

Political Communication: The Shifting Paradigm of Cameroon Anglophone Self-Expression (1961-2018)

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Abstract: This research examines the unease expressed by the Anglophone minority people of Cameroon, as a result of alleged marginalization by the Francophone majority. Discontent had been gathering momentum for decades in different forms. However, things came to a head following a strike staged by Anglophone lawyers and teachers in 2016, to which the government responded with repression. Since then, the situation has escalated and led to an armed conflict with separatist fighters taking over the struggle and claiming to fight for a separate republic for the Anglophones known interchangeably as “Ambazonia” and “The Southern Cameroons”. The paper uses a combination of historical and archival secondary sources, and the technique of observation, backed by qualitative analysis, to examine the dynamics of the conflict, both overtly and covertly. The findings reveal that there is indeed an identity crisis among Cameroon’s Anglophone peoples vis-a-vis their Francophone counterparts. The study concludes that the root cause of the problem lies in the colonial past of the two peoples and offers recommendations that can lead to peaceful coexistence.

Keywords: Political Communication; Cameroon; paradigm shift; Anglophone; post-colonialism; armed conflict; Identity Crisis; Secession; Liberation; Ambazonia; The Southern Cameroons.

1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

If we approach the introduction of Cameroon as it obtains today from the point of view of the linguistic terminologies of form and substance (Hyman 2009; Fischer-Jørgensen 2011; Vajda 2013; Anward & Linell 2016) we can say that the country is a cultural and political entity that comprises a total of 10 regions, 8 of which are predominantly French-speaking (or Francophone) and the other two, predominantly English-speaking (or Anglophone). That is as far as form is concerned. Regarding substance, we refer to Tanjong (2012) who says “Cameroon is peopled by over 19 million inhabitants (results of the 2010 census conducted in 2000), spread across more than 200 ethnic groups speaking over 200 different local languages with English and French being the official languages”

Both Francophone and Anglophone territories were colonized by the Germans from 1884 when the great powers partitioned Africa at the Berlin conference following the First World War which Germany lost. Mphoweh and Futonge (2008) opine: “During the First World War 1914 to 1918 Germany was defeated in Cameroon in 1915 by a combined force of British, French and Belgian troops. The British and French thereafter established a joint administration of the territory (condominium) for a few months, and then partitioned it. The British took a smaller Western band with the mountain range forming a natural frontier between her sector and the larger eastern French sector”. Mphoweh and Futonge (2008) note that from the time the former German colony was partitioned and administered by France and Britain, problems of adaptation arose. They state: “Cameroonians were henceforth subjected to two other types of colonial experiences with problems of adaptation to new languages: French and English; new attitudes and cultures. This was a new start all over”

Significantly the blame which Anglophones have often apportioned to Britain for what they regard as their woes today actually dates back to the pre-German era. This is because even before the Germans colonized Cameroon, Britain had the opportunity to occupy the entire territory but did not do so. Mphoweh and Futonge (2008) explain: “Mphoweh and Futonge (2008) explain: “But in spite of the several treaties contracted between the Douala chiefs and the British over their people and territory in 1877, 1879 and 1881, Queen Victoria hesitated. In 1884 therefore, Chancellor Bismark, in search of a colonial empire for Germany, sent Dr. Gustav Nachtigal to Morocco, Togo, Cameroon and S.W. Africa. Nachtigal negotiated and signed treaties with the kings of Douala, Bimbia and Batanga, thus declaring Cameroon a German Protectorate. German explorers Zintgraff, Zeuner, Thoebecke, soon started exploring and surveying their new protectorate. Germany set up an administration based first in Douala, then later at Buea. They created plantations, built roads, railways and houses, schools and ports, using forced labour. They launched pacification expeditions against turbulent groups. By 1914, they had created Cameroon and put it on the map of Africa and the world. Many Germans settled in the country as traders, farmers and administrators”.

Ndobegang (2011) reports British lack of interest in the Anglophone territory which they inherited: “When the war ended, there was no specific discussion about the Bakweris regarding their land which had been confiscated by the Germans and on which the plantations were found. Instead, the British that took over the administration of the territory (now a mandated territory of the League of Nations) decided to get rid of the estates through action”. Amaazee (2003) affirms that even when the British had the opportunity of buying over the German plantations which were now in the territory that they were controlling, the British showed no interest in the offer. Amaazee (2003) explains: “Generally, the London merchants proved indifferent, even to favourable conditions of sale which excluded ex-enemy nationals (Germans or their agents) from consideration. Most of the potential buyers were unwilling to put up large sums of money needed both for the initial purchase and for the necessary subsequent development. In such circumstances, the British government decided to re-advertise the plantations without discrimination for sale on 24th and 25th November 1924. When the date came, more than 207,000 of the 264,000 acres that had once been in German hands were repurchased by them. The remainder went to British, Dutch and Swiss firms”.

After Cameroon was ceded to France and Britain, the latter attached its own territory to nearby Nigeria which it had already colonized. This was because Britain found it more convenient to administer the territory from the administration which they had put in place in Nigeria (Adig 2017). Even so, the Cameroonian population was to feel marginalized by Nigeria. Amaazee (1990) states: “On 11 February 1961, the southern part of the British mandate in the Cameroons¹ voted by a large majority to leave the newly independent federation of Nigeria and join instead the Republic of Cameroon, successor-state to the French mandate. A major factor in this plebiscite was fear of Igbo domination in trade, education, public and private sector employment, politics and social life.”

Jua and Konings (2004) agree that the origin of what has come to be widely known as “the Anglophone problem” (Juan and Konings 2004) citing Konings & Nyamnjoh 1997, 2000, 2003; Eyoh 1998; Jua 2003) can be traced back to the incongruous entity that the colonial powers put in place. That is why the researchers affirm: “Most agree that its roots may be traced back as far as the partitioning, after World War One, of the erstwhile German Kamerun Protectorate (1884-1916) between the French and English victors, first as mandates under the League of Nations and later as trusts under the United Nations”

From the post-plebiscite era till today, Anglophone Southern Cameroons has cohabited with the Francophone Republic of Cameroon firstly as a Federal Republic (1961-1972), a United Republic (1972-1984), and from 1984 to date as simply the Republic of Cameroon. While the Francophone-dominated administration argues that the present dispensation is proof that Cameroon has attained political maturity and can live as one country, Anglophones generally reject that assertion. That discontent is the subject of this investigation. For the record, the combined population of the Anglophone regions in 2005 stood at 3 381 981 inhabitants (of which the North West accounted for 1 728 853 and the South West accounted for 1 316 079 inhabitants) out of a total of 17 791 257 for the entire country (Law 2005), which is 19.01 % of the country's population..

Cameroon Anglophone nationalist consciousness was provoked by the introduction of multiparty politics by President Paul Biya in 1990. This was after the country's political leaders including Anglophone ones took a decision in 1966 to merge their various political parties into a single party which they called the Cameroon National Union (CNU) with the then president of the Republic, Ahmadou Ahidjo as its national chairman. After Paul Biya succeeded him as president in

1982, he transformed the CNU into the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) in 1985, but kept it under the one-party regime. In 1990, following the wind of change that blew from the Soviet Union and led to the collapse of the Berlin wall and the reunification of Germany, coupled with growing domestic clamouring for greater democratization in Cameroon, President Paul Biya reintroduced multiparty politics in the country. Kah (2004) states: "When multiparty politics was reintroduced in Cameroon in the 1990s, the immediate impact was a re-mapping of the geopolitical chart of Cameroon. A debate ensued among Anglophones on the essence of the reunification of the Southern Cameroons with the Republic of Cameroon in 1961"

Konings and Jua (2004) confirm that the need for Anglophone Cameroon political self-expression heightened with the political liberalization of the 1990s: "Although Anglophone resistance has been a permanent feature of Cameroon's post-colonial biography (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003), it was not until political liberalization that the Anglophone elite started mobilizing and organizing the regional population. Capitalizing on traumatic Anglophone experiences of "otherness" and second-class citizenship in the Francophone-dominated post-colonial state, they began to lay claims to autonomy and self-determination, in the form first of a return to a federal state and later in the creation of an independent state."

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem formulation was partly informed by the research problem formulation method advocated by Northrop (1966) quoted by Brewer and Hunter (2005): "Inquiry starts only when something is unsatisfactory, when traditional beliefs are inadequate or in question, when the facts necessary to resolve one's uncertainties are not known, when the likely relevant hypotheses are not even imagined. What one has at the beginning of the inquiry is merely the problem".

When the UN-organized plebiscite was held in 1961, giving the people of the British Southern Cameroon the choice of "obtaining independence by joining" either the French-speaking Republic of Cameroon which had achieved independence the previous year or the Republic of Nigeria which had also achieved independence that same year, perhaps unknown to the stakeholders at that time, serious seeds of discord were sown. The first problem was that it was not explained how the people of the Southern Cameroons could be said to be achieving independence which being attached to another country. For that reason, the obvious third option of achieving total independence without having to join an already existing country was denied the Southern Cameroonians. Historians have stated that the British who were giving up the territory as a result of the plebiscite opposed this third option on the grounds that the Southern Cameroons were not fit to stand on their own. Faced with no option, the Southern Cameroons voted in the majority to join Cameroon and not Nigeria. Even so, they were to start off on an unfavourable footing because they constituted only 20 % of the total population of the Federal Republic of Cameroon to which they now belonged, while the Francophones had an overwhelming numerical majority with up to 80 % of the population. Although the new union started off with what the newly drawn up constitution termed two equal federated states, one being the Anglophone State of West Cameroon, and the other being the Francophone State of East Cameroon, the situation was worsened when in 1972, the federal republic was abolished and Cameroon was broken up into seven provinces, of which the Anglophones constituted two: the South-West and the North-West.

Inyang (2011) cites Ngoh (2004) as advancing two main reasons for the dismantling of the federation: "Firstly, he contends that the Federal Republic of Cameroon was experiencing serious political headaches resulting from the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970). Thus, the liquidation of the federal structure which perpetrated regional particularisms would have led to national integration. Finally, the insecurity brought by treaties and sabotage led by the Union des Populations du Cameroon (UPC) party from 1955 (when they were banned by the French controlling Francophone Cameroon) to 1970, would better be contained if the country became a unitary State. This was because many UPC militants took shelter in West Cameroon and used it as a launch pad for attacks on the government of Cameroon, which seriously undermined national unity"

On another note, Anglophone political leaders themselves facilitated Ahidjo's resolve to dismantle the federal system. Ngoh (2004) refers to "divisiveness, ethnicity, mudslinging, backstabbing, and character assassination that characterized West Cameroon politics". While explaining the rivalry between the KNDP led by John Ngu Foncha of the Grassfields and the CPNC led by Endeley of the coastal area, Inyang (2011) observes: "All the CPNC officials wanted to take the government from the Grassfields because the latter had monopolized the post of Vice President of the Federation and Prime Minister of West Cameroon. The decision to supply subversive information to Ahidjo through his gendarmes not only revealed the backstabbing and selfishness of the CPNC officials but also highlighted the police state into which

Ahidjo`s totalitarianism had submerged Cameroon. It also revealed the brutality of Ahidjo`s security network and showed that West Cameroon was experiencing Francophone domination”

Thus, from the day the two Cameroons came together following the 1961 plebiscite, entrenched divisions separated them from each other and turned them into strangers to each other, despite the efforts made by them and their leaders to coexist. Bate Besong (1990) quoted by Ako (2001), captures the mood: “After the lunatic route we took from Foumban, as in a Dantean inferno, the Anglophone Cameroonian occupies the centre of hell - our people, subjected to perpetual mental and psychological servitude, are the story-book victims of a cultural holocaust - three decades of reunification have wrought for us: feudal oppression, mountains of suspicion and hate, retrogression, post-Foumban pauperization, resentment; indeed, we bear the scars of brotherhood”. Furthermore, Atanga (2011) has argued that the Anglophone problem is “one of the severest threats to the post-colonial nation-state project in Cameroon”. Sango et al (2010) buttress the point: “Since the union between British Southern Cameroons and French Cameroon (La République) was contracted after the plebiscite of 1961, it has been an unholy reunification marred by domination and marginalization of the Anglophone”

The dichotomy in the Anglophone and Francophone cultures in Cameroon can be seen in the media. Tanjong et al (2002) state: “The bilingual nature of Cameroon (with French and English as official languages) has given room for the development of a media landscape along Anglophone and Francophone cultural lines. Attempts to forge a common Cameroonian media system, drawing from the two colonial legacies, have often met with resistance”

For those reasons, one can state that there is an Anglophone problem in Cameroon which has spilled over into the violence and bloodshed that Cameroon is experiencing today. The two Anglophone regions of the North-West and the South-West have been the scenes of an unprecedented political crisis – or better still, crisis of identity – since 2016. Although the government in Yaounde has taken some measures aimed at satisfying the Anglophone communities, the crisis appears to be escalating, thus shaking the very foundation of the republic.

Even so, the escalation of the crisis into a civil war should be blamed on its poor handling by the regime of President Paul Biya. The proof is that in 2009 which was seven years before the crisis erupted, the Catholic national newspaper, *l'Effort Camerounais*, sounded an apocalyptic warning. The paper, in an article signed by Chongwain (2009) cried out: “Even when things are evidently going wrong, the powers that be are giving the impression that they are in control. The seeds of this country`s self-destruction have been nursed, watered; have germinated and are just beginning to nurture”

This investigation seeks to examine the motivation behind the ongoing crisis, while bringing out the impact of the outburst not only on the said community in particular but also on the rest of Cameroon and the international community at large. This is done with a view to coming up with recommendations that can bring a lasting solution to the conflict, and proposals for subsequent research by scholars.

3. CONCEPT EXPLICATION

1. Political communication

According to www.definitions.net, political communication falls within political science and communication and concerns “the production, processing and effects of information both through media and interpersonally within a political context” Swanson and Nimmo (1990) see it as “the strategic use of communication to influence public knowledge, beliefs, and action on political matters” The focus of the two researchers is the persuasive, while for www.definitions.net, it is the production and utility chain. Pye (1993) cited by Pfetsch and Esser (2012) says it is “the flow of messages and information that gives structure and meaning to the political process”. For Graber (2005), it “involves analyzing effects of message flow and format and content when subject matter concerns the realm of politics”. Denton and Woodward (1998) consider it as being rooted in the intentions of the encoder of the message with a view to influencing the wider political environment. As such, the focus of the political act is its result or the intended decoder. Nonetheless, McNair (2003) holds that for this kind of communication to be termed “political”, it must by necessity be “purposeful” about politics.

2. Paradigm shift

Westacott (2017) explains that the term, ‘paradigm shift’ “was coined by the American philosopher Thomas Kuhn (1922-1996) and is one of the central concepts in his work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, published in 1962. Concerning what is a paradigm shift, Westacott (2017) says it “occurs when one paradigm theory is replaced by another”. As examples, he cites Ptolemy`s astronomy which was later replaced by Copernicus`astronomy; Aristotle`s

physics which stated that material objects possessed natures that determine the way they behave, but which physics was supplanted by that of Galileo and Newton who perceived material objects as being governed by natural law. He also cites the shift from Newton's physics which states that time and space were the same everywhere for all observers; to Einstein's theory that on the contrary, time and space are relative to the frame of reference of the observer.

Westacott (2017) posits that in order to comprehend the meaning of paradigm shift, one must first grasp the notion of paradigm theory which he states is "a general theory that helps to provide scientists working in a particular field with their broad theoretical framework – what Khun calls their 'conceptual scheme'. It provides them with their basic assumptions, their key concepts, and their methodology. It gives their research its general direction and goals. And it represents an exemplary model of good science within a particular discipline". Westacott (2017) concludes that "paradigm theories are part of our conceptual schemes. So, when a paradigm shift occurs, in some sense, the 'world' changes. Or, to put it another way, scientists working under different paradigms are studying different worlds".

Kuhn (1970) terms the paradigm shift as "a change from one way of thinking to another. It is a revolution; a transformation; a sort of metamorphosis. It just does not happen, but rather it is driven by agents of change". Eyoh (1998) acknowledges this shift when he refers to "the conflicting narratives of Anglophone Protest and the Politics of Identity in Cameroon" Nfah-Abbenyi (2012) highlights the seeds for the factors that necessitated the paradigm swing, especially as it relates to Cameroon Anglophone literature, by stating: "Anglophone Cameroon writing generally reflects the postcolonial malaise of a union that for some, never was, and therefore in need of dissolution; a union that for others is fragile, diseased; in dire need of healing and reconciliation. Anglophone Cameroon literature is as such obsessed with what is known as 'the Anglophone problem', for it showcases the anxieties of a marginalized group of people that is required to assimilate, and is often deprived of the right of full citizenship".

The relevance of the paradigm shift to the specific case of the Cameroon Anglophone problem can be better understood when one appreciates the shift that has taken place from what researchers call the dominant paradigm to the current dispensation in the country characterized by an uprising against public order and the state by Anglophone separatists, to the extent of declaring a breakaway self-proclaimed republic of theirs. McQuail (2005) makes that point when he affirms: "The underlying view of society in the dominant paradigm is essentially normative. It presumes a certain kind of normally functioning 'good society' which would be democratic (elections, universal suffrage, free-market conditions, individualistic, freedom of speech); pluralistic (institutionalized competition between parties and interests) and orderly (peaceful, socially integrated, fair, legitimate). From that perspective, one can conclude that if the regime of Cameroon's President Paul Biya were banking on the dominant paradigm theory to maintain the status quo in the country, then the paradigm shift brought about by Anglophone separatists have called all of those assumptions into question, and in a way, sent ruling politicians and other stakeholders back to the drawing board.

3. Self-expression

The armed conflict in Cameroon is not fought only between armed separatists and regular government troops, but it is simultaneously being waged ferociously on social media. Use of social media space for such a purpose has been previously documented by other researchers such as Fox & Warber (2015), Lane et al. (2019), and Gil de Zúñiga et al. (2014). This is the case with the current crisis in Cameroon, not just because of the many advantages offered by social media as opposed to traditional media, but also because the bulk of those leaders who control the separatist movement are based in the diaspora. Social media therefore enables them to quickly reach out to followers on the ground while at the same time escaping censorship by the Cameroon government. Even when government shut down internet in the two Anglophone regions for three months from January to April 2017, and again in October of the same year (Dahir, 2017; Ritzen, 2018; and Nanfuka, 2017), and it was forced to reopen it.

The political self-expression that characterizes the current Cameroon Anglophone struggle can be better understood when likened to some of the utterances made in a book written by Lilla (2017), reviewed by Peter Leithart and cited by Veith (2018). One of these describes the initial stage of discomfort in which a people finds itself, prior to storming the status quo: "Romantics see society . . . as somewhat dubious, an imposed artifice that alienates the individual from itself, drawing arbitrary lines, creating enclosures, and forcing us into costumes that are not of our own making". Next is the choice between maintaining the status quo and dominating the oppressor on the one hand, and breaking free to become independent and autonomous on the other hand. On that point, the researcher says: "This can give rise to the impulse 'to flee so to remain an authentic, autonomous self' or to the 'impulse to transform society so that it seems like an extension

of the self". Obviously, having realized that because of its numerical inferiority, Anglophone Cameroon stands no chance of "transforming" the larger society of Cameroon, it has chosen the second option. The researcher describes what goes on in the mind of the individual who chooses to become a freedom fighter: "Identity politics fused political and personal into a seamless whole: Political action was all about the self-expression of the political actor as X (whatever X might be). And this took up a pseudo-political and distinctly American (here one can substitute `American` with `Anglophone Cameroon`) rhetoric of feeling self and its struggle for recognition". This explains why in the case of the Cameroon Anglophone struggle, thousands of youths have dedicated themselves to the cause so strongly that they are not deterred by the number of them who are killed regularly and in large numbers by the Cameroon military, or attracted by the olive branch offered to them by President Paul Biya to lay down their arms and become reintegrated into society.

4. METHODOLOGY

We used a multidisciplinary approach, one of which was the historical research method elaborated by Borg (1963) and described by CCRM (2014) as "the systematic and objective location, evaluation and synthesis of evidence in order to establish facts and draw conclusions about past events". From that perspective, the present research is relevant because it is all about tracing the current crisis in the two Anglophone regions of Cameroon back to the time when the seeds of discord were sown in the colonial days. This approach can also be explained by borrowing the linguistic term, "diachronic", which is explained by Nordquist (2019) cited by Brenes (2014) as "across-time, and it describes any work which maps the shifts and fractures and mutations of languages over the centuries". As such, diachrony differs from synchrony in that whereas the former examines a concept from the historical, developmental and evolutionary perspectives; the latter considers a concept at a given concept in time without regard to its historical evolution (Ramat et al, 2013). Berger (2014) defines diachrony thus: "In diachronic (or historical studies), we focus on change over time; and in synchronic (or comparative studies), we study change over distance". The same researcher explains further: "The axis of simultaneity (synchronicity) involves comparison in space, and the axis of succession (diachronicity) involves change over time"

Considering that the subject under study basically concerns language and culture, we examined the use of language in the society under investigation within the language and environmental contexts referred to by Wittgenstein (1980), Austin et al (2005) and Hinton (2014). This consideration is particularly relevant to the ongoing conflict in Cameroon, considering that since it concerns the two English-speaking regions of the country as opposed to the rest of the country which is made up of the predominantly French-speaking people. We also examined the problem within the sociolinguistic and ethnographic contexts within which Hymes (1974), and Beinstein (1986) cited by Matei (2009); and Labov (1972) and Labov (1977) have conducted substantial research, while also taking into account, the conversation analysis approach elaborated by Sacks (1992). Again here, this is because the Cameroonian conflict is also basically sociological and ethnographic. However, as CCRM (2014) puts it citing Walliman (2011): "the meaning of the term, `cultural texts` has been broadened from that of purely literary works to that of the many manifestations of cultural exchange, be they formal such as opera, TV news programs, cocktail parties, etc; or informal such as how people dress or converse". In our research, we have gone far enough and studied how Anglophone self-expression has been manifested through dressing and conversation.

Another research method used is observation, described by Inyang (2011) as "making a personal assessment of a behaviour, an activity or a situation. It involves watching, listening and drawing conclusions based upon what is seen and / or heard". In this particular case, the observation process lasted for years. It was both participant and non-participant, since the researcher was not only part of the population from which the sample was drawn, but actually lived in it and shared the experiences recorded and described in the study. In addition to observation, this researcher used personal notes, personal diary entries, and personal journals. Such an approach is equally explanatory in the sense that while carrying out the investigation, we probed the causes of the Anglophone problem as well as its visible signs, and used that information to propose solutions to stakeholders.

Therefore, the method was qualitative because it consisted of substantive statements in the form of texts, arranged in a thematic manner, spiced with descriptive and narrative accounts. It was not necessary to resort to quantitative data analysis by converting data collected through our secondary sources and then content analyzing it. The choice of the qualitative method was both pertinent and relevant because this research consisted of primarily "describing a situation, a problem, issue, phenomenon or event without quantifying it" (Inyang 2011).

We can summarize the research methods we used in this study as falling under triangulation because their pluralistic nature involved combined different types of research. The advantages are that the result enhances validity, enhanced research development, complementarity, and new avenues for further studies.

5. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This research embraces three of the five critical conceptual approaches mapped out by Chesebro (1974). These are Machiavellian because the subject of investigation under study is about a power struggle between a disgruntled people on the one hand and a regime on the other hand seeking to assert its authority over the former; iconic because the study makes use of symbols in its analysis; and dramatic because the Cameroonian political society which is the base of the study population is symbolically constructed in the sense that it is composed of semiotically speaking, symbols representing different aspects of society. That is why being located in the very heart of Africa in that it is equidistant between the north and the south of Africa, as well as between the west and the east of Africa; it is in touristic terms referred to as “Africa in miniature” (Belle, W.N. 2016; Euronews 2017; Bush, G. 2011, Pointdujour, 2016), and Tchawa, Paul 2012).

Sennholz (1996) expands on Machiavellianism when talking about Machiavelli (1469-1627) he says: “His ideal government was ever scheming and calculating about political gain and authority. Machiavelli’s persuasion differed materially from that of earlier writers: he rejected the ideal and moral and preferred the real and practical. He allowed the conclusion that politics has nothing to do with morals, ethics, and religion, and that it is incapable of observing all the rules of Judeo-Christian morality.” Having defined the Machiavellian concept, let us now consider the icon. In semiotic analysis, the icon is one of the three “signs”, identified by the American semiotician Charles Peirce (1839-1914). The other two are the symbol and the index. Port (2000) states that of the three types of Peircian signs, “the icon is the simplest since it is a pattern that physically resembles what it stands for”. Thus, within the context of our investigation, the flag of the Republic of Cameroon on the one hand and that of the self-proclaimed Republic of Ambazonia of the secessionist Anglophone community on the other, can be considered as icons of those political entities.

Concerning dramatism, also known as the dramatic framework or the dramatic method (Nordquist 2017) holds that “dramatism is a metaphor introduced by 20th-century rhetorician Kenneth Burke to describe his critical method, which includes study of the various relations among the five qualities that comprise the pentad: act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose. Burke's most extensive treatment of dramatism appears in his book *A Grammar of Motives* (1945). There he maintains that “language is action.” Dramatism is regarded by some composition scholars and instructors as a versatile and productive heuristic (or method of invention) that can be useful to students in writing courses” Dramatism is seen as relevant within the context of the present study once one applies the pentad to which Nordquist (2017) by asking the questions he proposes: “who, what, where, how, and why”, with the paradigm here as he rightly puts it, being “drama”. In other words, the entire Cameroon Anglophone crisis under investigation here can be considered as a drama involving the various stakeholders in it as actors.

As far as the present investigation is concerned, central to the other conceptual frameworks we have mentioned is the postcolonial theory which Hidalgo (2018) describes as “a general term from literary theoretical movements in the late 20th century that attend to questions of power dynamics, especially between an imperial metropolis and its peripheries; between colonial centers and margins; and it’s questioning the relationships of imperial power and also how they end up being negotiated—especially discursively, especially within texts, especially within art, especially within literature—and that’s its attendant focus.” Fidel Fajardo-Acosta (2006) defines it as “a cultural, intellectual, political, and literary movement of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries characterized by the representation and analysis of the historical experiences and subjectivities of the victims, individuals and nations, of colonial power. Post-colonialism is marked by its resistance to colonialism and by the attempt to understand the historical and other conditions of its emergence as well as its lasting consequences.”

Fondo (2015) highlights the adverse effects of post-colonialism by positing that “its continuous relevance several decades after the dismantling of the European colonial empires is largely justified by the persistent effects of colonialism”. Schwartz (2005) is more pointed in his definition of post-colonialism. He goes beyond just stating the concept and actually pinpoints its role in being “the radical philosophy that interrogates both the past history and ongoing legacies of European colonialism in order to undo it”. Hawley (2008) views rising nationalism as an attempt to counter post-colonialism when he states that “and within the notion of nationalism, the injustices of pitting one ethnic group against another that became a central modus operandi of colonial government, in subsequent years, continues to undermine the chances for stability and healing in a newly colonizing world”.

6. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

1. Representation and re-presentation of the quagmire

The term, ‘representation’ here denotes the instance where one thing symbolically stands in the place of another (Merriam-Webster 2019). Lahlou and Abric (2011) look at representation this way: “A representation is both process and content (Abric 1987; Moscovici 1976). As a process, it is a series of psychological operations (exploration, recognition, categorization, sense-making etc...) addressing a given phenomenon, based on previous experience and properties of the subject’s psyche. As content it is the result of that process in the form of some “presentation”, or image: the-phenomenon-as-re-presented by the subject. A social representation (SR) is how a phenomenon, or object, is represented in a population (Doise 1986; Jodelet 1989; Moscovici 1989). While there is general agreement on what SRs are (“common sense”) their exact ontological status is still debated.”

We have used the other term, “re-presentation” within the grammatical context of the definition that the prefix “re” “occurring originally in loanwords from Latin, used with the meaning ‘again’ or ‘again and again’ to indicate repetition, or with the meaning ‘back’ or ‘backward’ to indicate withdrawal or backward motion: regenerate; refurbish; retype; retrace; revert (Dictionary.com 1919). According to the English Oxford Living Dictionaries (2019), the prefix “re” is a synonym for “once more”, “afresh”, “anew”, “reaccustom”, “reactivate”, “revert”, “mutually”, “react”, and “resemble”, among others. That being the case, we can conclude that the noun “re-presenting”, which comes from the verb (to) “represent”, means “to present again or once more”, with the verb “to present” itself, meaning “to deliver something like a speech, or perform something like a play. On formal occasions, when we present someone, we introduce them, usually to a group or to the public. Present might also mean “to submit” or “hand over.”

Let us now examine a prototypical snapshot of the current Cameroon Anglophone crisis by using the parallel of the Mayan people of Guatemala, a country in the Central American region. Just like the Anglophone peoples of Cameroon, the Mayan Indians of Guatemala are fighting marginalization.

Warren (1994) puts the Guatemalan situation in perspective: “First, they are working to foster a distinctive sense of pueblo, that is, a community of interest for all Mayan as “a people” or “nation.” Second, they are proposing a pluricultural (multicultural) model for participatory democracy. According to the Council of Mayan Organizations of Guatemala, a pluricultural model would recognize multiple national cultures rather than the current hispanic standard, historically established by the Spanish colonizers and later transformed and modernized by their Ladino descendants. A pluricultural model would define collective cultural, linguistic, and political rights for Mayan citizens and legitimize claims for cultural and political space in national educational, judicial, and administrative systems.”

Although the above quotation explains the effort the Guatemalan people are making to transform their country into a more inclusive and a more pluralistic one, which is evidently not the stage that Cameroon’s Anglophones have reached today, it is nevertheless an option that the allegedly oppressed people of Cameroon can take. Nonetheless, the extract that follows depicts the armed stage of the Guatemalan conflict, which is where the Cameroon Anglophone struggle finds itself today: “Between 1978 and 1985, Guatemala was engulfed in intense internal warfare, la violencia as it was called in the country. The poor were caught in the middle. The guerrillas sought to radicalize them, and the army to punish them so they would not collaborate with or join the opposition. During the height of the violence, and estimated 50,000 to 70,000 people were killed; half a million people out of a national population of 8 million became internal refugees; 150,000 fled to Mexico as political and economic refugees; and 200,000 found their way to countries such as the United States. Many of the people affected by the civil war were Mayan Indians. In the western highlands, they faced the total destruction of some 400 hamlets and municipal centers; periodic sweeps, repression, and selective killings; forced participation in community-based civilian patrols; mass evangelical conversions; and economic devastation.”

Concerning President Paul Biya’s adoption of the oppressive approach to solving the Anglophone problem in his country, Warren (1994) issues a note of warning to the effect that such a line of action could on the contrary, backfire: “Although many observers expected that violence and poverty in Guatemala would drive Mayans to assimilate - to attempt to pass as non-Indians outside their home communities - quite the opposite has occurred. In a country with the lowest physical quality of life index in Central America and the third lowest (after Haiti and Bolivia) in all Latin America, Mayans are attempting to promote their own development by revitalizing Mayan culture, identity, and languages. This article traces the special relevance of language for Mayan cultural renewal and for images of nation-state relations. Mayan Indians are currently promoting cultural revitalization and national unification through an innovative network of research centers and grassroots education programs. Their goals for the 60% of the Guatemalan population that is indigenous are twofold.”

2. The genesis of the conflict

When Anglophone Cameroon voted at the 1961 plebiscite to rejoin the independent French-speaking republic of Cameroon, it was clear that although both peoples had been one as a German colony before Britain and France divided them, they were now strangers to each other. Awasom and Etangondop-Mbu (2001) confirm this when they point out that differences in the ways the British and the French administered their respective trust territories. The historians explain that while the British used self-government as practiced in the rest of its empire, France ensured that its own territory remained tied to its apron strings. As might be expected, reconciling such differences was bound to be a herculean task. Other researchers such as Ekwelie (1986) have explained that although African countries clamoured for independence and achieved it, they were never adequately prepared for the challenges of independence.

Nfi (2011) contends that the very partitioning of Cameroon as it was under the Germans to hand the fractures parts to the French and the British created problems by separating peoples and institutions: "The Anglo-French boundary dislocated a people united for close to thirty years by the German plantations, schools, mission-stations, trade centres, railways, ports, and firms" McLeod (2007) pitches the problem at the global level by stating: "The national border of most (once) colonized countries have been imagined and imposed by European powers that have reorganized and violated indigenous mappings of terrain. There are no naturally occurring phenomena which inevitably divide, say, India from Pakistan or Bangladesh; the physical terrain and borders of lands that have come to be called Brazil, Canada, Nigeria, Haiti, for example, were created by and often have been inherited from the European empires". Chrisman (2007) says when colonial powers created their colonies, they did so with selfish aims which adversely affected the colonized people: "It is important to recognize that the particular administrative regimes and national boundaries that European colonialism created in its colonies were imposed, inorganic and designed to serve the interests of imperial, colonial, and metropolitan domination. Moreover, the political legacy of these particular structures and boundaries has often been disastrous"

The International Crisis Group (2017) regrets that leaders from the independent Francophone Republic of Cameroon and those of the Anglophone Southern Cameroons who met in Foumban (Cameroon) during what has come to be known as "The Foumban Conference" to chart the way forward, endorsed these bad policies of the European colonial powers. That is why the Crisis Group says: "the root cause of the Anglophone problem in Cameroon can be traced back to the Foumban Conference of 1961 that united the two territories with different colonial legacies into one state". Montcrieff (2017) adds his voice to those criticizing the Foumban Conference: "The Constitutional Conference which followed in July 1961 was hopelessly one-sided. A weak Anglophone negotiating team sparred with a Francophone side which had already gained independence and had strong support from its former colonial power, France. The result was a series of vague promises that Cameroon would be `an equal federation` in which the English language and customs derived from British rule, would carry equal weight at the federal level".

Fondo (2015) reports on the disintegration that has followed independence: "So, in the aftermath of their sometimes hard-won independence, these postcolonial nations, began to disintegrate as a result of internal ruptures, mutual suspicion, long-held ethnic hatred, and religious tension". It is within such a context that the current Anglophone crisis in Cameroon has to be placed.

3. The vote to join the independent Republic of Cameroon

Although a lot has been said about how the union between the former British Southern Cameroons and the independent French-speaking Republic of Cameroon went wrong, and that the former were tricked by the UN with the complicity of Britain to go for the plebiscite, not much attention appears to have been paid to the fact that on the whole, Southern Cameroonians really wanted to join Cameroon rather than remain in the union with Nigeria.

British apathy towards the Southern Cameroons led to some Southern Cameroonians concluding that it was better to cross over into French-speaking Cameroon rather than stay with Nigeria in which Britain still had some influence as its former colonial power. Amaazee² (2003) makes this point: "It was in such circumstances that Britain was not prepared to give the Southern Cameroons `the golden key` of the Bank of England if the Cameroons chose independence instead of association with Nigeria to which it was annexed. Amaazee² (2003) further reports that even after the Germans lost the Southern Cameroons to the British following the partition by the allies in the wake of the First World War and the German plantations in the Southern Cameroons were advertized for auction, British commercial interests were indifferent" Under such circumstances, Southern Cameroonians felt they should distance themselves from both Britain and Nigeria.

It is clear that after the British annexed the Southern Cameroons to Nigeria, the latter soon subjected the former not just to marginalization, but also humiliation. Alobwed'Epie, cited by Ako (2001), puts it thus: "When British Cameroons was administered as a part of Nigeria, it was short of educated people and thus relied on manpower from Nigeria and the Gold Coast (Ghana). Nigerians dominated all spheres of life in British Southern Cameroons. They were farmers, petty traders, teachers, administrators. They were everywhere" The Igbo (Nigeria) factor is stated from another angle by Fomin (2013): "Many Igbos were among the personnel the British government used, to administer the territory. Igbo employees, traders and their families created Diasporas in different parts of the Southern Cameroons which share a boundary with the Eastern Region of colonial Nigeria, the homeland of the Igbo people". Fomin (2013) further states that "the British Southern Cameroons welcomed the replacement of the Germans in the territory by the British but never cherished the merger of the Southern Cameroons into the Eastern Region of Nigeria for the purpose of administration which brought about the ever-growing influx of Igbos, especially traders and civil servants". Fomin (2013) remarks that the resentment Southern Cameroonians felt about the Igbo Nigerians became so intent that John Ngu Foncha who was at the time Assistant Secretary of the Bamenda Branch of the KNC party, wrote to the Igbo Union secretary in Bamenda in 1954, warning him against interference in Southern Cameroon politics. The researcher adds conclusively: "By 1953, it was clear that the Cameroonians did not want to continue as part of the Eastern Region of Nigeria and there was also the possibility of joining French Cameroon." 'Ako (2001) quotes Alobwed'Epie, who is a writer, as suggesting that "writers can look back in anger or pleasure, and tell us how they felt being second class citizens in their supposed area of jurisdiction . . . they can look back and recast the humiliations suffered by their womenfolk at the hands of domineering Igbo traders".

In addition to Nigerian ill-treatment of Southern Cameroonians in their own land, unlike the Germans previously, the British were reluctant to develop the territory, contrary to France which actively developed its own territory next door. Kah (2004) says: "In the domain of education, the treatment of Southern Cameroonians as an appendage of the federation of Nigeria and rapid developments in education in French Cameroon, contributed towards the reunification process in Cameroon. The British were reluctant to establish a post-primary school in the Southern Cameroons, but for the Teachers' Training School at Kake-Kumba, because they were not prepared to spend much money in the running of colonies"

When the plebiscite was proposed, there were Southern Cameroons who gladly opted to vote for reunion with French-speaking Cameroon as a means of reuniting with their "brothers and sisters" whom the arbitrary partition of German Cameroon by western powers had placed in the territory of French-speaking Cameroon. Kah (2004) reports: "The long history of socio-cultural and economic interactions between the Duala and the Bakweri, the partitioned Mungo, Balong, Bakossi, Mbo and Tikars, influenced calls for a reunited Cameroon because these ethnic groups wanted to end restrictions to movement of people, goods and services"

Within the Southern Cameroons, there were antagonisms between those of the northern zone and those of the southern zone. Ngoh (2001) paints the picture: "For the Anglophones, the South-westerners generally speaking, did not want to be governed with the North-westerners as a state or region" Fondo (2015) places this internecine strife within the global context of the generalized inadequacy of former colonies around the time of independence: "Also, in fighting for independence, these countries failed to consider and address their internal rifts and tensions, and thus allowed them to spill over and taint the fabric of nationhood" The rifts could be seen in the fact that while approaching the plebiscite, southern Cameroons political leaders failed to present a united front. While Foncha under the banner of the KNDP stood for reunification with French Cameroon on the one hand, EM.M.L. Endeley of the KNC and N.N. Mbile of the KPP on the other hand, stood for integration with Nigeria. When the plebiscite results were announced, the pro-Cameroon faction won 233,571 votes, while the pro-Nigerians picked up only 97,741 (Nfi 2011). That meant that the pro-Cameroon proponents had won up to 70.5 % of the votes, while the pro-Nigerians won only 29.5 %.

These were some of the little publicized factors that led to the choice of union with French Cameroon rather than with Nigeria.

Manifestations of marginalization

The Anglophones fewer in number than the Francophones, accounting for only 19.1 % of the total population of Cameroon (Law 2005) whereas the Francophones constitute the remaining 80.9 %. From that perspective, they are already a vulnerable national group. Ghiorgis (2012) makes that point when he says: "Majority rule cannot be the only expression of 'supreme power' in a democracy... If so, the majority would too easily tyrannize the minority. Thus, while it is clear that democracy must guarantee the expression of the popular will through majority rule, it is equally clear that it must guarantee that the majority will not abuse its power to violate the basic and inalienable rights of the minority."

A grievance often cited by Anglophones is name calling by the Francophone majority. Ngoh (2001) quotes and example: “Emah Basile, the Government Delegate to the Yaounde Urban Council and National Treasurer of the CPDM, later accused Anglophones, and more especially North-westerners, of being ‘the enemy within the house’” When some Anglophone demonstrated in Buea in 2017 in a pro-independence march, the (Francophone) governor of the region referred to them as “dogs” (The Median 2017; Tasha 2017; Mokube et al. 2017)

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