ..... 185  
**Manuel Bernardo**
- Resumos** ..... 189
- Legendas das ilustrações** ..... 201

# Editorial

War and conflicts in Africa are usually linked to artificial borders, a lasting heritage of the colonial times<sup>1</sup>. In fact, about 70 % of the continental borderlines were settled – only among European powers – in less than 25 years (1885-1909). By the end of the Scramble for Africa, the geometrical lines (parallels, meridians and straight lines between points) accounted for more than 40 % of African borders – in Europe, the equivalent borders are 5%. Furthermore, only 11 % of African border-making decisions were based on human geography while this factor accounts for 50 % of the European borders (Bougetaia, 1981: 28; Foucher, 2014: 14; 18; 21).

From these statistics, we clearly see that the “ethnic” factor was irrelevant not only in the colonial agreements but also to the new African states. The respect for “territorial integrity”, that is, for colonial borders became the official standing of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) since its 1963 Chart (Art. 3<sup>rd</sup>, § 3<sup>rd</sup>). In the Addis Ababa summit of 1963, a large majority of African states agreed to maintain the colonial borders arguing that those border lines represented an “overcoming of tribalism”. In 1967, an African author wrote that they had become *intouchable, parce que correspondant à un sentiment national profond* (M’Baye, 1967: 14). In Europe, too, it was recalled, the state-building process had followed a similar pathway.

But there was a catch. The OAU also stood for the people’s right of self-determination – how could it not be so if in 1963 the whole Austral Africa was still under colonial control? There was now the issue of how the border’s *statu quo* could coexist with the self-determination principle. Administrative practices in post colonial Africa managed to get a solution but only by ranking the two principles, that is by relegating the latter to a second class-rhetorical regulation. This explains why when it comes to the causes of African territorial tensions, most of them are considered as inter-states conflicts (in fact, most are presented as “ethnic”) rather than intra-state conflicts (Ikome, 2012: 10). And they are not few: Foucher estimates that in 2012 62 % of the debates at the UN Security was spent on “African crisis” (Fucher, 2014: 53).

Is this an outcome of the OAU “wisdom” in preserving the colonial borders or of the African States practice of preserving the *colonial state* itself? The connection of a vertical, centralised, foreign interest-conveyed state apparatus to so many current civil wars extending from Mali to Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Cameroon, Sudan (Darfur and South Sudan, Ethiopia (Tigray), Mozambique, etc., is now plain to see. If we add rent exclusion of a large majority of peripheral population living in areas rich in oil, natural gas, diamonds, etc., then it is a matter of time to find intra-state conflicts in the record of the African ruling class.

In this sense, the South Cameroons conflict may be considered as an African “fait social total” in which the main variables are present. Besides, it only became an “intra-state” conflict after it had been merged with the Republic of Cameroon without fully exercising the self-determination principle, in spite of the 11<sup>th</sup> February 1961 plebiscite. Still, the two newly independent states agreed on a federal system of government until 1972, when the then President of Cameroun (Ahmadou Ahidjo) dissolved the federation and formed a

1 For the long debate about African borders, among others, Bougetaia, Boualem (1981), *Les frontières meridionales de l’Algérie*. SNED; Foucher, Michel (2014) – *Frontières d’Afrique*. Pour en finir avec un mythe. CNRS Éditions ; Ikome, Francis, *Africa’s International Borders as potential sources of conflict and future threats to Peace and Security*, Institute for Security Studies, Paper 133, Taylor& Francis. Available at: [www.informaworld.com/rasr](http://www.informaworld.com/rasr).

unitary state known as United Republic of Cameroon. In 1984, Cameroon's 2<sup>nd</sup> president (Paul Biya) renamed the country "Republique du Cameroun", the name French Cameroon got at its independence. After decades of political exclusion, on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2017, the leader of the newly formed Governing Council of Ambazonia declared the Anglophone regions' independence. The government reacted harshly by killing hundreds of protesters and by detaining others. At this point, the population decided to pick up arms against the state. From then till today, calls for a ceasefire are a far cry, and the government is unable to defeat the armed groups. In 2019, Amnesty international declared that over 3.000 people have been killed, thousands internally displaced and others fled to Nigeria as refugees. Very little has been done by the international community to resolve the crisis and the government believe that it can defeat the arm groups militarily. While most Anglophones see an independent state of Southern Cameroons as the only permanent solution to their problem, others are divided between maintaining the unitary state or restoring the federation that existed before 1972.

In order to discuss the results of recent research about another African reality forgotten by the media, this issue of *Africana Studia* focuses both on the genesis of the conflict in Southern Cameroons and on the ongoing war. If the Southern Cameroon's case contributes to the understanding of African societies, it is probably because it clearly shows that it is not the borders neither the "ethnics" which are to blame: just the African inherited Leviathan, the colonial state.

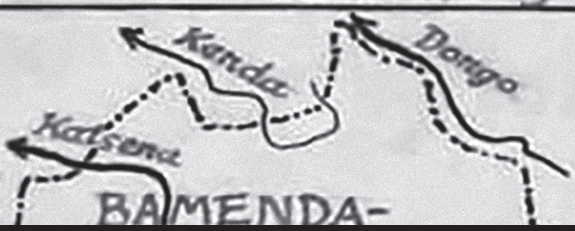
**Maciel Santos\***

**Roland Ngwatung Afungang\***

---

\* CEAUP.

- Eisenbahn
- Autostrassen
- Basler Mission
- Baptisten
- Katholiken
- 



# Camarões

## – ascensão e queda da Federação



(2/8)



La Réunion en vue du  
lancement de la Conférence de  
Foumban le 17 juillet 1961.



# La transhumance politique et la réunification au *Southern Camerouns*: 1949-1960 <sup>□</sup>

Mokam David\*

pp. 9-16

## Introduction

La transhumance politique a fait couler beaucoup d'encre et de salive dans les pays de l'Afrique francophone depuis leur retour au multipartisme. On a eu l'impression que c'était un phénomène nouveau; non. En effet, elle a été vécue sous d'autres cieux et à des périodes plus anciennes. On a enregistré ce phénomène en Occident. Les cas les plus cités sont ceux de François Mitterrand en France et de Ronald Reagan aux États-Unis d'Amérique (Tiensigué, 2006: 5). Le premier était d'abord pétainiste avant de servir sous le régime de Vichy. Le second, quant à lui, était militant du parti démocrate avant de le quitter pour rejoindre le parti républicain qui l'a porté à la présidence des États-Unis. En Afrique coloniale, un cas patent de transhumance politique est celui de Félix Houphouët-Boigny. Ce membre fondateur du RDA (Rassemblement Démocratique Africain), qui luttait avec véhémence contre la colonisation, devint un collaborateur zélé de la puissance coloniale française (Médias, 2019). Ces cas cités exposent clairement la diversité dans les manifestations de la transhumance politique définie par Kaptchouang Tchédjip (2015: 8) comme «cette attitude qui consiste pour l'homme ou les acteurs politiques voire publics à migrer allègrement d'un groupement à l'autre, d'une chapelle à l'autre, dans la construction et/ou la reconstruction de leur carrière politique, sans considération des convictions partisanses». La définition ne doit pas restreindre le phénomène aux chapelles politiques uniquement. On parlerait aussi de bord politique pour y inclure ceux qui n'appartiennent pas aux partis politiques, mais ont une influence politique certaine. On retrouve donc, dans ces manifestations, «... scissions au sein des formations politiques, défections, démission des militants ou responsables d'un parti politique pour rejoindre un autre, acte de fusion, migration des élus de leur parti qui les avaient investis vers un autre, volte face d'un parti ou d'un groupe de partis dans leurs stratégies d'alliances...» (Tiensigué, 2006: 3).

Le Cameroun colonial a connu la transhumance politique. Dans sa partie dont l'administration avait été confiée aux Britanniques, elle a eu de forts liens avec le processus de réunification. C'est dans ce sens que Bongfen Chem-Langhëë (1983: 71) a affirmé que si l'affaire Frambo avait réussi, le gouvernement du KNDP (Kamerun National Democratic Party) aurait chuté, entraînant avec lui le mouvement de réunification<sup>1</sup>.

□ 10.21747/doi.org/0874-2375/afr33a1

\* Université de Ngaoundéré.

<sup>1</sup> Cette affirmation traduit certes la forte corrélation de la transhumance politique et de la réunification au *Southern Camerouns*, mais elle est erronée. En effet, l'affaire Frambo intervint en mai 1960, plusieurs mois après que la Quatrième Commission de l'Assemblée Générale de l'ONU avait adopté la résolution 1352 (XIV) qui arrêta les questions

La réunification du Cameroun a fait l'objet de nombreuses études (Chem-Langhëë, 1976; Amazeé, 1994; Njeuma, 1995; Awason, 2000; Ngoh, 2011; Nfi, 2014). Ces études ont, pour l'essentiel, retracé son parcours, indiquant souvent le rôle que des groupes ont joué dans ce processus. Seul l'article de Martin Zachary Njeuma l'a mise en rapport avec l'opportunisme politique qui permet de comprendre certaines attitudes de transhumance politique. Il reste alors le problème de la contribution de la transhumance politique au processus de réunification au *Southern Cameroons*. La transhumance politique a-t-elle favorisé ou défavorisé le processus de réunification au *Southern Cameroons*? Le déchiffrement de cette énigme permet de mieux comprendre certaines revendications politiques qui ont eu cours dans cette partie du Cameroun et qui menacent sa stabilité politique. L'analyse des principaux cas de transhumance politique au *Southern Cameroons* permet de répondre à cette préoccupation. Cette étude pourrait alors donner un argument de plus pour davantage condamner cette pratique ou essayer de la réhabiliter. Il faut d'abord poser les termes de la réunification dans cette partie du Cameroun colonial, puis considérer la transhumance politique jusqu'en 1954 et, enfin, l'envisager de 1954 à 1960.

### La question de la réunification au *Southern Cameroons*

La réunification au Cameroun, en général, et au *Southern Cameroons*, en particulier, a une histoire qu'il importe de connaître afin de mieux appréhender tous les contours de cette importante question. En quels termes s'est-elle posée ici?

En 1884, contre toute attente, le territoire qui allait devenir le Cameroun, devint un protectorat allemand avec la signature du traité germano-douala. La colonisation allemande commença, mais ne dura qu'une trentaine d'années. En 1914, la Grande Guerre, qui fut allumée sur le continent européen, s'étendit en Afrique, notamment au Cameroun qui fut attaqué par les troupes franco-britanniques soutenues par les troupes belges. La guerre y dura jusqu'en 1916. Le 20 février 1916, le capitaine allemand, Von Raben, se rendit et la prise du fort de Mora marqua la fin des hostilités au Cameroun. La France et la Grande-Bretagne entreprirent d'administrer ce butin de guerre sur la base du condominium qu'elles avaient institué avant la fin des hostilités après la signature de l'accord du 21 septembre 1915 (Madiba Essiben, 1981: 43). Comme l'a indiqué Lovett Zephania Elango (1987, pp. 9-10), la réalisation de ce condominium fut en butte à plusieurs différends provenant des mésententes survenues lors de la tentative d'application de cet accord. Par conséquent, cette forme d'administration fut abandonnée et l'idée du partage du territoire vit le jour. Elle se matérialisa en 1916. Après de nombreuses négociations, un accord fut signé le 04 mars 1916, partageant le Cameroun entre la France et la Grande-Bretagne suivant la Ligne Picot. Selon cet accord, la France recevait, en dehors des territoires cédés à l'Allemagne en 1911, les 4/5<sup>e</sup> du Cameroun, le reste revenant à la Grande-Bretagne. Une fois ce partage effectué, le Secrétaire britannique des colonies instruisit le Gouverneur Général du Nigeria de prendre les dispositions nécessaires pour administrer la sphère britannique de l'ancienne colonie allemande du Cameroun. La partie du Cameroun revenue à la Grande-Bretagne fut alors administrée comme partie intégrante du Nigeria. Le texte du mandat, signé le 20 juillet 1922, entérinait l'accord et cette disposition pratique d'administration. La Grande-Bretagne n'en fit pas une entité unique. Elle divisa sa part

---

à soumettre à l'électorat du *Southern Cameroons* pour le plébiscite devant se tenir, au plus tard, le 31 mars 1961. C'est dire clairement que même si le gouvernement du KNDP était tombé suite à la défection du député Frambo, le plébiscite n'aurait pas été annulé, sauf s'il est établi que c'est la présence du KNDP au pouvoir qui avait permis d'avoir les résultats sortis des urnes en faveur de la réunification du *Southern Cameroons* avec la république du Cameroun.

du Cameroun en deux sections: le *Northern Cameroons* et le *Southern Cameroons* dans lesquels naquirent de nouvelles réalités aux contours complexes.

La première réalité avait trait à la géographie de la frontière. La frontière entre le Cameroun sous administration française et le *Southern Cameroons* avait divisé des ethnies, notamment le Bamiléké, les Mbo, les Bakossi, pour ne citer que ces exemples-là. Les restrictions frontalières ne favorisaient plus les relations sociales et commerciales qui avaient cours lorsque les deux entités formaient un territoire unique sous l'administration allemande.

La seconde réalité était sociale. Au cours de la colonisation allemande, la mobilité des habitants du territoire avait fait en sorte qu'une bonne partie de la population originaire des régions situées à l'Est du fleuve Mounjo s'était installée dans la partie qui devint le *Southern Cameroons*. Elle y avait été attirée par le travail dans les grandes plantations et l'exploitation des terres fertiles, notamment sur les flancs du Mont Cameroun. Par ailleurs, d'autres personnes originaires des zones indiquées s'y étaient installées en tant qu'agents de l'administration. Il y avait eu un tel brassage qu'il était difficile d'envisager un retour dans les zones d'origine de ces personnes.

La troisième réalité était liée à l'administration. Le *Southern Cameroons* était administré comme partie intégrante du Nigeria. De 1919 au 1er janvier 1947, le *Southern Cameroons* fut toujours une partie des provinces méridionales du Nigeria. A partir de 1947, il devint une partie de la Région Est du Nigeria, conformément au découpage fait par la nouvelle constitution, celle du gouverneur Richards (Ngoh, 1990: 58-59). Il resta partie de cette région jusqu'en 1954, lorsqu'il fut érigé en Quasi-Territoire Fédéral. Cette administration comme partie intégrante du Nigeria eut de nombreuses implications dont deux furent très importantes. La première est que les Ibo du Nigeria s'installèrent massivement au *Southern Cameroons* en tant que fonctionnaires et commerçants. Ils y créèrent ce qui a été appelé «ibophobie» en s'imposant et en dominant le commerce. Les Camerounais eurent alors le sentiment qu'ils n'étaient pas chez eux. Par ailleurs, il y avait aussi le sentiment que la personnalité du *Southern Cameroons* était diluée dans celle du Nigeria.

Il faut aussi ajouter que, de par cette administration du *Southern Cameroons* comme partie intégrante du Nigeria, les Camerounais originaires des zones situées à l'Est du Mounjo étaient considérés comme des étrangers. C'est ainsi qu'ils ne jouissaient pas du droit de vote. Tous ces facteurs se conjuguèrent pour faire naître l'idée de réunification des deux Cameroun. Nous partageons l'avis bien fondé de Bongfen Chem-Langhë (1976: xix) qui affirme que cette idée naquit aussi bien au *Southern Cameroons* qu'au Cameroun français, contrairement à Nicodemus Fru Awasom (2000: 94-96) qui, marchant dans le sillage de Le Vine (1971: 16-17), pense que cette idée commença au Cameroun français avant de s'exporter au *Southern Cameroons* via des immigrants. Les contours de cette idée de réunification ont été bien formulés dans les buts de la *Cameroons National Congress* (CNF) qui étaient, entre autres, d'affirmer une identité séparée des populations du *Southern Cameroons*, d'affirmer une unification de principe, la suppression des restrictions et des réglementations de frontière, l'enseignement de l'anglais et du français dans les écoles des deux Cameroun et la création d'une assemblée qui permettrait l'unification de toutes les sections du territoire camerounais sous tutelle (Fru, 2008: 140). La CNF fut le premier mouvement politique d'envergure nationale au *Southern Cameroons* et qui fit de l'unification et de la réunification ses préoccupations centrales. C'est dans ce mouvement que commença la transhumance politique en rapport avec la réunification.

## La transhumance politique de 1951 à 1953

Au cours de cette période, la principale organisation politique qui existait dans le *Southern Cameroons* était la *Cameroons National Federation*. C'est elle qui va donc subir la transhumance politique dont les causes ont surtout été liées à la réunification. La présentation de sa naissance permet de mieux comprendre tous les cas de transhumance politique qui l'ont touchée.

La CNF fut créée en 1949 par Emmanuel Mbella Lifafa Endeley et Paul Monyongono Kale à Kumba. Ils le firent en mettant ensemble les associations de développement, les *Improvement Unions*, qui existaient dans les principales villes de la zone, notamment Victoria<sup>2</sup>, Kumba et Bamenda et dans certains villages du *Southern Cameroons* (Chem-Langhëë, 1976: 41; Ebune, 1992: 131; Anye, 2008: 140). Ce mouvement politique fut créé dans un contexte particulier, celui de la première visite de la Mission de l'ONU au Cameroun. C'est à l'occasion de cette première visite que ce mouvement politique adressa sa première pétition.

Dans cette pétition-ci, la CNF fit plusieurs demandes. Elle commença par condamner l'administration britannique du territoire qui en faisait une annexe du Nigeria. Par conséquent, elle demanda une séparation du *Southern Cameroons* du Nigeria. Elle demanda l'unification de l'ensemble du Cameroun britannique pour constituer une région distincte dans le Nigeria, avec un Haut Commissaire résidant à Buea. Elle demanda, enfin, la réunification des différentes sections du Cameroun afin que l'on retrouve le territoire tel qu'il existait avant 1914 (Ebune, 1992: 132; Awasom, 2000: 97; Anye, 2008: 141). La lecture attentive de la pétition de la CNF expose des positions qui apparaissent contradictoires. L'unification du *Northern* et du *Southern Cameroons* pour en faire une région distincte dans le cadre du Nigeria est-elle compatible avec la réunification des deux Cameroun? C'est une ambiguïté congénitale de la CNF qui va la suivre tel le péché originel et être à la source de certains départs de ses membres.

La première transhumance politique du *Southern Cameroons* pour la période étudiée arriva en 1951. Cette année-là, du 11 au 13 août 1951, se tint, à Kumba, une réunion regroupant les membres dissidents de la CNF, essentiellement ceux qui appartenaient à la *French Cameroons Welfare Union*, branche de la CNF, Nerius Namaso Mbile, le secrétaire général de la CNF et des membres de l'Union des Populations du Cameroun venus du Cameroun français. Cette réunion donna lieu à la naissance d'un nouveau mouvement politique, la *Kamerun United National Congress* (KUNC). Comme conséquence, le 18 août 1951, Nerius Namaso Mbile rendit publique sa démission de la CNF. Il devait occuper le secrétariat général de la nouvelle organisation politique ayant à sa tête Robert Jabea Kum Dibonge (Chem-Langhëë, 1976: 48-49; Amaze, 1994: 202-203). Deux causes principales sous-tendent cette transhumance politique. La première est liée à la rivalité pour le leadership politique entre les deux principales figures de la CNF, son président, Emmanuel Mbella Lifafa Endeley et son secrétaire général, Nerius Namaso Mbile. Selon le Commissaire du *Cameroons*, ce dernier avait été fort motivé, dans son action, par ses ambitions politiques (Amaze, 1994: 204). Il voulait s'assurer une position dominante dans le *Southern Cameroons* aux dépens du Dr Endeley dont il fut le secrétaire général à la fois au sein de la *Cameroon Development Corporation Workers' Union* et au sein de la CNF. Monsieur Mbilé aurait ainsi voulu, en participant à la création du nouveau mouvement, s'attirer les sympathies d'une frange importante des habitants originaires du Cameroun français qui constituaient un électorat important s'ils étaient mis dans le jeu.

<sup>2</sup> Actuelle ville de Limbe.

Cet argument est recevable. Toutefois, on se demande si Nerius Namaso Mbile pouvait y arriver en continuant à être secrétaire général de ce nouveau mouvement politique. Pourquoi n'a-t-il pas plutôt voulu occuper sa présidence pour avoir suffisamment de pouvoir et de visibilité? Dans cet argument apparaît, en arrière plan, la question de la réunification qui fut déterminante dans cette transhumance politique.

Parmi les objectifs ambigus de la CNF figurait la lutte pour la réunification qui fut reléguée à un arrière plan et parfois abandonné, car ce mouvement politique se préoccupait beaucoup plus, sinon exclusivement, des questions internes du *Southern Cameroons*. A titre d'illustration, il faut faire remarquer que son leader, Emmanuel Mbela Lifafa Endeley pensait qu'un meilleur avenir de ce territoire se réaliserait mieux au travers de la défense des droits des travailleurs, de la représentation dans les organes législatifs du Nigeria et de la réforme de l'ordonnance sur les terres et les droits des populations locales que dans des efforts de réduction des difficultés liées à la frontière entre les deux sections de l'ancien Cameroun allemand (Njeuma<sup>3</sup>, 1995: 30). C'est dans cet ordre des choses que, à l'approche des élections générales de 1951<sup>4</sup> au *Southern Cameroons*, le leader de la CNF s'opposa à l'octroi du droit de vote à 17 000 personnes dont les parents étaient originaires du Cameroun sous administration française et qu'il considérait comme des étrangers (Awasom, 2000: 98; Anye, 2008: 135). Ce fut la goutte d'eau qui fit déborder le vase. Les frustrés, ayant à leur tête Robert Jabea Kum Dibonge, claquèrent la porte de la CNF. Ils furent, par la suite, rejoints par John Ngu Foncha, un partisan de la réunification qui vécut mal l'abandon de cet objectif par la CNF. Il adhéra aussi au KUNC qui, toujours mu par le souci de la réunification, se réconcilia avec la CNF. Cet autre épisode de la transhumance politique au *Southern Cameroons* eut lieu en 1953.

Cette année-là, il y eut une crise dans la région Est du Nigeria à laquelle le *Southern Cameroons* était administrativement intégré. Cette crise, bien relatée par Victor Julius Nghoh (1990: 95-107), avait été causée par les problèmes internes au *National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons* (NCNC). Elle affecta l'ensemble de la Région Est du Nigeria et eut, entre autres conséquences, la division entre les élus du *Southern Cameroons* à l'Assemblée de cette Région et la fin de la constitution de Macpherson. Face à la crise interne du NCNC, quatre des treize élus du *Southern Cameroons*, Emmanuel Mbela Lifafa Endeley, J. T. Ndze, J. C. Kangsen et S. A. George tinrent une réunion à Lagos au cours de laquelle ils optèrent d'observer une «neutralité bienveillante». Une fois informé de cette décision, Nerius Namaso Mbile objecta en indiquant que l'adoption d'une telle politique devait se faire avec l'assentiment des chefs traditionnels et de l'électorat du *Southern Cameroons*. Cette position de Mbile fut soutenue par trois autres élus, à savoir, P. N. Motomby-Woleta, R. N. Charley et Sama Chi Ndi. Les treize élus s'étaient alors divisés en deux camps opposés. Cette situation compliqua davantage la crise, paralysant l'Assemblée de la Région Est du Nigeria qui fut finalement dissoute le 6 mai 1953. Les neuf partisans de la «neutralité bienveillante» convoquèrent une conférence à Mamfe du 22 au 24 mai 1953. Préalablement à cette conférence, ils organisèrent des réunions dans le *Southern Cameroons* afin d'expliquer les actions qu'ils avaient posées. C'est au cours d'une de ces réunions que se développèrent les prémices d'un autre acte de transhumance politique.

Cette réunion se tint au domicile du chef Abel Mukete de Kumba, en présence de Robert Jabea Kum Dibonge du KUNC. Ce dernier apporta son soutien à la position de «neutralité

<sup>3</sup> Cet article regorge d'anachronismes. A titre d'illustrations, aux pages 30 et 31, en ce qui concerne la désignation du territoire correspondant au *Southern Cameroons*, l'auteur utilise le nom *West Cameroon* pour le désigner en 1951. Parlant du Cameroun sous administration française, il utilise le terme *East Cameroon* pour la même période. Ces appellations ne sont valables qu'après la réunification qui a eu lieu le 1<sup>er</sup> octobre 1961.

<sup>4</sup> Nicodemus Fru Awasom (2000), p. 98, parle des élections générales de 1950. Cela est erroné puisqu'il n'y a eu aucune élection au *Southern Cameroons* au cours cette année-là.

bienveillante» qu'avait adoptée le camp d'Emmanuel Mbela Lifafa Endeley. Ce fut aussi l'occasion pour les deux leaders d'évoquer la fusion de leurs mouvements respectifs (Ngoh, 1990: 101). Cette fusion fut acquise à l'occasion de la conférence de Mamfe. A l'ordre du jour figurait la discussion sur la séparation du *Southern Cameroons* du Nigeria en vue de la constitution d'une Région du Cameroun. Ceci était du goût du KUNC qui trouvait en cette démarche une étape importante dans la voie devant, à terme, déboucher sur la réunification des deux Cameroun. Le KUNC, très vite, se réconcilia avec la CNF. La fusion du KUNC et de la CNF se concrétisa en juin 1953 lorsque les deux mouvements formèrent le *Kamerun National Congress* (KNC) (Awasom, 2000: 100). L'usage de la lettre «K» dans l'appellation du nouveau parti politique était le gage de son engagement à la réunification. La création du KNC se fit sans Nerius Namaso Mbile, secrétaire général du KUNC, qui s'était d'office exclu de ce mouvement en soutenant une plus grande intégration du *Southern Cameroons* dans le Nigeria. Pour participer aux élections à venir, il créa le *Kamerun People's Party* (KPP), (Njeuma, 1995: 31). C'était la conséquence de son éloignement de la réunification.

De 1951 à 1953, les cas de transhumance politique enregistrés au *Southern Cameroons* avaient trait à la défection, à la dissidence et à la création de nouveaux mouvements politiques. La quasi-totalité des cas de transhumance politique a été causée par un éloignement ou un rapprochement de l'objectif de réunification des deux Cameroun. Ces cas ont eu lieu dans un contexte où le *Southern Cameroons* était administré comme faisant partie intégrante de la Région Est du Nigeria. Dès 1954, le contexte change lorsque le *Southern Cameroons* devient un Quasi-Territoire Fédéral à la suite de la victoire du KNC aux élections générales de 1953. Dès 1955, le KNC devint la principale victime de la seconde phase de transhumance politique.

## La transhumance politique de 1955 à 1960

Les victoires électorales engrangées par le KNC en 1953 et 1954 en ont fait le principal parti politique du *Southern Cameroons*. C'est lui qui a inauguré le statut de Quasi-Territoire Fédéral octroyé par la constitution de Lyttelton de 1954 quand son président, Emmanuel Mbela Lifafa Endeley, est devenu *Leader of Government Business*, une sorte de premier ministre. Ce dernier a vite été rattrapé par ses convictions intrinsèques au sujet de la réunification.

Le KNC abandonna la séparation d'avec le Nigeria, programme qui a assuré ses trois victoires, pour de plus en plus parler d'une autonomie du *Southern Cameroons* au sein du Nigeria. Cette tendance du KNC indiquait clairement l'abandon de la réunification qui fut renforcé par l'alliance de ce parti politique avec l'*Action Group*, une formation politique nigériane, brisant ainsi la «neutralité bienveillante» qui avait fait la renommée d'Emmanuel Mbela Lifafa Endeley en 1953. Pour toutes ces raisons, John Ngu Foncha quitta le KNC<sup>5</sup> (Chem, 1976: 93; Ngoh, 1979: 85; Njeuma, 1995: 31). Une fois hors du KNC, il créa le *Kamerun National Democratic Party* (KNDP) en 1955. Ce parti politique avait, comme programme, la sécession du *Southern Cameroons* d'avec le Nigeria et la réunification avec le Cameroun sous administration française (Ebune, 1992: 149-150; Awasom, 2000: 103). D'autres acteurs politiques suivirent l'exemple de John Ngu Foncha. Il s'agit de Solomon Tandem Muna qui quitta le KNC avant les élections générales de 1957. Ce dernier voulut créer son propre parti mais en fut dissuadé par Fon Galega, un autre transfuge du KNC,

<sup>5</sup> La plupart des sources relatives à cet événement avancent la date de 1955 à l'exception de Bongfen Chem-Langhèë qui parle de 1954.

qui le convainquit à rejoindre, comme lui, les rangs du KNDP. Victor E. Mukete quitta aussi le navire KNC pour rejoindre John Ngu Foncha au KNDP afin qu'ils se battent pour la réunification qui lui tenait à cœur. Le député de Victoria, Mbua Monomo, suivit le même chemin (Ngoh, 2011: 14-17). Le KNDP ne brilla pas par sa stabilité au cours de cette période.

Le 11 mars 1960, le député du département de Wum, J. M. Boja, élu sous l'étiquette du KNDP, quitta les bancs du parti majoritaire à l'Assemblée du *Southern Cameroons* pour rejoindre ceux de l'opposition, ce qui les mit à égalité de sièges de 13-13. Il justifia son acte par sa conscience et la pression de son électorat qui ne croyait plus en la réunification (Chem-Langhëë, 1986: 74).

A l'analyse, ces cas de transhumance politique furent, pour l'essentiel, liés à la question de la réunification du Cameroun. Il se dégage clairement que l'adoption du programme de réunification était un bon ferment de victoire aux élections dans le *Southern Cameroons*. Son adoption permit au KNC, qui rassemblait la plupart des partisans de la réunification, de rempoter une victoire écrasante aux élections générales de 1953 et aux deux autres élections qui se déroulèrent au *Southern Cameroons* en 1954. L'abandon du programme de réunification causa des défections au sein de ce parti politique-là. Les démissionnaires se retrouvèrent au sein d'un parti qui mit à son programme la réunification. Dans de nombreux milieux du *Southern Cameroons*, on avait attribué à la réunification le mérite d'avoir contribué à la victoire du KNDP aux élections générales de 1959 (Njeuma, 1995: 32; Ngoh, 2011: 16). Les leaders politiques du *Southern Cameroons* en avaient conscience. C'est la raison pour laquelle, ne croyant pas profondément à cette réunification, ils eurent à changer de position lorsqu'il le fallait. Une belle illustration est donnée par John Ngu Foncha. Entre 1954 et 1956 il était partisan de la réunification. Entre 1957 et septembre 1958, il était partisan de la sécession du *Southern Cameroons* d'avec le Nigeria. Entre octobre et novembre 1958, il était une chauve-souris car étant engagé dans la sécession, mais aussi dans la réunification, quoique assortie de certaines conditions (Chem-Langhëë, 1976: 117).

## Conclusion

Au sortir de cette étude dont la préoccupation était de savoir si la transhumance politique avait favorisé ou défavorisé le processus de réunification du Cameroun, il se dégage que la plupart des cas de transhumance politique enregistrés au *Southern Cameroons* se sont produits pour protester contre l'abandon et la relégation de cette cause à un plan arrière. La création du KNC, suite à une réconciliation entre le KUNC et La CNF n'a été possible que parce qu'Emmanuel Mbela Lifafa Endeley s'était engagé à revenir à la réunification. Lorsqu'il a été établi que l'engagement de ce dernier n'était pas sincère, son parti s'est vidé des partisans de la réunification. Seule la démission du député J. M. Boja était motivée par un refus de la réunification. La transhumance politique a ainsi permis d'entretenir l'idée de la réunification au *Southern Cameroons*. Il est bien entendu que les calculs politiques et électoraux des principaux leaders du *Southern Cameroons* ont alimenté cette transhumance politique qui peut bien se comprendre à l'aune de la théorie de l'individualisme méthodologique. C'est à la lumière de cette même théorie que l'on peut comprendre les attitudes adoptées par certaines personnes dans le cadre de la crise anglophone qui secoue le Cameroun depuis 2016. La transhumance politique a ainsi contribué à l'avènement de la réunification dans une Afrique balkanisée par la colonisation européenne. C'est une contribution positive qui devrait donner l'occasion de réviser le regard porté sur la transhumance politique. Au lieu de la considérer uniquement

de façon négative, il faudrait peut-être voir en quoi elle peut être positive comme ce fut le cas pour la réunification au Cameroun. Des revirements politiques ne peuvent-ils pas contribuer à l'instauration de la paix dans des contextes politiques perturbés?

## Références bibliographiques

- Amazee, Victor Bong (1994), *The Role of French Cameroonians in the Unification of Cameroon, 1916-1961*, *Transafrican Journal of History*, vol. 23, pp. 195-234.
- Anye, Emmanuel Fru (2008), *Issues of Minority Rights in the Context of Political Liberalization: the Case of Anglophone Cameroon*, PhD thesis in Political Studies, University of Witwatersrand.
- Awasom, Nicodemus Fru (2000), *The Reunification Question in Cameroon History. Was the Bride an Enthusiastic or a Reluctant One?*, *Africa Today*, pp. 91-119.
- Chem-Langhèè, Bongfen (1986), *The 'Frambo Affair'*, *Revue Science et Technique, Science and Technology Review*, série Sciences Humaines/Social Science series, pp. 71-77.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1976), *The Kamerun Plebiscites, 1959-1961, Perceptions and Strategies*, PhD Thesis, University of British Columbia.
- Ebune, B. Joseph (1992), *The Growth of Political Parties in Southern Cameroons 1916-1960*, Yaoundé: CEPER.
- Elango, Lovett Z. (1987), *The Anglo-French Condominium in Cameroon 1914-1916. History of a Misunderstanding*, Limbe: Navi-Group Publications.
- Le Vine, Victor T. (1971), *The Cameroon Federal Republic*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Madiba, Essiben (1981), *La France et la redistribution des territoires du Cameroun (1914-1916)*, *Afrika Zamani*, N.º 12 et 13, pp. 36-52.
- Médias (2019), *La transhumance politique au Cameroun*. [Em ligne]. [Consult. 15.déc.2019]. Disponible sur <https://actucameroun.com/2019/12/02/la-transhumance-politique-au-cameroun-chaque-nation-a-les-opposants-quelle-merite>.
- Nfi, Joseph Lon (2014), *The Reunification Debate: the Role of French Cameroon Immigrants*, Bamenda: Langaa Research and Publishing CIG.
- Ngoh, Victor Julius (2011), *Les dessous de la réunification du Cameroun: de 1955 à 1961*, trad. Limbe: Presprint.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1990), *Constitutional Developments in Southern Cameroons 1946-1961. From Trusteeship to Independence*, Yaoundé: CEPER.
- Njeuma, Martin Zachary (1995), *Reunification and Political Opportunism in the Making of Cameroon's Independence*, *Paideuma*, N.º 41, pp. 27-37.
- Tchedjip, Célestin Kaptchouang (2015), *Le transhumance politique au Cameroun (1990-2013) entre surdimensionnement des ego et figuration sur La Scène politique*, *Revue Africaine D'Études Politique et Stratégiques: African Journal of political and Strategic Studies*, n.º 2, Éditions L'Hartmattan.
- Tiensigué, Diabaté (2006), *La transhumance politique au Sénégal*, mémoire de Maîtrise en Science Politique, Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar.



# The Anglophone Question in Cameroon: Historical Context and Evolution from “Everyday” Resistance to Armed Conflict, 1961-2017<sup>1</sup>

Confidence Chia Ngam\* e Reymond Njingti Budi\*\*

pp. 17-31

## Introduction


One of the unflinching legacies of colonial rule in Africa is that it left the continent in a dismembered state which has bred conflicts of various forms and dimensions. This was because while in the continent, the colonialists created new boundaries (both ideological and conventional) to expedite their administration and exploitation of the continent's resources. However, these boundaries were largely unseemly to the Africans after the demise of colonialism. In this regard, Abwa has maintained that, inevitably,

*[The] European colonial boundaries have had profound effects, generally, negative on the history of statehood in Africa as they are generally responsible overtly or covertly for many inter and intra-state conflicts in the continent. This is because many of them were created without due considerations of the traditional state boundaries that pre-colonial African state-builders had made and sanctioned through different types of traditional diplomacy mechanism (Abwa, 2011: 2).*

In fact, by creating new boundaries in Africa, the colonialists were not only doing so for the purpose of facilitating their administrations and exploitation of African resources but also as a means of promoting their unity which was detrimental to Africa. According to Hazlewood;

*In a sense, the unity which appeared once to exist [in Africa] was illusory. It was a unity imposed from outside for the administrative convenience of the colonial power – it was unity of Europe in Africa, ... It was not to be expected that, with the removal of Europe from the scene, the unity would necessarily continue (Hazlewood, 1967: 3).*

---

 [10.21747/doi.org/0874-2375/afr33a2](https://doi.org/10.21747/doi.org/0874-2375/afr33a2)

\* University of Bamenda, Cameroon.

\*\* University of Bamenda, Cameroon.

<sup>1</sup> This paper has benefitted extensively from excerpts of a paper presented by one of the authors (Reymond Njingti Budi) at the *Colloquium for Civil Peace Service* organized by Community Initiative for Sustainable Development (COMINSUD)'s Knowledge Working Group at The Catholic University of Cameroon (CATUC), Bamenda, on December 10, 2019.

Colonialism therefore created a situation where African states have tended to be particularistic, emphasizing micro nationalisms at the expense of continental unity (Ngwa, 2011: 55-60). Ostensibly, the European-created boundaries (ideological and conventional) have remained a potent source of conflicts in the continent since the demise of colonialism. After the fall of German Kamerun in 1916, the territory came under the direct tutelage of the League of Nations, which in turn surrendered its control to Britain and France as Mandatory Powers. These powers experimented with a shared-dominion arrangement called the Condominium; with its ultimate failure, Britain and France decided to partition the territory. In the course of the partition, Britain and France acquired 1/5 (20 %) and 4/5 (80 %) of the territory respectively (Ndi, 2013b: 74-6). The territory taken by Britain was not only small in terms of surface area but was also narrow (elongated), non-contiguous (separated) and marred by transportation and communication difficulties that made its effective administration as a separate entity from Nigeria nightmarish (Ngoh, 2001: 3). In spite of this, the British deliberately decided to administer Southern part of her territory (Southern Cameroons) as a part of Southern and later Eastern Regions of Nigeria. While this decision was intended to satisfy British administrative ambition (at least by reducing administrative costs and ensuring its effective economic exploitation) in the territory, it was to expose the Southern Cameroons territory to experiences that significantly altered and configured its historical evolution from 1922 to 1961 (Budi, 2019b: 2). Consequently, British Southern Cameroons and French Cameroon were administered separately from 1916 to 1961 (about 45 years) during which period they were socialized in the Anglo-Saxon and French systems respectively. By 1961 when both territories were reunifying, they had emerged a perceptible ideological boundary between them. The inability to manage the two different identities effectively by the post-independent Cameroon governments invariably created the Anglophone Question which became violent by 2017.

### Conceptual clarification

For a proper appreciation of the issues discussed in this paper, a proper understanding of some concepts which are implicitly and explicitly reflected therein is necessary. These concepts would include The Anglophone Question, “Everyday” Resistance and Armed Conflict.

The Anglophone Question in Cameroon is not a tittle-tattle subject at least within the precinct of the Cameroonian academia, politics and social interactions. It has animated debates within the academic, social and political specialisms for a greater part of the post-independent era. Politicians, Cameroonian citizens at home and abroad as well as academics have passionately defended their views on this question and interestingly, such debates have often generated emotions and sometimes acrimonious outbursts (Budi, Forthcoming: 3-4). However, many scholars have harped on different aspects of the Anglophone Question in their numerous writings, sometimes taking divergent positions in their submissions (Dze-Ngwa, 1997; Dze-Ngwa, 2013; Awasom, 1998; Ngoh, 1999; Chem-Langhee, 1995; Nyamnjoh, 1995; AAC Standing Committee, 1995; Ngwane, 1992; Tita, 1993; Njaah, 2001; Mbile, 2001; Nfor, 2002; Nkwi, 2004; Nkwi, 2007; Fanso, 1999; Jurg, 1999; Kah, 2012, Konings and Nyamnjoh, 1997 and Konings and Nyamnjoh, 2003). The Anglophone Question, Ngoh maintains is;

*First and foremost, a minority problem; linguistic/language (Anglo-Saxon culture and values) minority as against linguistic/language (Gaullic culture and values) majority ... The problem is/was a “clash” between the majority Gaullic (French) culture and values and the minority Anglo-Saxon (British/English) culture and values (Ngoh, 2019: 382).*

On his part, Fanso holds that it is the political, social, economic and linguistic marginalization of Anglophones and their consignment to a second-class status in Cameroon (Fanso, 2017: 385). It has also been defined as the Anglophone consciousness and the feeling (among Anglophones) of being “marginalized”, “exploited” and “assimilated” by the Francophone-dominated state and even by the Francophone population as a whole (Konings and Nyamnjoh, 1997: 207). According to a *Briefing Paper* of the United Kingdom House of Commons (2019), the Anglophone “Problem” is the rise of Anglophones against the denial to offer them the right to self-determination in 1961 and also their marginalization within the confines of the present State of Cameroon (Lunn and Brooke-Holland, 2019: 5). However, another group of scholars are those who view the Anglophone “problem” as differences between the North West and South West Provinces/Regions of Cameroon (Jurg, 1999 and Kah, 2012: 71-103). To debunk this position, Ndi (2013b) has argued that there exist historical milestones in North West/South West nexus that have created an almost inseparable bond between the Anglophones in Cameroon to the extent that possibilities of intra-Anglophone conflicts are slim.

For the interest of this paper, what has been called the Anglophone “Problem” will be viewed as the Anglophone “Question”. This is because the appellation the “Anglophone Problem” could be subject to ambiguity and interpreted to mean either as Anglophones are a problem to Cameroon and/or the problem among Anglophones in Cameroon. The Anglophone Question is thus an identity issue. It is the feeling among the Anglophones that the manner in which the country has been managed in the post independent era poses a threat to their Anglo-Saxon identity as testified by the preponderant influence of the French language, culture, and systems of administration over the English language, culture and systems of administration. All these became evident after the rescinding of the federal system of government in 1972. The inevitable outcome of this monumental administrative change has been assimilationist tendencies, exploitation, marginalization, economic underdevelopment as well as the near administrative and socio-cultural neglect of the Anglophone regions of Cameroon.

The concept of “everyday” resistance also requires an explanation for a clear understanding. Therefore;

*Everyday resistance is a theoretical concept introduced [...] in order to cover a different kind of resistance; one that is not as dramatic and visible as rebellions, riots, demonstrations, revolutions, civil war or other such organized, collective or confrontational articulations of resistance [...]. ‘Everyday’ resistance is quiet, dispersed, disguised or otherwise seemingly invisible; something [referred to as] “infrapolitics”. [...] certain common behavior of subaltern groups (for example, foot-dragging, escape, sarcasm, passivity, laziness, misunderstandings, disloyalty, slander, avoidance or theft) is not always what it seems to be, but instead resistance. [...] these activities are tactics that exploited people use in order to both survive and undermine repressive domination; especially in contexts when rebellion is too risky (emphasis in the original) (Vinthagen and Johansson, 2013: 4; Scott, 1985; 1989: 33-62 and 1990).*

The concept of ‘everyday’ resistance is used in this paper to refer to the non-violent means adopted by the Anglophones in Cameroon since at least 1972 to call the attention of the government to their predicament within the context of The United Republic/The Republic of Cameroon. These were manifested particularly through petitions, formation of pro-Anglophone pressure groups and every other means excepting violence and open confrontations.

Lastly, armed conflict is a slippery concept requiring contextual definition as well. Though it has been hard to have a consensual definition for armed conflict in International Law, it has been defined by the UNDP as; “a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state results in at least twenty-five battle-related deaths in one calendar year” (Melander, 2015). Evidently, this definition captures the understanding of the concept’s use within the present study. The armed conflict involved regular government forces and armed groups called “Amba” Boys operating in the North West and South West Regions supposedly defending the course of the Anglophones. These groups regularly clashed with government forces particularly in villages in these regions for a greater part of the period from 2017 to 2019. In many cases, innocent civilians were victims of the clashes.

### Context of study

Following the vote for reunification by Southern Cameroons in the 1961 plebiscite, a series of conferences were held with agenda to discuss the nature of the union between Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroon. These included the Buea Tripartite Meeting, May 15-17, 1961, the Yaoundé Ahidjo-Foncha Meeting, May 22-24, 1961, The Buea Tripartite Meeting, June 14-19, 1961, Bamenda All-Party Conference of June 26-28, 1961, the Foumban Constitutional Conference of July 17-21, 1961 and the Yaoundé Tripartite Conference of August 2-7, 1961 (Ngoh, 2019: 229-36). At the end of the Foumban Conference, a federal system of government was adopted with the States of West (former Southern Cameroons) and East (former French Cameroon) led by Prime Ministers. During this Foumban Conference, in a statement in defense for the federal system of government, President Ahidjo intimated that;

*Linguistic, administrative and economic differences do not permit us to envisage seriously and reasonably a state of the unitary and centralized type. It was because a confederal system on the other hand, being too loose, would not favour the close coming together and the intimate connection which we desire (Ngoh, 2018: 233).*

At the same Conference, Foncha who led the twenty-five-man Southern Cameroons Delegation also submitted that;

*In our previous discussions... we have kept in mind that in our desire to rebuild the Kamerun nation we must not however, forget the existence of the two cultures. We have, therefore, proposed a form of government which will keep the two cultures in the areas where they now operate and to blend them in the centre. The centre is, therefore, deliberately given only very limited subjects, while the States are left to continue largely as they are now (Ngoh, 2018: 234).*

But as soon as the federal structure was put in place, President Ahidjo (who by background and upbringing was not a federalist) almost immediately began taking measures to rescind it. The first of these measures was taken on October 20, 1961 in Decree N.º 61/DF/15 dividing the Federal Republic of Cameroon into six administrative inspectorates (Ngoh, 2018) with West Cameroon constituting one of these Inspectorates. This led to the appointment of federal inspectors over the administrative inspectorates and the West Cameroon federal inspector, Jean Claude Ngoh was impulsive and lorded over the West Cameroon prime minister.

In 1962, the Nigerian pound sterling which was in use in West Cameroon was replaced by the *Communauté Financière Africaine (CFA)*<sup>2</sup> Franc which became legal tender in the entire nation. Similarly, in 1964, the West Cameroon imperial system of weights and measures was abandoned in favor of the East Cameroon metric system.<sup>3</sup> The ground breaking event took place in 1966 when President Ahmadou Ahidjo, taking advantage of the crisis within the ruling party in West Cameroon, the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP)<sup>4</sup> merged all the political parties in both the East and West Cameroon States to form the Cameroon National Union (CNU) as the sole political party in the country. The four parties that merged to form the CNU included the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) of J. N. Foncha, the Cameroon Peoples National Congress (CPNC) of E. M. L. Endeley, Cameroon United Congress (CUC) of S. T. Muna from the West Cameroon State and the *Union Camerounaise* (UC) of Ahmadou Ahidjo of the East Cameroon State (Ngoh, 1996: 240).

By 1968, the greatest obstacle to Ahidjo's bid for a unitary state was A.N Jua, the P. M. of the West Cameroon State who was so strongly opposed to Ahidjo's program. He was immediately dismissed from his position and replaced by S. T. Muna who was seemingly a stooge and an uncritical supporter of Ahidjo's policies.<sup>5</sup> Two years later, that is in 1970 another stumbling block to Ahidjo was his Vice President, J. N. Foncha himself. Like Jua, Foncha too was anti-unitarist in character and opposed Ahidjo on that. Ahidjo did not also hesitate to sack him and replaced him with S. T. Muna, making the latter to cumulatively hold the positions of both the P. M. of the West Cameroon State and the Vice President of the Federation.<sup>6</sup>

It is evident that nothing could stop President Ahidjo from achieving his ultimate goal of dissolving the federation in Cameroon. The last decisive move which put an end to the federal system of government was the May 20, 1972 referendum. On this day, Cameroonians from both states turned up massively at the polls to vote on a question proposed by the head of state. The question was; "*Do you approve with the view of consolidating National Unity and accelerating the economic, social and cultural development of the Nation, the draft constitution submitted to the people of Cameroon by the President of the Federal Republic of Cameroon, instituting a Republic One and Indivisible to be styled The United Republic of Cameroon?*" (CNU, 1972). Cameroonians overwhelmingly voted "YES" in the polls and the results of the votes were as follows; at the national level, 3,236,280 people registered, out of this number, 3,177,846 voted "YES" and an insignificant 176 ballots were cast against the Unitary Constitution. 1,612 ballots were declared null and void and 56,646 voters did not bother to vote. At the level of the State of West Cameroon, 731,850 persons registered for the Referendum, 716,774 people voted in favor of the Unitary Constitution and 89 voted against it, 13,934 registered voters did not vote and 1053 ballots were declared null

<sup>2</sup> It should be mentioned that Bongfen Chem Langhee holds that the full meaning of the CFA is the *Communauté Française d'Afrique*. See Bongfen Chem Langhee, "The Road to the Unitary State of Cameroon, 1959-1972". In *Annals of the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences, Volumes 1 and 2*, University of Yaoundé, January-July (1990): 14.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> The KNDP crisis was a power tussle that rocked the party from 1963 to 1965 and was largely disagreement between A. N. Jua and S. T. Muna as to who between them would succeed J. N. Foncha as Prime Minister of the West Cameroon State since the later was to move to Yaoundé as the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Cameroon. The crisis had far reaching attendant repercussions on the politics of the West Cameroon State in particular and the Cameroon nation in general. At the end of the crisis, A. N. Jua emerged victorious as the P. M. of the West Cameroon State while his opponent, S. T. Muna who refused to accept defeat was dismissed from the party to form the CUC.

<sup>5</sup> It should be mentioned that, popular slogan of S. T. Muna's Cameroon United Congress (CUC) Party was "one country, one government, one flag, one currency". This slogan seemed to fit squarely in Ahidjo's program and made him to be appointed to replace A. N. Jua as P. M.

<sup>6</sup> Muna's appointment as the Vice President of the Federation in addition to his position as Prime Minister of the West Cameroon State was an utter violation of Article 9/3 of the Federal Constitution which stated that the post of the Federal President or Vice were incompatible with any other public position.

and void. In the East Cameroon State, of the 2,504,430 that registered to vote, 2,461,072 votes were cast in favor of unitary state and 87 against it. While 559 ballots were declared null and void, 42,712 persons did not vote (CNU, 1972a). These results automatically put an end to the Federal system of government in Cameroon and launched the unitary state which had far reaching implications for the Anglophones.

The rescinding of the federal system of government in Cameroon formed the basis of the Anglophone Question. This was because, despite the evident weaknesses inherent in the federal structure, it still gave Anglophones some constitutional safeguards; the customary court systems were allowed to function in the West Cameroon State; the West Cameroon House of Chiefs was allowed; it had a Prime Minister; a separate budget and also controlled part of the education and could also provide a President or at least Vice President of the FRC. Moreover, the State of West Cameroon controlled basic education, local government, social welfare, archives and antiquities, agriculture, internal trade, cooperatives, state public works and other minor issues (Chem-Langhee, 1990: 13) which assured the preservation of the Anglo-Saxon identity. However, these constitutional safeguards were removed in 1972, when the federal constitution was finally abolished.

### **Southern Cameroons Independence that never was: International “Conspiracy”?**

Following the independence of French Cameroon on January 1, 1960 and plans by Britain to grant independence to British Nigeria on October 1, 1960, the question as to the political future of the sandwich territory that lay between them became topical. This ignited a period of hectic political maneuvers in Southern Cameroons particularly in the 1950s. As Southern Cameroonians disagreed on the political future of their territory, three shades of opinions emerged among the political leaders. These included the options of gaining independence either as an integral part of Nigeria (Integration); or as part of The Republic of Cameroon (Reunification); or as an independent territory in its own right (Secession). (Fanso, 2017: 324-7; Ngoh, 2019: 219-28 and Ndi, 2013a: 105-14). While integration and reunification options had some support from Southern Cameroonians, the option of secession was arguably the most popular and supported by a cross section of Southern Cameroonians including traditional rulers. For instance, Fon Achirimbi II of Bafut who doubled as Chairman of the Chiefs’ Conference argued that;

*We [traditional rulers] believed on two points during a conference in Bamenda in which Dr. Endeley and Mr. Foncha were present. I was Chairman of that conference. We rejected Dr. Endeley because he wanted to take us to Nigeria. If Mr. Foncha tries to take us to French Cameroon we shall also run away from him. To me French Cameroon is ‘fire’ and Nigeria is ‘water’. ...I support secession without reunification (Kale, 1967: 69. Cited in Chem-Langhee, 2004: 119).*

Evidently, Southern Cameroonians were caught between Scylla and Charybdis at this critical moment in its political evolution. In the midst of this political conundrum, the British, the Commonwealth, the French, the United Nations, other European powers and even Nigeria pushed through their interests in the territory.

Generally speaking, while the British expressed doubts on the possibility of Southern Cameroons to stand on its own as an independent state, the Commonwealth maintained a suspicious indifference while the French chose a reluctant posture (Torrent, 2012: 23-35). Very bluntly, these nations and organizations including Nigeria were opposed to Southern Cameroons gaining independence in its own right. Torrent has averred that, “Just as they opposed reunification, the Nigerian leaders contested any form of separate independence

for the Southern Cameroons...” (Torrent, 2012: 24). Evidently, while the British and Nigerians favored integration, the French subscribed to the reunification option (though were more willing to be amenable to the British interest in the territory). Both powers thus influenced the decisions of the UN and other international organizations regarding the Southern Cameroons territory.

In fact, Britain was opposed to Southern Cameroons’ independence as a separate state in its own right (Ndi, 2013b: 15-22). Apart from the fact that the British seriously retarded the socio-economic development of Southern Cameroons during the period of administration in the area, it also worked hard to ensure that Southern Cameroons remained part of Nigeria. Some British officials who served in different capacities in the Southern Cameroons territory during this period were to confess that the whole idea of the plebiscite in Southern Cameroons was a charade. One of them, Malcolm Milne who was Deputy Commissioner of the Southern Cameroons confesses that,

*I had not come to terms with the conviction myself[...] we were doing the [Southern] Cameroons a wrong. We would have struggled harder to continue our trusteeship for several years longer. But the forces against us were strong and I judge now that had I, as Commissioner of the Cameroons taken this line in 1959-61, I should merely have made a great nuisance of myself and achieved nothing (Milne, 1999: 395).*

Even John Percival, one of the plebiscite officials hired by the British to serve in the Cameroons has also indicted Britain and the UN on the fate of Southern Cameroons. He maintains that;

*Many Southern Cameroonians continued to plead for colonial administration to be prolonged for a little longer, to give them a chance to make informed decision about the future, but both the UN and the [British] had refused to countenance this option... with Ian Macleod as colonial secretary, the British Government of the day was only too eager to wash its hands off the Cameroons.... as quickly and painlessly as possible (Percival, n.d.: 77-8. Cited in Ndi, 2013b: 17-8).*

Meanwhile, the UN General Assembly was determined to grant independence to all aspiring nations around the world declaring in its Resolution 1514 (XV) of December 14, 1960 that, “inadequacy of political, economic, social and educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence” (UN, 1960). In addition, Resolution 1541 (XV) of December 15, 1960 also stipulated that non-self-governing territories could attain independence either by; *Emerging as a Sovereign Independent State or Free Association with an Independent State or Integration with an Independent State* (Emphasis added) (Ngoh, 2019: 221). Since the interests of the European powers especially the British had to be protected and being opposed to the first option and skeptical of the second, they had to manipulate the UN to capitalize on the third, which was granting independence to Southern Cameroons as an integral part of the independent state of Nigeria. This was reflected in the plebiscite questions of February 11, 1961 which was the peak of the Southern Cameroons political evolution.

On this date, British Southern Cameroonians faced a bizarre situation in which they were left with no option than to submit to the UN-supervised plebiscite. The questions were tricky and hinged on the following options: *Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the Independent Federation of Nigeria? OR Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the Independent Republic of Cameroon?* (Ngoh, 2019: 217). These questions reflected two of the three main political opinions in the Southern Cameroons, the third and of course the most popular option, that is “Independence without joining” (secession) having been consigned to obscurity/oblivion. The above questions, if properly interpreted

actually meant; “Do you wish to achieve Independence by being annexed to the Nigerian Federation?” OR “Do you wish to achieve Independence by being annexed to the Republic of Cameroon?” The questions thus left Southern Cameroonians only with the option of achieving independence by losing it. Despite this, by the day of voting, John Ngu Foncha who championed the drive for reunification with the Republic of Cameroon had succeeded to charm Southern Cameroonians into believing that a vote for reunification was going to be the “better evil”. Thus by a total of **233,571 (70.5 %) votes against 97,741 (29.5 %)** Southern Cameroonians chose to achieve independence by reunifying with *La République du Cameroun* (Chem-Langhee, 2004: 167; Ndi, 2013b: 121; Fanso, 2017: 326 and Ngoh, 2019: 225). Southern Cameroonians’ independence was thus clearly conditional though in line with UN Resolution 1541 (XV). However, though independence was granted to Southern Cameroonians on condition of reunification, reunification was negotiated on the basis of federalism.

### From “Everyday” Resistance to Armed Conflict

As indicated in the foregoing section, the reunification of the two Cameroons was negotiated on the basis of federalism. In fact, it was assurances of the fact that the Southern Cameroonians’ identity would be preserved in the union through a federation that the Southern Cameroonians overwhelmingly voted for reunification. As early as July 1960, President Ahidjo visiting Buea and Tiko assured Southern Cameroonians that, “Our desire is [re]unification not annexation... the time has come for Cameroonians to unite and form a nation... within a united Africa” (Ndi, 2013b: 129). Ahidjo further added that reunification would be on the basis of federalism.<sup>7</sup> On the strength of these assurances, Southern Cameroonians (Anglophones) voted for reunification with former French Cameroon (Francophones).<sup>8</sup> How Reunification eventually raised the Anglophone Question can thus only be explained by the fact that Ahidjo’s government (and later, Biya’s) did not sustain measures taken to safeguard the Anglophone identity.<sup>9</sup> This was clearly the origin/root cause of the Anglophone Question. Every other perceived causes including marginalization (in all its forms including linguistic, administrative, economic and political) of Anglophones in Cameroon are mere manifestations of this monumental feature of post-independent Cameroon. That is why the dismantling of federalism in 1972 almost immediately led to response from within the ranks of the Anglophones to create the Cameroon Action Movement (CAM) in 1979 calling for secession from the union. Many other pro-Anglophone movements and pressure groups emerged with time (Ngoh, 2019: 388).

While there have always been grievances among the Anglophones in Cameroon which became overt following the dismantling of the federal system in 1972, it has never escalated to a scale as witnessed as from 2017. It began with grievances of common law lawyers and later Cameroon Anglophone Teachers Trade Unions expressed in the form of

<sup>7</sup> *Southern Cameroons Press Release N.º 911*, July 19, 1960. Cited in Ndi, 2013: 130.

<sup>8</sup> At this time, events in Nigeria were also not favorable for Southern Cameroonians. The Nigerian Constitutions from 1922 (Clifford Constitution), 1947 (Richards Constitution), 1951 (Macpherson Constitution) and 1954 (Lyttelton Constitution) showed evidence of domination of the Southern Cameroonians. This was worsened by persistent attempts at political domination, economic exploitation and social suppression of the Southern Cameroonians by the Igbos. See R. N. Budi, “Southern Cameroons in Nigerian Politics, 1922-1961: Resistance to Political Domination”. *Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences IX. N.º III. Quarter III*. (2018: 1-20); R. N. Budi, “Colonial Administrative Integration of African Territories: Identity and Resistance in Nigeria’s Southern Cameroons, 1922-1961”. *The IAFOR Journal of Arts and the Humanities 6. Issue 1*. Spring (2019: 109-122). DOI: 10.22492/ijah.6.1.09; R. N., Budi, *Identity and Resistance in Nigeria’s Southern Cameroons, 1922-1961* (Latvia, European Union: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2019).

<sup>9</sup> It should be mentioned that immediately after reunification, Ahidjo began taking measures to dismantle the federation which culminated in the 1972 Referendum.



strikes before degenerating into a socio-political crisis that has trapped the entire country until. By 2017, the Anglophone Question became violent with the emergence of armed groups to defend the course of the Anglophones especially secession and independence and the creation of the State of Ambazonia. Consequently, the armed groups that emerged became known as "Amba" Boys and perpetuated attacks on military, government facilities especially schools, government officials and the blockading and destruction of roads and bridges linking the various towns and villages of the North West and South West Regions of the country. This also met with violent response from government forces defending the territorial integrity of the country (Budi, 2019c: 261-8).

As a corollary to the dissolution of the federal system in Cameroon, the Anglophone Question became evident culminating in subtle resistance. In reaction to the dismantling of the federal system of government, a pro-Anglophone pressure group was created known as Cameroon Action Movement (CAM) in 1979 (Ngoh, 2019: 387) to defend the course of the Anglophones. In spite of this, the closed political atmosphere in the country made it difficult for more pressure groups and activism to be engaged by Anglophones to demonstrate their grievances. However, by Law N.º 84-001 of February 4, 1984, President Biya abolished the name, "United Republic of Cameroon" and introduced the name the "Republic of Cameroon" (Ngoh, 2019: 388). The Anglophones greeted this change with aversion describing it as assimilationist and annexationist. With the passage of Liberty Laws in December 1990, more Anglophone pressure groups and associations emerged either to reminisce relics of Anglophone identity or to defend the plight of same in Cameroon. These included, Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC), Southern Cameroons Peoples' Organization (SCAPO), the Ambazonia Liberation Movement (ALIM), the Free West Cameroon Movement (FWCM), the Southern Cameroons Youth League (SCYL), The Ambazonia Peoples' Emancipation Council (APEC) among others. Other associations that were created to reminisce the relics of Anglophone identity included the South West Elite Association (SWELA), the North West Elite Association (NOWELA), the South West Chiefs' Conference (SWECC) and the North West Fons' Union (NOWEFU) (Ngoh, 2019: 388).

While resistance had been engaged by Anglophones over the years, it had never reached a crescendo culminating in armed confrontation of the scale witnessed as from 2017. It should be noted that as the government engaged discussions with lawyers and teachers over their respective corporate concerns, both groups were bent on forcing the government to return to the two-state federation that formed the basis of the union. This led to the creation of a Consortium of Anglophone Teachers and Common Law Lawyers but which was eventually banned by government on grounds of illegality and subsequently arresting some of its members including Agbor Bala and Fontem Neba. However, the stage for armed confrontation was actually set with the popular demonstration on September 22, 2017 and events of October 1, 2017. Based on claims that the march was peaceful but government reaction was violent and also the fact that events of October 1, 2017 led to the killing of some Anglophones, it became evident that the Anglophone regions were drifting towards an armed conflict. Under the command of many Anglophones in the diaspora, armed groups were created in the North West and South West Regions including the Ambazonia Defense Forces (ADF), the Southern Cameroons Defense Forces (SOCADEF), the Southern Cameroons Defense Forces (SCDF), the Lebialem Red Dragons, the Manyu Ghost Warriors, the Ambazonia Self-Defense Restoration Forces, the Tigers

of Ambazonia,<sup>10</sup> Many Tigers, The Sword of Ambazonia (TSOA), Southern Cameroons Restoration Forces, Ten-Ten Group, Ambazonia Restoration Army, 'General' Obi's Group, 'General' Eugene's Group and 'General' Nyambere Group in the South West Region and The Vipers, Donga/Mantung Self-Defense Group, 'General' Satan's Group, Menchum Fall Warriors, White Tigers, Seven Kata, Ambaland *Kwifor*, Ambazonia Defense Forces (ADF) and the Warriors of Nso, among many other groups operating in the North West Region. This led to sporadic confrontations between these groups and regular government forces on the ground.

The existence of these groups has led to recurrent conflicts in the two regions with far reaching attendant repercussions for the civilian populations. But how did we get here? As indicated in the abstract, a conspiracy of factors was responsible for this twist in the Anglophone resistance in Cameroon. Undeniably, accumulated grievances evident in frustrations, jelled by the growth of 'Ambazonism', propagated as the twin phenomena of liberalism and nationalism through the social media, steered by a cream of Anglophone Cameroon diaspora, enjoying immunity afforded them by geography and distance were responsible for the armed struggle in the Anglophone Regions since 2017.

### Accumulated grievances

The Anglophone grievances against the government of Cameroon stemmed from the inability of the Ahidjo and Biya governments to sustain measures to safeguard their identity. This state of affairs has generally left Anglophones with a well-founded feeling of marginalization coupled with attempts to assimilate or annex the latter into the majority French. This has generally led to the treatment of Anglophones as second-class citizens in the country. Against this, the Anglophones have complained since the institution of the union. More and more, these grievances were further worsened by near socio-economic and administrative neglect and exploitation resulting in underdevelopment and economic hardship especially among the youths. This provides an understanding of the reactions of the youths during discussions between government ministers and the representatives of the teachers and lawyers in Bamenda in January 2017.<sup>11</sup> Besides the well-founded grievances among the Anglophones, there was also an outburst of emotions that steadily ruled over reason resulting in the escalation of conflict in the Anglophone regions. The youths saw the teachers' and lawyers' strikes as opportunities to reverse the situation they have suffered over the years.

### The Growth of Ambazonism

The name 'Ambazonia' was derived from *Ambass Bahia*. The Portuguese are said to have arrived in the territory which later became Victoria on December 7, 1492, Feast Day of St. Ambrose. They named the Bay, *Ambass Bahia* which referred to an Island in the Bay which was named Victoria or Nicoll Island near Bimbia. The people of the area were called Ambous. They were said to be tall, well-built and cannibal. The British missionaries and traders later referred to the area as Ambass Bay. In reaction to President Biya's Decree

<sup>10</sup> See The International Crisis Group Report, 2017 and Human Right Watch, "The Killings Can be Stopped: Government and Separatist Groups Abuses in Cameroon's Anglophone Regions" (2018: 20-21).

<sup>11</sup> Following intense discussions that took the whole day at the Governor's Office in Bamenda, rumors circulated that the representatives of the lawyers and teachers were being coerced to sign documents calling off the strikes. A huge mobilization of youths surrounded the Governor's Office demanding reassurance from their leaders that the discussions were free and fair.

N.º 84-001 of February 4, 1984 which changed the name of the country, Fon Gorji Dinka of Widikum coined the name ‘Ambazonia’ as the ‘independent’ name of the former Southern Cameroons territory (Ngoh, 2019: 398, Footnote 55). In the midst of frustrations caused by accrued grievances, secessionist activists revived the concept of ‘Ambazonia’ to provide a better alternative for the Republic of Cameroon. To enroll support of the disenfranchised youths, these activists propagated the utopic Republic of Ambazonia where employment will be assured; resources fairly distributed; corruption sunk to the base; roads and railways constructed and above all, a better standard of education and legal services based on Anglo-Saxon ideals. This charmed many youths who took up arms to fight for the realization of this state.

### **Social Media Nationalism**

The contagion effect of the crisis in the North West and South West regions has largely been thanks to the phenomenon of social media nationalism. The secessionist activists who for the most part were settled in foreign countries used the social media (Takor, 2011)<sup>12</sup> to propagate their ideals in the most alluring manner, thereby endearing many youths whose hopes in the government had faded nearly beyond recovery. Through Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and even Instagram, the secessionists were radical, making pronouncements and declarations as well as promises enveloped in propagandist statements (largely baseless) which did not only expose the extent of the crisis but enrolled more sympathizers for the course. In fact, the accessibility of the youths to android gadgets exposed them to entreaties from secessionists and caused them to engage armed confrontation for the creation of the State of Ambazonia.<sup>13</sup>

### **Initial popular support**

At the exordium of the armed conflict in the Anglophone Regions, the populations were supportive of the armed groups styled “Amba Boys”. They were loved by the people and seen to be veritable Freedom Fighters. Perhaps, they had presented themselves as Freedom Fighters and Self-defense Movements emerging with the aim of protecting the populations against the invading forces of the government which many saw as the villain responsible for untold atrocities on the masses. At this point, “Amba Boys” were affectionately referred to as “Our Boys” by a cross section of the Anglophone population. They visited homes and requested material and financial support for the struggle which the populations willingly and generously offered them.<sup>14</sup> In some cases, the populations provided accommodation to the Boys and above all, gave them moral support besides painting a very positive image of them. On the basis of this, not only were the numbers of armed groups increasing but also public perception towards them was generally good. However, with the passage of time, when “Our Boys” began perpetuating atrocities on the populations including kidnappings for ransom, attacks on pupils and students, blockading of roads to some towns and villages in the North

<sup>12</sup> Social Media refers to web-based mobile technologies designed to turn communication into an interactive dialogue that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated contents. They are used for social interaction between communities, organizations and individuals.

<sup>13</sup> Ambazonism is however quickly transforming into an ideology to which individuals and communities subscribe to express their grievances against the government. This explains why some individuals and communities are more active and committed to the ideology than others.

<sup>14</sup> Emmanuel Fai, (Medical Practitioner) in discussion with Author in Bamenda on August 22, 2018.

West and South West Regions as well as ‘arrest’, torture, killing and beheading of suspected ‘blacklegs’, public perception began changing though very slowly. They were more and more referred to as “Those Boys” rather than the affectionate appellation “Our Boys”. However, as the crisis persisted, the populations soon found themselves between Scylla and Charybdis and suffered hugely from both government forces and “Amba” Boys. Government’s mal-handling of the crisis also contributed to the armed conflict in the Anglophone regions.

## Role of Government

At the beginning of the crisis with the teachers’ and lawyers’ grievances, the government was generally lackluster in addressing the corporatist grievances upfront. For instance, Ngoh argues that in spite of the reasonable time span given by the lawyers for their grievances to be addressed, the government dillydallied (Ngoh, 2019: 389. See also Fanso, 2017: 397-400). Even the calling of government’s attention to the issues plaguing the educational sector by the Cameroon Education Forum (CEF), SYNES/UB Chapter, CATTU among others, the government was slow in its response. This gave the impression that the government was not serious about resolving their legitimate grievances. Worse still, government’s reaction to demonstrations by the students of the University of Buea (UB) was violent. Military forces were dispatched to Buea and they inflicted untold sufferings on the students (Ngoh, 2019: 389. See also Fanso, 2017: 397-400). Lawyers were also brutalized as they marched on streets in Bamenda and Buea peacefully. The high point of military brutality was however experienced on September 22, 2017 and October 1, 2017 when mass demonstrations were organized on the streets of the North West and South West Regions. The brutal response of government forces and the arrests and imprisonment of many people only added to the grievances and proved to Anglophones that their with French Cameroon was bad. It is therefore a fact that, though some effort might have been made to resolve the issues of the Anglophones in Cameroon, the handling of the situation has been far from being satisfactory thereby radicalizing youth who were placed at the mercy of the entreaties of secessionist activists.

## Concluding thought

Armed conflict is not a new phenomenon in Africa. If you don’t find it in Mali, you find it in Nigeria or Sudan or Somalia. It is usually caused by deep-seated frustrations in government pushing the masses to take arms against existing regimes. Armed conflicts in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon began being perceptible in mid-2017. The paper has demonstrated that it has been a concomitant feature of historical milestone events, accumulated grievances evident in frustrations, gelled by the growth of ‘Ambazonism’, propagated as the twin phenomena of liberalism and nationalism through the social media and steered by a cream of Anglophone Cameroon diaspora. The Anglophone Crisis has caused untold sufferings on the people of these regions. Apart from the burning of villages, destruction of public and private properties and innumerable deaths, the Norwegian Refugee Council (2018), argues that the number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in neighboring towns and cities of Cameroon like Littoral and the West had reached 437,000 by 2018 while the International Crisis Group (2019) submits that after twenty months of fighting, some 530,000 persons are internally displaced and about 35,000 (or 40,000) others seeking refuge in Nigeria as a result of the Anglophone

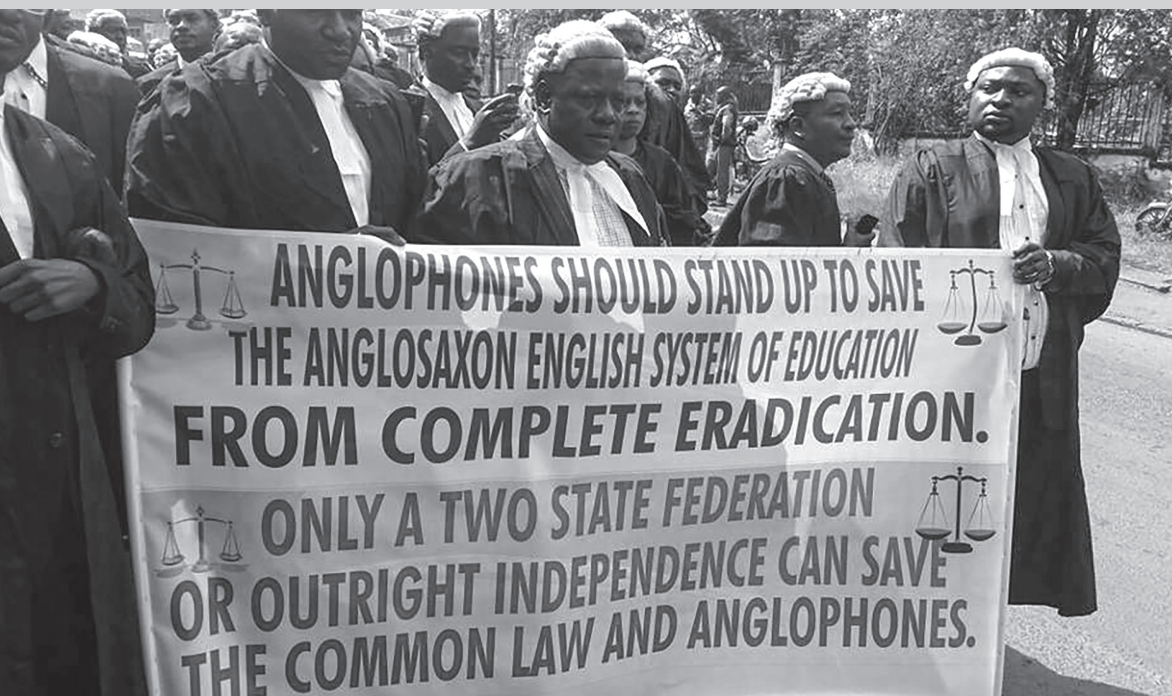
Crisis and living under perilous conditions. While efforts at seeking lasting solutions to the issues of these regions continue, the historical context must be revisited with the view of undoing the errors of the past with the view of establishing sustainable peace in Cameroon.

## Bibliographic references

- AAC Standing Committee (1995), *The Buea Declaration*. Limbe: Nooremac Press.
- Abwa, D. (2011), Introduction. In: Abwa D., Fomin E. S. D., Temgoua A. P. and Dze-Ngwa W. (eds.) *Boundaries and History in Africa: Issues in Conventional Boundaries and Ideological Frontiers* (Festschrift in Honour of Verkijika G. Falso). The University of Yaounde I: Department of History, pp. 1-7.
- Awasom, N. F. (1998), *The Development of Autonomist Tendency in Anglophone Cameroon*, *Journal of Third World Studies*, vol. XV, n.º 1, pp. 163-183.
- Budi, R. N. (Forthcoming), *Social Media Extremism and the Growth of 'Ambazonism' and Counter-'Ambazonism' in Cameroon, 1979-2017*, pp. 1-22.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2019a), *Colonial Administrative Integration of African Territories: Identity and Resistance in Nigeria's Southern Cameroons, 1922-1961*, *The IAFOR Journal of Arts and the Humanities*, vol. 6. Issue 1. Spring, pp. 109-122.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2019b), *Identity and Resistance in Nigeria's Southern Cameroons, 1922-1961*. Latvia, European Union: Lambert Academic Publishing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2019c), *Caught between Scylla and Charybdis? Assessing the Practice of Journalism in Bamenda-Cameroon during the Anglophone Crisis, 2016-2019*, *Arts and Humanities Open Access Journal*, vol. 3. N.º 6, pp. 261-268.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2018), *Southern Cameroons in Nigerian Politics, 1922-1961: Resistance to Political Domination*, *Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. IX. N.º III. Quarter III, pp. 1-20.
- Chem-Langhëë, B. (2004), *The Paradoxes of Self-Determination in the Southern Cameroons under the United Kingdom Administration; The Search for identity, Well-being and Continuity*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1995), *The Anglophone-Francophone Divide and Political Disintegration in Cameroon: A Psycho-historical Perspective*. In: *Regional Balance and National Integration in Cameroon: Lessons Learned and the Uncertain Future*. Leiden: African Studies Center, pp. 88-99.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1990), *The Road to the Unitary State of Cameroon, 1959-1972*, *Annals of the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences*, vols. 1 and 2, University of Yaoundé, January-July, pp. 3-22.
- CNU (1972a), "Results of the Referendum of May 20 Announced", *l'Unité*, N.º 540.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1972b), "The People Massively Approve the Institution of the United Republic of Cameroon", *l'Unité*, N.º 537.
- Dze-Ngwa, W. (2013), *The Plight of the Anglophones*, *Newsroom Magazine*, n.º 002. Special Edition. November-December.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1997), *The Anglophone Problem in Cameroon: A Historical Perspective, 1916-1995*, University of Yaoundé I: MA Dissertation in History.
- Fai, E. (2018), Medical Practitioner in discussion with Author in Bamenda on August 22, 2018.
- Falso, V. G. (2017), *Cameroon History for secondary Schools and Colleges. From Pre-historic Times to the Twenty-first Century*. Revised and Updated Combined Edition. Bamkika'ay-Kumbo-Cameroon: Team Work Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1999), *Anglophone and Francophone Nationalisms in Cameroon*, *Roundtable 350*, pp. 281-296.
- Hazlewood, A. (1967), *The Problem of Integration among African States*. In: Hazlewood A. (ed.) *African Integration and Disintegration: Case Studies in Economic and Political Union*. Oxford, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, pp. 3-16.

- Jurg, S. (1999), *The Intra-Anglophone Conflict in Cameroon in Historical Perspective: Stereotypes in Mutual Perception*, University of Buea: BA, Long Essay in History.
- Kah, H. K. (2012), *The Anglophone Problem in Cameroon: The North West/South West Dichotomy from 1961-1996*, *Cameroon Journal on Democracy and Human Right*, vol. 6, n.º 1, pp. 71-103.
- Kale, P. M. (1967), *Political Evolution in the Cameroons*. Buea: Government Printer.
- Konings, P. and Nyamnjoh, F. B. (2003), *Negotiating an Anglophone Identity: A Study of the Politics of Recognition and Representation in Cameroon*, Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1997), *The Anglophone Problem in Cameroon*, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 35, n.º 2, pp. 207.
- Lunn, J. and Brooke-Holland, L. (2019), *The Anglophone Crisis: April 2019 Update, Briefing Paper N.º 8331*. House of Commons Library, April 17.
- Mbile, N. N. (2001), *The Other Side of the SCNC Story*. Revised Edition. Bota, Limbe.
- Melander, E. (2015), *The Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) Armed Conflict Definition, Organized Violence in the World, A Assessment by UCDP*.
- Milne, M. (1999), *No Telephone to Heaven: From Apex to Nadir, Colonial Service Nigeria, Aden, the Cameroons and Gold Coast, 1938-61*. Longstoke: Meon Hill Press.
- NAB, Vc/b/1961/2, Fouban Conference 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> July, 1961.
- Ndi, A. (2013a), *Southern West Cameroon Revisited, 1950-1972: Unveiling Inescapable Traps*. Volume One. Bamenda: Paul's Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2013b), *Southern West Cameroon Revisited: North-South West Nexus, 1858-1972, Myth, History and Reality*. Volume Two. Bamenda: Paul's Press.
- Nfor, N. N. (2002), *Southern Cameroons: The Truth of the Matter*. Bamenda: Quality Printers, 2002.
- Ngoh, V. J. (2019), *Cameroon 1884-Present (2018): The History of a People*. Limbe: Design House.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2001), *Southern Cameroons, 1922-1961: A Constitutional History*. Burlington, USA: Ashgate Publishing Company.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1999), *The Origin of the Marginalization of Former Southern Cameroonians (Anglophones), 1961-1966: An Historical Analysis*, *Journal of Third World Studies*. vol. XC, n.º 1, pp. 165-183.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1996), *History of Cameroon since 1800*, Limbe: Presbook.
- Ngwa, C. A. (2011), *Sacrificing Micro Nationalisms within the Broader Dream of Pan-Africanism: What Prospects for the United States of Africa (USA)*. In: Forje, J. W. (ed.) *Century of Change: Symposium on African Unity*. New York, Hauppauge: Nova Science Publishers, pp. 55-60.
- Ngwane, G. (1992), *Fragments of Unity*. Limbe: Nooremac Press.
- Njaah, P. T. (2001), *The Anglophone Problem in Cameroon: The Prospects for Non-violent Transformation*. Bamenda: Quality Printers.
- Nkwi, W. G. (2007), *The Anglophone Problem in Cameroon: Towards New Insights*. In: Fandio Pierre and Madini Mongi (eds.), *Actors of History and Artistic Creativity in Cameroon*. Paris: l'Harmattan, 2007, pp. 153-160.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2004), *The Anglophone Problem*. In: Ngoh, V.J. (ed.), *Cameroon: From a Federal to a Unitary State, 1961-1972*. Limbe: Design House, pp. 185-209.
- Nyamnjoh, F. B. (1995), *The GCE Crisis, A Test of Anglophone Solidarity*. Bamenda: Newslink.
- Percival, J. (n.d.), *The Southern Cameroons Plebiscite, Choice or Betrayal*. Bamenda, Mankon: Langa Research and Publishing CIG.
- Scott, J. C. (1990), *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*. Hiddens Transcripts. Yale University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1989), "Everyday Forms of Resistance", *Copenhagen Papers* 4, pp. 33- 62.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1985), *Weapons of the Weak*. Yale University Press.
- Takor, N. K. (2011), *The Arab Spring: Interrogating the Historical Basis and Implications of Social-Media Nationalism in Africa*, Paper Presented at NOWEHCTA Seminar, December 2.

- The International Crisis Group (2018), Report, 2017 and Human Right Watch, “The Killings Can be Stopped: Government and Separatist Groups Abuses in Cameroon’s Anglophone Regions”.
- Tita, J. C. (ed.) (1993), *A Time of Hope: Anglophones on the Anglophone Problem*. Limbe Nooremac Press.
- Torrent, M. (2012), *Diplomacy and Nation Building in Africa: Franco-British Relations and Cameroon at the End of Empire*. London and New York: I. B. Tauris.
- UN (1960), Resolution 1514 (XV) “Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples”. UNGA 947<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting. December 14.
- Vinthaghen, S. and Johansson, A. (2013), ‘Everyday Resistance’: *Exploration of a Concept and its Theories*, *Resistance Studies Magazine*, n.º 1.





# Stages and changing *Modus Operandi* of Anglophone Separatists in Cameroon since 1984

Joseph Lon Nfi\*

pp. 33-42

## Introduction

One of the topics that have provoked extensive research and debates in Cameroon's history is the Anglophone Problem. There have been substantive publication on this subject especially by sociologists, anthropologists, historians, political scientists, lawyers and journalists.<sup>1</sup> The focal point of most of these studies has always revolved around the origins, causes, manifestations and impact of the Anglophone Problem. This study probes into the evolution of the problem with emphasis on the stages, tactics, strategies and weapons used by the extremists to push through their idea of separation.

The Anglophone problem can be traced back to the colonial period. In 1884 Cameroon was annexed by Germany. In 1916, Britain and France defeated Germany in Cameroon during the First World War and partitioned the German Protectorate of Kamerun into two unequal halves. The British occupied a fifth constituted as British Cameroon and the French assumed four-fifths referred to as French Cameroun. When the war ended, the international community recognised the partition and requested Britain and France to administer their respective portions as mandate territories of the League of Nations. The new international boundary came to be called the Oliphant-Picot line in honour of Lancelot Oliphant, a British diplomat, and George Picot, a French diplomat who in a meeting in London in February 1916 initiated the partition by drawing a line on the map of Cameroon from Lake Chad to the Mungo River. The partition was finalised by the Milner-Simon Agreement of July 10, 1919.

Britain further partitioned British Cameroons into British Northern Cameroons and British Southern Cameroons and integrated the two portions into Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria respectively. In fact from 1922, the Oliphant-Picot line, with some cosmetic modifications, became the boundary between British Nigeria and French Cameroun because British Southern and British Northern Cameroons were integral parts of the British colony

 [10.21747/doi.org/0874-2375/afr33a3](https://doi.org/10.21747/doi.org/0874-2375/afr33a3)

\* **University of Bamenda, Cameroon.**

<sup>1</sup> There are several articles, books and chapters on the Anglophone Problem. Ndiva Kofele-Kale (ed.), (1980), *An African Experiment in Nation Building: The Bilingual Cameroon Republic since Reunification*, Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, Paul Nchoji NKwi and Francis B. Nyamnjoh (1995), *Regional Balance and National Integration in Cameroon: Lessons Learned and the Uncertain Future*, Yaounde, ICASSRT 1995, Victor Julius Ngoh (ed.), (2004), *Cameroon: From a Federal to a Unitary State, 1961-1972, A Critical Study* Limbe, Design House, Francis B. Nyamnjoh (1995), *The GCE Crisis: A Test of Anglophone Solidarity*, Bamenda, Newslink Printing, Piet Konings and Francis B. Nyamnjoh, "The Anglophone Problem in Cameroon" in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 35, N° 2, pp. 207-229, D. Abwa, (2011), "Le Problème Anglophone et le Renouveau de Paul Biya", *Annals of the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences*, vol. 1, n.º 12.

of Nigeria. During this period, the people adopted some aspects of the British system of education, the common law judicial system and the Anglo-Saxon culture (Ndi, 2005). This greatly alienated them from their “brothers” in French Cameroun who were introduced to the Napoleonic code and the highly centralised French system of administration.

It was with this background that some Southern Cameroon nationalists wanted independence with Nigeria. This was the case with E. M. L. Endeley and N. N. Mbile who merged their political parties in 1960 to create the Cameroon People’s National Convention (CPNC), a pro-Nigerian political party (Nfi, 2014: 238). Others led by John Ngu Foncha advocated separation from Nigeria and eventual reunification with French Cameroon. They founded the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) in 1955 to champion the course of reunification. That same year, 1955, the *Union des Populations du Cameroun* (UPC), a staunch pro-reunification party in French Cameroun, moved its headquarters to Kumba in the Southern Cameroon following a ban placed on the party by the French authorities in July 1955 (Nfi, 2014: 323). The KNDP and the UPC were therefore the political forces in favour of reunification in the Southern Cameroons. When the UPC was banned in 1957, its Southern Cameroon followers founded One Kamerun (OK) under Ndeh Ntumazah to continue with the struggle for reunification.

Another group led by PM Kale wanted a separate Cameroon state without links to either French Cameroons or Nigeria. It was due to this division among the nationalists that the United Nations organised a plebiscite in the British Southern Cameroons in February 1961. The electorates were to choose between independence by joining the independent Federation of Nigeria or independence by reunification with the independent Republic of Cameroun. Out of 332,665 votes cast, 233,571 voted for reunification with the Republic of Cameroun and 97,741 voted for union with Nigeria (Ebune, 1992: 102). The majority under the leadership of J N Foncha therefore opted for reunification with Cameroun. The reunified Cameroon was styled the Federal Republic of Cameroon.

## Conceptual issues

Within the Cameroon federation, the Anglophones complained of marginalisation, exploitation, assimilation and denigration. This was through appointments, closure of their economic institutions and constitutional reforms that violated the 1961 Fouban agreement that established a union of two equal federated states. This Anglophone problem has therefore been defined as a struggle by the ethnic Anglophones (former Southern Cameroon Anglophones) to rescue their cultural identity especially the education and judiciary systems and the English Language threatened by the assimilation policies of the majority Francophones.

In Cameroon, an Anglophone is not just someone who speaks English; not just someone whose parents lived in the former British Southern Cameroons; not just someone who has acquired Anglophone education or culture but precisely someone whose ancestry is Southern Cameroonian. Bobda (2001) clearly indicates that the term Anglophone, as it is understood in Cameroon, has mostly an ethnic connotation. It has very little to do with knowledge of the English language as an Anglophone in the Cameroonian sense does not need to know a word of English. This definition is more relevant because in Cameroon the concept Anglophone is more ethnic, cultural and regional than linguistic. In this study therefore, Anglophones are those Cameroonians whose ancestral origins and ethnic bases are in the former British territory of the Southern Cameroons whether they spoke the English Language or not. The term is therefore exclusionary and limited to people of a defined territory, culture and history. These were the people who fought to preserve

their cultural identity and their right to exist like citizens of Cameroon. Some of them believed that their identity and survival as a people could better be achieved through the “restoration” of the state of Southern Cameroon, Ambazonia. They have variously been called separatists, secessionists, restorationists, terrorists and Amba boys. Their strategies and weapons have also varied since 1984.

## **I. Pre-1984 Modus operandi**

The Anglophone struggle started as early as 1961 because the Founban Constitution did not satisfy the aspirations of the Anglophones who wanted a decentralised federation or confederation. President Ahmadou Ahidjo is believed to have imposed a highly centralised federation on the Anglophones. All decisions and appointments came from Yaounde. In order to obscure the federal structure and make it ineffective, he signed a presidential decree in 1962 dividing the federation into six administrative units and each placed under a federal inspector (Fanso, 2010: 10). West Cameroon constituted one of the administrative units. The federal inspector was directly accountable to Ahidjo and this undermined the powers of the Prime Minister and authority of the federated states especially that of West Cameroon. The federalists led by Albert Mukong, Augustine Ngom Jua and Bernard Fonlon did not hide their dissatisfaction. The following were their weapons:

### **1.1. Petitions and Protest Literature**

Due to the laws of subversion and the reign of terror in Cameroon many of Ahidjo’s opponents could not publicly criticise him. The federalists in West Cameroon could not therefore be vocal. They resorted to petitions and anti-government literature. Albert Mukong who spearheaded these petitions and pro-Anglophone literature was arrested several times and jailed especially after the abolition of the federation and the introduction of a unitary state in 1972. He was very much against the unitary state which to him was a breach of the 1961 “contract”. Dr Bernard Fonlon in August 1964 in an article titled “Will we make or mar” questioned the excessive centralisation in Cameroon calling for democracy, liberties, equality and the rule of law (Ngoh, 1996: 320). This publication indicated the frustration that the KNDP reunificationists suffered due to multiple acts and decisions taken by Ahidjo in the 1960s against freedom of expression, liberties and equality between the citizens of the two federated states. A. N. Jua, the Prime Minister of West Cameroon and a convinced federalist, also adopted an attitude of rebellion. He opposed the Federal Inspector and maintained his autonomy vis-a-vis the central government at several instances. This could be seen in his management of the Bamileke-Bakossi war 1965-1966. He was also seen as the most important obstacle to Ahidjo’s single party scheme as he is alleged to have wanted to preserve as much political clout for the West Cameroonians as possible (Ngoh, 1987: 257). It was his reluctance to surrender the administration of West Cameroon to Ahidjo that led to his dismissal in 1968 in favour of a centralist S. T. Muna. So far in the 1960s and 1970s there was no violence in the struggle for Anglophone autonomy.

### **1.2. Street Protest**

In 1983, the first protest against the marginalisation of the Anglophones was carried by university and secondary school students and their parents. This was against a ministerial circular that attempted to convert the Cameroon GCE examination into a group certificate examination as was the case with the Francophone exams. The French system

of education was not touched by the reform. In fact this was the first public resistance to the francophonisation of the Anglo-Saxon education system inherited from British colonial rule. This was treated as assimilation or attempts to eradicate the English culture and the weapon was street protests in Buea, Yaounde, Bamenda, Kumba etc in October 1983 (Ngoh, 1996: 302). It should however be made clear that these demonstrations were possible because President Biya who succeeded Ahidjo in 1982 promised rigour, moralisation and democracy.

## **2. The 1984 Reform and the rise of Anglophone Extremism**

In 1984, President Biya signed a decree changing the name of the country from the United Republic of Cameroon to the Republic of Cameroon. This angered the Anglophones because this was the name French Cameroon adopted during independence. The Anglophone pressure groups accused the leadership of annexing them (Nkwi, 2005: 189). Others claimed that the Republic of Cameroon had seceded from the union and the Southern Cameroons had no other alternative than to regain its independence. This change of name or the revival of the Republic of Cameroon was insulting to the Anglophones. The outcome was political extremism amongst some Anglophones who advocated outright separation and the use of violence. The strategies and weapons consequently evolved from petitions and protests to creation of pressure groups for better coordination, boycotts, violence and the internationalisation of the question.

### **2.1. Protest Petitions**

In 1985, a prominent Anglophone lawyer and traditional ruler, Fon Gorji Dinka, was arrested for distributing pamphlets to Anglophones which declared the Biya government unconstitutional and asked the former Southern Cameroons, the Republic of Ambazonia, to secede from the Republic of Cameroon. This was the first reaction against Biya's change of the country's name in 1984 (Nkwi, 2005: 189) Gorji Dinka was therefore the first secessionist or separatist who wanted the creation of Ambazonia in what he called the "Zero Option" (Ngoh, 1996: 320).

The second protest was in the form of memoranda. In 1985 during the Bamenda congress of the Cameroon National Union that gave birth to the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM), two memoranda were presented to the congress by Anglophone elite from Douala on the frustrations of the Anglophones (Ngoh, 1996: 32). These protest letters were in favour of separation.

### **2.2. Creation of Pressure Groups**

The aftermath of the 1984 reform was the radicalisation of the Anglophone federalists. Few years after 1984, Albert Mukong founded the Cameroon Anglophone Movement (CAM), the first organisation to vocally advocate separation. Although this was an illegal association, Mukong was able to win the sympathy of some Anglophone elites and in 1989 he collected more than 5000 signatures from them to legitimize CAM push for Anglophone right to self-determination (Dinka, 1985: 24). In May 1990 and benefiting from the wind of change in favour of democracy in Cameroon, he and other leaders like John Fru Ndi founded a political party, the Social Democratic Front (SDF), which by his estimation was to serve as the mouthpiece of the disgruntled Anglophones (Mbah, 2018: 7). Unfortunately for Mukong, the SDF under John Fru Ndi gained national recognition and

Fru Ndi, the chairman, ignored the original objectives of this pro-Anglophone party. However, in June 1990 John Ngu Foncha resigned from the CPDM party claiming that the Anglophones he brought into the union had been ridiculed and insulted as *les Biafrais, les ennemis dans la maison* (Abwa, 2011: 206). This resignation was welcomed by many activists who were also encouraged to forge ahead in the search for freedom.

In April 1993, CAM organised a gathering of an All Anglophones Conference (AAC1) in Buea to call for the restoration of the federal system of government. This was followed by another All Anglophone Conference (AAC2) in Bamenda in 1994 during which another pressure group, the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC), was formed. From 1994, the SCNC became the mouthpiece of Anglophone extremists and advocate of the state of Ambazonia. Its military wing was called Southern Cameroons Peoples' Organisation (SCAPO). The spokespersons of the SCNC, such as Barrister Sam Ekontang Elad, Dr Martin Ngeka Luma, Ambassador Henry Fossung, Prince Ndoki Mukete, Peter Forchu Che Sam, Akwanga Ebenezer, Chief Ayamba and Nfor Ngala Nfor operated most often from neighbouring Nigeria (Ayim, 2010: 457).

### 2.3. Protest Literature

This second phase of the Anglophone search for self-government was also characterised by the publication of many pro-Anglophone literature. Prominent amongst these authors and *philosophes* of this revolution were Bole Butake who wrote "And Palm-wine will Flow" in 1990, "Shoes and Few Men in Arms" in 1992 and "Dance of the Vampire" in 1995 (Ashutantang, 2016). In these plays he preached revolution in favour of the oppressed, castigated the regime especially the domination of the Anglophones. Bate Besong wrote "Beast of no Nation" in 1990 and "Requiem of the Last Kaiser" in 1991 calling for the liberation of the Anglophones from dictatorship (Ekpebisong *et al.*, 2017). In 1992 Victor Epie Ngome came up with "What God has put Asunder", a play that demonstrated the incompatibility of the couple in the marriage between Southern (Anglophone) Cameroons and Francophone Cameroon (Besong, 2005). In fact this drama directly advocated divorce in this couple relationship. John Ngongong Ngengasong in 2004 published "Across the Mongolo" in which he castigated the horizontal colonisation of Anglophone Cameroon by Francophone Cameroon (Forbang-Looh, 2018). The historian Ndi Anthony also published what he called the "Golden Age of Southern (West) Cameroon" in 2005 presenting the Anglo-Saxon culture and the perfections of the Anglophone state as ideal. These were the *philosophes* of the Anglophone revolution whose writings attracted the attention of the Anglophone elites who in Yaounde, Buea and Bamenda massively attended the launching of these books.

Apart from protest literature, there was also some protest journalism amongst the Anglophones both in the official and private media houses. Charlie Ndichia, Boh Herbert, Julius Wamey, Paddy Mbawa, Francis Wache, Ntenfack Ofege, Lary Eyong Echaw and Sam Nuvala Fonkem used their various press organs to call for change in favour of the Anglophone minorities (Nyamnjoh, 2017). Their TV and Radio programs especially "Cameroon Calling" and "Minute by Minute" on the official Cameroon Radio and Television and their columns in the newspapers were the most popular in the 1990s. This press activism contributed to the internationalisation of the struggle.

## 2.4. The Internationalisation of the Anglophone Case

Another strategy or weapon at the disposal of the SCNC was to carry the struggle to the international community. Early in the 1990s Gorji Dinka filed an application for membership of Ambazonia to the United Nations and in 1994 John Ngu Foncha and Solomon Tandeng Muna, both actors of reunification in the 1960s, returned to the United Nations and demanded separate independence for the Southern Cameroons (Ngoh, 1996: 322). This dream was not realised and in August 1995, the SCNC petitioned the UN to intervene and mediate between them and the government of Cameroon warning that a lack of intervention would create “another Somalia”. The SCNC also sent delegations to the meetings of the Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Nations and when the Secretary General of the organisation was visiting Cameroon in June 1993, the SCNC failed to convince him to admit Anglophone Cameroon as full member of the Commonwealth (Ngoh, 1996: 323). In 1995 and during the Commonwealth conference in Auckland, New Zealand, the Southern Cameroon was again denied Commonwealth membership.

With continuous harassment at home, many SCNC activists went into exile and opened many international offices and branches. In 2001 a group of exiled SCNC members founded a so-called Southern Cameroon Embassy in the German city of Frankfurt. From these offices abroad they circulated literature on the Anglophone problems in Cameroon and organised conferences. The most popular conferences were the Minnesota Affirmation of the Statehood and Independence of the Federal Republic of Southern Cameroon, September 26-28, 2003, and the Southern Cameroons Liberation Conference in Dallas, USA, on April 22, 2007 (Ayim, 2010: 192). Apart from appealing for the recognition of Ambazonia, they also carried out anti-Republic of Cameroon acts such as the burning of the Republic’s flag. These activities abroad attracted the attention of international institutions like the UN, African Union, Commonwealth and European Union.

## 2.5. Lawsuits in foreign Courts

From the offices abroad, they intensified their struggle for autonomy by constantly suing the government of Cameroon for their right to self-determination. In 2002, SCAPO sued the Republic of Cameroon in the Abuja (Nigeria) high court arguing that the 1984 change of name in Cameroon was an act of secession of the Republic of Cameroon from the union. In January 2003, a group of Southern Cameroonians acting on behalf of the SCNC and SCAPO sued the government of Cameroon in the African Commission of Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR) in Banjul (Ayim, 2010: 147). In October 2005, the SCNC petitioned the UK government on the incomplete decolonisation of the Southern Cameroons. In 2006 the SCNC became part of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation. In 2009 the group attempted to penetrate the African Union but the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights rejected the SCNC petition. The difficulties encountered abroad and the weaknesses of their legal actions probably convinced the SCNC to use violence at home.

## 2.6. The Use of Violence

Although the motto of the SCNC was “The force of argument, not the argument of force”, the movement resorted to violence at several instances. The first protest was on February 11, 1992, when the activists celebrated “federation day” in Bamenda and Buea. This was followed by attempts on every February 11th and October 1st to protest. When

the Foncha-Muna led delegation to the UN failed to convince the UN officials in 1994, they returned home for the AAC2 in Bamenda determined to change strategy. In this connection, SCNC members attacked security forces in Bamenda in 1997 and 200 of them were arrested. On December 31, 1999, Chief Ayamba, Frederick Alobwede, James Sabum and some determined members of the Southern Cameroons Youth League (SCYL) seized Radio Buea and declared the independence of the former Southern Cameroons (Ayim, 2010: 643). The first session of the Constitutional Assembly of the Federal Republic of Southern Cameroon met in Bamenda on May 1st-2rd, 2000 (Ayim, 2010: 127). The SCNC boycotted the Municipal elections of 2002 and the presidential elections of 2004 propagating violence as the way out. On August 9, 2003, the Southern Cameroon Defence Force (SOCADEF) was formed in Abuja, Nigeria (Ayim, 2010: 457). This was a signal that the future was to be more violent.

## 2.7. Cyber Nationalism

Perhaps the best weapon of the post-1984 Anglophone struggle was the internet. Activists abroad used the internet to denigrate the Republic of Cameroon and propagate the Southern Cameroon identity. The most popular forum was camnet internet forum where the literature on the righteousness of the Southern Cameroon course and the abuses of “Francophone colonisation” were posted. It was animated by bloggers like Dibussi Tande who also used [www.dibussi.com](http://www.dibussi.com) to propagate Southern Cameroons activities (Anyefru, 2008). The SCYL led by Ebenezer Akwanga also established blogging sites. Other examples of sites included [www.gobata.com](http://www.gobata.com), [www.fonlon.org](http://www.fonlon.org), [www.gagwane.org](http://www.gagwane.org), [www.martinjumbam.com](http://www.martinjumbam.com). The contents of the websites of these movements vary but nonetheless there are several commonalities: code of independence, flag, history, the UN and the Southern Cameroons, national songs and the international boundary between Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroon (Elong, 2011: 15). This was just the beginning because the internet became the most powerful weapon of the next stage of the struggle.

## 3. The 2016 Lawyers/Teachers Strikes and the Escalation of the Crisis

Another stage in the Anglophone war of independence started in 2016 when lawyers and teachers in the Anglophone regions went on strike or peaceful protest for what appeared to be legitimate grievances. While the lawyers were against the francophonisation of common law practices and the use of French in judicial institutions in Anglophone Cameroon, the teachers were against the marginalisation of the English language and the Anglophone subsystem of education. Apart from lawyers and teachers, there was also a “Coffin Revolution” led by Mancho Bibixy against poor social infrastructure in Bamenda (Tembon, 2018:6). Also on 13 December, 2016 Hon. Joseph Wirba, an opposition MP from Anglophone Cameroon, stormed parliament with a protest speech “When injustices becomes law, resistance becomes a duty” (Tembon, 2018: 7). By January 2017, when the Consortium of Anglophone Civil Societies was banned, the conflict escalated and the “restoration” of Ambazonia became the song for all extremists. This new phase of the crisis had new actors, new strategies and war as the most cherished weapon.

### 3.1. Civil Disobedience

The first strategy of this radical phase of the revolution was to render the Anglophone regions ungovernable through civil disobedience, boycotts, urban terrorism, mass protests

etc. National days such as February 11 celebrated as youth's day and May 20 celebrated as national day were boycotted and/or sabotaged. Mass protests were regular and the most popular was on 22 September, 2017 when men, women, children came out in all the villages in Anglophone Cameroon and in all the major cities in the world including the UN headquarters, New York, to clamour for the independence of the Southern Cameroons (Okereke, 2018: 10). On 1 October, 2017 they celebrated the independence of the Southern Cameroon thereby violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cameroon (Ayim, 2010: 312). The extremists also declared every Monday a civil disobedience day with no work or no activity especially government related activities. Since then ghost towns, lock-ups etc became common methods of fighting the enemy republic.

### 3.2. War and Urban Terrorism

The new *modus operandi* this time was the use of arms or warfare to liberate the Southern Cameroons. Several armed groups were created by the various factions of the Anglophone liberation struggle. The most prominent were the Southern Cameroons Defense Force (SOCADEF) of Ebenezer Akwanga, the Ambazonia Defense Force (ADF) of Ayaba Cho, the Lebialem Red Dragons controlled by Chris Anu, Ambazonia Self-Defense Council, Ambazonia Restoration Army led by Paxson Agbor, Southern Cameroon Defense Forces (SCDF) controlled by Nso Foncha and Manyu Ghost Warriors (World Bank, 2019). These groups acquired weapons through and from Nigeria and even used young men and women from the Cross River State of Nigeria as machineries (Sombaye, 2018: 36). From the use of Dane guns, knives, cutlasses at the beginning of this phase of the war, the "Amba Boys" as they are called later in 2018 acquired AK47s and the deadly M21 which they used against the soldiers and civilians.

Their mission was simple; enforce civil disobedience, attack and kill civil and military authorities, burn schools and promote school boycott, control the movement of citizens in and out of the two Anglophone regions and take over the administration of "their" land. The outcome was atrocities and exaggerated violation of human rights. Civilians like soldiers were murdered, butchered and in some instances buried alive. To enforce school boycott considered to be their best strategy, these armed groups burned schools, threatened teachers, students and parents and kidnapped school heads. In 2016 and 2017, a majority of the schools closed down and as of May 2018, 42 500 children were still out of schools according to the UN office for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (World Bank, 2019). UNESCO also reported that by June 2018, 58 schools had been damaged since the crisis started. Apart from the soldiers of the Cameroon army who were targeted, the armed groups also beheaded, tortured and killed civilians considered as traitors or "black legs". The most condemned of their assassinations was that of Florence Ayafor in Pinyin on September 22, 2019 (Cameroon Tribune, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2019: 5). Even humanitarian workers were victims of these atrocities intended to force the Yaounde regime to surrender. This was the case with Pascal Ngwayi, a UN worker killed in Nkambe on November 30, 2019 (Baiocchi, 2019).

### 3.3. Cyber Nationalism, Disinformation and Hate Speech

The internet, especially social media platforms like Facebook were used to mobilise Anglophones and incite or instigate riots in the two regions so as to intensify the conflict. The platforms were used to promote disinformation and hate speech against the Yaounde



regime with diaspora activists like Ayaba Cho, Ebenezer Akwanga, Mark Bareta and Tapang Ivo animating<sup>2</sup>. People picked pictures of issues that were happening elsewhere and pasted on the internet making others to believe that it was happening in the Northwest and Southwest villages (Sombaye, 2018: 54). Videos from Rwanda and Cote d'Ivoire were shown as videos from Cameroon. The most popular Ambazonia Facebook groups by November 2018 were Southern Cameroon-Ambazonia resistant front with 74 255 members, SCNC with 38 429 members, Southern Cameroon Peoples Organisation with 17 670 members and Southern Cameroon Teachers Forum with 17 705 members (Sombaye, 2018: 61). These groups propagated fake news and increased the number of those who did not see any reason for Anglophones to remain in a “one and indivisible Cameroon” whether as a decentralised state or a federation.

## Conclusion

This study has traced the main phases of the Anglophone struggle for autonomy in Cameroon indicating the changing strategies and actors. It can be seen that what started in the 1970s with peaceful petitions and protests calling for a return to the 1961 federation developed into a well organised rebellion led by the SCNC in the 1980s and 1990s. A rebellion that benefitted from the liberalisation laws of the 1990s and the literature against the marginalisation of minorities. From 2016, the separatists adopted terrorist methods using the social media as their main propaganda vehicle. The Anglophone problem therefore became the Anglophone war of liberation with armed groups using very unconventional methods to free Ambazonia and or discredit the Yaounde regime in the eyes of the international community. There are fears that apart from the AK47 and M21, the separatist forces may soon have access to more sophisticated weapons. It is therefore clear that if this conflict is not immediately given adequate attention, the casualties from the increasing use of unorthodox war methods may be above those recorded in Rwanda in 1994.

## Bibliographic references

- Abwa, D. (2011), “Le Problème Anglophone et le Renouveau de Paul Biya”, *Annals of the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences*, vol. 1, n.º 12, pp. 191-219.
- Anonymous (1993), *All Anglophone Conference Standing Committee Resolution in Reaction to President Biya's Interview of 30 April 1993*.
- Anyefru, E. (2008), “Cyber Nationalism: The Imagined Anglophone Cameroon Country in Cyberspace”, *African Identities*, vol. 6, issue 3, pp. 253-274.
- Ashutantang, J. (2016), “Anglophone Cameroon Literature 1959-1996 a brief overview”, *TYDSKRIF VIR LETTERKUNDE*, 53(1), pp. 110127.
- Ayim, M. A. (2010), *Former British Southern Cameroons Journey Towards Complete Decolonisation, Independence and Sovereignty*, Bloomington, Author House.
- Baiocchi, A. (2019), “Communiqué on the death of Pascal Ngyayi”, *Journal du Cameroun*, online, December 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Besong, B. (2005), “Nationhood in Dramaturgy: Marginality and commitment in Victor Epie Ngame's “What God has put Asunder”, in *Figures de l'histoire et imaginaire au Cameroun*, Buea, UB Publication, pp. 56-80.

<sup>2</sup> These activists were all trade union leaders when they were students in the University of Buea, Cameroon.

- Cameroon Tribune (2019), "Cameroon: Bamenda-Government Hunts Florence Ayafor's Murderers", 23<sup>rd</sup> October, p. 5.
- Dinka, Fon Gorji (1985), *The New Social Order*, 20 of March.
- Ekpebisong, G. and Kashim, B. (2017), "Politics of the oppressed "inside outside" in Cameroon, Rhythms of Alienation and loss of Identity in Bate Bisong's *Beast of no Nation*", *International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Literature*, vol. 5, issue 7, pp. 143-158.
- Elong, E. E. (2012), "The Anglophone Problem and the Secession Option in Cameroon", Paper presented at the 4<sup>th</sup> European Conference on Africa, Upsala, Sweden.
- Fanso, V. G. (2012), "Constitutional Problems in the Construction and Legality of the Unitary State in Cameroon," in *Cameroon Journal of Democracy and Human Rights*, pp. 8-24.
- Forbang-Looh, G. N. (2018), "Marginalisation and (Un)belonging in John Ngongong Ngengasong's "Across the Mongolo", *International Journal of Academic Research and Reflection*, vol. 6, n.º 2, pp. 81-95.
- Konings, P. and Nyamnjoh, F. B. (1997), "The Anglophone Problem in Cameroon", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 35, n.º 2.
- Mbah, Sam (2018), *Anarquismo Africano: A história de um movimento*. Rizoma Editorial.
- Ndi, A. (2005), *The Golden Age of Southern (West) Cameroon*, Bamenda, Maple Fair.
- Ndobegang, M. (2009), "The Anglophone Francophone Divide in Cameroon: Diagnosis of a National Disconnection", [Online]. [Consult, July. 2009]. Available at: [public.unionky.edu/Fulbright/files/2009/07](http://public.unionky.edu/Fulbright/files/2009/07).
- Nfi, J. Lon (2014a), "The Anglophone Cultural Identity in Cameroon 50 years after Reunification", *International Journal of Advanced Research*, vol. 2, Issue 2.
- (2014b), *The Reunification Debate in British Southern Cameroons: The Role of French Cameroon Immigrants*, Bamenda, Langaa Publishing CIG.
- Ngoh, V. J. (1987), *Cameroon 1884-1985: A Hundred Years of History*, Limbe, Navi-group.
- (1996), *History of Cameroon since 1800*, Limbe: Presbook.
- Nkwi, G. W. (2004), "The Anglophone Problem" in J. V. Ngoh (ed.), *Cameroon from a Federal to a Unitary State*. Limbe: Design House, pp. 185-209.
- Okereke, N. E. (2018), "Analysing Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis", *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, vol. 10, n.º 3, pp. 8-12.
- Sombaye Eyang, J. R. (2018), "Inside the Virtual Ambazonia: Separatism, Hate Speech, Disinformation and Disapora in the Cameroon Anglophone Crisis", MA Thesis, the University of San Francisco.
- Tembon, E. (2018), "Crisis in the Republic of Cameroon: An overview of the Anglophone Crisis 2016-2018", Report to Rayburn Africa.
- World Bank Report (2019).

# The Structure of the Post-Colonial State and the survival of the Anglophone Education at the origins of the Cameroon Civil War

Joseph Lon Nfi\*

pp. 43-50


## Background

In 1916, Allied forces, principally dominated by French and British contingents that defeated Germany in Cameroon during the First World War, partitioned the German Protectorate of Kamerun into two unequal halves; the British occupying a fifth constituted as British Cameroons and the French assuming four-fifths referred to as French Cameroun. When the war ended, the international community recognised the partition and requested Britain and France to administer their respective portions as mandate territories of the League of Nations. The new international boundary came to be called the Oliphant-Picot line in honour of Lancelot Oliphant, a British diplomat and George Picot a French diplomat who in a meeting in London in February 1916, initiated the partition by drawing a line on the map of Cameroon from Lake Chad to the Mungo River. The partition was finalised by the Milner-Simon Agreement of July 10, 1919 (Elango, 1987).

The Anglo-French boundary in Cameroon gained additional international status when Britain further partitioned British Cameroons into British Northern Cameroons and British Southern Cameroons and integrated the two portions into Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria respectively. In fact from 1922, the Oliphant-Picot line, with some cosmetic modifications, became the boundary between British Nigeria and French Cameroun because British Southern and British Northern Cameroons were integral parts of the British colony of Nigeria.

During this period, the territory was administered as part of the British colony of Nigerian and the people adopted some aspects of the British system of education, the common law judicial system and the Anglo-Saxon culture (Ndi, 2005: 25). This greatly alienated them from their “brothers” in French Cameroun who were introduced to the Napoleonic code or civil law and the highly centralised French system of administration.

It was with this background that some Southern Cameroon nationalists wanted independence with Nigeria. This was the case with E M L Endeley and N N Mbile who merged their political parties in 1960 to create the Cameroon People’s National Convention (CPNC) a pro-Nigerian political party (Nfi, 2014a: 23). Others led by John Ngu Foncha advocated separation from Nigeria and eventual reunification with French Cameroun.

 [10.21747/doi.org/0874-2375/afr33a4](https://doi.org/10.21747/doi.org/0874-2375/afr33a4)

\* University of Bamenda, Cameroon.

They founded the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) in 1955 to champion the course of reunification. That same year, 1955, the *Union des Populations du Cameroun* (UPC) a staunch pro-reunification party in French Cameroun moved its headquarters to Kumba in the Southern Cameroons following a ban placed on the party by the French authorities in July 1955. The KNDP and the UPC were therefore the political forces in favour of reunification in the Southern Cameroons. When the UPC was banned in 1957, its Southern Cameroon followers founded One Kamerun (OK), under Ndeh Ntumazah to continue with the struggle for reunification.

Another group led by PM Kale wanted a separate Cameroon State without links to either French Cameroons or Nigeria. It was due to this division among the nationalists that the United Nations organised a plebiscite in the British Southern Cameroons in February 1961. The electorates were to choose between independence by joining the independent Federation of Nigeria or independence by reunification with the independent Republic of Cameroun. Out of 332,665 votes cast, 233,571 voted for reunification with the Republic of Cameroun and 97,741 voted for union with Nigeria (Ebune, 1992: 102). The majority under the leadership of J N Foncha therefore opted for reunification with Cameroun. The reunified Cameroon was styled the Federal Republic of Cameroon. It was within this polity that the Anglophones agitated.

## Conceptual Issues

For a better understanding of the problem, it is appropriate to define the concepts used in the study. To begin with, the term Anglophone as used in Cameroon and especially by promoters of “Ambazonia” or the State of Southern Cameroon is not only focused on the linguistic identity. An Anglophone in Cameroon is not just someone who speaks English, not just someone whose parents lived in the former British Southern Cameroon or someone who has acquired Anglophone education or culture but precisely someone whose ancestry is in the Southern Cameroons, that portion of Cameroon administered by the British from 1922 to 1961 (Ndobegang, 2009: 8). It is therefore clear that the term Anglophone as used in Cameroon has an ethnic connotation. In this study therefore, Anglophones are those Cameroonians whose ancestral origins and ethnic bases are in the former British territory of the Southern Cameroons whether they speak the English language or not. This definition excludes some “linguistic Anglophones” especially those who migrated from the former French administered Cameroon and settled in the Southern Cameroons to acquire the Anglo-Saxon culture (Nfi, 2014b, 122).

While politicians in Cameroon may agree on the concept of Anglophone as used in Cameroon, politicians and scholars did not agree on the concept of the Anglophone problem until recently. Some Anglophone and Francophone scholars and politicians claim that there is nothing like the ‘Anglophone Problem’. Some narrow it down to the problem of ethnic minorities because Anglophones are in only two of the ten administrative regions of Cameroon with less than 30 % of the population. Those who claim to recognise the problem, differ in their conceptualisation of the problem. For example (Konings and Nyamnjoh, 1997: 207) hold that the problem is the self-perception of the former Southern Cameroon as a distinctive community defined by differences in official language and inherited colonial traditions of education, law and public administration. It is therefore the problem of a people in search of their identity—an identity blurred by constitutional and political reforms that departed from the spirit of the 1961 federal constitution. In other words, the Anglophone problem can be defined as a struggle by the ethnic Anglophones

(former Southern Cameroonians) to rescue their cultural identity threatened by the assimilation policies of the Francophone dominated governments since 1961.

### **The Structure of the Federation and Unitary State**

The structure the Cameroon Federation took in 1961 was in fact the outcome of negotiations and a compromise between the centralist ambitions of Ahidjo leader of the Republic of Cameroon and the federalists from the Southern Cameroons. Before the constitutional talks proper, Ahidjo had made several declarations in Tiko, Victoria and Buea (in the Southern Cameroon) in July 1960 insinuating that reunification will not be annexation or the assimilation of the Southern Cameroons by the Republic of Cameroon. According to him, reunification was to be undertaken in an atmosphere of equality between the representatives of the Republic of Cameroon and the Southern Cameroons (Nfi, 2014a: 267). It was with these promises in mind that the Southern Cameroon delegation after a preliminary or preparatory meeting in Bamenda in June 1961, travelled to Foumban for the Constitutional Conference of July 1961 scheduled by Ahidjo, President of the Republic of Cameroon. It was at this conference that the structure of federation was crafted.

Essentially, the Federal Republic of Cameroon was a centralised two-state federation (West and East Cameroon) under an executive President assisted by a Vice President. The President and his vice were elected by universal suffrage for a mandate of five years renewal indefinitely. The constitution reserved the President excessive powers which gave him the latitude to appoint and dismiss all federal and states officials including the Prime Ministers of West and East Cameroon. He unilaterally controlled all government actions. In fact his powers were not limited and the Vice President was not given any specific functions as the constitution merely stated that the Vice President's duty was to assist the President who might delegate responsibilities to him by decree. Yaounde was to serve as the Federal Capital and the headquarters of East Cameroon while Buea was the capital of the State of West Cameroon.

The legislature consisted of a Federal House of Assembly, the East Cameroon House of Assembly, the West Cameroon House of Assembly and the West Cameroon House of Chiefs. The constitution specified that a bill passed by the Federal House of Assembly would be adopted only when a majority of the deputies of each of the federated states assemblies voted for it. This measure was intended to obstruct any attempt to revise the Federal Constitution to the disadvantage of any of the states.

Although the Foumban compromise apparently satisfied both Ahidjo and Foncha, leaders of the two delegations, the grave of the federation was also dug at Foumban. Ahidjo knew very little about the functioning of the federal system of government. He accepted it just to please Foncha and his delegation who came to Foumban convinced that only a loose federation or a confederation under a ceremonial President with executive Prime Ministers heading the federated states was the best form of government (Williard, 1970: 178). Ahidjo like his French advisers at Foumban believed in a centralised form of government and was determined to move as rapidly as possible towards the creation of a unitary state. It was for this reason that he carefully added a paragraph to the French and authentic version of the constitution which indicated that the federation was an experiment and a temporary measure. Articles five and six which gave the central government broad powers were also already preparing the stage for the future abrogation of the Foumban accord.

Again, the conference did not settle on the nature of revenue allocation between the two states. West Cameroon was to give up its sources of customs and other revenue and was to be financed by the federal subvention until a formula could be fixed. Such a formula was

never fixed and West Cameroon continued to be economically dependent on the federal purse. This was not for nothing. Ahidjo wanted the economy of West Cameroon paralysed so that whenever his call for a unitary state was made, many people in West Cameroon may accept it out of frustration. The economic frustration was not long to come. In the 1966/67 financial year, West Cameroon obtained 70 percent of its budget from the Federal Government in the form of subventions (Nghoh, 2004: 147). In a confidential letter to President Ahidjo, Prime Minister Jua requested a loan of 500 million Francs (CFA) in September 1967. In 1968, the new Prime Minister S. T. Muna asked for another loan of 150 million, an indication that West Cameroon could not survive without the centre (Nghoh, 2004: 150).

Apart from the constitutional lapses that rendered the 1961 federation vulnerable, Ahidjo was interested in preserving power and could not tolerate rivalry from the Prime Ministers of the federated states or from the leaders of other political parties. In September 1966, he therefore used shrewd diplomacy to convince Foncha, Muna and Endeley to dissolve their political parties and accompany Ahidjo's *Union Camerounaise* (UC) to form a Grand National party, the Cameroon National Union (CNU). Still in 1966, he used the Bakossi-Bamileke War<sup>1</sup> in Tombel to buttress his argument in favour of the consolidation of national unity through the unitary state. Ahidjo also complained of the duplication of services between the institutions of the Federation and those of the Federated States and the high cost involved in running four assemblies and three governments by a country that was very underdeveloped. All these were seen as window dressing arguments by his detractors. The dismantling of the federation was certainly in his agenda since 1961 but the problem was how to achieve it unopposed. It was for this reason that he forced the federation into a one party system, dismissed A N Jua in 1968 and Foncha in 1970. Lastly, what precipitated the defederalisation scheme was the discovery of petroleum in West Cameroon and the probability that the Federal Government and East Cameroon may become financially dependent on the considered barren West Cameroon (Nfi, 2017). In May 1972, Ahidjo organised a referendum during which the majority of the people voted in favour of a unitary state. The Federated States of West and East Cameroon disappeared in favour of seven provinces. West or better still Southern Cameroon as an entity disappeared. West Cameroon was divided into the Northwest and Southwest Provinces and the two stars on the national flag symbolising the two Cameroons was replaced by one star. This marked the beginning of the crisis. In 1984, Ahidjo's successor Paul Biya added to be injury when he unilaterally and by decree changed the name of the country from the United Republic of Cameroon to the Republic of Cameroon, the name French Cameroun adopted at independence in 1960 (Nghoh, 1996: 287). To many Anglophone federalists and secessionists this was an attempt to ignore or assimilate the Anglophones or former British Cameroon component of the United Republic of Cameroon.

Like the federation, the unitary state instituted in 1972 and renamed by Paul Biya in 1984 also had structural lapses. It permitted the President to appoint governors, senior divisional officers and divisional officers in the provinces, divisions and subdivisions of Cameroon respectively. As a result, Ahidjo and later Biya appointed Francophones as administrators in the Anglophone provinces, divisions and subdivisions. Francophone magistrates trained under the civil law system were appointed in the courts in the Northwest and Southwest Provinces where the common law was applied. Worse still many of these civil administrators and magistrates could not speak the English Language.

<sup>1</sup> Bamileke people migrated from their ethnic base in East Cameroun and settled in Bakossiland, West Cameroon because of fertile agricultural land. They used orthodox and unorthodox means to acquire land and this resulted in land conflicts and war in 1965. This crisis threatened national unity.

All these were silent efforts to destroy the dignity and statehood of Anglophones. The greatest treasure that nearly survived this destruction was the Anglo-Saxon educational system and this explains why Anglophone teachers' trade unions led the violent phase of the Anglophone revolution from 2016.

### Education as a factor of Anglophone Secession

In November 2016, the Anglophone struggle took a revolutionary character when lawyers and teachers trade unions strikes initially perceived as motivated by legitimate professional grievances turned into political protest movements. The Teachers Association of Cameroon (TAC) led by Tameh Valentine and the Cameroon Teachers Trade Union (CATU) led by Tasang Wilfred mobilised their members calling for boycott of schools against the Francophonisation of Anglophone schools. Later a consortium of All Anglophone Pressure Groups called for civil disobedience and ghost towns. The radicals called for the 'restoration of the State of Southern Cameroon', Ambazonia<sup>2</sup>. It became an open secret that some Anglophones wanted the former Southern Cameroons to secede from la République du Cameroun. Attempts by the secessionists to "restore" the Southern Cameroons, Ambazonia nation on October 1, 2017 met with stiff resistance from the Cameroon army. The situation degenerated in January 2018 as the media reported that the secessionists ambushed and killed soldiers in their barracks and duty posts (Fai, 2018: 5). Many military wings of the secessionist movements emerged and with the support of activists in the diasporas, they attacked and killed both the military and civilians. Amongst their grievances was education in the English Language.

One of the policies of the Ahidjo (1961-1982) and Biya (1982-?) regimes that reinforced the sense of cultural identity amongst the Anglophones was the policy of official bilingualism and biculturalism. Although successive constitutions of Cameroon since independence always reiterated the policy of official bilingualism, there existed no well-defined language policy. French language had a *de facto* dominance over English language in the areas of administration, education and the media. The domination of French was due to the demographic factor, the fact that Francophones continued to occupy top ranking positions in government and the civil service, and also because there was no effective language policy that guaranteed the right of minorities (Echu, 2004). As a result, the English language became a symbol of in-group solidarity for Anglophones who could use the language or not in an environment perceived to be linguistically and socio-politically hostile to them. In line with the constitutional biculturalism of the state, government recognized two educational subsystems in 1961, the Anglophone and Francophone subsystems with two examination systems. The existence of two subsystems of education was confirmed in 1993 with the creation of the *BACCALAUREAT* and G. C. E. examinations boards (Ngoh, 1996: 325). Unfortunately schools and other institutions of learning in Anglophone Cameroon were later staffed with Francophones who taught lessons and set examinations in the French language and or in Pidgin English. This was the case with technical education which was never given the Anglo-Saxon character in government schools. Government Technical Colleges in Anglophone Cameroon therefore have operated under the Francophone subsystem of education since 1972. Such schools had Francophone examinations such as *CAP*, *PROBATOIRE* and *BACCALAUREAT* rather than the G. C. E. as their end-of-course examinations. Even after the creation of the G. C. E. Board in 1993, Anglophone

<sup>2</sup> Ambazonia come from Ambas Bay the name of the area along the coast of Cameroon acquired by the London Baptist Missionary Society as their settlement for evangelisation and named Victoria in honour of the then queen of England.

students from these Government Technical Colleges wrote G. C. E. Technical examinations organized by this board as an external examination and not as an obligatory end of course examination. These examinations did not very much promote values cherished by the Anglophones especially self-reliance, civility, moral probity and honesty (Ndi, 2005: 72). With the Francophone character of technical education in Anglophone Cameroon, Government Technical Colleges were therefore staffed with Francophone teachers with a good number of students coming from the neighbouring Bamileke, Duala and Bassa villages in French Cameroon (Tasang, 2012). There was no teacher training college or higher institution to train teachers for technical education for the Anglophone subsystem until 2009 when the Higher Technical Teachers Training Colleges, Bambili was created. At the beginning of the 2011-2012 academic year, Francophone teachers in Government Technical High Schools in Bamenda, Buea, Kumba and Ombe constituted more than 72 percent of the staff strength of these schools (CATTU, 2006). This was seen as attempts to eradicate the Anglophone culture through the adulteration or pollution of its subsystem of education. Products of these 'francophonised' Government Technical Colleges could not be identified with Anglophone values of moral probity, obedience and civility as these Colleges were known for vandalism and chaos.

The Anglophone culture characterized by honesty, obedience, tender consciences and moral probity were also products of religious subject and moral education. Religious knowledge and Moral Education were taught in all schools, public or confessional. The teaching of religious knowledge was a prerequisite for financial assistance from government for all schools. In 1926, the first Education Code for the Southern Cameroons officially introduced a graded course of religious instruction in all Government, Voluntary Agency and Native Authority Schools. The 1944 Education Act made it obligatory in all schools to begin every school assembly with a period of religious worship. Religious knowledge was a requirement in all teachers' professional examinations, the West African School Certificate and later on the G. C. E. (Ihim, 2003: 57).

Unfortunately after reunification and when the Federal Government Bilingual Grammar School was opened at Man o'War bay (Anglophone Cameroon) in 1963, Religious knowledge and moral education were excluded from its curriculum as was the case with colleges in East Cameroon. On September 3, 1976, a Presidential Decree n.º 1976/385 stipulated that a pass in Religious knowledge at the G. C. E. was not to be included among the passes for employment. All attempts by the Catholic, Presbyterian and Baptist authorities in Anglophone Cameroon to reverse the situation failed. Even a compelling memorandum in February 1977 by Jeremiah C. Kangsen of the Presbyterian Church, Pastor Samuel Ngum of the Cameroon Baptist Convention, and Bishops Pius Suh Awa and Paul Verdzekov of the Catholic Church in West Cameroon on this painful issue to the Minister of National Education did not change things (Ndi, 2005: 40). This position of the regimes in Yaounde on the study of religious knowledge in schools alienated the Anglophones and contributed to the birth of underground secessionists movements.

Even when the G. C. E. Board re-introduced religious knowledge in its examination in 1996 in order to promote the Anglo-Saxon character of this subsystem of education, government refused to consider a pass in religious knowledge at the G. C. E. for the admission of students in its universities and for employment. Religious knowledge which was the cornerstone of Anglophone cultural identity lost its value in schools and this accounted for the steady erosion of the Anglophone cultural identity and the near complete absence of professional consciousness amongst Anglophones especially in the public service.

One of the grievances of the ethnic Anglophone students in the lone bilingual university of Yaounde in 1980's was the predominance of the French language over the English



language as the language of instruction. In this university, the lecturers delivered their lectures in the official language he/she mastered better and students took down notes and did tests and examinations in the language of their choice. Studies carried out by Tambi (1973) and Njeck (1992) produced evidence to support the view that many Anglophone students failed examination in Yaounde because 80 percent of the lectures were delivered in the French language and only 20 percent in the English language. Important courses could not even be delivered in English. For example, in 1983, Francophone students in the department of economics protested against Dr. Bisong for teaching Accounting in English and he was replaced (Mukong, 1990: 26). This language problem and the university strikes of the 1980s and early 1990s convinced government to set up an Anglo-Saxon university in Buea in 1992 to serve the needs of the Anglophones.

In 2011, President Biya created another Anglo-Saxon university in Bambili-Bamenda because of the political imperative of meeting the demands of elites of the North West Region. Unfortunately government failed to respect the Anglo-Saxon character of these universities. For example, in 2011, more than 40 junior lecturers of Francophone background were appointed to teach in these Anglo-Saxon universities. Some Francophones without any Anglo-Saxon background were also appointed to top administrative posts in these Anglo-Saxon universities. Besides, the Higher Teachers Training College and the Higher Technical Teachers Training College, all of the University of Bamenda already had a reasonable number of lecturers of Francophone background before the creation of the University. These lecturers are known to teach in French or in approximate English (not to say Pidgin English) (CATTU, 2006). This was seen by Southern Cameroons National Council, a secessionist Anglophone group, as part of government policy to 'francophonise' Anglophone educational institutions, assimilate Anglophones and destroy the cultural identity of former Southern Cameroon Anglophones.

## Conclusion

The struggle for secession by the Anglophones of Cameroon resulted from long standing grievances that could be traced back to the nature of the federation established at independence and reunification. The Anglophones in the British administered Southern Cameroons accepted to gain independence by joining the Republic of Cameroon because Ahidjo had promised them a federation in which their identity and polity would be preserved. This promise was not respected as the 1961 Federal Constitution failed to grant the Anglophones dual nationality within the Federal Republic of Cameroon. In 1972 the Federation was rather scrapped and a unitary state created and the Anglophone identity eroded. The education sector suffered most as English as a language of instruction was relegated to the background, morals and religious knowledge dear to Anglophones ignored, technical education and university education "Francophonised". Anglophone Teacher's Trade Unions could not continue to tolerate these practices and the generalised marginalisation of the Anglophones in Cameroon. When they protested in 2016, political activists picked up the struggle asking for the 'restoration' of the State of Southern Cameroon. Today more than 2000 soldiers and civilians have been killed by the crisis and more than half a million displaced internally and externally. The conflict can better be solved by a federal system of government that can permit the Anglophone to safeguard their cultural identity especially their educational system, common law and English Language. By the time I was concluding this paper, government has announced a special status for the two Anglophone regions and it is expected that the content will respect the cultural realities of the people.

## Bibliographic references

- CATTU (2006), Cameroon Teachers Trade Union, Petition to the Prime Minister.
- Echu, G. (2004), "The Language Question in Cameroon", in *Linguistik*. [Online]. Available at: [http://www.linguistik-online.de/18\\_04/echu.html](http://www.linguistik-online.de/18_04/echu.html).
- Ebune, J. (1992), *The Growth of Political Parties in Southern Cameroons, 1916-1960*, Yaounde: CEPPER.
- Elango, L. Z. (1987), *The Anglo-French Condominium in Cameroon, 1914-1916: History of Misunderstanding*, Limbe: Navi-Group Publication.
- Fai, P. (2018), "Media Framing of Secessionist Politics in the Anglophone Crisis: An analysis of two Cameroonian Newspapers", Paper Presented at an International Symposium, Turkey.
- Ihim, J. (2003), *A Century of Western Education in Cameroon*, Bamenda: Unique Printers.
- Konings, Piet and Nyamnjoh, Francis B. (1997), "The Anglophone Problem in Cameroon", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 35(2), pp. 207-229.
- Mukong, A. W. (1990), *The Case for the Southern Cameroons*, Enugu: CAMFECO.
- Ndi, A. (2005), *The Golden Age of Southern (West) Cameroon*, Bamenda: Maple Fair.
- Ndobegang, M. (2009) "The Anglophone-Francophone Divide in Cameroon: Diagnosis of a National Disconnection". [Online]. Available at: [public.unionky.edu/Fulbright/files/2009/07](http://public.unionky.edu/Fulbright/files/2009/07).
- Nfi, J. Lon (2017), "The Dismantling of the Cameroon Federation in 1972: The Petroleum Factor", *International Journal of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences*, vol. 3, n.º 6.
- (2014a), "The Anglophone Cultural Identity in Cameroon 50 years after Reunification", *International Journal of Advanced Research*, vol. 2, Issue 2, pp. 121-129.
- (2014b), *The Reunification Debate in British Southern Cameroons: The Role of French Cameroon Immigrants*, Bamenda: Langaa Publishing CIG.
- Ngoh, V. J. (ed.), (2004), *Cameroon: From a Federal to a Unitary State 1961-1972*, Limbe: Design House.
- (1996), *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, Limbe: Presprint.
- Njeck, A. F. (1992) "Official Bilingualism in the University of Yaounde: Some Educational and Social Issues", *Maitrise* Dissertation, University of Yaounde.
- Nyamnjoh, Francis B. (2017), *Incompleteness: Frontier Africa and the Currency of conviviality*, *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, vol. 52, n.º 3, Sage Publications, pp. 253-270.
- Tambi, J. (1973), "Perceived Language Bilingualism in Cameroon: A Study of Functions and Attitudes", DES Dissertation, University of Yaounde.
- Tasang, W. (2012), Leader of Cameroon Teachers Trade Union.
- Willard, R. Johnson (1970), *The Cameroon Federation: Political Integration in a Fragmentary Society*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

# *Ambazonia ou o projeto Camarões?* *– o momento atual*





# Failed Decolonization of Africa and the Rise of New States: Cartography of the War in Southern Cameroons Ambazonia <sup>□</sup>

Roland Ngwatung Afungang\*

pp. 53-75

## Introduction

From the 1870s to the 1900s, many European countries invaded Africa and colonized almost the entire continent except Liberia and Ethiopia. African kingdoms at the time fought deadly battles with the imperialists but failed to stop them. The invaders went on and occupied Africa, an occupation that lasted up to the 1980s. After World War II, the United Nations (UN) resolution 1514 of 14 December 1960 (UN Resolution 1415 (1960), accessed on 13 Feb. 2019) obliged the colonial powers to grant independence to colonized peoples and between 1957 and 1970, over 90 percent of African countries got independence. However, decolonization was not complete as some colonial powers refused to adhere to all the provisions of the above UN resolution. For example, the Portuguese refused to grant independence to its African colonies (e.g. Angola and Mozambique). The French on their part granted conditional independence to their colonies by maintaining significant ties and control through the France-Afrique accord (an agreement signed between France and its colonies in Africa). The France-Afrique accord led to the creation of the Franc CFA, a currency produced and managed by the French treasury and used by fourteen African countries (African Business, 2012). CFA is the acronym for “Communauté Financière Africaine” which in English stands for “African Financial Community”. Other colonial powers violated the resolution by granting independence to their colonies under a merger agreement. This was the case of former British Southern Cameroons and Republic of Cameroon, South Sudan and Republic of Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia, Senegal and Gambia (Senegambia Confederation, 1982-1989). These decolonized peoples except for Gambia were immediately recolonized by their powerful neighbors leading to renewed fighting for freedom (Ilustração 01). All the above-mentioned states have restored their independence except Western Sahara and Southern Cameroon (Anyangwe, 2009). In the case of Western Sahara, the resistance movement known as the Polisario Front began an insurgency against the colonial master Spain in 1973 and when the Spanish left the country in 1976, Mauritania and Morocco invaded and re-annexed the territory. In 1979 Mauritania also ended her invasion and the Polisario Front continued fierce battles against the Moroccans until 1991 when a cease fire agreement was signed that left large swaths of the territory under Moroccan control. In a similar manner, South Sudan, after years of domination by the

<sup>□</sup> [10.21747/doi.org/0874-2375/afr33a5](https://doi.org/10.21747/doi.org/0874-2375/afr33a5)

\* CEAUP.

Muslim-led government of Sudan, began hostilities against the Khartoum government in 1955 with the aim of acquiring better representation and autonomy in Sudan. The war ended in 1976 with the establishment of an autonomous region for South Sudanese. However, in 1983 the Sudanese President Gaafar Nimeiry abolished the autonomy of South Sudan and declared Sudan, including the autonomous region, an Islamic state under Sharia law. Another war broke-out and ended with UN ceasefire and a referendum in 2011 that saw South Sudanese voting massively for independence (BBC News, accessed on 10 Jan. 2011). A similar process took place in Eritrea. After Italy's defeat during World War II, the former Italian governorate of Eritrea was claimed by the Ethiopian empire in 1941. Based on claims that the predominantly Christian South wanted a union with Ethiopia against the wish of the predominantly Muslim North that wanted out-right independence, the UN refused Eritrea complete independence and federated Eritrea with Ethiopia in 1950. Tired of Italian colonial domination, Ethiopia's imperialism and military rule, and driven by the desire to pursue self-determination, Eritrean nationalists formed the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) in 1961 (Weldeghiorgis, 2014). Annoyed by this, Ethiopia dissolved the federation and annexed the territory in 1962. A brutal 30-year war ensued until the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) defeated the Ethiopian army in May 1991. In April 1993, Eritreans overwhelmingly voted (99 %) for independence in a referendum supported by the friendly Ethiopian government that took overpower with EPLF support. A similar process is ongoing in the Southern Cameroon. Like Eritrea, Western Sahara and South Sudan, multiple armed groups are fighting the Cameroon military to restore the independence of Southern Cameroons.

In Southern Cameroon, the resistance against cameroon was more diplomatic and peaceful until 2016 when peaceful protects led by common law lawyers and teachers in the English-speaking regions were brutally suppressed by the military forcing Southern Cameroon nationalist movements to call for the use of arms against the French-dominated government. Currently the country once called a "pinnacle of peace in central Africa" is embroiled in deadly battles pitting Cameroon troops and local militias known as "Amba boys" (Ilustração 02). The problems of Southern Cameroon began when the British

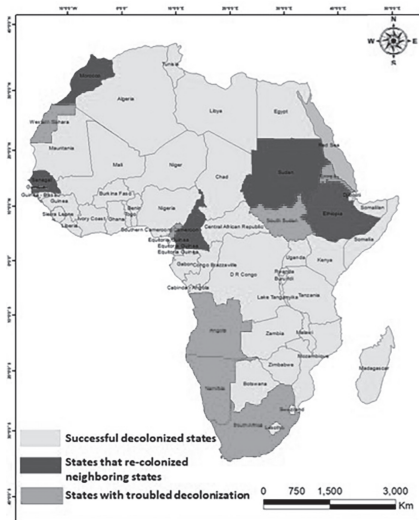


Ilustração 01 – Conflict states out of Decolonization.

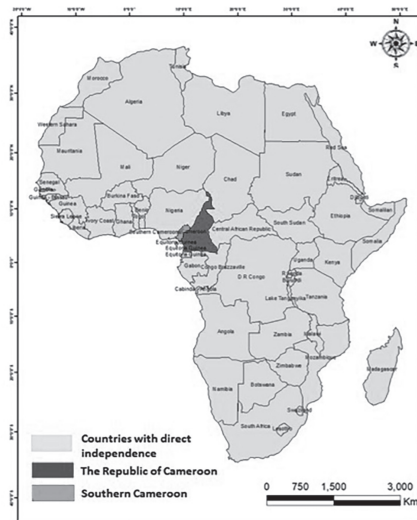


Ilustração 02 – Study area in Africa.

colonial administration violated the UN charter on decolonization by failing to hand unconditional independence to Southern Cameroons. Instead, the British on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1961 handed over instruments of power over Southern Cameroons to neighboring Republic of Cameroon who by then was an independent country. The latter went in for a federation with Southern Cameroons but later annexed the territory in 1972. Looking at the previous independent struggles cited above and what is going on in Southern Cameroons, the independence saga consists of six main stages: **1.º)** Exit of the colonial master, **2.º)** Re-occupation by a powerful neighboring state, **3.º)** Federation with the neighboring state, **4.º)** Abolition of the federation and annexation, **5.º)** Declaration of independence and War, **6.º)** Liberation and self-rule. Now, Southern Cameroons is at the 6<sup>th</sup> stage and it's imperative for the international community especially the African Union to intervene before the disaster that took place in South Sudan and Eritrea repeats itself in Southern Cameroons. The examples above clearly show the ineffectiveness of decolonization as it inadvertently failed to render colonized states independent without war.

This paper focusses on the decolonization of the former British Southern Cameroons and the war currently raging in that territory. It is aimed at conscientizing the “community of the willing” about the catastrophic consequences of decolonization in Southern Cameroon and the plight of the people at war. The paper traced in brief the colonization history, decolonization and its mistakes, map changes in Cameroon's boundaries since 1901 and map villages burned down since 2017. This cartography will determine critical war zones in dire need of humanitarian aid and provide information that can speed up the work of human rights/humanitarian organizations and political actors who wish to assess what is happening on the ground.

## Materials and methods

Each objective cited above was attained using a set of methods. The history of Southern Cameroon was gotten from varied sources (e.g. history books, scientific articles, nationalist publications, social media activist talk-shows, group discussions and conference presentations). Changes in territorial frontiers were mapped based on historical facts from older maps derived from books, publications and online platform (Google Earth). Damaged and burned-down infrastructure especially buildings were assessed based on social media reported and corroborated using Remote sensing data and Geographic Information System (GIS). To do this, baseline data or imagery captured prior to the event was compared against post-event imagery to determine apparent affected structures. Satellite images from TerraServer Digital Globe and Google Earth were analyzed to get changes in infrastructure before and after the events. Images taken by amateurs using mobile phones cameras and eye-witness accounts through audio recording were used to cross-corroborate what was observed on the aerial photos. The timeline of events provides highlights on the sequence of events including the destruction caused by the war. It contains necessary information that can facilitate prospective assistance and/or intervention by humanitarian groups and experts.

## The historical background of Southern Cameroons and the conflict

In 1470, the Portuguese arrived the coastal waters of Cameroon and named the estuary of the Wouri River “Rio dos Camarões” meaning River of the Prawns. The malaria parasite prevented any significant European settlement until 1884 when the Germans finally colonized the territory. Before the Germans, the British from 1858-1887 were in control of



Ilustração 03 – German Kamerun 1900-1911.

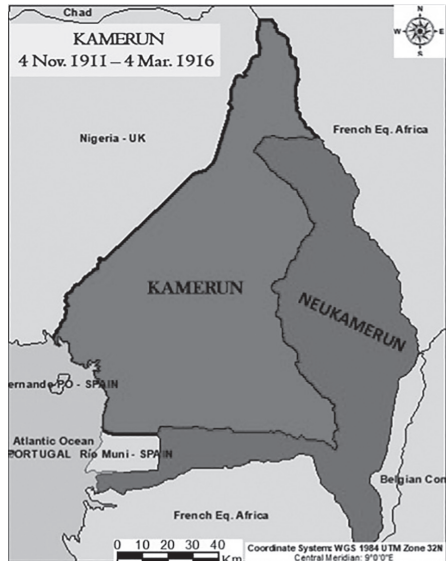


Ilustração 04 – German Kamerun 1911-1916.

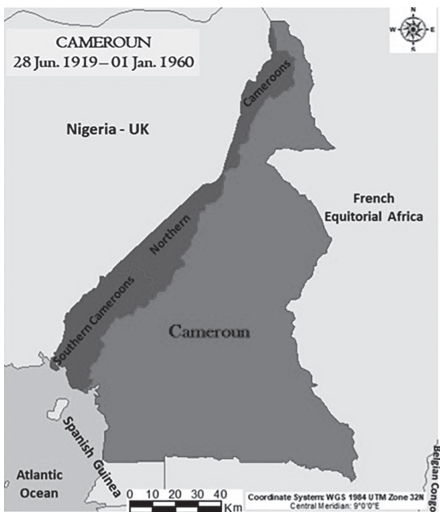


Ilustração 05 – Cameroon Trusteehip period.



Ilustração 06 – Independent Republic of Cameroon.

Victoria, a territory in today's Southern Cameroon named after queen Victoria of England. After the British, the Germans arrived in the territory east of the Mongo (present day Cameroon) in 1884 and colonized it by signing treaties with the coastal chiefs. The Germans in 1887 moved inland to the west of River Mongo to the present-day Southern Cameroons and took over the British protectorate of Victoria. From 1901 to 1911 the German



extended their territorial influence by signing more treaties with local chiefs and moving inland (Ilustração 03). The most significant German expansion was in 1911 when France ceded nearly 300,000 km<sup>2</sup> of former French Equatorial Africa to Kamerun through the Treaty of Fez following the Agadir Crisis. The newly acquired territory became known as Neukamerun (Ilustração 04). Kamerun remained under the Germans until 1914 when they were defeated in World War I by the allied powers (Britain and France). Before their defeat in 1916, German Kamerun included the western part of Central African Republic, northern part of Gabon and the Congo, far eastern parts of Nigeria and the South-western part of Chad. Following the 28 June, 1919 Treaty of Versailles, the western part of German Kamerun (about 20%) was given to Britain and the eastern part (about 80 %) went to France as mandated territories under the League of Nations (Ilustração 05). Motivated by administrative convenience, the British divided their own share of the territory into two parts and named them, British Northern and Southern Cameroons. They ruled these territories as part of Nigeria. After World War II, the UN transformed all colonial and mandated territories into trust territories under the trusteeship council and obliged the colonial powers to prepare the colonized peoples for self-rule. Following the independence of Nigeria and Cameroon in 1960, the two British territories (Ilustração 06) were not yet independent and had to decide their fate. As such, a plebiscite was organized by the UN on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1961 in the British territories with two questions: 1.º) Do you wish to gain independence by joining French Cameroon? or 2.º) Do you wish to gain independence by joining Nigeria? A 3<sup>rd</sup> option to allow the people to vote for full independence was rejected by the UN based on a complaint made by the out-going British colonial administration and the 1959 Philipson Report that the territory couldn't sustain itself as an independent state (Konings and Nyamnjoh, 2003, 230p.). British Southern Cameroons voted to join the Republic of Cameroon while British Northern Cameroons voted to join Nigeria (Ilustração 07). The co-existence of both nations in their new republics was under the form of a federation.

### Failures in the decolonization process and causes of the conflict

The failures of decolonization started with the disregard of laws voted by the UN itself and the implementation of the provisions of their resolutions. Denying Southern Cameroons complete independence on grounds that the territory was not self-sustaining violated the following:

- UN General Assembly resolution 1514 of 14 December 1960 point 3, that states that “Inadequacy of political, economic, social or educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence” and point 5 that mandated the colonial masters to “transfer all powers to the peoples of colonial territories, without any conditions or reservations, in accordance with their freely expressed will and desire”.
- UN Resolution 1608 (General Assembly – 15<sup>th</sup> session) point 2 of 21<sup>st</sup> April 1961 granted independence to the Southern Cameroons with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 1961.

The United Kingdom and the UN obliged the people of Southern Cameroons to accede to independence by “joining” either the Republic of Nigeria or Cameroon (Fanso, 2014). Many Southern Cameroon scholars, politicians and nationalists have condemned the UN and the United Kingdom's decision to hold a referendum in the Southern Cameroons instead of granting the people independence as stipulated by international law. It is worth noting that, during the UN General Assembly of April 1961, 64 countries voted in favour of the independence of Southern Cameroons and 23 countries voted, against among which were the Republic of Cameroon and France. This thus obliterated any possible federation with

Southern Cameroons (Anyangwe, 2014a; Fonkem, 2014). In the same light, authors like Awasom (1998, 2000; Fossung, 2004), and nationalist gatherings such as the All Anglophone Conference (AAC I) of 1993 that culminated with the “Buea Declaration” and AAC II of 1994 that ended with the “Bamenda Declaration” join the chorus to condemn the UN and the UK’s referendum decision. The two declarations also called for the restoration of the federal system or the complete independence of the Southern Cameroons. The nationalists also questioned why the plebiscite questions decided upon during the Mamfe “All-Party Plebiscite Conference” were not considered by the UN and the United Kingdom. During the Mamfe conference that held from 10-11 August 1959, 67 % of Southern Cameroon leaders voted that the plebiscite questions should be “Integration with Nigeria or Independence for Southern Cameroons” against 33 % for “Integration with Nigeria or Re-unification with Cameroon”. The UN General Assembly rejected both proposals and instead crafted the plebiscite questions as “Integration with Nigeria or Re-unification with Cameroon” under resolution 1352 (Fonkem, 2014). Jumbam in his write-up based reports from Wache Francis and Ekontang Elad (The All Anglophone Conference, April 2-3, 1993, accessed on September 8, 2019) considered the nullification of the Mamfe Plebiscite conference decision by the UN as illegitimate and gross transgression of the people’s rights. The result of the plebiscite as desired by the British and UN was in favor of joining the Republic of Cameroon. Based on point five of the UN resolution 1608, the two Cameroons entered negotiations that culminated with the Fouban Constitutional Conference that defined the terms of the union by federation. The Republic of Cameroon adopted the name East Cameroon and Southern Cameroon adopted the name West Cameroon and the new state became known as “The Federal Republic of Cameroon”. The validity of the decision to join the two states reached at the Fouban conference has equally been challenged by nationalist authors (e.g. Ayim, 2010; Anyangwe, 2014a). They argue that both states did not sign any UNION TREATY which is the binding document in international law that confirms the unity of two states. That such a treaty would have required the following steps:

- 1.º) First, negotiations mandated by international law (UN Resolutions 1352, 1608, 1514 (XV) and a meeting between the Southern Cameroons Prime Minister and French Cameroons president, overseen by both the British government, the French government and the UN.
- 2.º) Second, the drafting and ratification of a “Treaty of Union” by the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly and Republic of Cameroon’s Parliament.
- 3.º) And last, the signing of the “Treaty of Union” by the leaders of both countries.

However, none of these prerequisite steps were followed thus invalidating the legal basis of the federation. Worse still the Southern Cameroons Plebiscite Order in Council (SCOC, 1960) which opposed any form of annexation was not respected. The crossing over of French Cameroon troops into Southern Cameroons on 31 September 1961, after the British withdrawal and the disarming of Southern Cameroon armed police known as the Mobile Wing was an armed invasion (Meyomesse, 2018). The federation was a charade as the then French President Pompidou boasted that Southern Cameroons was a ‘small gift’ from the Queen of England to France (Gaillard, 1994). The federal structure constructed in 1961 was abolished in 1972 by Cameroon’s French speaking government through another referendum that saw the French Cameroon voting to absorb Southern Cameroons. After the abolition of the federation on 20 May 1972, the two territories became known as “United Republic of Cameroon”. In 1985, the Republic of Cameroon’s president (Paul Biya) through a decree once again changed the name of the country from “United Republic

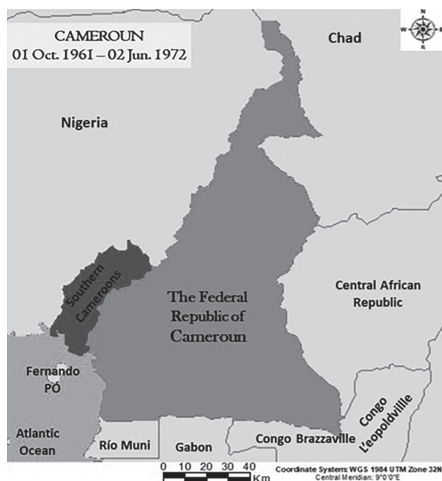


Ilustração 07 – British Cameroon joins Nigeria.

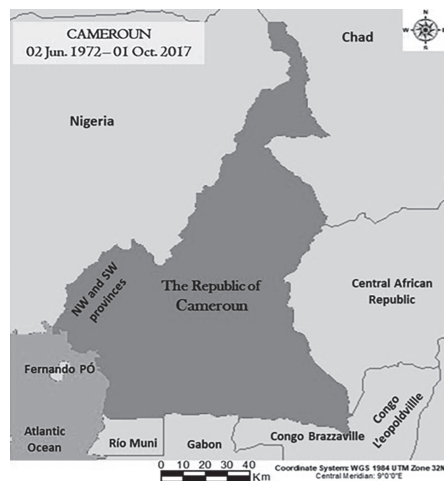


Ilustração 08 – End of Federation and unified Cameroon.

of Cameroon” to “Republic of Cameroon”. This is the same name French Cameroon adopted on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1960 when it got its independence from France. As explained in the Crawford James report “State practice and international law in relation to unilateral secession” (Crawford, 1997), such an act is synonymous to secession. Political scientists like Ayim (2008, 2010) had argued that the abolition of the federation should have seen both nations restore to their original structures as independent states. Unfortunately, the territory was annexed, divided into two and renamed as the North West and South West provinces of Cameroon (Ilustração 08). Scholars like Anyangwe (2009), Eyango (2018, p. 28) went further to argue that the changing of the federal structure went contrary to the federal constitution. It was regarded as a creeping annexation or re-colonization by some authors (e.g. Benjamin, 1972). In order to maintain its identity, Southern Cameroons was renamed Ambazonia in 2002 by Gorji-Dinka, a Southern Cameroon independence lawyer and activist (see U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/83/D/1134/2002, accessed on October 19, 2020).

### Socio-economic pressure and marginalization

Socio-economic problems, marginalization and systematic assimilation of Southern Cameroon is the root-cause of the current crisis. The people believe that the only permanent solution to the current impasse is to restore the statehood of the former British Southern Cameroons. The Republic of Cameroon is ranked 151 on the 2018 Human Development Index, and it is estimated that 48 % of the population lives below the poverty line with 55 percent of the country’s poor living in rural areas. Large parts of Southern Cameroon are rural, and it is among the poorest and highly underdeveloped regions in Cameroon. Despite its abundant natural resources including petroleum, timber, agricultural plantations etc., and the high literacy rate of its population, rural-urban exodus, youth immigration and unemployment remain very high. Harsh taxation policies have scared many industries and companies from setting-up offices in this area. The offices or headquarters of most national and international corporations involved in the exploitation of resources in Southern Cameroons are based in French Cameroon and exploitation benefits are paid to

the councils where the offices are based and not to the councils where the resources are being exploited. For instance, from 1978 – 2015, revenue from oil exports from Southern Cameroon amounted to \$44,929,093,897.00 and oil revenue accounted for about 30 % of the national income (see OECD Details of Public Revenues in Cameroon, accessed on 19 October 2020). Paradoxically, royalties from this oil are paid to the Douala city council, a town in the republic of Cameroon located 120 Km from the area Ndian and Fako division where the oil wells are found. The government argue that the oil trading companies and the port of export are in Douala and thus gives Douala more rights over the royalties than the council where the oil is exploited. This move has left the oil-rich communities very poor with lack of basic amenities such as roads, portable water, and roads. World Bank records for 2012 shows that a total of 7,325 Km long of roads were tarred across the national territory from 1980 to 2010, with less than 300 Km in Southern Cameroons. This is irrespective of the fact that petroleum exploited from Southern Cameroon is highly rich in bitumen, the material used for road construction.

World Bank financial statistics from 1965 to 2015 also shows that Cameroon had an average budget of 1.18 billion U.S. dollars with a minimum of 0.11 billion U.S. dollars in 1965 and a maximum of 3.32 billion U.S. dollars in 2015. Looking at these figures and comparing them with that in table 03, it is clearly shown that oil exports alone exploited from Southern Cameroons contribute over 50 % to the National Treasury. This amount does not include revenue from other resources like timber, bananas, cocoa, coffee, palm oil, pawpaw, and rubber which are also top export products Cameroon. On the other hand, tax revenue kept growing from 390,005 U.S. Dollars in 1993 to 3,214,297.3 in 2014 showing a 10-fold increase despite the high level of corruption in the country. However, the country's infrastructure remains deplorable.

Apart from economic marginalization, social and political discrimination had steadily increased since the dissolution of the federation in 1972. In the 1980s and 1990s, English speaking Cameroonians were often referred to as “Biafrans” (an ethnic group in Nigeria) and in the last decades they were called “Anglo-fools” or “Les Bamenda” meaning foolish people from Bamenda, a town in Southern Cameroons. Citizens from Cameroon believe that the Anglophones were less intelligent or foolish to have trusted Cameroon in the Fouban constitutional conference that brought the two Cameroons together. Very few Anglophones are recruited in the public service or appointed to high offices in Cameroon. For example, Cameroon had 32 Ministers in 2005 and none were from the Southern Cameroons. Although the government have enacted a law banning the use of the terms “Biafrans”, “Anglo-fools” and “Les Bamenda” and have appointed some “Anglophones” in high public offices, the stigma on Southern Cameroonians and the superiority complex of Cameroon citizens remain unchanged.

## Political brinkmanship

To destroy the harmony and history of Southern Cameroon, Cameroon in the last 57 years had embarked on the policy of divide and rule and political manipulation. Following the annexation in 1972, Southern Cameroons was divided into two parts (Ilustração 08). They were called the North West and South West provinces of Cameroon (Takougang and Amin, 2018). To further prevent any form of a unified resistance against the government, the political elites manipulated the natives of the South West part to believe that the migrants from the northern part were depriving them of jobs, seizing their lands and exploiting their resources. It should be noted that the southern zone is rich in volcanic soils, two seaports, oil and timber that has attracted thousands of migrants from the northern

**Table 01 – Oil Revenue in Cameroon 1978 – 2015**

Year	Kilotons	World Price	Million Barrels	Revenue in Dollars
1978	512.068	9	3.657628571	\$32,918,657.14
1979	2032.049	12.64	14.51463571	\$183,464,995.40
1980	3620.981	21.59	25.86415	\$558,406,998.50
1981	4865.155	31.77	34.75110714	\$1,104,042,674.00
1982	5746.317	28.52	41.04512143	\$1,170,606,863.00
1983	5988.663	26.19	42.77616429	\$1,120,307,743.00
1984	8926.21	25.88	63.75864286	\$1,650,073,677.00rs
1985	8918.098	24.09	63.7007	\$1,534,549,863.00
1986	8772.083	12.51	62.65773571	\$783,848,273.80
1987	8837.992	15.4	63.12851429	\$972,179,120.00
1988	8176.867	12.58	58.40619286	\$734,749,906.10
1989	7634.379	15.86	54.53127857	\$864,866,078.10
1990	6926.609	20.03	49.47577857	\$990,999,844.80
1991	6572.724	16.54	46.94802857	\$776,520,392.60
1992	6572.724	15.99	46.94802857	\$750,698,976.90
1993	6065.726	14.25	43.32661429	\$617,404,253.60
1994	5966.355	13.19	42.61682143	\$562,115,874.60
1995	5189.633	14.62	37.06880714	\$541,945,960.40
1996	5527.294	18.46	39.48067143	\$728,813,194.60
1997	6016.04	17.23	42.97171429	\$740,402,637.10
1998	6229.994	10.87	44.49995714	\$483,714,534.10
1999	5827.437	15.56	41.62455	\$647,677,998.00
2000	5863.941	26.72	41.88529286	\$1,119,175,025.00
2001	5302.187	21.84	37.87276429	\$827,141,172.00
2002	5538.448	22.51	39.56034286	\$890,503,317.70
2003	5255.543	27.56	37.53959286	\$1,034,591,179.00
2004	5008.128	36.77	35.77234286	\$1,315,349,047.00
2005	4594.418	50.28	32.81727143	\$1,650,052,407.00
2006	4682.635	59.69	33.44739286	\$1,996,474,880.00
2007	4437.248	66.52	31.69462857	\$2,108,326,693.00
2008	4362.212	94.04	31.15865714	\$2,930,160,118.00
2009	3809.584	56.35	27.21131429	\$1,533,357,560.00
2010	3350.244	74.71	23.93031429	\$1,787,833,780.00
2011	3038.947	95.73	21.70676429	\$2,077,988,545.00
2012	3146.431	94.52	22.47450714	\$2,124,290,415.00
2013	3414.126	95.99	24.38661429	\$2,340,871,105.00
2014	3867.382	87.39	27.62415714	\$2,414,075,093.00
2015	3867.382	44.39	27.62415714	\$1,226,236,336.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>204502.786</b>	<b>1356.35</b>	<b>1460.734186</b>	<b>\$44,929,093,897.00</b>

Source: United States Department of Energy.

zone. This social/political segregation strategy was very successful until the uprising of 2016. The teachers and lawyers uprising in 2016 was the first time the population of the two provinces waved away their differences to fight against the government since 1972. Before 2016, Southern Cameroon nationalists had rose in 2004 and 2007 to restore the federal structure abolished in 1972 but failed as French Cameroon used the military to surprise the protests (Efi, 2018). The uprising of 2016 started when common law lawyers protested on the streets against the posting of French speaking magistrates with no mastery of the common law and English language to courts in the English-speaking regions (Journal du Camerun, 2017). This protest was later joined by the Cameroon Anglophone Teacher's Union (CATU) to protest the posting of French speaking teachers with no knowledge of the English language in English speaking schools in Anglophone Cameroon. As usual, these protests were brutally suppressed. But this time around, the brutal response of the military boomeranged and spurred other civil society organizations and the general public to join the teachers and lawyers to demand for the return of the federal system of government. As the protest worsened, the government was forced to open a dialogue with representatives of the protesters who by then had constituted themselves in what became known as the Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium. After failing to convince the Consortium leaders to call off the strike action, the government banned the Consortium together with the Southern Cameroon National Congress on 17 January 2017 and arrested the leaders. Internet network was equally suspended from the two English speaking regions. From there on, the nationalist movements whose leaders were based in the diaspora including the Ambazonia Governing Council (AGC), Southern Cameroon National Congress (SCNC), Republic of Ambazonia (ROA), Southern Cameroon Youth League (SCYL) and the Southern Cameroons Peoples Organisation (SCAPO), came together and formed the Southern Cameroons Ambazonia Consortium United Front (SCACUF) with the objective of restoring the lost statehood of Southern Cameroons. SCACUF was later transformed into the Governing Council (GC), and then to an Interim Government (IG) for Southern Cameroons. The Governing Council under the leadership of the Sesiko Ayuk Tabe symbolically declared independence for Southern Cameroons on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2017. Ambazonia flags were hoisted across the territory and the military responded with hundreds of arbitrary arrests, detentions, manning and killing of protesters using live ammunition and helicopter gunships. The new state adopted the name "Ambazonia", the same name given by Fon Gorji-Dinka (an activist from the Southern Cameroons) who first declared independence for the territory in 1985 (Ilustração 09). Etymologically, Ambazonia is the local name derived from the Ambas Bay (see report from wikipedia.org, accessed on July 11, 2017), an area where the British Baptist missionary Alfred Saker first established his church in 1858 and where the British created a protectorate in 1884 before ceding it to the Germans in 1887. Following these events, the AGC under the leadership of Dr. Ayaba Cho Lucas evoked the right of self-defense enshrined in Article 51 of the UN Charter (Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs, accessed on 20 October, 2020) and formed an armed wing known as the Ambazonia Defence Forces (ADF). The Ambazonia Interim Government joined the AGC to call upon the UN Security Council to evoke the rights of protection for endangered minorities under the UN Charter by imposing travel bans and assets freeze on Cameroon government/military officials. Considering the military's use of helicopter gunships to shoot protesters at point-blank range of the nationalist movements again urged the UN under Resolution 1970 to impose a no-fly zone over Southern Cameroons territory as stipulated by Resolution 1973, earlier applied on Libya during the 2011 crisis. None of these calls were answered. On 1 November 2017, the president of the Republic of Cameroon Paul Biya declared war on Ambazonia and urged the Nigerian government under Muhammadu Buhari to arrest the leaders of the movement



Ilustração 09 – Southern Cameroons – Ambazonia.

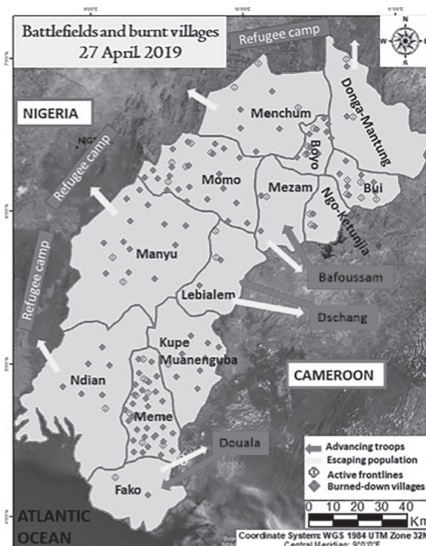


Ilustração 10 – Main battlefields as of June 2019.

living in exile in Nigeria. On 5 January, 2018, the Nigerian government heeded this call and arrested the Ambazonian leadership in Nigeria and extradited them to Cameroon. This act escalated the crisis to a full-blown war that still rages today. The war has chased hundreds of thousands to flee into Nigeria and the Republic of Cameroon based on nearness to safe areas. Most of the refugees in Nigeria are from communities located along the border with Nigeria such as Manyu, Ndian and Ndongo-Mantum divisions (Doctors Without Borders report on Cameroon refugees in Nigeria, accessed on 17 January, 2019). Those in French Cameroon are mainly from towns and villages located close to the border with Cameroon (Ilustração 10). Thousands are also internally displaced within Ambazonia taking refuge in three main cities (Bamenda, Buea and Limbe). The fighting till now is concentrated in the rural areas largely under the control of armed groups while the urban centers above are controlled by the military with sporadic gunfire from time to time between government forces and Ambazonia fighters. The towns cited above have become a hub for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) across the region.

### Military activities and events from 2017 to 2019

Following the brutal crack-down on protesters, the banning and arrest of the Anglophone Consortium leaders on 17 January 2017, the ADF chief Benedict Kuah declared the start of armed resistance against the Cameroon military. The objective was to render Ambazonia ungovernable and to increase the cost of the occupation (Amindeh, 2017). On 9 September ADF fighters attacked a military base in Besong-abang killing three gendarmes (Daily Nation, 2017). On 11 and 12 September, an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) controlled from a mobile phone was activated at Mobile Nkwen and Hospital Roundabout in Bamenda respectively targeting government troops causing serious injuries to three police officers. On 11 September, another IED destroyed a dormitory in Sacred Heart College Mankon – Bamenda with no casualties. On 1 October, Ambazonia Independence Day, over a hundred

demonstrators were killed in protest across Southern Cameroons-Ambazonia. On 9 October, Cameroon forces claimed to have prevented hundreds of Nigerians crossing the border to fight alongside the separatists. On 8 November, Ambazonia fighters killed three gendarmes, two of them around Bamenda airport and one in the out-skirts of Bamenda (Reuters, 2017: 8). On 17 November, four soldiers were killed in Kembong village in Mamfe town in the Southern zone and confirmed by the ADF chief of staff, Benedict Kuah, during an interview with Reuters. International monitors reported that at least 20 to 40 people were killed in September alone. By the end of December, about 13 confrontations took place between Cameroon armed forces and Amba fighters (some believed to come from Nigeria) left at least seven Cameroon military dead (Voice of America, 2017). By the end of 2017, the main arms groups including the ADF, SOCADEF, Tigers and allied forces were believed to number between 500 to 1000 man-strong operating in 7 out of the 13 divisions that make up the Southern Cameroons. Most of the fighting took place in the Southern zone with just very few incidents in the Northern zone.

### **Military activities and events of 2018**

On 5 January, the President of the Ambazonia Interim Government Sesiko Ayuk Tabe and eleven others were arrested in Naira hotel Abuja-Nigeria. Thirty-eight others mostly asylum seekers were also arrested in Taraba state by Nigerian authorities. Although the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR, 2019) in Nigeria condemned the arrest and handing over of the asylees to the Cameroonian government, Nigeria still went on to arrest more refugees suspected of supporting the ADF and sent them to Cameroon. Across the border in Southern Cameroon, the violence worsens. On 29 January, Senior government officials were arrested in Kupe Muanenguba division by the “Tigers” of Ambazonia, one of the armed groups fighting for independence. On 25 January, gunmen believed to have crossed from Nigeria engaged Cameroon border post guards at Ekok in a three-hour long gun fight with casualties on both sides. On 1 February, another attack killed three soldiers and was condemned by the French Foreign ministry spokeswoman, Agnes Von der Muhll, when addressing reports following the United States suspension of military aid to Cameroon (Reuters, 2019).

It should be recalled that France is the main international backer of the Biya's regime in Cameroon and French companies control the oil industry, the railway, shipping, timber exploitation and other industries in Cameroon. On 11 January, the Divisional office for Batibo was seized by ADF forces ahead of celebrations marking the 1961 plebiscite day. On 3 March, government forces invaded Batibo forcing over 400 residents from five villages including Korgwe, Effa, Koroko, Ambo and Angie to flee their home. Civilians who could not escape were also arrested, and the abandoned villages were burned down by the Cameroon military. On 4 February, Samuel Ikome Sako was voted in as Acting Interim president of Ambazonia to replace the captured President, Sesiko Ayuk Tabe. The new Interim government leadership adopted self-defense as the main policy for prosecuting the struggle. This Interim Government shift in policy to join the armed faction of the revolution led by the ADF was highly welcomed. On 15 March, three Tunisian civil engineers working on the Kumba-Isangele highway were kidnapped and two were later killed and one rescued. On 25 April, Cameroonian forces were forced to retreat from Belo, a town in the NW region of the country as fighting intensified across Ambazonia with clashes in Mbonge, Muyuka, Konye, Batibo, Bangem etc. This culminated with the killing of at least 30 people by French Cameroon military in Pinyin in the Northern zone. As 20<sup>th</sup> May celebrations marking the end of the Federation



and annexation of Southern Cameroons approached, Ambazonian fighters opt for the resistance by announcing a complete lockdown of the territory, forbidding all forms of movement. Barricades were mounted on major highways including the Buea-Kumba highway, Widikum-Mamfe road, among others. In August there were deadly clashes in Mabonji and Ediki, Babungo, Zhoa in Wum and Lebialem (Cameroon News Agency, 2019). September saw serious clashes in Muyuka, Chomba, Zhoa and Buea as Amba fighters forced the military to retreat from Balikumbat and Ngo-Ketunjia. By the end of September, fighting was reported in twelve out of the fourteen divisions that make up Ambazonia with 183 clashes recorded between the ADF and French Cameroon forces. Political leaders like the SDF chairman, Ni John Fru Ndi, and some clergy men were attacked. Schools like Presbyterian school Nkwen were equally attacked. November was the peak of the conflict with over 120 Amba fighters killed and over 30 government forces. The violence escalated further on 21 December with the killing of the ADF military commander, General Ivo Mbah, in an ambush in Teke village in Kumba. During President Paul Biya's end of year speech on 31 December, Biya called on the fighters to drop their weapons or be neutralized. On the opposite end of the aisle, the President of the Ambazonia Interim Government promised a switch from a defensive to an offensive strategy to the war and promised hell to Cameroon forces fighting in Ambazonia.

### **Military activities and events of 2019**

As the new year began, fighting continued in Muyuka, Mamfe, Mbonge, Bafut and on 24 January, General Andrew Ngoe, one of the commanders of SOCADEF rebel group was killed in Matoh village by government troops. In anticipation of National Youth Day on February 11, a 10-day lockdown was declared by Amba fighters from 5 to 14 February although the main fighting group, the ADF, argued that it was counterproductive. The celebration was a fiasco across Ambazonia because it was highly boycotted. Two Amba fighters were killed in Bamenda as they tried to disrupt the festivity (Journal du Cameroon, 2019). On 14 March, the military burned-down a village in Dunga Mantung and Menchum killing at least 12 people with some burnt alive in their homes (CNA, 2019). Human Rights Watch has been following the war and confirms that over 170 people were killed and hundreds of houses were burnt by the Cameroon military in the northern zone (Human Rights Watch report, 28 March, 2019, accessed on 27 April 2019). As of 27 April, a total of 14 armed groups with membership of up to 20 000 men and women were taking part in the fighting across the territory. These groups include the ADF, SOCADEF, TSOA, Tigers, 7 KATA, Amba Guerrillas, ARA, Pythons, Red Dragons, SCFR (RK), Red vultures, Black Mambas, Bui Warriors and Makon warriors. These meant a significant increase in armed groups from 2017 to 2019 where the ADF, SOCADEF and the Tigers were the only groups fighting the military. Most recently, fighting has been reported in three French Speaking towns with more than 10 people killed, some believed to be fighters from French Cameroon recruited by the Ambazonia armed groups. In May 2019, the Swiss-based NGO called Humanitarian Development (HD) announced its intention to act as a mediator between Ambazonia and Cameroon to end the conflict. However, this initiative has not progressed much because the government of Cameroon hasn't signed up to the process and some separatist groups like the AGovC and Interim government have also refused to participate. In October 2019, the Cameroon government called for a dialogue that was not attended by the separatists who say their security to travel to Cameroon was not guaranteed. The government rejected calls for a return to federation but instead announced the granting of a special status to Southern Cameroon was outrightly rejected

by the separatists and federalists alike. The dialogue was considered a monologue. The President of Cameroon, Paul Biya, later stated that his intention of absorbing the Southern Cameroon minority into the Republic of Cameroon has failed due to cultural specificities and that is when he is granting them a special status within his country (Andzongo, 2019). As the conflict drags on, high-ranking personalities of international organizations like the European Union, International Human Rights Watch, the Norwegian Refugee Council, the Commonwealth, and United States government officials have visited Cameroon. On 20 April, the European Union parliament passed a resolution accusing Cameroon of human rights abuses and called on the government to initiate dialogue to end the conflict. In May, the EU parliament asked that the conflict be debated at the UN Security Council.

### Consequences of the war as of May 3, 2019

In December 2018, the Belgium based International Crisis Group (ICG, 2018) placed the war in Southern Cameroons among the ten most violent conflicts in the world to watch in 2019 (ICG, 2019). National and international organizations have published conflicting reports on the impact of the war. ICG report of 2<sup>nd</sup> April (2019) states that in the last 20 months 350 000 people have fled Cameroon into neighboring Nigeria, 530 000 are internally displaced and 1850 Southern Cameroonians have been killed in the conflict. The report further states that at least 235 military and police officers, 650 civilians and nearly 1000 Amba fighters have been killed. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) report of October 2018 said that 437 000 people are internally displaced within Cameroon and 35 000 others are registered as refugees in neighboring Nigeria (United Nations High commission for Refugees report, accessed on September 26, 2018). Among these, 246 000 are from the Southern zone, 105 000 from the Northern zone and 86 000 from the Littoral and West



**Ilustração II** – Location of displaced persons

Source: Adopted from UNHCR 2019 appeal map.

regions of Cameroon. It further says that 35 000 of the refugees are asylum seekers and forecasts that the number of refugees in Nigeria will rise to 50 000 by the end of 2019.

The UN estimates that 1.3 million people need aid because of the conflict. Apart from killings and displacement of persons, political and other opinion leaders are targeted. The EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini termed the arrests and trail of political leaders in military courts as “disproportionate”. Human Rights Watch report of 28 March 2019 said at least 2554 civilians have been killed by the Cameroon military since 2017 in over 220 incidents and at least 170 civilians were killed from October 2018 to March 2019 alone. They have also documented the burning of homes, villages, schools, and churches by Cameroon’s military. Apart from killings, the Cameroon military has used civilian corpses as booby-traps in Bali and Kumbo. In the case of Bali, two civilians were killed and 11 seriously injured as they tried to pick a booby-trapped corpse on the street laden with explosives by the Cameroon military. The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) reported a similar abuse again in Bali in November 2018, when Cameroon military killed 42 unarmed civilians and burnt their bodies (UNPO article 21484, accessed on April 29, 2019). This is in violation of the additional Protocol of the Geneva Conventions relating to the “Protection of Victims during Armed Conflicts”, which Cameroon acceded and ratified on 16 March, 1984. Furthermore, Amnesty International (2018) reported that 400 civilians were killed from January to September 2018 alone in about 260 security incidents. They also blamed government forces for the burning of villages, indiscriminate killings, arrests, and torture of dozens of people across Ambazonia. Kidnappings has become rampant, allegedly perpetrated by some Ambazonia armed groups and government militias operating in the restive regions. Amnesty like others also noted that the conflict has displaced thousands of civilians both within Ambazonia, French Cameroon and across the border into Nigeria (Amnesty International, 2018). Caritas NGO on its part has reported that the conflict has forced 160 000 people out of their homes into the bushes, and another 26 000 into Nigeria as refugees and 95 percent of the internally displaced people have less than 3-days food reserves left (Caritas report of July 2018 on Cameroon accessed on 26 May, 2019). The figures reported by these organizations are far below the actual figures as access to the regions and information is restricted by government forces. For instance, Cameroon authorities denied a human rights researcher entry into Cameroon on 12 April, 2019 for fear that she will detail document human rights abuses carried-out in the Southern Cameroons (Human Rights Watch report accessed on May 2 2019).

Apart from foreign organizations, national NGOs such as the Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA) and the Ayah Foundation have been reporting on the conflict. CHRDA 2019 report (CHRDA report of 3 June, 2019, accessed on 16 April, 2019) shows that at least ninety-six villages have been torched by fire in the Southern zone with sixty-seven severely burnt. Out of the eighty villages affected in the Northern zone, forty-eight have been destroyed by burning (Table O2 and O3). The effects of the war are closely reported by local newspapers like The Guardian. An example is the report of the atrocities in Belo, a small town in North West Cameroon (The Guardian Newspaper, 2018).

The role of International lobbyists cannot be underestimated. For instance, Clout Public Affairs lobbying firm whose managing director is U.S. President Donald Trump’s former acting attorney general, Matthew Whitaker, signed a contract to lobby for Cameroon for \$55,000 a month in Washington (Robbie and Jefcoate, 2019). These groups have covered up the abuses committed by government forces by publishing contrary reports on the social media. They have also used their influence to downplay the carnage and convinced the international stakeholders like the UN, EU, African Union (AU), etc. not to intervene in the conflict.

Table 02 – Villages burn-down in the Northern zone of Ambazonia

## North West Region

Division	Sub-division	Towns/villages	Damage level	Division	Sub-division	Towns/villages	Damage level	
Bui	Jakiri	Sob	Partial	Momo	Batibo	Batibo	Destroyed	
	Kumbo	Kumbo	Partial			Ashong	Destroyed	
		Mbiame	Destroyed			Bessi	Destroyed	
		Meluf	Significant			Ambo	Destroyed	
		Tadu	Destroyed			Guzang	Destroyed	
		Square	Significant			Kugwe	Destroyed	
		Shisong	Partial			Teiben	Destroyed	
	Oku	Ngemsiba	Destroyed			Efah	Destroyed	
		Mbokevu	Destroyed		Mbengwi	Mbengwi	Significant	
	Mbven	Mbven town	Partial			Njinibi	Destroyed	
		Noni	Djottin			Destroyed	Njindom	Destroyed
	Noni		Noni			Destroyed	Nyen	Destroyed
	Nkum	Kuvlu	Partial		Tudig	Destroyed		
		Tatum	Destroyed		Acha	Significant		
Mbam		Significant	Zen	Destroyed				
Donga Mantung	Nwa	Sabongari	Significant	Njikwa	Njikwa	Destroyed		
		Nfe	Significant		Oshie	Destroyed		
		Mbaw	Significant	Ngwo	Destroyed			
		Sih	Significant	Ngie	Destroyed			
	Ako	****	****	Andek	Destroyed			
	Ndu	****	****		Widikum-Menka	Diche 2	Destroyed	
Misaje	****	****	Bifang	Destroyed				
Nkambe	Mbot	Destroyed	Eka	Destroyed				
Menchum	Wum	Wum	Destroyed	Ngo-ketunjia	Ndop	Ndop town	Destroyed	
	Fura Awa	****	****			Bamuka	Destroyed	
	Menchum valley	Befang	Destroyed			Bamali	Significant	
		Fungon town	Significant			Bamessing	Significant	
	Fungom	Esu	Destroyed			Bambalang	Significant	
		Zhoa	Destroyed			Babessi	Significant	
		Kuk	Destroyed		Balikumbat	Bamunkumbit	****	
Weh	Destroyed	Boyo	Funding		Funding	Partial		
Mezam	Bamenda 1, 2, 3		Mbatu		Significant	Bum	Bum	Partial
	Bali		Bali		Destroyed	Belo	Belo	Significant
	Bafut		Bafut	Significant	Anjang		Destroyed	
	Santa		****	****	Anyajua		Destroyed	
	Tubah		Bambili	Partial	Djiichami		Destroyed	
			Bambui	Partial	Sho		Destroyed	
				Ashing	Destroyed			
				Njinkedjem	Destroyed			
				Baingo	Destroyed			
				Jinkfuin	Destroyed			
				Ntungfe	Partial			
				Fundeng	Partial			
				Muwa	Significant			
			Anjin	Destroyed				
			Acha	Significant				
			Fuli	Partial				
			Njinikom	Destroyed				
			Wombong	Destroyed				
			Kikfuini	Significant				
<b>Total NW</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>80</b>						

N.B. The villages included in this list are only those villages whose burning-down are corroborated by video recordings taken by amateurs using mobile phones as of 27<sup>th</sup> April 2019. Villages with \*\* are those with unconfirmed reports.

Source: Update from the list published by Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA) 2019.

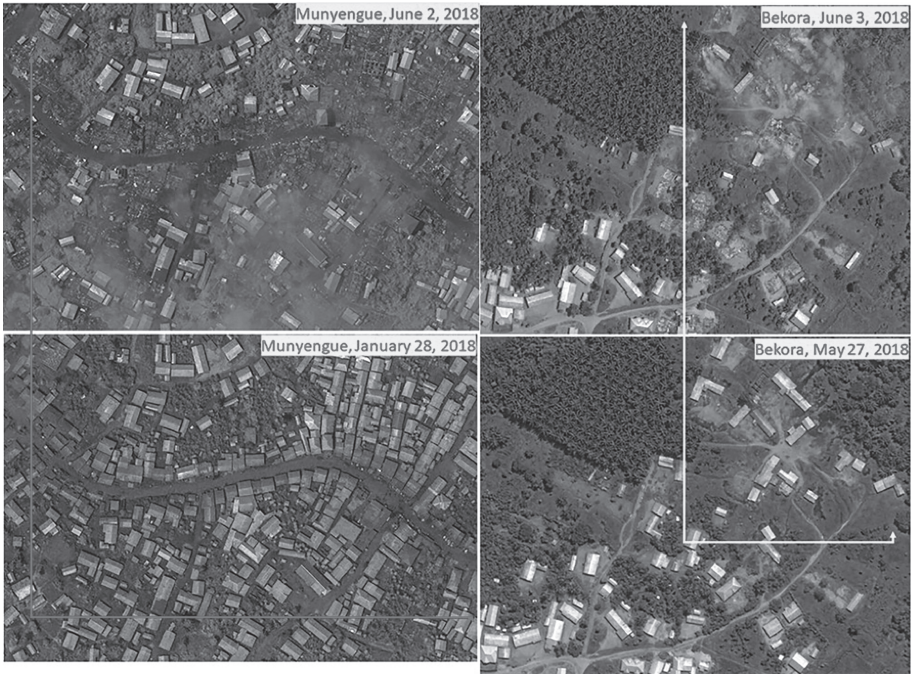
**Table 03 – Villages burn-down in the Southern zone of Ambazonia**

**South West Region**

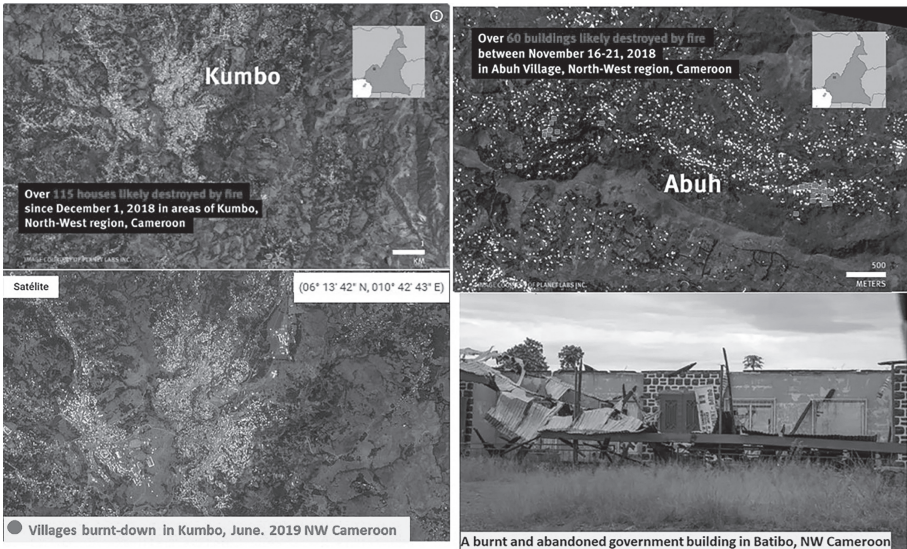
Division	Sub-division	Towns/villages	Damage level	Division	Sub-division	Towns/villages	Damage level	
Fako	Tiko	Mutengene	Partial	Meme (cont.)	Mbonge	Bekondo	Destroyed	
	Limbe 1, 2, 3		****			Kombone mission	Destroyed	
Buea		Muea	Partial			Mbonge	Destroyed	
	Maumu	Destroyed	Nganjo			Destroyed		
Muyuka		Bolifamba (Mile 16)	Significant			Kwa Kwa	Destroyed	
		Ekona	Significant			Ekombe	Destroyed	
		Muyuka	Significant			Small Ekombe	Destroyed	
		Muyenge	Destroyed			Bole Bakundu	Destroyed	
		Ikata	Destroyed			Foe Bakundu	Destroyed	
		Camdev	Destroyed			Bokosso	Destroyed	
		Malende	Destroyed			Bai Panya	Destroyed	
		Bafia	Destroyed			Bakumba	Destroyed	
Yoke	Partial	Big Nghandi	Destroyed					
Idenau – West Coast		****	****			Edikui	Destroyed	
Lebialem	Wabane	****	****			Kuke Mbono	Destroyed	
	Fontem (Menji)	Azi	Destroyed			Bombele	Destroyed	
		Menji	Destroyed			Bangele	Destroyed	
Alou	Alou	Significant	Kumu kumu			Destroyed		
Manyu	Akwaya	Kajifu 1	Destroyed			Mbalangi	Destroyed	
		Kajifu 2	Destroyed			Mofako Butu	Destroyed	
		Beteme	Destroyed			Nake	Destroyed	
		Dadi	Destroyed			Big Massaka	Destroyed	
		Navas	Destroyed			Bongwana kake 1	Destroyed	
		Ngali	Destroyed			Bokoko kake 2	Destroyed	
		Kumku	Destroyed			Maromba 1	Destroyed	
		Manfe	Significant			Big Ekombe	Destroyed	
	Mamfe	Besongabang	Significant			Banga Bakundu	Destroyed	
		Nchang	Significant			Mbongo Balondo	Destroyed	
		Eshobi	Significant			Boa Balondo	Destroyed	
		Upper Bayang	Ekoto			Destroyed	Illoani Balondo	Destroyed
	Kendem		Destroyed			Ekondo Titi	Dipenda	Destroyed
	Gurifén		Destroyed				Kumbe Balue	Destroyed
	Mbeme		Significant	Ekondo Nene	Destroyed			
	Ashum		Significant	Lipenja Barombi	Destroyed			
	Ebensuk		Significant	****	****			
	Tali 1		Significant	Kombo-Abedimo	****			
Tali 2	Significant		Mundemba	Fabe Bima	Significant			
Eyumojock	Kembong	Destroyed		Ndiba Ngolo	Partial			
	Agborkem	Destroyed		Lipendja 2	Significant			
	Njeke	Significant		Fabe	Significant			
	Ossing	Destroyed	Kombo Itindi	****				
Meme	Kumba 1, 2, 3	Mambanda – Teke	Destroyed	Idabato	****			
		Kumba town – kang	Significant	Dikome Balue	****			
	Konye	Konye	Destroyed	Toko	Ikoti Ngolo	Significant		
		Dipenda Bakundu	Destroyed	Nguti	Lipenja 1	Significant		
		Wone	Destroyed		Nguti	Significant		
		Dikomí Bafaw	Destroyed	Babensi	Destroyed			
		Ikiliwindi	Significant	Manyemen	Destroyed			
		Lobange	Destroyed	Kupe Muanenngo	Etam	Destroyed		
		Bangem	Tomel		Destroyed	Ebonji	Destroyed	
			Ngusi		Destroyed	Bouba 3	Destroyed	
Mombo	Destroyed							
<b>Total SWR</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>96</b>						
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>176</b>						

**N.B.** The villages included in this list are only those villages whose burning-down are corroborated by video recordings taken by amateurs using mobile phones as of 27<sup>th</sup> April 2019. Villages with \*\* are those with unconfirmed reports.

Source: Update from the list published by Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRD) 2019.



**Ilustração 12** – Villages in Southern zone of Ambazonia before and after they were burnt down.



**Ilustração 13** – Villages in Northern zone of Ambazonia before and after they were burnt down.

The number of villages destroyed by burning in the northern zone as shown on table 1 corroborates the fact that heavy fighting has been going on in Momo, Boyo and Bui divisions for a long time (Ilustração 10). Most of the burnings are documented by CHRDA in its 3 June 2019 report. Similarly, table 03 shows wide scale burning of villages in Manyu, the birthplace of the armed struggle, Meme and Muanenguba division in the southern zone. A total of 96 villages in 66 sub-divisions have been touched so far with 80 in the northern zone and 96 in the southern zone. The arson perpetrated by French Cameroon's military in Ambazonia forced the few who believed in a united Cameroon to change their stance in favour of full independence for the English regions. Many now consider the independence strive as an existential battle or struggle for survival. Recent clashes have been more violent than previous ones partly due to the increasing sophistication of Amba fighter's weaponry, experience and increasing frustration within the ranks of the military. The government expected a quick victory against the separatists but has been taken aback by the resilience of the population and the inability of the military to surprise the resistance. Southern Cameroonians in the diaspora have launched numerous campaigns (e.g. My Trip to Buea, Pa Che, National AK, Liberation Pins, etc.) to raise funds and sustain the war. They have upgraded the firepower of the Amba fighters by replacing Dane guns with machine guns and sniper rifles. Compelled by their inferior weapons and number, the armed groups have adopted guerrilla warfare tactics to fight the military. Government troops have responded with rampant burning of homes and the adoption of the scorched-earth policy. This military response has been interpreted as a sign of frustration as entire villages whose occupants are believed to be sympathetic with the Ambazonian course have been burned down. This has boomeranged on the state as the homeless population are increasingly joining the ranks of the fighters. It should be noted that the burning of villages in war violates national and international human rights laws and a host of other laws including the classical common article 3 of the 4<sup>th</sup> Geneva Convention 1949 and the Additional Protocol II to the same Convention dealing with non-international conflicts. There is plenty of substantial information shown by satellite images, aerial photographs, amateur videos, and photos about the destruction caused by the war. The interpretation of satellite images and aerial photographs corroborate onsite reports about the burning

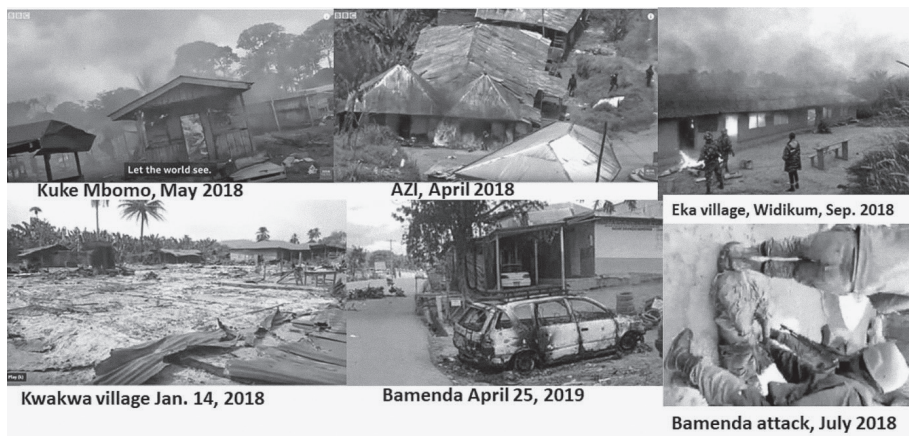


Ilustração 14 – Amateur images showing homes and villages on fire in Ambazonia.

of villages and towns. A visual comparison of the satellite image of Munyengue (Ilustração 12) taken on 28 January and 2 June, 2018 shows several villages and towns raised to the ground by fire. The satellite image of Bekora taken on 27 May and 3 June 2018 shows smoke rising from the village. This is the same for Kumbo and many other towns and villages burnt across Southern Cameroons. The amateur video recordings showing the burning and aftermath of Kwakwa (Amateur video of Kwakwa burning and Kuke (Amateur video of Kuke village burning accessed on 26 May, 2018) are constant reminders of the carnage caused by Cameroon military. From one of the videos taken by a hidden camera in Azi village (Ilustração 13), the photo and video footage show men dressed in Cameroon military wear carrying-out the burning. In a similar video taken in Eka village in Widikum sub-division NW region, the military men confirmed that they burnt the school because it was a hideout for Amba fighters (Ilustração 13). A host of satellite images showing the burned-down villages has been published by Human Rights Watch. Apart from villages and schools, medical facilities have also been burnt. Among them is the Kumba district hospital burned down on 11 February, 2019 killing four people including two patients who could not run. Another hospital located in Muyenge was also burned down on 30 March, 2019. Due to attacks suffered by medical personal and their facilities, health care operations are largely in the hands of Doctors Without Borders (DWF video, accessed on 7 October, 2018). Several churches have also been burned. Clergymen have been caught in the crossfire and some executed by the Cameroon military. A good example is Trumann Wesco killed by the military in NW Cameroon (The New York Times, 2018).

## Conclusion

The expansion of German Kamerun from 1911-1916 reflects the way Africa was partitioned. The boundary demarcations were mainly driven by politico-economic motives with little regards to socio-cultural implications. As such, ethnic groups were separated by the artificial boundaries. The division of Neu Kamerun in 1916 divided the Beti-Pahuin people (a Bantu ethnic group) with some living in Cameroon, Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and São Tomé and Príncipe. The Fangs now live in the South Province of Cameroon and across the boundary into Río Muni in Equatorial Guinea and South into Gabon, and Congo. However, families living across the borders continue to interact with each other, but national custom checks and other border restrictions has rendered communication between these tribes difficult.

The annexation of small and weak African states by stronger neighbors was all facilitated by their former colonial masters. In the examples examined in this paper, the European colonial masters violated almost all the provisions of UN General Assembly Resolution 1514 of 14 December 1960 that mandated the colonizers to prepare their colonies for self-rule. They did not transfer powers to the peoples without conditions nor allowed the peoples to freely determine their political status. The annexation of small states by their larger neighbors (e.g. Saharawi and Morocco, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Sudan and South Sudan, Cameroon and Southern Cameroons, etc.) violated point 5 of that resolution which prohibits all forms of interference in the affairs of other states.

Secondly, the forceful bringing together of states that were designated for independence by the UN and the colonial masters has been a recipe for conflicts. For instance, the federation between Ethiopia and Eritrea, Sudan and South Sudan, Cameroon and Southern Cameroons, etc., all failed as the stronger states ended up annexing the smaller ones. Even Senegal and Gambia failed to maintain the Senegambia federation or evolve to a unitary state. War has consumed these states.



The root causes of the Southern Cameroon conflict have never been addressed for fear that the country will regain its sovereignty and take away the resources Cameroon's economy depend on for growth. The fact that the government keeps insisting that the problem lies in differences in language, culture and tradition are all political fabrications aimed at twisting the facts. The root cause lies in the deceitful implementation of UN resolution 1415 of 10 December 1960 and abolition of the 1972 federation that changed the form of the union agreed upon during the Fouban conference of 1961.

The systematic closure of Southern Cameroons institutions after 1961 (e.g. the house of Chiefs, Prime ministerial position), the removal of Southern Cameroons symbols (e.g. the Blue and White flag, the Mobile Wing Police force), the closure of state corporations (e.g. Medino, Power Camp, National Produce Marketing Board, WADA, Amity and Cameroon bank, Tiko Warf and airport, etc.) and the renaming of Southern Cameroons to NW and SW provinces of Cameroon has been a bitter pile for Southern Cameroon nationalists to swallow. Worst still, the twisting of history (e.g. the celebration of 20<sup>th</sup> May instead of 1<sup>st</sup> October as independence day), the eradication of the Common Law and English system of educational and the over taxation of top Southern Cameroons entrepreneurs like Niba Auto, Nanga construction, etc. was considered as a means to destroy their businesses and wipe the Southern Cameroons identity.

Despite national and international pressure, the Biya's regime as the Ahidjo regime have remained unapologetic, arrogant, and reluctant to change course by calling for an inclusive dialogue. The national Dialogue held in November 2019 was largely a monologue because Southern Cameroon nationalist movements were absent. The declaration of President Paul Biya during the 2019 Paris Peace conference that his efforts to integrate the anglophone minority into the francophone majority have failed only buttress the fact that Southern Cameroons identity cannot be erased. The African Union and the UN Security Council must step in now to stop the bloodshed. If the current rate of indiscriminate killing, kidnappings and lawlessness continue, this may give room for terrorist organizations already operating in the North of Cameroon to infiltrate the territory and take the struggle. Terrorist groups such as the Islamic States, al-Qaeda and Boko Haram are known to exploit protracted conflicts especially by oppressed populations who feel abandoned by the international community. If this happens, the threat would not be limited to Southern Cameroon but extend to the region and the world at large.

## Bibliographic references

- Africa News (2019), *Cameroon's human rights record questioned by UN, EU and US*, 07.Mar.2019. [Online]. [Consult. 03.Apr.2019]. Available at: <https://www.africanews.com/2019/03/07/cameroon-s-human-rights-record-questioned-by-un-eu-and-us>.
- African Business Magazine (2012), *A Brief History of the CFA Franc*. *African Business*, 19 February 2012. [Online]. [Consult. 10.Nov.2019]. Available at: <https://africanbusinessmagazine.com/uncategorised/a-brief-history-of-the-cfa-franc>.
- Amindeh, Blaise Atabong (2017), *The crisis in Cameroon's English-speaking regions has turned violent with ombings*, 22.Sep.2017. [Online]. [Consult. 05.Oct.2018]. Available at: <https://qz.com/africa/1084943/cameroons-anglophone-crisis-turns-violent-as-president-paul-biya-speak-at-unga-2017>.
- Amnesty International (2018), *Cameroon: Horrific violence escalates further in Anglophone regions*, 18.Sep.2018. [Online]. [Consult. 16.Apr.2019]. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/09/cameroon-horrific-violence-escalates-further-in-anglophone-regions>.

- Andzongo, Sylvain (2019), *Paris Peace Forum: Paul Biya explains the background of the Anglophone crisis*, Business in Cameroon. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.businessincameroon.com/public-management/1311-9677-paris-peace-37forum-paul-biya-explains-the-background-of-the-anglophone-crisis>.
- Anyangwe, C. (2014a), A country decolonized becomes colonizer: Republique du Cameroun's colonial occupation of the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia). In: Achankeng Fonken (eds.). *British Southern Cameroons: Nationalism & Conflict in Postcolonial Africa*. Vitoria, Canada: Friesen Press, pp. 1-12.
- (2009), *Betrayal of Too Trusting a People. The UN, the UK and the Trust Territory of the Southern Cameroons*. African Books Collective. Langaa RPCIG.
- Awason, Nicodemus F. (2000), "The Reunification Question in Cameroon History: Was the Bride an Enthusiastic or a Reluctant One?", in *African Today*, vol. 47: 2, Africa Today Associates, pp. 91-119.
- (1998), *Colonial Backgound to the Development of Autonomist Tendencies in Anglophone Cameroon, 1946-1961*, *Journal of World Studies*, 15(1), pp. 168-183.
- Ayim, Martin (2010), *Former British Southern Cameroons journey towards complete decolonization, independence, and sovereignty: a comprehensive compilation of efforts and historical documentation*. Bloomington, Indiana: Author house.
- (2008), *Former British Southern Cameroons Journey Towards Complete Decolonization, independence, and sovereignty*. Vol 2. ISBN-13: 978-1434365200.
- Benjamin, Jacques (1972), *Les Camerounais Occidentaux*. Presses de l'Université: Montreal.
- Business in Cameroon (2019), *Paris Peace Forum: Paul Biya explains the background of the Anglophone crisis*, 13.Nov.2019. [Online]. [Consult. 18.Nov.2019]. Available at: <https://www.businessincameroon.com/public-management/1311-9677-paris-peace-forum-paul-biya-explains-the-background-of-the-anglophone-crisis>.
- Cameroon News Agency (2019), *Thursday's incidents in Wum and Nkambe central; casualties you should know 16 March*, 14.Mar.2019. [Online]. [Consult. 30.Jul.2019]. Available at: <http://cameroonnewsagency.com/thursdays-incidents-in-wum-and-nkambe-central-casualties-you-should-know>.
- Crawford, James (1997), *State Practice and International Law in Relation to Unilateral Secession: Report*, p. 57, Canada. Department of Justice.
- Daily Nation (2017), *Four Cameroon soldiers killed in restive Anglophone region*, 29.Nov.2017. [Online]. [Consult. 29.Mar.2019]. Available at: <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/africa/4-Cameroon-soldiers-killed/1066-4207694-10cknvr/index.html>.
- Efi, Tembon (2018), *Crisis in the Republic of the Cameroon: An Overview of the Anglophone Crisis 2016 2018*. Rayburn Africa, Global health, Global Human Rights and International Organizations.
- Eyango, Sombaye J. R. (2018), *Inside the Virtual Ambazonia: Separatism, Hate Speech, Disinformation and Diaspora in the Cameroon Anglophone Crisis*. Thesis (Masters) 1158. University of San Francisco.
- Fanso, V. G. (2014), *British Southern Cameroon's independence by joining*. In Fonken, A. (Ed.) (2014), *British Southern Cameroons: Nationalism & Conflict in postcolonial Africa*. Vitoria, BC, Canada: Friesen Press.
- Fonken, Achankeng (2014), *The Fouban Constitutional Talks and Prior Intentions of Negotiating: A Historico-Theoretical Analysis of a False Negotiation and Ramifications for Political Developments in Cameroon*, *Journal of Global Initiatives* 14:10.
- Fossun, H. (2004), *The UN and the decolonization process in Africa: Case for Southern Cameroon's restoration of statehood*. African Orbit, African Leader's Lectures Series, 1(1).
- Gaillard, P. (1994), *Ahmadou Ahidjo (1922-1989)*. Paris: Jalivres.
- Human Rights Watch (2019), *New attacks on civilians by Troops, separatists. At Least 170 Killed; Hundreds of Homes Burned*, 28.Mar.2019. [Online]. [Consult. 27.Apr.2019]. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/03/28/cameroon-new-attacks-civilians-troops-separatists>.

- International Crisis Group (2019), *Crise anglophone au Cameroun, comment arriver aux pourparlers*, Report N.º 272/Africa, 2.May.2019. [Online]. [Consult. 12.May.2019]. Available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/fr/africa/central-africa/cameroon/272-crise-anglophone-au-cameroun-comment-arriver-aux-pourparlers>.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2018), 10 Conflicts to Watch in 2019, 28.Dec.2018. [Online]. [Consult. 10.Jan.2019]. Available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/10-conflicts-watch-2019>.
- Journal du Cameroun (2019), *Cameroun: Security forces kill two separatist fighters in Mbengwi*, 06.Feb.2019. [Online]. [Consult. 10.Oct.2019]. Available at: <https://www.journalducameroun.com/en/cameroon-security-forces-kill-two-separatist-fighters-in-mbengwi>.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2017), *Who really is Hon Joseph Wirba?*, 28.Jun.2017. [Online]. [Consult. 06Dec.2019]. Available at: [www.journalducameroun.com/en/really-hon-joseph-wirba](http://www.journalducameroun.com/en/really-hon-joseph-wirba).
- Konings, Piet and Nyamnjoh, Francis B. (2003), *Negotiating an Anglophone Identity. A Study of the Politics of Recognition and Representation in Cameroon*. Leiden-Boston, Brill, Afrika-Studiecentrum Series, Vol. 1, p. 230.
- Meyomesse, Enoch (2015), *Ahidjo's Forceful Takeover*. [Online]. [Consult. 10.Nov.2019]. Available at: <https://cameroonpostline.com/ahidjos-forceful-takeover>.
- Reuters (2019), *France says to continue military cooperation with Cameroon*, 07.Feb.2019. [Online]. [Consult. 19.Oct.2020]. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-france-cameroon/france-says-to-continue-military-cooperation-with-cameroon-idUSKCNIPWIRA>.
- Robbie, G. and Jefcoate, O. (2019), African Governments Rush to Hire Trump-Linked Lobbyists, 06.Aug.2019. [Online]. [Consult. 19.Jun.2019]. Available at: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/08/06/cameroon-biya-fara-african-governments-rush-to-hire-trump-linked-lobbyists>.
- Southern Cameroons Plebiscite Order in Council (1960), *Southern Cameroons Notice N.º 36, "The Two Alternatives" Southern Cameroons Gazette*, N.º 4. Vol 7, 27<sup>th</sup> January 1961.
- Takougang, Joseph and Amin, Julius (Ed.) (2018), *Post-Colonial Cameroon: Politics, Economics, and Society*, New York: Lexington Books, pp. 78–80.
- The Guardian Newspaper (2018), *This is a genocide: villages burn as war rages in blood-soaked Cameroon*, 30.Mar.2019. [Online]. [Consult. 18.Jun.2019]. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/may/30/cameroon-killings-escalate-anglophone-crisis>.
- The New York Times (2018), *American Missionary Killed in Cameroon Amid Armed Conflict*, 30.Oct.2018. [Online]. [Consult. 28.Sep.2019]. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/30/world/africa/american-missionary-killed-cameroon.html>.
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees (2019), *Supplementary Appeal, Cameroon situation: responding to the needs of IDPs and Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria*, 30.Mar.2019. [Online]. [Consult. 15.May.2019]. Available at: <http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/UNHCR%20Cameroon%202019%20Supplementary%20Appeal%20%28March%202019%29.pdf>.
- Voice of America (2017), *Gunmen cross from Nigeria, attack Cameroon border post: witnesses*, 25.Jan.2018. [Online]. [Consult. 14.Nov.2019]. Available at: <https://www.voanews.com/africa/gunmen-cross-nigeria-attack-cameroon-border-post-witnesses>.
- Weldeghiorghis, Tedla Michael (2014), *The Eritrean Liberation Front: Social and Political Factors Shaping Its Emergence, Development and Demise, 1960-1981*. Master thesis. The Netherlands: Leiden University.



# A inação das Comunidades Econômicas Regionais no contexto da crise nos Camarões: Um retorno ao passado?

Guilherme Ziebell de Oliveira\* e Nilton César Fernandes Cardoso\*\*


pp. 77-93

## Introdução

As eleições presidenciais nos Camarões, em outubro de 2018, marcadas por tensões e violência, trouxeram à atenção da comunidade internacional o cenário de grave crise que vinha sendo enfrentado no país africano, historicamente dividido em duas regiões, uma majoritariamente anglófona (compreendendo cerca de 20 % da população camaronês) e outra predominantemente francófona. As decisões tomadas pelo governo camaronês – formado majoritariamente por indivíduos francófonos –, em 2016, de impor o francês como língua oficial em todas as escolas do país e de nomear juízes francófonos para atuar nas regiões Sudoeste e Noroeste dos Camarões – estas majoritariamente anglófonas – levaram a uma escalada das tensões. Diante disso, diversos protestos contrários às medidas adotadas passaram a acontecer em tais regiões. Em resposta, as forças de segurança camaronesas foram acionadas, passando a reprimir as manifestações – em muitos casos com o uso da violência.

Esse contexto levou a um agravamento expressivo da situação, com uma significativa escalada da violência e a eventual declaração unilateral de secessão das regiões anglófonas do restante do país em 2017. Diante da situação, as forças do governo intensificaram a sua atuação, e o Camarões mergulhou em um conflito armado, com severas consequências humanitárias. A despeito dessa realidade, até o final de 2018, as Comunidades Econômicas Regionais (RECs) das quais o Camarões é parte, a Comunidade Econômica dos Estados da África Central, (ECCAS, na sigla em inglês), e a Comunidade Econômica e Monetária dos Estados da África Central (CEMAC), adotaram uma postura de inação, permitindo o livre desenrolar do conflito.

Tal comportamento das RECs, contudo, apresenta pouca coerência com o esperado no contexto securitário africano do século XXI. A transformação da Organização da Unidade Africana (OUA) em União Africana (UA), no início dos anos 2000, teve como principal marca a substituição da noção de “não-intervenção” nos assuntos dos Estados-membros pela de “não-indiferença”. Esta mudança atribuiu à UA, e também às diversas RECs, não apenas o direito, mas também a responsabilidade de intervir em situações em que os

 10.21747/doi.org/0874-2375/afr33a6

\* Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil (UFRGS).

\*\* Universidade de Cabo Verde (Uni-CV).

Estados-membros se tornassem focos de instabilidade, promovessem violações dos direitos humanos, crimes contra a humanidade, genocídios ou mesmo mudanças inconstitucionais de governo.

Diante de tal contexto, busca-se, nesse artigo, evidenciar que a inexistência de uma ação mais assertiva da ECCAS e da CEMAC na estabilização da crise camaronesa está em desacordo não apenas com o panorama securitário africano do século XXI, mas também com o histórico de atuação de ambas comunidades na busca por garantir a estabilidade da África Central. Para tanto, o artigo será dividido em três seções, além desta introdução e da conclusão. Primeiro, apresenta uma breve discussão a respeito da transformação do panorama securitário africano no início do Século XXI, dando especial atenção à transformação da OUA em UA e apresentando o papel das RECs nesse contexto. Em seguida, são discutidos os processos de criação e evolução da ECCAS e da CEMAC, dando especial atenção para a sua atuação em tentativas de garantir a estabilidade da África Central, de forma a evidenciar as suas estruturas institucionais e como esperava-se que fossem suas atuações na crise dos Camarões. Por fim, é realizada uma análise da crise camaronesa, de suas raízes até 2018, de forma a identificar os principais elementos que levaram ao seu surgimento e evolução, bem como aqueles fundamentais para sua resolução, levando em consideração as atuações da ECCAS e da CEMAC na condução da situação.

## Os mecanismos africanos de prevenção e resolução de conflitos: da OUA a UA

Desde o início do processo de descolonização, em meados do século XX, o continente africano tem sido palco de conflitos armados de grande intensidade e crescente letalidade (Reno, 2011; Williams, 2014). Diante da ameaça que tais conflitos representavam para a consolidação dos Estados nascentes, em maio de 1963, os países africanos independentes criaram a Organização da Unidade Africana, baseada em ideais pan-africanistas e na ideia de criar uma estrutura forte e unificada para combater o jugo colonial e o racismo, e para promover o desenvolvimento econômico e a estabilização política dos países membros (Mays, 2003).

A Organização, contudo, era fortemente baseada em princípios<sup>1</sup> estritos de respeito à soberania de seus membros, o que contribuiu para que sua atuação e seu sucesso em intervenções militares e na estabilização do continente fossem bastante limitados (Dersso, 2014; Murithi, 2008). As diversas restrições institucionais e funcionais da OUA contribuíram para que a sua atuação fosse restringida em diversos eventos importantes que demandavam uma postura mais ativa (Cardoso *et al.*, 2018). Nesse contexto, ao longo das décadas de 1960 e 1970, as ações da Organização no âmbito securitário restringiram-se à mediação de disputas fronteiriças, utilizando abordagens *ad hoc* e o envio de pequenas missões de observação de cessar-fogo. A Organização também desempenhou um papel central no apoio aos movimentos de libertação nacional, na articulação de uma posição comum para o continente em relação aos regimes racistas na África Austral (África do Sul e Rodésia) e no desenvolvimento econômico africano (Adebajo, 2013; Chazan *et al.*, 1999). A primeira tentativa da OUA de realizar uma missão de manutenção da paz teve lugar somente na década de 1980, diante da intensificação da guerra civil iniciada no Chade na década anterior (Cardoso *et al.*, 2018; Chazan *et al.*, 1999). A missão, todavia, diante das inúmeras dificuldades enfrentadas, se mostrou um fracasso, e após o seu encerramento, a OUA somente voltou a se envolver com processos de pacificação no continente na década

<sup>1</sup> Foram definidos sete princípios-chave que guiariam a sua atuação, dos quais se destacam três: a igualdade soberana entre os Estados-membros; a não interferência nos assuntos internos dos demais Estados-membros; o respeito à soberania e à integridade territorial dos demais Estados-membros (OUA, 1963).

de 1990. A partir daí, todavia, não houve mais o envio de tropas, mas sim de missões neutras de observação da paz. Paralelamente, uma série de discussões passou a ter lugar na OUA, começando em 1989, com o Movimento Kampala, e se aprofundando ao longo dos anos 1990, no sentido de criar um mecanismo capaz de viabilizar a atuação da organização em situações de crise no continente<sup>2</sup> (Adebajo, 2013; Mays, 2003).

Com o final da Guerra Fria a África perdeu grande parte de sua importância estratégica para as potências centrais e, logo, a sua capacidade de barganha internacional. O resultado desse processo foi a progressiva marginalização do continente no sistema internacional, acompanhada de forte debilidade econômica, e de crescente instabilidade política. Com isso, diversos países africanos enfrentaram conflitos internos de grande intensidade e letalidade que, marcados pela emergência de fenômenos como os senhores da droga, as guerras de milícias e os “diamantes de sangue”, e destituídos – para as potências centrais – de caráter estratégico, foram retratados como guerras tribais, bárbaras e irracionais (Taylor *et al.*, 2004).

Nesse contexto, o fracasso das intervenções da ONU na Somália (1993) e em Ruanda (1994), somado à falta de interesse demonstrada pelas antigas potências atuantes na região pela manutenção da paz e da estabilidade africanas, deixava cada vez mais clara a necessidade das lideranças africanas buscarem soluções internas para os problemas do continente através da institucionalização de uma série de mecanismos de aquiescência (prevenção, monitoramento, intervenção, resolução de conflitos) e meios que visassem à estabilização da África e à promoção do desenvolvimento econômico integrado (Cardoso *et al.*, 2018). Assim, teve início um longo processo de reformas que culminou no estabelecimento de uma nova Arquitetura Africana de Paz e Segurança (APSA), em 2002, com adoção de uma ampla agenda de segurança e defesa.

No âmbito sub-regional, assistiu-se à expansão e ao fortalecimento do escopo das Comunidades Econômicas Regionais (RECS) engajadas no processo de administração de conflitos e cooperação em matéria de segurança. Nesse sentido, a partir da década de 1990, as organizações sub-regionais, que tiveram um papel marginal na manutenção da paz e segurança continentais durante o período da Guerra Fria, adotaram uma nova agenda regional de cooperação, que passou a incluir questões de segurança e defesa, com base no que dispõe o Capítulo VIII, artigos 52 e 53 da Carta da ONU, com o objetivo de responder de forma satisfatória aos novos e renovados desafios de segurança que se apresentavam. Nesse contexto, na África Ocidental, a Comunidade Econômica dos Estados da África Ocidental (ECOWAS) criou, em 1990, o Grupo de Monitoramento da Comunidade (ECOMOG) para intervir na guerra civil na Libéria e, em 1999, foi instituído o órgão responsável pelas questões de segurança da Comunidade. Após a intervenção na Libéria, a ECOWAS também foi responsável por intervir em momentos de crise em Serra Leoa, Costa do Marfim, Guiné-Bissau, Guiné e Mali, realizando mediações e enviando missões de manutenção e também de imposição da paz.

Na África Austral, em 1994, a Conferência de Coordenação para o Desenvolvimento da África Austral (SADCC) foi transformada em Comunidade para o Desenvolvimento da África Austral (SADC) e, em 1996, foi criado o Órgão para Cooperação em Política, Defesa e Segurança da Comunidade (OPDS), baseado num conceito amplo de segurança. A SADC foi responsável pelas intervenções militares nos conflitos na República Democrática do Congo e no Reino do Lesoto nos finais da década de 1990 e mediou dezenas de crises políticas na sub-região.

<sup>2</sup> Em 1993, foi estabelecido o Mecanismo para a Prevenção, Manutenção e Resolução de Conflitos (MCPMR) da OUA, cujo objetivo era prevenir e auxiliar na resolução dos conflitos no continente, que acabou sem muito efeito na prática (Adebajo, 2013).

Na África Central, a Comunidade Econômica dos Estados da África Central (ECCAS) institucionalizou, em 2002, o Conselho de Paz e Segurança da África Central (COPAX) e a Força Multinacional da África Central (FOMAC) e interveio em diversas crises político-militares na região. No Chifre da África, a despeito da Autoridade Intergovernamental para o Desenvolvimento (IGAD) não possuir uma força militar de intervenção, a organização mediu com sucesso a Segunda Guerra Civil Sudanesa (1983-2005) (Akokpari *et al.*, 2014; Francis, 2006).

No âmbito continental, em 1999, teve início um longo processo de reforma da OUA, que culminou na sua substituição, em 2002, pela União Africana, a qual adquiriu um escopo conceitual e institucional mais amplo (Badmus, 2015). Na esfera securitária, a principal mudança em relação a sua predecessora foi substituição do princípio da “não intervenção” pelo princípio da “não-indiferença”, e a introdução da noção de intervenção legítima nos assuntos internos dos Estados membros, caso eles se tornassem focos de instabilidade interna, promovessem violações dos direitos humanos, genocídio, crimes contra a humanidade ou mudanças inconstitucionais de governo (Mwanasali, 2008; Williams, 2014). Assim, a UA não só tem a responsabilidade de intervir (sem necessidade de consentimento das partes) para proteger a população e restaurar a paz e a estabilidade, mas, sobretudo, intervir para prevenir que situações de violência e instabilidade ocorram (Apuuli, 2018; Mwanasali, 2008). A UA assumiu, nesse contexto, a responsabilidade primária na manutenção de paz e segurança no continente, atuando em estreita cooperação com as RECs e a ONU.

### **ECCAS/CEMAC e os desafios de segurança na África Central**

A África Central é formada por nove países de grande diversidade política, econômica, linguística e populacional, abrangendo uma vasta área geográfica que se estende da costa Ocidental atlântica (Golfo da Guiné) até o deserto do Saara. Sua população é estimada em cerca de 158,3 milhões de habitantes. Em termos securitários, a região foi marcada por décadas de instabilidade política (tensões internas, golpes e conflitos armados) em grande parte dos Estados e pelas constantes intervenções militares francesas nas suas ex-colônias para salvaguardar seus interesses (Adebajo, 2013).

A materialização desta política francesa se deu, historicamente, através de acordos de cooperação militar assinados entre a ex-metrópole e os países francófonos. De fato, no período pós-independência, a França aumentou sua influência política e militar na região, firmando pactos de defesa com diversos países e oferecendo vultosos apoios econômicos e militares às suas ex-colônias. Paris manteve bases militares no Chade, no Gabão e na República Centro Africana (RCA), as quais lhe permitiam intervir rapidamente na região para defender seus interesses em caso de instabilidade interna ou de ameaça externa (Taylor, 2010).

No início da década de 1980, tendo por base as estratégias estabelecidas pelo Plano de Ação de Lagos (LPA), os países da região buscaram um instrumento capaz de amenizar a crise e promover o desenvolvimento econômico. Em linhas gerais, as estratégias estabelecidas pelo LPA se baseavam em seis princípios básicos: a independência como base para o desenvolvimento; a equidade na distribuição de bem-estar como objetivo fundamental do desenvolvimento; a expansão do setor público como elemento fundamental do desenvolvimento; o direcionamento do capital externo para os setores mais carentes ou com financiamento inadequado; a efetivação mais rápida possível da cooperação e da integração interafricanas; e, a luta pelo desenvolvimento de uma Nova Ordem Econômica Internacional (NOEI), mais favorável aos países africanos e do Terceiro Mundo (Taylor, 2010).



Nesse contexto, em outubro de 1983, sob a liderança do Gabão, que buscava conter a influência de Camarões na União Econômica e Aduaneira dos Estados da África Central (UDEAC), foi aprovado o Tratado de Libreville, criando oficialmente a Comunidade Econômica dos Estados da África Central (ECCAS), composta por dez Estados da região<sup>3</sup>. Sediada em Libreville, no Gabão, a ECCAS entrou em funcionamento em 1985, buscando, através do incremento da relação comercial entre seus membros e da cooperação em programas de desenvolvimento, acelerar o crescimento econômico autossustentável, tendo por meta a integração econômica entre esses países. Contudo, a crise econômica e a instabilidade política na região inviabilizaram o funcionamento pleno da organização ao longo da década de 1980 (Adebajo, 2013; Nagar *et al.*, 2018).

No início dos anos 1990, com a escalada de novos conflitos na região<sup>4</sup> e a relutância da comunidade internacional em intervir, as lideranças da região passaram a buscar soluções internas para resolver os problemas regionais. Nesse contexto, por iniciativa do presidente camaronês, Paul Biya, teve início, ainda no final da década de 1980, um processo de revitalização da ECCAS, com apoio da ONU. Foram realizados dois seminários, em 1988 e em 1991, buscando analisar a possibilidade da inclusão de uma agenda regional de segurança nos objetivos da ECCAS. Em 1992, a ONU estabeleceu o Comitê Consultivo Permanente das Nações Unidas para as Questões de Segurança na África Central (CCPNU-QSAC),<sup>5</sup> que passou a trabalhar em estrita cooperação com os países membros da organização. Diante da paralização da ECCAS, o Comitê se transformou gradualmente em um instrumento de comunicação entre os Estados da África Central em questões relacionadas à segurança (Francis, 2006; ICG, 2011).

Em 1994, cinco Estados membros da ECCAS<sup>6</sup> assinaram um Pacto de Não Agressão (PNA). Dois anos depois, os demais membros também assinaram o PNA, que teve pouco efeito prático (ICG, 2011). Em fevereiro de 1998, em Libreville, durante a Cúpula Extraordinária da ECCAS, os Estados-membros não só concordaram em relançar a organização, como também decidiram ampliar o escopo de cooperação, passando a incluir uma agenda de segurança. O objetivo principal era criar uma estrutura institucional capaz de dar uma resposta política e militar rápida e assertiva, além de prevenir conflitos na região, criando, assim, um ambiente regional propício ao desenvolvimento econômico de seus membros (Meyer, 2015).

O principal avanço, contudo, foi a assinatura do Protocolo para o Estabelecimento do Conselho de Paz e Segurança da África Central (COPAX), em fevereiro de 1999,<sup>7</sup> cujo objetivo era construir capacidades efetivas de apoio humanitário, manutenção e construção da paz na região. Baseado no modelo do CCPNU-QSAC e do Mecanismo de Prevenção, Resolução, Gestão, Manutenção de Paz e Segurança de Conflitos da ECOWAS, o COPAX é um órgão consultivo e decisório e um fórum de diálogo sobre paz e segurança, que reúne anualmente os Ministros do Interior, de Defesa e de Relações Internacionais para avaliar as propostas estabelecidas pelo Departamento de Segurança e Defesa,<sup>8</sup> que tem por função planejar e supervisionar as intervenções militares da ECCAS. Em junho, o COPAX foi integrado à estrutura da ECCAS. O Conselho possui três órgãos técnicos: a Comissão de

<sup>3</sup> Burundi, Camarões, Chade, Congo, Gabão, Guiné Equatorial, São Tomé e Príncipe, República Centro Africana, Ruanda e Zaire (atual República Democrática do Congo).

<sup>4</sup> Pode-se citar, como exemplo, as guerras civis no Burundi (1993-2003), na RDC (1996-7; 1998-2003); e na Ruanda (1990-4).

<sup>5</sup> Além da CCPNU-QSAC, a UNECA (Comissão Econômica das Nações Unidas para África) e a União Europeia foram também importantes apoiadores do processo de revitalização da ECCAS.

<sup>6</sup> Congo (Brazzaville), Gabão, São Tomé e Príncipe, Camarões e Guiné Equatorial.

<sup>7</sup> No mesmo ano Angola foi admitida na organização.

<sup>8</sup> Composto por militares, chefes de polícia e especialistas em segurança.

Defesa e Segurança (CDS); a Força Multinacional da África Central (FOMAC); e o Mecanismo de Alerta Rápido da África Central (MARAC) (Francis, 2006; Meyer, 2011).

O CDS é responsável por decisões ligadas a assuntos de Paz e Segurança e pelo envio de tropas de manutenção/imposição da paz. Reúne os chefes de estado-maior dos Estados membros e os comandantes-chefes das forças armadas e policiais. Também aconselha a conferência de Chefes de Estado e de Governo sobre questões de segurança e defesa, bem como sobre a organização de operações militares (Meyer, 2015). O MARAC é responsável por avaliar e mapear as situações potencialmente desestabilizadoras (em termos políticos, sociais e econômicos) na sub-região, de forma a prevenir a eclosão de conflitos. Sediada em Libreville, o Mecanismo entrou em operação em 2007. A FOMAC, por sua vez, é um órgão não permanente responsável pelas operações de manutenção de paz na região<sup>9</sup>. A força possui uma base logística em Douala, nos Camarões (Adebajo, 2013; Meyer, 2015).

Em 2000, os Chefes de Estado e de Governo da ECCAS assinaram um protocolo que estabelecia os princípios fundadores e os órgãos da COPAX, além de um Pacto de Defesa Mútua entre os Estados membros, que previa que agressões contra qualquer um dos Estados membros seriam consideradas como ameaças coletivas, sendo respondidas, portanto, de forma coletiva. Nesse contexto, em 2002, os países adotaram o Protocolo para o Estabelecimento do COPAX, que entrou em vigor no ano seguinte (IGC, 2011). Vale ressaltar que, além do presidente camaronês, Paul Biya, os presidentes Omar Bongo, do Gabão, e Denis Sassou Nguesso, da República do Congo, tiveram um papel central na reforma da ECCAS, o que reflete suas preocupações internas e regionais e as do seu principal aliado externo, França.

A partir de 2007, com a proliferação da pirataria no Golfo da Guiné, a questão da segurança marítima passou a ser amplamente discutida no âmbito da ECCAS. Em 2009, foi criado o Centro Regional de Segurança Marítima na África Central (CRESMAC), sediado no Congo-Brazzaville, cujo objetivo é o combate da pirataria e do narcotráfico. O CRESMAC faz parte da estratégia marítima da ECCAS para o Golfo da Guiné, contudo, não está operacional em sua totalidade, possuindo atividades apenas na Zona D<sup>10</sup> e onde já foi instituído um centro de combate à Pirataria em Douala, nos Camarões. A estratégia marítima da ECCAS está assentada em seis pilares principais: gerenciamento comum de informações; medidas de vigilância locais; harmonização jurídica e funcional das operações marítimas dos membros; autofinanciamento através de um imposto comunitário; compra e manutenção de equipamentos voltados à estratégia; e institucionalização de uma conferência marítima para a África Central. Em conformidade com estas diretrizes, a CRESMAC criou um inventário dos meios navais disponíveis dos países membros que possam auxiliar na tentativa de atingir os objetivos definidos. Em 2012, foi estabelecida a Zona E,<sup>11</sup> a primeira zona operacional da comunidade no Atlântico Sul, em conformidade com as diretrizes do CRESMAC (Meyer, 2015; Ukeje *et al.*, 2013).

Paralelamente ao processo de revitalização da ECCAS, em 1994, foi estabelecida, por seis países da região,<sup>12</sup> uma nova organização regional de cooperação. Com sede em Bangui, na RCA, a Comunidade Econômica e Monetária dos Estados da África Central (CEMAC), tem por objetivo monitorar e promover a convergência das políticas econômicas nacionais,

<sup>9</sup> Com o objetivo de avaliar a capacidade operacional da FOMAC e promover a interoperabilidade das forças armadas dos países da região, a ECCAS planejou e conduziu diversos exercícios multidimensionais desde o início dos anos 2000. Pode-se citar, por exemplo, "Biyongho-2003", no Gabão; "Sawa-2006", nos Camarões; "Barh-El-Gazel-2007", no Gabão; "Kwanza-2010", em Angola e; "Loango-2014", na República do Congo. Este último contou com a participação de 2500 contingentes de todos os Estados membros da ECCAS, com exceção da RCA e de São Tomé e Príncipe (Meyer, 2015).

<sup>10</sup> Esta zona inclui Camarões, Gabão, Guiné Equatorial e São Tomé e Príncipe.

<sup>11</sup> Esta zona inclui Benim, Níger, Nigéria e Togo – responsáveis pela segurança e devem compartilhar informações e recursos (Ukeje *et al.*, 2013).

<sup>12</sup> Camarões, Gabão, Guiné Equatorial, Congo, República Centro-Africana e Chade.

coordenar as políticas setoriais e, progressivamente, criar um mercado comum. A CEMAC entrou em funcionamento em 1999, após a ratificação do tratado de N'Djamena, substituindo oficialmente a União Econômica e Aduaneira dos Estados da África Central (UDEAC), estabelecida em 1966 (Meyer, 2008).

Diferentemente da ECCAS, a CEMAC não possui uma estrutura institucional voltada para as questões de segurança, embora tenha enviado uma missão de paz para República Centro Africana entre 2002 e 2008, a Força Multinacional na República Centro-Africana (FOMUC). Após o encerramento da missão, em 2008, a organização voltou a centrar-se em questões econômicas e monetárias, relegando as questões de segurança na região à ECCAS e à UA. Percebe-se, portanto, que a CEMAC assumiu a responsabilidade pela manutenção da paz na RCA no momento em que a estrutura securitária da ECCAS estava sendo desenvolvida (Adebajo, 2013; Francis, 2006).

O primeiro grande teste à nova estrutura institucional e funcional estabelecida, no âmbito da ECCAS foi a crise política na República Centro Africana, que tem as suas origens em 1993, quando o então presidente, Ange-Félix Pattassé, foi eleito e passou a utilizar o aparato estatal em benefício próprio e daqueles de sua etnia. A situação interna se agravou em 1996, quando ocorreram três motins dentro das forças armadas, que reivindicavam pagamentos dos salários em atraso. Em novembro, a França estabeleceu um pequeno contingente militar no país, que acabou entrando em confrontos com os grupos contrários ao governo, gerando diversas críticas (ICG, 2011; Williams, 2014).

No mesmo ano, durante a Cúpula Franco-Africana, foi discutida a crise na RCA e, por solicitação da França, seis países<sup>13</sup> concordaram em enviar tropas para o país. Desde a independência da RCA, a França exerce forte influência política, econômica e militar no país. Em 1979, por exemplo, o serviço secreto francês coordenou uma intervenção militar (*Operation Barracuda*) realizada pelas forças especiais francesas, que culminou na deposição do presidente Jean Bedel Bokassa, que meses antes havia se autoproclamado imperador, e foi reinstaurada a República, sob a presidência de David Dacko, o qual havia sido derrubado por Bokassa em 1965<sup>14</sup> (Chazan *et al.*, 1999; Meyer, 2011).

Em janeiro de 1997, foi estabelecida uma Comissão formada pelos presidentes do Gabão (Omar Bongo), Burkina Faso (Blaise Compaoré), Mali (Alpha Oumar Konaré) e do Chade (Idriss Déby), que foi responsável pela criação da Missão Africana para Monitorar a Implementação dos Acordos de Bangui (MISAB). Em fevereiro, com apoio financeiro e logístico da França, os 750 contingentes da MISAB desembarcaram em Bangui, com o mandato de monitorar a implementação do acordo de paz e supervisionar o processo de desarmamento. Contudo, as forças da Missão acabaram entrando em confronto com os grupos rebeldes, o que colocou em dúvida a sua neutralidade. Nesse contexto, após a morte de alguns soldados e de civis, as forças da MISAB anteciparam sua saída da RCA, em abril de 1998 (ICG, 2011). Ciente do fracasso da MISAB, o CSNU estabeleceu a Missão da ONU na RCA (MINURCA), com o mandato de supervisionar as eleições legislativas e presidenciais (previstas para 1998 e 1999, respetivamente); consolidar o cenário de segurança e estabilidade no país e; auxiliar na reforma das forças policiais. Em 1999, foram realizadas as eleições, vencidas por Pattassé. Com o cumprimento de seu mandato, a MINURCA foi encerrada em 2000 (ICG, 2011; Meyer, 2008).

Em 2001, no entanto, houve uma nova escalada de violência em Bangui, após uma tentativa de golpe, liderada pelo ex-chefe das Forças Armadas, General François Bozizé. Diante da situação, Pattassé solicitou uma intervenção militar da Comunidade dos Estados do

<sup>13</sup> Burkina Faso, Chade, Gabão, Mali, Senegal e Togo.

<sup>14</sup> Paris também manteve, até 1997, duas bases militares no país, *Bouar e Camp Béal* (Chazan *et al.*, 1999; Meyer, 2011).

Sahel-Saara (CEND-SAD) no país para reforçar a segurança e garantir a ordem interna. Atendendo ao pedido, Líbia, Sudão e Djibuti enviaram 300 soldados para a RCA, sob auspício da CEND-SAD, em apoio às forças governamentais. No ano seguinte, Pattassé recebeu ajuda adicional do líder rebelde, Jean Pierre Bemba, do Movimento de Libertação do Congo (MLC) (ICG, 2011; Meyer, 2011).

Em outubro de 2002, com a deterioração da situação interna, a CEMAC decidiu enviar uma força regional para a RCA, composta por contingentes de Camarões, Chade, Congo e Gabão, a fim de substituir a força da CEND-SAD. Em dezembro, os 350 soldados da FOMUC – contando com o apoio logístico e financeiro da França – foram enviados para Bangui, com o mandato de proteger o governo de Pattassé e assegurar a ordem interna (ICG, 2011; Meyer, 2011). A situação do país se agravou ainda mais quando, em março de 2003, um golpe de Estado derrubou o presidente Pattassé, levando o General Bozizé ao poder – sem que houvesse qualquer intervenção FOMUC. Em junho, com o reconhecimento do governo de Bozizé pela CEMAC, o mandato da FOMUC foi revisto, passando a supervisionar o processo de transição e de reconciliação nacional lançado pelo novo presidente e a criar condições para realização de eleições (Meyer, 2011).

Em maio de 2005, foram realizadas as eleições presidenciais, vencidas por François Bozizé. A paz, contudo, durou pouco tempo, e uma nova escalada de violência teve início a partir junho, com o surgimento de um novo grupo insurgente, o Exército Popular para a Restauração da República e da Democracia (APRRD). No ano seguinte, surgiram mais dois grupos rebeldes, a União das Forças Democráticas pelo Reagrupamento (UFDR) e a Frente Democrática do Povo Centro africano (FDPC) (Meyer, 2008).

Com a deterioração da situação interna e diante da dificuldade da FOMUC em cumprir seu mandato, em outubro de 2007, a CEMAC transferiu a autoridade da missão de paz na RCA para ECCAS, a qual havia feito um progresso significativo no sentido de institucionalizar um mecanismo de prevenção e resolução de conflito na região. Nesse contexto, em julho de 2008, após um período de transição, a FOMUC foi substituída pela Missão de Consolidação a Paz na RCA (MICOPAX), composta por 380 contingentes<sup>15</sup> de Camarões, Chade, Gabão e RDC, com o mandato de auxiliar o governo na reestruturação institucional, na Reforma do Setor de Segurança (RSS) e na implementação do programa de Desarmamento, Desmobilização e Reintegração (DDR) dos ex-combatentes; apoiar o processo de transição política no período pós-conflito; e coordenar a ajuda humanitária (Meyer, 2011).

Nesse contexto, em junho 2008, após intensos confrontos em Bangui, foram realizadas negociações, que culminaram na assinatura de um Acordo de Paz Abrangente com todos os grupos insurgentes, com exceção da FDPC,<sup>16</sup> e um cessar-fogo foi estabelecido. O acordo previa a DDR dos grupos armados e sua integração nas forças armadas, além da inclusão dos seus representantes no governo. Em 2011, foram realizadas eleições presidenciais, tendo sido vencidas, novamente, por Bozizé (ICG, 2011).

Em março de 2013, no entanto, um novo golpe de Estado (sob liderança de Michel Djotodia) foi realizado, culminando na guerra civil e em uma intervenção externa. Após a queda do governo Bozizé, a França aumentou o seu contingente no país e estabeleceu uma intervenção militar (*Operação Sanguiris*), que levou à derrubada de Djotodia, em dezembro de 2013. Nesse contexto, foi estabelecido um governo de transição, liderado por Catherine Samba-Panza, tendo como seu Primeiro-Ministro, Andre Nyazapeke. Ainda em

<sup>15</sup> Devido a complexa situação de segurança no país, o número de contingentes foi aumentado para 527, posteriormente.

<sup>16</sup> Em dezembro do mesmo ano, no entanto, a FDPC entrou no Diálogo Político Inclusive lançado pelo presidente Bozizé e foi incorporada ao governo de transição (Meyer, 2011).

dezembro, uma Missão de Paz da UA (MISCA) foi estabelecida, substituindo as forças de paz da MICOPAX (Williams, 2014).

A partir da análise realizada, percebe-se uma importante evolução na questão securitária na África Central a partir da criação de diversos mecanismos e instrumentos de prevenção, gerenciamento e resolução de conflitos – sobretudo no âmbito da ECCAS – desde o final dos anos 1990, dentre os quais o principal certamente foi o COPAX. Contudo, a situação de incessante instabilidade na República Centro Africana expôs os limites e as fragilidades desses mecanismos e seguiu mostrando-se como um importante desafio aos mecanismos e instrumentos de prevenção, gerenciamento e resolução de conflitos estabelecidos nos âmbitos da ECCAS e da CEMAC. Nesse sentido, tanto a FOMUC como a MICOPAX encontraram sérias dificuldades para cumprir seus mandatos e restabelecer a paz. Isso se deve, em parte, à falta de recursos financeiros, técnicos, materiais, logísticos e humanos. De modo semelhante à FOMUC, a maior parte dos recursos para operacionalização e sustentação da MICOPAX veio de atores não africanos, especialmente da França e União Europeia (UE). Nesse sentido, a França forneceu treinamento e apoio logístico aos países contribuintes com tropas na missão, e a UE financiou grande parte do orçamento da MICOPAX.

Por fim, cumpre lembrar que a ECCAS é responsável por uma das cinco Brigadas de Pronto Emprego (ECCASBRIG) da União Africana, operacionais desde 2016. O Núcleo de Planejamento Regional (PLANELM) e o quartel-general estão sediados em Libreville, no Gabão. A força centro-africana conta também com bases logísticas em Douala (operacional desde janeiro de 2018) e Yaoundé, nos Camarões. Esta força inclui os Estados membros da ECCAS (Apuuli, 2018; Williams, 2014).

A crise camaronesa, que se instalou em 2016, se impôs como um dos principais desafios à ECCAS na manutenção da paz e da estabilidade na sub-região. A posição central ocupada pelos Camarões nas organizações – sobretudo no que concerne à ECCAS – contribuiu significativamente para isso. De igual maneira, a crise se apresentou como um importante desafio à UA, não apenas por conta de seus pressupostos e responsabilidades auto-impostas, mas também por conta do grande potencial de desestabilização do conflito, que impactou não apenas os Camarões e a região central do continente, mas também a Nigéria.

### **A crise nos Camarões: de suas origens até 2018**

A atual crise vivida nos Camarões tem suas origens ainda no período colonial do país. Durante a Conferência de Berlim, a posse do território dos Camarões foi concedida aos alemães, que mantiveram um domínio colonial marcado pela violência contra as populações autóctones. Com a derrota alemã na Primeira Guerra Mundial, o país foi despojado de sua colônia, que teve seu domínio dividido entre a Inglaterra – que passou a governar o território a partir de Lagos, na Nigéria – e a França, com esta assumindo o controle da maior parte do território e incorporando-o à estrutura da África Equatorial Francesa. Ao longo das quatro décadas administradas por britânicos e franceses, ambas as regiões foram submetidas a sistemas culturais, legais, políticos, administrativos e sociais profundamente diferentes (Nana, 2016; Konings *et al.*, 2003).

Em 1.º de janeiro de 1960, a parte camaronesa sob domínio francês tornou-se independente, sendo seguida, em 1.º de outubro de 1961, pela Nigéria. No contexto da independência nigeriana, foi realizado, pela ONU,<sup>17</sup> um plebiscito com as populações da parcela

<sup>17</sup> UN General Assembly, “The future of the trust territory of the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration,” A/RES/1608. [Online]. Available at: <https://search.archives.un.org/united-nations-plebiscite-for-cameroons-under-united-kingdom-administration>.

anglófona dos Camarões, então administrada pelos britânicos, para que estes decidissem a qual das duas novas nações independentes gostariam de se incorporar. A porção setentrional do território (aproximadamente dois terços do total), marcada por uma forte influência islâmica que a aproximava das populações nigerianas, optou por ser incorporada à Nigéria (Englebert, 1991). O entendimento de que uma eventual incorporação ao país anglófono poderia representar uma supressão de qualquer importância política da região levou a porção austral, por sua vez, a optar por incorporar-se aos Camarões. Formou-se, assim, a República Federal dos Camarões, dotada de uma constituição que afirmava o respeito a ambas identidades culturais e garantia que a natureza federativa do novo país não seria alterada em constituições subsequentes (Merle, 1961; Awasom, 2000).

O primeiro presidente do país, Alhaji Ahmadou Ahidjo, líder da União Nacional de Camarões (UNC, apoiado pela França), manteve-se no poder de 1960 até 1982. Buscando fortalecer sua posição, ele adotou um modelo de governo centralizado, fortemente autoritário e marcado por repressão e cooptação (Mokam, 2012). Diante das críticas feitas pelos opositores, o presidente ordenou, em 1962, a prisão das diversas lideranças de oposição e, em 1968, banuiu todos os partidos políticos, exceto a UNC (Englebert, 1991). Em 1972, Ahidjo conseguiu fortalecer sua posição ainda mais, quando, contando com amplo apoio do eleitorado – majoritariamente francófono – foi aprovada uma nova constituição para o país, convertendo a Federação em um Estado unitário, a República Unida dos Camarões (Fomunyoh, 2017).

A despeito da mudança, todavia, características importantes da Federação foram mantidas. Para além de elementos simbólicos (como a bandeira com duas estrelas, representando as duas identidades culturais camaronesas), os arranjos de poder também foram mantidos. Havia o entendimento, ao longo do período federativo, de que em momentos em que a presidência do país fosse ocupada por um francófono, a vice-presidência – segundo cargo na linha de comando – deveria ser ocupada por um anglófono. Com a adoção da Constituição de 1972, o cargo de vice-presidente deixou de existir, e o Presidente da Assembleia Nacional passou a ser o segundo cargo na linha de comando. A ideia de equilíbrio (com um anglófono ocupando o cargo, enquanto o presidente fosse francófono), todavia, foi mantida (Fomunyoh, 2017).

O tênue equilíbrio que ainda restava, entretanto, passou a ser desmanchado a partir de 1975, quando foi criado o cargo de Primeiro Ministro, sendo assumido por Paul Biya, um francófono, e por ele mantido até 1982. O Presidente da Assembleia Nacional, assim, deixava de ser o segundo posto na linha de comando do país. Com a renúncia de Ahidjo ao poder, em 1982, Biya assumiu a presidência dos Camarões, intensificando o processo de centralização. Assim, em 1983 a região anglófona foi dividida em duas províncias (Sudoeste e Noroeste), e no ano seguinte uma nova constituição foi adotada, trazendo mudanças como a supressão do termo “unida” no nome do país, que passou a se chamar República dos Camarões, a adoção de uma nova bandeira – desta vez com apenas uma estrela –, e o restabelecimento do presidente da Assembleia Nacional como segundo na linha de comando nacional (Le Roux *et al.*, 2018).

Diante da situação, diversos grupos políticos anglófonos passaram a se organizar. Sua efetividade em avançar suas demandas, todavia, se mostrou bastante reduzida, especialmente diante da expansão do predomínio das referências culturais francesas e francófonas no período, contribuindo para reforçar ainda mais, entre as populações das províncias do Sudoeste e do Noroeste, o sentimento de exclusão e de ataque à sua cultura e identidade (Le Roux *et al.*, 2018). O descontentamento popular se agravou ainda mais a partir de meados da década de 1980, quando o país passou a enfrentar uma severa crise econômica – fruto, entre outros, de uma forte seca e da queda nos preços internacionais do petróleo.

Nesse contexto, as populações das regiões anglófonas, onde estavam localizadas as principais reservas de petróleo do país, entendiam que a situação era resultado da má gestão de Biya, e, por isso, intensificaram suas críticas ao governo. Para elas, além de o governo redirecionar grande parte das receitas do petróleo para outras regiões do país, muitas das vagas de trabalho – especialmente os cargos mais altos – no setor eram ocupadas por francófonos. Além disso, consideravam que os investimentos públicos na região eram muito reduzidos, o que fazia com que os benefícios advindos da exploração do petróleo fossem ainda menores do que poderiam ser, incrementando ainda mais as dificuldades econômicas<sup>18</sup> (Crisis Group, 2017). Diante disso, as pressões políticas sobre o governo de Biya se intensificaram significativamente. Como destaca Englebort (1991: 5),

*A crise econômica que começou em 1986 levou à emergência gradual de forças de oposição anteriormente latentes ou suprimidas, à uma reduzida tolerância pública à repressão e a um novo foco às diferenças étnicas e linguísticas. Tudo isso, por sua vez, se refletiu na economia, que sofreu ainda mais deterioração a partir de junho de 1991 por conta de uma campanha política que desestimula a atividade econômica (a chamada tática das “Cidades Fantasmas”) e que encoraja os cidadãos a boicotar o pagamento de impostos e a retirar seus depósitos do sistema bancário.*

Frente a essa situação, as eleições presidenciais de 1992 – as primeiras multipartidárias na história do país –, deram grandes esperanças de mudança para as populações anglófonas. O resultado, contudo, determinou a eleição de Paul Biya (com cerca de 40 % dos votos válidos), em um processo que foi amplamente contestado – especialmente porque o candidato que ficou em segundo lugar (com cerca de 36 % dos votos), John Fru Ndi, era um anglófono (Mbaku, 2004). Nesse contexto, em 1993, mais de 5000 membros da elite anglófona se reuniram na chamada Conferência de Todos os Anglófonos (AAC), e elaboraram a Declaração de Buéa, um documento que expressava uma posição anglófona comum à respeito de diversas questões – como desenvolvimento social, questões territoriais e reformas constitucionais –, além de demandar o retorno a um Estado federal. A despeito de atender algumas das demandas de reforma contidas na Declaração, a principal delas – a questão federativa – foi rejeitada pelo governo (Konings, 1996). Diante disso, uma nova Conferência foi realizada em 1994, elaborando outra Declaração que demandava a independência da região anglófona, caso o *status* federativo não fosse retomado pelo governo. A resposta de Yaoundé, todavia, foi novamente negativa (Balla, 2017). Para os anglófonos ficava claro, portanto, que a despeito de suas esperanças, seus anseios não seriam atendidos pelo governo de Biya, que buscava apenas a manutenção do *status quo* e a perpetuação de uma dominação francófona (Le Roux *et al.*, 2018).

Essa noção se reforçou ainda mais com a adoção de uma nova constituição, em 1996, que entre outras modificações estabelecia a criação de uma segunda casa do parlamento, um Senado composto por 100 assentos – 70 dos quais ocupados por membros eleitos e os 30 restantes indicados pelo presidente –, cujo cargo de presidente passava a ser o segundo posto na linha sucessória nacional (CIA, 2019). A criação do Senado, que dependia de um decreto presidencial, todavia, se deu apenas em 2013, com Marcel Niat Njifenji, um francófono, sendo eleito para sua presidência. Com isso – e com outras modificações realizadas pelas diversas emendas à Constituição dos Camarões – o anglófono mais próximo do comando do país, à época o Primeiro Ministro, passou a ser apenas o quinto na linha sucessória após o presidente, ficando atrás dos presidentes do Senado,

<sup>18</sup> O descontentamento das populações anglófonas se intensificou ainda mais diante da adoção, pelo governo, dos Programas de Ajuste Estrutural, uma vez que estas acreditavam que as principais empresas agroindustriais da região seriam fechadas ou vendidas, atendendo a interesses francófonos ou franceses (Crisis Group, 2017).

da Assembleia Nacional e do Conselho Econômico e Social, reforçando ainda mais o sentimento de marginalização experimentado por parcelas da população anglófona do país (Fomunyoh, 2017).

A partir de 2016, contudo, a situação nos Camarões passou por um agravamento ainda mais acentuado, especialmente a partir da decisão do governo, ainda comandado por Paul Biya, de nomear juizes e professores francófonos para atuarem nas províncias anglófonas do país. Em resposta, diversos protestos passaram a ser realizados na província do noroeste, considerando as mudanças como ataques à cultura e identidade anglófonas, e como formas de aumentar ainda mais a sua marginalização no sistema político e social camaronês. Após uma greve de juizes, realizada em outubro daquele ano, foi organizada, no início de novembro, uma passeata com a participação de centenas de pessoas, demandando, entre outros, a retomada do federalismo. A despeito do caráter inicialmente pacífico da passeata, as forças de segurança usaram a violência para tentar dispersar os manifestantes – ao que parte deles respondeu, igualmente, com violência, dando início a um enfrentamento direto, que teve como saldo um grande número de feridos (Crisis Group, 2017).

Uma nova passeata ocorreu no final do mês, em apoio aos professores da região, que entraram em greve em protesto às medidas adotadas em relação a educação na região, consideradas, por eles, como um ataque à sua cultura e identidade. Milhares de pessoas se juntaram à manifestação, protestando, entre outros, contra a marginalização das populações anglófonas no país. A resposta das forças do governo foi, novamente violenta, com um saldo de vários feridos, dezenas de presos e ao menos duas mortes. Os protestos, até então restritos à província do noroeste, passaram a ocorrer também na província do sudoeste, levando o governo a promover a militarização da região. As medidas adotadas, todavia, contribuíram para uma deterioração ainda maior da situação, que passou a ser marcada por uma reintensificação não só das manifestações, mas também da violência com que estas eram reprimidas – com diversos registros de abusos por parte das forças do governo – e do número de feridos e mortos em cada uma delas (Crisis Group, 2017).

Em dezembro de 2016, foi formado o Consórcio da Sociedade Civil Anglófona dos Camarões (CACSC), que passou a centralizar as demandas<sup>19</sup> das duas províncias anglófonas junto ao governo camaronês. As negociações, todavia, não avançaram. Diante do impasse, o CACSC conclamou a população anglófona a realizar a tática das Cidades Fantasmas, paralisando completamente todos os serviços das cidades da região ao menos um dia por semana. Em resposta, o governo federal ordenou a prisão de algumas das lideranças do CACSC e do Conselho Nacional dos Camarões do Sul (SCNC)<sup>20</sup>, além de interromper o acesso à internet das duas províncias – medidas que contribuíram para reforçar a animosidade das populações anglófonas em relação a Yaoundé (Okereke, 2018).

Protestos continuaram sendo realizados nas regiões anglófonas ao longo de toda a primeira metade de 2017, sem que houvesse uma escalada da violência. A partir de setembro, todavia, as manifestações passaram a se tornar, gradualmente, cada vez mais violentas, passando a ser acompanhadas por ataques a infraestruturas críticas e confrontos com as forças de segurança. Além disso, progressivamente os protestos passaram a abandonar as demandas por representação em um Estado federal, adotando a defesa da separação da região anglófona do restante do país, inclusive com a realização de um ato, em Nova York,

<sup>19</sup> As principais demandas eram o fim da marginalização imposta às regiões anglófonas; o retorno à Federação que era a base da União estabelecida à época da independência, em 1961; a preservação dos sistemas educacional e legal das regiões anglófonas; a libertação de mais de 100 pessoas presas pelo governo, envolvidas nos protestos realizados nas províncias anglófonas (Okereke, 2018).

<sup>20</sup> O SCNC é órgão administrativo da Conferência dos Povos dos Camarões do Sul (SCPC), que foi criado a partir da mudança de nome da Conferência de Todos os Anglófonos (Balla, 2017).



que aconteceu concomitantemente ao discurso proferido por Paul Biya nas Nações Unidas (Okereke, 2018).

Parte expressiva das manifestações que vinham sendo realizadas integravam as atividades planejadas pela *Southern Cameroons Ambazonia Consortium United Front* (SCAUF), um grupo formado por membros do CACSC e SCNC que se exilaram na Nigéria após as prisões de lideranças do grupo realizadas pelo governo, e que tinha como objetivo principal a independência da região anglófona sob o nome de República Federal da Ambazônia (Pedneault *et al.*, 2018). Nesse contexto, no dia 1 de outubro, data em que se comemorava aniversário da unificação dos Camarões, em 1961, a SCAUF e outros grupos pró-independência organizaram grandes manifestações que tinham como objetivo celebrar a declaração de independência da República Ambazônia, evento que foi marcado pelo hasteamento da bandeira da pretensa nova república, em detrimento da camaronesa, em diversas cidades das províncias de Noroeste e Sudoeste (Okereke, 2018).

Em resposta, teve início uma forte onda de repressão por parte das autoridades camaronesas. A administração Biya destacou forças para atuarem na repressão das manifestações, incluindo o Batalhão de Intervenção Rápida, que levaram a cabo operações militares e de segurança para enfrentar a situação, vista como ameaça a integridade territorial do país. Além de um grande número de feridos, mais de quinhentos civis foram presos, e ao menos vinte foram mortos nos enfrentamentos (AI, 2018). O Presidente, nesse contexto, chegou a declarar, em novembro de 2017, que o país estava em guerra, sob ataque de terroristas disfarçados de separatistas, de modo que todas as medidas de segurança necessárias seriam empregadas para restabelecer a paz (Okereke, 2018).

A intensificação das operações militares e de segurança levou mais de 30 mil pessoas a se deslocarem para as áreas de fronteira com a Nigéria, sendo que até abril de 2018, o Alto Comissariado das Nações Unidas para Refugiados havia registrado mais de 20 400 pedidos de asilo de camaroneses no país (UNHCR, 2018). O número de deslocados internos originários das regiões anglófonas também passou por um grande aumento, sendo estimado em mais de 150 000 no período (AI, 2018). Além disso, registrou-se também a ocorrência de violações ao território nigeriano, por parte das forças de segurança dos Camarões, em perseguições a militantes das Forças de Defesa da Ambazônia (ADF) que estariam lançando ataques às forças camaronesas a partir das áreas de fronteira com a Nigéria. Nesse contexto, em dezembro de 2017, o governo camaronês destacou mais contingentes para atuar na área de fronteira, por considerar possível uma escalada do conflito (Okereke, 2018).

Ao longo de 2018 a situação na região anglófona dos Camarões seguiu se deteriorando. Os constantes embates entre forças do governo e os grupos separatistas foram marcados por acusações mútuas de abusos contra as populações civis. Enquanto as forças de segurança têm sido acusadas de queimar vilarejos e praticar tortura, assassinatos extrajudiciais e prisões indiscriminadas, os grupos rebeldes são acusados de realizar sequestros, mutilações e assassinatos, além de ataques a professores, escolas e instalações de saúde – o que contribuiria para potencializar ainda mais as consequências humanitárias da crise (Husted *et al.*, 2019). Com a aproximação das eleições nos Camarões, em outubro de 2018, a situação tornou-se cada vez mais crítica no país, especialmente por conta da candidatura de Paul Biya a um sétimo mandato como presidente do país, o que, entre outros, motivou grupos separatistas a conclamarem um boicote ao pleito nas regiões anglófonas.

A despeito da continuidade e da intensificação dos enfrentamentos entre as forças de segurança e os grupos separatistas, a realização das eleições foi mantida. Após a apuração, Biya, que teria recebido mais de 70 % dos votos, foi declarado vencedor, com o líder de

oposição, Maurice Kamto,<sup>21</sup> que teria recebido pouco mais de 14 % dos votos, ficando em segundo lugar. O processo, todavia, foi marcado por diversas acusações de fraude e de irregularidades, bem como pelos altos índices de abstenção – apenas cerca de 54 % dos eleitores cadastrados compareceram às urnas, com esse número caindo para aproximadamente 10 % nas regiões anglófonas, consequência, em grande medida, do conflito em curso (Kiven *et al.*, 2018). Após a divulgação dos resultados a violência e a situação de crise nos Camarões se mantiveram, com frequentes enfrentamentos entre as forças do governo e grupos separatistas – que têm sido caracterizados, por Yaoundé, como terroristas. Como resultado disso, no final de 2018 o número de deslocados internos no país já era estimado em mais de 437 000, e o número de refugiados vivendo na Nigéria em mais de 29 000 (Husted *et al.*, 2019).

A despeito da longa duração e dos evidentes impactos humanitários do conflito vivido nos Camarões, a atuação da UA tem sido bastante aquém de suas prerrogativas e responsabilidades. Em julho de 2018, o presidente da Comissão da UA, Moussa Faki Mahama, realizou uma visita ao país, na qual deu diversas declarações condenando o contexto de violência crescente, além de conclamar as partes a buscarem uma solução negociada para o conflito. Ainda no mesmo ano a organização enviou duas missões ao país – uma de curta duração e outra de longa –, com o objetivo de acompanhar o desenvolvimento do processo eleitoral. Para além da produção de um relatório preliminar em que são apontadas diversas fragilidades que marcaram o pleito e que conclama os diversos grupos de interesse político a engajarem-se em um processo de diálogo para buscar uma solução para a crise, todavia, nada de concreto foi feito, sem que haja qualquer previsão ou consideração a respeito do estabelecimento de uma missão de estabilização para o país (AU, 2018). A atuação das RECs das quais o país faz parte – a ECCAS e a CEMAC – nesse contexto, anda na mesma direção. Isso se deve, em parte, ao fato de os Camarões serem, especialmente no primeiro caso, o país que ocupa a posição de liderança da organização, o que dificulta que uma ação prática seja adotada sem a sua participação e iniciativa (Fomunyoh, 2017).

Diante da falta de atuação das organizações regionais, em fevereiro de 2019, o Vaticano propôs, em audiência realizada em Genebra, realizar uma mediação do conflito, indicando sua preocupação com a situação do país e sua disposição em prestar auxílio na busca por uma solução de longo prazo para a crise. Vale lembrar que o Vaticano possui atuação no setor de educação dos Camarões e a situação de crise já levou, por exemplo, à ocorrência de sequestros de sacerdotes na região anglófona (Fofung, 2019). Nesse sentido, a não aplicação do princípio de não-indiferença da UA em relação à crise camaronesa tem aberto espaço para que atores extracontinentais busquem – e encontrem espaços para – atuar no continente.

## Conclusão

A partir da análise realizada, percebe-se, uma importante evolução da questão securitária no continente africano entre o final do século XX e início do XXI, a partir da substituição da OUA pela UA e do reconhecimento do papel central das RECs na estabilização do continente. Apesar disso, contudo, a UA apresenta as mesmas limitações de recursos (materiais, técnicas, humanos e logísticos) da OUA – o que contribui para que ela se mantenha dependente não só do auxílio, mas também da disposição e dos interesses de atores

<sup>21</sup> Maurice Kamto se recusou a reconhecer o resultado das eleições, declarando-se vencedor do processo e passando, junto a outras lideranças de seu partido, a organizar diversas manifestações críticas ao processo eleitoral. Em janeiro de 2019, Kamto e outras lideranças de oposição foram presas, acusadas de sedição, insurreição e incitação à violência (Maclean, 2019).

extracontinentais para poder assegurar a paz e a estabilidade no continente. Isso ficou claro nas operações de paz conduzidas pela organização, desde o início dos anos 2000, nas quais as forças da UA tiveram dificuldades em cumprir os seus mandatos e restabelecer a paz, em grande medida, pela falta de recursos suficientes.

No caso específico da África Central, a complexa situação de segurança quando da criação da ECCAS, associada às consequências decorrentes do final da Guerra Fria – perda da importância estratégica da África e crises dos Estados –, levou as lideranças regionais, sobretudo, Paul Biya, Omar Bongo e Denis Nguesso, a buscar, através de uma série de mudanças institucionais, criar um mecanismo regional capaz de dar respostas qualificadas às situações de crise na região. Assim, a partir de 1999, foram estabelecidos diversos órgãos, como o COPAX, a CDS, a FOMAC, o MARAC e o CRSMAC, os quais permitiram à ECCAS assumir a responsabilidade primária pela manutenção da paz e segurança na região central do continente. A intervenção da CEMAC, por meio da FOMUC, no conflito da República Centro Africana, marcou o início de um maior envolvimento dos Estados da região na promoção da estabilidade regional. No entanto, as dificuldades para operacionalização dessas estruturas são as mesmas enfrentadas no nível continental. A principal delas é a falta de recursos financeiros, o que emperra a concretização das iniciativas planejadas e a dependência de atores não africanos para concretizar os seus esforços de paz. A análise da recente crise nos Camarões, contudo, parece demonstrar que, ao menos até 2018, houve um retorno aos padrões de atuação da OUA por parte da UA da ECCAS e da CEMAC, pois essas priorizaram o respeito à soberania e à integridade territorial, em detrimento da proteção aos direitos humanos das populações e da garantia de estabilidade no continente. Nesse contexto, percebe-se que tanto a UA quanto as RECs trataram a crise como uma questão estritamente interna dos Camarões, que deveria ser resolvida pelos próprios camaroneses, sem qualquer intervenção. Ademais, a falta de atuação da ECCAS, em parte, pode ser explicada pelo papel de liderança ocupado pelo próprio Camarões na organização.

O cenário de agravamento da situação e a falta de atuação assertiva dos atores africanos – sobretudo da UA –, entretanto, abre a possibilidade de uma intervenção militar promovida por atores extrarregionais no conflito, como as que ocorreram na Costa do Marfim, em 2011, e no Mali, em 2013 (ambas lideradas pela França e legitimadas por instituições multilaterais). A eventual confirmação de tal cenário colocaria em questionamento não só a nova estrutura institucional e funcional continental, como também o próprio princípio da “não indiferença” adotado pela UA. Diante da eventual comprovação de tal situação, a segurança regional africana certamente sairia significativamente prejudicada.

## Referências bibliográficas

- Adebajo, Adekeye (2013), *The curse of Berlin: Africa after the Cold War*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- AI – Amnesty International (2018), *A turn for the worse: violence and human rights violations in Anglophone Cameroon* [Em linha]. [Consult. 05.jan.2019]. Disponível em: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr17/8481/2018/en/>.
- Akokpari, John e Ancas, Sarah (2014), The African Union and regional economic communities: a partnership for peace and security? In: Murithi, Tim (Ed.), *Handbook of Africa's International Relations*, London: Routledge, pp. 73-81.
- Apuuli, Kasajja Phillip (2018), The AU's Peace and Security Architecture: the African Standby Force. In: Karbo, Tony e Murithi, Tim (Eds.), *The African Union: autocracy, diplomacy and peacebuild in Africa*. London: I.B. Tauris, pp. 149-182.

- AU – African Union (2018), *African Union Election Observation Mission to the 7 October 2018 Presidential election in the Republic of Cameroon* [Em linha]. [Consult. 12.fev.2019]. Disponível em: [https://au.int/sites/default/files/pressreleases/34995-pr-final\\_preliminary\\_statement\\_-\\_english\\_version-09\\_oct\\_2018.pdf](https://au.int/sites/default/files/pressreleases/34995-pr-final_preliminary_statement_-_english_version-09_oct_2018.pdf).
- Awason, Nicodemus Fru (2000), The Reunification Question in Cameroon History: Was the Bride an Enthusiastic or a Reluctant One? *Africa Today*, v. 47, n.º 2, pp. 91-119.
- Badmus, Isiaka A. (2015), *The African Union's Role in peacekeeping: Building a lessons learned from security operations*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Balla, Nkongho Felix Agbor (2017), *The Cameroon Anglophone Crisis: Examining Escalation and Seeking Solutions* [Em linha]. [Consult. 20.dez.2018]. Disponível em: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/event/cameroon-anglophone-crisis-examining-escalation-and-seeking-solutions>.
- Cardoso, Nilton C. e Oliveira, Guilherme Z. (2018), Operações de paz africanas: as experiências da OUA e da UA. *Brazilian Journal of International Relations*. v. 7, n.º 2, pp. 334-370.
- Chazan, Naomi et al. (1999), *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- CIA – Central Intelligence Agency (2019), *The World Factbook: Cameroon* [Em linha]. [Consult. 03.jan.2019]. Disponível em: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cm.html>.
- Crisis Group (2017), *Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis at the Crossroads* [Em linha]. [Consult. 20.dez.2018]. Disponível em: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/250-cameroons-anglophone-crisis-crossroads>.
- Derso, Solomon (2014), The African Peace and Security Architecture. In: Murithi, Tim (Ed.), *Handbook of Africa's International Relations*. London: Routledge, pp. 51-61.
- Englebert, Pierre (1991), Cameroon: Background to a Crisis. *CSIS Africa Notes*. n.º 130, pp. 1-8.
- Fofung, Amos (2019), *The Vatican wants to mediate in Cameroon's Anglophone crisis* [Em linha]. [Consult. 10.mar.2019]. Disponível em: <https://www.panafricanvisions.com/2019/the-vatican-wants-to-mediate-in-cameroons-anglophone-crisis/>.
- Fomunyoh, Christopher (2017), *Understanding Cameroon's Crisis of Governance* [Em linha]. [Consult. 20.dez.2018]. Disponível em: <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/understanding-cameroons-crisis-of-governance/>.
- Francis, David J. (2006), *Uniting Africa: Building regional peace and security systems*. Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing.
- Husted, Tomas e Arieff, Alexis (2019), *In Focus: Cameroon* [Em linha]. [Consult. 13.mar.2019]. Disponível em: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/IF10279.pdf>.
- ICG – International Crisis Group (2011), Implementing peace and security architecture (I): Central Africa. *International Crisis Group, Africa Report*, n.º 181.
- Kiven, Brenda, Stone, Sam e Maclean, Ruth (2018), Biya wins again in Cameroon as crackdown disrupts anglophone vote. *The Guardian*. [Em linha]. [Consult. 20.jan.2019]. Disponível em: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/22/paul-biya-cameroon-85-year-old-president-wins-re-election-landslide>.
- Konings, Piet (1996), Le “Problème anglophone” au Cameroun dans les années 1990. *Politique africaine*, v. 6, n.º 62, pp. 25-64.
- Konings, Piet e Nyamniob, Francis (2003), *Negotiating an Anglophone identity: A study of the politics of recognition and representation in Cameroon*. Leiden: Brill.
- Le Roux, Pauline e Boucher, Alex (2018), *Growing Instability in Cameroon Raises Fundamental Questions about the State*. [Em linha]. [Consult. 20.dez.2018]. Disponível em: <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/growing-instability-cameroon-raises-fundamental-questions-about-state/>.
- Maclean, Ruth (2019), Cameroon arrests opposition leader who claims he won 2018 election. *The Guardian* [Em linha]. [Consult. 3.mar.2019]. Disponível em: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jan/29/cameroon-opposition-leader-maurice-kamto-claims-won-2018-election-arrested>.

- Mays, Terry M. (2003), African Solutions for African Problems: The Changing Face of African-Mandated Peace Operations. *The Journal of Conflict Studies*. Fredericton, v. 23, n.º 1, pp. 106-125.
- Mbaku, John Mukum (2004), Decolonization, Reunification and Federation in Cameroon. In Mbaku, John e Takougang, Joseph (ed.) *The Leadership Challenge in Africa: Cameroon Under Paul Biya*. Asmara: Africa Word Press.
- Merle, Marcel (1961), Les plébiscites organisés par les Nations Unies. *Annuaire français de droit international*, v. 7, pp. 425-445.
- Meyer, Angela (2015), Preventing conflict in Central Africa: ECCAS caught between ambitions, challenges and reality. *Institute for Security Studies*, Adis Ababa, Central Africa Report, n.º 3.
- (2011), Peace and security cooperation in Central Africa: developments, challenges and prospects. *Nordiska Afrikainstitutet*, Uppsala, Discussion paper, n.º 56.
- (2008), Regional Integration and Security in Central Africa: assessment and perspectives 10 Years After the revival. *The Royal Institute for International Relations Egmont*, Paper 25. Brussels: The Royal Institute for International Relations.
- Mokam, David (2012), The Search for a Cameroonian Model of Democracy or the Search for the Domination of the State Party: 1966-2006. *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos*, v. 23, pp. 85-108.
- Murithi, Tim (2008), The African Union's evolving role in peace operations: the African Union Mission in Burundi, the African Union Mission in Sudan and the African Union Mission in Somalia. *African Security Review*, v. 17, n.º 1, pp. 70-82.
- Mwanasali, Musifiky (2008), From non-interference to non-indifference: The emerging doctrine of conflict prevention in Africa. In: Akokpari, John, Muvumba, Angela e Murithi, Tim (Eds.), *African Union and its institutions*. Cape Town: Fanele.
- Nagar, Dawn e Nganje, Fritz (2018), The African Union and its relations with Sub-Regional Economic Communities. In: Karbo, Tony e Murithi, Tim (Eds.), *The African Union: autocracy, diplomacy and peacebuild in Africa*. London: I.B. Tauris, pp. 205-231.
- Nana, Genevoix (2016), Language ideology and the colonial legacy in Cameroon schools: A historical perspective. *Journal of Education and Training*, n.º 4, v. 4, pp. 168-196.
- OAU – Organization of African Unity (1963), *OAU Charter* [Em linha]. [Consult. 10.jan.2020]. Disponível em: [https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/7759-file-oau\\_charter\\_1963.pdf](https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/7759-file-oau_charter_1963.pdf).
- Okereke, C. Nna-Emeka (2018), Analysing Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis. *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, v. 10, n.º 3, pp. 8-12.
- Pedneault, Jonathan e Sheppard, Bede (2018), "These Killings Can Be Stopped": Government and Separatist Groups Abuses in Cameroon's Anglophone Regions [Em linha]. [Consult. 05.jan.2019]. Disponível em: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/07/19/these-killings-can-be-stopped/abuses-government-and-separatist-groups-cameroons>.
- Reno, William (2011), *Warfare in independent Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor, Ian (2010), *The International Relations of Sub-saharan Africa*. New York: Continuum.
- Taylor, Ian e Williams, Paul D. (Eds.) (2004), *Africa in International Politics: External Involvement on the Continent*. London: Routledge.
- Ukeje, Charles e Mvolo Ela, Wullson (2013), *African approaches to maritime security: The Gulf of Guinea*. Abuja: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.
- UNHCR (2018), *Nigeria/Cameroon situation* [Em linha]. [Consult. 06.jan.2019]. Disponível em: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/63470>.
- Williams, Paul D. (2014), *War and conflict in Africa*. Cambridge: Polity Press.



# History Never Dies, How Silent Past Returns: Southern Cameroons/“Ambazonia”

Gallous Atabongwoug\*

pp. 95-109

## Introduction

Post-colonial Cameroon is located between West and Central Africa. Cameroon has ten administrative regions with an estimated population of 24,910,930 inhabitants living on a surface area of 475,442 square kilometres (CIA, 2018). Geographically, Cameroon shares borders with Nigeria to the West, Chad to the North, Central African Republic to the East, and Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Congo-Brazzaville to the South. Before Europeans arrived present day Cameroon in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the borders of Cameroon were limited to the coastal areas along the Gulf of Guinea. The Bantu-speaking ethnic groups inhabited the area before colonisation. Post-colonisation Cameroon presents a highly diverse society with significant internal, cultural, linguistic and ethnic plurality (Eriksen, 2010: 5-15). This makes it difficult to construct a shared/homogenous ethnicity (Eriksen, 2010: 5-15). Shared ethnicity is not a necessary foundation for a successful nation building project (Eriksen, 2010: 5-15).



English speaking regions and countries      Bilingual Spanish and French speaking country (Equatorial Guinea)  
French speaking regions and countries

Ilustração 01 - Map of Cameroon showing its Administrative Regions and Boundaries.

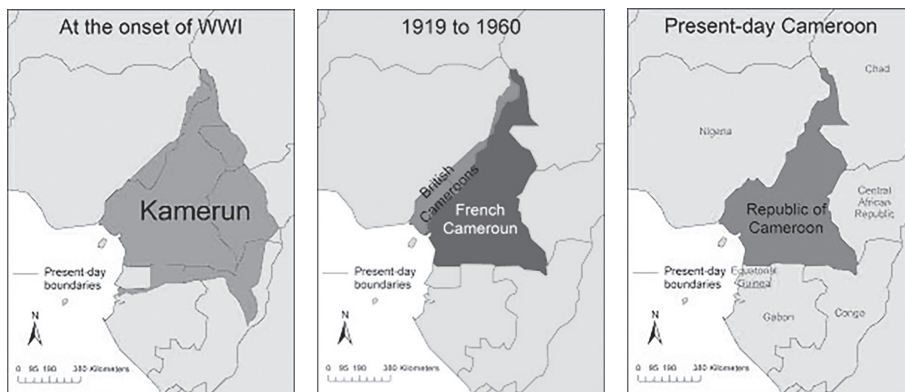
□ 10.21747/doi.org/0874-2375/afr33a7

\* University of Pretoria.

## 1.1. The History of Cameroon before and after Independence

History has it that a Portuguese navigator by the name of Fernando Po discovered Cameroon as a colony in 1472. This statement somehow seems problematic when fit into the broader African history which Toyng Falola and Tyler Flemings (2009) have argued that the people of Africa lived in the continent for quite some time before the arrival of the European explorers. Africans used iron tools to mark the significant moment of progress in their civilization. As iron tools enhanced weaponry which allowed various ethnic groups to clear and manage the dense forests, plow fields for farming to better their everyday lives. As a consequence, iron tools allowed Africans to flourish in every environment, and this allowed them to expand their communities which led to the formation of ancient states and kingdoms (Falola and Tyler, 2009). By virtue of the formation of these states and Kingdoms came an eventual progress in the African modern civilizations with common languages, belief and value systems, art, religion, lifestyle and culture (Falola and Tyler, 2009). However, unlike most Euro-Asian civilizations, African societies favoured oral tradition because as of that time, very few African collectives possessed written languages (Falola and Tyler, 2009). Therefore, African stories and oral histories documented the past, and were handed down from generation to generation. Through such intellectual practice, it was obvious that the oral-based linguistic past of Africa would remain simultaneously promising and problematic in documenting Africa's pre-colonial past, as many of these oral histories have either been forgotten or distorted after being retold by each passing generation (Falola and Tyler, 2009). Therefore, in the absence of the beauty of written sources, Africanist scholars of this era have had to be creative in discovering new sources to document the continent's precolonial past. As research in genetics, archaeology and linguistics increases, we will know more about early African civilizations. This is not to say, however, that we know little (Falola and Tyler 2009). Therefore, to affirm Fernando Po discovered Cameroon as a colony in 1472 could either be an issue of semantics or a colonial project that attempt to erased the history of Cameroon before 1472. Notwithstanding, when Fernando Po arrived the Bight of Biafra, he sailed up the Wouri River in the coastal regions of Cameroon. Fernando Po was surprised to see large numbers of prawns in the Wouri River and named the Wouri River "*Rio dos Camarões*" ("river of prawns"). But the presence of malaria in most of West Africa including Cameroon (*West Africa was referred to as "the White Man's Grave"*) impeded Fernando Po from exploring and making further conquests into the hinterland (Raper, 1995: 1186-89). Cameroon therefore derives its name from the Portuguese lexicon "*Camarões*". The name became "*Kamerun*" during the German annexation of 1884-1916 after the Germans signed the Germano-Douala treaty in July 1884. The treaty granted the Germans full legitimacy to administer Cameroon as a German protectorate until March 1916 when the Germans were defeated in the First World War (1914-1918), and dispossessed of most of its African colonies. The name '*Kamerun*' was then changed to '*Cameroun*' by the French and '*Camerouns*' by the British after the territory was partitioned into East Cameroon and West Cameroon under French and British colonial administrations respectively (Elango, 1985: 658-60). The partition gave the British one-fifth of the territory and the French four-fifths of the territory (Elango, 1985: 658-60). East and West Cameroon later became the League of Nations mandates in 1922 and the United Nations trust territories in 1946 (Ngoh, 1979: 28). The French ruled East Cameroon from 1916 until East Cameroon gained independence in January 1960 to become "*La République du Cameroun*." The British on the other hand, ruled West Cameroon from 1916 until February 1961, when British West Cameroon gained independence through unification/[re]-unification with French East Cameroon to form a





**Ilustração 02** – Shows the Map of Cameroon before and after the (re)-unification.

federal union called the Federal Republic of Cameroon. From observation, Cameroon is called “Africa in miniature” owing to its geographical, linguistic and cultural heterogeneity. As the country is host to one of the highest literacy rates on the continent. Africa in miniature is a phrase that view Cameroon as a space that is home for all in the sense that it is believed everything feature or human groups in Africa is found in Cameroon because Cameroon exhibits all the major ecological features of the continent: coast, desert, mountains, rainforest, resources, and savanna. Even though Cameroon is a country of enormous human and material potential its economic and political prosperity has been hampered by long decades of corrupt of Francophone authoritarian rule a perennial source of conflict with the Anglophones. Anglophone political representation and economic development as part of the Cameroon federation have been deprived through policy that consistently eroded since 1961. Instead, the British Southern Cameroons/Ambazonia has been referred to as a minority collective in the wholesome Cameroon society. As mockery to the Anglophone, no minority rights have been given to them. Notwithstanding, the complexity of Cameroon is in the nature of its ethnic identity. Accordingly, there are about 250 ethnic groups in Cameroon with diverse origins, cultures and traditions. The most famous are; the Bamileke, Bassa-Bakoko, Bata, Duala, Fang-Beti, Kirdi, Mbororo, Pygmies, Shuwa Arabs, and Tikar. The country has four cultural zones: Sawa, Grassfield, Fang-Beti and Sudano Sahelian (Gordon, 2005). It has been a great challenge to unite all the various ethnic groups in Cameroon because of the fact that the ethnic groups are involved in the socioeconomic and political divide in the country. This divide is as a result of the partition of Cameroon in 1919 (Kofele-Kale, 1980). For before 1919, Cameroon was administered under the Germans as a single political entity.

Post 1919, until the reunification, Cameroon had two political capitals -Yaoundé the capital of French Cameroon and Buea the capital of British Southern Cameroons (See Ilustração 02 above) (Kofele-Kale, 1980).

## 1.2. The Reunification of Cameroon

Some scholars and politicians saw the re-unification of French East and British West Cameroon as an example of political expediency. Here were two previous colonies with varying socio-political experiences; the British “*indirect rule*” and the French “*policy of assimilation*”, and from two distinct sociolinguistic backgrounds of French and English

which were the two official languages that would be included in the federal union. After experiencing more than four decades of British and French colonial rule which promoted their political ideologies, cultures and lifestyles in the separate territories. Erudite scholars like Bernard Fonlon would not resist idealizing the glories of the reunification as “the crucible of African unity” (Fonlon, 1963: 4). Such a sentiment is contrary to that of Le Vine who described the re-unification of Cameroon as mundane (Le Vine, 1964: 273). In his academic prophecy, Le Vine argued that the reunification of Cameroon was an “*imperial design*” because it undermined the distinct socio-political realities of the two states, and was evident that it would compromise peace in the near future (Le Vine, 1964: 273). Hence, the reunification question of the early 1960s, prompted Le Vine (1964: 273) to coin the metaphor for West Cameroon as the “*bride*” and East Cameroon as the “*bridegroom*”. Le Vine’s metaphor was to show a relationship of incompatibilities between a weaker in-group (English Speaking/Anglophone Cameroonians) vis-à-vis a dominant out-group (French Speaking/Francophone Cameroonians). In terms of surface area, demography, language and level of development, French East Cameroon was ten times the size of British West Cameroon. French East Cameroon had four times the population of West Cameroon and a higher level of economic development (Le Vine, 1976: 273). Moreover, Le Vine reiterated the huge socio-political incompatibilities between the two previous colonies would compromise future peace of Cameroon. Le Vine however, envisaged the emergence of minority and marginalization sentiments, raising the possibility that Francophone Cameroonians would see Anglophone Cameroonians as a minority group in terms of language differentiation and the small size of the Anglophone population resulting from the partition of Cameroon. Le Vine further states the inevitability of Francophone Cameroonians turning on, and marginalizing their Anglophone counterparts, since there is always tension in a majority – minority relationship in any given socio-political landscape (Le Vine, 1976: 273).

However, irrespective of Le Vine’s assertion, the then African politicians hailed the reunification of Cameroon as appropriate (Le Vine, 1976: 273). Through a plebiscite on 11 February 1961, the Federal Republic of Cameroon was born. East and West Cameroon that previously existed as distinct political entities were now collapsed into one. The new Federal Republic would transform the two political entities into a single Federal State. The first constitution of the Federal Republic of Cameroon came into force on October 1961. The constitution was supposed to ensure that the new Federal Republic maintains its originality as two autonomous federal states, given Cameroon’s bi-jural, bicultural and bilingual nature inherited from colonialism. But the new Federal Republic quickly became a “*Unitary State*” in a 1972 referendum dominated by East Cameroon deputies. The deputies voted in favour of a unitary state. The vote was in violation of article 47 of the first Federal Constitution of 1961 because it dismantled the federal structures that advocated for separate autonomy of East and West Cameroon (Kale, 1967: 70). On June 2, 1972, the United Republic of Cameroon was born. The United Republic of Cameroon would maintain the status quo of French East Cameroon, while British West Cameroon would become two administrative regions/provinces under one central government led by French East Cameroon. English would remain the official language of the two newly designated regions/provinces of West Cameroon (Ngoh, 1987: 257). Ahmadou Ahidjo (the first president of postcolonial Cameroon) said that, “the federal structure was collapsed to a conformist unitary state to promote national development because managing a two-state federation was a hindrance to various national development efforts because it was cumbersome and expensive.” The inadequately rationalized and harmonized public and town planning were already hindering agricultural production and urban development

policies which came from the old federal structures (Chem-Langhëë, 1995: 23). However, worth noting that the argument tabled by President Ahidjo was refuted by Mr. John Ngu Foncha (the then prime minister of British Southern Cameroons). President Ahidjo therefore replaced Mr Foncha with Mr S. T. Muna because both Ahidjo and Foncha were at loggerheads. This came at a time President Ahidjo realized Mr Muna would agree to his suggestions.

The seemingly successful reunification of Cameroon caught the attention of supranational organizations, including the then Organization of African Unity - OAU (present day African Union-AU) to reward Cameroon for its peculiar Pan-African approach (Awasom, 2000: 91-119). The OAU proceeded to appoint two Secretaries General from Cameroon; Mr Nzo Ekanghaki (1972-1974), and subsequently Mr William Eteki Mboumoua (1974-1978) (Awasom, 2000: 91-119). There was growing perception that the reunification of Cameroon was a great political achievement, "the apotheosis of African nationalist struggles par excellence" (Awasom, 2000: 91-119).

Furthermore, in 1984, under President Paul Biya, the name of the country was changed from the United Republic of Cameroon to the Republic of Cameroon. If translated into French verbatim, this means "*la République du Cameroun*" which alludes to the original state of former French East Cameroon after independence (Ngoh, 1979: 93-98). The name change was and remained a blow to Anglophone Cameroonians who felt that their British West or Southern Cameroons statehood was dismantled and stripped of its autonomy according to the federal constitution. Even their inherited "*Anglo-Saxon*" culture was under threat. The act of the name change therefore heightened the feeling of "*exclusion and marginalization*" already experienced by the Anglophone collective less than a decade after the reunification (Ngoh, 1979: 93-98). Contrary to the promise made by President Ahidjo in one of his official visits to the Anglophone town of Tiko on the 17 July 1960 where he declared, "French East Cameroon is not going to annex British West Cameroon in the reunified Cameroon nation" (Ngoh, 2001: 136-173). But the subsequent name change by Ahidjo's predecessor Mr Paul Biya in post reunified Cameroon only exacerbated anxiety and tension among Anglophone Cameroonians. Worth mentioning is Paul Biya's manipulation of parliament to pass a controversial amendment in 2008 allowing him to run for office again and again, with his party, the Cameroonian People's Democratic Movement (RDPC) which has a long history of manipulating Cameroon's electoral body, the "Elecam" to rig landslide majorities in every parliamentary election since 1992. And his new seven-year terms in 2011 and 2018 in votes marred by widespread irregularities and rigging by international observers (Reuters, world news, 16 October, 2018) only added salt to the severe injuries of Southern Cameroons. It has, culminated in to the now prolonged political crisis/civil war which before its bloody nature, scholars like Konings and Nyamnjoh had already coined the anglophone anxiety as the "*Anglophone problem*". This problem remains at the heart/core of the civil war in Cameroon. It is therefore imperative to contextualize the Anglophone problem.

## 2. The Anglophone problem in Cameroon

The Anglophone problem that was dormant in the first two decades after independence and reunification, is dominating the current political landscape of the country. The Anglophone problem poses insurmountable challenges to the various attempts that post-colonial Cameroon has made in order to forge national unity and integration (Konings and Nyamnjoh, 1997: 207). As the root cause of the problem that led to the civil war in 2016 dates back to the political history of Cameroon. When it was time to form the

Federal Republic of Cameroon, there was no precise indication as to the actual nature and involvement of the “*would-be federation*.” The federal republic did not provide effective institutions that could guarantee and preserve the equal partnership of the two previous colonies as envisaged in the first federal constitution of 1961 (Kale: 1967: 70). As a consequence, it was obvious that the would-be federation would not be able to guarantee the preservation of the dual colonial systems that was passed down. Notwithstanding, another contention was the huge imbalance in terms of socioeconomic and political development between East and West Cameroon as a result of the different socioeconomic and political policies that were inherited and adopted between 1961 and 1966 (Ardener, 1967: 309-335). The policies gravely undermined the socioeconomic progress of West Cameroon (Ardener, 1967: 309-335). This created poor socioeconomic state in West Cameroon (Ardener, 1967: 309-335). And therefore, the British West/Southern Cameroons became dependent financially on the federal subsidies, largely generated from the more advanced economy of East Cameroon after the reunification (Ardener, 1967: 309-335). This dependency therefore added complexity to the nature of the republic of Cameroon. Walter Rodney as far back as 1975 stated, “when two societies of unequal level of socio-political and economic development interact which each other at any level, the more advanced one would exert total influence on the less advanced one” (Rodney, 1975). It was therefore evident that French East Cameroon would dominate the British Southern Cameroons resulting exclusion/marginalization. That is why hitherto, the increasing consciousness of Anglophone exclusion and marginalization within the context of *forceful assimilation* of the Anglophone population into a Francophone-dominated state in terms of language and population has resulted in a bloody civil war (Lazar, 2019: 1-2). In addition, the complexity of Anglophone exclusion, marginalization and forced assimilation into a Francophone dominated state are not some stand-alone facts. The duality of Cameroon history has severe impact in the way issues of national “*belonging*” one negotiated in Cameroon. This also heightens and presents an interesting feature of how language attitudes in such a complex sociolinguistic landscape like Cameroon can shape or deny one’s being to belong to a particular space of belonging. Post-post the name changes in 1984 by President Paul Biya, Anglophone Cameroonians don’t feel they belong to Cameroon. The primary way belonging is expressed in Cameroon through language/language attitudes. Hence, it is important to revisit the role of language in the war in Cameroon.

### 3. The Sociolinguistic dynamics of the war in Cameroon

Cameroon is globally and officially considered a bilingual country with French and English as the two official languages (Gordon, 2005). Nevertheless, “to be Francophone or Anglophone in Cameroon denotes a new kind of ethnicity that transcends conventional ethnic ties” (Anchimbe, 2005: 1). French and English exert a stronger influence on Cameroonians who are originally Francophone or Anglophone. Such influence created language attitudes which shape the way Francophone and Anglophone Cameroonians express their belonging. And determines what language must expand or decay, restore or destroy among the two languages (Ngefec, 2010: 149-164). The politics in Cameroon has also compelled French to dominate English which in return is influencing the behaviour of Anglophone Cameroons to an extent (Abongdia, 2009). Fonlon had argued against the dominance of French by stating much earlier in 1969 that “the dominance of French in Cameroon is due to the attitude of the government to elevate French to dominate the entire socio-political and economic landscape” (Fonlon, 1969: 43). This was achieved because the government of Cameroon has shown to have no regard for English. The government appoints more

Francophone Cameroonians than Anglophones to key positions in public administration (Fonlon, 1969: 43). Even government official texts and speeches are in French first, before being translated into English. Sometimes the English translation is so poor that it does not capture the ideas and intentions of the original text. The attitude of the government to undermine English makes the majority of Francophone Cameroonians to operate in the system without any need of English, thereby causing Francophone Cameroonians to perceive English as inferior and French as a superior language (Mforteh, 2006: 16). This has created further complications where by Anglophone Cameroonians are increasingly perceived to be inferior/ lower-class citizens (Ngefac, 2010). This has added anger within the Anglophone communities contrary to some distorted narratives of the role of language in the war in Cameroon that I will highlight in the subsequent paragraph.

### 3.1. Language in a distorted narrative

Some people have presented a problematic claim regarding the issue of language in Cameroon. The problematic renders the very essence of the role language plays in the war in Cameroon to be blurred and void of originality. Many Francophone writers in Cameroon consider the sensitivity of the political context, time and space in which they find themselves when writing on any subject on Cameroon during this time of a civil war for fear that their analysis may be taken out of context. And there could be some repercussions as is the case of many journalists and activists that have been jailed or killed for speaking truth to power. The truth of the matter is it is obnoxious when speaking "truth to power", or "challenging the powers that be", or "questioning existing status quo". They try to distort history by presenting a false narrative on the reality of the situation. Any distortion of historic facts like what has been happening in Cameroon for more than 4 four decades would not remain silent forever. This is because there is a lot of evidence that history has always had a way of returning to the society. This we have seen in many states how the suppression of history became a "silent past," and how many silent pasts have returned in different local and national communities in a very regrettable manner. Therefore, how we represent our collective past to ourselves and to others determines how such past would shape our actions, identities and understandings in a way that individual-level processes would peacefully interact with collective ones and vice versa etc. Interestingly, we are ethically and politically obligated to remember our past/history, and the consequences of meeting, or failing to meet, these obligations in terms of respecting where we come from as a people with a history. In addition, in the case of Cameroon, history has become a reference to the subjective experience of time. Whereas history should not be a replay of a string of moments, but 'an enlivening and reconfiguring of past and future that is larger than any individual' (Barad, 2017). The distortion of present-day history of Cameroon is done by Francophone majority who dominate the socioeconomic and political realms of Cameroon. Anchimbe (2005) argues the dominance of Francophone in Cameroon is *de facto* because majority of Cameroonians are French speakers [80 %] as a result of the partition of Cameroon at the end of the First World War in 1919. It must be reiterated that it is a result of French dominance Anglophone Cameroonians continue to see English as an enabler to create a symbolic zone for themselves. There is no effective government policy that maintains equal status of English and French as agreed in the 1961 federal constitution (Chumbow, 1996: 5). Somehow the government of Cameroon has managed systematically to relegate English to second place below French within state organs and has associated French with more benefits than English (Truong, 2012: 8). In line with this, the government has also been unable to reinvent a common

lingua franca that could be used by all Cameroonians as a way to forge national unity in post-independent Cameroon. This inability to unify the country through a common language or an elevation of the two official language to remain equal in the eyes of Cameroonians only adds complexity in the already existing ethnolinguistic divide in the country (Makoni and Meinhof, 2003: 1-4). Even when the government instituted and pretended to promote French and English official “bilingualism at all levels, it only remains a “*child’s play*” in the face of logic as many government documents are published in French (Republic of Cameroon, 1998a). Hence, years later Kouega (1999: 112) observed that Cameroon bilingualism was unidirectional – a one-way bilingualism where speakers of English increasingly operate in French, while their French-speaking counterparts remained largely monolingual”. Achille Mbembe (2016: 36), argues ‘*monolingualism*’ was a way of perpetuating colonialism in Africa because it involves imposing one’s language on others irrespective of their knowledge of that language. It could therefore be argued that, Cameroon government has discreetly embarked on a naïve strategy that geared at *internal colonialism*. Notwithstanding, both French and English – official bilingualism gained traction immediately after independence for the following two reasons:

- (a) Post-reunification, Cameroon political elites considered French and English as non-ethnic weapons to quell inter-tribal conflicts and ensure a shared national belonging.
- (b) French and English helped to avoid conflicts that might have arisen in the attempt to choose a local language as a common *lingua franca* to be used for the entire nation in the midst of multiple local languages.

In one view, it was obvious that when attempting to choose a lingua franca for the nation, there might be contention among local language groups with political powers because of the gross linguistic plurality in the country. Many political elites might have preferred their local languages to that of other groups for the entire nation (Bitjaa, 2001a). This would have brought chaos as Ngūgī wa Thiongo (1985: 109) states that, “language choice in a multilingual society is critical because language shapes the way people think and see the world” (Ngūgī wa Thiongo, 1985: 109). The view presented by Ngūgī wa Thiongo was upheld by Migge and Léglise (2008: 1-2) who state that any language chosen in a multilingual society can create prejudice in the same way. That is why in Cameroon or outside Cameroon, Cameroonians often identify themselves primarily as Francophone or Anglophone in terms of official languages (Anchimbe, 2005: 1). This is because the official languages of Cameroon serve as identifiers and political markers with strong borderlines that facilitate the way Cameroonians negotiate their belonging at all spheres of their public life in a manner that is stronger than the sense of shared national belonging (Anchimbe, 2005: 1). Alidou also had argued, “The bond of unity existing among Cameroonians is confined along official linguistic borderlines (Alidou, 2006: 9). This means, overtime, “Cameroonians have demonstrated strong emotional linguistic attachment to French and English more than their local languages” (Anchimbe, 2005: 1). In addition, this tendency has made French and English transcend conventional ethnic ties because they have become the symbols of in-group/out-group solidarity (Anchimbe, 2005: 1). For example, the ubiquity of the *Anglophone problem* has caused Anglophone Cameroonians to create borderlines along English. That is why both Anglophone lawyers and teachers could not take it anymore in 2016 but appealed to the government against its continual deployment of Francophone lawyers and teachers to Anglophone courts and schools respectively. Such contestation among Anglophone collectives towards the government might encourage linguistic conflicts and unhealthy identification that tend to be the hallmarks of the day, when people start identifying themselves on the basis

of colonial official languages which stripped them of their "Africanness". It should also be acknowledged that the act of deploying Francophone lawyers and teachers to Anglophone courts and schools was an attempt to create new forms of identification and acceptance which in effect was imposing French language on Anglophones irrespective of their knowledge of it. The government cynically was forcing Anglophone Cameroonians to accept French which would have resulted in some form of "force assimilation" (Alobwede, 1998; Anchimbe 2007: 71). It is a subconscious phenomenon that in any given society where there are multiple languages, there is an unconscious competition among collectives on the question of language dominance – language that must be used in the context of linguistic integration (Ngefacs, 2010: 149). Hence Francophone Cameroonians have always emphasized the dominant use of French (Anchimbe, 2007: 71-72). The evidence is "when you travel in Cameroon you get a sense of the increased pervasiveness of French in terms of language in socio-political and economic spaces, media, dress code, food, and items for sale in shops" (Anchimbe, 2005: 1). However, contrary to what some writers have been claiming on the question of language divide in Cameroon, the war in Cameroon is not a problem of linguistic division between English and French [or between their speakers]. It is a political problem. After 37 years under President Paul Biya, Cameroon continues to divide along politics with deep fault lines that keep getting deeper. When Anglophone lawyers and teachers went on a peaceful protest in 2016, the government suppressed the peaceful demonstration with the full might of the military. The government of Cameroon arrested prominent lawyers such as; Felix Agbor Balla, Fontem Aforteka'a Neba and Paul Ayah Abine following the protest march of 2016. These individuals only advocated genuine political and inclusive governance that would consider the interests of both political cultures in Cameroon. Their suggestions to the government were to take the nation back to the 1961 constitution that created a two-state federation. This was the turning point of their arrest. However, the case of their arrest was tried under anti-terrorism laws enacted to combat Islamist Boko Haram militants in the north part of the republic. This act stoked tensions in the North-West and South-West regions which deepened opposition to President Paul Biya's mainly French-speaking government. However, after a long period in incommunicado "The decision (to end the prosecution) was made by a presidential pardon as a hypocrisy of resolving the senseless war through a questionable peaceful solution to end the crises". The victims and many others pleaded not guilty in February to charges that included complicity in hostility against the homeland, secession, civil war, and campaigning for federalism. They had faced a potential death sentence if convicted. This act of gross injustice fuelled an unquenchable anger within the Anglophone collective. There are also much horrific evidence of extrajudicial killings by security forces that emerged including the burning down of thousands of Anglophone villages which has kept millions of Anglophone in a "do or die" position. It is important also to note that it is the government of Cameroon's approach to the grievances of the Anglophone post- the arrest and the skinning of Anglophone lawyers and teachers that escalated the issue into a bloody war. While language has always remained a tool of communication between Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians with evidence of emerging *makeshift languages*. The current political cloud that leans towards pro-independence struggle of the Anglophone nation with unsurmountable challenges such as; senseless killing and imprisonment of Anglophone Cameroonians without being fair trials in a "war without end" destroys every further effort to forge national unity and integration (Konings and Nyamnjoh, 2019). In addition, the arrest of the Anglophone leader Sisiku Ayuk Tabe and nine others in a hotel in Abuja, Nigeria and transported to Cameroon where they are kept in a dungeon waiting their last breath on earth violates their unquestionable and inalienable right to

self-determination as protected by Article 20 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights which was ratified by both Nigeria and Cameroon. It has fuelled tension all over Southern Cameroons.

The Anglophone question therefore must be looked upon in the context of legality that must only be answered through the lens of justice in the midst of decaying political realities. The prolongation of the crisis through political shyness in terms of confronting the situation head-on through inclusive, progressive and ethical dialogues from historical truths may break Cameroon in the long run because the root cause of the problem dates as far back as the political reunification [federation] of the two Cameroons (Anyangwe, 2009). It is also important to emphasise that every attempt to define the root cause of the conflict as an object of language difference would misconstrue the basis for seeking political progress. Such attempt would only linger to pathos for a while because it is already late to try to re-write the history of Cameroon in the midst of international archives in the United Nations Security Council. It must be also be noted that the ongoing struggle for the independence of British Southern Cameroons is not an accident. It has a long history. It started with the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) that has a history of supporting any attempt towards the independence of the two Anglophone regions, Northwest and Southwest regions. The Southern Cameroons National Council is a non-violent organization that was established in the early 1990s as a result of disagreements within the Social Democratic Front during the arrival of multi-party politics in Cameroon. It rose to political prominence around 1995 with a sole focus on the independence of the former British Southern Cameroons. There are two factions of the SCNC, the genuine one that is for Anglophone nationalism and the state sponsored one that seeks to discredit the genuine one. The genuine one tries to foster the argument that Southern Cameroons was an independent state between 1954 – 1961 a way of attracting genuine conversation with the government of Cameroon. However, until now there had been no dialogue between the government and the SCNC. In 1999, the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) declared, mostly symbolically, an independent Republic of Ambazonia, citing a 1995 non-binding referendum on independence in which separatists won out with 99 %. Even though the majority of anglophone campaigners and a few lone rangers from French Cameroon want the country to resume a federalist system – an approach that followed the 1961 unification that was later scrapped in favour of a centralised government run from the capital Yaoundé. No nation building efforts have succeed in Cameroon. It is “*high tide*”. The government and the people of French Cameroon must gaze their eyes beyond the conflict and must return to the original rules of the game – “the drawing board of the 1961 federal constitution”. The international community can also facilitate the return of the two-state federation. This is because the state of the nation building post reunification is abysmal.

#### 4. The abysmal nation building efforts in Cameroon

More than 5 decades now, political repression, economic marginalization and cultural and linguistic exclusion by the ruling regimes have resulted in the heightened expression of divergent sentiments of nationalisms typically the – Anglophone nationalism (Jua and Konings, 2004). While the majority Francophone seek to force everyone into an outright Cameroonian nationalism – a conscious identification of the state of Cameroon. An attempt that has been misleading because it ignores the danger of the rising *politics of belonging* that is invading the Cameroonian society (Fonchingong, 2005). The fact is that the politics of belonging has the ability to overturn the progress of national unity. The



result of the politics of belonging in Cameroon is that it has become the “mainspring of internal xenophobia and destructive sub-nationalisms” (Boone, 2003: 1). As it creates forms of spatial variability and draws attention to the treacherous nature of *autochthony*, which is subject to constant redefinition against new ‘others’ at ever-closer range (Ceuppens and Geschiere, 2005: 385). The spirit of autochthony is most prevalent in French Cameroon because its stability is also at the brink.

Furthermore, there is a form of autochthony that is echoed by political elites of French Cameroon. This form of autochthony has aggravated the socio-economic and political divide amongst French Cameroonians. Notwithstanding, the situation of Cameroon is peculiar, unique, and instructive in terms of revisiting and comparing nation-building and governance efforts in various postcolonial Africa states. Cameroon harbors a complex colonial history in the sense that it had entanglements/encounters with three European colonial powers – Germany, Britain and France. These countries still have legacies in the political evolution of Cameroon. While at the same time, during the wind of change that ushered *decolonization* in Africa, Cameroon was faced with the difficult challenge of integrating its more than 250 collectives with different ethnic backgrounds (Gordon, 2005) into a single postcolonial state. It should be mentioned that ethnic collectives in Africa were more or less ethnic states. These states had political systems and culture orientations before colonization. Therefore, to tactfully manage these ethnic states remains an ever-pressing challenge to the nation of Cameroon with a high level of ethnic chauvinism. Therefore, Cameroon’s success or failure hinges on redressing its pertinent regional, linguistic and ethnic cleavages. It is critical at this point to realize that in spite of the prolonged tensions that accrue from the Anglophone revolt, Cameroon remains one of the few African countries whose leaders have never been deposed through a military coup or by civilian elements. This is because of the ethnic composition of the state as a whole, the multiplicity of crises and the rise of “*the politics of the belly*” (Young, 1999).

Previously, the international community had falsely claimed that Cameroon was among the most stable countries in Africa. This claim distracted a lot of attention from the decaying Cameroon political landscape. The claim therefore assists the government of Cameroon in its attempt to create a new pattern of nation building with an encompassing sense of being a Cameroonian around the national football team – The Indomitable Lions of Cameroon in the early 1990s. However, this was non-sustainable owing to the deteriorating economic situation that came with the democratic transition of 1990 (Krieger, 1994). Critically speaking, the nation building efforts in Cameroon are further resisted by linguistic cleavages in urban cities. The cleavages portray the fragmented state of its nation-building project. This is heightened by linguistic and cultural differences that will forever remain a salient factor in Cameroon’s nation building effort.

The international community particularly the two previous “*colonial masters*” of “*servitude-Cameroon*” have prevented the state from resolving the present crisis with the historical burden of colonialism. French Emmanuel Macron who was five years old when Paul Biya became President of Cameroon in 1982 not only endorsed the legitimacy of Biya’s presidency when he took office. He has also been playing double standard all this while. Criticising Paul Biya while at the same time reinforcing Cameroon military might with French squadrons. The British government has also followed the tune of this music. Even though the crisis in Cameroon has been raised many times in the British House of Commons with many requests from the British government in terms of what it is doing for the situation. The British government has only been able to express its concern over the situation in a manner that is good for literature and visual optics by encouraging the government of Cameroon to embark in a process of an all-inclusive dialogue in order to resolve

the deadly violence. However, the British government has not done any better in terms of resolving the war. It must be noted that Paris and London are at the centre of the war in Cameroon. Their decision to grant the former British Southern Cameroons independence by converging with *La République du Cameroun* was the apogee of human negligence and colonial satanism. Meanwhile the international community should have encouraged the government of Cameroon to move towards an all-inclusive dialogue that welcomes debates on the form of the state. It was expected that the international community should have been a key player in this event. It was under the watchful eyes of the international community that the government of Cameroon created the dubious “National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multi-culturalism” as part of the government measures to resolve the war in Cameroon. Even though it was very clear that such commission would not succeed because it lacked the ethics and moral to speak truth to power. The war in Cameroon is only a reflection of the effects of neo-colonialism in the larger part of Africa. The war has made a critical announcement of what Cameroon is, or what it represents, in combination of its true historical experience, and long abuse of power by its leadership. Following decades of renewed political manipulation along ethnic, regional and linguistic lines that has been sustained by the previous colonial powers. However, the reality is that, finally the collective citizens of Cameroon Anglophone and Francophone – have become disillusioned with the manipulations of the Cameroonian nation-state (Gros, 1995 e 2003). What will happen hence forth will be presented as recommendations in my conclusion.

## 5. Conclusion

The war in Cameroon has significantly increased various political movements within the Anglophone collective. There are those in support of outright decentralization of power (two-state federalism). And those in support of outright independence (self-determination). The latter constitute amongst them those who have taken up arms as a reaction to the massacre of innocent Anglophone Cameroonians. Therefore, because the war has colonial implications in terms of the failed process of “decolonization” of British Southern Cameroons, it is required that the British government should take the lead in seeking solution to the current conflict. The strongest recommendation in ending the war is that Cameroon must return to its 1961 Federal constitution and must continue to exist in a two-state federation. This must not be replaced by any other form of the state. It must never become a ten-state federation or a new decentralized state. The later would not keep Southern Cameroonians at peace owing to the new face that French Cameroon has shown them. Alternatively, there should be a referendum for self-determination of Southern Cameroons.

## Bibliographic references

- Abongdia, Jane-Francis Afungmeyu (2009), *Language Ideologies and Attitudes of Francophone Learners towards English in Yaoundé, Cameroon*. PhD diss., University of Western Cape.
- Alidou, Hassana (2006), *Use of African Languages and Literacy: Conditions, Factors and Processes (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Tanzania and Zambia).* *Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)*. Accessed June 28, 2015.
- Alobwede, D’Epie (1998), *Banning Pidgin English in Cameroon*, *English Today*, vol. 14(1), pp. 54-60. [Online]. Available at: DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0266078400000742>.

- Anchimbe, Eric A. (2007), Linguabridity: Redefining linguistic identities among children in urban areas, in, Eric A. Anchimbe, *Linguistic Identity in Postcolonial Multilingual Spaces*, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 66-86.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2005), Anglophonism and Francophonism: The Stakes of (Official) Language Identity in Cameroon, *Alizés*, pp. 25-26.
- Anyangwe, Carlson (2009), *Betrayal of Too Trusting a People: The UN, the UK, and the Trust Territory of the Southern Cameroons*. Bamenda, Cameroon: Langaa.
- Ardener, E. (1967), The Nature of Reunification in Cameroon, in, Arthur Hazelwood, *African Integration and Disintegration: Case Studies in Economic and Political Union*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ardener, Edwin, Ardener, Shirley and Warmington, W. A. (1960), *Plantation and village in the Cameroons: some economic and social studies*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Awasom, Nicodemus F. (2000), The reunification question in Cameroon history: was the bride an enthusiastic or a reluctant one? *Africa Today*, pp. 91-119.
- Barad, K. (2017), Troubling time/s and ecologies of nothingness: Re-turning, re-membering, and facing the incalculable, *New Formations* vol. 92(92), pp. 56-86.
- Besong, J. Bate and Ngwasiri, C. N. (1995), *The 1994 Forestry Law and National Resource Management in Cameroon*, APVO-NGON RMS: Cameroon.
- Bitjaa, Kody Zachée D. (2001a), Emergence and Survival of National Languages in Cameroon, *TRAOS. Internet-Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften*. N.º 11/2001. [Online]. [Consult. 15.Jan.2004]. Available at: [www.inst.at/trans/11Nr/kody11.htm](http://www.inst.at/trans/11Nr/kody11.htm).
- Boone, C. (2003), *Political Topographies of the African State: territorial authority and institutional choice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cameroon (1972), *The institutions and the constitution of the United Republic of Cameroon*. Yaoundé: Ministry of Information and Culture.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1961), *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Cameroon*. Yaoundé: National Printing Press.
- Ceuppens, Bambi and Geschiere, Peter (2005), "Autochthony: Local or Global? New Modes in the Struggle over Citizenship and Belonging in Africa and Europe", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 34, pp. 385-407.
- Chem-Langhëë, Bongfen (1995), The road to the unitary state of Cameroon 1959-1972, *Paideuma*, pp. 17-25. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.mambila.info/Chilver/Paideuma/paideuma-Introdu.html>.
- Chumbow, Sammy (1996), The role of national languages within a Comprehensive Language Policy for Cameroon, Academic discourse presented at the University of Buea: Buea.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1980), Language and Language Policy in Cameroon, in, Ndiva Kofela-Kale, *An African Experiment in Nation Building: The Bilingual Cameroon Republic Since Reunification*, Colorado: Westview Press Inc, pp. 281-311.
- CIA (2018), *The World Factbook*. [Online]. Available at: [https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/print\\_cm.html](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/print_cm.html).
- Elango, Lovett Zephaniah (1985), The Anglo-French Condominium in Cameroon: The Myth and the Reality, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 184, pp. 658-71.
- Eriksen, Thomas Hylland (2010), *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, New York: Pluto Press.
- Falola, Toyin and Tyler, Fleming (2009), African Civilizations: From the Pre-colonial to the Modern Day, *World Civilization and History of Human Development*, vol. 1, pp. 123-140.
- Fonchingong, C. (2005), Exploring the politics of identity and ethnicity in state reconstruction in Cameroon, *Social Identities*, vol. 11 (4), pp. 363-81.
- Fonlon, Bernard (1969), The language problem in Cameroon: an historical perspective, [Online]. [Consult. 05.May.2006]. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/view/03050068/sp030013/03x0446d/0>.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1963), A Case for Early Bilingualism, *Abbia*, n.º 4.

- Gordon, Raymond G. (ed.) (2005), *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. 15<sup>th</sup> ed. Dallas: SIL International.
- Gros, Jean-Germain (2003), *Cameroon: Politics and Society in Critical Perspective*, Lanham, Md: University Press of America.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1995), The Hard Lessons of Cameroon, *Journal of Democracy*, pp. 112-20.
- Jua, Nantang (2005), The mortuary sphere, privilege and the politics of belonging in contemporary Cameroon, *Africa*, vol. 75(3), pp. 325-54.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2003), Differential responses to disappearing transitional pathways, *African Studies Review*, vol. 46 (2), pp. 13-36.
- Jua, Nantang and Konings, Piet (2004), Occupation of public space: Anglophone nationalism in Cameroon, *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, vol. 175: 609-634. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17449057.2013.844435?scroll=top&needAccess=true>.
- Kofele-Kale, Ndiva (ed.) (1980), *An African Experiment in Nation Building: The Bilingual Cameroon Republic since Reunification*, Westview Special Studies on Africa, Boulder, Colo: Westview Press.
- Kale, Paul (1967), *Political Evolution in the Cameroons*. Buea: Government Printer.
- Konings, Piet and Nyamnjoh, Francis (2019), Anglophone secessionist movements in Cameroon, in Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, *Secessionism in African Politics*, pp. 59-89.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1997), The anglophone problem in Cameroon, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 35(2), pp. 207-229.
- Kouega, Jean-Paul (1999), Forty years of official bilingualism in Cameroon, *English Today* 60, vol. 15 (4), pp. 38-43.
- Krieger, Milton (1994), Cameroon's democratic crossroads, 1990-4, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 32(4), pp. 605-628. Cambridge University Press.
- Lado, L. (2005), African Imagination of the West: Between Resentment and Seduction, *Etudes* 403, vol. 7/8, pp. 17-27.
- Lazar, Mircea (2019), Cameroon's Linguistic Divide Deepens to Rift on Questions of Democracy, Trust, National Identity. [Online]. Available at: [http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Dispatches/ab\\_r7\\_dispatchno283\\_anglo\\_francophone\\_divisions\\_deepen\\_in\\_cameroon.pdf](http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Dispatches/ab_r7_dispatchno283_anglo_francophone_divisions_deepen_in_cameroon.pdf).
- Le Vine, Victor (1976), Political Integration and the United republic of Cameroon, in David Smock and Kwamena Bentsi-Enchill, *the Search for National Integration in Africa*, London, England: Macmillan.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1964), *The Cameroons: From Mandate to Independence*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press.
- Makoni, Sinfree and Meinhof, Ulrike (2003), Introducing applied linguistics in Africa, *AILA review*, vol. 16.1, pp. 1-12.
- Mbembe, Achille (2016), Decolonizing the university: New directions, *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, vol. 15(1), pp. 29-45.
- Mforteh, SA (2006), Cultural innovations in Cameroon's linguistic Tower of Babel, in, *TRANS. Internet-zeitschrift für kulturwissenschaften*, 16:2005. [Online]. Available at: [http://www.inst.at/trans/16Nr/03\\_2/mforteh16htm](http://www.inst.at/trans/16Nr/03_2/mforteh16htm).
- Migge, Bettina and Léglise, Isabelle (2008), Language and colonialism: Applied linguistics in the context of creole communities, in Hellinger, A., and Pauwels, P., *Handbook of Language and Communication: Diversity and Change*.
- Ndille, Roland (2016), English and French as official languages in Cameroon: The Intentionality of Colonial Representations and the Failure of a Cameroon-centric Identity; 1884 and after, *European Journal of Language Studies*, vol. 3(2), pp. 17-34.
- Ngefacs, Aloysius (2010), Linguistic choices in postcolonial multilingual Cameroon, *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, vol. 19(3), pp. 149-164.

- Ngoh, Victor Julius (2004), *Cameroon from Federal to Unitary State: A Critical Study*, Limbe: Design House.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2001), *Southern Cameroons, 1922-1961: A Constitutional History*, Aldeshot and Burlington: Ashgate.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1987), *Cameroon 1884-1985: a hundred years of history*. Yaoundé: CEPER.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1979), *The political evolution of Cameroon, 1884-1961*.
- Niba, F. N. (2007), New language for divided Cameroon, BBC News, February 20. [Online]. [Consult. 24.March.2009]. Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/low/world/africa/6376389.stm>.
- Nyamnjoh, Francis (2005), *Africa's media: Democracy and the politics of belonging*. London: Zed Books.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1999), Cameroon: a country united by ethnic ambition and difference, *African Affairs*, vol. 98 (390), pp. 101-18.
- Nyamnjoh, Francis and Page, Ben (2002), Whiteman Kontri and the Enduring Allure of Modernity Among Cameroonian Youth, *African Affairs*, vol. 101 (405), pp. 607-634.
- Republic of Cameroon (1998a), Decree N.º 98/003: organizing the Ministry of Culture. Cameroon Tribune n.º 6517 of 13 January 1998.
- Raper, Alan (1955), Malaria and the Sickling Trait, *British Medical Journal*, vol. 2, pp. 1186-1189.
- Rodney, Walter (1975), *How Europe underdeveloped Africa*, Verso Trade.
- Torrent, Mélanie (2012), *Diplomacy and Nation-Building in Africa: Franco-British relations and Cameroon at the End of the Empire*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Truong, N. (2012), Language of Instruction: Unlocking effectiveness of education and sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa, *International Education*, vol. 42(1): 6-21.
- Thiong'o, Ngũgĩ Wa (1985), The language of African literature, *The New Left Review*, vol. 150, pp. 109-127.
- Vigouroux, Cécile (2005), "There are no whites in South Africa: Territoriality, Language and Identity Among Francophone Africans in Cape Town, *Language and Communication*, vol. (25), pp. 237-255.
- Young, Tom (1999), Review Article the State and Politics in Africa, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 25, n.º 1, pp. 149-154.



# Problème anglophone et conflits mémoriels au Cameroun

Emmanuel Tchumtchoua\*

pp. III-127

## Introduction

Parlant de la mémoire collective, Maurice Halbwachs dit qu'elle «est la reconstitution du passé... Elle adopte l'image des faits anciens aux croyances et aux besoins spirituels du présent» (Halbwachs, 1941: 7). Au-delà du conflit armé, le problème politique, économique et culturel des deux régions anglophones se cristallise autour des enjeux mémoriels qui fondent les discours et les revendications des protagonistes et par lesquels, ces différents acteurs réactualisent et réinterprètent le présent à l'aune d'un passé «essentiellement mythique, déformé, anachronique» (Le Goff, 1988: 194). Ce travail de réinterprétation du passé constitue selon nous l'un des soubassements de la mémoire collective au Cameroun aujourd'hui pour ce qui est du problème anglophone.


L'objectif de ce papier consiste à démontrer comment le passé colonial anglais, français, allemand et surtout le moment capital de la réunification des deux Cameroun sont «incorporés au présent sans distance» (Dosse, 2000: 182) pour emprunter une expression de François Dosse afin de servir de discours de légitimation à l'une ou l'autre des parties en conflit.

Ce faisant, ce travail interroge d'abord l'écriture de cette histoire aussi bien dans le site de production que chez les personnes habilitées à le faire. Nous voulons avant tout ici analyser de manière critique la façon dont les questions de l'indépendance, de la réunification, de l'État fédéral sont traitées par les historiens et les différentes personnes qui se sont penchées sur ces sujets. Quelles lectures les différents auteurs et acteurs de la scène politique camerounaise font-ils de cette histoire et quels sont les problèmes soulevés par tous ces écrits?

Aujourd'hui, le retour en force des identités particulières (Southern Cameroons, anglophonie, SCNC...), que semblait avoir tranché le vote référendaire du 11 février 1961 impose de reconsidérer les significations de ce combat, de réétudier les assises et les logiques des acteurs et de ré-analyser avec un œil critique sur ce passé qui refuse de passer et sur le processus par lequel nous sommes arrivés à cette sorte de saturation mémorielle.

## 1. Quand l'État organise l'amnésie

Le 3 mars 2020, Me Agbor Balla, enseignant vacataire à l'université de Buéa, donne aux étudiants dont il a la charge d'enseignement un sujet d'examen ainsi libellé: «La crise anglophone depuis 2016 a été déclenchée par la grève des avocats et des

 10.21747/doi.org/0874-2375/afr33a8

\* Université de Douala.

enseignants. Évaluez la validité de cette déclaration».<sup>1</sup> Informé, le ministre camerounais de l'Enseignement supérieur dans une correspondance adressée au «Vice-Chancellor» (Recteur) de l'université de Buéa accuse Me Agbor Balla de «transgresser le caractère clos et apolitique de l'université», violant ainsi le code éthique et déontologique de l'université de Buéa. il demande par conséquent au Vice-Chancellor «prendre des mesures... pour mettre fin à cette situation». À la suite de la requête du ministre, les autorités de cette université, après avoir traduit l'enseignant devant le conseil de discipline, décidèrent de mettre fin au contrat de ce dernier. Ce qui est troublant dans cette démarche c'est que des sujets identiques ont été donnés aux étudiants à l'université de Yaoundé II à Soa sans que personne ne se plaigne. Il y a donc des sujets qui peuvent être discutés à Yaoundé, mais pas à Buea?

Cet épisode est révélateur du climat politique qui sévit au Cameroun depuis les indépendances. En effet et comme l'écrit Pierre Messmer, l'un des principaux ordonnateurs de cette indépendance et qui fut plus tard Premier ministre de son pays,

*«La France accordera l'indépendance à ceux qui la réclamaient le moins, après avoir éliminé politiquement et militairement ceux qui la réclamaient avec le plus d'intransigeance; dans les régions Bassa et Bamiléké; l'ordre n'est pas encore complètement rétabli le 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 1960, lorsque le Cameroun sous administration française devient indépendant.»* (Messmer, 1998: 115).

Les nouvelles autorités mises en place par la France et qui étaient d'ailleurs quelques années auparavant, des adversaires résolus de l'indépendance et de la réunification, décidèrent faute d'une légitimité historique de fonder la nouvelle république sur l'oubli et l'amnésie. Par une série de lois notamment celles portant sur la répression de la subversion et sur l'État d'exception sans oublier les actes d'autorité, le régime Ahidjo confisqua la production de la pensée et de la parole, transformant le nouvel État qui venait de naître et qui depuis octobre 1961 s'appelait République fédérale du Cameroun en une sorte de dictature fondée sur la répression et la peur. L'un des historiographes de monsieur Ahidjo décrit avec des mots justes le système politique en vigueur au Cameroun dans l'après-indépendance.

*«L'édification des structures politiques fut, sans cesse accompagnée de la répression de subversions réelles ou supposées. Face à la réfutation par le fer et le feu de la légitimité du pouvoir, s'érigèrent une armée tournée vers l'ennemi intérieur et un appareil policier dont la croissance devenue sans objet, s'auto-entretint fabriquant des ennemis du régime. La peur régna. La peur de l'un engendra celle de l'autre. La crainte des factions et des conspirations multiplia les suspects. Chacun s'intéressant tant soit peu à la politique devint un suspect potentiel, et risqua, de ce fait, l'arrestation, la torture et la détention indéfinie sans jugement»* (Gaillard, 1994: 62).

Par la terreur et la peur, le pouvoir politique confisqua à son seul profit la production de l'histoire et de la mémoire collective. Un nouveau narratif du passé fondé sur le panégyrie du «père de la nation» fut mis sur pied et bien encadré. Tout ce qui ne participait pas de cet objectif fut réduit au silence. Une franche importante de l'histoire nationale notamment celle portant sur la lutte pour l'indépendance et la réunification du pays fut interdite de l'espace public et refoulée par les uns et les autres au plus profond de la mémoire collective devenant ainsi une sorte de «mémoire en errance».<sup>2</sup>

À titre purement illustratif, en 1961 soit un an après les indépendances, le ministère de l'Éducation nationale dirigé par Jean Ekwabi Ewane fit publier un ouvrage scolaire intitulé: «Histoire du Cameroun de la préhistoire au 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 1960». Ce livre fut saisi et

<sup>1</sup> C'est nous qui traduisons.

<sup>2</sup> Sur cette notion lire Bayard, Mbembe, Toubalor (1992: 219).



retiré de la circulation juste une semaine après sa sortie. Pour le régime, ce livre pour avoir consacré une page entière à l'UPC et à son chef contre une demi-page à Ahidjo avait commis le crime de lèse-majesté et devait subir l'autodafé (Eyinga, 1984: 7).

Comment dans ce contexte, parler d'histoire politique surtout de celle de la décolonisation de notre pays sans d'abord prendre le risque de ramer à contre-courant en s'attaquant à la quiétude des gens que les années de dictature avaient rendus soit amnésiques, soit apathiques. En tout cas, oser parler de l'histoire dans ce contexte, c'était s'attaquer aux logiques qui avaient permis au pouvoir de s'incruster dans la durée. C'était nécessairement faire de la subversion et «réveiller les vieux démons» que d'essayer de réécrire l'histoire, notamment l'histoire politique.

Il faut dire à la décharge du régime actuel que, à la suite du conflit entre Paul Biya et son mentor Ahmadou Ahidjo, le premier avait, dans le but de délégitimer son prédécesseur, porté le contentieux sur le plan mémoriel en réactualisant le souvenir de l'indépendance: «L'histoire du Cameroun ne commence pas avec l'indépendance... elle a été conquise de haute lutte... [elle ne] fut point ni «donnée» ni «octroyée»». Aussi était-il désolant de constater que les noms de ces «dignes enfants issus de ce terroir... sont, hélas, restés tabous pendant le quart de siècle qui vient de s'écouler.» (Biya, 1986: 251-252) L'on aurait applaudi à deux mains si celui qui écrivait ces lignes n'avait pas servi ce système aux plus hautes fonctions pendant plus de vingt-cinq ans. D'ailleurs, ce constat ne le poussa pas à supprimer les lois d'exceptions qui réprimaient tout discours dissident qu'on qualifiait alors de lois sur «la subversion»<sup>3</sup> ou la censure sur les publications intellectuelles.

Ce n'est qu'à partir des années 1990, et ce devant les différents changements qui se produisaient sur la scène internationale avec la chute du mur de Berlin et le désir de liberté des peuples que le gouvernement se rendit compte que sa position n'était plus tenable et qu'il ne pouvait pas maintenir pendant longtemps cette sorte de silence qui ne disait pas son nom sur le passé immédiat du pays; il résolut alors de l'instrumentaliser. Ainsi, le 16 décembre 1991, le Parlement camerounais, encore entièrement contrôlé par le parti unique, vota une loi portant réhabilitation de certaines figures de l'histoire du Cameroun. Cette loi offrait «désormais la possibilité: d'user de leur patronyme pour baptiser rues et édifices publics et de transférer au Cameroun les restes mortuaires de ceux d'entre eux qui ont été inhumés hors du territoire national»<sup>4</sup>.

Le paradoxe de ce texte, c'est qu'aucune prescription écrite antérieure n'empêchait de procéder à ce qu'autorise cette loi de 1991. Par ce texte, l'État reconnaissait donc de manière implicite qu'une loi non écrite avait pendant longtemps posé un verrou sur le passé et banni certains Camerounais de l'espace public. Il faut dire que, 30 ans après la promulgation de cette loi, le bilan est très pauvre: il n'y a eu aucun rapatriement des restes mortuaires, aucun monument n'a été construit à l'honneur des «réhabilités» et la journée de deuil national prévue n'a jamais été fixée. De plus, la liste qui devait s'élargir avec le temps est restée la même jusques aujourd'hui. L'on peut ajouter à cette analyse le fait

<sup>3</sup> La législation anti-subversive était constituée par l'ordonnance n° 62/OF/18 du 12 décembre 1962 et la loi n° 63/30 du 25 octobre 1963 complétant l'ordonnance n° 61/OF/14 du 4 octobre 1961 fixant l'organisation judiciaire militaire de l'État et modifiant l'ordonnance n° 62/OF/18 portant répression de la subversion. Selon les dispositions de l'ordonnance du 12 décembre 1962, la subversion est le fait:

- d'avoir par quelque moyen que ce soit, incité à résister à l'application des lois, décrets, règlements ou ordres de l'autorité publique (article 1<sup>er</sup>);
- d'avoir porté atteinte au respect dû aux autorités publiques ou incité à la haine contre le gouvernement de la République, ou de participer à une entreprise de subversion dirigée contre les autorités et les lois de ladite République, ou d'encourager cette subversion (article 2);
- et, surtout, d'avoir émis ou propagé des bruits, nouvelles ou rumeurs mensonges, soit assorti de commentaires tendancieux des nouvelles exactes, lorsque ces bruits, nouvelles et commentaires sont susceptibles de nuire aux autorités publiques (article 3). Sur ces différentes lois d'exception, lire Thomas Ojong, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Exposé de motif de la loi du 16 décembre 1991 portant réhabilitation de certaines figures de l'histoire du Cameroun.

que le Cameroun a reporté trois années de suite, la célébration du cinquantenaire de la réunification et qu'un livre commandé par le cabinet civil de la présidence (qui d'ailleurs présidait le Comité national d'organisation des cinquantenaires de l'indépendance et de la réunification) (Oswald Baboké, année de publication n. i.), a réussi la prouesse inédite d'effacer des pans entiers de notre histoire et d'en déformer d'autres. La conclusion que l'on peut librement tirer, c'est que le Cameroun a un problème avec son passé. Achille Mbembe a-t-il peut-être raison d'affirmer que «de tous les pays du monde moderne, le Cameroun est, en effet, connu pour ses traditions d'ostracisme et de violence à l'encontre des morts qui, de leur vivant, ont, à un moment ou à un autre, joué un rôle dans son histoire» (*Politique africaine*, 1990: 117).

### **La production scientifique comme reflet d'une société de la peur et de l'amnésie organisée**

Dans ce contexte marqué par la volonté de l'État d'enrôler l'histoire dans son patrimoine, la science devient une sorte de gaine idéologique destinée à endoctriner, à manipuler et à assoir un pouvoir tyrannique. Ainsi, jusqu'à une époque très récente, l'histoire de l'indépendance et de la réunification était truffée d'interprétations partielles et partiales, faites par des hommes de sciences qui pour conserver leur position au sein du pouvoir ou de la haute hiérarchie de l'administration universitaire était obligée souvent de se contenter d'une sorte de service minimum ou d'oblitérer les faits. On se ment à soi-même pour survivre.

Lorsqu'on lit pour prendre cet exemple, la leçon inaugurale du colloque organisé en février 2013 par l'université de Douala pour commémorer les cinquante années de la réunification et dont le titre portait précisément sur: «La question de la réunification du Cameroun aux Nations-Unies (1946-1961)», (Mbozo'o, 2013: 21-39) l'on est surpris par la prouesse du Doyen de cette faculté par ailleurs chef de département d'histoire de cette institution qui en plus de 30 minutes de discours réussit l'exploit de ne pas prononcer même une seule fois le nom de Ruben Um Nyobe ou de l'UPC. Le fait que ce leader politique fut le premier Camerounais à demander et à obtenir à trois reprises, une audition devant l'Assemblée générale de l'ONU pour poser le problème de l'indépendance, de la réunification des deux Cameroun avec pour conséquence la fin de la tutelle ne méritait qu'on le mentionne. Il suffit de souligner le fait que celui qui faisait cette leçon inaugurale était membre influent du parti au pouvoir, pour que l'on comprenne aisément les rapports incestueux qui se sont noués sur la terre du Cameroun entre la science et la politique, et ce, au détriment du premier.

Nous nous proposons dans cette partie à travers une mise en perspective de la question de l'indépendance et de la réunification qui est pour moi l'un des points d'achoppement du problème anglophone, de montrer jusqu'où s'étendent les ravages de cette mise sous tutelle du passé et de la mémoire de ce passé sur la production et le débat scientifique au Cameroun.

Lorsqu'on jette un regard rétrospectif sur la manière dont on écrit cette histoire, surtout l'histoire des faits relevant de la politique, l'on est surpris par le côté épars et squelettique de la bibliographie s'y rapportant. En dehors des textes des étrangers comme Gardnier, Victor T. Levine, Richard Joseph ou de nos aînés Chem-Langhèë Bongfen, Achille Mbembé, et Abel Eyinga dont la candidature à l'élection présidentielle lui avait valu une condamnation à vingt ans de prison<sup>5</sup> et dont les livres étaient frappés d'interdiction, tout

<sup>5</sup> Sur ce procès inédit, lire Eyinga (1978).

était en friche jusqu'à une époque très récente avec la sortie des livres comme celui de Thomas Deltombe, Manuel Domergue et Jacob Tatsitsa (Deltombe, 2011). Des pans entiers de notre histoire restent encore aujourd'hui inexplorés. Il faut dire en passant que ceux qui avaient osé, étaient en exil et bénéficiaient alors des privilèges de la liberté.

L'on se serait donc attendu que, avec le vent de liberté qui souffle sur notre continent et sur nos pays, alors qu'une très grande frange de la population se tourne vers le passé et manifeste une soif presque insatiable de connaissances, que les historiens camerounais saisissent la balle au bond en produisant des œuvres de haute facture sur notre passé. Ce n'est malheureusement pas le cas!

Cette carence est à la fois quantitative et qualitative. Sur le plan quantitatif, l'on a l'impression que les «années de plomb» ont laissée dans les consciences une telle marque que personne n'ose franchir la barrière de l'autocensure. Pour prendre seulement l'exemple de la réunification, cinquante ans après les indépendances, et ce, malgré l'existence de six départements d'histoire dans les sept universités d'État au Cameroun, aucune thèse n'a été soutenue sur ce sujet. Pour ce qui est des mémoires de master, le constat n'est guère plus reluisant. Notre département d'histoire de l'Université de Douala, en plus de vingt ans d'existence, n'a pu produire qu'un seul mémoire ayant trait à ce phénomène de la réunification (Makongo, 2012) et quelques mémoires ayant des liens plus ou moins directs avec l'histoire politique de la période sus-citée (Yomsi, 2012; Djoko, 2012; Nana, 2012; Fotso, 2007; Sadio, 2012; Olomo, 2010). On pourrait étendre cette étude aux autres universités d'État sans que les conclusions pour ce qui concerne les mémoires ne changent pour autant.

L'on aurait pensé que l'Université de Buéa qui est la ville capitale de l'ancienne «*British Southern Cameroons*» et qui par le plébiscite du 11 février 1961 avait décidé de rejoindre la partie française du Cameroun ferait mieux que son homologue de Yaoundé! Que non.<sup>6</sup> En somme, et pour ce qui concerne l'histoire de la réunification comme l'histoire politique du Cameroun tout court, les études y afférentes produites par les universités camerounaises sont à la fois «rares et parcellaires» (Tchumtchoua, 2013: 99).

L'autre talon d'Achille de tous ces écrits se trouve au niveau de leur démarche méthodologique. En prenant toujours l'exemple de l'indépendance et de la réunification, la principale critique qu'on peut émettre à ce sujet, c'est le côté confiscatoire d'une très grande partie de ces écrits, trop marquée par des identités particulières (Cameroun oriental, *British Southern Cameroons*, anglophone, francophone...), éclipsant de ce fait les échanges qui ont eu lieu entre les deux identités politiques et surtout l'action des hommes politiques des deux bords qui ont souvent agi de concert afin de faire triompher le projet unitaire. Nous pensons pour l'occasion à Paul Soppo Priso, au Dr Bebey Eyidi ou à Paul Kemayou sans oublier des Upécistes comme Ruben Um Nyobé ou Félix Roland Moumié, etc.

Le prolongement de cette immersion des questions identitaires dans le débat a conduit certains auteurs à donner à ces événements, pourtant de portée nationale, des lectures tribalistes et régionalistes. La résultante de cette dérive, c'est que notre histoire politique, et principalement l'histoire de la réunification, est restée une «niche de paradoxes et de contradictions» (Tchumtchoua, 2013: 101-102).

Pour ce qui est des livres publiés par les universitaires camerounais et dont le sujet porte plus au moins sur ces problématiques, en dehors du livre du professeur Daniel Abwa sur lequel nous allons revenir (Abwa, 2010) la plupart des écrits qui existent sur le thème de

<sup>6</sup> Nous sommes redevables ici à l'enquête menée sur le terrain par notre étudiant Charles Makongo et aux informations fournies par notre collègue du département d'Histoire de l'Université de Buéa, Joseph Nfi.

la réunification, sont souvent des monographies ou des témoignages dont la principale carence, est qu'ils manquent tous d'une mise en perspective, d'un regard global sur la lutte pour la réunification telle qu'elle s'est simultanément déroulée dans les deux entités politiques qu'étaient le Cameroun sous tutelle française et le Cameroun sous tutelle britannique. Le titre très accrocheur du dernier livre du professeur Victor Julius Ngoh (Ngoh, 2011) est à cet égard très édifiant. L'on se serait attendu au regard du titre et des bornes chronologiques choisis qu'il consacre une grande partie de son livre au combat pour l'indépendance et la réunification au Cameroun sous tutelle française et principalement au mouvement qui a pendant longtemps porté presque seul cette principale revendication, à savoir l'UPC. Sur ce point, on est vite déçu, car tout l'ouvrage met en scène presque exclusivement les acteurs du «*British Southern Cameroons*» et les responsables de l'autre partie du Cameroun ne sont convoqués qu'accessoirement. Pour ce qui est du combat de l'UPC, il ne lui consacre même pas une page entière. Le style descriptif et narratif de cet opuscule fait qu'il souffre par endroits d'un déficit d'analyse, transformant quelques fois le livre en un véritable réquisitoire anti-Foncha. La très grande focalisation du texte sur monsieur Foncha, dont la stratégie est qualifiée de «*double jeu*» ou encore de «*duplicité*» (Ibid: 17) oblitère l'analyse des facteurs sociopolitiques et culturels qui ont pu pousser la population de cette région à préférer dans sa très grande majorité la réunification avec le Cameroun français à l'intégration au Nigéria.<sup>7</sup>

Au-delà de ces critiques, il ressort à l'évidence qu'il n'existe pas une étude exhaustive de l'histoire de la réunification des deux Cameroun. Il importe donc cinquante ans après ces événements, de mettre à l'épreuve du débat cette tranche importante de notre histoire en commençant par le moment où il s'invite dans la trajectoire du mouvement nationaliste camerounais jusqu'au moment où réuni, le pays fait le deuil de la République fédérale. Il s'agit d'identifier dans le contexte des indépendances africaines, les moments ainsi que les trajectoires que prit cette quête pour la réunification ou le retour au Cameroun allemand. Si cette quête pour une histoire du phénomène de la réunification ne souffre d'aucune contestation, elle devrait s'arrimer sur de nouvelles problématiques avec pour ambition de dévoiler les mécanismes par lesquels les puissances occidentales (France, Angleterre, États-Unis) et les acteurs locaux sans exclusive se sont appropriés ce combat, les transactions complexes, bref, les luttes de pouvoir autour de cette revendication, les changements significatifs qu'a connu le pays depuis cette époque sans oublier ces nouvelles identités particulières qui remettent en cause le bilan et les significations de cet événement historique.

Peut-être par cet acte pouvons-nous éviter que ne perdure sur notre sol une forme de «*guerre des mémoires*»<sup>8</sup>, car une histoire aussi ébréchée, échançrée dans un contexte de contrôle mémoriel comme le nôtre ne peut déboucher que sur une forme de refoulé qui à la longue suscite sur un conflit mémoriel et c'est ce que nous vivons aujourd'hui derrière le problème anglophone.

## Un conflit mémoriel derrière les armes et les revendications diverses

C'est une lapalissade que de dire qu'il existe autour de l'histoire de la réunification et du problème anglophone, plusieurs mémoires qui se juxtaposent et qui souvent se heurtent. Prenons seulement le cas des régions du Nord-Ouest et du Sud-Ouest qui forment l'ancien «*British Southern Cameroons*», elles sont traversées par une véritable convulsion

<sup>7</sup> Le résultat du plébiscite était de 233571 voix pour et 97741 voix contre.

<sup>8</sup> Sur le concept de la guerre des mémoires, lire Stora (2011). Lire aussi *Cultures Sud* no 165 d'avril-juin 2007.

mémorielle consécutive à une sorte de crise d'identité que vivent les Camerounais originaires de cette région et qui pousse les uns et les autres à s'interroger sur le passé de la région, son identité et son destin collectif. Le groupe le plus visible est celui que l'on peut appeler les nostalgiques de la période coloniale anglaise. Pour eux, les peuples de la région avaient commis un acte de suicide collectif en se faisant «engloutir» (Ngoh, 2011: 26; Mbile, 2000) par les francophones. Ce groupe ne constitue pas un ensemble homogène, car il est aussi traversé par des divergences avec d'un côté la SCNC qui veut la sécession et l'indépendance de la région (Awason, 1998) et de l'autre, ceux qui réclament le retour à l'État fédéral à deux États (Che Tita, 1993), (Nyamnjoh, 2000: 315-316).

À côté de ces derniers, un autre groupe, se sentant exclu du processus ayant mené à la réunification, prétend que la région du Nord-Ouest est la principale bénéficiaire des retombées symboliques, politiques et pécuniaires de la réunification. Pour s'en convaincre, ces «déflatsés» de réunification, qui se recrutent tous dans la région du Sud-Ouest, postulent que les leaders du Nord-Ouest, pour avoir bonne presse auprès du président Ahidjo, n'hésitèrent pas à liguier ce dernier contre les élites politiques du Sud-Ouest. C'est la teneur des propos que l'on peut lire dans le *Cameroon Post* de novembre 1991:

*«The South West Province has been the underdog of the North West Political giants who have since re-unification been at the forefront of Cameroon Politics... after the Fouban Conference, the political leaders who emerged from Southern Cameroons and became allied to Ahidjo were all North Westerners, who indoctrinated Ahidjo against South Westerners»<sup>9</sup>.*

Le défi actuel consiste donc à corriger cette injustice historique pour que s'éteigne ce sentiment d'insatisfaction. Ce discours n'est pas partagé par une autre partie de l'élite de la région pour qui le «problème anglophone» est plus profond que cette présentation caricaturale. Selon ces derniers, les anglophones indifféremment de leur région d'origine (Nord-Ouest ou Sud-Ouest), sont aussi dans une certaine mesure architectes de leur propre marginalisation (Kah, 2012).

Pour faire à peu près complet, nous ajoutons à la liste ceux qui se désignent eux-mêmes comme la «11ème province»<sup>10</sup> c'est-à-dire ceux des Camerounais natifs de la région dont ils partagent d'ailleurs la langue et la culture, mais dont les parents ou les grands-parents sont ou étaient originaires de la partie francophone du pays. Ces derniers vivraient à en croire Michael Yanou, un véritable «dilemme» né d'une part du rejet dont ils sont l'objet, coté anglophone, de la part des déçus de la réunification qui les considèrent aujourd'hui encore comme des «étrangers» et qui, au passage, les accusent, d'être les descendants d'une immigration (francophone) qui a favorisé le phagocytage des anglophones; et d'autre part, ce sentiment de «dilemme» est entretenu par les hésitations du pouvoir politique qui peine à leur donner une identité et à favoriser leur intégration dans un contexte où les notions d'autochtonie et «d'allogénie» constituent le soubassement des politiques identitaires tant à l'échelle nationale que locale.

Le prolongement de cette immersion des questions identitaires dans le débat lié à la réunification a donné lieu à un autre enjeu épistémologique qui rend compte de la dimension tribaliste et régionaliste que certaines personnes veulent donner à cet événement, pourtant de portée nationale. À ce propos, Daniel Abwa écrit fort justement:

<sup>9</sup> Memorandum presented by the Fons, chiefs, Political leaders and people of former West Cameroon by a committee of Anglophone Elites resident in the Littoral Province in *Cameroon Post* (13-20 November 1991).

<sup>10</sup> Lire à ce propos l'article du Dr Michael Yanou "Reunification and the Eleventh province dilemma in Cameroon" in *Cameroon Journal on Democracy and Human Rights*, Vol. 2, N.º, Dec. 2007.

*«La deuxième rupture que connaît ainsi Endeley pour cause de tiédeur vis-à-vis de l'idée de sécession avec le Nigéria et de réunification avec le Cameroun français après celle de 1951, celle-ci (rupture de 1955 avec le départ de Foncha de ce parti pour fonder le KNDP), est définitive, car elle va prendre progressivement un caractère régional et ethnique. Désormais, d'après Neville Rubin, les Camerounais de la côte (KNC et KPP) s'opposent aux Camerounais des grassfields (KNDP); les côtiers contre les montagnards, le Sud contre le Nord»* (Abwa, 2010: 345-346).

Abwa, même s'il convoque la thèse du professeur Chem pour atténuer le côté abrupt de cette assertion et pour nuancer l'analyse ainsi faite, il n'en demeure pas moins qu'il contribue peut-être sans le savoir à vulgariser la thèse qui a cours dans certains milieux, qui, devant les difficultés de notre vivre ensemble en tant qu'État bilingue et multiculturel, présente les ressortissants de l'actuel Nord-Ouest comme la source des malheurs des anglophones pour avoir fait campagne pour la réunification (Kah, 2012: 79; Nfi, 2000: 58-70).

Ce discours accusateur est nourri par la trop grande propension qu'ont certains auteurs à circonscrire tout le problème anglophone à de la réunification, au plébiscite et à la Conférence constitutionnelle de Fouban (Kah, 2012).

Une telle approche biaise à notre avis l'analyse et ne rend pas justice de la complexité des faits ou des enjeux qui sous-tendent l'action des hommes politiques. Nous pensons aux différentes rencontres qui se sont tenues à Nkongsamba, Tiko, Yaoundé pour ne citer que celles-là. Nous pensons aussi aux enjeux diplomatiques (guerre froide) qui font que la France et l'Angleterre ne souhaitaient et ne pouvaient pas entrer en conflit pour une question d'indépendance d'un territoire qui d'après les propres analyses des Anglais ne serait pas économiquement viable si on lui accordait l'indépendance (Ngoh, 2011: 5).

Parlant du plébiscite de 1961, il faut ajouter au dossier de l'accusation, la thèse de notre collègue Joseph Lon Nfi selon laquelle «the massive vote in favour of reunification in the Southern Cameroons plebiscite of 1961 was the product of French Camerounian manipulation and maneuvers» (Nfi, 2013: 66). Même si une mise en perspective des autres élections qui ont précédé ce plébiscite notamment les élections de janvier 1959, permet de relativiser les conclusions de cette étude, il n'en demeure pas moins vrai qu'elle est révélatrice d'une certaine mentalité dans les milieux anglophones qui au lieu de faire le procès de la dictature en vigueur chez nous cherche les boucs émissaires.

Malheureusement, la vérité historique est très éloignée de ces analyses sommaires. Pour preuve, en relisant par exemple uniquement les chiffres du plébiscite, l'on remarque que toute la région de Nkambé dans le Nord-Ouest vota à une forte majorité contre la réunification (Nfi, 2012: 67). Dans le même temps, au Sud-Ouest, et précisément à Kumba, qui était le fief électoral de Mbile, tout le district de Mbonge qui pour parler le langage convenu était peuplé presque exclusivement d'autochtones, vota à une très écrasante majorité (12827 voix contre 6105) pour la réunification (Nfi, 2012: 67).

Lorsqu'après le plébiscite, Endeley et Mbile se lancèrent dans un combat sans issue pour demander que les entités territoriales (villages et villes) qui avaient voté pour le rattachement au Nigéria soient autorisées à faire sécession pour rejoindre le pays de leur choix, il se trouva 11 chefs et 13 notables Bakweri pour s'opposer à ces idées et demander que le pays déjà balkanisé ne le soit pas davantage (Nfi, 2012: 67). Terminons cette recension des faits dénotant d'une pluralité mémorielle et d'un foisonnement de contradictions au sujet de la réunification en évoquant les cas, d'une part de Mamfé, ville adossée sur la frontière nigériane qui a paradoxalement voté en faveur de la réunification et d'autre part du «fon» de Nso qui, bien qu'originaire de la région de Bamenda, fit campagne contre la réunification avant d'être désavoué dans les urnes par sa population (Nfi, 2012: 67).

Du côté francophone, l'image n'est guère reluisante. Des lignes de clivages existent et s'entremêlent dans un choc presque indescriptible.

Je commence par la mémoire upéciste. Ces derniers revendiquent souvent à raison d'être les principaux porteurs et mêmes artisans du combat pour la réunification. La littérature upéciste sur cet événement ne fait pas dans la dentelle (Eyinga, 1991: 102-109; Louka, 1994; Bakang, 2007; Ngapeth, 2009). La crise au Cameroun et l'absence de mémoire qui va avec, résulteraient selon eux, de ce que les manigances françaises de 1955 avec l'interdiction de l'UPC avaient vidé subitement la scène politique camerounaise, l'abandonnant à des «pan-tins» qui n'avaient jamais pensé l'indépendance ou la réunification et qui se trouvaient par la volonté des Français happés par un tourbillon dont ils ne maîtrisaient guère la force. Ils en étaient venus, bon gré et mal gré à constituer le corps politique d'un espace qui n'était pas le leur et pour lequel ils n'avaient aucun sentiment sinon celui de la vanité de leurs actes. Beaucoup de personnes dans ce milieu voient dans les revendications anglophones et surtout le désir de sécession une attaque contre leur héritage.

Évoquons en passant la mémoire des ahidjoistes (Gaillard, 1999; Zang, 1989) pour qui le premier président est non seulement le père de la nation, mais aussi la figure même du démiurge organisant tout, structurant tout pour le «bonheur» des Camerounais. À ce propos, Zang Atangana écrit:

*«Il fallait un chef capable de rassembler autour d'un idéal commun tous ces citoyens qui, en moins de quinze ans, ont été partagés en une centaine de familles spirituelles; un chef qui fut capable de montrer aux autres nations que les Camerounais étaient capables d'offrir autre chose qu'un spectacle de luttes, de sang et de désolation! Un chef qui par son rayonnement personnel, put s'imposer à tous...»* (Ibid, Tome 2, pp. 12-13).

Cette mystique du chef providentiel, empruntée sans vergogne à l'ogre nazi accoucha ce que Pascal Ndjock et nous avons appelé «*le refoulé colonial*» (Tchumtchoua, 2013: 358-377) c'est-à-dire une histoire officielle fabriquée, sans continuité de temps, mais qui n'arriva jamais à supplanter et à effacer l'histoire telle que vécue par les gens. Ces derniers, pour ne pas subir les foudres de la répression la refoula au plus profond de leur mémoire. Le pouvoir politique actuel, issu du même moule idéologique.

On peut inclure dans le même registre les hérauts du pouvoir actuel qui gardant la mystique du chef omniscient, ont disserté pendant des mois sur la différence entre problème anglophone et la question anglophone pendant que des hommes et des femmes mourraient et des maisons allient en fumée.

En somme, la résultante de cette niche de paradoxes et de contradiction invite à un réexamen des conclusions jusqu'ici admises et des grilles d'analyses en vogue jusqu'à présent. En fait, la vérité se situe à l'opposé d'une vision simpliste et manichéenne et se révèle une étonnante complexité en ce qui concerne ce qui se serait réellement passé. Derrière les cris d'une partie du peuple camerounais qui refusent de vivre comme des citoyens de seconde zone et qui souvent maladroitement utilisent l'histoire pour fonder son argumentation, il importe pour les historiens de métier de revenir de façon plus approfondie sur cette question afin de proposer d'autres perspectives à notre métier et de laisser aux entrepreneurs politiques un narratif plus exact. Une telle démarche permettrait de sortir de l'obscurité née du conflit mémoriel pour orienter les gens vers le centre des enjeux à savoir le procès d'un État postcolonial qui est devenu un instrument de notre mise en servitude. Seules l'histoire et même une histoire croisée permettraient de sérier entre la légende et le fait historique. À ce niveau, il me plaît à titre d'exemple de revisiter deux sujets sur lesquels il n'y a aucun consensus, mais qui sert de fonds de

résonnance à des revendications les plus diverses. Ce faisant, nous sommes conscients que pour beaucoup l'histoire ne sert qu'alibi.

## Pour sortir des sentiers battus et de l'enchevêtrement des mémoires

### I. L'impérieuse nécessité d'une autopsie de l'État fédéral et de l'État postcolonial

L'impasse «*autour de la question anglophone*» a amené certaines personnes à proposer le retour à l'État fédéral comme solution à ce problème. Auréolé de toutes les vertus et présenté comme la solution idoine à toutes les frustrations que sont censés connaître les anglophones, le système fédéral à deux États tels que nous avons connu au Cameroun de 1961 à 1972 resurgit, rajeuni de son musée pour être exhibé comme «la solution» (Che Tita, 1993; Konings et Nyamnjoh, 2000: 315-316). Pour ne pas nous tromper de «solution», il urge pour les historiens de faire une certaine autopsie du régime fédéral à deux États que nous avons vécus pour analyser la pertinence de ces revendications et pour leur donner «sens», disons.

D'emblée à la suite du professeur Daniel Abwa que l'engagement de Ahidjo pour la réunification a été «*plus un choix tactique qu'une conviction sincère*» (Che Tita, 1993; Konings et Nyamnjoh, 2000: 315-316). Il avait vite compris tout le profit qu'il pouvait tirer de cette entreprise, à savoir, «*couper l'herbe aux pieds de l'UPC*» (Ibid), et surtout utiliser cette quête et les structures issues de cette lutte comme instrument de consolidation de son pouvoir hégémonique (Konings et Nyamnjoh, 2000: 315-316). C'est à la lumière de cette volonté d'un pouvoir hégémonique qu'il faut comprendre et analyser le système fédéral de monsieur Ahidjo, car il s'agit d'un État dit fédéral dans un système présidentiel fort, doublé d'un parti unique. Voici seulement à titre d'exemple quelques incongruités de ce système.

- C'est le président fédéral qui nomme les Premiers ministres des États fédérés<sup>11</sup>;
- La constitution donne la quasi-totalité des compétences au pouvoir fédéral et aucune propre aux États fédérés, si ce n'est des compétences résiduelles et à titre transitoire (Louka, 1994: 26).

L'article 6, alinéa 3 de la constitution de 1961 est à cet égard très éclairant. Il dispose que:

*«Selon le cas, les autorités exécutives ou législatives des États fédérés cesseront d'être compétentes en toutes ces matières lorsque les autorités fédérales s'en seront saisies»*  
(Ibid., p. 28).

En somme, il suffit que pour un cas même mineur, le pouvoir fédéral se dise compétent pour que les autorités de l'État fédéré s'en dessaisissent immédiatement.

Cette constitution ne prévoit aucune ressource propre pour les États fédérés.

L'autre incongruité de ce système et qui montre à suffisance que le pouvoir avait une compréhension très particulière du système fédéral, c'est la création, dès 1961 de régions administratives dirigées par des inspecteurs fédéraux.<sup>12</sup> Ainsi, le pays fut-il divisé en 6 régions administratives à la tête desquelles étaient nommés par décret présidentiel, des inspecteurs fédéraux. Le Cameroun occidental, État fédéral ayant à sa tête un Premier ministre élu, devient par ce décret une région administrative dirigée par un inspecteur fédéral qui recevait ses ordres directement du Président de la République fédérale à qui

<sup>11</sup> L'article 39 de la constitution dit: «Le président de la République fédérale désigne dans chaque État fédéré le Premier ministre qui doit recevoir l'investiture de l'Assemblée législative de l'État fédéré à la majorité simple», in Bayart (1919: 125).

<sup>12</sup> Décret présidentiel n.º 61/DF/15 du 20 octobre 1961, in JOC octobre 1961.



il rendait compte. À l'analyse, nous avons ici à faire à un système centralisé qui utilise le verni fédéral pour donner le change et contenter un peu les anglophones.

Une analyse, même superficielle, de la trajectoire historique du vécu de l'État fédéral corrobore nos analyses et nos conclusions. En effet, non content d'avoir mis sur pied une constitution centralisée sous le couvert du fédéralisme, Ahidjo s'évertua par des révisions constitutionnelles organisées à dessein à vider le texte de 1961 de toute substance fédérale. Ainsi, ayant décidé en 1967 de mettre sur orbite Salomon Tandeng Muna, il le nomma Premier ministre du Cameroun occidental «*sans guère de consultations préalables et contre toutes les attentes d'une grande partie des Camerounais occidentaux*» (Bayart, 1979: 125). Il s'agissait d'un véritable coup d'État puisque la pratique voulait que le nouveau Premier ministre après sa nomination reçoive l'investiture du parlement à Buéa. Ahidjo et Muna sachant qu'ils étaient minoritaires refusèrent de passer par ce processus.

La modification constitutionnelle de novembre 1969 donna un verni de droit à ce coup de force en supprimant l'investiture par le parlement de l'État fédéré. En effet par cette révision constitutionnelle, le président fédéral nomme désormais le Premier ministre des États fédérés sans l'avis et l'investiture du parlement de l'État en question comme il était prévu dans la constitution de 1961 (Ibid). En somme, l'on pouvait être Premier ministre de l'État fédéral contre l'avis du parlement de l'État fédéré. Après avoir phagocyté tous les autres partis dans le parti unique, Ahidjo pouvait ainsi écarter celui qui l'avait fait «roi» et qui lui faisait ombrage, à savoir John Ngu Foncha. Le chemin étant ainsi balisé, il nomma son protégé Salomon Tandem Muna, Premier ministre du Cameroun occidental. En 1970, il continua dans cette direction en modifiant une fois de plus, la constitution pour permettre à monsieur Muna de cumuler les postes de Premier ministre du Cameroun occidental et de vice-président fédéral (Ibid, p. 127).

La réforme constitutionnelle de 1972 qui mit fin à la République fédérale n'était donc venue que pour mettre un terme à l'agonie d'un système fédéral moribond, transformé en coquille vide par monsieur Ahidjo avec la complicité des leaders politiques. L'on comprend qu'après le requiem que constituait le 20 mai 1972, il ne se trouva presque personne pour regretter la disparition de la fédération.

En somme, si un État fédéral devait être mis en place au Cameroun, il serait à reconstruire et à réinventer plutôt qu'à faire une marche en arrière.

## 2. Une nouvelle lecture des acteurs pour en finir avec des procès d'intention à rebours

Dans son poème intitulé «*Questions que pose un ouvrier qui lit*», Bertold Brecht écrit:

*«Qui a construit Thèbes aux sept portes?  
Dans les livres, on donne les noms des rois.  
Les rois ont-ils trainé les blocs de pierre?  
Quand la muraille de Chine fut terminée, où allèrent ce soir les maçons?  
Rome la grande est pleine d'Arcs de Triomphe. Qui les érigea?  
Le jeune Alexandre conquiert les Indes. Tout seul?»<sup>13</sup>*

Ce poème traduit à suffisance à la fois notre conception de l'histoire et les limites d'une histoire essentiellement axée sur des personnes éminentes présentées comme des acteurs comme si les autres étaient des spectateurs. Une telle écriture ébréchée de l'histoire débouche dans beaucoup de cas comme celui de la réunification, sur des paradoxes. À titre purement illustratif, prenons le cas de Charles Okala. Lorsque le 17 décembre 1952,

<sup>13</sup> Texte français de Maurice Regnaut, cité par Kaplow (1974: 12).

le secrétaire général de l'UPC prend la parole devant la quatrième commission pour revendiquer au nom des Camerounais l'indépendance et la réunification du pays, le pouvoir français envoie Charles Okala lui porter la contradiction. Devant cette commission il affirme

«Pour ce qui est de la réunification des deux Cameroun, on peut dire qu'il n'y a pas de volonté de communauté entre les masses du Cameroun sous tutelle française et du Cameroun sous tutelle britannique. En doctrine, c'est évidemment un problème qui doit se poser un jour. Dans les faits, c'est un problème qui n'est pas actuellement posé et qui n'agit, à notre avis, qu'un certain nombre de personnages politiques en quête de thèmes idéologiques de propagande» (Eyinga, 1991: 72-73).

Par ironie de l'histoire, c'est le même homme qui fut appelé moins de 8 ans après, cette fois-ci, en tant que ministre des affaires étrangères de la République du Cameroun, à défendre les mêmes instances onusiennes, les revendications du Cameroun en vue d'un comptage global des voix à l'issue du plébiscite du 11 février 1961. L'on dirait quel revirement de position!

Si on s'arrêtait seulement sur ce personnage, l'on oublierait les conditions de l'émergence de son discours, l'on oublierait qu'il était représentatif de la quasi-totalité de la classe politique officielle au Cameroun sous tutelle française et surtout, de ceux qui prendront le pouvoir après le départ des Français. En dehors de l'UPC, aucun parti, aucun leader de cette partie du Cameroun n'avait fait de l'indépendance encore moins de la réunification son programme politique. Il faudra attendre février 1958 pour que le Haut-Commissaire Paul Ramadier reconnaisse pour la première fois la légitimité de l'indépendance et de la réunification; que comme des perroquets au service de leur maître et sans regret aucun pour les balivernes passées, ils reprennent en cœur cette revendication en la vidant de son contenu (Ibid, pp. 33-100).

Et lorsqu'à la suite de leurs maîtres, ils changent d'avis, ils n'y vont pas en courant. D'ailleurs, lorsqu'en 1959, Foncha sollicite de monsieur Ahidjo une aide en vue de financer sa campagne électorale, il n'obtient aucun sou. Seul Paul Soppo Priso vint à son secours. Il finança sa campagne et son journal, *The Camerons Times* (Bayart, 1979: 93). Cet exemple est révélateur du peu d'intérêt qu'Ahidjo accordait alors à la cause de la réunification. Certes les circonstances vont changer à partir de 1960 et l'amener à être l'un des «organiseurs de la réunification» comme l'écrit Daniel Abwa (Abwa, 2010: 384).

Si ce qualificatif sied bien à Ahidjo, nous pensons que, pour ce qui concerne John Ngu Foncha, il est très excessif et participe de la littérature très récente qui s'évertue à l'adjoindre au passif du régime Ahidjo qu'on pointe du doigt comme étant à l'origine de la «marginalisation» de l'ancien Cameroun sous tutelle britannique et du «problème anglophone» (Awason, 1998; Ngoh, 2004; Che Tita, 1993; Nkwi, 2000; Fandio, 2007)<sup>14</sup>. Dans cette littérature qui résume les frustrations et le mal-être d'une partie de l'élite anglophone dans un Cameroun post réunification, Foncha, pour avoir encouragé les Camerounais du «*British Southern Cameroons*» à adhérer à l'idée de la réunification, représente l'homme par qui «*le malheur*» est arrivé. Qu'une élite d'une région en prise à des convulsions politiques, économiques et mémorielles, en vienne à trouver en Foncha le

<sup>14</sup> Sur ses questions de la «marginalisation des anglophones» ou du «problème anglophone» lire: Piet Konings et Francis Nyamboh «the Anglophone problem in Cameroon» in *The Journal of Modern African studies* (1997, pp. 208-229); Victor Julius Ngoh, «The origin of the Marginalization of the former Southern Cameroonians (Anglophones) 1961-1966: A historical analysis», *Journal of the Third World Studies* (1999); Chem-Langhèè Bongfem, «The Anglophone-Francophone: Divide and political Disintegration: A Psycho-historical Perspective» in *Regional Balance and National Integration in Cameroon: Lessons Learnt and The uncertain future*, Leiden (1995, pp. 88-99); James Kam Kah «The Anglophone problem in Cameroon: The North West/South West Dichotomy from 1961-1996» *Cameroon Journal on Democracy and Human Rights*, Vol 6, N.º 1, June 2012; Mbile (2000).

bouc émissaire idéal, cela peut se justifier, mais que des historiens qui doivent à notre avis avoir du recul et surtout un culte des faits et de croisements des sources, s'engouffrent tête baissée et sans esprit critique dans cette brèche, nous trouble quelque peu.

À notre avis, son long parcours de militant de la réunification dans des conditions pas toujours favorables suffit à lui seul pour nuancer tous ces jugements péremptoirs. Dès 1951, ce directeur d'école catholique à Bamenda s'engagea dans la politique en se faisant élire à l'«*Eastern Nigeria House of Assembly*». <sup>15</sup> Il participa la même année à la rencontre de Kumba qui regroupait en plus de l'UPC, les principaux partis du Cameroun britannique en vue de discuter de la réunification des deux Cameroun <sup>16</sup>. En 1953, et ce, malgré quelques hésitations, il adhéra au groupe dit des «réunificationnistes» c'est-à-dire ceux qui souhaitaient la réunification des deux Cameroun (Chem-Langhëë, 1984: 147-163). Il prendra d'ailleurs la tête de ce mouvement quelque temps après. En 1955, lorsque Endeley abandonna cette option dans son programme politique, il rompit avec le KNC (Kamerun National Congress) pour créer le KNDP (Kamerun National Democratic Party) (Chem-Langhëë, 1984: 147-163). Souvent sans grands moyens (puisqu'il fut obligé de quémander des soutiens financiers auprès des élites du Cameroun sous tutelle française comme Paul Soppo Priso), il engagea le combat pour la réunification. À la même période, il créa avec Moumié qu'il hébergea à Bamenda, le Comité pour l'unification du Cameroun dont il était le secrétaire général (Eyinga, 1991: 121). Un opportuniste se serait-il lié avec un mouvement qui n'était pas en odeur de sainteté ni auprès de l'administration française ni auprès de son homologue de l'autre côté du Moungo?

C'est sur le thème de la réunification des deux Cameroun qu'il gagna les élections de 1959. Si certains auteurs (Ngoh, 2011: 14) insistent sur la différence de sièges entre lui et ses adversaires (24 contre 22) pour démontrer que son option n'était pas très populaire, ils omettent volontairement d'indiquer qu'il récolta plus de 55 % des votes populaires <sup>17</sup>. Preuve évidente qu'il avait réussi à creuser son sillon et à faire émerger son option comme enjeu populaire dans cette région. Il engagea une fois élu et sans pression aucune, et contre la volonté de la puissance tutrice, des négociations avec le pouvoir politique au Cameroun sous tutelle française (qui lui-même n'était pas très favorable à cette option) en vue de la réunification des deux entités politiques.

Est cela le travail d'un simple héritier? D'un simple organisateur? Il nous faut rendre justice à ce combat et lui trouver d'autres qualificatifs plus significatifs qui auraient le mérite de refléter son combat tant dans la région qu'à Londres ou à New York aux Nations Unies. Qu'il n'ait pas su négocier avec Ahidjo est une chose. Qu'il lui ait fait beaucoup de concessions en est une autre, mais le considérer comme quelqu'un d'obsédé par ses intérêts personnels, qui pour un poste de vice-président se serait fait acheter la conscience comme l'écrivent certains (Ngoh, 2001: 159-164), est à notre avis un raccourci trop abrupt qu'il ne faut pas emprunter sans analyse et sans une densité critique de faits nouveaux. Ainsi, de 1951 à 1961, contre vents et marées, et souvent au risque de sa vie, John Ngu Foncha aurait combattu seulement pour des intérêts personnels? C'est à notre avis trop simple et même simpliste. Les questions que l'on se pose sont les suivantes: Foncha, Premier ministre et chef du parti majoritaire à la chambre des députés du «*British Southern Cameroon*» avait-il besoin de se faire acheter pour un poste de Vice-président? Qui méritait mieux que lui ce poste? Ahidjo pouvait-il former son gouvernement sans lui? Et le plébiscite alors? Les plus de 70 % qui votèrent pour la réunification des deux Cameroun étaient-ils tous corrompu?

<sup>15</sup> République Unie du Cameroun (non indiquée, p. 78). Tribute to Dr John Ngu Foncha (1916-1999), publié par quelques élites du Nord-Ouest.

<sup>16</sup> Témoignage de Kingue Etouké Samuel, 73 ans, Upéciste, Bonabéri-Douala, février 2013.

<sup>17</sup> Lire à cet effet Makongo (2012).

Une réponse sérieuse à ces questions nous conduit à quitter les lieux communs pour aborder avec beaucoup de nuances toutes ces aspérités de notre passé sur lesquelles le débat n'est pas encore ouvert.

D'ailleurs pour ajouter une autre pièce à ce dossier très complexe, il faut souligner ici la réaction très virulente du professeur Verkijika G. Fanso sur le livre du Julius Victor Ngoh qu'il qualifie de «distorsions de l'histoire du Cameroun» (Fanso, 2011)? Il juge d'ailleurs ses déclarations sur Foncha ou sur la conférence de Foumban comme manquant de «crédibilité» ou «sujettes à caution». Aussi met-il les étudiants en garde contre une écriture de l'histoire «qui pourrait se révéler être une histoire diffamatoire ou un chantage qui viserait à nuire à la bonne réputation d'une tierce personne de manière injuste» (Fanso, 2011). À notre avis, cette trop grande polarisation autour de Foncha ou d'Ahidjo appauvrit ce débat et ne rend pas compte de la complexité des faits et de la variété des intervenants dans ce processus historique. Considérons seulement le cadre du «British Southern Cameroons», comment éluder l'action des mouvements des jeunes comme la «*Kamerun Society*», la «*National Union of Kamerun Students (NUCKS)*», ou la «*Pan-Kamerun Students Conferences*»? Je ne parle pas de ce que Henry Kah appelle les «*considérations socioculturelles et économiques*» (Henry, 2004: 116) du mouvement de la réunification qui font que Foncha était plus proche parent d'une grande partie de la population des Bamoutos avec qui il partageait une communauté de langue et qu'un rattachement au Nigéria aurait été pour lui comme couper le cordon ombilical qui le liait à ses frères. On pourrait inscrire dans ce registre les Bakossi et les Mbô sans oublier les gens de Fontem et ceux de la Menoua. *Quid* des Balong et des Mongo.

Nous ne parlerons pas de l'attitude de l'Angleterre qui par une étude biaisée avait fait croire à Foncha et à quelques personnes qu'une indépendance de cette partie du pays n'était pas économiquement viable (Ngoh, 2011: 4-5). Ils n'avaient donc que deux alternatives: le Nigéria ou le Cameroun. Nous ne parlerons pas enfin des attitudes des autres protagonistes de la scène politique de cette partie du pays comme Endeley qui négociait en sourdine avec Ahidjo afin de fragiliser Foncha. En somme, il y a autour de ce qui s'est réellement passé beaucoup de nuages et de points sombres pour se contenter des affirmations lapidaires et sentencieuses.

## Conclusion

L'histoire en tant que champ de connaissance qui postule à la vérité ne s'est pas encore déployée au Cameroun dans toute son ampleur. La faute à un pouvoir oppressif mis en place à la suite des indépendances et qui a confisqué à son seul profit le discours public et la production de l'histoire.

L'asymétrie des relations entre les deux Cameroun ainsi que la nature du pouvoir politique mis en place après les indépendances ont conduit à une sorte de «refoulé colonial» qui aujourd'hui resurgit en thème de convulsions mémorielles, de guerre de mémoires. Le problème anglophone a aussi une dimension mémorielle.

Comme le dit si bien Gerard Noiriel, «toute histoire s'inscrit toujours au présent, à partir d'un point de vue particulier, en fonction duquel le monde étudié acquiert sa cohérence»<sup>18</sup>. La réflexion historique actuelle au Cameroun pour faire sens ne devait tourner le dos à toutes interrogations et ces conflits. Un regard croisé et biculturel peut à notre avis contribuer à trouver des solutions aux problèmes mémoriels, laissant aux hommes politiques le reste du fardeau.

<sup>18</sup> Noiriel (2005: 12).

## Références bibliographiques

- Abwa, Daniel (2010), *Cameroon: Histoire d'un nationalisme: 1884-1961*, Yaoundé, Clé.
- Afrika Zamani, *Revue D'Histoire africaine* (1984), N.º 14 et 15, Yaoundé, Juin 1984, pp. 147-163.
- Awasom, Nicodemus F. (1998), "Colonial Background to the development of Autonomist Tendencies in Anglophone Cameroon 1946-1961", *Journal of Third World Studies*, N.º 1, Vol XV, pp. 163-183.
- Baboké, Oswald (année de publication non indiquée), *La lettre de la réunification au peuple camerounais. Historique du cinquantenaire 1961*, Yaoundé: Martin Belinga Eboutou éditeur.
- Bakang Ba, Tonjé (2007), *Sur le chemin de l'émancipation nationale: le Kamerun, l'indépendance réelle d'abord*, Douala, édition Kunde.
- Bayart, Jean-François (1979), *L'État au Cameroun*. Paris: Presses de la fondation des Sciences Politiques.
- Biya, Paul (1986), "Cameroon: Challenges Ahead for Biya", Directorate of Intelligence, 3 february, pp. 251-252.
- Blanchard, Pascal; Bancel, Nicolas et Lemaire, Sandrine (2005), *La fracture coloniale: La société française au prisme de l'héritage colonial*. Paris: La découverte.
- Cameroon Journal on Democracy and human Rights* (2012), Vol. 6, N.º 1, June 2012, pp. 58-70.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2007), Vol. 2, N.º, Dec 2007.
- Cameroon Post* (13-20 November 1991), "Beyond Elitism (Including a Reply to Tande Dibussi)".
- Chem-Langhëë, Bongfen (2004), *The paradoxes of self-determination in the Cameroons under the United Kingdom administration. The search of identity, well-being and continuity*, Lanham, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press of America.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1984) «Southern Cameroon Traditional Authorities and Nationalist Movement 1953-1961», *Afrika Zamani* (Juin 1984, pp. 147-163).
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1976), *The Kamerun plebiscites 1959-1961: perceptions and strategies*, Ph. D Dissertation, University of British Columbia.
- Che Tita, Julius (1993), *A time of hope: Anglophones on the Anglophone problem*, Limbe: Nooremac Press.
- Chiabi, Emmanuel (1997), *The making of modern Cameroon. A History of Substate nationalism and disparate union, 1914-1961*, Lanham, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press of America.
- Deltombe, Thomas, Domergue, Manuel et Tatsitsa, Jacob (2011), *Kamerun! Une guerre cachée à l'origine de la Françafrique (1948-1971)*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Djoko, Guy (2012), Kame Samuel: homme politique et idéologue du parti unique, mémoire de master, Université de Douala.
- Dosse, François (2000), *L'histoire*. Paris: Armand Colin.
- Dze-Ngwa, Willibroad (1997), "The Anglophone Problem in Cameroon: A Historical Perspective, 1916-1995". MA Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I.
- Ebune, Joseph B. (1992), *The growth of the political parties in Southern Cameroons*, Yaoundé: CEPER.
- Eyinga, Abel (1991), *L'UPC. Une révolution manquée*. Paris: Editions Chaka.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1978), *Mandat d'arrêt pour cause d'élections. De la démocratie au Cameroun 1970-1978*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines (2013), *Actes du colloque des Cinquantenaires: la réunification des deux Cameroun (13 et 14 février 2013)*, Douala: Université de Douala (édit).
- Fanso, Verkijika. G. (2011), «Mot de remerciement et d'au revoir», prononcé le 29 juillet 2011 à l'Université de Yaoundé I à l'occasion de son départ à la retraite.
- Fandio, Pierre and Mongi, Madini (dir.) (2007), *Actors of History and artistic creativity in Cameroon*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Fotso, Kamdem Ghislain (2007), Le docteur Mathieu Tagny: leader nationaliste et premier maire élu de la commune de Bafoussam, mémoire de maîtrise, Université de Douala.

- Gaillard, Philippe (1999), *Ahmadou Ahidjo, Patriote et despote, bâtisseur de l'État camerounais*. Paris: coll. JALIVRES.
- Johnson, Willard R. (1970), *The Cameroon Federation: Political Integration in a Fragmentary Society*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Journal of Applied Social Sciences (2004a), University of Buea, Vol. 4, N.º 2.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2004b), University of Buea, Vol. 4, N.º 2, p. 116.
- Journal of Third World Studies (1988), N.º 1, Vol. XV.
- Kah, Henry (June 2012), "The Anglophone problem in Cameroon: The North West/South West Dichotomy from 1961-1996", *Cameroon Journal on Democracy and Human Rights*, Vol. 6, N.º 1.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2004), "The Reunification Movement in Cameroon 1948-61: Socio-Cultural and Economic Considerations", *Journal of Applied Social Sciences*.
- Kaplow, Jerry (1974), *Les noms des rois. Les pauvres de Paris à la veille de la révolution*. Paris: Maspero.
- Ki-Zerbo, Joseph (1978), *Histoire de l'Afrique noire. D'hier à demain*. Paris: Hatier.
- Kofele-Kale, Ndiva (1980), *An African experiment implantation-Building: the Bilingual Cameroon Republic since Reunification*, Boulder Colorado: Westview Press.
- Konings, Piet and Nyamnjoh, Francis. B. (2000), "Construction and deconstruction: Anglophones or autochthones?", in Paul Nchoji Nkwi (2015), "The Anthropology of Africa: Challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century", Langaa RPCIG.
- Le Goff, Jacques (1988), *Histoire et mémoire*. Paris: Éditions Gallimard.
- Louka, Basile (1994), *Crise de l'État au Kameroun: les enjeux du fédéralisme*, Yaoundé, éditeur non mentionné.
- Mamadou, Diouf (1999), *L'historiographie indienne en débat. Colonialisme, nationalisme et sociétés postcoloniales*. Paris: Karthala.
- Mbembe, Achille (1996), *La naissance du maquis dans le Sud-Cameroun (1920-1960). Histoire des usages de la raison en colonie*. Paris: Karthala.
- Mbile, N. Nerius (2000), *Cameroon Political Story: Memories of an Authentic Eye Witness*, Limbe: Pessbook.
- Mbozo'o, Samuel Efoa (2013), «La question de la réunification du Cameroun aux Nations-Unies (1946-1961)», *Université de Douala*.
- Messmer, Pierre (1998), *Les Blancs s'en vont*. Paris: Albin Michel.
- Nana, Ferdinand Marcial (2012), *Chefs traditionnels et rébellion armée à l'Ouest Cameroun, le cas de l'arrondissement de Bangou, 1948-1961, mémoire de master*, Université de Douala.
- Nkwi, Paul Nchoji (dir.) (2000), *The Anthropology of Africa: Challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, New York: Werner-Gren Foundation.
- Nfi, Joseph Lon (2013) "French Cameroons immigrants and Southern Cameroons 1961 plebiscite" colloque des cinquantenaires.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2012), "In Cameroun journal on Democracy and human Rights", Vol. 6, N.º 1.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2000), "Ethnic tensions during the 1961 plebiscite and Reunification in the Southern Cameroons", In *Cameroon journal on Democracy and Human Rights*, Vol. 6, N.º 1, June 2012, pp. 58-70.
- Ngapeth, Biyong (2009), *Cameroun. Combats pour l'indépendance*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Ngoh, Victor Julius (2011), *Les dessous de la Réunification du Cameroun de 1955 à 1961*, Limbé: Pressprint.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (dir.) (2004), *Cameroon: From a Federal to a unitary State 1961-1972*, Limbe: Design House.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2001), *Southern Cameroons, 1922-1961: a constitutional history*, Ashgate Publishing Company.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1996), *History of Cameroon since 1800*, Limbe: Presbook.
- Noiriel, Gerard (2005), *Sur la «crise» de l'histoire*. Paris: Gallimard.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1998), *Qu'est-ce que l'histoire contemporaine?* Paris: Hachette.

- Notre librairie: Revue des Littératures d'Afrique, des Caraïbes et de l'océan Indien: Cultures Sud (2007), "Retours sur la question coloniale", n.º 165, d'avril-juin 2007.
- Olomo, Manga Jocelyn (2010), Le phénomène des divisions dans l'Union des Populations du Cameroun (UPC) 1955-2002, mémoire de master, Université de Douala.
- Politique Africaine* (Mars 1990), n.º 37, "Le Cameroun après la mort d'Ahmadou Ahidjo", Achille Mbembe, pp. 117-122.
- République Unie du Cameroun (Date non indiquée), *Livre d'or de l'Assemblée nationale*, Douala: Éditions CDM.
- Rocher, Guy (1972), *Introduction à la sociologie générale, Tome 3 le Changement social*. Paris: Éditions HMH.
- Sabelli, Fabrizio (1993), *Recherche anthropologique et développement*, Éditions de l'institut d'ethnologie, Neuchâtel.
- Sadio, Vincent Rodrigue (2012), Monographie historique de la direction centrale de Bamendjo, 1955-1968, mémoire de master, Université de Douala.
- Stora, Benjamin (2011), *la guerre des mémoires. La France face à son passé colonial*. Paris: Éditions de l'aube.
- Tchumtchoua, Emmanuel (2013), "La réunification dans l'historiographie camerounaise", *Université de Douala*.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2006), *De la JEUCAFRA à l'UPC. L'éclosion du nationalisme camerounais*. Yaoundé: CLE.
- Tchumtchoua, Emmanuel et Pascal, Ndjock (2013), in «le retour du refoulé colonial à l'échelle nationale: Enjeux historiques et mémoriels des cinquantenaires», Université de Douala.
- The Journal of Modern African Studies* (June 1997), Vol. 35, ISSUE 2, "The Anglophone Problem in Cameroon", Piet Konings and Francis Nyamnjoh, Cambridge University Press, pp. 207-229.
- Um Nyobe, Ruben (1884), *Le problème national camerounais*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Yanou, Michael (Dec. 2007), "Reunification and the Eleventh province dilemma in Cameroon", in *Cameroon Journal on Democracy and Human Rights*, Vol. 2.
- Yomsi Puhe, Luc (2012), Les femmes dans la vie politique en Sanaga Maritime, 1948-1966, mémoire de master, Université de Douala.
- Zang-Atangana, Joseph-Marie (1989), *Les forces politiques au Cameroun réuni*, tome 1, 2. Paris: L'Harmattan.





A black and white photograph of a man, Obadiah MUA, sitting in a leather armchair. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a light-colored shirt. The background shows a gallery or museum setting with various art pieces, including a large sculpture and a potted plant.

## Entrevista

### **OBADIAH MUA**

**The Southern Cameroons crisis is a socio-political crisis rooted in the colonial past – it is not simply a cultural or language issue**

# STATE OF AMBAZONIA



IGN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT  
ARTMENT OF STATE  
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT



# Obadiah Mua

***The Southern Cameroons crisis is a socio-political crisis rooted in the colonial past – it is not simply a cultural or language issue***

Interview led by Roland Ngwatung Afungang and Maciel Santos  
Brussels, 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Obadiah Mua is the Secretary General of the Ambazonia Governing Council. He has been active in the nationalist movement for over two decades. His late father had been sacked from his job after the plebiscite when he served as the personal assistant to Reverend J.C. Kangsen who campaigned for the Southern Cameroons to join Nigeria.

Mr. Mua has held several roles within the Ambazonia struggle. He was the first secretary general of the Anglophone Youth League, which was part of the Cameroon Anglophone Movement, and in 1995 became a founding member of the Southern Cameroons Youth League (SCYL). He is a close aide to Dr. Ayaba Cho, leader of the Ambazonia Liberation since 2002.

Mr. Mua established the first coordination structure of Southern Cameroonians in Belgium in early 2002 and went on to set up the Southern Cameroons European Mission together with Dr. Lawrence Ayamba. He served as Chairperson of the Southern Cameroons Youth League in Belgium and in various capacities in the governments in exile of Professor Carlson Anyangwe and Ebenezer Akwanga. Since 2016, Mr. Mua has held several positions within the Ambazonia Governing Council.

He is holder of a M. A. in International Politics from the *Centre d'Etude des Relations Internationales et Strategiques* in Brussels.

**Roland Ngwatung Afungang (RA)/Maciel Santos (MS):** Who do you mean by Southern Cameroons people? The 1916 border demarcation between the British and French governments divided the Bamileke, the Mbo, the Bakossi, etc. Before and afterwards, people from East of the border migrated therein. Is there any cultural or language identity in today's Southern Cameroons?

**Obadiah Mua (OM):** Thank you for giving me this opportunity to highlight some key aspects of the origin of the current crisis between Cameroon and Ambazonia. To put things in perspective, the March 1916 border demarcation between British and French Cameroon, commonly known as the Picot Partition, was the result of the earlier

partition of the former German Cameroon into British and French protectorates in February 1916. The Milner-Simon agreement of July 10, 1919 officially confirmed the boundary between British Southern Cameroons and French Cameroon. Consequently, during the UN sponsored plebiscite of February 11, 1961, the Southern Cameroons people were not given clear choices for the future. Instead they were left to be manipulated and used by the French and the British who ignored the fact that Southern Cameroons at the time was a parliamentary system and that the results of the plebiscite could only become law after ratification by parliament. It should be clearly stated that the crisis that oppose the Ambazonian people to Cameroon is a socio-political crisis rooted in the colonial past of the former British Cameroon

and French Cameroon. It is not simply a cultural or language issue as many have been misled to understand. The Ambazonian people are a distinct people who under international law and UN Charter have a right to aspire for external self-determination.

**RNA/MS: Why was there a plebiscite in II February 1961 and why was the option of independence left out?**

OM: At the end of World War II, there was this growing desire among African countries under colonial rule to become independent. The African continent had sacrificed and lost a lot during the war. Under the UN policy of decolonisation, European powers were obliged to relinquish control of territories they occupied. Then Southern Cameroons which was under British protection was denied outright independence through manipulation. The two options that were presented violated the very basis of the UN decolonisation policy which required that all protectorates be given the right to freely choose their path to independence.

Claims by the British that Southern Cameroons was not economically viable to be an independent state were completely false and contrary to the UN decolonisation policy which stated that the integration of the “Non Self-Governing Territories” in any State “should be the result of the freely expressed wishes of the territory’s people”. Therefore, by expressed design, the Southern Cameroons was offered a plebiscite with two options that did not meet the requirements of the United Nations and in variance with the aspirations of the people of the territory.

**The end of the Cameroon Federation – the truth of the matter lay in the discovery of substantial oil wells off the coast of Southern Cameroons in the late 1960s**

**RNA/MS: Why did Southern Cameroons not leave Cameroon when Amadou Ahidjo (Cameroon’s president at the time) abolished the Federation in 1972?**

OM: The historical failure by the international system to solve the Ambazonia problem dates to the early manipulations set up by the colonial forces and the Cameroon government. The Southern Cameroons politicians led by John Ngu Foncha and Simon Tandeng Muna had become corrupted by the Yaoundé regime of Ahmadou Ahidjo to endorse the annexation process. Dissenting voices were identified and eliminated. The talk of cutting cost on the federal structures was presented to the people as a reason for abolishing federalism and moving to a centralised structure. The truth of the matter lay in the discovery of substantial oil wells off the coast of Southern Cameroons in the late 1960s which meant that within a federal system, the control of proceeds would be in the hands of the federated state. Ahmadou Ahidjo with the help of France decided to abolish the federal structure and transfer all powers including control of natural resources from Southern Cameroons to Yaoundé. Such action was contrary to Article 47 of the 1961 Federal constitution which forbade any change to the form of state.

**RNA/MS: The most important anti-colonial movement of Cameroon (UPC) had a large support in Southern Cameroons. It pledged for re-unification but it also fought the Ahido/Biya regime. Considering the increasing disaffection at this regime in whole Cameroon, would the chances of toppling it be greater if all the oppositionist movements gather to establish a new Republic?**

OM: The idea of a ‘One-Cameroon’ being propagated as a panacea to the current crisis ignores the root causes and belittles the efforts of the Ambazonian people who have over the years sort to resolve the problem but have been ignored by Cameroon and

the international system. It should be noted that though both the Southern Cameroons and the *Republique du Cameroon* have coexisted for close to six decades, the trend has never been for a harmonious coexistence as French Cameroon has always sort to assimilate the Ambazonian people and completely root out the Anglo-Saxon culture that Ambazonia inherited from the British. Over the years attempt by Ambazonians to bring about a meaningful change has always been met with disdain and opposition. In April 1993, after the first All Anglophone Conference (AACI), the Buea Peace initiative was proposed to resolve the grievances of Ambazonians. This was ignored by the government of Cameroon. In May 1994, after the second All Anglophone Conference in Bamenda, the Bamenda Proclamation gave a reasonable time for which Cameroon had to act or face the 'Zero Option' (Independence). We are now at that stage.

**RNA/MS: In 1961, many traditional authorities were not favourable either to integration (Nigeria) nor reunification (Cameroon). What do they think nowadays?**

**OM:** Traditional authority in Ambazonia plays a very important role and Cameroon understands that very well. That is why after unconstitutionally getting rid of the federal structure, Yaoundé went ahead to abolish the House of Chiefs that played an important role in the state of Southern Cameroons. Over the decades, Cameroon has sort to undermine the traditional authorities in Ambazonia using corruption and blackmail. Since 2016, many traditional authorities have been killed by Cameroon military because they stand for the restoration of the statehood of Ambazonia. The missed opportunity of 1961 that was not offered to the Ambazonian people has now come to fruition and many traditional rulers are willing to lend their support.

**RNA/MS: Trade Union officers, such as Nerius Namaso Mbile, were important in**

**earlier Southern Cameroons movements, even in those pledging for reunification. What do Trade Unions in Southern Cameroons say now?**

**OM:** One of the entrenched Anglo-Saxon value that prevailed in then Southern Cameroons before Cameroon's occupation was the freedom of association. This gave birth to a strong trade union during the Southern Cameroons self-rule 1954-1961. It was during this period that trade unionists like N. N. Mbile emerged and became a force during the run up to the February 1961 Plebiscite. Over the years, due to the culture of intimidation and absence of freedom of association and speech, trade unionism has taken backstage in the socio-political life of the people. However, trade union leaders have never given up. It was in this light that the current crisis was born in October 2016 when the teachers' and lawyers' trade unions decided to call for protests on the evasion of the education and legal systems of 'Anglophones'. The reaction of the government of Cameroon was brutal. Attempts to corrupt trade unionists failed and in January 2017, some of the leaders were arrested while others managed to flee to exile. The trade unions that began by asking for internal reforms of the system have now moved on to call for an independent Ambazonia.

**RNA/MS: Why did Southern Cameroons remained silent from 1972 until 2016?**

**OM:** In the eyes of the international community which has paid little attention to the Ambazonia crisis, the period 1972 to 2016 may look silent. However, the current crisis has had the momentum build over this period. In 1984 Fon Gorji Dinka filed a case HCB/28/92 at the Bamenda High Court to protest the change of name from United Republic adopted in 1972 to *Republique du Cameroon*. This move was further enhanced by the birth of the Federal Republic of Ambazonia under the leadership of Fon Gorji Dinka. As earlier stated, two Anglophone

conferences took place in 1993 and 1994 producing the Buea Peace Initiative and Bamenda Proclamation, respectively. The Southern Cameroons National Council was born in Buea in 1993 after the first All Anglophone Conference. In 1995, the Southern Cameroons Youth League emerged with the youth becoming more involved and ready to take up the case of the Ambazonian people. In 2003 Kevin Gumne *et al.* representing Southern Cameroons filed Communication N.º 266/2003 against Cameroon at the African Court of Human and People's Rights in Banjul. In a verdict in May 2009, the ACHPR recognised the right of Ambazonians as a distinct people. During this very period, the Southern Cameroons National Council facilitated the admission of the Southern Cameroons into the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO) in 2003 and the admission was reactivated in 2017 by the Ambazonia Governing Council (AGovC).

In 2013, members of different Ambazonia freedom movements including the Southern Cameroons National Council, The Southern Cameroons Restoration Movement, the Southern Cameroons Peoples Organisation, the Southern Cameroons Youth League and other civil, religious and political leaders met and established the Ambazonia Governing Council (AGovC). The AGovC in the years leading up to 2016, worked covertly and overtly in Ambazonia and the Ambazonia community in the diaspora to herald in a new approach to free Ambazonia from annexation and brutal occupation.

## **War and the international community – the historical perspective puts France at the centre of what is going on in Cameroon**

**RA/MS: Is there an international oil conspiracy fostering nationalism in Southern Cameroons? Or are oil interests better served with the present situation?**

**OM:** The right of the Ambazonian people to external self-determination is a fundamental right based on fundamental international law and the UN Charter. The decolonisation policy of the United Nations was wrongly or manipulatively applied in the case of Ambazonia. The Ambazonian people have over the six decades following the April 21, 1961 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) vote granting independence to Ambazonia, asked for their rights to be restored and respected. It should however be noted that the reason behind the abolition of the federal structure in 1972 was influenced by the discovery of enormous oil wells offshore in Ambazonia. We are aware of the effect of natural resources on the numerous conflicts in Africa and the world. How the ongoing conflict between Cameroon and Ambazonia is handled by the international community will have serious ramifications on the peace and security in the Gulf of Guinea and beyond.

**RNA/MS: Is this a Cameroon issue or is it still also a French issue? What are the French Government responsibilities in the present conflict?**

**OM:** The ongoing conflict is an international conflict that deserves the intervention of the international system with Cameroon being the aggressor. The historical perspective puts France at the centre of what is going on in Cameroon and in extension of the conflict with Ambazonia. As the Ambazonian people continue to endure the use of brutal force and the ongoing genocide, we will continue to gather evidence of those involved in such crimes against our people. At the right moment, the evidence will be used to bring those responsible to justice.

**RNA/MS: What has been the role of the United Nations in this conflict? Have they done enough to resolve it?**

**OM:** It must be noted that the United Nation's failure to implement its UNGA Res-

olution 1608 (XV) of April 21, 1961 fully and correctly is at the root of the ongoing crisis. That is why in our communication to the office of the UN Secretary General, we have emphasized on the need for a negotiated settlement of the conflict by getting to the root causes. We have also called for neutrality in the venue for the negotiations mediated by a credible neutral party with a guarantor for implementation of the outcome. We look forward to the UN becoming more present and active in bringing about an end to decades of occupation.

**RNA/MS: Why has the International community remained quiet and why is the conflict not aired by international media like in Syria, Yemen, Crimea, Nagorno Karabakh, etc?**

**OM:** We are aware that geopolitics is driven by the game of interests. The mainstream media is driven by ratings. The occupying power, Cameroon is aware of this and it has done much because it has the financial means and friends within the international system to keep its record on genocide and crimes against humanity out of world view. However, efforts put in especially by the Ambazonia Governing Council to internationalise our cause is gaining traction. With targeted diplomacy, the Ambazonia Governing Council has brought the conflict to the corridors of power in Washington, London, Brussels, Berlin, etc.

**Expectations and consensus – the Ambazonia Governing Council which is the biggest and vanguard liberation movement was formed by bringing together several liberation movements.**

**RNA/MS: What is the current state of the armed conflict? What are the possible solutions to the conflict?**

**OM:** Since Cameroon declared war on the Ambazonian people on November 30, 2017, the Ambazonia people have adopted the right to self-defence as they battle to protect their women and children. There is ongoing genocide carried out by Cameroon with several massacres that have caught international attention, more than 400 villages and towns burnt down. The Ambazonia Defence Forces (ADF) is the main liberation force which has been able to secure territory and facilitate the operation of Community Schools and Community Health Centres.

**RNA/MS: Is there any kind of consensus among the (many) nationalist military and political movements?**

**OM:** The Ambazonia Governing Council which is the biggest and vanguard liberation movement was formed by bringing together several liberation movements. The AGovC entertains very close working relations with other frontline movements. The ADF is the biggest self-defence group in Ambazonia and works in synergy with other friendly forces for the defence of the Homeland.

**RNA/MS: What are the most expected outcomes if independence is achieved, according to the nationalist movements?**

**OM:** The mission of the Ambazonia Governing Council is to liberate Ambazonia from illegal occupation from Cameroon, to achieve independence, sovereignty, and international recognition of Ambazonia as a country. And to bequeath to future generations of Ambazonians the foundations of a democratic, peaceful, and prosperous Ambazonia state in which all men and women are equal and the rule of law reigns. As we continue to defend our territory against Cameroon's occupation, we are also working on taking full control of the territory and deliver on our vision. Multiple projects are going on in the background to guarantee a smooth transition from occupation to self-rule.





# África em debate



Poderes e idéntidades



# Espaces oubliés dans les paysages de l'histoire du Cameroun: essai d'interprétation des valeurs symboliques du cimetière allemand de Yaoundé (1888-1912)


Martin Raymond Willy Mbog Ibock\*

pp. 139-152

## Introduction

Alors même qu'une certaine rumeur clamait que le présent, emporté dans le tourbillon de la postmodernité, était enfin sur le point de se délester de ses attaches avec la tradition et le passé, jamais l'histoire et la mémoire n'ont été aussi présentes dans le devenir des sites patrimoniaux. À l'ère de la raison technocratique, il est clair que les espaces oubliés dans les paysages de l'histoire du Cameroun n'ont pas épuisé son capital de mobilisation populaire sur les valeurs symboliques du cimetière allemand de Yaoundé. Situé dans la cour de l'actuel Ministère des Finances (Minfi) notamment à l'angle gauche, le cimetière allemand s'étend sur une superficie de 600 à 700 m<sup>2</sup>. Il comporte 36 tombes dont 28 existantes et 8 détruites<sup>1</sup>. Plantant le décor du Minfi, ces tombes toutes peintes de blanc au milieu d'un jardin, constituent une «archéologie des traces» (Laming, 1952: 363) allemandes au Cameroun.

Pour situer le problème et comprendre les passions que charrie la question de l'essai d'interprétation des valeurs symboliques du cimetière allemand (1888-1912), peut-être est-il commode de rappeler brièvement quelques faits, d'interroger légèrement le passé, question de revisiter quelques séquences de l'histoire pré-coloniale allemande au Cameroun. En effet, à la suite du traité Germano-Douala du 12 juillet 1884 et après avoir installé une base à Douala, une mission exploratrice militaire allemande commandée par les lieutenants Hans Tappenbeck et Hans Richard (Laburthe-Tolra, 1999: 76) est envoyée sur ordre du ministère des affaires étrangères de Berlin dans l'hinterland le 15 octobre 1887 (Laburthe-Tolra, 1999: 78). Il est question de trouver le moyen d'écouler les matières premières vers la côte en déterminant le point de jonction des eaux du grand Nyong (Sanaga et Nyong actuel) et du fleuve Congo. Vers la Sanaga, la mission rencontre des tribus hostiles qui leur opposent une vive résistance. Il s'en suit alors une bataille avec les guerriers

 [10.21747/doi.org/0874-2375/afr33a9](https://doi.org/10.21747/doi.org/0874-2375/afr33a9)

\* Université de Douala.

<sup>1</sup> En regardant de plus près le cimetière, l'on dénombre 36 tombes réparties en quatre rangées. Chacune des rangées comportent 9 tombes à l'exception de la seconde rangée qui présente seulement 1 tombe. Ce qui est la preuve que 8 autres tombes ont été détruites. L'on s'en convainc au regard de la présence d'un vaste espace qui renseigne sur la connaissance de l'occupation du sol.

de Mbida Menge (Laburthe-Tolra, 1999: 79) au cours de laquelle un soldat allemand rend l'âme. Une telle situation pousse le corps expéditionnaire à changer de direction. Au lieu de suivre le cours d'eau, il emprunte plutôt le chemin de terre, ne serait-ce que par pure stratégie. À la rencontre du premier groupement, le 15 janvier 1888, Kund, le chef de la mission trouve le paysage beau et le climat plutôt attrayant. C'est alors qu'après entretien avec le chef de groupement zonu, Essono Ela, que lui est accordé une portion de terrain afin qu'il enterre le soldat décédé en chemin. Ainsi naît sur la base de ces quelques faits historiques, le cimetière allemand de Yaoundé de (1888-1912).

Si «l'écriture du patrimoine est le patrimoine de l'écriture» (Dosse, 2003: 145-156; Ricoeur, 2000: 731-747), comme le relevait Michel De Certeau, l'on verrait qu'il a autour de la question de l'interprétation des valeurs symboliques du cimetière allemand de Yaoundé une diversité et productivité des «territoires» de recherches. L'on s'en convainc mieux en recourant aux travaux d'Alexandre Kum'a Ndumbe III (2005: 13-15) et de Jean Temgoua (Michels et Temgoua, 2003). Comparant la mémoire historique à la mémoire coloniale, les deux auteurs la définissent comme étant la faculté nostalgique permettant de restituer la conscience du passé colonial allemand mystifié et de la conserver. S'appuyant sur une telle définition, ils éprouvent le besoin de réinterroger les moyens de l'art dramatique de l'histoire coloniale allemande au Cameroun comme l'a fait Peter Weiss. Une pareille homologie se dégage des travaux d'André Ekama et Philomène Atyame (2002: 23) qui assimilent la mémoire historique à une réminiscence d'un passé commun et l'expression d'une identité. Cette définition reste entachée de sentimentalité et risque de faire passer les deux auteurs pour des chercheurs indigestes ressassant le topo éculé de la fuite du temps. Or, on sait l'importance, pour la pensée de ces illustres auteurs d'aller questionner la configuration du multiculturalisme et le cosmopolitisme allemand<sup>2</sup>. Mais, il faudra attendre *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* de Marie-Louise Pratt pour pouvoir analyser de manière sommaire, la question de la mémoire historique sous les traits culturels notamment la culture transnationale comme souvenir de phénomènes sociaux et historiques ayant eu lieu dans une zone de contact. Elle définit la mémoire historique en ajoutant un fond de teint culturel aux précédents.

Il ressort de cette brève revue, nécessairement partielle, de la littérature historique, que ces études sont restées fondamentalement évasifs et confinées à l'histoire. Sans nier la grande utilité de la plupart de ces travaux, il faut cependant bien reconnaître qu'ils ne peuvent, en tout état de cause, que fournir des explications partielles sur la place de la mémoire pré-coloniale. L'on est au regret d'affirmer qu'ils n'explorent en profondeur la mémoire historique du cimetière allemand de Yaoundé (1888-1912), qui s'entend dès lors comme la réminiscence d'un passé commun et l'expression d'une identité collective, d'une part et, la réécriture de l'histoire à travers la construction culturelle des lieux, d'autre part. À partir de là, il apparaît que la présente intellection envisage non pas penser le cimetière allemand de Yaoundé (1888-1912) en reprenant le fil de son histoire. Mais au contraire, il est surtout question de ressusciter l'urgence de la transmission dans la fracture apparente des générations, qui s'enracine dans la question de l'histoire des paysages patrimoniaux coloniaux. Comment faire lien, y compris au sein de cette fracture, de manière à écrire non pas historiquement, mais symboliquement une histoire qui rend compte de l'histoire des paysages.

La problématisation de l'interprétation invite à questionner à cet égard sur le sens de l'interprétation des valeurs «symboliques» (Bourdieu, 1971: 55) de cette dernière, parce qu'elle apparaît comme la condition *sine qua non* d'une lecture de l'histoire du paysage

<sup>2</sup> Ils arguent, en effet, que ces deux paramètres constituent le substrat de la propagation et de la sédimentation d'un ensemble de lieux communs sur l'Afrique, en général, et sur le Cameroun, en particulier.

(Pitte, 1986: 23) historico-funéraire allemand au Cameroun. Mieux encore, comment saisir le sens de l'interprétation des valeurs symboliques du cimetière allemand de Yaoundé (1888-1912)? De cette question centrale, jaillissent deux interrogations subsidiaires, à savoir: comment l'analyser comme une thérapeutique du souvenir allemand? Et comment le saisir comme un héritage socio-culturel de la présence allemande au Cameroun? Construit ainsi, un tel questionnement devient plus compatible avec les exigences méthodologiques de toutes sciences sociales (Croce et Chaix-Ruy, 1968: 115). Étant donné que l'histoire s'écrit avec des documents (Moniot, 1962: 115-138), dans le cadre de la présente recherche, cela implique tout d'abord de recourir principalement à la «mémoire archivistique» (Mbondo-bari et Gouaffo, 2016: 31; Dosse, 2003: 148) coloniale on falsifiable (Croce et Chaix-Ruy, 1968: 116). Il s'agit essentiellement des archives officielles allemandes (à savoir: les archives centrales Albert Schweitzer de Gunsbach et les archives nationales de Kiew) et les archives coloniales élaborées au Cameroun où se trouvent conservées des traces du passé. Dans le même registre, on rangera également les publications officielles et de publications non officielles. Leur lecture croisée avec des archives privées pourra certainement être d'un appui précieux (la fondation africain avenir d'Alexandre Kum'a Ndumbe III). Ensuite, l'on ne se montrera pas oublieux d'aller exploiter les données collectées par les centres ci-après: le centre pour la collecte et le traitement de la tradition orale, à savoir: le CELHTO (Centre pour l'étude linguistique et historique par la tradition orale), et en Afrique centrale (Cameroun) et du CERDOTOLA (Centre régional de recherche et de documentation sur les traditions orales et pour le développement des langues africaines). Même si beaucoup d'histoires ont été écrites, de nombreux récits de ce qui s'est passé dans ce cimetière appartiennent à la tradition orale (Szemin'ski, 2006: 229) sous la forme des entretiens. Le recours aux entretiens avec les protagonistes trouvés aux abords du cimetière ne saurait conduire à négliger la question du statut différent des discours recensés permettant de contextualiser et objectiver les propos des acteurs. Il convient de préciser que le traitement de ces données recueillies obéira à un traitement analytique et critique des différents types de discours sur la base des méthodes d'analyse des discours.

Rappelons, cependant, qu'il ne s'agit pas ici d'épingler l'approche cognitive comme le point faible de l'approche historique de ce domaine étude. Au contraire, l'on considère plutôt que cette démarche de recherche est tout à fait pertinente mais, elle est perfectible. Dans cette perspective, il s'agit plutôt de recourir à l'approche «interprétative» défendue par Marc Bevir (Durnova et Zittoun, 2013: 576) qui s'inspire davantage de la philosophie herméneutique et met en évidence la pluralité irréductible des interprétations prenant en compte tout à la fois les intentionnalités, l'historicité et la réflexivité des allemands et des camerounais pour mieux saisir *l'image-souvenir* de ce patrimoine (Pasqua, 1993: 139).

L'hypothèse retenue dans le cadre de cette réflexion suggère que les fouilles faites au cimetière allemand de Yaoundé (1888-1912) conduisent à sa relecture sur la base des principes de continuité et d'homogénéité qui apparaissent être des éléments de construction de la mémoire du paysage funéraire allemand. Ces deux principes empêchent de repérer les ruptures parce que garantissant l'identité dans le temps (Durnova et Zittoun, 2013: 577). Une telle considération se justifie en regard de la sauvegarde de l'identité et de la mémoire allemande au Cameroun, trop souvent négligés des archéologues, mais qui présentent cet inégalable intérêt de donner une image d'un peuple sensiblement plus vraie.

Pour étayer cette hypothèse on voudrait d'abord rappeler que le cimetière allemand de Yaoundé (1888-1912) constitue une thérapeutique du souvenir. D'autre part, il sera question de considérer le cimetière allemand de Yaoundé (1888-1912) comme un héritage socio-culturel.

## 1. Le cimetière allemand de Yaoundé (1888-1912), une thérapeutique du souvenir

En partant de l'idée que le cimetière allemand Yaoundé ne saurait conduire à l'oubli (mémoire occultée) (Kanafani-Zaha, 2000: 81), ce dernier constitue une forme thérapeutique du souvenir parce qu'étant un lieu de mémoire.

En faisant fi et abstraction de la kyrielle d'approches définitionnelles (Mbondobari et Gouaffo, 2016: 7), l'on retiendra simplement que le lieu de mémoire s'entend de: «toute unité significative d'ordre matériel ou idéal dont la volonté des hommes ou le travail du temps a fait un élément symbolique du patrimoine mémoriel d'une quelconque communauté» (Konaté, En ligne). Annonçant un point de départ synchronique, la saisie d'un passé projeté à la surface du présent (Petitier, 1989: 106), le lieu de mémoire s'appuie sur «le plus précis de la trace» (Nora, 1984: 34), «le plus matériel du vestige» (*Ibid*). Une règle à laquelle ne semble pas déroger le cimetière allemand de Yaoundé. Problématisant la représentation du passé, donc du présent, le cimetière allemand de Yaoundé (1888-1912), espace public à nul autre comparable, est un lieu de mémoire collective où l'intimité et la spiritualité se côtoient.

Avant d'examiner les systèmes de questionnement savants portant spécifiquement sur la question de la morphologie tombale de la nécropole allemande (1888-1912), il conviendrait de s'instruire à l'archéologie des vestiges de cette dernière.

### 1.1. L'esprit du lieu: la présence des pierres tombales

Avant d'aborder l'étude de la morphologie des traces tombales de la nécropole allemande, il est nécessaire de dire que la descente sur le terrain auprès de cimetière a révélé que 28 tombes classées en 4 colonnes (comme évoqué précédemment) présentent une morphologie permettant de différencier en fonction de la position sociale du défunt et de la classe sociale (Pin, 1962: 86) comme on le verra plus bas.

Sous ce rapport, il conviendrait de faire une lecture de la forme géométrique des sépultures du cimetière allemand. Tout en participant conjointement à son analyse, l'on pourra mener une étude sur l'orientation astronomique des sépultures du cimetière allemand.

#### 1.1.1. La forme géométrique des sépultures

La forme géométrique des sépultures est une composante de l'architecture des tombes. En effet, la forme géométrique rectangulaire des 28 sépultures explorées affiche quelques identités frappantes. Il est probable que ces identités remarquables reposent sur des critères ci-après: la décoration secondaire est-elle unitaire sur les 4 parois et sur les 2 frontons? Est-elle de nature architecturale ou décorative? Encadre-t-elle la représentation figurée? Les scènes se suivent-elles d'une paroi à l'autre? Existe-t-il des symétries d'une paroi à l'autre? En existe-t-il sur une même paroi?

Invariablement ces critères identiques ne cachent pas moins une différenciation. D'autant plus que la forme géométriquement rectangulaire se retrouve perçue au niveau de la typologie des sépultures. Conformément à l'observation menée, il se dégage 7 types de tombes dressées en fonction des rangées. Il s'agit: des tombes avec non bombé; des tombes sans croix avec écriteau; des tombes avec croix et écriteau; des tombes sans croix et sans écriteau; des tombes avec croix réduites; des tombes majestueuses avec croix; des tombes avec croix simple. Pour tout dire, l'on représenterait mieux cette énumération par le tableau ci-après:

**Tableau 01 – La structuration des tombes**

	Types de tombes	nombres
Première rangée	Tombes avec croix simple	4
	Tombes sans croix avec écriteau	1
	Tombes sans croix et sans écriteau	1
	Tombes avec croix mais réduite	1
	Tombes majestueuses avec croix	2
		9
Deuxième rangée	Tombe avec croix et écriteau	1
		1
Troisième rangée	Tombes avec croix simple	4
	Tombes sans croix mais avec écriteau	4
	Tombes sans croix et sans écriteau	1
		9
Quatrième rangée	Tombes sans croix avec écriteau	2
	Tombes avec croix et écriteau	2
	Tombes majestueuses avec croix et sans écriteau	3
	Tombes majestueuses avec croix et écriteau	1
	Tombes sans croix	1
		9

Source: Martin Raymond Willy Mbog Ibock, Mai 2017.

Deux hypothèses peuvent être formulées et discutées à propos de cette structuration des tombes: la première est la présence des sépultures de style. L'on se nourrit à l'éclairage des tombes: 21 (de Carl Wilhem Vofs), 22 (de Carl Gottschalk), 24 (de Paul Doenger), 25 (de Max Buchwald), 28 (de Tsunoda J. Chizo), 29 (de René Domingo Charles), 30 (d'Ernest Cowden), 32 (de Paul Giraud et d'Odette Giraud), 33 (de Madame Lepine). Dans tous les cas, ils traduisent comme on l'a dit plus haut, la position, le rang et la classe sociale des défunts. On perçoit tout de même une seconde hypothèse qui est celle de la présence des sépultures à la mode. Elles sont investies des modes de vie et de coutumes allemandes de cette époque.

Plus intéressant encore, est le système de couverture de quelques sépultures qui présente une nature quelque peu périssable parce qu'étant recouvert de béton armé de ciment. Il est toutefois vraisemblable que les planches qui ferment les inhumations, aient reposé au sommet sur des couches d'argile qui tapissent les fosses. Un système de fermeture de ce genre a été mis en évidence dans des tombes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 19, 20, 23, 26, 27, 31, 34, 35, 36. Leur hauteur de la fosse est de 100 cm environ. Pour les autres sépultures, il est difficile de déterminer comment et à quelle hauteur sont placées les planches qui les fermaient. Cette situation est à certains égards compréhensibles dans la mesure où les fosses ne présentent aucune trace de décrochement. Il est clair, cependant, que les couvercles ne peuvent se situer au sommet des fosses qui atteignent parfois  $\frac{1}{2}$  mètre de hauteur. Le risque d'effondrement des parois aurait été trop élevé si le couvercle n'était probablement pas resté longtemps en place.

### 1.1.2. L'orientation astronomique des sépultures

Avant d'entrer en profondeur sur la question de l'orientation astronomique des sépultures du cimetière allemand de Yaoundé, il est important de rappeler qu'il se présente comme un «lieu privé et public, un espace intime ou secret de la vie collective» (Urbain, 1998: 244). De forme d'une trame orthogonale plus ou moins régulière de circulations plus ou moins importantes, depuis les allées transversales et circulaires jusqu'à tous les interstices qui séparent les tombes, ainsi que les monuments publics et la fosse commune.

La structure prégnante des monuments et de leurs interstices façonnent un paysage à la fois quadrillé au plan horizontal et hérissé de constructions de formes diverses au plan vertical très contrasté. À première vue, il manque d'homogénéité, sembler composé de compartiments hétéroclites. Non seulement le cimetière peut paraître une agrégation de particules sans lien entre elles. Mais, dans son ensemble, il peut constituer un ovni sans rapport avec son environnement paysager, qu'il soit citadin ou rural, comme un amas d'îlots formant eux-mêmes une île.

Après avoir goûté aux charmes de l'argumentation, selon laquelle le cimetière allemand de Yaoundé (1888-1912) constitue un lieu de mémoire, il s'avère aussi intéressant de jeter son dévolu sur la considération du cimetière allemand de Yaoundé comme faisant partie d'une mémoire des lieux, ceci grâce à un passé recomposé (Ozouf, 1993: 24).

### 1.2. Le lieu d'esprit: les ornements funéraires

Il y a quelques années Michel de Certeau invitait à rechercher les traces laissées par l'événement depuis sa manifestation en considérant celles-ci comme constitutives d'un sens toujours ouvert (Certeau, 2002: 523). L'archéologie tombale de la nécropole allemande consiste en une lecture critique des «objets funéraires» (Ozouf, 1993: 25; Labbé, 1991: 31). Participant de la résurrection du passé, ces objets funéraires cristallisent la «commémoration mémorielle» (Mbondobari et Gouaffo, 2016: 30) allemande au Cameroun, du moment où celle-ci arbore, sans précaution, des faits historiques (coloniaux) perçus comme équivoques et qui sont à la base du déséquilibre culturel créé, en Afrique dont les stigmates sont encore visibles.

Pour bien comprendre ceci, l'on se montrera vertueux de décrypter, d'abord, l'épigraphe funéraire. Et, par la suite, l'on déchiffrera de manière analytique de la statistique des décès.

#### 1.2.1. Le décryptage analytique de l'épigraphe funéraire

Le décryptage analytique de l'épigraphe funéraire relève-t-il d'un hasard? Une telle préoccupation est loin d'être aveugle, parce qu'elle rend compte de la mort en tant que concept et réalité philosophique. Dissserter sur cette question honore l'idée que la nécropole allemande de Yaoundé présente pour la plupart des sépultures un discours sur le mort fait foi d'une épigraphie certaine. Sans être une gageure et encore moins une lapalissade, elle affiche 28 tombes dont 10 qui comportent des épigraphes. Il s'agit de: la tombe 10 (de René Carmagnat), tombe 21 (de Carl Wilhem Vofs), tombe 22 (de Carl Gottschalk), tombe 24 (de Paul Doenger), tombe 25 (de Max Buchwald), tombe 28 (de Tsunoda J. Chizo), tombe 29 (de René Domingo Charles), tombe 30 (d'Ernest Cowden), la tombe 32 (de Paul Giraud et d'Odette Giraud), la tombe 33 (de Madame Lepine). En scrutant l'épigraphe de ces quelques sépultures, l'on se rend compte qu'elle n'en présente pourtant aucun éloge. Il n'y a pas de création d'une mort idéale dans les épitaphes qui insistent au contraire sur son inexorabilité ou encore sur son caractère imprévisible. On trouve cependant rarement



de demande de prière générale, ne s'adressant pas à un défunt particulier mentionné dans l'inscription; ce qui montre encore une fois l'absence de discours. La lecture du texte épigraphique pour la plupart contiennent les mentions suivantes: l'ordre ci-dessous: (1) prénom; (2) patronyme; (3) la date de naissance et la date de décès à certains endroits et d'autres non. En mettant l'accent sur ces mentions, l'on serait cependant au regret de constater que le contenu de ces épitaphes, bien qu'identifiant explicitement le mort ne renseignent pas à suffisance sur le grade (officier ou pas), peut-être parce qu'étant taillé au goût des épigraphistes (Roux, 2013: 169) de l'époque.

Plus surprenante, en revanche, est l'inexistence des tombes dont la plaque<sup>3</sup> comportant l'épigraphie qui semble-t-il a été détruite<sup>4</sup>. En guise d'illustration, l'on s'en ira convoquer les tombes ci-après: la tombe 1, la tombe 7, la tombe 20, la tombe 23, la tombe 25, la tombe 27 et la tombe 31. Cette inexistence d'épigraphie dont ces tombes sont porteuses, se nourrit de l'impression d'une destruction par les intempéries ou par des actes de vandalisme. La question de la destruction des épitaphes pose ainsi, le récurrent problème de la conservation du patrimoine historique et permet, à tout le moins, de mesurer l'écart entre l'approche politique de l'acte de commémoration mémorielle et les usages qu'en font les populations auxquelles elle est destinée.

### 1.2.2. Le déchiffrement analytique de la statistique des décès

S'il est vrai que la tombe appartient donc à un langage dont le déchiffrement (Gauthier, 1996: 385-385) ne peut se faire sans tenir compte de la statistique. En scrutant dates extrêmes des décès, l'on s'aperçoit que la première tombe date de 1888.

Le cimetière allemand de Yaoundé conserve donc la mémoire des inhumations des deux derniers siècles. Les 37 décès dont la date est connue par endroits grâce à la lecture des épitaphes concernent 2 femmes, 10 hommes et 25 défunts de sexe non identifié, soit un rapport de masculinité de 95 %. L'on s'en convainc mieux par le tableau ci-dessous:

Tableau 02 - La statistique des décès

	Prénoms et patronymes	Sexe	Informations sur le décès
Allemands	Carl Gottschalk	H	décédé le 2 Septembre 1907
	Carl Wilhem Vofs	H	mort le 11 Mars 1907 à Eduma
	Max Buchwald	H	décédé le 20 Février 1912
	Joseph Gauderick Aymerich	H	
	Paul Doenger	H	enterré ici le 14 Juillet 1909
	Ernest C. Cowden	H	
Français	Madame Lepine	F	Né le 2 octobre 1888 et décédé le mai 1922
	René Domingo Charles	H	Né le 7 mai 1897 et décédé le 2 février 1926
	René Carmagnat	H	
	Ciraud Odette	F	
	Giraud Paul	H	
Japonais	Tsunoda J. Chizo	H	Décédé le 25 septembre 1907

Source: Martin Raymond Willy Mbog Ibock, Mai 2017. Les abréviations suivantes sont utilisées pour indiquer les sexes employés: H = Homme. F = Femme.

<sup>3</sup> Le choix de ces matériaux atteste de la non-dégradation des sépultures.

<sup>4</sup> C'est ce qui se dégage de l'observation faites sur les lieux. L'on aperçoit quelques trous ouverts sur certaines sépultures. Ce qui est la preuve certaine qu'il existait autrefois une épigraphie qui aujourd'hui à disparu.

De l'observation faite, on peut y déceler un certain nombre d'imprécisions qui ne permettent pas de dire avec exactitude quelles fonctions occupaient ces personnes. Car les femmes, n'ayant aucun rôle officiel dans la vie religieuse (comme rabbins, sacrificateurs, etc.), peut-être est-ce la raison d'une moindre tendance à donner aux femmes des noms bibliques. La curiosité des lieux a permis de se rendre compte de ce que la majorité des défunts inhumés sont plutôt des allemands tels que le révèle le tableau les nationalités des défunts ci-dessus.

Après avoir esquissé une compréhension de la thérapeutique de la nécropole allemande, il semble opportun d'appréhender dès à présent d'envisager le cimetière allemand de Yaoundé comme un héritage socio-culturel.

## 2. Le cimetière allemand de Yaoundé (1888-1912), un héritage socio-culturel

«Chaque lieu se trouve associé à une image-souvenir, (...) qui permet la reviviscence du souvenir», écrit Nicolas Verdier (2009: 104). Intellectuellement construit et savamment pensé, l'auteur, se montrant révérencieux à la pensée de Cicéron<sup>5</sup>, fait de chaque lieu un système défini par la distance qui existe entre l'image et le souvenir permettant ainsi la mémorisation (Antoine, 1993: 1447-1469).

Pour rendre raison de cette affirmation, il sera question dans ce premier palier, globalement, de mettre en évidence de la sigillographie de la mémoire collective (Halbwach: 1997: 177) germano-camerounaise à partir d'une certaine homogénéité et continuité. Dans un second palier, ce sera l'occasion d'analyser la retransmission de ce dernier parce que constituant un enjeu mémoriel (*Ibid*) du cimetière allemand de Yaoundé.

### 2.1. La transmission d'une mémoire historique

La continuité et l'homogénéité apparaissent comme une construction de la mémoire et l'idée d'une histoire linéaire, d'un devenir homogène, comme l'illusion d'une histoire-mémoire (Petitier, 1989: 104). En ce sens qu'elle constitue l'une de ces forces qui tissent la continuité et empêche de'en repérer les ruptures (*Ibid*). La mémoire est toujours celle d'un sujet (individuel ou collectif) dont elle garantit l'identité dans le temps.

Évoquer la dialectique homogénéité-continuité participe de la reconstruction d'une «intelligence culturelle»<sup>6</sup> duquel se dégage une reconfiguration des valeurs interculturelles.

#### 2.1.1. La reconstitution d'une intelligence culturelle

Rien ne fait plus se confronter les divers registres de la mémoire qu'une situation patrimoniale (Rautenberg, 2003: 23) pré-coloniale. Pour comprendre la «mémoire travaillée» ou «reconstituée», l'on partira de l'hypothèse suivante: le patrimoine émerge à la fois comme idéologie culturelle et comme modèle d'action politique (Lamy, 1993: 52). La reconstitution d'une intelligence culturelle illustre un besoin d'une transmission du souvenir de phénomènes socio-historiques ayant eu lieu dans une zone de contact. Elle

<sup>5</sup> Selon Cicéron, l'art de la mémoire repose sur la fabrication d'un système de lieux et d'images mis en relations par un itinéraire.

<sup>6</sup> L'Intelligence culturelle est composée de quatre facteurs: 1. La connaissance (compréhension des différences culturelles): La mesure de a compréhension des enjeux et des différences culturelles. Les aspects les plus souvent soulignés; 2. L'interprétation (la capacité à interpréter les signaux culturels): Le degré auquel l'on est attentif et conscient quand on interagit avec une autre culture; 3. La persévérance (persévérer à travers les difficultés interculturelles): le niveau d'intérêt, de désir et de motivation de s'adapter à une autre culture; 4. Le comportement (conduite interculturelle appropriée): La mesure dans laquelle l'on change de manière appropriée les actions et le comportement lorsque l'on interagit avec une autre culture.

représente pourtant des cultures totalement dissemblables n'ayant aucun rapport entre elles et cela dans des espaces chronologiques, historiques et géographiques différents (Gauthier, 1996: 393). Indépendamment des autres traits culturels, on voit que les sépultures constituent ici un excellent critère d'identification, parce que dans le binôme temps-espace, elles sont très spécifiques (Gauthier, 1996: 394).

Si la plupart des auteurs admettent le postulat selon lequel, le politique peut être défini par sa fonction de maintien de la cohésion sociale, peu d'entre eux s'interrogent sur le contenu de cette dernière notion et pourtant il faut partir d'elle pour poser les bases d'une théorie de l'État en action. Il est important de dire que Kum'a Ndumbe livre au lecteur dans la pièce *Ach Kamerun! Unsere alte deutsche Kolonie*, archéologie de la mémoire culturelle germano-camerounaise. Aucun détail n'est épargné dans ce projet de reconstruction de la mémoire culturelle germano-camerounaise. Le lecteur assiste à un dialogue constant entre l'espace théâtral et l'espace mémoriel: celui du temps de l'histoire mise en scène. Sur le plan stylistique, il emprunte à Bertolt Brecht la technique du théâtre épique et à Peter Weiss, Ernst Magnus Enzensberger et autres, celle du théâtre documentaire. Mieux, les monuments de commémoration traduisent la façon dont les peuples élaborent leur intelligence du passé; ils permettent, *a posteriori*, de repérer, pour paraphraser Pierre Rosanvallon (2003: 14), «les récusations et les attractions à partir desquelles ils ont formulé leurs objectifs, de retracer en quelque sorte la manière dont leur vision du monde a borné et organisé leur champ d'action».

À défaut d'autres signes et aussi en complément à d'autres données, les sépultures fournissent des indications précieuses sur les structures fondamentales, matérielles et spirituelles d'une société. Mais il convient de respecter deux conditions essentielles: d'une part, qu'elles soient considérées dans leur ensemble, d'autre part, qu'elles ne soient pas détachées du contexte socio-culturel et géographique auxquels elles appartiennent.

### 2.1.2. La conservation de l'héritage de l'histoire des ancêtres précoloniaux allemands

Si le Cameroun a œuvré, depuis les indépendances, en faveur de la redécouverte et la valorisation de son histoire, il a fait aussi «une large place aux éléments issus du patrimoine colonial en tant qu'éléments constitutifs de l'histoire nationale» afin de «transformer [le] passé controversé en un lien de solidarité universelle... scellée dans le sang. Au plus grand bénéfique du progrès et du développement partagés» (Bayart, 1979: 31).

L'intérêt est d'autant plus grand que de considérer le cimetière allemand comme un vecteur de mémoire en termes des valeurs culturelles (Coquery-Vidrovitch et Moniot, 1974: 341) et d'acceptation de l'autre «l'allemand». En fait, elles portent et véhiculent les identités culturelles qui rappellent avant tout l'histoire héroïque du peuple allemand. Elles s'apparentent à des éléments unissant et réconciliant (Konaté, En ligne) le peuple allemand avec son histoire. Elles sont un point de repère de même que la raison d'être du peuple et le principe de ses ambitions les plus élevées (*Ibid*: 342).

Peintes comme tel, ces pierres tombales ont tout de même besoin de réfection. Mais les descendants des défunts, parfois, introuvables ou ne veulent pas déboursier d'argent pour les faire restaurer. Les monuments de marbre de l'époque victorienne ont été attaqués sévèrement par la pollution atmosphérique émanant des zones industrielles à proximité. Ils sont maintenant altérés, perdant du coup leur valeur spirituelle, mais surtout leur spécificité historique: il s'avère impossible de lire l'épithaphe, de recueillir des données démographiques ou iconographiques, etc. Enfin, le vandalisme et le vol font partie des soucis auxquels font face les administrateurs. Ces problèmes de conservation alourdissent la problématique complexe que représente actuellement le patrimoine funéraire allemand.

Comme on a pu le voir à partir de ces exemples, les sépultures s'inscrivent en tête des éléments d'identification. Deux raisons militent en faveur de cela: la première est parce qu'elles évoquent le fait mortel et le sacré. Tandis que la seconde tient compte de l'eschatologie. À partir de là, on aura alors compris que ces sépultures ne sont que l'expression de simples traits culturels (*Ibid*), permettant de voyager, sans pour autant que leurs changements soient obligatoirement liés à des bouleversements profonds de l'ordre socio-culturel établi.

Au-delà de la mise en évidence de la transmission d'une mémoire historique, il n'en reste pas moins incontestable que soit abordée sa retransmission.

## 2.2. La retransmission d'une mémoire historique

Cette articulation suggère des questions en apparence simples: Comment l'opinion allemande et l'opinion camerounaise perçoivent-elles aujourd'hui respectivement ce passé germano-camerounais à travers ce cimetière et quel rapport entretiennent-elles avec ce dernier? Quelle est, aujourd'hui, la vision que les allemands et les camerounais se forgent respectivement de cette longue histoire (De Vallemont, 1700: 89)? Telles sont les questions auxquelles l'on tentera de répondre dans cette réflexion.

Dans ce qui suit, l'on verra tout d'abord que le cimetière allemand de Yaoundé constitue un patrimoine mémoriel commun<sup>7</sup>. On s'appuiera pour ce faire sur la transmission de la mémoire et de sa représentation. On s'étendra, par la suite, sur son sens symbolique au travers du sens de la pratique du devoir de mémoire (Lalieu, 2001: 87).

### 2.2.1. Une retransmission de la mémoire et de sa représentation

Particulièrement intéressant d'un point de vue historique, le cimetière allemand de Yaoundé permet de mettre une certaine distance entre le présent et le passé. Devenu des reliques patrimoniales et culturelles, il est maintenant engagé comme un patrimoine mémoriel commun à l'Allemagne et au Cameroun. Subodoré par l'Allemagne qui tente de retisser les liens avec le Cameroun, il est devenu un véritable nœud d'une complexité mémorielle, d'autant plus que des avis divergent à propos de cela. Cette consubstantialité négative dont ces monuments sont porteurs, se nourrit de l'impression d'une perpétuation insidieuse des standards idéologiques de la colonisation, or une historiographie d'essence nationaliste, réclame que soient considérés, dans les annales de la colonisation, les témoignages précieux de toute la part prise par l'Afrique dans son historicité. Cette revendication, tantôt sourde, tantôt spectaculaire, semble être portée par un mouvement informel, caractérisé par la détérioration périodique du cimetière allemand. Une attitude paradoxale qui éclaire autrement le rapport de l'Africain au passé colonial. Ce paradoxe peut être scientifiquement cerné par le biais du concept wébérien du motif. Pour preuve, «l'ensemble significatif qui semble constituer aux yeux de l'agent ou de l'observateur la raison significative d'un comportement» (Weber, 1971: 10).

Porte ouverte sur l'histoire, le cimetière allemand constitue un patrimoine pour les vivants qu'il faille à tout prix préserver. Car, ne dit-on pas souvent que « l'oubli, c'est la deuxième mort? En tant que lieu d'histoire (Nora, 1984: 58), ce cimetière est un lieu terriblement

<sup>7</sup> À partir de là, et si l'on privilégie la dimension profondément politique de la question, deux points interpellent tout particulièrement ceux qui se revendiquent aujourd'hui de Marx et du marxisme. Le premier concerne le capitalisme en tant que mode de production qui relie le XIX<sup>e</sup> au XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle, par continuités et différences. Le second concerne les perspectives politiques et, de ce fait, la question communiste notoirement résurgente, mais principalement sur le terrain théorique pour le moment.

vivant. Ces sépultures élevées par l'Allemagne, en souvenir de ses héros, rendent difficiles une telle ambition, du moment où leurs contenus mettent plutôt en exergue l'héritage «de déstructurations, d'aliénations, de situations et d'êtres contradictoires, ne disparaît pas simplement par la disparition du cadre où tout cela fut engendré» (Coquery-Vidrovitch et Moniot, 1974: 341).

### 2.2.2. Une retransmission de la pratique du devoir de mémoire

«La revendication mémorielle est devenue au fil du temps le mode privilégié à travers lequel le récit historique a été sommé de progresser vers plus de clarté, plus de vérité», affirmait (Nora, 1984: 13). Toute transposition pouvant être faite avec la présente réflexion, il est aisé de se rendre compte de ce que la tradition que l'histoire officielle n'avait nullement éprouvé le besoin de prendre en compte parce que le groupe national s'était le plus souvent construit sur son étouffement, sur son silence, ou parce qu'elle n'avait pas affleuré comme telle à l'histoire (Nora, 1984: 14). Les mémoires familiales des défunts ne pactisent pas avec l'oubli (Ferney, 2012: 13). Ayant accès aux secrets intimes, elles les sauvegardent. Les descendants d'une lignée peuvent se rappeler un cheminement, une petite gloire, un tourment qui fut inutile, une torture restée ignorée (Ferney, 2012: 15). Tout se passe en effet comme si, au soulagement de la mémoire enfin retrouvée, désencombrée de tant de refoulés, d'interdits et de tabous, avait succédé peu à peu une sorte de saturation mémorielle face à la multiplication des rituels, de commémorations et d'injonctions diverses à se souvenir. À titre d'exemple, il convient de relever que depuis de nombreuses années, l'on assiste à des initiatives commémoratives allemandes. Elles sont le propre de quelques familles qui se souviennent encore de leurs morts qui viennent déposer à leurs côtés des intentions de prière.

On peut en dire autant de la pratique du devoir de mémoire qui semble être aujourd'hui le nouveau passage obligé de la conscience lucide et de la vigilance intellectuelle, la pose nouvelle de l'intellectuel averti, comme naguère (il n'y a pas si longtemps) le devoir de mémoire fut le fer de lance d'un nouveau civisme, recomposé autour de la figure de la victime (victime de la guerre, victime des camps, victimes de l'extermination etc.). Mieux, les monuments de commémoration traduisent la façon dont les peuples élaborent leur intelligence du passé; ils permettent, *a posteriori*, «de repérer, pour paraphraser Pierre Rosanvallon, les récusations et les attractions à partir desquelles ils ont formulé leurs objectifs, de retracer en quelque sorte la manière dont leur vision du monde a borné et organisé leur champ d'action» (Rosanvallon, 2003: 14).

On comprend aisément que la pratique du devoir de mémoire à propos du cimetière allemand de Yaoundé rappelle l'importance de cette mémoire pour la nation et, par ce biais, il réintègre la communauté nationale (Mbondobari et Gouaffo, 2016: 123).

## Conclusion

Parvenu au terme de la présente recherche, il convient d'indiquer que le fait important mis en lumière ici, consistait à prouver que la mémoire historique du cimetière allemand ne saurait disparaître des radars de l'histoire des paysages (Chouquer, 2007: 109). Dans la mesure où cette problématique fondée sur les personnages coloniaux devient ainsi celle des contenus culturels, autrement dit, du sens symbolique. Il s'en dégage l'impression que ce site funéraire ressuscite le passé colonial allemand et camerounais au point de n'aborder celui-ci que sous l'angle du «déterminisme historique» (Daniel, 2010: 157).

Pour conclure, cette réflexion constitue un plaidoyer en faveur de la reconnaissance de ces lieux de sépulture qui font face ici et ailleurs à une situation d'abandon chronique. Ces abandons sont dus à plusieurs facteurs, comme le désengagement des autorités étatiques et les menaces liées au vandalisme. Dans ce cas, la protection et la sauvegarde des cimetières comme éléments de patrimoine posent le défi de leur conservation (*Ibid*) dans une société en mutation. Il est donc important d'impliquer les individus, les familles, les associations et les autorités dans l'avenir et la préservation de l'intégrité de ce patrimoine, en cherchant tout particulièrement à accorder modes de sépulture, commémoration et développement durable<sup>8</sup>. Des actions, comme l'établissement de circuits touristiques, de visites guidées ou d'expositions itinérantes, devraient susciter leur intérêt. Tout ceci devrait faciliter une prise de conscience des communautés sur l'importance des cimetières pour leur identité (Simard et Brault, 2008: 451).

## Références bibliographiques

- Antoine, Jean-Philippe (1996), «Mémoire, lieux et invention spatiale dans la peinture italienne des XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles», *Annales HSS*, vol. 48, n.° 6, pp. 1447-1469.
- Assmann, Aleida (2011), *Erinnerungsräume. Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses*, München: C. H. Beck.
- Atyame, Philomène (2002), *Abengs Entscheidung. Eine schwarz-weiße Liebe in Kamerun. Roman*, Oberhausen. Athena: Verlag.
- Bayart, Jean-François (1979), *L'État au Cameroun*. Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des Sciences politiques.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1987), *Choses dites*. Paris: Minuit.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1971), «Le marché des biens symboliques», *L'Année sociologique*, vol. 22, pp. 49-126.
- Certeau, Michel (2003), *L'écriture de l'histoire*. Paris: Gallimard, coll. «Folio».
- Chamoiseau, Patrick (1994), *Guyane: Traces-Mémoires du baigne (avec des photographies de Rodolphe Hammadi)*. Paris: CNMHS (Caisse Nationale des Monuments Historiques et des Sites).
- Chouquer, Gérard (2007), «Quels scénarios pour l'histoire du paysage?: Orientations de recherche pour l'archéogéographie: essai», *Centro de Estudos Arqueológicos das Universidades de Coimbra*.
- Chretien, Jean-Pierre (2005), «Le passé colonial: le devoir de d'histoire», *Politique Africaine*, vol. 2, n.° 98, pp. 141-148.
- Chretien, Jean-Pierre et Triaud, Jean-Louis (1996), *Histoire d'Afrique. Les enjeux de mémoire*. Paris: Karthala.
- Coquery-Vidrovitch, Catherine et Moniot, Henri (1974), *L'Afrique noire de 1800 à nos jours*. Paris: PUF.
- Croce, Benedetto et Chaix-Ruy, Jules (1968), *L'histoire comme pensée et comme action*. Paris: Droz.
- Daniel, Jean-Marc (2010), *Histoire vivante de la pensée économique: Des crises et des hommes*. Paris: Pearson.
- De Vallemont, Pierre Le Lorrain (1700), *Eléments de l'histoire, ou ce qu'il faut savoir de chronologie, de géographie, de blason, etc., avant que de lire l'histoire particulière*. Paris: Anisson.
- Diop, Papa Samba (2007), «Le roman francophone subsaharien des années 2000. Les cadets de la post-indépendance», *Notre librairie (Nouvelle génération 25 auteurs à découvrir)*, n.° 166, pp. 9-18.
- Dosse, François (2003), «Michel de Certeau et l'écriture de l'histoire», *Revue d'histoire*, vol. 2, n.° 78, pp. 145-156.

<sup>8</sup> Bulletin d'information de la fédération Écomusée de l'Au-Delà, [Consulté, le 2 mai 2020 ], Disponible en: <https://pfmtl.files.wordpress.com/2014/05/bulletin-c3a9tc3a9-2013-vol-1-nol.pdf>,

- Doucet, Dominique (1987), «L'Ars memoriae dans les confessions», *Revue des études augustinienes*, vol. 33, n.º 1, pp. 49-69.
- Durnova Annette et Zittoun Philippe (2013), «Les approches discursives des politiques publiques. Introduction», *Revue française de science politique*, Vol. 63, n.º 3, pp. 569-577.
- Ferney, Alice (2012), *Un passé sous silence*. Paris: Actes Sud.
- Foucault, Michel (1971), *L'ordre du discours*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Gallien, Véronique et Langlois, Jean-Yves (1996), «Exemple d'une gestion de cimetière au Moyen Âge: le cimetière de la basilique de Saint-Denis (Seine-Saint-Denis)», *Bulletins et Mémoires de la Société d'anthropologie de Paris*, Nouvelle Série. Tome 8 fascicule, n.º 3-4, pp. 397-412.
- Gauthier, Jean-Gabriel (1996), «Typologie des sépultures et identification culturelle. Populations du Cameroun et du Tchad», *Bulletins et Mémoires de la Société d'anthropologie de Paris*, Nouvelle Série, Tome 8, fascicule 3-4, pp. 385-395.
- Gilson, Bernard (1992), *La révision bergsonienne de la philosophie de l'esprit*. Paris: Vrin.
- Grataloup, Christian (1996), *Lieux d'Histoire. Essai de géohistoire systématique*. Montpellier: GIP Reclus.
- Halbwachs, Maurice (1997), *La Mémoire collective*. Paris: Albin Michel.
- Kanafani-Zahar, Aïda (2000), «Liban, mémoires de guerre, désirs de paix», *La pensée de Midi*, *Revue Littéraire et de débat d'idées*, n.º 3, pp. 75-84.
- Konaté, Doulaye, «Mémoire et Histoire dans la construction des États-nations de l'Afrique subsaharienne: le cas du Mali», [En ligne]. Disponible sur: <http://www.anamnesis.fl.ulaval.ca/DKonate.pdf>.
- Kum'a Ndumbe III, Alexandre (2005), *Ach Kamerun! Unsere alte deutsche Kolonie... Dokumentarstück in zehn Szenen*. Berlin: AfricAvenir.
- Labbé, Thérèse (1991), «L'objet funéraire: un imaginaire à explorer», *Continuité*, vol. 2, n.º 49, pp. 28-32.
- Laburthe-Tolra, Philippe (1999), *Vers la Lumière? Ou Le Désir d'Ariel: à propos des Beti du Cameroun: Sociologie de la conversion, Hommes et Sociétés*. Karthala.
- Lalieu, Olivier (2001), «L'invention du «devoir de mémoire», *Revue d'histoire*, vol. 1, n.º 69, pp. 83-94.
- Laming, Annette (1952), *La découverte du passé, progrès récents et techniques nouvelles en préhistoire et en archéologie*. Paris: A. & J. Picard.
- Lamy, Yvon (1993), «Du monument au patrimoine. Matériaux pour l'histoire politique d'une protection», *Genèses*, vol. II, n.º 1, pp. 50-81.
- Le Roux, Patrick (2013), «Inscriptions funéraires et historiographie régionale», *Revista da Faculdade de Letras Ciências e Técnicas do Património*, vol. 12, n.º 1, pp. 167-180.
- Lévêque, Pierre et Lordkipanidzé, Otar (1990), «Sur les traces des Argonautes», Actes du 6<sup>e</sup> Symposium de Vani (Colchide) du 22-29 septembre.
- Mbembe, A. Chille (1993), «Écrire l'Afrique à partir d'une faille», *Politique Africaine*, n.º 51, pp. 69-97.
- Mbondobari, Sylvère et Gouaffo, Albert (2016), *Mémoires et lieux de mémoire enjeux interculturels et relations médiatiques*. Sarre: Presses Universitaires de la Sarre.
- Michels, Stefanie et Temgoua, Albert-Pascal (2003), «La politique de la mémoire coloniale en Allemagne et au Cameroun - The politics of colonial memory», in Germany and Cameroon. Actes du colloque à Yaoundé, octobre. Proceedings of a conference, In: Yaoundé, Münster, Lit Verlag, (Reihe Encounters/Begegnungen Bd. 5).
- Moniot, Henri (1962), «Autour de quelques livres d'histoire africaine», *Cahiers d'études africaines*, vol. 3, n.º 9, pp. 115-138.
- Nora, Pierre (1984), *Les Lieux de la mémoire*, Tome I. La République. Paris: Gallimard.
- Ozouf, Mona (1993), «Le passé recomposé», *Le magazine littéraire*, n.º 307, pp. 22-25.
- Pasqua, Hervé (1993), *Introduction à la lecture de Etre et temps de Martin Heidegger*. Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme.

- Petitier, Paule (1989), «Les Lieux de mémoire», sous la direction de P. Nora», *Romantisme*, vol. 1, n.º 63, pp. 103-110.
- Pin, Emile Jean (1962), *Les classes sociales*. Paris: Spes.
- Pitte, Jean-Robert (1986), *Terres de Castanide: Hommes et paysages du Châtaignier de l'Antiquité à nos jours*. Paris: Fayard.
- Rautenberg, Michel (2003), «Comment s'inventent de nouveaux patrimoines. Usages sociaux, pratiques institutionnelles et politiques publiques en Savoie», *Public et musées*, n.º 1, pp. 19-40.
- Reid, Martine (1991), *Stendhal en images: Stendhal, l'autobiographie et la Vie de Henry Brulard*. Genève: Droz.
- Ricœur, Paul (2000a), *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli*. Paris: Seuil.
- (2000b), «L'écriture de l'histoire et la représentation du passé», *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, vol. 55, n.º 4, pp. 731-747.
- Rosanvallon, Pierre (2003), *Pour une histoire conceptuelle du politique*. Paris: Seuil.
- Simard, Jean et Brault, François (2008), *Cimetières: patrimoine pour les vivants*. Québec: Éditions GID.
- Sloane, David Charles (1995), «La conservation des souvenirs privés: le cimetière américain et la commémoration publique», *Frontières*, vol. 7, n.º 3, pp. 18-23.
- Szemin'ski, Jan (2006), «La tradition orale comme source historique», *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, vol. 61, n.º 2, pp. 299-336.
- Tarek, Mitri (2004), *Au nom de la Bible, au nom de l'Amérique*. Genève: Labor et Fides.
- Urbain, Jean-Didier (1989), *L'archipel des morts: le sentiment de la mort et les dérives de la mémoire dans les cimetières d'Occident*. Paris: Plon.
- Verdier, Nicolas (2009), «La mémoire des lieux: entre espaces de l'histoire et territoires de la géographie», in: Takács, Ádám (2009), *Mémoire, Contre mémoire, Pratique historique*. Budapest: Equinter, pp. 103-122.
- Vieillard-Baron, Jean-Louis (2004), *Bergson: La durée et la nature*. Paris: PUF.
- Weber, Marx (1971), *Économie et société*, Tome I. Paris: Plon.

## Bulletin d'information

Bulletin colonial allemand.

Bulletin d'information de la fédération Écomusée de l'Au-delà (2013), vol. 1, n.º 1, été 2013. [En ligne].  
Disponible sur: <https://pfmtl.files.wordpress.com/2014/05/bulletin-c3a9tc3a9-2013-vol-1-no1.pdf>.



# Mercenaries or Peacekeepers? Comparing Executive Outcomes and ECOMOG in Sierra Leone

Antonino Adamo\*

pp. 153-169

## Introduction: From Private Security to the African Regional Tools for Security

Private Military Companies (PMCs) – i.e. corporate enterprises providing a different yet related range of armed security services, from armed combat to security services (See Ilustração 01) – represented a genuine novelty in sub-Saharan Africa since the early 1990s (Musah & Fayemi, 2000). The origins of private security are rooted in a series of macro processes characterising the post-Cold War, such as the erosion of the nation-state, the so-called ‘New Wars’ (Kaldor, 1999), and the spread of neoliberalism.

As a market player, private security is regulated by the law of supply and demand.

As for the supply, military downsizing at the end of bipolar era determined a huge availability of arms and military personnel (especially from the hotspots of the Cold War, such as Eastern Europe, South Africa, etc.) in the market. Moreover, rising neoliberal policies, the globalisation and the reduction of nation-state power (i.e. the global trend toward privatisation) led to the widespread assumption that even national security could become marketable.

Concerning the demand, at least three factors should be taken into account. Firstly, the decay of nation-state in Africa, due to incomplete/failed nation-building processes, new wars as a result of severe economic crisis and socio-political (i.e. rising ethnic and religious tensions) cleavages, often led to widespread insecurity, ‘Low-Intensity Conflicts’ (Van Creveld, 1991) or asymmetric conflicts fought by a wide range of non-state armed groups (militias, terrorist groups, etc.). Secondly, the end of the ‘patronage’ system by superpowers determined the unwillingness to intervene – both diplomatically and militarily – in sub-Saharan African conflicts. Finally, this loss of strategic interest also added to the failure of some UN Peace Operations (e.g. the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda, the United Nations Operation in Somalia) that caused a re-thinking of direct military involvements of Western powers in African scenarios.

This context was the perfect set for the rise of the PMCs. Their main features – making them quite different from traditional 1960s-style mercenarism – can be summarised as follows: a-political groups, corporate structures made up by highly trained and skilled military staff coming from special forces and units (such as the British Special Air Service, the South African Defence Force’s ‘Koevoet-Crowbar’, etc.) and able to provide ‘integrated security packages’ (Musah & Fayemi, 2000: 23) to national governments with major internal security

□ 10.21747/doi.org/0874-2375/afr33a10

\* National Research Council of Italy (CNR).

issues, but also non-governmental organisations, aid-workers, and even anti-poaching groups (Duffy *et al.*, 2016: 19). Services range from military escorts to economic assets, crisis management, threat assessment, to military advisory, military training and combat. Then, PMCs used to have strong connections with mineral and oil corporations based in Western countries, e.g. Branch Heritage Group and EO (Pech, 1999: 81-109).

Besides private security and PMCs, it should be noted that the African continent had started to envisage African regional security systems since decolonisation and the emergence of the nation-states. In particular, an important debate arose since the creation of the Organisation of African Unity in 1963 between the ‘Brazzaville Group’ and the ‘Casablanca Group’. States belonging to the first group favoured close co-operation with the former colonial powers and the preservation of the state system bequeathed by the colonial era, while Casablanca states placed their hopes for the future of Africa in the creation of a supranational organisation (McKeon, 1966), in order to overcome the divisions between the African peoples within a higher political unit. The most significant proposal among the Casablanca states was carried forward by the Pan-Africanist leader and president of Ghana Kwame Nkrumah and related, *inter alia*, to the establishment of an African High Command to strengthen and consolidate political independence by the neo-independent states. Governance, development policies and security were some of the areas on which Nkrumah hoped for regional control. However, the reluctance of many countries to renounce their sovereignty prevented the newly-formed independent states from tackling common security issues within a shared framework of mutual assistance, thus defending their collective interests.

Only many years later, regional and sub-regional security-related tools such as the OAU ‘Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution’ in 1993 (following the Organisation of African Unity’s *débat* in Chad), the ‘New Partnership for Africa’s Development’ in 2001, the Peace and Security Council and, the African Stand-by Force, inspired by the ‘sovereignty-as-responsibility’ assumption (Deng, 1996) marked a return to a shared security framework. As for ECOWAS, even if it was inherently an economic organization, former agreements such as the 1978 Protocol on Non-Aggression and 1981 Defense Protocol had set the trend for more effective peacekeeping tools. This quest for a regional and sub-regional security system, mostly since the 90s, was also a response to the ineffective African national armies that are often characterised by military unprofessionalism, top-down co-optation, personal loyalties, ethnic-based recruitment, etc. These aspects are clearly reported by the following section as they represent the wider context for state failure and the outbreak of the civil war in Sierra Leone.

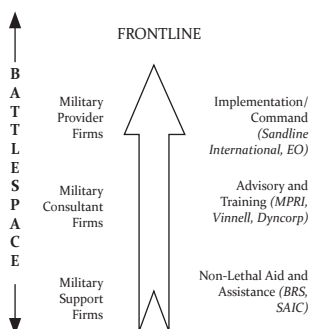


Ilustração 01 – The “Tip-of-the-spear” typology (Singer, 2003: 93).

## State failure and Civil War in Sierra Leone

With some of the world's best diamond fields, Sierra Leone started to experience a brutal civil war in March 1991 leading to economic decline, the collapse of the state apparatus (Francis, 1999: 324) and a typical state failure. The war in Sierra Leone started after an attack of a small group of rebels supported by Liberian rebel Charles Taylor, but the conflict was fuelled by a complex mix of internal (state decay, ethnic cleavages and economic grievances, etc.) as well as external (spillover effect from neighbour Liberia, unwillingness to intervene from Western countries, etc.) factors that turned into one of the cruellest civil wars of sub-Saharan Africa (Hirsch, 2001; Keen, 2003).

State sovereignty declined to the extent that it became unable to perform its basic functions (controlling state resources, defend citizens' lives and properties, etc.). Ethnic cleavages between the Temne (North) and the Mende (South) played a role, as well as economic grievances such as poverty, unemployment, state bankruptcy.

RUF rebels, backed by Gaddafi's Libya and Taylor's Liberia, gathered both alienated and 'lumpen' (Abdullah & Muana, 1998: 172) young men from urban areas, and 'socially-disconnected village youth' (Keen, 2003: 78), taking advantage with radical rhetoric propaganda. RUF soon became notorious for its abuses and brutality. Diamonds played a major role in funding the RUF, through their smuggling to neighbour Liberia. However, corruption poverty and bad governance account as much as diamonds for the spread of violence, so that the Sierra Leonean scenario seemed to fit in the pattern of the 'greed and grievances' (Berdal & Malone, 2000) often related to the new wars.

The lack of interest from the international community in terms of effective conflict resolution can be explained by the absence of strategic resources at stake, the end of the patronage system by Superpowers and Great Powers, as well as the failure of former UN Peace Operations.

In the mid-nineties, what remained of Sierra Leone were only areas controlled by warlords and bandits, since the state authority was completely absent. Together, RUF guerrilla, rebel soldiers – the *Sobel*s ('*Soldiers by day, rebels by night*') – military commanders in disarray and local leaders controlled the agri-food and diamond illegal markets for an amount of \$ 200 million, when government revenues totalled just \$ 60 million a year. Beware of an underpaid and undisciplined army, the foreign mining industry along with the besieged government decided to turn to the mercenaries in order to guarantee their businesses.

## EO Intervention in Sierra Leone

The first PMC to operate in Sierra Leone was British Gurkha Security Guards (GSG), with the aim of protecting Sierra Rutile, a US and Australian-owned mining plant, and training some Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces units. Fifty-eight Gurkhas were deployed in February 1995, but their mission failed shortly afterwards, as twenty of them fell into an RUF ambush and were killed. Despite this incident, GSG remained in the country until April of the same year, but refused to seek direct confrontation with the RUF (Vines, 1999: 130).

None of the PMCs that worked in those months in Sierra Leone agreed to engage militarily with the RUF. Only EO was an exception. The South African PMC decided to assist the army against the RUF when the latter was just 20 kilometres from the capital Freetown. Furthermore, the army had lost control of the Sierra Rutile titanium mine in Gbangbatok and the Swiss-owned Sierra Leone Ore and Metal Company bauxite mine in Mankanji.

Together, these mines produced two-thirds of the country's exports. Finally, even the eastern diamond area of Kono had fallen into the hands of the rebels. EO's plan was to: **i)** secure Freetown; **ii)** regain control of the US-owned Sierra Rutile mine (generating revenue for the government and helping to guarantee payment to EO); **iii)** destroy the RUF's headquarters; and **iv)** clear the remaining areas (Shearer, 1998: 49).

EO started to train both the army and the '*Kamajors*' local militia, a group of traditional hunters from the Mende ethnic group which was later called Civil Defence Forces, becoming a paramilitary organisation fighting against the RUF. Then, EO led five major offensives thus playing an important strategic role. The first offensive was launched in April 1995 on the outskirts of Freetown, thus easing the pressure on the capital: the rebels were forced to retreat into 126 km, suffering heavy losses with hundreds of militants killed and at least a thousand desertions. The second offensive was aimed at liberating the Kono diamond fields, thus enabling the government to exploit the mine again. Then, in December 1995, following the recapture of the Sierra Rutile mine, EO started to directly hit the RUF, taking advantage of an additional 200-man force from South Africa and destroying the RUF stronghold near Kangari Hills with a ground attack. A last attack was launched at the end of 1996, when, following the elections that had given power to Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, the RUF had failed in the promise of a negotiated solution to the conflict. Following yet another defeat, Sankoh signed the Abidjan Peace Accord on November 30, 1996. EO was given credit for pushing rebels to momentary surrender and signing peace agreements. In fact, Sankoh himself admitted that he would have been able to occupy Freetown and win the war if EO had not intervened and conditioned the signing of peace agreements on the cessation of activities by the South African PMC (Isenberg, 1997; Shearer, 1998).

The 21 month-long operation cost \$35 million – a high price considering that Sierra Leone's foreign trade was only worth \$39 million. According to speculation, EO was paid in diamond concessions, as Branch Energy acquired the Kono diamond concessions after EO's entry into Sierra Leone. Even the International Monetary Fund approved payments to EO as part of Sierra Leone's overall budget (Shearer, 1998: 51-2). Although EO's success forced the RUF to sign the 1996 Abidjan Peace Accord, just ninety days later a new military coup plunged the country into chaos once again. In fact, the RUF attacked Freetown and committed abuses and atrocities against the civilian population that culminated years later during the 1999 'No Living Thing' operation, which was the most notorious mass killing of the Sierra Leone civil war.

EO's short-lasting achievements were benefitting the mining companies (mainly Branch Group) rather than the ordinary people and showed that 'security' and 'stabilisation' were only instrumental to foreign investments. This led some analysts to consider EO as a '*recolonising agent for British and South African corporate interests*' (Rubin, 1997: 6), as the country's debt increased and permanent insecurity as well. Furthermore, the use of 'new mercenaries' seemed to prove the 'resource-curse' theory (Streeten, 1993; Atkinson & Hamilton, 2003) – i.e. the presence of valuable natural resources leading to economic failure and destabilization, rather than economic growth and development – given that PMCs fight their battles for profit and strategic minerals on behalf of a corporate establishment.

The momentary success provided by private security interventions may lead to deem private security as cost-effective option when a state has serious threats – or even regime survival is at stake – and no way to tackle them. As will be discussed later, further issues such as legitimacy, human rights and accountability need to be taken into account when it comes to assessing neo-mercenary interventions.

## Sub-regional Security at Work: ECOMOG in Liberia

ECOMOG was established in 1990 as an 'improvised response' (Berman & Sams, 2000: 83) to the Liberian Civil War by ECOWAS, with the aim to support Samuel Doe's Liberian government against the rebellion launched in December 1989 by Charles Taylor and his National Patriotic Front of Liberia. The reason for improvisation was the lack of a functioning security apparatus (though the Defense Protocol remained in effect) combined with a determination among a small group of ECOWAS States to intervene militarily in support of a fellow member.

At the request of the Nigerian President Ibrahim Babangida, the ECOWAS Authority established the Standing Mediation Committee at the May 1990 ECOWAS Summit in Banjul which included Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Togo, in order to activate mediation procedures. ECOMOG was born from the Standing Mediation Committee on August 7, 1990, in a climate of sharp contrasts. The legitimacy of the intervention was immediately questioned, as the Liberian crisis was deemed internal and the Standing Mediation Committee did not represent all member countries: however, the spill-over effect of the conflict (a factor sufficient to trigger the intervention mechanisms provided for by the Defense Protocol) would emerge within a short time. Then, another problem was that whilst Doe did request aid, it was from Nigeria, not ECOWAS (Tuck, 1999: 4). At that point, Lagos decided to intervene under the umbrella of the sub-regional organization. After losing support from Mali and Togo, ECOMOG landed in Monrovia on August 24, 1990 with 3,000 men initially from five countries (Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Guinea) to start the 'Operation Liberty'.

This operation revealed a number of weaknesses, as financial and material constraints were a major issue and made ECOMOG inadequate for any peace-making programme. As for the military domain, ECOMOG showed lack of military experience and professionalism. The unavailability of naval and aerial force, poor intelligence and communication, command and control, along with inefficient logistics and low standard operating procedures among member states, deeply affected the whole operation from its beginning: hence the local joke that ECOMOG was an acronym for '*Every Car or Moving Object Gone*' (Tuck, 2000: 9). Moreover, ECOMOG was blamed for its strong political ambiguity. Firstly, it was highlighted that ECOMOG was an alliance of authoritarian regimes (Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, etc.) promoting democracy abroad (Hutchful, 1999; Ero, 2000). Similarly, Nigerian claims to act as a regional power were stressed by some ECOWAS countries, such as Burkina Faso, thus revealing a further cleavage within the sub-regional organisation, namely the fear of Nigerian dominance from Francophone countries. In fact, ECOMOG started to be affected – since its creation – by the same cleavages that have been historically involving ECOWAS, such as regional rivalries, e.g. the Anglophone-versus-Francophone countries competition, and the mistrust towards the Nigerian leading role.

As for the operations in the field, ECOMOG had erratically shifted several times from peacekeeping – under the Ghanaian command – to peace enforcement, and then implemented peacekeeping again at the end of the eight month-long operation. For its part, Taylor's truces were basically tactical, agreed upon more by the need to reorganize its forces than by a genuine desire to put an end to the conflict. In fact, some armed groups believed that the benefits of a continuation of the war would have been greater than those deriving from a peace agreement.

Having said that, observers agreed that the outcomes on the intervention were blurred. In fact, further UN peacekeeping missions (the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia from 1993 to 1997) and regional agreements (the 1993 Cotonou Agreement and the 1995

Abuja Agreement) were necessary in order to stabilise the country and schedule the 1997 free elections which were won, eventually, by Taylor himself (Tuck, 2000).

As shown in the following sections, ECOMOG's performances in Sierra Leone will not fully capitalise from its previous experience in Liberia.

## ECOMOG II: The Intervention in Sierra Leone

Although ECOMOG's intervention in Liberia is a paradigmatic case of sub-regional multilateral peacekeeping, this analysis will focus on the second intervention of ECOMOG in West Africa, i.e. the involvement in Sierra Leone (1997-2000) – also known as 'ECOMOG II' (Mortimer, 2000) – which is less known and documented.

A number of factors should be considered before introducing this intervention.

Firstly, ECOMOG II is somehow linked to ECOMOG in Liberia, due to the spillover effect (Fawole, 2001) of the Liberian Civil War: Charles Taylor supported the RUF that smuggled diamonds to neighbouring Liberia and purchased weapons and ammunition there. Secondly ECOMOG II in Sierra Leone was affected by the same legal constraints and technical deficiencies as the first intervention in Liberia, due to the controversial application of the ECOWAS treaties. Thirdly, ECOMOG II intervened along with a plurality of armed groups, ranging from ethnic-based local militias, to PMCs (EO/Sandline International<sup>1</sup>), foreign armies (the British army), which were simultaneously operating in Sierra Leone: as a result, it is not easy to accurately assess ECOMOG II – and namely to what extent it contributed to the end of the Sierra Leone Civil War. Finally, the predominant Nigerian presence within ECOMOG II – even more than in Liberia – led in to be considered more a unilateral armed intervention by a third country, rather than a regional peacekeeping mission, thus determining inevitable concerns of interference in the internal affairs of another state. The intervention started when the Nigerian army – that had in Sierra Leone its headquarters (ECOMOG Forward Operation Base) for the operations carried out in Liberia – provided the first response following the military coup (25 May 1996) led by J. P. Koroma and its Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) that had overthrown the democratically-elected President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah. The coup, carried out by a group of disgruntled army officers who soon teamed up with the RUF rebels, marked the acme of the collusion between the army and the RUF, as demonstrated by the role of the 'shadow state' and the 'sobels', thus determining 'a strangely co-operative conflict' (Keen, 2005: 107). Soon after Kabbah was overthrown, the Nigerians took control of the strategic positions in the country and tried to repel the coup leaders in early June 1997 through the operation codenamed 'Sandstorm', which had been planned together with the Civil Defence Forces led by Sam Hinga Norman. A week later, another military operation led to the Nigerian recapture of Lungi (Adeshina, 2000: 14-16; Gberie, 2005).

In the meantime, Nigeria went on searching for a diplomatic solution too: ECOWAS, then chaired by the Nigerian head of state General Sani Abacha, decreed economic sanctions

<sup>1</sup> The 'Arms-to-Africa affair' is another example of the complex scenario where ECOMOG was involved. This incident refers to the late-1997 importing of weapons in apparent violation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1132 – which obliged member states to prevent their nationals from importing arms to Sierra Leone – through the British PMC Sandline International. Rakesh Saxena, an Indian financier, was allegedly supposed to fund a plan – supported by the ousted president Kabbah and Sandline International – of hiring mercenaries with the aim to overthrow Koroma. Later, the plan partly aborted following the arrest of Saxena in Thailand and only involved an arms transfer from Bourgos, Bulgaria to Lungi, Sierra Leone: this arms and ammunition load from the Bulgarian National Arms Company included a Soviet-made Mi-17 and further air equipment that had helped ECOMOG in its operation. The scandal in the United Kingdom emerged in early 1998 when it appeared that both the British High Commissioner in Sierra Leone, Peter Penfold and the Foreign Office had given a tacit approval to the arms transfer. Finally, the Arms-to-Africa affair led some observers to further blame ECOMOG in Sierra Leone for its reliance on mercenaries and their legitimization in order to enforce peace (Ero, 2000: 62-63).

that ECOMOG should have put in place and established the Committee of Four (made up of Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire, and later extended to Liberia) in order to negotiate the return of the civilian government with the military junta. Then, these efforts were endorsed by the UN Security Council Resolution N.º 1132 of 8 October, 1997 – upon request by the United Kingdom – that imposed sanctions on oil products and arms supplies.

The regional rivalries that had characterized ECOMOG's intervention in Liberia emerged here again. In fact, some countries (mainly the ECOWAS francophone countries) argued that the goal of ECOMOG was the application of the embargo and not the use of force against the Freetown junta, while the Nigerian minister of foreign affairs and ECOWAS Chairman Tom Ikimi, for his part, was convinced that regional peacekeeping was the key strategy in order to respond to the crisis in Sierra Leone (Mortimer, 2000: 198; Fawole, 2001: 17-18).

However, these disagreements did not prevent Sani Abacha from ordering the invasion of Sierra Leone, on 5 February, 1998, in the name of collective security. Within a week, after a carefully planned operation with the help of air force and ground troops, the Nigerian commander of the ECOMOG Peacekeeping Force, Colonel Maxwell Khobe, entered Freetown at the head of Nigerian troops, moving from the eastern suburbs. It was clear that the operation had been prepared in advance and the goal of bringing Kabbah's legitimate government back to power was achieved. Nigeria, under the auspices of ECOMOG, had unilaterally decided to evacuate the coup leaders from Freetown. Unlike what had happened seven years earlier in Liberia, no attempt was made by ECOWAS to legitimize the intervention on the basis of existing protocols – the 1978 Protocol on Non-Aggression and 1981 Defense Protocol. On the contrary, Nigeria leveraged on the widespread disapproval of the coup to justify its expedition. Abuja's troops made up 90 percent of the entire ECOMOG contingent (around 12,000 out of 13,000), while Ghana and Guinea had 600 men each, and Mali 500 (Adebajo, 2002: 91). In addition, Colonel Khobe was appointed by Kabbah as Chief of Staff of the Sierra Leonean army, with the aim of reforming it. Along with the triumphant Nigerian entry into Freetown, the unilateral conduct of operations and the continued use of air bombings further increased the mistrust from the francophone ECOWAS countries towards Nigeria. However, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso at the same time continued to show their unwillingness to send their own troops.

Originally, the intervention had three main goals, namely *i*) restoring the Kabbah government; *ii*) training and supporting the Sierra Leonean army; and *iii*) chasing the RUF and the AFRC. Only the first two goals were accomplished. As for the third goal, given that the rebels and the junta had retreated into the bush, ECOMOG chased them eastward and liberated Lunsar and Makeni, relying on the air force support. Subsequently, ECOMOG headed towards the rich diamond area of Kono, with the aim to occupy the district and establish a headquarters in Koidu. However, the rebels' 'hit and run' tactics began causing heavy losses to the Nigerian contingent. Then, military operations moved to the northern territories of Karene and Koinadugu in the spring of 1998, where the rebels were pursued with the aviation support. At the end of July, rebels attacked the diamond district (31 July 1998), taking back the city of Kabala after having pretended to be refugees and having freely circulated in the area in the previous days (Adeshina, 2002: 93-94). The rebels were reorganizing themselves, while ECOMOG did not succeed in liberating the diamond-rich area of Kono and started to think about an exit strategy. In September 1998, ECOMOG lost the liberated territory, as the rebels – still in control of several diamond mines and led by Sam 'Mosquito' Bockarie (Sankoh had been arrested months earlier in Nigeria, where

he had gone to buy weapons) – attacked Freetown during the “No Living Thing” operation (6 Jan. 1999). It was precisely in the attempt to recover Freetown (during the operation code-named ‘Death Before Dishonour’) that ECOMOG’s troops were blamed for atrocities (Gberie, 2005: 131).

Finally, suffering almost 700 casualties, the Nigerian Army decided it would withdraw by May 1999, also as a result of power being shifted from the military to the civilians (President Olusegun Obasanjo). Actually, ECOMOG withdrawal completed only in May 2000 in a context of tensions and mutual accusations (illicit diamond trafficking, collusion with the RUF, etc.) between the UN and Nigeria over ECOMOG’s role in Sierra Leone (Montague, 2002; Gberie, 2003). Following the Nigerian withdrawal and the failure of the controversial Lomé Peace Agreement<sup>2</sup> in July 1999, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) peacekeeping operation was launched, thus replacing both the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) and ECOMOG, and shifting the commitment to the international community and the UN.

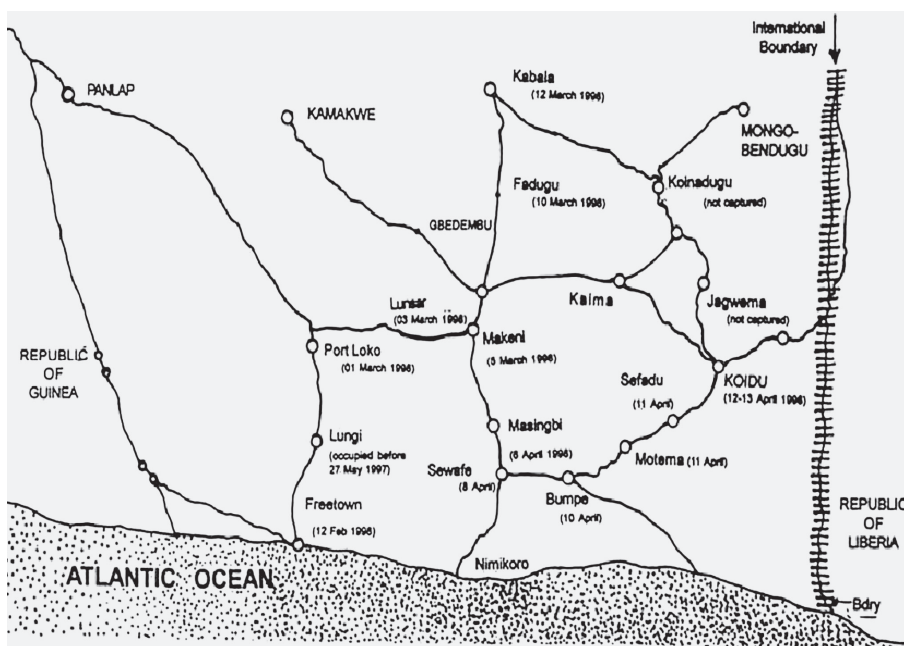


Ilustração 02 – Areas liberated by ECOMOG by June 1998 (Adeshina, 2002: 49).

## Assessing EO and ECOMOG Interventions

Neither EO nor ECOMOG were able to end the Sierra Leone Civil War. A number of factors, including the joint effort by the UNAMSIL, the *Kamajors*, the British military intervention in May 2000 (the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest UK intervention after the Falklands/Malvinas

<sup>2</sup> The Lomé Peace Agreement signed on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 1999 was heavily criticized for being an appeasement towards the rebels. In particular, the agreement granted Foday Sankoh a position in the transitional government (vice president and Chairman of the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources) as well as amnesty for him and all combatants. As a result, the Lomé Peace Agreement was considered ‘*A feast for the sobels*’ by Adebajo, 2002: 79.



War that saved UNAMSIL from the brink of collapse and shifted the power in favour of the Kabbah government), and the arrest of Foday Sankoh in Freetown, led to the end of conflict in January 2002.

However, as already said, it is difficult to precisely assess to what extent both private security involvements and sub-regional peacekeeping contributed to the end of the civil war.

As for EO, it has been argued that the short-lasting stabilisation provided did not convert into a viable peacekeeping option. The intervention in Sierra Leone – following a previous engagement in Angola (1993) and further activities in sub-Saharan Africa<sup>3</sup> – marked the start of the debate on private security. This debate hinged on different aspects, namely international law, legitimacy, human rights and international humanitarian law records, and accountability. In particular, international law has been challenged by the PMCs since their rise, due to the ambiguous definition of mercenary provided by the 1949 UN Protocols and the 1997 Organisation of African Unity Convention. At the national level, some steps forward have been made by South Africa through the *Regulation of Foreign Military Assistance Act* (which caused EO to close officially in 1999), which was enacted in 1998 and toughened in 2006 with the *Prohibition of Mercenary Activity Bill*. These laws explicitly prohibit the recruitment of nationals abroad. In terms of legitimacy, the question is whether EO jeopardized the nation's monopoly on the use of force, thus undermining national security structures, or whether it was a viable, cost-effective option, taking into account the state of the Sierra Leonean military and the threat represented by the RUF. Training the army was supposed to be an investment in confidence-building: this is often a common pattern in some PMC interventions. However, when mercenaries and contractors are perceived as competitors by local officers, increasing tensions are more likely to emerge. This was the case in Sierra Leone, where pay disparities and the perceived risk to military corporate interests led to a lack of confidence and widespread mistrust towards the PMCs from the military (Shearer, 1998). Further issues at stake relate to human rights and international humanitarian law records. According to foreign non-governmental organisation employees in Sierra Leone, injured civilians were reported to be brought to the hospital after that EO's air force flew over Freetown (Chatterjee, 1997). Finally, this links to accountability: in fact, the unavailability of reliable sources of PMC interventions (EO in Sierra Leone as well) is quite frequent, due to the lack of publicity, the opacity around contracts and network ties, the controversial image of the mercenary soldiers, and the unwillingness of the client state to reveal its reliance on private security (Singer, 2003; Renou *et al.*, 2005).

Regarding ECOMOG, it should be stressed that it contributed to stabilise the capital Freetown – although further military involvements were later necessary – but it proved unable to solidly defeat the rebels and secure the surrounding countryside (Berman & Sams, 2000: 119). However, the end of this intervention in 2000 and its follow-ups led many analysts to assess it either in comparison with private security, or with an eye on previous and contemporary African regional and/or sub-regional peacekeeping involvements. The reasons for ECOMOG 'defeat' were deemed both military and political.

The operations in the field soon revealed that ECOMOG mandate and rules of engagement were unclear and not fully agreed upon by ECOMOG countries: in particular, peace

<sup>3</sup> In 2015, Specialized Tasks, Training, Equipment and Protection (STTEP International, Ltd), a South African PMC born from the ashes of EO, intervened against Boko Haram, the Islamic terrorist group in Nigeria. It was an unprecedented use of PMCs against Islamic extremist groups, though STTEP intervention and previous EO efforts in sub-Saharan Africa reveal many similarities, including in terms of results (Bisbjerg, 2016; Freeman, 2015; Nossiter, 2015). For a report of the 1993 EO intervention in Angola, see Shearer, 1998: 46-48.

enforcement would have been preferable in Sierra Leone at that moment, rather than peacekeeping or peacemaking, but ECOMOG countries had different military approaches. Then, poor logistics was due to both persistent financial constraints and third countries' difficulties in funding a non-UN peacekeeping operation. This coupled with the lack of equipment – armored vehicles, ambulances, communication equipment, spare parts, uniforms, medicines, food – and poor intervention planning, poor knowledge of terrain and widespread mistrust towards the *Kamajors* who were supposed to operate as ECO-MOG allies. This situation determined the low morale of the troops and added to further tensions, such as the limited turnover, the pay differences with UN soldiers, as well as the grievances within ECOMOG between Ghanians and Nigerians – the former blaming the Nigerian contingent for occupying the majority of the leadership positions within ECOMOG, and the latter claiming they were the only ones to carry the burden of the operation.

As for the political reasons of ECOMOG 'heroic failure' (Gberie, 2003) or 'Pyrrhic victory' (Berman & Sams, 2000: 118), at first it should be noted that there were no conditions for ECOMOG intervention in Sierra Leone to fall under the specifications provided by the ECOWAS protocols. In fact, the Defense Council, the Defense Commission and the Allied Armed Forces of the Community – aimed at implementing the protocols – were not operating at that time. As a result, Nigeria unilaterally decided to intervene and later claimed to act under the auspices of ECOMOG. Similarly, it was not possible to call ECOWAS to the rescue as the Liberian Samuel Doe did in 1990: in fact, the possibility that the overthrown Kabbah government could still exercise authority should be ruled out (Fawole, 2001). This background led the ECOWAS countries to feel a widespread mistrust towards Nigeria's attitude, thus fearing that Abuja could pursue a hidden agenda during its intervention in Sierra Leone. For sure, Nigerians had their foreign policy targets, namely pushing ahead Nigeria's aspirations as a regional power and attempting to avoid sanctions to their dictatorial regime: an option was that of playing the role of a reliable regional power able to provide regional security in West Africa. Finally, the opportunity to gain mineral concessions cannot be ruled out, given the widespread corruption within the government and the military, and the accusations of illicit diamond trafficking involving Nigerian military officers<sup>4</sup>. Then, another factor weakening the political dimension of the intervention was the controversial relationship between Nigeria and the international community that ambiguously relied on Abuja as a viable tool for sub-regional peacekeeping, but at the same time considered it a pariah state for its dictatorial regime and the alleged role in international drug trafficking. Similarly, Abuja feared that ECOMOG would easily become the scapegoat of the international community in the event of further interventions and failures. Then, there was growing resentment for the alleged ingratitude of the international community towards a country that had been in frontline but felt to be treated by the western media and human rights activists as a gang of assassins and mercenaries (Adebajo, 2002; Olonisakin, 1998).

<sup>4</sup> The accusations against Nigeria for the questionable conduct within ECOMOG were published in a confidential report by UNAMSIL Head General Vijay Jetley of India addressed to the United Nations in September 2000. Nigerian officials and civilians were accused of having attempted to sabotage the UN mission by colluding with the RUF in order to prolong the conflict and benefit from the illicit trafficking of diamonds. These declarations involved General Khobe himself (nicknamed 'Ten Million Dollar Man'), who was accused of having pocketed \$ 10 million to allow the RUF to continue its activities. The Nigerians opposed these allegations and requested the removal of Jetley, threatening not to take orders and accusing him to adduce lies in order to hide his ineptitude. A Kenyan general was called to replace Jetley and New Delhi, in retaliation, withdrew its contingent which was promptly replaced by 4,000 Pakistani soldiers (Gberie, 2005: 168-169; Montague, 2002: 236).

**Tabela 01 – A comparison between EO and ECOMOG interventions in Sierra Leone**

<u>EO in Sierra Leone (1995)</u>	<u>ECOMOG in Sierra Leone (1998-2000)</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Client:</b> National governments</li> <li>• <b>Opponent:</b> Armed groups with political aspirations (RUF)</li> <li>• <b>Payment:</b> Mineral concessions/Cash (The EO-Branch-Energy network)</li> <li>• <b>Results:</b> Ephemeral military/political success: restart and/or prolongation of conflict</li> <li>• <b>Comments:</b> Controversial positions between those considering PMCs a tool of conflict solutions and those questioning about HR records, legitimacy and accountability.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Client:</b> same</li> <li>• <b>Opponent:</b> same</li> <li>• <b>Payment:</b> None (speculations of widespread corruptions and diamonds used as a commodity-based payment to the Nigerian army)</li> <li>• <b>Results:</b> Blurred: The conflict ends only in 2002 following further developments</li> <li>• <b>Comments:</b> Despite military, political and legal limitations. ECOMOG II in Sierra Leone avoided further sufferings to the Sierra Leoneans, especially in 1999, and prevented Freetown at the cost of hundreds of Nigerian soldires.</li> </ul>

## West Africa between Private Security and ECOWAS/ECOMOG Developments

Nowadays, private security is increasingly perceived as more acceptable than in the past. This is also due to some recent developments concerning private security, such as the huge deployment of Western contractors not only in Africa (Aty & Elaggoune, 2019), but also in Iraq and Afghanistan as employees of Private Security Companies – allegedly less controversial than PMCs.

As a result, the *case for* PMCs now relies on assumptions, such as: **i)** they increase the military independence of African states, which do not need to rely on the intervention of foreign countries; **ii)** Their codes of conduct (many PMCs autonomously decide to apply a set of rules) would prevent unacceptable behaviour on the battlefield; **iii)** They are legally registered, highly dynamic, highly-trained, quick and easy to deploy, and to some extent cost-effective. In 2003, the International Peace Operation Organization consortium – now International Stability Operations Association – launched one of the best known initiatives relating to the use of private security in peacekeeping missions: this consortium proposed the UN to support the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo with air surveillance and humanitarian support for \$100-200 million. Another proposal came from a Green Paper released by the British government in 2002 (Norton-Taylor, 2002). This envisaged hiring PMCs for peacekeeping missions in order to reduce costs and political constraints, such as the reluctance to send national troops. However, many concerns within the British parliament halted the political, highly-controversial debate over the use of PMCs as peacekeepers.

The failure of these initiatives demonstrates that there is still strong scepticism about private security capabilities as a tool of conflict resolution and/or peacekeeping. In fact, the *case against* PMCs highlights some key points. Accountability is one of the most important. The difficulty of implementing and enforcing checks-and-balance systems and political oversight derives from the problem of determining to whom PMCs are accountable and who can effectively guarantee oversight. Similarly, it is difficult to define a legitimate client: EO tended to consider sovereign and internationally-recognized governments as legitimate, even though there was a military junta ruling in Sierra Leone at the time of the intervention. Regarding accountability, some observers warn of the risk of ‘adverse selection’ (Singer, 2003: 221) that might allow disreputable players to do their job at a lower cost. Neutrality and reliability is another key point. As already discussed, EO’s interventions in Sierra Leone seemed to be part of a larger plot involving mineral corporations

and prolonged the conflict. Moreover, the survival of the government in exchange for the alienation of natural resources looked like 'imperialism by invitation' (Singer, 2003: 167). Within similar contexts, one may assume that PMCs are primarily responsive not to their clients, but rather to their stakeholders (Renou *et al.*, 2005: 171-3). Then, efficiency and cost-effectiveness are challenged by further evidence. On the one hand, EO's interventions in Sierra Leone revealed that PMCs are more likely to intervene if the client state is a commodity-rich country. On the other hand, some studies (Singer, 2003; Leander, 2005) have revealed that the supply in the market for private security tends to self-perpetuate, as supply creates its own demand: in fact, private security is skilled in marketing its services, thus increasing the perceived need for military services, selling alleged customer-tailored services and maximising their profits. Moreover, given that private security often offers better salaries than public forces, it drains human resources and diminishes the status of public armed forces, further reducing public investments. Finally, starting from this premises, it can be said that the development of a market for force ultimately undermines (rather than helps) the consolidation of public security in the weakest African states (Leander, 2005: 618).

On the contrary, multilateral peacekeeping enforced by African regional and/or sub-regional organizations (Adebajo, 2004) is still being used as the most viable option for conflict resolution, even though previous and existing peacekeeping interventions have not been successful enough, due to the reasons presented in the previous sections: political ambiguity (reluctance, overlapping of conflicting national interests), lack of economic resources, poor coordination, absence of peacekeeping expertise, etc. Current tools for peacekeeping in Africa include the African Union's African Stand-by Force (Kent & Malan, 2003) that was deployed within the framework of the African Union Monitoring Mission in Sudan (2004-2007) and the African Union Mission in Somalia (2007-to date), and ECOMOG itself that was also deployed in Guinea Bissau (1998), following Liberia and Sierra Leone (Aning, 2000 and 2004; Ero, 2000; Gberie, 2003; Olonisakin, 2000) and before a new series of involvements in more recent times.

In particular, ECOWAS has evolved a comprehensive conflict management and security framework and has made significant achievements in conflict management in the West African sub-region. ECOMOG, for its part, has been incorporated into the new security framework (De Wet, 2014; Odobo *et al.*, 2017; Agbo *et al.*, 2018). In particular, the ECO-WAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, established in 1999, is aimed at responding to the inadequacy of the previously existing Protocols to address with emerging security issues (such as in Liberia and Sierra Leone). The ECOWAS Mechanism comprises a framework that would ensure wide consultation and inclusiveness of relevant stakeholders in managing issues that affect sub-regional security. It is made up of **i)** The Authority of Heads of State and Government, which is the decision making apex; **ii)** The Mediation and Security Council, which deliberates on all matters of peace and security on behalf of the Authority and represents a replica of the United Nations Security Council at sub-regional level; **iii)** The Defence and Security Commission, which assesses all technical issues and reviews logistical requirements for any peacekeeping missions; and **iv)** The Council of Elders: it is a body of preventive diplomacy made up of eminent and prominent individuals such as renowned diplomats and religious leaders working as mediators, conciliators, or facilitators. Furthermore, the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance has been established (2001) with the aim of taking into account the underlying (political) triggers of instability, conflicts and insecurity, a with focus on human rights, the rule of law, and government's commitment to delivering good governance, free, fair and credible elections. Finally, the

ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework aims at preventing the conflict outbreak, escalation, spread or relapse, once a conflict has already started. It comprises the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network, designed to help ECOWAS member states predict the emerging conflicts and facilitate interventions (Odobó *et al.*, 2017: 145-149).

Following Sierra Leone, ECOMOG deployed peacekeepers in Guinea-Bissau in 1998, after the outbreak of an armed conflict between the president and rebel military chief. It was ECOMOG's last pre-Mechanism involvement. Although ECOMOG force was undermanned and heavily dependent on French and Portuguese logistical support (De Wet, 2014: 363) – Nigeria not being involved – this intervention marked some improvements in terms of efficacy in comparison with the former experiences in Liberia and Sierra Leone. ECOWAS institutional developments have positively affected in-field performances. Post-Mechanism operations comprise the interventions in Côte d'Ivoire (2002), Liberia (2003) and the Gambia (2017-to date). As for ECOWAS Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (1,478 troops), it was quickly deployed in October 2002. It was mainly financed by France and carried out by Senegal, Ghana, Niger, Togo and Benin, provided with the mandate of monitoring the ceasefire and assisting the government of national reconciliation in maintaining law and order, the disarmament of armed factions, humanitarian assistance, and the protection of United Nations personnel. Then, ECOWAS launched in 2003 a peacekeeping mission named ECOMIL to halt the occupation of Monrovia by the rebel force and to ensure that transition to democracy was successful (Agbo *et al.*, 2018: 27): ECOMIL succeeded in preventing a conflict escalation and monitoring the ceasefire. These two interventions revealed an effective pattern of burden-sharing in multilateral peacekeeping, namely the 'first-instance enforcement action' (De Wet, 2014: 363) by sub-regional organisations (ECOWAS/ECOMOG) before the huge involvements by the United Nations. In fact, in both cases, the UN soon replaced and absorbed the ECOMOG contingent through the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire and the United Nations Mission in Liberia. Finally, ECOWAS has deployed a mission in the Gambia (ECOMIG) in 2017 which is currently ongoing and is aimed at restoring the breakdown of the internal order, following a harsh dispute over the country's presidency: ECOMOG is provided with a UN endorsement that does not imply the use of military means.

These developments seem to recall the enthusiastic remarks of some observers, who thought in 2000 that the retention of the ECOMOG would be in the interest of the security of the West African sub-region (Saliu, 2000). However, analysts recommend that more steps forward still need to be done in order to enable these achievements to convert into fully-effective peacekeeping strategies. In particular, peace-building efforts should also address poverty, human rights abuses and election fraud as well as more synergy and political will to handle religious extremism in the sub-region (Odobó *et al.*, 2017: 143). In other words, it is argued that the securitisation of West Africa and its economic integration and development strategies still need more institution building that enhances democratic consolidation, the rule of law, the respect for and protection of the minorities, etc. (Agbo *et al.*, 2018: 32). Without reaching these requirements, ECOWAS' goals will not be fully attained.

## Conclusions

Neo-mercenary interventions are carried out by PMCs that keep a strong corporate structure – this being their most interesting feature that distinguish them from 'old' mercenaries. Since the 1990s, there has been a growing demand and supply of security

services in sub-Saharan Africa: low-intensity conflicts, new wars and state decay often set the conditions for private security business.

At the opposite of the privatization of war, regional and sub-regional peacekeeping have their roots in the 1960s, namely during the debate on shared frameworks for collective security: however, this approach did not convert into real opportunities for effective regional and sub-regional peacekeeping until the end of 1990s.

The Sierra Leone civil war – due to the insurgence of rebel movements eager to seize power and the state resources, thus leading to governmental inability and state collapse – represents the case study for both private security and sub-regional peacekeeping involvements. It can be argued that both interventions revealed a lot of military and political shortcomings and did not accomplish their goals. However, some clarifications can be made. EO claimed it had been able to defeat the RUF, but it provided only a short-lived security umbrella that seemed more investment-oriented rather than genuine peacekeeping. ECOMOG intervened in a complex scenario and – despite a number of deficiencies and ambiguities – succeeded in stabilising Freetown and enabled further peacekeeping interventions to finally put an end to the conflict in Sierra Leone. In other words, ECOMOG was the tile – albeit defective – of a mosaic represented by the universally-accepted multinational peacekeeping framework (the UN and regional organisations somehow inspired to it) whose moral acceptance goes far beyond the limits of private security.

Despite the best efforts of PMCs and their attempts to be seen as acceptable, accountable, responsive and reliable, a number of issues regarding efficiency, accountability and cost-effectiveness still remain unresolved. Some argue that PMCs are much cheaper than multinational peacekeeping (Brooks, 2000), but one should wonder who will ultimately pay for them (Olonisakin, 1999: 234-235). If the cost is to be met by foreign companies, it is likely that the security provided will be primarily targeted at the safety of those companies, and the majority of people will bear the human and material costs of war.

Finally, investing in regional and sub-regional peacekeeping in West Africa seems to be the best option to overturn that new neoliberalism-style security assumption through which security is basically a commodity and only those who are able to pay for it will benefit. Regionalising peacekeeping and empowering both states and sub-regional organisation to commit to sub-regional security not only avoids the mercerization of the national security domain in West Africa, but also enables economic integration and development as major goals of ECOWAS (Agbo *et al.*, 2018: 18).

## Acronyms

CEDEAO – Communauté économique des États de l'Afrique de l'ouest

ECOMIG – ECOWAS Mission in The Gambia

ECOMIL – ECOWAS Mission in Liberia

ECOMOG – Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group

ECOWAS – Economic Community of West African States

EO – Executive Outcomes

GSG – Gurkha Security Guards

OAU – Organisation of African Unity

PMC – Private Military Company

RUF – Revolutionary United Front

UN – United Nations

UNAMSIL – United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

UNOMSIL – United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone

US – United States

## Bibliographic references

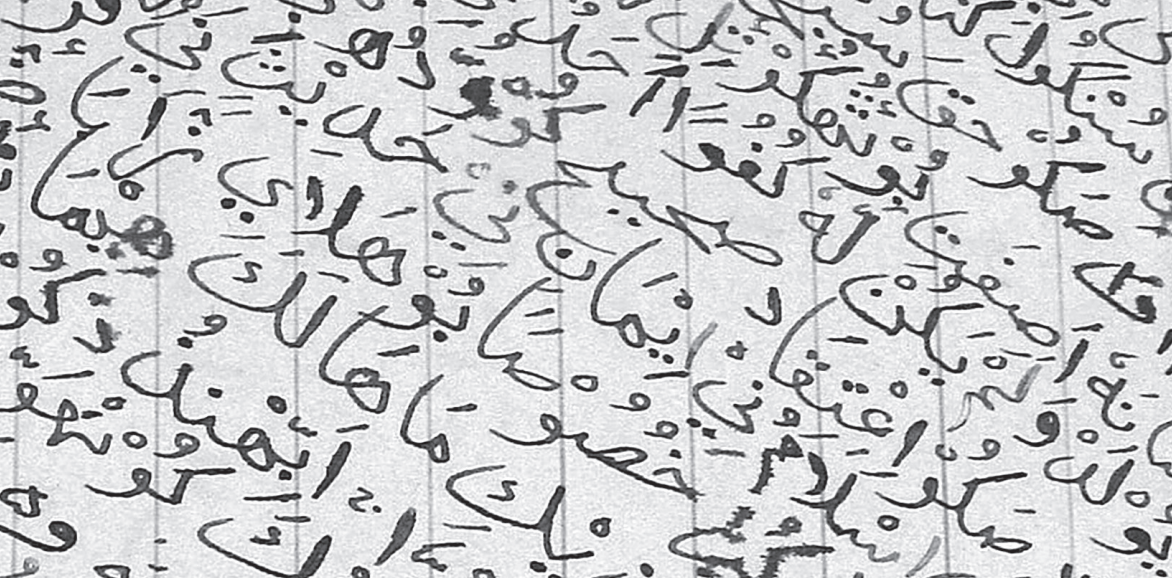
- Abdullah, Ibrahim e Muana, Patrick (1998), *The Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone: A Revolt of Lumpenproletariat*, in Clapham, Christopher, org., *African Guerrillas*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Adebajo, Adekeye (2004), *Pax West Africana? Regional Security Mechanisms*, in A. Adebajo, Adekeye e Ismail Rashid (orgs.), *West Africa's Security Challenges: Building Peace in A Troubled Region*. Boulder (Co): Lynne Rienner.
- (2002), *Building Peace in West Africa. Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau*, Boulder (Co.): Lynne Rienner.
- Adeshina, Rafiu A. (2002), *The Reversed Victory: Story of Nigerian Military Intervention in Sierra Leone*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Agbo, Uchechukwu J. et al. (2018), *West Africa: From Peacekeeping to Peace Enforcement. ECOWAS and the Regulations of Regional Security*, *Conflict Studies Quarterly*, vol. 22, pp. 18-35.
- Aning, Emmanuel Kwesi (2004), *Investing in peace and security in Africa: the case of ECOWAS*, *Conflict, Security & Development*, vol. 4, pp. 533-542.
- (2000), *Towards the New Millennium: ECOWAS's Evolving Conflict Management System*, *African Security Review*, vol. 9, pp. 50-63.
- Atkinson, Giles e Hamilton, Kirk (2003), *Savings, growth and the resource curse hypothesis*, *World Development*, vol. 31, pp. 1793-1807.
- Aty, Mourad e Elaggoune, Abdelhak (2019), *Private Military Contractors in Africa: The Case of Erik Prince*, *Africana Studia*, vol. 31, pp. 169-179.
- Berdal, Mats e Malone, David M. (orgs.) (2000), *Greed and Grievance, Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*, Boulder (Co.): Lynne Rienner.
- Berman, Eric G. e Sams, Katie E. (2000), *Peacekeeping in Africa. Capabilities and Culpabilities*. Geneva: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.
- Bisbjerg Nielsen, Loke (2016), *Private Military Companies in Africa – The case of STTEP in Nigeria*, *Journal of World Development Studies*, vol. 2, pp. 1-16.
- Brooks, Doug (2000), *Write a Cheque, End a War: using Private Military Companies to end African conflicts*, *Conflict Trends*, vol. 1, pp. 33-35.
- Chatterjee, Pratap (1997), *Mercenary Armies and Mineral Wealth*, *Covert Action Quarterly*, vol. 62, pp. 22-37.
- Deng, Francis M. (org.) (1996), *Sovereignty as Responsibility: Conflict Management in Africa*. Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institute.
- De Wet, Erika (2014), *The Evolving Role of ECOWAS and the SADC in Peace Operations: A Challenge to the Primacy of the United Nations Security Council in Matters of Peace and Security?*, *Leiden Journal of International Law*, vol. 27, pp. 353-369.
- Duffy, Rosaleen et al. (2016), *Toward a new understanding of the links between poverty and illegal wildlife hunting*, *Conservation Biology*, vol. 30, pp. 14-22.
- Ero, Comfort (2000), *ECOMOG: A Model for Africa?*, in Cilliers, Jakkie, e Hilding-Norberg, Annika (orgs.), *Building Stability in Africa: Challenges for the New Millennium*. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.
- Fawole, W. Alade (2001), *Military Power and Third Party Conflict Mediation in West Africa: The Liberia and Sierra Leone Case Studies*. Ile-Ife (Nigeria): Obafemi Awolowo University Press.
- Francis, David J. (1999), *Mercenary intervention in Sierra Leone: Providing national security or international exploitation?*, *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 20, pp. 319-338.

- Freeman, Colin (2015), *South African mercenaries' secret war on Boko Haram*, *The Telegraph*, May 10. [Online]. [Consult. 12.Oct.2020]. Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/nigeria/11596210/South-African-mercenaries-secret-war-on-Boko-Haram.html>.
- Gberie, Lansana (2005), *A Dirty War in West Africa: the RUF and the Destruction of Sierra Leone*. London: Hurst, 2005.
- (2003), *ECOMOG: the story of an heroic failure*, *African Affairs*, vol. 102, pp. 147-154.
- Hirsch, John L. (2001), *War in Sierra Leone, Survival*, vol. 43, pp. 145-162.
- Hutchful, Eboe (1999), *The ECOMOG Experience with Peacekeeping in West Africa*, in Malan, Mark, org, *Whiter Peacekeeping in Africa?*. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.
- Isenberg, David (1997), *Soldier of Fortune Ltd.: A Profile of Today's Private Sector Corporate Mercenary Firm*. Washington D.C.: Center for Defense Information.
- Kaldor, Mary (1999), *New and old wars: Organized violence in a global era*, Stanford. CA: Stanford University Press.
- Keen, David (2005), *Conflict & Collusion in Sierra Leone*. Oxford: James Currey.
- (2003), Greedy elites, dwindling resources, alienated youths: the anatomy of protracted violence in Sierra Leone, *Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft*, vol. 3, pp. 67-94.
- Kent, Vanessa e Malan, Mark (2003), The African Stand-by Force: Progress and Prospects, *African Security Review*, vol. 12, pp. 71-81.
- Leander, Anna (2005), The Market for Force and Public Security: The Destabilizing Consequences of Private Military Companies, *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 42, pp. 602-622.
- McKeon, Nora (1966), The African States and the OAU, *International Affairs*, vol. 42, pp. 390-409.
- Mortimer, Robert (2000), From ECOMOG to ECOMOG II: Intervention in Sierra Leone, in Harbeson, John W. e Rothchild, Donald (orgs.), *Africa in World Politics. The African State System in Flux*. Boulder (Co.): Westview Press.
- Montague, Dena (2002), The Business of War and the Prospects for Peace in Sierra Leone, *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, vol. 9, pp. 229-237.
- Musah, Abdel-Fatau e Fayemi, J. Kayode (2000), Africa in Search of Security: Mercenaries and Conflicts – An Overview, in Musah, Abdel-Fatau, Fayemi, J. Kayode (orgs.), *Mercenaries: An African Security Dilemma*. London: Pluto Press.
- Norton-Taylor, Richard (2002), *Let mercenaries be licensed, says Foreign Office*, *The Guardian*, Feb 13. [Online]. [Consult. 12.Oct.2020]. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2002/feb/13/uk.foreignpolicy>.
- Nossiter, Adam (2015), *Mercenaries Join Nigeria's Military Campaign Against Boko Haram*, *The New York Times*, Mar 12. [Online]. [Consult. 12.Oct.2020]. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/13/world/africa/nigerias-fight-against-boko-haram-gets-help-from-south-african-mercenaries.html>.
- Odobo, Samuel O. et al. (2017), Analysis of ECOWAS Institutional Framework for Conflict Management, *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 8, pp. 143-153.
- Olonisakin, 'Funmi (2000), Conflict Management in Africa: The Role of the OAU and Sub-regional Organisations, in Cilliers, Jakkie, e Hilding-Norberg, Annika (orgs.), *Building Stability in Africa: Challenges for the New Millennium*. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.
- (1999), Arresting the Tide of Mercenaries: Prospects for Regional Control, in Musah, Abdel-Fatau, e Fayemi, J. Kayode (orgs.), *Mercenaries: An African Security Dilemma*. London: Pluto Press.
- (1998), Sierra Leone and beyond: Nigeria and Regional Security, *Jane's Intelligence Review*, vol. 10, pp. 44-46.

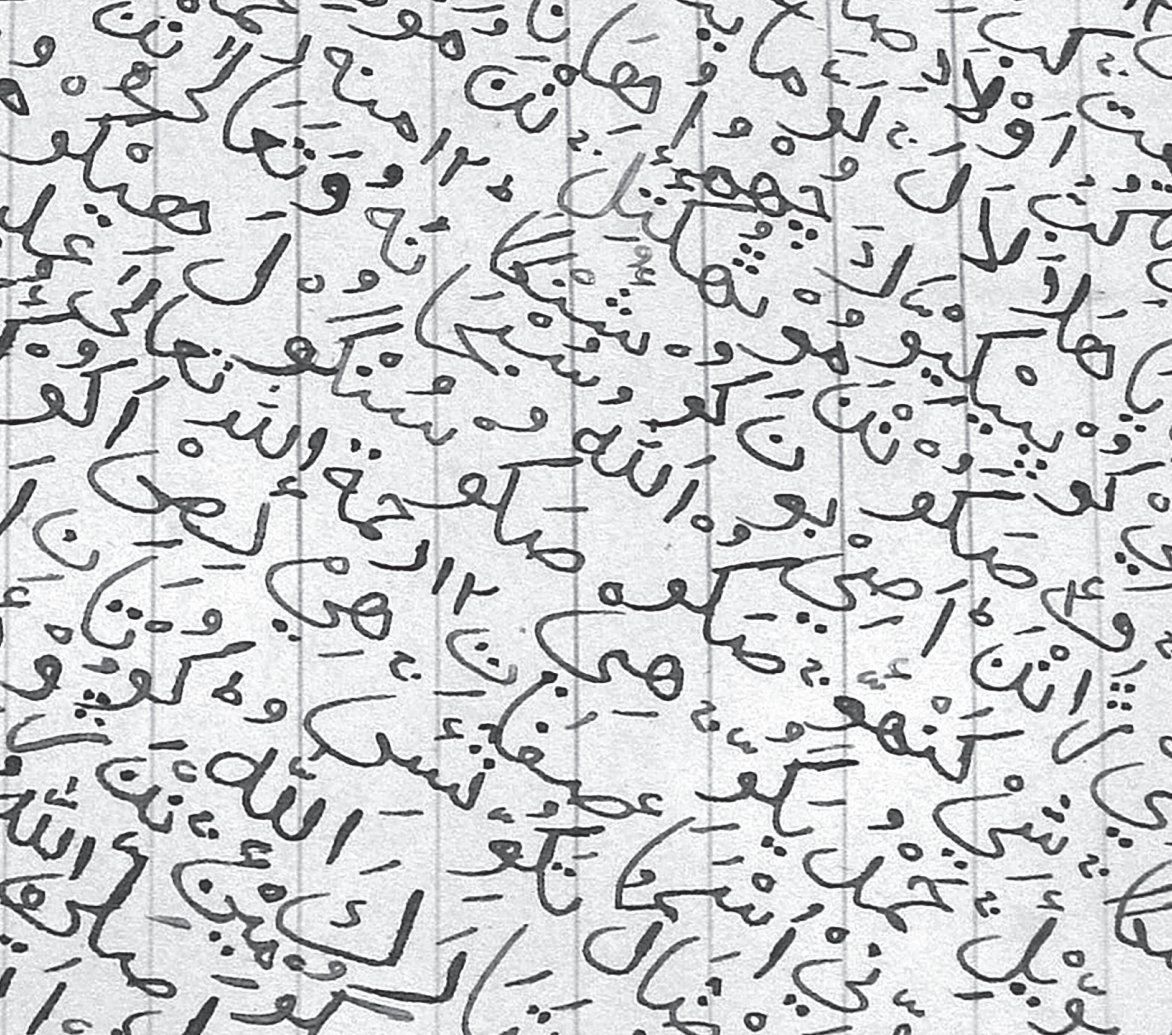


- Pech, Khareen (1999), Executive Outcomes – A corporate conquest, in Cilliers, Jakkie, e Mason, Peggy (orgs.), *Peace, Profit or Plunder? The Privatisation of Security in War-torn African Societies*, Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.
- Renou, Xavier et al. (2005), *La privatisation de la violence. Mercenaires & sociétés militaires privées au service du marché*. [The Privatization of Violence. Mercenaries & Private Military Companies Serving the Market]. Marseille: Agone.
- Rubin, Elizabeth (1997), An Army of One's Own, *Harper's Magazine*, pp. 44-55.
- Saliu, Hassan A. (2000), ECOMOG as a Permanent Force: Issues and Constraints, *Africa Quarterly*, vol. 40, pp. 51-67.
- Shearer, David (1998), Private Armies and Military Intervention, *Adelphi Paper*, vol. 38, pp. 39-63.
- Singer, Peter W. (2003). *Corporate Warriors. The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry*. Ithaca (Ny) – London: Cornell University Press.
- Streeten, Paul (1993), The Special Problems of Small Countries, *World Development*, vol. 21, pp. 197-202.
- Tuck, Christopher (2000), 'Every Car Or Moving Object Gone'. The ECOMOG Intervention in Liberia', *African Studies Quarterly*, vol. 4, pp. 1-16.
- Van Creveld, Martin (1991), *The Transformation of War*. New York: Free Press.
- Vines, Alex (1999), Gurkhas and the private security business in Africa, in Cilliers, Jakkie, e Mason, Peggy (orgs.), *Peace, Profit or Plunder? The Privatisation of Security in War-torn African Societies*. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.





**Notas de leitura**





# Cartographe, combattre, tromper, informer: missions délicates!

René Pélissier

pp. 173-184


Curieux titre, résultant de l’alignement de quatre verbes antonymes, dont la plupart ne s’entendent pas entre eux! Mais passons, puisque – sous réserve de vérifications – un vieux sage prétendait que la carte prépare la guerre et qu’un autre tout aussi savant étendait à toute la géographie ce rôle maléfique mais crucial pour la survie de l’espèce. Dès le début, nous sommes donc sur le front des oppositions.

On n’accorde jamais assez d’importance aux cartographes, gent généralement pacifique, dont le travail n’est pas souvent estimé à sa juste valeur. Pour avoir eu des cartes insuffisantes, voire franchement erronées, certains experts ont attribué à cette carence la responsabilité d’une partie des échecs militaires enregistrés par plusieurs aspirants colonialistes au tournant du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Soit, mais critiquer des cartes implique pour un historien qu’il mesure préalablement le degré d’intérêt et les connaissances de ses lecteurs potentiels pour le sujet dont il traite. Ayant nous-même préparé une quarantaine de simples cartes de repérage, cette expérience nous habilite-t-elle à passer un jugement argumenté et applicable en toutes circonstances? Probablement non dans cette chronique que l’on va commencer en présentant deux atlas historiques examinés sous l’angle de l’africanisme.

## Généralités et regroupement de plusieurs pays

L’*Atlas historique mondial*<sup>1</sup> de Christian Grataloup offre 515 cartes en couleur pour rendre compte de l’évolution de l’humanité, c’est dire que le livre n’a pas d’objectifs prioritairement affichés comme africanistes. L’on sait que du format d’un atlas dépend – dans une large mesure – son utilité. Ici, nous sommes en présence d’un bloc respectable de 175 x 250 mm pour 670 pages. L’on en déduit que s’il avait fallu mobiliser à plein temps une équipe de cartographes capables d’exécuter ex-nihilo 515 cartes somptueusement coloriées, le coût final de l’ouvrage aurait été prohibitif, rendant sa commercialisation aléatoire, sinon impossible. Il convient donc de savoir que la majorité des cartes du volume ont été trouvées dans quarante ans d’archives de la revue mensuelle *L’Histoire* qui a su fidéliser son public. Elles ont été adaptées dans certains cas. D’autres ont été inspirées par des atlas spécifiques antérieurs.

Se lancer dans la création d’un atlas historique pluricontinental est l’une des méthodes les plus directes pour mécontenter certains de ses lecteurs. Surtout s’ils appartiennent à des pays qui ont connu de grandes guerres intérieures ou internationales. S’ils ont juste fini d’assumer la charge d’un empire colonial, c’est encore bien pire. L’Afrique du nord

 [10.21747/doi.org/0874-2375/afri33a11](https://doi.org/10.21747/doi.org/0874-2375/afri33a11)

<sup>1</sup> Grataloup, Christian (2019), *Atlas historique mondial*, Paris: Les Arènes & L’Histoire, pp. 670, cinq centaines de cartes en couleur.

et les autres pays musulmans en général sont relativement bien traités dans le livre. Le Portugal impérial a droit à une double page (XV<sup>e</sup>-XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle), les Pays-Bas aussi, de même que les traites négrières. La période couverte arrive aux années quasi finales de la décennie 2000-2019. En gros, l'Afrique obtient environ 8-10 % des cartes. Généralement, un bref commentaire et une chronologie succincte accompagnent la partie purement cartographique.

La réalisation de l'ensemble est-elle à la hauteur des ambitions du promoteur et de ses adjoints ou collègues? Oui. Est-ce une réussite? Oui, également. Pourquoi? Parce qu'ils ont d'abord pensé au lecteur et à son confort visuel, tout en simplifiant ce qui le méritait (entre autres dans le choix des toponymes). Ils ont conservé l'essentiel: la *lisibilité*. A quoi bon essayer de répondre au souci d'«exhaustivité» des spécialistes si l'utilisateur ne peut déchiffrer le produit sans recourir à une forte loupe? Cet atlas a réussi le mariage des aplats élégants et d'une typographie adaptée à l'objectif même de la carte qui est de faciliter l'absorption par le lecteur qui veut retenir l'essentiel du texte. Il allie la beauté plastique à l'utilité savante.

L'**Atlas historique de l'Afrique**<sup>2</sup> a d'autres préoccupations. Dirigé par François-Xavier Fauvelle et Isabelle Surun – le premier étant archéologue et spécialiste de l'histoire de l'Afrique ancienne, sa collègue professeure d'histoire contemporaine, spécialiste de l'histoire comparée des colonisations en Afrique, l'attelage entrant également dans l'orbite des anthropologues –, cet ouvrage offre de sérieuses garanties dans des domaines encore jugés comme secondaires par de nombreux historiens de l'hexagone. Laissant Hegel et ses déclarations sur l'histoire africaine dans l'enfer des vieilles lunes, une vingtaine de collaborateurs s'efforcent de démontrer qu'ils peuvent faire aussi bien que les orientalistes. Ils réclament implicitement la reconnaissance de leur branche dans la corporation des historiens francophones dits «exotiques». Ils sont, donc, semble-t-il, à la recherche de leur légitimité sur le plan scientifique. Ayant autrefois voltigé en flanc-garde de cette cohorte, nous comprenons ses motivations mais, devenu bibliographe, nous devons prévenir nos lecteurs qu'ils ne doivent pas s'attendre à des miracles de facilité dans le décorticage de certaines cartes «incarcérées» dans des formats où l'on fait entrer toute l'Afrique dans un rectangle de 90 x 120 mm, voire 60 x 80 mm. Le cartographe a fait ce qu'il a pu mais il s'est heurté au massicot des atlas et à la pagination limitée chez cet éditeur.

Une affirmation de l'auteur/e de la feuille accompagnant le service de presse est inexacte. Cet atlas n'est pas le «premier atlas historique ... [du] continent». Mais en comparant, par exemple, une édition britannique d'un atlas de 1985, avec la présente, le lecteur s'apercevra vite qu'avec une bonne centaine de cartes nouvelles, comprimées à l'excès, certes, l'acheteur reçoit cependant au moins dix fois plus d'informations chez Fauvelle & Surun. C'est dire le saut qualitatif et quantitatif des études africanistes en histoire et science politique entre 1985 et 2019. Ajoutons que le découpage chronologique et thématique des cartes et leurs commentaires sont détaillés, intelligents et ambitieux, surtout pour l'Afrique francophone. Nuançons ce compliment en rappelant que, sur certaines cartes trop réduites, l'abondance des toponymes rend les plus petits indéchiffrables. Il aurait fallu accorder une page supplémentaire à chaque carte. On ne peut qu'espérer sincèrement une nouvelle édition de l'ensemble, à un format au moins égal à celui adopté par Les Arènes et *L'Histoire* pour que les cartes puissent «respirer» librement. La cartographie est un art mineur. Mais autant le pratiquer dans de bonnes conditions.

<sup>2</sup> Fauvelle, François-Xavier & Surun, Isabelle (coordonnateurs) (2019), **Atlas historique de l'Afrique. De la préhistoire à nos jours**, Paris: Editions Autrement, pp. 95, une centaine de cartes et illustrations en couleur.

## Angola

Pour rendre compte du livre suivant, **Powerful Frequencies**<sup>3</sup> nous n'hésiterons pas longtemps à mobiliser le verbe «tromper». En vérité, il s'agit de présenter un texte non seulement original, lui aussi, mais surtout important pour l'histoire récente de l'Angola car, pour le moment, c'est le meilleur guide pour connaître un média qui, pendant des décennies, lui a tenu lieu de petite fenêtre ouverte sur le monde extérieur: la radio. Celle des pouvoirs en place, et celles de ses concurrents privés ou religieux. Le travail de Marissa J. Moorman a été difficile à faire aboutir car pour cette Américaine, habituée à vivre dans une société moderne prônant le libre accès à l'information (avec archives classées et témoins ou acteurs, en principe, accessibles), documenter paisiblement le panorama radiophonique d'un pays où les détenteurs d'une quelconque autorité sont soupçonneux à l'égard de toute recherche indépendante, exige temps, relations et aussi moyens financiers dans bien des cas. Avec un facteur aggravant pour Moorman: la succession de plusieurs couches de totalitarismes antagonistes agissant dans un fief linguistique devenu minoritaire en Afrique.

L'auteure examine d'abord l'appareil informatif d'Etat, de 1931 à 1960, ses missions et les résultats obtenus dans l'auditoire initial (la population européenne, assimilée ou «évo-luée»). Face à ce Behémoth fonctionnarisé, on tolère dans des limites variables la concurrence juvénile d'organismes para-commerciaux, celle des Radio Clubs, notamment au Centre et au Sud-Ouest, vaguement politisée, qui s'autorise quelques incursions vers la musique africaine et tout ce qui peut favoriser ses sponsors (publicité, courses automobiles, sports, etc.). Pendant la période «euphorique» 1961-1974 qui enregistre une augmentation fulgurante de la population métropolitaine immigrée et le décollage de l'économie locale, on fait semblant d'oublier la guerre larvée qui n'affecte d'ailleurs qu'une partie (faible) des zones rurales.

Pour sa part, la radio externe du MPLA mouline depuis Brazzaville sa propagande outrancière. On la capte plus ou moins clandestinement dans la population négro-africaine. Par omission ou commission, les deux adversaires donnent à leurs partisans des informations partielles ou carrément fausses. Il s'agit pour chacun d'entretenir la flamme et l'espoir dans son camp, les Portugais en faisant semblant que le pays est calme, les intellectuels blancs travaillant pour le MPLA en prétendant entasser des victoires constantes contre l'armée des colonialistes. Dans l'effondrement chaotique de la colonie en 1974-1975, les Portugais s'enfuient en désordre, tandis que le MPLA à Luanda réussit son coup de maître qui consiste à battre sur le terrain le FNLA des Bakongo de Holden Roberto et à proclamer l'indépendance. De ce fait, les stratèges du MPLA, appuyés par les renforts cubains, s'emparent des principaux émetteurs pour imposer leur vision du présent et même de leur Histoire reconstituée. Incontestablement, après l'échec de Nito Alves, en 1977, c'est la propagande d'Agostinho Neto qui inonde les ondes, y compris au Sud-Angola, ravagé par les attaques inefficaces des Sud-Africains, et au-delà dans les immenses territoires soumis progressivement à la «vérité» de l'UNITA et de son prophète de la suprématie de la guérilla en brousse. A cet égard, on doit remercier l'auteure d'avoir rédigé un bref chapitre sur la riposte de Savimbi dans cette confrontation entre fréquences.

Pendant que le MPLA s'empare des principaux postes dans l'Administration, les conseillers et amis de Savimbi lui montent dans la désolation du Cuando-Cubango une radio fort capable de répliquer aux personnalités qui occupent l'antenne dans le confort de Luanda. Radio Vorgan, depuis Jamba, la capitale des illusions, diffusera de 1979 à 1998 la «vérité»

<sup>3</sup> Moorman, Marissa J. (2019), **Powerful Frequencies. Radio, State Power, and the Cold War in Angola, 1931-2002**, Athens (Ohio): Ohio University Press, pp. XXI-257, photos noir et blanc.

du «Coq noir» et la pensée de Savimbi. C'est un véritable tour de force pour une guérilla africaine. La mort en 2002 de l'illusionniste suprême que fut Savimbi clôt le livre dont il faut souligner le caractère pionnier. Aux festivals de l'intox, s'ils existaient, les radios angolaises pourraient alléguer qu'elles ont fait la preuve de leur efficacité et qu'elles mériteraient un prix spécial d'un jury auquel Moorman pourrait siéger avec d'autres historiens qui n'acceptent pas qu'on leur mente.

Et l'on passera ensuite à une illustration plutôt routinière du verbe «combattre». Combattre comment? Par la vigilance et les patrouilles du quadrillage. A part une attaque d'ampleur moyenne (6 compagnies engagées) contre le maquis de la Serra da Mucaba, il n'y a pas de descriptions de combats réels chez l'auteur de **Ai dos Vencedores!**<sup>4</sup> qui estime que les hommes de sa compagnie et même de son bataillon ayant été épargnés par la violence, il est indéniablement vainqueur, tant au Nord-Ouest (notamment à Lucunga) qu'au Sud-Est (Chiume), à quelques kilomètres de la Zambie, secteur encore calme en 1965. Si nous avons bien compris son raisonnement, personne ne l'ayant vaincu, lui, simple *alferes*, de 1963 à 1965, de ce fait, l'Armée portugaise s'est effondrée toute seule, minée par le virus de l'abandon des «sages préceptes» de Salazar, virus propagé par «deux cents capitaines», selon l'expression relevée sur la 4<sup>ème</sup> page de la couverture. L'auteur pense donc que son Armée en 1974-1975 a violé sa mission et les officiers leur serment. Il reconnaît néanmoins qu'en 1966, le MPLA attaquera au Sud-Est, après son départ, mais pour lui, aucun doute: «Malheur aux vainqueurs!». Comme nous ne sommes pas capable de philosopher en triturant les faits, nous ferons crédit à l'auteur: le MFA intervient neuf ans plus tard dans une phase (1974) où Lisbonne a la situation bien en main du point de vue militaire en Angola. Cette stase momentanée allait-elle durer? L'auteur ne veut pas le savoir. Et nous en resterons là puisqu'il a eu la chance de passer entre les gouttes.

La suite de la section angolaise s'accompagnera d'un retour du verbe «combattre». On y ajoutera au préalable une série d'interrogations adressées à ceux qui ont participé à l'élaboration de l'étude originale de John P. Cann, et à ceux qui la liront et possèdent de l'anglais et du portugais une connaissance plus approfondie que la nôtre. Pourquoi et comment se fait-il qu'un titre rarissime peut-être parce qu'il est souvent un prénom, Alberto, est en fait ici le nom de famille de l'auteur, d'où confusions (Alberto, Manuel Simões, *Condenados. A Grande Guerra vivida às portas do degrêdo*, Aveiro, 1933) se trouve – à la note 94 du chapitre 1 de **Portuguese Dragoons**<sup>5</sup> – transcrit de telle sorte que «*do degrêdo*» est remplacé par «*do Delgado*», lequel est traduit dans ce *livrinho* par «*the Sleazy*»? Or, le plus gros dictionnaire américain en notre possession ne connaît que l'adjectif «*sleazy*», dont il explique le sens par «*flimsy, thin*», se dit d'un tissu. Par ailleurs, le nom propre Delgado est très fréquent au Portugal, mais le plus connu de nous des Delgados modernes est le général Humberto Delgado, opposant anti-salazariste notoire. En quoi est-il «*the Sleazy*» qui en anglais de Grande-Bretagne peut aussi s'appliquer à ce qui est corrompu, sordide, louche, peut-être même membre de la pègre? Etrange itinéraire sémantique pour ce qui était dans le titre réel «*do degrêdo*», terme juridique portugais bien connu que l'on rencontre très souvent dans la littérature consacrée à l'Afrique lusophone, jusque dans les années 1930-50. Sa traduction exacte en français également judiciaire est la relégation ou, moins restrictifs, le bannissement, l'assignation à résidence dans une colonie tropicale, après accomplissement ou non de la peine.

<sup>4</sup> Soares, Francisco Ribeiro (2017), *Ai dos Vencedores! Vae Victores! Angola, 1963-1965*, Lisboa, MIL (Movimento Internacional Lusofóno), Linda-a-Velha: DG Edições, pp. 79, photos noir et blanc.

<sup>5</sup> Cann, John P. (2019), *Portuguese Dragoons, 1966-1974. The Return to Horseback*, Warwick (Angleterre): Helion & Company Ltd. (Egalement distribué par Casemate UK, Oxford), pp. 68, une centaine de photos, cartes et autres illustrations noir et blanc et couleur.



Tous ces détails plus ou moins hors sujet ou intrusifs ne doivent cependant pas peser sur notre jugement du texte de John P. Cann qui lui ne s'intéresse pas uniquement à l'emploi de la cavalerie portugaise dans les étendues du Bié ou celles peu peuplées du Moxico, dans la Cameia, et même au début de l'installation au Mozambique. Le lecteur nationaliste notera avec plaisir que l'auteur a consacré aussi de nombreuses pages aux ancêtres illustres des cavaliers, importés de la Métropole, inscrits en lettres d'or dans l'histoire coloniale portugaise en Afrique (surtout en Angola), avec une visite aux panthéons des années 1895-1896 (Mousinho de Albuquerque au Mozambique), 1897 (Sud-Angola), 1904 (la déroute du Vau de Pembe), 1907 (la revanche portugaise au Cuamato), 1914 (Naulila), 1915 (la conquête du Cuanhama), 1915-1918 (le chaos républicain face aux Allemands au Mozambique). A cette époque, les chevaux transplantés avaient une espérance de vie limitée et les dragons portugais n'accueillaient pas les soldats africains dans leurs rangs. Les grandes campagnes terminées, ils disparurent même d'Afrique, mais à partir de 1966, devant le manque de soldats européens, le haut-commandement à Lisbonne décida, premièrement, de soigner attentivement les chevaux importés, puis d'africaniser progressivement la troupe ainsi montée.

Il semble que Cann, qui professionnellement est issu de l'aéronavale américaine, ait été fasciné par ce recours à l'archaïsme apparent de l'introduction de ces escadrons bicolores, à la recherche des guérilleros à pied du MPLA. A en juger par le nombre d'illustrations et de photos vouées aux manèges et aux exercices réservés à ces hommes de cheval d'un nouveau genre, le groupe de pression des officiers de cavalerie qui était puissant dans le corps des officiers supérieurs portugais avait été entendu. Ils mettaient l'accent sur l'efficacité contre-insurrectionnelle de ces néo-centaures. Et ils pouvaient compter sur l'enthousiasme sélectif de la presse étrangère amie dont certains membres (un Italien notamment) ne tarissaient pas d'éloges sur les plaisirs équestres auxquels ils se livraient gratuitement en participant à l'envahissement des cavaliers dans la savane. Le lecteur qui aime l'intrusion du pittoresque dans les livres de guerre doit lire cet opuscule détaillé sur le plan technique. Pour un effectif d'environ 300 hommes en permanence en Angola, la masse de détails fournis est remarquable. Mais on ne voit pas clairement les résultats concrets et chiffrés obtenus sur le plan des opérations. Et nous avons cherché en vain à savoir comment les dragons d'Angola ont mis fin à leurs activités en 1974. Ont-ils rapatrié leurs montures? Cann doit nous donner une étude approfondie de ce problème, qui fasse honneur à sa minutie habituelle.

Il faut s'y résigner: les verbes emblématiques qui servent de titre à la présente chronique ne pèsent pas d'un poids égal dans la répartition des œuvres, et celui qui est le plus encombrant, «combattre», domine tout. Ou plutôt ce sont ses fantômes qui hantent les mémoires des anciens combattants plus ou moins iréniques dans la sélection de leurs impressions, même chez les poètes, déguisés en reporters de guerre. Prenons le cas de Herberto Helder, collaborateur de l'hebdomadaire *Notícias. Semanário Ilustrado*, à Luanda, d'avril 1971 à juin 1972, à quelques années de l'effondrement de 1974. Le Portugal est un pays qui honore ses poètes et, trop souvent, mésestime les prosateurs amateurs de la presse écrite. Or, nous sommes d'une ignorance abyssale en matière de poésie. Quelle que soit la langue dans laquelle elle s'exprime. Nous ne nous excuserons donc pas de n'avoir retenu du recueil de l'auteur, **em minúsculas**<sup>6</sup>, que ce qui relève plus ou moins du reportage et surtout des visites de Helder hors de la capitale. C'est injuste de notre part, car il prospère dans un humour bien à lui qui l'oblige à meubler ses colonnes de petites

<sup>6</sup> Helder, Herberto (2018), **em minúsculas. Crónicas e reportagens de Herberto Helder em Angola**, Porto: Porto Editora, pp. 197.

histoires luandaises, dans un pays qui veut croire qu'il n'est pas en guerre, même molle. Nous ne voulons ici que le retenir pour sa vision de Nambuangongo, du poste militaire d'Onzo et de l'ennui des soldats (été 1971) qui attendent l'asphaltage de la piste stratégique désenclavant les *fazendas* caféières du Nord-Ouest. Le poète pousse la hardiesse jusqu'à voyager vers Luanda en convoi protégé par les mitrailleuses des garnisons locales. C'est donc un reportage commandé, agrémenté d'une forte dose de détachement ironique. Probablement une licence poétique tolérée par la censure! Le lecteur actuel sent que les servitudes du journalisme insipide qui régnait en Angola à cette époque lui tombent sur les épaules. «Combattre»? Où ça? Ce n'est pas ce qu'il veut voir. Il semble redouter davantage la poussière latéritique rouge qui le suffoque. Elle le contrarie en tout cas plus que le risque des mines et des embuscades de maquis résiduels et depuis longtemps à bout de souffle, d'hommes et d'armement.

L'auteur qui suit ne partagera probablement pas cette opinion. C'est un licencié en droit, né en Angola (Golungo Alto), directeur et rédacteur en chef d'une revue angolaise (*Cultura*) et récompensé par différentes instances officielles du MPLA. Comme il est édité par une maison d'édition portugaise renommée pour ses livres d'anciens combattants portugais (guerre coloniale), nous avons cru qu'**Angola, me diz ainda**<sup>7</sup> contenait quelques confessions d'un ancien soldat ou colon nostalgique. En fait, c'est une compilation de poèmes d'un pur produit du MPLA culturel, qui chante la lutte héroïque du *poder popular* (*sic*) et nous nous garderons bien d'analyser les mérites de ce «poète de cour» angolais, né au cœur même du nationalisme anticolonial. Il a le droit de faire connaître sa production là où il veut et même au Portugal qui regorge de gens compétents pour jauger la valeur d'un poète lauréat de la Lusophonie. Nos excuses à l'éditeur et à l'auteur pour ce quiproquo dont nous sommes responsable car nous avons mal interprété l'ambiguïté du titre.

Comment oser refuser d'associer le verbe noble qu'est «informer» à un livre dont l'auteur, ancien banquier belge, écrit dans l'entrée «corruption» (quatre pages) de sa micro-encyclopédie: «On estime que 15 % des revenus encaissés par l'Angola entre 2002 et 2017, soit un pactole se situant entre 600 milliards et 1 trillion de dollars, se sont «évaporé». Autrement dit, le montant des fonds publics détournés peut être évalué entre 90 et 150 milliards de dollars»? Et nous n'avons toujours pas les chiffres pour les années de guerre 1975-2001 où l'on ne compte plus les gros contrats d'armement passés par le MPLA pour survivre, à deux doigts d'être balayé! Après la relecture de **L'Angola de A à Z**<sup>8</sup>, nous avouons avoir mal jugé son auteur, nous fiant trop vite à l'image plutôt ténébreuse de certaines banques travaillant en Afrique, en particulier dans l'ancien Zaïre. Battons donc notre coulpe et faisons une place parmi les redresseurs de torts à Daniel Ribant, président-fondateur d'une ONG ayant pour objet le développement de l'Angola. Son travail de compilation est d'une richesse telle qu'elle fait de l'ensemble qu'il présente l'un des livres les plus utiles pour suivre l'actualité.

On ne peut ici énumérer l'intégralité des 76 entrées qu'il a documentées. Dans les plus utiles, il nous semble que l'on doit citer Angolagate, Banques, Belgique, Cabinda, Chemin de fer, Chine, Colon, Colonialisme portugais, Congo, Corruption, Cuba, Diamants, Dos Santos, Forces armées, France, Guerre civile, Isabel, Jamba, Lourenço, Luanda, MPLA, Pétrole, Savimbi, UNITA. A noter que le texte comporte en plus une chronologie (22 pages), un lexique respectable, une forte bibliographie et – miracle pour un essai africaniste français! –, un index.

<sup>7</sup> Mendonça, José Luís (2018), *Angola, me diz ainda*, Lisboa: Guerra & Paz, pp. 95.

<sup>8</sup> Ribant, Daniel (2019), *L'Angola de A à Z. Nouvelle édition revue et augmentée*, Paris: L'Harmattan, pp. 295, cartes et illustration en couleur.

Nous ne savons pas en quoi consistent exactement les activités de cette ONG sur le terrain, ni l'origine et l'importance de son budget, mais il est visible que la qualité majeure de son fondateur, telle qu'elle se révèle dans ce livre, c'est sa volonté d'équilibrer ses commentaires sans dissimuler ses opinions quant aux hommes politiques, leurs travers et leurs faiblesses. Il appartient à la catégorie des observateurs qui misent sur les succès du nouveau président, le général João Lourenço, dans sa croisade contre les poisons sociaux qu'entraîne la corruption. En Afrique, c'est une ambition fréquente dans la propagande électorale, mais la gangrène et le poids des traditions nous ont démontré la vacuité des promesses, une fois les vainqueurs installés au pouvoir. Chez les Lusophones, pour réussir à concrétiser les espoirs, le volontarisme devra aussi passer – selon plusieurs commentateurs – par une répudiation permanente de certaines pratiques de la bureaucratie, dont l'inertie, l'incapacité, voire l'hostilité au changement des coutumes sont devenues légendaires. Dans un pays où pour quelques milliers de jouisseurs avides, l'argent n'est plus un problème, l'importance des enjeux en cause va multiplier les pièges que corrupteurs nationaux ou étrangers (et corrompus endurcis) vont tendre aux réformateurs si ces derniers vacillent ou ne conservent pas l'appui au moins tacite des millions de misérables affamés et/ou désillusionnés. On entrevoit des solutions ou des palliatifs populistes, mais ce n'est pas la mission des chroniqueurs lointains de les exposer publiquement. Entrer dans l'Histoire est parfois facile. Y rester beaucoup plus difficile. Surtout dans les pays artificiellement riches en apparence, mais ruinés en réalité. La conscience habite rarement dans les hôtels de luxe en Afrique. Et ailleurs aussi.

Confronté au risque de nous enliser dans un dérapage moralisateur que nous serions incapable de maîtriser, nous ne soutiendrons pas qu'il y a toujours un lien entre la tromperie et la corruption. Ce serait probablement indéfendable après la lecture de la fin d'un petit livre français qui s'intitule **La dos Santos Company. Mainmise sur l'Angola**<sup>9</sup>. Restons donc dans notre rôle de bibliographe en rappelant que les Français ayant une bonne perception des problèmes de l'Angola, notamment les journalistes en poste ou en voyage dans ce pays, ont fait pâle figure, comparés aux critiques anglophones qui ont derrière eux une longue tradition de dénonciateurs depuis le XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Il a fallu attendre dix-sept ans après la fin (2002) de la guerre civile pour voir paraître un quasi-libelle français, mordant à l'égard des autorités à la tête de l'Angola depuis 1975.

Estelle Maussion, son auteure, fut la correspondante locale de l'Agence France Presse et de Radio France internationale de 2012 à 2015, longévité sur place largement suffisante pour étayer une connaissance fine des particularités de la gouvernance et de la société luandaïses. Le résultat tardif de ses efforts surprend, car il apporte très peu de faits inconnus des spécialistes, des ONG, des opposants politiques et de leurs médias électroniques. On peut même se demander à qui elle s'adresse. Nous penchons pour un choix de sa part ciblant le grand public qui ne sait pas ce que le MPLA signifiait à l'origine: l'espoir de tiers mondialistes généreux, soutenant *a priori* un parti indépendantiste africain en lutte contre une «dictature» intrinsèquement d'extrême droite puisque colonialiste. Ce qu'il est maintenant devenu (un clan d'où des arrivistes embourgeoisés ont découragé les vieux militants utopistes d'autrefois de rester) a dû encore réduire le nombre de lecteurs potentiels, déjà échaudés par tout ce qui concerne l'Afrique noire francophone en librairie. Comme l'annonce le sous-titre, le texte est une mise en accusation radicale du deuxième président de l'Angola, Eduardo dos Santos, trente-huit ans au pouvoir, contrasté avec les intentions du troisième, João Lourenço, bien qu'appartenant, dit-elle, à la même «bande». Il semble que la composition du texte ait été syncopée en deux temps (un zoom

<sup>9</sup> Maussion, Estelle (2019), **La dos Santos Company. Mainmise sur l'Angola**, Paris: Editions Karthala, pp. 205.

d'ouverture puis des saute-moutons chronologiques plus détaillés). Pour allécher un peu plus le chaland qui s'ennuierait, l'auteure a jugé bon d'introduire dans la narration des scènes purement imaginaires, des morceaux de fiction, afin de ne pas perdre le lecteur en chemin. Cela surprend puis on s'y fait.

Selon nous, la valeur de ce *livrinho* se trouve cependant dans les passages où Maussion exprime une certaine admiration pour les capacités exceptionnelles d'homme d'Etat d'Eduardo dos Santos. Elle a compris qu'elle avait affaire à un stratège intelligent, un cérébral froid qui a, non seulement, survécu à une guerre civile (1975-2002) théoriquement non gagnable (face à Savimbi, ce génie de la guérilla, dans un pays immense où l'ennemi est plus mobile qu'une armée opérant sur le modèle soviétique), mais a toujours su changer de soutiens à temps. Passer d'une «république populaire» fictive se réclamant de l'URSS tant que celle-ci pouvait livrer – à crédit – tanks, mines et avions, pour ensuite embaucher des mercenaires sud-africains, grâce au pétrole, tout en se débarrassant de cet allié encombrant qu'était devenu le contingent cubain, naguère indispensable, tout cela ne suscitait aucun remords chez celui que l'on appelait à Luanda le Sphinx du Palais, l'indéchiffrable énigme présidentielle, l'idole inamovible qui simultanément s'enrichissait lorsqu'il lançait des nouvelles campagnes contre la corruption dont il était le grand bénéficiaire.

Cet ancien pauvre, arrivé au pouvoir, soucieux d'en faire profiter sa famille compliquée, et ses affidés, ne pouvait pas déroger à la «règle africaine». Grâce à lui, la corruption atteint des proportions inusitées. Parvenu au sommet de son art, c'est alors que ce grand calculateur surprit son monde par un nouveau revirement tactique. Le Sphinx remplaça ses bailleurs de fonds occidentaux par des développeurs assoiffés de pétrole et moins exigeants en matière d'éthique politique. Puis, de son propre gré, il décida de se retirer de la cabine de pilotage. Le dernier chapitre de cette saga est encore peu fourni, mais déjà riche en imprévus. Un général, pourtant membre éminent de la «bande», selon l'auteure, c'est-à-dire le MPLA, marchepied indispensable vers la richesse, décide que le temps est venu de détruire les gros corrompus, dont ceux de la sainte famille. Le général João Lourenço, devenu le troisième président, veut être le nouvel homme fort et le champion de l'intégrité en s'attaquant à la camarilla de son prédécesseur. Nous supposons ce général bien averti de la mythologie grecque pour qu'il ne s'offusque pas si nous lui souhaitons, avec l'auteure, de devenir, non le dauphin du Sphinx, mais le nouvel Heraklès angolais devant les écuries ou plutôt les étables du roi Augias qu'il doit nettoyer. Malheureusement, l'Alphée coule en Elide (Grèce), mais pas en Angola, et la question qui se pose maintenant est la suivante: toutes les eaux détournées du Bengo et du Kwanza seront-elles assez puissantes pour décaper l'amoncellement de fumier qui a englouti l'honnêteté des forces vives de son pays en 45 ans d'indépendance?

## Mozambique

Tromper pour convaincre son armée qu'elle doit se battre? Cela n'arrive jamais, évidemment. Alors, soyons optimistes et imaginons qu'un lecteur acharné réussisse à enchaîner la lecture de **Companhia de Caçadores 2418**...<sup>10</sup> immédiatement après celle – vengeresse – de *A Grande Guerra em África* d'António José Telo & Nuno Lemos Pires. C'est improbable, mais cela offrirait pourtant une comparaison riche d'enseignements pour mesurer le chemin parcouru par l'Armée portugaise au Mozambique entre 1918 et 1968. Non seulement du point de vue strictement militaire mais aussi celui du développement de la colonisation

<sup>10</sup> Carvalho, Fernando (2018), *Companhia de Caçadores 2418 na guerra em Moçambique, 1968-1970*, Porto: Mário Brito Publicações, 5livros.pt, pp. 287, photos noir et blanc et couleur.

en cinquante années au Niassa, dans un poste dont nous n'avions jamais entendu parler, Massangulo, à la frontière du Nyasaland/Malawi. Une monographie de style classique destinée à être lue par d'anciens combattants ayant appartenu à cette Compagnie 2418 peut donc aussi servir de borne temporelle si on sait que, deux générations plus tôt, c'est un général britannique et ses troupes qui étaient en embuscade pour empêcher que l'insaisissable général allemand Von Lettow-Vorbeck s'échappe du Mozambique vaincu. En 1968, c'est une grosse centaine de soldats portugais qui essaient d'éliminer les maquis locaux du FRELIMO et l'on est à quelques kilomètres du chemin de fer qui monte vers Vila Cabral/Lichinga. Il y a donc eu quelques «progrès» au Niassa? En apparence, certainement. Retenons aussi que l'auteur déplore que la compagnie précédente, la 2418 étant chargée de la relever, fusilla six «civils» africains accusés de collaborer avec le FRELIMO, fit brûler les corps, et les exposa dans le village, pour décourager leurs successeurs. La 2418, selon lui, pratiqua pour sa part une politique plus «sociale». Nous le croyons, car ce ne fut pas par la terreur coloniale que cette guerre se termina, mais par la lassitude de Lisbonne et de ses soldats. Et par les pressions internationales. Que l'éditeur et l'auteur se rassurent, leur livre est l'un des meilleurs exemples de la production de l'édition portugaise tournée vers la célébration des efforts des anciens combattants de 1961-1974 luttant contre l'oubli et parfois le mépris des nouvelles générations au Portugal. En 1918, il n'y avait pas de mines au Niassa mais, malgré l'efficacité de leur présence récente, la Compagnie 2418 n'eut que quatre morts entre 1968 et 1970. Alors que les politiciens «criminels» de la Première République envoyèrent à la mort des milliers de ses soldats «hospitalisés». Ils étaient aussi involontaires en 1918 que ceux de 1968. Littéralement, elle les naufragea au Nord-Mozambique pendant la Grande Guerre, sans armes adéquates, sans service de santé fiable et sous la conduite d'officiers en retard d'une guerre. Ils tombèrent donc comme des mouches pour montrer aux opinions internationales que Vasco de Gama était enfin de retour. Dans ces conditions d'incapacité, il vaut mieux qu'il n'y ait pas eu trop de monographies d'anciens des compagnies en 1919-1940. Ceux de 1961-1974 ont survécu, eux, mais ils s'estiment à juste titre avoir été sacrifiés pour des résultats nuls. Et les gouvernants africains qui les ont suivis n'ont pas démontré beaucoup plus de sagesse dans la conduite de leurs affaires. Sauf l'un des deux PALOP insulaires!

## Guiné

Comme la plupart de nos lecteurs le savent déjà, la Guinée a engendré, proportionnellement à sa superficie et à sa population, beaucoup plus de livres de souvenirs d'anciens combattants que l'Angola et le Mozambique. *Missão na Guiné*<sup>11</sup> est l'un des plus utiles à connaître pour fuir les généralisations abusives car trop hâtives. Compte tenu de sa situation géographique (dans le couloir du passage des guérilleros du PAIGC vers l'île de Como) et historique (c'est le «célébre» Nino Vieira qui commande la zone et les maquis qui y transitent), on devrait s'attendre à une série de combats incessants dans ce terrain frontalier de la Guinée-Conakry, peuplé de Nalu, de Sosso et même de Balante. Or le livre évite ou minimise presque toute description répétitive des harcèlements de l'artillerie du PAIGC ou des embuscades que ses soldats montent de temps à autre contre les patrouilles de la garnison portugaise de Cabedu. Son commandant, le capitaine António José Ritto et le *furriel* Norberto Gomes da Costa insistent avant tout sur leurs bonnes relations avec les villageois et leurs «*homens grandes*» qui ont cependant dû fournir aux indépendantistes

<sup>11</sup> Ritto, António José & Costa, Norberto Gomes da (2018), *Missão na Guiné. Cabedu, 1963-1965*, Linda-a-Velha: DG Edições, pp. 98, photos noir et blanc.

d'Amílcar Cabral la quasi-totalité de leurs hommes de 20 à 30 ans, leurs impôts du sang versés à la cause nationaliste, en quelque sorte. L'éternel dilemme des civils pris entre deux feux.

Ce qui est apparent à la lecture du texte, c'est que l'ampleur des combats, faisant pourtant intervenir en plus les paras, les fusiliers, la Marine et l'Aviation, ne préoccupe pas beaucoup les deux auteurs dont l'un traque plus le gibier local que le PAIGC. A noter, car c'est plutôt rare dans cette littérature mémorielle, la confrontation entre les rapports établis par les officiers et les pièces d'archives du PAIGC pour une même opération. Nino Vieira exagère, ces années-là, les résultats de ses efforts. Une bonne leçon de relativité! C'est quelques années plus tard que l'armement lourd, les missiles et les mines firent pencher la balance en faveur du PAIGC, ce qui rendit la situation intenable pour les défenseurs de l'Império, nonobstant les innovations introduites par Spínola.

Et maintenant, comment justifier que nous ayons présenté la Guinée après l'Angola et le Mozambique dans cette chronique? Géographiquement et historiquement c'est une hérésie. Mais nous avons voulu prendre en compte le degré zéro de la Guinée dans l'échelle de la considération des PALOP par les anciens partisans étrangers d'Amílcar Cabral, face à cette dépouille actuelle de ce qu'était le grand rêve utopique de 1973-1974. Il était contre nature du double point de vue ethnique et sociologique. Et certains observateurs aveugles de l'époque n'ont jamais accepté d'avoir été trompés par leur admiration envers le seul penseur politique issu des anciennes colonies portugaises récentes.

Peut-on avec un titre pareil, **Um ranger na guerra colonial**<sup>12</sup>, placer sans hésiter, les vignettes qui le constituent sous l'égide du verbe «combattre»? En principe oui, mais en réalité non, car dans le théâtre des opérations militaires la zone du Gabu (ex-Nova Lamego) était l'une des plus calmes, les Portugais ayant conservé l'appui majoritaire des Fula (les Peul de Guinée) contre le PAIGC, quoi qu'en aient dit et disent encore certains falsificateurs ou trompeurs ultérieurs. Mais l'auteur n'écrit pas pour eux puisque ses souvenirs, émiétés initialement dans un site électronique intéressant (puisque destiné aux anciens combattants ayant passé des années en Guinée), ne sauraient «tromper» ses camarades. Qui est donc l'ex-furriel José Saúde, devenu journaliste de la presse sportive portugaise? L'ancien combattant typique, vraisemblablement nostalgique de sa jeunesse perdue en Guinée? Il décrit au ras du sol, ses activités quotidiennes essentiellement pacifiques, dans un bourg dont la population collabore activement ou passivement avec l'armée portugaise. Il cultive le pittoresque local et sait le rendre aimable, mais il est comme beaucoup d'anciens appelés qui ont perdu une guerre coloniale, fondée sur une propagande fallacieuse. Ils se sentent floués par le haut-commandement qui les a conduits dans une impasse.

La rancune ou la rancœur affleure quand il assimile (pp. 189-192) le sort des esclaves exportés aux Amériques à celui de ces soldats involontaires des années 1973-1974, enfournés dans une guerre qui était trop exotique pour qu'ils l'appellent patriotique. Ce qu'il dit de l'abandon (septembre 1974) du Gabu, vécu par lui, a une modeste valeur testimoniale ambiguë: soulagement et peut-être sentiment d'avoir dû trahir la confiance des Musulmans. Les photos sont explicites. A signaler que cette édition reprend en partie un texte antérieur, de 2013, *Guinée-Bissau. As minhas memórias de Gabu. 1973/74*. Un recyclage adapté en quelque sorte, le lectorat restant, plus ou moins, le même, mais vieilli.

<sup>12</sup> Saúde, José (2019), *Um ranger na Guerra colonial. Guinée-Bissau (1973-74). Memórias de Gabu*, Lisboa: Edições Colibri, pp. 217, photos noir et blanc.

## Timor

En quelques décennies et surtout depuis son indépendance, le Timor portugais, devenu oriental, avec sa vingtaine de langues – et autant de micro-ethnies –, s’est transformé en l’un des Eldorados «découverts» par les anthropologues dont certains se sont abattus comme des corbeaux sur les *reinos* (chefferies) et même leurs subdivisions. Un livre novateur dans leur domaine s’efforce de les alerter – surtout les débutants – sur le risque qu’ils peuvent courir s’ils ne se libèrent pas de la fascination pour l’insignifiance et la répétition des thèmes étudiés par le collègue voisin. Autrement dit, plusieurs de ces spécialistes ont pris conscience de la nécessité de connaître au minimum une tranche du passé de leurs sujets d’études. Le recueil de Ricardo Roque et Elizabeth G. Traube<sup>13</sup> sacrifie donc à ce minimum, sans pour autant que les auteurs des contributions prétendent avoir une vue d’ensemble de l’histoire des insulaires. C’est plus sage de leur part. Mode ou non, plusieurs des textes rassemblés s’attachent à des thèmes historiques «par capillarité». Un seul chapitre présente une source nouvelle dont l’exploitation honorerait un historien «*mainstream*»: le *Boletim de Comércio, Agricultura e Fomento da Província de Timor*. Ce périodique présente un intérêt pour l’histoire de la caféiculture. Un autre fait le point sur les textes néerlandais et portugais documentant les premiers siècles de la présence européenne dans l’île. Pour le reste, d’autres chapitres sont fondés sur des objets, des croyances ou des faits qui semblent d’une importance limitée si l’on compare avec ce qui a marqué l’impact de la présence coloniale portugaise: la guerre répétitive à des fins fiscales ou agricoles, conduite par tel ou tel gouverneur. Maintenant que les archives sont censées être plus accessibles, la tâche devrait être enrichissante. Tel quel, ce travail donne un échantillon de ce qu’offre un ethnologue timoraniste se hasardant prudemment sur les sentiers à peine défrichés de l’exploration du passé des sociétés actuelles. Ici le verbe «informer» n’est pas déplacé.

## Sahara occidental

«Tromper» est-il ici le préalable à «combattre» ou est-ce l’inverse? Les deux actions s’additionnent souvent et même se prolongent et s’enchevêtrent habituellement, ce qui peut expliquer les divergences d’opinions des lecteurs à l’égard des trois auteurs du Vol. 2 de *Showdown in Western Sahara*<sup>14</sup>.

Premièrement, certains pourraient leur reprocher d’avoir choisi un sous-titre aussi restrictif pour leur texte qui semble indiquer qu’il se focalise sur la seule guerre aérienne, alors que l’aviation marocaine, faute d’adversaire dans les airs, a surtout servi de transporteur et d’appui-feu à la plupart des combats au sol contre le POLISARIO.

Deuxièmement, d’autres, plus nombreux heureusement, pourraient les féliciter chaleureusement de nous avoir révélé et décortiqué une bonne dizaine d’opérations terrestres de grande envergure, occultées au Maroc, ignorées par la grande presse occidentale et très vaguement citées par les politistes qui se sont penchés sur ces conflits entre deux nationalismes surarmés qui tranchent par leur modernisme sur les luttes des guérilleros dans l’empire portugais finissant. Maintenant que les armes se sont tuées depuis des décennies, c’est tout un pan de l’histoire militaire du Sahara qu’ils nous font entrevoir, avec ses milliers de morts et de prisonniers, inconnus du grand public.

<sup>13</sup> Roque, Ricardo & Traube, Elizabeth G. (eds.) (2019), *Crossing Histories and Ethnographies. Following Colonial Historicities in Timor-Leste*, New York & Oxford, Berghahn, pp. X-362, photos noir et blanc.

<sup>14</sup> Cooper, Tom & Grandolini, Albert & Fontanellaz, Adrien (2019), *Showdown in Western Sahara. Volume 2: Air Warfare over the Last African Colony, 1975-1991*, Warwick (Angleterre): Helion & Company (Distribué aussi par Casemate UK), pp. 80 + 8 p. de planches couleur, 129 photos noir et blanc.

Troisièmement, aller jusqu'à reconnaître aux trois auteurs les limites d'une démarche d'historiens, pourtant privés de toutes archives accessibles, lacune compensée dans une certaine mesure par un recours à l'histoire orale et ses pièges, certes. Mais ils risquent de les accuser d'avoir rédigé leur prose comme si elle était destinée aux seuls officiers d'état-major qui ne lisent que des retours d'expérience, plus intéressés par le détail des armements perdus ou conquis que par le sort des hommes. Ils ne nous font grâce d'aucune nomenclature quant aux avions, transports, blindés, armes collectives, etc. C'est un festival de catalogues de plusieurs salons de l'armement des années 1970-1990. Qui, parmi les lecteurs, en dehors des collectionneurs et des hauts-commandements, se soucie plus du matériel que des pertes humaines? Il y a une véritable obsession énumérative dans certaines pages: un véritable annuaire de «quincaillerie» en gros.

Ces réserves doivent s'effacer devant l'utilité du produit final. Parmi ses atouts on citera en outre l'impartialité relative des auteurs à l'égard des belligérants, non pas sur le plan purement militaire, mais quant au choix des arguments historiques de l'Etat chérifien. On ne discute plus les prétentions du POLISARIO à contrôler en novembre 1981 les deux tiers du territoire. Autre avancée de ce petit ouvrage: une iconographie inconnue, mais richissime (une grosse centaine de photos noir et blanc et d'autres illustrations inédites en couleur). Un regret cependant: on manque de données minutieuses sur ce qui se révélera déterminant dans la stratégie du Maroc, à savoir le financement et les constructeurs de la grande muraille de sable et d'électronique et leur progression vers le sud afin de protéger le Sahara utile resté aux mains du roi Hassan II.

En résumé, un travail globalement très positif.



# Esclarecendo René Pélissier

Manuel Bernardo

p. 185

(...) O autor do livro é um coronel reformado, ex-oficial dos comandos, (...). O seu texto contém capítulos monográficos disjuntos e depoimentos de outros oficiais, como el, favoráveis às teses imperiais. (...)

René Pélissier in “Africana Studia”/2019

Lembro que o regime de Salazar, antecipou a expansão do comunismo em África, e um futuro conflito subversivo nos territórios africanos. Assim, com base na instrução de contraguerrilha dada por militares, que foram “aprender” à guerra da Argélia, foi montado em 1960, em Lamego, o Centro de Instrução de Operações Especiais. Fui “apanhado” por este esquema e integrado numa Companhia de Caçadores Especiais, para o Ultramar.

Esclareço que não fui oficial dos “Comandos”, pois não me voluntariei para tal (era assim que funcionavam). Fiz a guerra até 1974, em quatro comissões por imposição/escala, de dois anos cada (Moçambique e Angola). Apenas, no pós-25 de Abril, tive ocasião de contactar com “Comandos”, como Jaime Neves e oficiais do Batalhão de Comandos. Depois, durante as atribuições/atrocidades do PREC, fiquei na Amadora até ao contragolpe do 25 de Novembro de 1975, e colaborei no PC, lá montado e liderado por Ramalho Eanes.

Recordo que o início da Guerra, em 1961, resultou dos macabros massacres efectuados pela UPA (depois FNLA) de Holden Roberto, com apoio financeiro dos EUA (e não da URSS, como se podia esperar) por todo o Norte de Angola, desde 15 de Março. Foram mortas cerca de 1200 brancos e 6000 negros. Daí o “Para Angola e em Força” de Salazar...

Não sou “favorável às teses imperiais”. “Apenas” tivemos que cumprir como militares e, quando estávamos desgastados e vimos não haver intenção de negociar com os “movimentos de libertação”, passámos, a partir de 1973, a conspirar contra o governo, para derrubá-lo.

Em Setembro já eu subscrevia abaixo-assinados em Moçambique, no Movimento dos Capitães e, no livro “Alvorada em Abril”/1977, de Otelo, se vê o apoio que lhe dei, no frustrado golpe de 16 de Março de 1974.

Jaime Neves e Rafael Durão, também facilitaram a queda do governo. O primeiro sendo um dos principais operacionais na baixa lisboeta no 25 de Abril e o segundo, com outros, conseguindo a neutralidade inicial dos pára-quedistas. Favoráveis às teses imperiais? Não! Também nem o Bispo de Vila Cabral ou o Alferes mil.<sup>º</sup> Luís Rosa.

O responsável pela descolonização descontrolada foi Marcello Caetano, que não quis aceitar a via negocial, incluindo a de 1972, através de Senghor e Spínola, única maneira de terminar aquele tipo de guerras subversivas e não “acções de polícia”, como ele as designava.

PS: Vide livros publicados in wikipedia (Manuel Amaro Bernardo).



**Resumos**

**Abstracts**

**Resumés**

**ملخصات**



## Transumância política e reunificação nos Camarões do Sul: 1949-1960

Mokam David

A transumância política, prática amplamente criticada, foi vivenciada nos Camarões do Sul quando da reunificação entre 1949 e 1960. Este estudo discute se contribuiu favorável ou desfavoravelmente para a reunificação dos dois Camarões. A análise dos vários casos de transumância política registrados nos Camarões do Sul mostra claramente que na maioria desses casos foi motivada pelo abandono ou negligência da questão da reunificação nos programas políticos. Prova-o o facto de a inclusão do tema da reunificação ter contribuído largamente para as vitórias eleitorais dos partidos políticos no sul dos Camarões. A transumância política manteve viva a ideia da reunificação até esta ser considerada pelas Nações Unidas (ONU) como uma alternativa a considerar num plebiscito sobre a questão da independência dos Camarões do Sul.

**Palavras-chave:** Camarões do Sul, reunificação, transumância política, líder político.

### Political carpet-crossing and reunification in Southern Cameroons: 1949-1960

Political carpet-crossing was witnessed in Southern Cameroons with reunification. Through the scrutiny of the various manifestations of political carpet-crossing, this essay notices that in most cases it was motivated by the rejection or the disregard for reunification in the agendas of political movements. This is evidenced by the fact that reunification, when considered, contributed largely to electoral victories in Southern Cameroons. Political carpet-crossing helped to keep afloat the idea of reunification until it was adopted by the UN (United Nations) as one of the alternatives for the plebiscite questions for Southern Cameroons' achievement of independence.

**Keywords:** Southern Cameroons, reunification, political carpet-crossing, political leader.

### La transhumance politique et la réunification au *Southern Cameroons*: 1949-1960

La transhumance politique, pratiquée très largement critiquée, a été vécue au *Southern Cameroons* en rapport avec la réunification, de 1949 à 1960.

Cette étude détermine si elle a contribué favorablement ou défavorablement à la réalisation de la réunification des deux Cameroun. L'analyse des différents cas de transhumance politique enregistrés au *Southern Cameroons* montre clairement que la majorité de ces cas étaient motivés par l'abandon ou la négligence de la réunification dans les programmes politiques. Pour preuve, la prise en considération de la réunification a largement contribué aux victoires électorales des partis politiques dans le *Southern Cameroons*. La transhumance politique a entretenu l'idée de la réunification (jusqu'à ce que celle-ci soit adoptée à l'ONU (Organisation des Nations Unies) comme un des deux axes de l'alternative d'accession du *Southern Cameroons* à l'indépendance.

**Mots-clés:** *Southern Cameroons*, réunification, transhumance politique, leader politique.

الترحال السياسي وإعادة التوحيد في "الكاميرون الجنوبي": ١٩٤٩ - ١٩٦٠

موكام دافيد

عُرِفَتْ تجربة الترحال السياسي، وهي ممارسة انتُجَت على نطاق واسع، في "الكاميرون الجنوبي" خلال إعادة التوحيد بين ١٩٤٩ - ١٩٦٠. تتناقش هذه الدراسة ما إذا كانت قد ساهمت بشكل إيجابي أو سلبي في إعادة التوحيد. يُظهر تحليل مختلف حالات الترحال السياسي المسجلة أن الدافع وراء ذلك كان في الأغلب هو التخلي عن مسألة إعادة التوحيد أو إهمالها في البرامج السياسية. وقد ثبت ذلك من خلال حقيقة أن إدراج موضوع إعادة التوحيد قد ساهم إلى حد كبير في الانتصارات الانتخابية لأحزاب السياسية في البلاد. أبقى الترحال السياسي فكرة إعادة التوحيد على قيد الحياة إلى أن نظرت فيها الأمم المتحدة كبديل في استفتاء عام حول مسألة استقلال "الكاميرون الجنوبي".

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** "الكاميرون الجنوبي"، إعادة التوحيد، الترحال السياسي، الزعيم السياسي

### A questão anglófona nos Camarões: o contexto histórico e a passagem da resistência «quotidiana» ao conflito armado, 1961-2017

Confidence Chia Ngam e Reymond Njngti Budi

Desde 2017 que as regiões anglófonas dos Camarões têm assistido a conflitos armados nas suas cidades e aldeias com profundas repercussões. Este é talvez um dos piores conflitos armados nos Camarões desde a independência em 1960 e a reunificação em 1961. Impressiona constatar como a questão

dos movimentos corporativistas iniciados por professores e advogados anglófonos que rapidamente degenerou num confronto armado a uma escala só comparável com os movimentos anticoloniais nos Camarões franceses das décadas entre 1940-60. Partindo desta premissa básica, este artigo argumenta que o conflito armado que irrompeu em 2017 nas regiões de língua inglesa não emergiu do nada. Estava em gestação, assumindo a forma de resistência «quotidiana» desde pelo menos os anos 1970. O conflito armado resultou de queixas e frustrações acumuladas, solidificadas pelo crescimento do «ambazonismo», foi propagado como duplo fenómeno do liberalismo e de nacionalismo através dos meios de comunicação social e patrocinado por toda uma diáspora camaronesa que goza da imunidade conferida pela distância. O artigo utiliza diversas fontes, arquivísticas, impressas e orais para se fundamentar.

**Palavras-chave:** Camarões de língua inglesa, resistência «quotidiana», conflito armado e Ambazonismo.

### **The Anglophone Question in Cameroon: Historical Context and Evolution from “Everyday” Resistance to Armed Conflict, 1961-2017**

Since 2017, English-speaking regions of Cameroon have witnessed armed conflict in its towns and villages with far-reaching repercussions. This is perhaps one of the worst endogenous armed conflicts in Cameroon since independence in 1960 and reunification in 1961. What is even more engrossing to the mind has been the question as to how corporatist movements initiated by Cameroon Anglophone common law lawyers and teachers soon vitiated into armed confrontation on a scale that can only be compared to anti-colonial movements in French Cameroon from the 1940s to the 1960s. From this basic premise, this paper contends that the armed conflict witnessed in the Anglophone regions since 2017 did not emerge from a vacuum. It has been in gestation in the form of “everyday” resistance since at least the 1970s. The armed conflict has been a concomitant feature of historical milestones marked by accumulated grievances and frustrations, gelled by the growth of ‘Ambazonism’, propagated as the twin phenomena of liberalism and nationalism through the social media and sponsored and steered by an ensemble of Cameroonian Diaspora enjoying immunity afforded by geography and distance. The paper wields an

avalanche of diverse sources ranging from archival, published and oral material to sustain its thesis.

**Keywords:** Anglophone Cameroon, ‘Everyday’ Resistance, Armed Conflict and Ambazonism.

### **La Question anglophone au Cameroun: le contexte historique et le passage de la résistance quotidienne au conflit armé**

Depuis 2017, les régions anglophones du Cameroun ont été témoins de conflits armés dans ses villes et villages avec des répercussions profondes. Il s’agit peut-être de l’un des pires conflits armés au Cameroun depuis l’indépendance en 1960 et la réunification en 1961. Ce qui est encore plus frappant c’est la question de savoir comment les mouvements corporatistes des avocats de common law et des enseignants anglophones du Cameroun se sont vite viciés en une confrontation armée à une échelle qui ne peut être comparée qu’aux mouvements anticoloniaux du Cameroun français des années 1940-60. Partant de cette prémisse de base, cet article soutient que le conflit armé dont les régions anglophones ont été témoins depuis 2017 n’est pas sorti du vide. Il est en gestation prenant la forme d’une résistance «quotidienne» depuis au moins les années 1970. Le conflit armé a été produit par des griefs et frustrations accumulés, gélifiés par la croissance de l’«ambazonisme», propagé comme le double phénomène du libéralisme et du nationalisme à travers les médias sociaux et parrainé et dirigé par un ensemble de la diaspora camerounaise bénéficiant de l’immunité que leur confère la distance. Cet article utilise une avalanche de sources diverses, d’archives, publiés et de l’oral pour soutenir sa thèse.

**Mots-clés:** Cameroun anglophone, résistance ‘au quotidien’, conflit armé et ambazonisme.

قضية اللغة الإنجليزية في الكاميرون: السياق التاريخي والانتقال من المقاومة  
 “اليومية” للنزاع المسلح، ١٩٦١-٢٠١٧  
 كونغفيدانص شيا نغام و ريموند نجنتجي بوي

شهدت المناطق الناطقة بالإنجليزية في الكاميرون نزاعات مسلحة في مدينتها وقراها مع تداعيات عميقة منذ عام ٢٠١٧. ربما يكون هذا أحد أسوأ النزاعات المسلحة في الكاميرون منذ الاستقلال في عام ١٩٦٠ وإعادة التوحيد في عام ١٩٦١. من المدهش أن نرى كيف تحولت قضية حركات الشركات التي بدأها الأساتذة والمحامون الناطقون بالإنجليزية بسرعة إلى مواجهة مسلحة على نطاق لا يُقَارَن إلا بالحركات المناهضة للاستعمار في الكاميرون الفرنسية في العقود ما بين ١٩٤٠-٦٠. استناداً

إلى هذه الفرضية الأساسية، تجادل هذه المقالة بأن النزاع المسلح الذي اندلع في عام ٢٠١٧ في المناطق الناطقة باللغة الإنجليزية لم يبرز من العدم. لقد كانت في طور التحضير، متخذة شكل المقاومة "اليومية" منذ سبعينيات القرن الماضي على الأقل. نشأ النزاع المسلح من تراكم الشكاوى والإحباطات التي يعززها نمو "الإمبارونية"، وتم الترويج له كظاهرة مزدوجة للبيرالية والقومية من خلال وسائل الإعلام و برعاية الشتات الذي يمتنع بحصانة يمنحها بعده عن الأحداث. يستخدم المقال عدة مصادر أرشيفية، مطبوعة وشفوية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الكاميرون الناطق باللغة الإنجليزية، المقاومة "اليومية"، الصراع المسلح و الإمبارونية

### Evolução e períodos do *modus operandi* dos separatistas anglófonos nos Camarões desde 1984

Joseph Lon Nfi

O artigo analisa as fases, estratégias, táticas, métodos operacionais e armas utilizadas pelos extremistas anglófonos para conseguirem a separação da República dos Camarões. Desde a reunificação dos Camarões Ocidentais e da República dos Camarões em 1961, os anglófonos dos Camarões Ocidentais queixam-se de marginalização, negligência, exploração, assimilação e dominação por parte dos governos dominados pelos francófonos. Enquanto os anglófonos moderados pretendem uma descentralização ou federalismo reais, os extremistas exigem uma cisão total. Com base em fontes primárias e secundárias, bem como nas minhas observações, o estudo argumenta que a partir de 1984, quando o Presidente dos Camarões, Paul Biya, mudou o nome do país de República Unida dos Camarões para República dos Camarões, os extremistas anglófonos que lutavam pela autonomia e/ou secessão dos Camarões Ocidentais ou Ambazonia tornaram-se mais radicais, violentos e sangrentos. É provável que esta violência e extremismo continuem até que se encontre uma solução para o que é uma das últimas guerras de secessão em África.

**Palavras-chave:** Ambazonia, Anglófono, Camarões, secessão.

### Stages and changing *Modus Operandi* of Anglophone Separatists in Cameroon since 1984

The paper probes into the phases, strategies, tactics, operational methods and weapons used by Anglophone extremists to achieve their objective, the separation from the Republic of Cameroon.

Since the reunification of Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroon in 1961, the Anglophones of Southern Cameroons complained of marginalisation, neglect, exploitation, assimilation and domination by the Francophone dominated governments. While the moderate Anglophones are asking for genuine decentralisation or federalism, the extremists want outright secession. Based on primary and secondary sources and on my observations, it is argued that starting in 1984 when the president of Cameroon Paul Biya changed the name of Cameroon from the United Republic of Cameroon to the Republic of Cameroon, Anglophone extremists struggle for autonomy and/or secession of Southern Cameroon or Ambazonia became more radical, violent and bloody. It is likely that this violence and extremism will continue until a solution is provided to Africa's latest secession war.

**Keywords:** Ambazonia, Anglophone, Cameroon, Secession.

### Étapes et évolution du *modus operandi* des séparatistes anglophones au Cameroun après 1984

L'article explore les phases, les stratégies, les tactiques, les méthodes opérationnelles et les armes utilisées par les extrémistes Anglophones pour atteindre leur objectif qui était la séparation de la République du Cameroun. Depuis la réunification du Cameroun Occidental et de la République du Cameroun en 1961, les Anglophones du Cameroun Occidental se plaignent de la marginalisation, de la négligence, de l'exploitation, de l'assimilation et de la domination des gouvernements constitués des Francophones dans leur plus grande majorité. Alors que les Anglophones modérés réclament une véritable décentralisation ou le fédéralisme, les extrémistes quant à eux veulent une sécession pure et simple. Sur la base des sources primaires et secondaires ainsi que de mes observations, l'étude soutient qu'à partir de 1984 lorsque le président du Cameroun Paul Biya a changé le nom du Cameroun de la République-Unie du Cameroun à la République du Cameroun, les extrémistes Anglophones luttant pour l'autonomie et/ou la sécession du Cameroun Occidental ou de l'Ambazonie sont devenus plus radicaux, violents et sanglants. Il est probable que cette violence et cet extrémisme se poursuivent jusqu'à ce qu'une solution soit apportée à ce qui représente l'une des plus récentes guerres de sécession en Afrique.

**Mots-clés:** Ambazonie, Anglophone, Cameroun, Sécession.

مراحل وتغيير طريقة عمل الانفصاليين الناطقين بالإنجليزية في الكاميرون منذ عام ١٩٨٤

نفي جوزيف لون

يحلل هذا المقال المراحل، الاستراتيجيات، التكتيكات، الأساليب التشغيلية والأسلحة التي يستخدمها المتطرفون الناطقون باللغة الإنجليزية لتحقيق الانفصال عن الكاميرون. منذ إعادة توحيد "الكاميرون الجنوبي" وجمهورية الكاميرون في عام ١٩٦١، اشتكى الناطقون باللغة الإنجليزية في "الكاميرون الجنوبي" من التهميش، الإهمال، الاستغلال، و السيطرة من قبل الحكومات التي يهيمن أو يسيطر عليها الفرنكفونيين (الناطقين باللغة الفرنسية). في حين أن الناطقون بالإنجليزية المعتدلين يريدون لامركزية وفيدرالية حقيقيتين، فإن المتطرفين يطالبون بانقسام كامل. استناداً إلى المصادر الأولية والثانوية، بالإضافة إلى ملاحظاتي، تشير الدراسة إلى أنه منذ عام ١٩٨٤، عندما قام رئيس الكاميرون، بول بيا، بتغيير اسم البلاد من جمهورية الكاميرون المتحدة إلى جمهورية الكاميرون، كان المتطرفون الناطقون بالإنجليزية الذين قتلوا من أجل الاستقلال الذاتي أو انفصال "الكاميرون الجنوبي" أو "أمبازونيا" أصبحوا أكثر راديكالية و عنفانية و دموية. من المرجح أن يستمر هذا العنف والتطرف حتى يتم إيجاد حل لما يعد من الحروب الانفصالية الأخيرة في إفريقيا.

الكلمات مفتاحية: أمبازونيا، الأجلوفونيون (المتحدثون باللغة الإنجليزية)، الكاميرون، النزعة الانفصالية

## A estrutura do estado pós-colonial e a sobrevivência da educação anglófona nas origens da guerra civil camaronesa

Joseph Lon Nfi

O problema anglófono nos Camarões, que remonta à reunificação mal negociada de 1961, tornou-se violento em novembro de 2016, quando os apelos à «restauração dos Camarões Ocidentais» se tornaram o lema de certos grupos de pressão e de todas as formas de manifestações e protestos políticos. O governo foi lento a responder às queixas de professores e advogados, que reavivaram o conflito em 2017 e a crise transformou-se numa guerra ou numa luta pela independência. Este artigo, utilizando fontes primárias e secundárias, ensaia uma análise das falhas estruturais do estado pós-colonial que deram origem ao problema anglófono e às queixas dos professores, que foram as causas imediatas da guerra. O estudo revela que as queixas dos falantes de inglês estão profundamente enraizadas e que o fracasso do regime de Yaoundé em preservar a sua identidade cultural em geral e o seu sistema educativo em particular no novo regime político provocou descontentamento e apela à restauração do estado dos Camarões Ocidentais, Ambazonia.

**Palavras-chave:** Falantes de inglês, Camarões, educação, federação.

## The Structure of the Post-Colonial State and the survival of Anglophone Education at the origins of the Cameroon Civil War

The Anglophone problem in Cameroon which could be traced back to the poorly negotiated reunification in 1961 became violent in November 2016 when calls for the "restoration of Southern Cameroons" became the motto of some pressure groups and all forms of demonstrations and political protests. The government was slow to react to the grievances of the teachers and lawyers who reignited the conflict and by 2017 the crisis escalated into a war or struggle for independence. This paper with the use of primary and secondary sources, attempts an analysis of the structural lapses of the post-colonial state that gave birth to the Anglophone problem and the grievances of the teachers that served as the immediate causes of the war. The study reveals that the grievances of the Anglophones were deeply-rooted and that the failure by the Yaoundé regimes to preserve their cultural identity especially their educational system in the new polity provoked the discontent and calls for the restoration of the State of Southern Cameroon, Ambazonia.

**Keywords:** Anglophone, Cameroon, Education, Federation.

## La structure de l'État post-colonial et la survie de l'éducation anglophone dans l'éclatement de la guerre civile au Cameroun

Le problème anglophone au Cameroun qui remonte à la réunification mal négociée de 1961 est devenu violent en novembre 2016 lorsque les appels à la «restauration du Cameroun Occidental» sont devenus la devise de certains groupes de pression et de toutes les formes de manifestations et de protestations politiques. Le gouvernement a tardé à réagir aux doléances des enseignants et des avocats qui ont relancé le conflit en 2017 la crise s'est transformée en guerre ou en lutte pour l'indépendance. Cet article, utilisant des sources primaires et secondaires, tente une analyse des défaillances structurelles de l'État postcolonial qui ont donné naissance au problème anglophone et des griefs des enseignants qui ont été les causes immédiates de la guerre. L'étude révèle que les doléances des anglophones



sont profondément enracinées et que l'échec du régime de Yaoundé à préserver leur identité culturelle en général et leur système éducatif en particulier dans le nouveau régime politique a provoqué le mécontentement et appelle à la restauration de l'État du Cameroun Occidental, l'Ambazonie.

**Mots-clés:** Anglophone, Cameroun, Éducation, Fédération.

هيكل دولة ما بعد الاستعمار و التعليم الجولفوني ( باللغة الإنجليزية ) كاهم  
مسببات الحرب الأهلية الكاميرونية

نفي جوزيف لون

تحولت مشكلة الانجولفين (الناطقين بالإنجليزية) في الكاميرون، والتي تعود إلى إعادة التوحيد الذي تم التفاوض عليه بشكل سري في عام ١٩٦١ إلى العنف في نوفمبر ٢٠١٦، عندما أصبحت الدعوات إلى "استعادة غرب الكاميرون" شعرا لبعض جماعات الضغط وجميع أشكال المظاهرات والاحتجاجات السياسية. كتبت الحكومة بطنية في الاستجابة لشكاوى المعلمين والمحامين، الذين قاموا بلجاء الصراع في ٢٠١٧ وتحولت الأزمة إلى حرب أو صراع من أجل الاستقلال. يدرس هذا المقال الذي يستخدم المصادر الأولية والثانوية الإخفاقات الهيكلية لدولة ما بعد الاستعمار التي أدت إلى مشكلة الناطقين باللغة الإنجليزية وشكاوى المعلمين، الذين كانوا السبب المباشر للحرب. تكشف الدراسة أن شكاوى الناطقين باللغة الإنجليزية عميقة الجذور وأن فشل نظام ياوندي في الحفاظ على هويته الثقافية بشكل عام ونظامه التعليمي بشكل خاص في النظام السياسي الجديد آثار استياءاً ودعوات لاستعادة أمبازونيا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المتحدثون باللغة الإنجليزية، الكاميرون، التعليم، الاتحاد

### O fracasso da descolonização em África e a ascensão de novos estados: Cartografia da guerra nos Camarões do Sul – Ambazónia

Roland Ngwatung Afungang

A descolonização de África é amplamente considerada um acontecimento passado, mas as marcas deixadas ainda hoje são notícia de primeira página. O processo tem sido a raiz de muitos conflitos em toda a África. Algumas potências coloniais europeias mantiveram o controlo sobre as suas colónias utilizando meios indiretos, enquanto alguns Estados africanos anexaram os seus vizinhos. Este artigo tem como objetivo examinar a descolonização dos Camarões do Sul e fazer uma cartografia da guerra de independência em curso. Para contextualizar a análise, fez-se uma retrospectiva de conflitos semelhantes em toda o continente. Métodos empíricos e não-empíricos, incluindo análise

cognitiva, crowdsourcing e métodos de investigação aplicada foram utilizados para recolher informações e verificar/autenticar factos. Foram também usados o sistema de informação geográfica e o processo de deteção remota para recolher, analisar, e apresentar estruturas danificadas observadas através de imagens de satélite. Descobri que a resolução 1514 da Assembleia Geral das Nações Unidas de 14 de dezembro de 1960 e a resolução 1608 de 21 de abril de 1961 não foram implementadas conforme as instruções. Recusou-se o direito à autodeterminação a alguns povos colonizados, causando conflitos insolúveis com enormes perdas de vidas. Nos Camarões do Sul, em abril de 2019 mais de 3000 pessoas foram oficialmente declaradas mortas, mais de 38 000 procuraram refúgio na Nigéria e mais de 1,5 milhões de pessoas tiveram de se deslocar para outras regiões do país.

**Palavras-chave:** Conflito armado, cartografia, Camarões do Sul, colonialismo.

### Failed decolonization of Africa and the rise of new states: Cartography of the War in Southern Cameroons – Ambazonia

The decolonization of Africa is widely looked upon as a past event, but the imprints left behind are still making news headlines today. The process has been the root cause of many conflicts across Africa. Some European colonial powers have maintained control over their colonies using indirect means while some African states have annexed their neighbours. This paper is aimed at examining the decolonization of Southern Cameroon and creating a cartography of the ongoing independence war. To put the analysis in context, similar conflicts across Africa have been reviewed. Empirical and non-empirical methods including cognitive analysis, crowd sourcing and applied research methods were used to gather information and verify/authenticate facts. Geographic information system and remote sensing were used to collect, analyze, and present damaged structures observed through satellite images. I found that United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1514 of 14 December 1960 and Resolution 1608 of 21<sup>st</sup> April 1961 were not implemented as instructed. Some colonized people were refused the right of self-determination causing intractable conflicts with huge loss of lives. In the Southern Cameroons, over 3000 people have been officially declared killed, over 38,000 are refugees in Nigeria and over 1.5 million persons are internally displaced, as of April 2019.

**Keywords:** Armed Conflict, Cartography, Southern Cameroons, colonialism.

## La faillite de la décolonisation en Afrique et les nouveaux États: cartographie de la guerre au Cameroun du Sud- Ambazonie

La décolonisation de l'Afrique est largement considérée comme un événement passé, mais les empreintes laissées derrière font encore la une des journaux aujourd'hui. Le processus de décolonisation a été à l'origine de nombreux conflits à travers l'Afrique. Certaines puissances coloniales européennes ont maintenu le contrôle de leurs colonies par des moyens indirects tandis que certains États africains ont annexé leurs voisins. Cet article vise à examiner la décolonisation du *Southern Cameroons* et à faire une cartographie de la guerre d'indépendance en cours. Pour mettre cela en contexte, un retour en arrière sur des conflits similaires à travers l'Afrique a été fait. Des méthodes empiriques et non empiriques comprenant l'analyse cognitive, le crowdsourcing et les méthodes de recherche appliquée ont été utilisées pour recueillir des informations et vérifier/authentifier les faits. Le système d'information géographique et la télédétection ont été utilisés pour collecter, analyser et présenter les structures endommagées observées au moyen d'images satellitaires. Il a été découvert que la résolution 1514 de l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies du 14 décembre 1960 et la résolution 1608 du 21 avril 1961 n'étaient pas appliquées comme prévu. Certaines personnes colonisées se sont vu refuser le droit à l'autodétermination, provoquant des conflits insolubles entraînant d'énormes pertes en vies humaines. Dans le *Southern Cameroons*, plus de 3000 personnes ont été officiellement déclarées tuées, plus de 38 000 sont devenues des réfugiés au Nigéria et plus de 1,5 million de personnes sont déplacées à l'intérieur du pays. Ces statistiques datent d'avril 2019.

**Mots-clés:** Conflit armé, cartographie, Cameroun du Sud, colonialisme.

فشل مسار إنهاء الاستعمار في إفريقيا وظهور دول جديدة: خرائط الحرب في -

جنوب الكاميرون - أمبازونيا  
رولاند نغواتونغ أفونجيج

يعتبر إنهاء الاستعمار في إفريقيا على نطاق واسع حدثاً قديماً، ولكن ما تبقى اليوم هو مجرد أخبار على صفحات الجرائد. كان هذا المسار هو السبب الرئيس للعديد من الصراعات في جميع أنحاء أفريقيا. حافظت بعض القوى الاستعمارية الأوروبية على

سيطرتها على مستعمراتها باستخدام وسائل غير مباشرة، بينما ضمت بعض الدول الأفريقية جيرانها. يهدف هذا المقال إلى دراسة مسار إنهاء الاستعمار في جنوب الكاميرون ورسم خريطة لحرب الاستقلال المستمرة. لوضع التحليل في سياق، تم عرض صراعات مماثلة حصلت في الماضي. تم استخدام الأساليب التجريبية وغير التجريبية، بما في ذلك التحليل المعرفي والتعميد الجماعي وطرق البحث التطبيقي لجمع المعلومات والتحقق من صحتها، كما تم استخدام نظام المعلومات الجغرافية والاستشعار عن بعد لجمع وتحليل وعرض الهياكل التالفة التي لوحظت من خلال صور الأقمار الصناعية. من خلال البحث، يتضح أن القرار ١٥١٤ للجمعية العامة للأمم المتحدة الصادر في ١٤ ديسمبر من ١٩٦٠ و القرار ١٦٠٨ الصادر بتاريخ ٢١ أبريل من ١٩٦١ لم يتم تنفيذهما حسب التعليمات. لقد حرمت بعض الشعوب المستعمرة من حقها في تقرير المصير، مما تسبب في صراعات غير قابلة للحل أدت إلى خسائر فادحة في الأرواح. في جنوب الكاميرون، في أبريل ٢٠١٩، تم إعلان وفاة أكثر من ٣٠٠٠ شخص رسمياً، ولجأ أكثر من ٣٨٠٠٠ شخص إلى نيجيريا واضطر أكثر من ١,٥ مليون شخص إلى الانتقال إلى مناطق أخرى من البلاد.

الكلمات المفتاحية: النزاع المسلح، الخرائط، جنوب الكاميرون، الاستعمار

## A inação das Comunidades Econômicas Regionais no contexto da crise no Camarões: Um retorno ao passado?

Guilherme Ziebell de Oliveira e Nilton César Fernandes Cardoso

Este trabalho busca analisar a atual crise no Camarões e a inação das Comunidades Econômicas Regionais (ECCAS e CEMAC) em relação à resolução do problema. A crise tem seu estopim em 2016, quando o governo camaronês buscou impor o francês como língua oficial em todas as escolas do país e nomear juízes francófonos para atuar nas regiões Sudoeste e Noroeste do Camarões (estas majoritariamente anglófonas). Diante disso, diversos protestos contrários às medidas adotadas pelo governo passaram a acontecer em tais regiões. Em resposta, as forças de segurança camaronesas foram acionadas, passando a reprimir as manifestações. Esse contexto levou a um agravamento da situação, com uma significativa escalada da violência e a eventual tentativa de secessão das regiões anglófonas do restante do país, em 2017. A partir de uma análise da evolução histórica da crise camaronesa, bem como das Comunidades Econômicas Regionais (RECs) das quais o país é parte, o trabalho demonstra que sua inação remete a elementos pertinentes ao panorama securitário africano anteriores à transformação da Organização da Unidade Africana em União Africana, os quais representam importantes desafios para o continente.

**Palavras-chave:** Camarões, UA, ECCAS, CEMAC.

## The Inaction of Regional Economic Communities in the Cameroon Crisis: a return to the past?

This work seeks to analyze the current crisis in Cameroon and the inaction of the Regional Economic Communities (ECCAS and CEMAC) in solving the question. The crisis was triggered in 2016 when the Cameroonian government sought to impose French as the official language in all schools in the country and to appoint French-speaking judges to work in the Southwest and Northwest regions of Cameroon (which are mostly Anglophone). Therefore, several protests against the measures adopted started in such regions. In response, Cameroonian security forces were called in and began to suppress the demonstrations. This context led to a worsening of the situation, with a significant escalation of violence and the attempt of the Anglophone regions to secede from the rest of the country in 2017. Based on an analysis of the historical evolution of the Cameroonian crisis, as well as of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) of which the country is a part, the work demonstrates that their inaction indicates elements relevant to the African security landscape prior to the transformation of the Organization of African Unity into African Union, which represent important challenges for the continent.

**Keywords:** Cameroon, AU, ECCAS, CEMAC.

## L'inaction des Communautés Économiques Régionales dans la crise du Cameroun: un retour au passé?

Ce travail cherche à analyser l'actuelle crise au Cameroun et le manque d'action des Communautés Économiques Régionales. La crise date de 2016, moment où le gouvernement camerounais a essayé d'imposer le français comme langue officielle dans toutes les écoles du pays et nommer des juges francophones dans les régions Sud-Est et Nord-Est du Cameroun (majoritairement anglophones). De ce fait, il a eu plusieurs protestations contre les mesures adoptées par le gouvernement dans ces régions-là. Ceci a provoqué la mise en action des forces de sécurité camerounaises qui ont réprimé les manifestations. Un tel contexte a empiré la situation avec une montée de violence et l'éventuel essai de sécession des régions anglophones du reste du pays en 2017. En partant d'une analyse de l'évolution historique de la crise camerounaise, tout aussi bien que des Communautés Économiques Régionales

(RECs) auxquelles le pays appartient, ce travail démontre que leur absence d'action est en rapport avec des éléments pertinents dans le panorama sécuritaire africain antérieurs à la transformation de l'Organisation de l'Unité Africaine en Unité Africaine, qui représentent des défis importants pour le continent.

**Mots-clés:** Cameroun, UA, ECCAS, CEMAC.

تقاعس المجموعات الاقتصادية الإقليمية حيال الأزمة في الكاميرون: عودة إلى الماضي؟

غيريم زيبال دو أوليفيرا و نيلتون سيزار فيرنانديش كاردوزو

يسعى هذا العمل إلى تحليل الأزمة الحالية في الكاميرون وتقاعس المجموعات الاقتصادية الإقليمية (المجموعة الاقتصادية لدول وسط أفريقيا و المجموعة الاقتصادية والتنمية لوسط إفريقيا) فيما يتعلق بحل المشكلة. اندلعت الأزمة في عام ٢٠١٦، عندما سعت الحكومة الكاميرونية إلى فرض الفرنسية كلغة رسمية في جميع المدارس في البلاد وتعيين قضاة فرنكفونيين للعمل في المناطق الجنوبية الغربية والشمالية الغربية من الكاميرون (معظمهم يتحدثون الإنجليزية). لذلك بدأت عدة احتجاجات على الإجراءات التي اتخذتها الحكومة في هذه المناطق. رداً على ما حدث، تم استدعاء قوات الأمن الكاميرونية وبدأت قمع المظاهرات. أدى كل هذا إلى تفاقم الوضع مع تصاعد كبير للعنف ومحاولات محتملة للانفصال بقية البلاد من طرف المناطق الناطقة باللغة الإنجليزية في عام ٢٠١٧. استناداً إلى تحليل التطور التاريخي للأزمة الكاميرونية، وكذلك للمجموعات الاقتصادية الإقليمية التي تعد البلاد جزءاً منها، يوضح العمل أن تقاعسها يشير إلى العناصر ذات الصلة بسيناريو الأمن الأفريقي قبل تحويل منظمة الوحدة الأفريقية إلى اتحاد أفريقي، والتي تمثل تحديات مهمة للقارة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الكاميرون، الاتحاد الأفريقي، المجموعة الاقتصادية لدول وسط أفريقيا، المجموعة الاقتصادية والتنمية لوسط إفريقيا

**A história nunca morre, de que modo regressa o passado silencioso: Camarões do Sul/"Ambazónia"**

Gallous Atabongwoug

Em 2016, os Camarões assistiram ao ressurgimento de um passado silencioso que se tinha tornado numa «caixa de pandora» à espera de ser aberta. Os Camarões foram divididos entre a Grã-Bretanha e a França durante a época colonial. O país foi iniciado nas glórias da independência em duas datas diferentes; em 1960 os Camarões franceses tornaram-se independentes da França e formaram a «République du Cameroun» e em 1961 os "Camarões do Sul" britânicos conquistaram a independência juntando-se aos Camarões franceses e formando a República Federal dos

Camarões. O governo dos Camarões reunificou o país no início da década de 1970 sem considerar o modo como a «reunificação» iria afetar as duas entidades políticas. O resultado foi a incapacidade do governo em reconciliar a divisão psicossocial do legado colonial que já estava enraizada no tecido das duas anteriores colônias. Como seria natural, a história regressou com uma grave crise política que levou ao rebentamento de uma guerra civil que já ceifou mais de 40 000 vidas e causou mais de um milhão de deslocados internos e mais de 50 000 refugiados na vizinha Nigéria. A crise continua a ser uma ameaça à unidade artificial que o Estado tem mantido após a independência. Este artigo tenta reconstituir a história dos Camarões, a fim de posicionar criticamente o argumento relativo à causa original do conflito atual. O artigo expõe também o papel da língua no reforço da questão da identidade camaronesa pós-reunificação. Conclui com as recomendações necessárias para uma ação rápida no sentido de corrigir as queixas profundamente enraizadas dos antigos camaroneses britânicos do sul.

**Palavras-chave:** Independência, República Federal, reunificação, poderes coloniais.

### **History Never Dies, How Silent Past Returns: Southern Cameroons/"Ambazonia"**

In 2016, Cameroon has seen the re-emergence of a silent past that was a 'pandora box' waiting for someone to open. Cameroon was divided between Britain and France during the colonial era. The country was ushered into the glories of independence with two dates; 1960 French Cameroon gained independence from France to form "*La République du Cameroun*", and 1961 the British Southern Cameroons gained independence by joining French Cameroon to form the Federal Republic of Cameroon. The government of Cameroon reunited the country in the early 1970s without a consideration of how the "*would be reunification*" would affect the both political entities. As a consequence, the government could not reconcile the psychosocial divide of colonial legacy that was already embedded in the fabrics of the two previous colonies. Certainly, history has returned with serious political crisis which led to the outbreak of a civil war that has claimed more than 40 000 lives, caused more than a million internally displaced and more than 50 000 living in neighbouring Nigeria as refugees. The crisis remains a threat to the artificial unity that the state has maintained post-independence. This article attempts to re-trace the history of

Cameroon in order to critically position the argument regarding the root cause of the present conflict. The article also expounds on the role of language in reinforcing the question of post-reunification Cameroonian identity. It concludes by providing recommendations needed for a swift action to redress the deep-rooted grievances of former British Southern Cameroonians.

**Keywords:** Independence, Federal Republic, Reunification, Colonial Powers.

### **L'Histoire ne meurt jamais et comment le passé silencieux revient: le Cameroun du Sud/"Ambazonie"**

En 2016, le Cameroun a vu la réémergence d'un passé silencieux qui était une «boîte à pandore» attendant que quelqu'un s'ouvre. Le Cameroun a été divisé entre la Grande-Bretagne et la France à l'époque coloniale. Le pays a été introduit dans les gloires de l'indépendance avec deux dates; 1960 Le Cameroun français a obtenu son indépendance de la France pour former «La République du Cameroun», et 1961 le «Southern Cameroons» britannique a obtenu son indépendance en rejoignant le Cameroun français pour former la République fédérale du Cameroun. Le gouvernement du Cameroun a réuni le pays au début des années 1970 sans se demander comment «la réunification» affecterait les deux entités politiques. En conséquence, le gouvernement n'a pas pu concilier la fracture psychosociale de l'héritage colonial qui était déjà ancrée dans les tissus des deux colonies précédentes. Certes, l'histoire est revenue avec une grave crise politique qui a conduit au déclenchement d'une guerre civile qui a fait plus de 40 000 morts, causé plus d'un million de personnes déplacées à l'intérieur du pays et plus de 50 000 personnes vivant au Nigéria voisin en tant que réfugiés. La crise reste une menace pour l'unité artificielle que l'État a maintenue après l'indépendance. Cet article tente de retracer l'histoire du Cameroun afin de positionner de manière critique l'argument concernant la cause profonde du conflit actuel. L'article expose également le rôle de la langue dans le renforcement de la question de l'identité camerounaise post-réunification. L'article conclut en formulant les recommandations nécessaires pour une action rapide pour redresser les griefs profondément enracinés des anciens Camerounais britanniques du sud.

**Mots-clés:** Indépendance, République Fédérale, réunification, Pouvoirs Coloniaux.

التاريخ لا يموت أبداً، فكيف يعود الماضي الصامت: جنوب الكاميرون /  
"أمبارونيا"

غالوس اتابونغونغ

في عام ٢٠١٦، شهدت الكاميرون عودة الماضي الصامت الذي أصبح "صندوق بانورا" ينتظر أن يُفتح. تم تقسيم الكاميرون بين بريطانيا وفرنسا خلال الحقبة الاستعمارية. دخلت البلاد إلى أمداد الاستقلال في تاريخين مختلفين. في عام ١٩٦٠، استقلت الكاميرون الفرنسية عن فرنسا وشكلت "جمهورية الكاميرون" وفي عام ١٩٦١ حصلت "الكاميرون الجنوبية" البريطانية على استقلالها بالانضمام إلى الكاميرون الفرنسية وتشكيل جمهورية الكاميرون الفيدرالية. أعادت الحكومة الكاميرونية توحيد البلاد في أوائل السبعينيات دون التفكير في كيفية تأثير "إعادة التوحيد" على الكيانات السياسيتين، وكانت النتيجة عدم قدرة الحكومة على التوفيق بين التقسيم النفسي والاجتماعي للارت الاستعماري الذي كان متجنزاً بالفعل في نسيج المستعمرتين السابقتين. بطبيعة الحال، عاد التاريخ بأزمة سياسية خطيرة أدت إلى اندلاع حرب أهلية أودت بحياة أكثر من ٤٠ ألف شخص وتسببت في نزوح أكثر من مليون شخص داخلياً وأكثر من ٥٠٠٠٠ لاجئ في نيجيريا المجاورة. لا تزال الأزمة تشكل تهديداً للوحدة المصطنعة التي حافظت عليها الدولة بعد الاستقلال. تحاول هذه المقالة إعادة بناء تاريخ الكاميرون من أجل تحديد موقف نقدي للحجة المتعلقة بالسبب الأصلي للصراع الحالي، يكشف المقال أيضاً عن دور اللغة في تعزيز قضية الهوية الكاميرونية بعد إعادة التوحيد. واختتم بالتوصيات اللازمة لاتخاذ إجراءات سريعة لتصحيح الشكاوي عميقة الجذور لمواطني الكاميرون الجنوبيين البريطانيين السابقين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاستقلال، الجمهورية الفيدرالية، إعادة التوحيد، القوى الاستعمارية

**Palavras-chave:** Problema anglófono, conflito de memória, reunificação, estado federal, produção de história.

## The Anglophone Problem and the Conflict of Memory in Cameroon

The present work demonstrates that the vivid memories of the colonial and postcolonial past of Cameroon feed the present conflict in the North West and South West. But these are distorted memories, reorganized, reconstructed by time and circumstances.

This work points out the origin of this resurgence in the political system set up after the independence, which lacked historical legitimacy and based its hegemonic power on an organized amnesia.

The scientific balance today is a poor historical production, both in quality and quantity. Politically this is an armed conflict underpinned by a memory divide.

To get out of such a memory conflict, this article proposes a return to historical scholarship from new paths, new hypotheses and above all from a crossed perspective.

**Keywords:** Anglophone problem, memory conflict, reunification, federal state, production of history.

## Problème anglophone et conflits mémoriels au Cameroun

Le présent travail démontre que les mémoires vives du passé colonial et postcolonial du Cameroun irriguent le présent conflit au Nord-Ouest et au Sud-Ouest. Seulement il s'agit de mémoires déformées, réaménagées, reconstruites par le temps et les circonstances.

Parlant des circonstances, ce travail trouve l'origine de cette résurgence dans le système politique mis en place après les indépendances et qui, faute de légitimité historique, avait fondé son pouvoir hégémonique sur une amnésie organisée.

Le bilan aujourd'hui c'est, sur le plan scientifique, une production historique pauvre en qualité et en quantité et sur le plan politique un conflit armé sous-tendu par une fracture mémorielle.

Pour sortir tout au moins de ce conflit mémoriel, cet article propose un retour à la science historique à partir des nouveaux chemins, de nouvelles hypothèses et surtout à partir d'un regard croisé.

## Problemas anglófonos e conflitos de memória nos Camarões

Emmanuel Tchumtchoua

O presente trabalho mostra que as memórias vivas do passado colonial e pós-colonial dos Camarões inundam o atual conflito no Noroeste e no Sudoeste. Contudo estas são memórias distorcidas, rearranjadas, reconstruídas pelo tempo e pelas circunstâncias. Falando de circunstâncias, este trabalho situa a origem deste ressurgimento na organização do sistema político após a independência que, por falta de legitimidade histórica, tinha alicerçado o seu poder hegemónico na amnésia organizada. O balanço atual é, a nível científico, uma produção histórica pobre em qualidade e quantidade e, a nível político, um conflito armado sustentado por uma memória fragmentada. Para sair de um tal conflito de memória, este artigo propõe um regresso à ciência histórica baseado em novos caminhos, novas hipóteses e, sobretudo, a partir de uma perspetiva cruzada.

**Mots-clés:** Problème Anglophone, conflit mémoriel, réunification, Etat fédéral, production de l'histoire.

مشاكل الناطقين بالإنجليزية (الانجلوفونيين) وصراعات الذاكرة في الكاميرون

إيمائول تشومتشوا

يظهر هذا المقال كيف تغيرت الذكريات الحية ماضي الكاميرون الاستعماري وما بعد الاستعمار والصراع الحالي في الشمال الغربي والجنوب الغربي. ومع ذلك، فهذه ذكريات مشوهة، أعيد ترتيبها، وأعيد بناؤها حسب الزمان والظروف. عند الحديث عن الظروف، يحدد هذا العمل أصل هذا الانبعاث في النظام السياسي بعد الاستقلال، والذي بنى قوته المهيمنة على فقدان الذاكرة المنظم بسبب الافتقار إلى الشرعية التاريخية. نتيجة لكل هذا وذاك، وعلى المستوى العلمي، فالنتيجة كانت إنتاجاً تاريخياً رديئاً نوعاً وكماً. أما على المستوى السياسي، فصراع مسلح تدعّمه ذاكرة مجزأة. للخروج من صراع الذاكرة، تقترح هذه المقالة العودة إلى العلوم التاريخية بنهضة على مسارات وفرضيات جديدة وقيل كل شيء من منظور متقاطع مع الآخر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مشكلة اللغة الإنجليزية، صراع الذاكرة، إعادة التوحيد، الدولة الفيدرالية، إنتاج التاريخ

**Palavras-chave:** Cemitério, espaços esquecidos, paisagens da história, valores simbólicos.

### Forgotten Spaces in Cameroon History: Symbolic Interpretation of the German Military Cemetery in Yaoundé (1888-1912)

How can one envisage the perceptions and symbolic representations of the German cemetery of Yaoundé (1888-1912)? Such a question, from the outset, may seem trivial if one tries to turn the spotlight on “the test of interpretation of the symbolic values of the cemetery” during those years. In such a reflection, the interpretation of its symbolic values is at issue whether it is in Cameroon or in Germany. From this central question arise two subsidiary questions, namely: how to analyze it as a therapy for a German memory? And how to grasp it as a socio-cultural heritage of the German presence in Cameroon?

**Keywords:** Cemetery, forgotten spaces, landscapes of history, symbolic values.

### Espaces oubliés dans les paysages de l'histoire du Cameroun: Essai d'interprétation des valeurs symboliques du cimetière allemand de Yaoundé (1888-1912)

Comment peut-on envisager les perceptions et représentations symboliques du cimetière allemand de Yaoundé (1888-1912)? Une telle question, d'entrée de jeu, peut paraître anodine si l'on essaie de braquer les projecteurs sur «l'essai d'interprétation des valeurs symboliques du cimetière» pendant cette période. En engageant une pareille réflexion, il s'agit de s'interroger sur le sens de l'interprétation des valeurs symboliques du cimetière, que ce soit au Cameroun ou en Allemagne. De cette question centrale, jaillissent deux interrogations subsidiaires, à savoir: comment l'analyser comme une thérapeutique du souvenir allemand? Et comment le saisir comme un héritage socioculturel de la présence allemande au Cameroun?

**Mots-clés:** Cimetière, espaces oubliés, paysages de l'histoire, valeurs symboliques.

### Espaços esquecidos nas paisagens da história dos Camarões: ensaio sobre a interpretação dos valores simbólicos do cemitério alemão de Yaoundé (1888-1912)

Martin Raymond Willy Mbog Ibock

Como podemos considerar as percepções e representações simbólicas do cemitério alemão de Yaoundé (1888-1912)? Esta questão, à primeira vista, pode parecer trivial se nos focarmos na «tentativa de interpretar os valores simbólicos do cemitério durante esse período. Ao fazer tal reflexão, há que questionar o significado da interpretação desses valores, sejam os referentes aos Camarões sejam aos da Alemanha. Melhor ainda, como compreender o significado da interpretação dos valores simbólicos do cemitério alemão de Yaoundé no mesmo período? Desta questão central emergem duas questões subsidiárias, a saber: como pode esta questão ser analisada como uma terapia para a memória alemã? E como apreendê-la enquanto património sócio-cultural da presença alemã nos Camarões?

المساحات المنسية في المناظر الطبيعية لتاريخ الكامبيرون: قراءة رمزية للمقبرة الألمانية في ياوندي (١٨٨٨-١٩١٢)  
ميوغ إيبوك

كيف يمكننا النظر في التصورات والعروض الرمزية للمقبرة الألمانية في ياوندي (١٨٨٨-١٩١٢)؟

قد يبدو هذا السؤال للوهلة الأولى تافهاً إذا ركزنا على "محاولة تفسير القيم الرمزية للمقبرة خلال هذه الفترة". عند القيام بهذا، من الضروري تفسير معنى هذه القيم، سواء بالإشارة إلى الكامبيرون أو ألمانيا. والأفضل من ذلك، كيف نفهم معنى تفسير القيم الرمزية للمقبرة الألمانية في ياوندي في نفس الفترة؟ من هذا السؤال المركزي، يبرز سؤالان فرعيان وهما: كيف يمكن تحليل هذا السؤال كعلاج للذاكرة الألمانية؟ وكيف نعتبره تراثاً اجتماعياً وثقافياً للوجود الألماني في الكامبيرون؟

الكلمات المفتاحية: مقبرة، مساحات منسية، مناظر طبيعية من التاريخ، القيم الرمزية

## Mercenários ou força de manutenção de paz? Uma comparação entre os Executive Outcomes e a ECOMONG na Serra Leoa

Antonino Adamo

Este artigo compara duas intervenções estrangeiras em Serra Leoa: a ação, em 1995, da Executive Outcomes (EO), uma empresa militar privada sul-africana (PMC) contra a Frente Revolucionária Unida (RUF); e a intervenção da Economic Community of West African States Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), entre 1997 e 2000.

Procede-se a uma análise do contexto, focada nas PMCs e nos sistemas de segurança regionais e sub-regionais africanos, no sentido de fazer uma avaliação das duas intervenções. O artigo salienta as falhas experimentadas pela EO e pela ECOMOG: por um lado, revela que a intervenção da EO dificilmente se pode considerar eficaz, dada a controvérsia em relação à sua legitimidade e fiabilidade, entre outros aspetos; por outro, destaca os constrangimentos técnicos, financeiros e políticos como as principais deficiências da ECOMOG.

Finalmente, apresenta-se um resumo das concretizações e desenvolvimentos mais significativos da CEDEAO/ECOMOG em termos da manutenção da paz sub-regional na África Ocidental.

**Palavras-chave:** Serra Leoa, Executive Outcomes, ECOMOG, Mercenários.

## Mercenaries or Peacekeepers? Comparing Executive Outcomes and ECOMOG in Sierra Leone

The paper compares two foreign interventions in Sierra Leone; the 1995 involvement of Executive Outcomes (EO), a South African private military company (PMC), against the Revolutionary United Front (RUF); and the intervention by the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG, 1997-2000). A context analysis is performed, along with a focus on PMCs and African regional and sub-regional security systems, before an assessment of both interventions is provided. The paper highlights the failures experienced by both EO and ECOMOG: on the one hand, it reveals that EO intervention can be hardly considered as effective, due to its controversial legitimacy, accountability, etc., but on the other it points out at the technical, financial and political constraints as the main deficiencies of ECOMOG. Finally, the paper briefly introduces the most relevant achievements and developments experienced by ECOWAS/ECOMOG in terms of sub-regional peacekeeping in West Africa.

**Keywords:** Sierra Leone, Executive Outcomes, ECOMOG, Mercenaries.

## Mercenaires ou force d'interposition? Une comparaison entre les Executive Outcomes et l'ECOMOG au Sierra Leone

Le document compare deux interventions étrangères en Sierra Leone; l'implication en 1995 de Executive Outcomes (EO), une société militaire privée sud-africaine (PMC), contre le Front révolutionnaire uni (RUF); et l'intervention de l'Economic Community of West African States Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG, 1997-2000). Une analyse du contexte est effectuée, avec un accent sur les PMC et les systèmes de sécurité régionaux et sous-régionaux africains, avant qu'une évaluation des deux interventions ne soit fournie. Le document met en évidence les échecs vécus par EO et

ECOMOG: d'une part, il révèle que l'intervention de EO peut difficilement être considérée comme efficace, en raison de sa légitimité controversée, de sa responsabilité, etc., mais d'autre part, il souligne les contraintes techniques, financières et politiques comme les principales lacunes de ECOMOG. Enfin, le document présente brièvement les réalisations et développements les plus marquants de la CEDEAO/ECOMOG en termes de maintien de la paix sous-régional en Afrique de l'Ouest.

**Mots-clés:** Sierra Leone, Sierra Leone, Executive Outcomes, ECOMOG, Mercenaires.

مرتزة أم قوة حفظ سلام؟

مقارنة بين أداء (إغزيكيتيف اوتكومز) ومجموعة المراقبة التابعة للمجموعة الاقتصادية لدول غرب أفريقيا في سيراليون

أنتونينو أدامو

يقارن هذا المقال بين تدخلين اجنبيين في سيراليون: تدخل شركة إغزيكيتيف اوتكومز وهي شركة عسكرية جنوب افريقية خاصة عام ١٩٩٥ ضد الثورة الجبهة المتحدة، وتدخل مجموعة مراقبة وقف إطلاق النار التابعة للمجموعة الاقتصادية لدول غرب إفريقيا بين عامي ١٩٩٧-٢٠٠٠. يتم إجراء تحليل للسباق مع التركيز على الشركات العسكرية الخاصة وأنظمة الأمن الإقليمية والمحلية على مستوى القارة الأفريقية. يسلط المقال الضوء على الإخفاقات التي عانى منها الطرفين: فمن ناحية، يكشف أن تدخل إغزيكيتيف اوتكومز بالكاد يمكن اعتباره فعالاً نظراً للجدل حول شرعيته وموثوقيته، ومن ناحية أخرى، يسلط الضوء على القيود الفنية والمالية والسياسية باعتبارها أوجه القصور الرئيسية لفريق المراقبين العسكريين التابع للمجموعة الاقتصادية لدول غرب أفريقيا.

في الأخير، يتم تقديم ملخص لأهم إنجازات وتطورات المجموعة الاقتصادية لدول غرب إفريقيا ومجموعة المراقبة التابعة لها فيما يتعلق بالحفاظ على السلم في غرب أفريقيا.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** سيراليون، إغزيكيتيف اوتكومز، مجموعة المراقبة للمجموعة الاقتصادية لدول غرب أفريقيا، المرتزة



## Legendas das ilustrações

1. Map of the Southern part of the Trust Territory of British Cameroons (1919 – 1961). It shows the 13 divisions and the divisional headquarters. The names on the map are still the same today. Source: Basel Mission Archives – <https://www.bmarchives.org>.
2. Conférence de Foumban. Juillet 1961. Archives Nationales à Buea.
3. Anglophone Lawyers protest of 6<sup>th</sup> October 2016 continued in the streets. Source: Bareta news – <https://www.bareta.news/cameroon-common-law-lawyers-take-protest-london/>.
4. Ambazonians or Southern Cameroons protest of 09<sup>th</sup> March 2020 in Parliament Square – London during the Commonwealth Day festivities. Source: Journal du cameroun.com – <https://www.journalducameroun.com/en/cameroon-two-ambazonia-protesters-arrested-at-queen-elisabeth-commonwealth-service/>.
5. A village in Belo Sub-division of the North West region of Anglophone Cameroon under fire after a raid by Cameroun military forces of 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020. Residents say the military burned down the village because they presumed it harboured separatist fighters of Southern Cameroons. Source: Facebook post by British Southern Cameroons Resistance Forces, an arm group fighting in the area.
6. UN Mission. Nord Kivu, D. R. Congo, 2014. Foto: Galina Sidorova.
7. Southern Cameroons National Congress (SCNC) activists detained in Bamenda Up-Station prison. 2005. Source Facebook post by one of the activists in the photo called Melchizedek Kaavi.
8. Conférence de Foumban. La délégation du *Southern Cameroons* était présidée par J. N. Foncha (Premier Ministre du *Southern Cameroons*) et celle du Cameroun par Amadu Ahidjo (President du Cameroun francophone) Juillet 1961. Archives Nationales à Buea.
9. Obadiah Mua. Brussels, 2020. Foto: Ambazonian Governing Council.
10. Obadiah Mua (on the left). Brussels, 2020. Foto: Ambazonian Governing Council.
11. Destroço de tanque soviético T-55, usado pelo exército marroquino na guerra do Saara Ocidental (1976-1991). Uad Tifariti, Saara Ocidental, Janeiro de 2020. Foto: Carmo Matos.
12. Cimetière allemand de Yaoundé. Yaoundé, 2020. Foto: Martin Raymond Willy Mbog Ibock.

## Crítérios para publicação

- A *Africana Studia* só publica trabalhos inéditos.
- A *Africana Studia* aceita trabalhos científicos de qualquer área de investigação cuja temática seja África e sociedades africanas.
- Os trabalhos só poderão ser aceites em português, inglês ou francês.
- A publicação de trabalhos está sujeita à apreciação dos Conselhos Científico e Editorial, bem como, de um painel de árbitros constituídos por membros internos e externos ao CEAUP.

## Normas para apresentação de originais

- Os originais devem chegar no programa WORD para Windows ao seguinte endereço eletrónico: *africanastudia@letras.up.pt*.
- Os originais devem vir acompanhados pela identificação do autor (nome, instituição e contactos).
- O corpo de letra deverá ser em fonte Arial ou Times New Roman. Tamanho: 12 pontos para o corpo do texto e 10 pontos para as notas. Espaço entre linhas: 1,5.
- As imagens (mapas, quadros, figuras, fotografias, etc.) devem ser numeradas de 01 em diante. A localização de cada imagem no texto deve ser indicada pelo autor. As imagens devem ser entregues em ficheiros individuais (com a extensão XLS para ficheiros Excel ou JPEG, TIFF ou EPS). As imagens devem ter no mínimo 10x6 cm com 1200x800 pixel (300 dpi).
- Os artigos terão no máximo 70 000 caracteres, incluindo espaços, notas e bibliografia (não serão contadas as imagens).
- Cada artigo será acompanhado de resumos em **duas línguas** escolhidas do seguinte conjunto: português e/ou inglês e/ou francês e/ou árabe. Cada resumo não poderá ultrapassar um máximo de 1000 caracteres do alfabeto latino. O resumo deverá incluir um conjunto de palavras-chave (máximo de quatro).
- As resenções não poderão exceder os 25 000 caracteres.

## Normas de revisão e citação bibliográfica

- Os autores terão a possibilidade de rever provas dos seus trabalhos.
- Os autores comprometem-se a devolver as provas uma semana após o seu envio. Em caso de indisponibilidade, deverão declarar por escrito que prescindem dessa revisão de autor.
- As referências a autores, no texto, seguem a norma (autor, ano: página).  
Exemplo: (Rodrigues, 2000: 15)
- Se houver uma referência a um mesmo autor no mesmo ano, este deve ser acrescido de uma letra minúscula.  
Ex: (Rodrigues, 2000a: 15).
- Se a referência citada for de vários autores ficará:  
(Rodrigues *et al.*, 2000: 15).
- As transcrições deverão ser em *itálico*, assim como quaisquer vocábulos em língua estrangeira.
- As notas de rodapé e outras deverão limitar-se a informações complementares de interesse substantivo, não ultrapassando cinco linhas em corpo 10.
- A lista das Referências bibliográficas será colocada no fim do artigo e deverá conter apenas as referências introduzidas no texto, listando-as por ordem alfabética e por ordem cronológica crescente quando forem do mesmo autor.
- A bibliografia deve seguir os seguintes exemplos:
  - Livros: Rodrigues, Carlos (2001), *Os novos poderes em África*, Porto: Campo das Letras.
  - Coletâneas: Rodrigues, Carlos, Matos, A. e Silva, António (orgs.), (2002), *Os novos poderes em África*, Porto: Campo das Letras.
  - Artigos em revistas: Rodrigues, Carlos (2001), *Os novos poderes em África*, *Africana Studia*, n.º 8 (ou vol.), pp. 12-35.
  - Artigos/capítulos em coletâneas: Matos, A. (2002), “Os novos políticos africanos”. In: Rodrigues, Carlos, Matos, A. e Silva, António (orgs.), *Os novos poderes em África*, Porto: Campo das Letras.
- As traduções deverão indicar sempre que possível o ano da primeira publicação.
- Nas Referências bibliográficas eletrónicas deverá indicar-se sempre o site/path, a data do artigo e a data da consulta.  
Exemplo: Portal da Língua Portuguesa, 2011. *Vocabulário ortográfico do português* [Em linha]. [Consult. 21.mar.2012]. Disponível em: <http://portaldalinguaportuguesa.org>.

- As referências das fontes primárias deverão vir em notas de rodapé e começar pelo acrónimo do arquivo/instituição, seguindo-se as unidades de arquivo numa ordem do geral ao particular.  
Exemplo: AHU, maço 1665.1 – Governo de Angola, SNI, Nota n.º 136, 02-01-1935.
- Os acrónimos deverão ser desdobrados na lista das Referências bibliográficas.
- Após a publicação, os direitos de autor passam a ser pertença da *Africana Studia*.
- As imagens, no caso de serem originais e enviadas por via postal, serão devolvidas se assim for explicitado pelos autores.

## Estatuto editorial e normas éticas

Ver o seguinte link: <http://www.africanos.eu/index.php/pt/africana-studia/estatuto-editorial-e-normas-%C3%A9ticas>.

## Editorial Criteria

- *Africana Studia* publishes only original articles.
- *Africana Studia* accepts papers from every scientific field whose main object regards Africa and African societies.
- Papers are only accepted in Portuguese, English or French.
- Acceptance for publication depends on the validation of the Scientific and Editorial Boards of *Africana Studia* as well as on the validation of peer-reviewers.

## Editorial Norms

- Articles should be sent in Windows-Word files to the following e-mail address: *africanastudia@letras.up.pt*.
- Articles must include the author's identification (name, institution, contacts).
- Characters should preferentially be Arial or Times New Roman font. Size: 12 for body text and 10 for footnotes. Spacing: 1,5.
- If the article includes images of any sort they should be numbered from 01 onwards. In the original the location of each image should be indicated by the author. The images should have the extension XLS – Excel and/or JPEG, TIFF or EPS. Images should have at least 10x6 cm with 1200x800 pixels (300 dpi).
- Articles should not exceed 70 000 characters, including spaces, references and bibliography (images excluded).
- Each article should include abstracts (maximum 1000 characters of the Latin alphabet) in **two languages** chosen out from Portuguese, English, French and/or Arabic. Abstracts must come with a set of key-words (maximum of four).
- Book reviews should not exceed 25 000 characters.

## Revision and reference norms

- Authors can review their proof-readings.
- Authors are asked to send the proofs back within the next 10 days after their reception. In case of unavailability for doing so, they should inform the *Africana Studia* Editorial Board by written statement.
- References within the text should follow the norm (author, year: page).  
Example: (Rodrigues, 2000: 15).
- If there is more than one reference to the same author a minor character should be added to the name.  
Example: (Rodrigues, 2000a: 15).
- If there is more than one author in the quotation, the reference should be:  
Example: (Rodrigues *et al.*, 2000: 15).
- Quotations and foreign words should come in italic.
- Footnotes will only be used only for complementary information, preferentially not longer than five lines in size 10.
- A list of Bibliographic references should come at the end of the article and must only quote the books, articles and manuscripts mentioned in the footnotes. The order of appearance is by ascending chronological when there is more than one reference of the same author.
- The bibliographical list should come as follows:
  - Books: Rodrigues, Carlos (2001), *Os novos poderes em África*, Porto: Campo das Letras.
  - Colective books: Rodrigues, Carlos, Matos, A. e Silva, António (org.), (2002), *Os novos poderes em África*, Porto: Campo das Letras.
  - Articles in Journals: Rodrigues, Carlos (2001), *Os novos poderes em África*, *Africana Studia*, n.º 8 (or vol.), pp. 12-35.
  - Articles/chapters in collective books: Matos, A. (2002), Os novos políticos africanos, in, Rodrigues, Carlos, Matos, A. e Silva, António (orgs.), *Os novos poderes em África*, Porto: Campo das Letras.
- Translated books should include, if possible, the year of the first printing.
- Quotations from online databases must always show the site/path, date of publishing and date of reading. Example: Portal da Língua Portuguesa, 2011. Vocabulário ortográfico do português [Online]. [Consult. 21.mar.2012]. Available at: <http://portaldalinguaportuguesa.org>.

- References to archival sources should come in footnotes and start by the acronym of the institution, followed by the archival units in descending order.  
Example: AHU, maço 1665.1 – Government of Angola, SNI, minute n.º 136, 02-01-1935.
- Acronyms should be written out in full and be included in the bibliographical list.
- Copyrights of all published material belong to *Africana Studia*.
- Original images supplied by authors will be returned to them if requested.

## Editorial statute and ethical norms

See: <http://www.africanos.eu/index.php/en/africana-studia-2/estatuto-editorial-2>.





## Africana Studia

REVISTA INTERNACIONAL DE ESTUDOS AFRICANOS  
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF AFRICAN STUDIES

N.º 34 – 2.º semestre – 2020

### Culturas Populares e Urbanas em África



#### Assinatura Anual (Annual Subscription)

CENTRO DE ESTUDOS AFRICANOS U.P. – FLUP

Africana Studia – Via Panorâmica, s/n – 4150-564 PORTO – Portugal  
Telephone / Fax (00-351-226077141)

#### Dois números semestrais (Two issues/year)

Portugal .....	22 €
U.E. (European Union) .....	28 €
PALOP's .....	32 €
Resto do Mundo (Rest of the world) .....	32 €

Desconto para estudantes (Student's discount) — 20 % (\*)

(\*) Add copy of student's card

Nome (Name) \_\_\_\_\_

Morada (Address) \_\_\_\_\_

Telefone / Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Endereço electrónico (E-mail) \_\_\_\_\_

#### Modalidade de Pagamento (Payment by)

Transferência Bancária para: (Bank Transfer) \_\_\_\_\_

CENTRO DE ESTUDOS AFRICANOS U.P.

IBAN: PT50 0035 0194 0000 2032 53053 – BIC/SWIFT: CGDIPTPL

Cheque Bancário N.º (Bank Cheque Nr.) \_\_\_\_\_

Necessário juntar comprovativo (add copy of bank transfer)

(Assinatura / Signature)





