Center-periphery relations in the context of political reforms in Africa: a study of Cameroon (1972-1997)

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ABSTRACT

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CENTER-PERIPHERY RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF POLITICAL
REFORMS IN AFRICA: A STUDY OF CAMEROON (1972-1997)

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In recent years, West Cameroonians (Anglophones) have expressed deep concern regarding their relative deprivation in the political, social and economic realities in Francophone dominated Republic of Cameroon, particularly the widening gap which continues to manifest itself between the two entities since integration in 1972. This study examines the factors and circumstances (internal and external) responsible for fusion of the two polities, and the implications of such a union for the life experiences of Anglophone Cameroonians, particularly in the political, economic, social, and infrastructural domains. A case study analysis approach was utilized to analyze data gathered from Cameroonians at home and in the United States, as well as personal interviews. The researcher found that successive Francophone regimes used varied policies and strategies to reinforce the hegemonic nexus of East Cameroon (center) over West Cameroon (periphery). The conclusions drawn from the findings suggests that although Francophone policies and strategies are paramount in hindering anglophone progress in Francophone dominated Cameroon, there are, never the less, other salient factors which have combined to make this reality apparent.
CENTER-PERIPHERY RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT
OF POLITICAL REFORMS IN AFRICA:
A STUDY OF CAMEROON
(1972-1997)

A DISserTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLark ATLANTA University
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THE Degree OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By
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Source: Extracted from Jo Sullivan and Jane Martin. 
Africa (Guilford: Connecticut: The Dushkin Publishing

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<tr>
<td>AAC</td>
<td>All Anglophone Conference</td>
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<td>ADB</td>
<td>African Development Bank</td>
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<td>AFC</td>
<td>Alliance for Change</td>
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<td>CAM</td>
<td>Cameroon Anglophone Movement</td>
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<td>CAMSUCO</td>
<td>Cameroon Sugar Company</td>
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<td>CDC</td>
<td>Cameroon Development Corporation</td>
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<td>CELLUCAM</td>
<td>Cellulose du Cameroun</td>
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<td>CIC</td>
<td>Cameroon Investment Code</td>
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<td>CFA</td>
<td>Communaut’e Financiere Africaine</td>
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<td>CPDM</td>
<td>Cameroon’s People Democratic Movement</td>
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<td>CPNC</td>
<td>Cameroon’s People National Convention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNF</td>
<td>Cameroon National Federation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNU</td>
<td>Cameroon National Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHOCOCAM</td>
<td>Cameroon Chocolate Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECLA</td>
<td>Economic Commission for Latin America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESAF</td>
<td>Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FNA</td>
<td>Federal National Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>FONADER</td>
<td>Fonds National de Development Rural</td>
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GDP  Gross Domestic Product
GNP  Gross Nation Product
IMF  International Monetary Fund
KNC  Kamerun National Congress
KNDP  Kamerun National Democratic Party
KPP  Kamerun People’s Party
KUNC  Kamerun United National Congress
MNC  Multinational Corporation
MP  Movement Progressive
NDI  National Democratic Institute
NIC  National Investment Code
UNDP  National Union for Democracy and Progress
NCFCV  National Commission Of The Final Counting Of Votes
NCNC  National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons
NCOPA  National Coordination of Opposition Parties and Associations
NPMB  National Produce Marketing Board
OCB  Organization Camerounaise de la Banane
OPEC  Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PE  Public Enterprises
SAP  Structural Adjustment Program
SCAC  Southern Cameroons Advisory Council
SCPC  Southern Cameroons People Conference
<table>
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<th>Full Name</th>
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<td>SDF</td>
<td>Social Democratic Front</td>
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<td>SEMRY</td>
<td>Société d'Expeansion et de Modernisation de la Riziculture de Yogoua</td>
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<td>SOCAPALM</td>
<td>Société Camerounaise de Palmeraise</td>
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<td>SODECOTON</td>
<td>Société de Development du Coton</td>
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<td>SONEL</td>
<td>Société Nationale d'Electricité</td>
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<td>SOWELA</td>
<td>Southwest Elites Association</td>
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<td>SRCC</td>
<td>State Revenue Collection Commission</td>
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<td>UC</td>
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<td>Union des Population du Cameroun</td>
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Domination and subjugation of countries, regions, peoples and minority populations is not a new phenomenon in global politics. In fact, this practice traces its origins many centuries past, where powerful rulers and their countries invaded and conquered their weaker neighbors, thus controlling and transforming the latter's political, social, cultural and economic destinies. In the late seventeenth century Europe, for example, Poland, a territorially large, but extremely weak country was invaded, partitioned and annexed by her wealthy and powerful neighbors, Prussia, Russia, and the Austrian-Hapsburg empires.

In the modern era, this phenomenon has continued unabated, especially with the creation of strong and powerful nation-states. This new creation brought with it the emergence of governments, political regimes, and other formal and informal institutions which undermined the traditional societies, clans, tribal linkages, and regional loyalties in the dominated territories. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries respectively, with accumulation of enormous wealth, military superiority and technological expertise, the industrialized countries explored,
conquered, and dominated the “less developed” countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa, exploiting their human and natural resources for their advancement. In Africa, the Berlin Conference of 1884, resulting in the scramble and partition of Africa, marked the official beginning of European colonial rule in Africa. This event also marked the beginning of “center - periphery” relations between Europe and Africa.

Two major characteristics of the global interstate system include: a hierarchical set of relations of dominance and dependence perpetuated by the “developed” countries over the “less developed” countries, and the prevalence of inequality between these two entities. Secondly, there has been strong resistance by subjugated peoples and regions in the past half century, against domination and inequality. Scholars have utilized concepts such as center-periphery, core-periphery, patron-client relations; as well as models such as dependency and world system theories, and thoughts from the “Annals School” to describe and analyze this asymmetrical and unequal relationship between dominant and subordinate entities. Regardless of what concept or approach one uses to explain this phenomenon, an irrefutable fact remains, that a superordinate and subordinate relationship prevails between the advanced industrial states and countries of the Third World in terms of power and exploitation of natural and human resources. This circumstance according to Christopher Chase-Dunn and Thomas D. Hall has resulted from a state-based world system, which has generally operated according
to the logic of “capital imperialism,” in which the core or center regions have accumulated resources or wealth by exploiting the periphery regions.1 Johan Galtung in “A Structural Theory of Imperialism” further notes that the world consist of “center” and “periphery” nations, and within each nation there are center(s) and periphery(s). He focuses on the relationship between the advanced capitalist society viz- a- vis the “less developed” countries.2 Also reflecting on the phenomenon, Edward Shils in “Center and Periphery” in The Logic of Personal Knowledge, examines center-periphery dynamics in two industrialized countries, France and Italy. Shils maintains that urban centers in these industrialized countries have exerted political and economic dominance over the out-skirt areas.3 In a similar vein, Hans Antlov in Exemplary Center and Administrative Periphery: Rural Leadership and the New Order in Java, explores center-periphery relations in the context of the Third World, focusing on Indonesia. Like Shils, Antlov argues that urban centers in Indonesia have assumed roles as centers due to the

1Christopher Chase-Dunn and Thomas D. Hall, Core/Periphery Relations in Pre-Capitalist Worlds (Boulder: West view Press, 1991), 7.


fact that these areas serve as the political seat of government or major center(s) of commerce.  

The “center” is viewed as a place of great activity, especially one to which people are attracted from surrounding districts or enclaves. In political terms, the center is seen as the place where power emanates, and consequently those who manage to occupy themselves with the center, are those who wield power. In this regard therefore, centrality is conflated with power. The core, Thomas R. Shannon, has pointed out, is still the location of the most technologically advanced, capital-intensive, and high-wage production. Shannon contends that the core has continued to retain its capitalist system of political economy, and is still organized into a system of competitive nation-states.

The term periphery on the other hand, is derived from the Greek suffix "peri," meaning around, about, or to bear. In contrast to the center or the core, one can logically infer that to be labeled “peripheral,” means to be perceived or viewed as powerless, unworthy of interest or attention. The term periphery, client states, colonies etc., have been used generally to describe countries of the Third World, that were under European or imperial domination. Although these former European colonies gained political independence, thus assuming statehood, and

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international recognition as sovereign entities, in essence, the same vertical relationship with their former colonial overlords remained unchanged. The periphery maintained its traditional export of raw materials to the center or core region, and in return, she received finished or manufactured products at exorbitant prices. Furthermore, the periphery was bound to cooperate with, and to obey the rules set out by the center, especially its major financial institutions such as the colonial office, and presently, World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). According to some scholars, the periphery has experienced tremendous political, economic, cultural, and social turmoil in recent years, as these countries aspire to become modern, following metropole or center-like economic prescriptions.

As a sound method of analysis, center-periphery relations is vital in our study and understanding of the historical developments of East and West Cameroon, and how this relationship can best be enhanced to facilitate the task of nation building. The main factors in the study of the relations between the center and the periphery include, geographic, politico-social, economic, and to some extent psychological. Frank Bealey has characterized the periphery’s attitude towards the center in the following statement:

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6Ibid., 94.

a state of mind, a feeling of remoteness from where decisions are made and where cultural activity is flourishing, where 'all the money has gone,' or 'is made' and where all national standards and values are sanctioned and authoritatively allocated.

Statement of the Problem

When the United Republic of Cameroon was created in May 1972, after much internal and external political maneuvers, many observers doubted the viability of this nascent state. The concerns of these skeptics were not entirely baseless, given the unique makeup of the country. The merger of the two entities from an economic and political standpoint, represented a "mismatch." East Cameroon was economically more developed than West Cameroon, its population was four times greater than West Cameroon, and it occupied four-fifths of the land area. Moreover, on January 1, 1960, East Cameroon gained her independence from France and was recognized as a sovereign nation (La Republic du Cameroon). Southern Cameroons (West Cameroon) on the other hand, never gained her freedom from British Trusteeship. In fact, on February 1, 1961, through a United Nations organized and supervised plebiscite, Southern Cameroons voted to join independent East Cameroon to form what was later known as the Federal Republic of Cameroon. Integration, therefore, left West Cameroon not only weak and malintegrated, but its economy was further distorted. These realities placed West
Cameroon in a multifaceted and tenacious dependency relationship, vis-a-vis East Cameroon. The new United Republic of Cameroon would be shaped by these circumstances, dictated largely by East Cameroon, with blessings from France. The unitary system and the advent of centralized rule, we should add, diluted any structural basis for West Cameroon solidarity, hence diminishing the geopolitical, economic, and cultural influence this region had experienced under British rule. Cameroon is the only country in Africa, and perhaps the world, to have experienced a triple foreign presence in less than a century. This history and legacy have no doubt, impacted decisions and policies of the polity since re-unification and formal political integration in 1961 and 1972 respectively.

After twenty-four years of relative peace, political stability and robust economic growth (1960-1984), post-independent Cameroon was struggling politically, economically, and socially to maintain unity. With the exception of internal disturbances by pro-Communist party movement, the Union des Population Cameroon (UPC), before and shortly after independence, as well as the April 1984 military coup against Paul Biya’s regime, Cameroon has not faced any severe internal challenges or threats to its stability. This, however, is not to suggest that Cameroon is a tranquil nation devoid of internal multi-ethnic and religious conflicts, clashes, or cleavages that have torn other nations or regions

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apart. On the contrary, the country’s mosaic of ethnic, religious, and regional differences, unequal resource and infra-structural distribution are some of the areas where the country has experienced occasional inter-group dissatisfaction, skirmishes and political pressures. Mack Delancey has indicated that inter-group rivalry and conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims as well as between the Bamilekes of the west and other southern groups have been noticeable. He maintains that the Bamileke’s desire for rich arable land and their drive for economic and entrepreneurial prosperity has often placed them (the Bamilekes) in constant conflict and occasional violence with other groups.9

As already indicated above, although there is general discontent among Cameroonians over a wide array of politico-social, economic, cultural and regional issues, the most lethal threat to the country’s cohesion and unity is from the Anglophone minority, outnumbered by a ratio of five to one by Francophones. Anglophone, in the past decade, have expressed their frustrations and anger at the government in Yaounde for continued indifference to their problems including: charges of discriminatory practices of the government in the allocation of industries and gross neglect in the economic sector of the former British Cameroons. They argue for example that despite international studies and recommendations that the Tiko and Victoria seaports in the Anglophone region

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were economically more cost effective to operate; the government decided instead to expand the shallow and overcrowded port of Douala in the Francophone area. Anglophones have also complained that they are being treated by Francophones as second-class citizens, regarded as inferiors, and have been subjugated and marginalized by their Francophone counterparts since reunification. Sammy Kum Buvo, in “How United is Cameroon” notes that “the relationship between Anglophone and Francophone Cameroon is plagued by mutual suspicion and petit hostilities,” and further argues based on evidence from the country, that Anglophones, since the union in 1972, have not held powerful portfolio positions such as defense, finance, foreign affairs, or territorial administration. Furthermore, under the pretext of bilingualism, a disproportionately large number of Francophones were dispatched to the Anglophone zones as Directors, Commissioners, and Cadres in government offices, schools, and other public sectors. According to some Anglophone observers, some of these officials sent to West Cameroon lacked both the academic qualification and professional competence compared to some of their Anglophone counterparts, but they were nevertheless, made heads of departments. According to a retired political figure, Francophones exhibited arrogance and disregarded the cultural values of the local authorities, chiefs, and quarter heads.

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He pointed out that while Anglophones were generally receptive to their Francophone counterparts in West Cameroon, Francophones generally did not treat Anglophones transferred to East Cameroon with the same respect. Some Anglophones transferred to East Cameroon resigned their positions, some after three months because of the unfriendly and hostile work environment. Discriminatory policies and practices of East Cameroon was mirrored in the educational system of the country, especially in the Yaounde University and other institutions of higher learning such as the medical school, which are supposed to be bilingual institutions. As Delancey has stated, Anglophone students often found themselves quite at a disadvantage as these institutions tend to be staffed predominantly by Francophones; and more significantly, the curricula were usually designed to interface with the Francophone secondary school curriculum and educational philosophy than with the Anglophone. "Again, despite the rhetoric of bilingualism, East Cameroon's chauvinism permeated Anglophone zones. In May 1985, the Anglophone intellectuals and businessmen presented a signed manifesto to the president, Paul Biya, protesting what they claim is the "humiliating and revolting colonial status that is gradually but systematically being imposed on the English-speaking Cameroonians by the administration." These elites demanded a new constitutional framework in the country, which would safeguard and guarantee the rights of all Cameroonians, as well as the
establishment of a “quota system” in government, especially in state corporations and the private sector. These demands, in a sense, reflected a clear departure from the system under Ahidjo and perhaps was a precursor to other protest activities that would ensue in the years to come.

Given the above circumstances, one is bound to ask some pertinent questions such as, why, despite the perceived unequal treatment and marginalization of West Cameroon by the East, has the former not opted to or taken drastic steps to break from East Cameroon? Secondly, why has the momentum among West Cameroonians suddenly risen in the past few years, starting in 1983, and especially in 1992-1993, concerning their problem? What exogenous factors, if any, have contributed to or hindered Anglophones in their efforts? What are other alternatives available to be explored by both sides to avert any potential secession by the Anglophones, which may result in a ripple effect, causing other disgruntled groups in the Francophone region to demand greater leverage from the government? Answers to these questions will undoubtedly provide more insight into the discussion on center-periphery relations in Cameroon.


12"Memorandum Presented to the Head of State and Chairman of the Cameroon People’s Democratic Movement (CPDM), by a Joint Committee of the Elite of the Northwest and Southwest Provinces resident in Littoral province," Douala, Cameroon, May 7, 1985, pg. 1.
Clearly, from evidence in the literature, a problem exists in the relationship between West and East Cameroon, which needs further research, analysis, and explanation. Some factors that have caused Anglophones to revisit this issue with more determination include: leadership change, economic difficulties in the country, and the role of democracy and multiparty system in the country. Strangely enough, despite these problems, Cameroon has remained resilient to some of the problems which have sparked intrastate conflicts and cleavages that have resulted in genocide in other developing countries such as Rwanda, Somalia, the Sudan, former Yugoslavia, Lebanon, Pakistan, and Liberia. The West Cameroon “factor”, as we view it, has resonated with increased vigor, raising new concerns and questions regarding Cameroon’s cohesion and unity. Also, as the content and context regarding the major debates has significantly shifted among West Cameroonians, from internal equity and political transparency to re-instituting the federal system as it existed prior to 1972, and outright calls by others, especially militants for secession from the union. This situation illustrates the dilemmas of unity in states composed of "nations." While East Cameroon continues to pursue policies viewed by West Cameroonians as detrimental to the political, and economic interest of West Cameroon, discord between Northwest and Southwest provinces has hampered any attempts for solidarity, and has prevented any cohesive action by Anglophones to pressure East Cameroon for more political concessions. This problem, Charles F. Doran has acknowledged, is
not peculiar to one country like Cameroon. He maintains that other countries such as Canada face similar difficulties of a single unified polity composed of two founding peoples.¹³

Main Proposition

In this study, therefore, the following questions will be investigated. Did unification of East and West Cameroon, in 1972, mark the beginning of dominant/subordinate relations between the two entities? and did partition of Cameroon into seven (7) administrative units (provinces), especially the division of West Cameroon into two separate units: Northwest and Southwest Provinces, serve as a divisive calculation aimed at weakening rather than enhancing West Cameroon’s solidarity? In addition, we will explore if democracy and multiparty politics in the country, which emerged in the early 1990s, increased political awareness of Cameroonians on some key issues, at the same time, magnifying regional and ethnic differences along party lines. Similarly, the study would seek to uncover if deterioration in the country's economy, especially the prevailing imbalances in resource and infrastructural development between East and West Cameroon, served as a major catalyst fueling Anglophone agitation's, and calls for separation from East Cameroon. Finally, the study will seek know if lack of solidarity among West Cameroonians has impeded, rather than enhanced the

region's ability to speak in “one voice,” thus exert political pressure on the government in Yaounde for meaningful changes in West Cameroon.

This study will explore if unification of East and West Cameroon, in 1972, marked the beginning of “center-periphery” relations between the two regions, with East Cameroon serving as the dominant entity and West Cameroon as the subordinate entity. It will also attempt to uncover if this unequal relationship between the two regions is the result of policies instituted by the political elites in East Cameroon, with support from some West Cameroon politicians in the government and assembly. In nutshell, the study will attempt to investigate if political, economic, and infrastructural imbalances between the two regions, plus perceived treatment of Anglophones as “inferiors” or “second class” citizens is a major catalyst propelling some Anglophones to advocate for separation from East Cameroon.

In sum, the endeavor to study dominant-subordinate relations between and within states in Africa, particularly in a multi-ethnic country such as Cameroon, it is expected that factors such as the prevailing economic conditions in the country, the current political dynamics, including the degree of political transparency, and political participation will play a key role in shaping the discussions of political events. Furthermore, resource and infrastructural distribution as well as cultural and social realities of the citizens in the dominated
region have influenced the attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs of the subjects in the
dominated territory.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Two salient features of the contemporary international system include
asymmetry and inequality. These characteristics define the relationship between
the advanced capitalist states and countries of the Third World. Dependency
theory, among other theories, has been used extensively by scholars and other
analysts to examine the unequal bargaining relationship prevalent between the
developed and less developed countries. Dependency theorists argue that a major
impediment to Third World development has been the exploitation of resources by
the developed countries, and the deterioration in the terms of trade for primary
products, resulting in economic chaos in the latter. K. J. Holsti has noted that the
relationship between societies from a dependency perspective is hierarchical,
unequal, and exploitative. Mainstream and progressive analysts have utilized the
dependency concept to interpret or explain issues relating to development and
underdevelopment. Perspectives of dependency have revealed contrasting forms
of dominance and dependence among nations of the capitalist world as well as
within the developing countries. Two important scenarios about this perspective
should be made clear. The first is that the dependent nations may develop as a
reflection of the expansion of the dominant nations; and secondly, the dependent
nations may be underdevelop as a consequence of their subjective relationship
with their developed counterparts.15

A non-Marxist approach, which emphasized underdevelopment, emerged from economists linked with the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), led by Argentinean economists Raul Presbisch. The focus of the ECLA approach for developing or Third World Nations was to build a strong bourgeoisie, which is supportive of national interests in the developing countries, especially in Latin America. Also, Furtado, another member of ECLA, argued that national development could only be achieved by autonomy in the less developed countries. This inward strategy of achieving development through national autonomy can eventually lead to state control and planning of the political economy. The ECLA approach revealed or uncovered that the developing countries were structured into dual societies—one advanced and modern and the other backward and feudal, and that the world was divided into two spheres, the metropole or the center and the periphery. The group argued that under


15Ronald H. Chilcote, Theories of Comparative Politics: The Search for a Paradigm Reconsidered (Boulder, West view Press, 1994), 236.
unrestrained competition, the metropole or center appropriates most of the economic benefits in the world to the disadvantage of the periphery.16

Andre Gunder Frank, a prominent underdevelopment and dependency theorist, argued that the vehicle through which national and regional metropolises exploit and appropriate surpluses from the economic satellites or peripheries was through commercial monopolies rather than feudalism or pre-capitalist economic means. Clearly, Frank’s dichotomy of metropolis and satellite conforms to or supports the ECLA’s notion of center and periphery relations and the contradictions inherent in this relationship.17 Theotonio Dos Santos challenged Frank’s thesis of surplus extraction as the major reason for underdevelopment. According to Dos Santos, “rather than focusing on ‘satellitization’ as the main cause of underdevelopment, attention should be geared toward a certain type of internal structure, conditioned by international relationships of dependence.”18

Before moving any further with this discussion, it is important for us to examine or define dependency. Theotonio Dos Santos defines dependency in the following:

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16Ibid., 230-238.


By dependency we mean a situation in which the economy of certain countries or regions is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy, to which the former is subjected. This relation of inter-dependence between two or more economies and between these and world trade assumes the form of dependence, when some countries (the dominant ones) can do this only as a reflection of that expansion, which can have either a positive or negative effect on their immediate development.¹⁹

Dependency theory, in a nutshell, examines the relationship of unequal bargaining and exploitation perpetuated by the dominant classes, regions, or countries over subjugated classes and regions, and the implications for the latter's development and growth. It should, however, be stressed that this definition is not limited to the relations between the developed and less developed countries, as most scholars have pursued in the past. Internal dependency within the developing countries loomed shortly after these countries gained independence, as post-independent elites in the developing countries maintained and strengthened the hierarchical post-colonial structures left behind by their former colonial authorities. This superior-subordinate relationship within the developing countries manifested itself in the political, economic, cultural as well as in communication domains, and has been termed neocolonialism.

The edifice of exploitation within the developing countries takes the form of paternalistic leverages such as rewarding certain regions, ethnic groups, and personalities with high political offices or other forms of rewards such as
building of schools, roads, health centers, etc. The perpetuation of the pattern of neglect and inequality within the developing countries is macro-managed by elite classes and can be regarded as the contemporary equivalent of a formal colonial apparatus.

Johan Galtung has put together a coherent synthesis of the dependency model, from a center-periphery perspective. Galtung argues that elites of the center or metropolis draw bounty from the periphery of their own state system, through taxes and other royalties, in order to nurture and support co-opted elites of client or “peripheral” states or regions. He maintains that elites of those client states or regions, who depend upon the elites of the center for assistance join in exploiting and suppressing their own peripheral populations. In the case of Cameroon, most West Cameroonians believe that some pre-unification and post-unification political elites sold out Anglophone Cameroon to East Cameroon leadership for their personal and political gains.

Dos Santos has identified several types of dependencies aimed at broadening our understanding of this polemic concept. The first type of dependence, which we are all familiar with, is colonial dependency. This type of dependency characterizes the relationship between Europeans and their former colonies. In this relationship, monopoly of trade complements monopoly of land,

manpower, and other resources such as the mines of the colonized regions. The second type of dependency identified by Dos Santos is financial-industrial dependency, which emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. It is characterized by domination of capital by the hegemonic centers and investment of capital in the peripheries for commodities such as cocoa, coffee, rubber, etc. which would be consumed in the metropole. Another category of dependency identified by Dos Santos is the "new dependency." This concept emerged and gained grounds after World War II and centered primarily on investment by Multinational Corporations (MNCs). The new dependency seeks to demonstrate that the relationship of dependent countries vis-a-vis the dominant countries cannot be changed or altered without significant internal structural change and important changes in external relations with the dominant countries. The new dependency theory acknowledges that the structure of dependency deepens, thus plunging further dependent countries to underdevelopment. This anomaly creates serious problems for the dependent people as they deal with and conform to international and internal structures influenced and dictated by Multinational Corporations as well as the international commodity and capital markets, and other bilateral institutions like the World Bank and IMF.20

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Dependency theory has been subjected to severe criticism by other theorists. Some supporters of the Marxist view charge that the dependency theory is weak for its overemphasis on external or exogenous factors for the problems of the periphery rather than the focus on internal dynamics such as the exploitative nature of the local elites. Secondly, many approaches have emerged, each purporting to interpret and explain Third World realities based on their exploitation, marginalization, and domination. This has resulted in confusion and contradiction in espousing the tenets of the theory.

Some analyst who have employed the dependency theory in an attempt to analyze and explain development and underdevelopment, have often ended up dealing with the issue of foreign penetration into the political economies of the Third World. Chilcote contends that foreign influence both in the political and economic domain has played a key role in local development, in reinforcing the dominant position of the ruling classes at the expense of the marginal or subjugated classes. Elaborating on this issue, Chilean economist Osvaldo Sunkel writes:

Foreign factors are seen not as external, but as intrinsic to the system, with manifold and sometimes hidden or subtle political financial, economic, technical, and cultural effects inside the underdeveloped country... Thus, the concept of “dependencia” links the post war evolution of capitalism internationally to the discriminatory nature of the local process.

21Ronald H. Chilcote, Theories of Comparative Politics: The Search for a Paradigm Reconsidered, 236.
of development, as we know it. Access to the means and benefits of development is selective; rather than spreading them, the process tends to ensure a self-reinforcing accumulation of privilege for special groups as well as the continued existence of a marginal class.22

Despite the different approaches and directions dependency theorists have embraced, we should be cautious not to be overwhelmed by elaborate interpretations or analysis which focus attention almost exclusively on advanced capitalist states vis-a-vis the less developed countries. Doing so will obscure severe internal cleavages in the developing countries, where some regions or ethnic groups have dominated and placed their fellow citizens in dependent circumstances.

Significance of the Study

A study of center-periphery relations in the context of Africa particularly as it pertains to Cameroon is significant for several reasons. First, it dispels the myth held by some scholars that this type of hierarchical and asymmetrical relationship only exists between the developed and less developed countries. Second, it reveals that domination and exploitation of resources by the dominant actor, whether the metropole in the developed country over the less developed countries, or Yaounde and East Cameroon over West Cameroon, remains pervasive and unaltered. Third, researchers and scholars who have dealt

22Osvaldo Sunkel, “Big Business and ‘Dependencia.’” Foreign Affairs 50 (April 1972), 519.
with center-periphery analysis either from a global or regional perspective, point

to ethnicity in Africa and other less developed countries as a major drawback to

peripheral development. This approach arguably is shallow and inadequate, since

there are other salient factors which combine with the ethnic factor to undermine

development and progress in Africa. As the case of Cameroon demonstrates,

although ethnicity is one of the key elements responsible for lack of solidarity

among West Cameroonians to bring pressure to bear on the dominant East

Cameroon other relevant factors also exist, including ideological differences,

political, social and economic circumstances.

Furthermore, past studies on Cameroon including, Kofele-Kale Ndiva’s

“Ethnicity Regionalism and Political Power: A Post Mortem of Ahidjo’s

Cameroon,” Mark W. Delancey’s Cameroon: Dependence and Independence, and

Mario Azevedo’s “The Post-Ahidjo Era in Cameroon” all failed to produce any

credible framework for examining and analyzing the impact of unification on

West Cameroon solidarity. This failure, one can only speculate, must have been

because these and other scholars treated and viewed West Cameroon as a

homogeneous entity, devoid of internal discord and separate interests.

By contrast to these, and other studies, however, evidence reveal stark

differences between Northwest and Southwest provinces (West Cameroon). The

prevalence of discord among these peripheral units only reinforces one of Johan

Galtung’s three theses in “A Structural Theory of Imperialism.” According to
Galtung, a key element of center-periphery relations is the prevalence of disharmony of interest within the periphery, while there is relative harmony of interest between the periphery and the center. In the case of Cameroon, therefore, while there is residual harmony of interest between Northwest and Southwest provinces (periphery), disharmony is interest between these two Anglophone regions appears to be relatively great. Likewise, although residual disharmony of interests prevails between Buea and Yaounde as well as between Bamenda and Yaounde, there is, nevertheless, relative harmony of interest between Bamenda and Yaounde, and Buea and Yaounde, more than there is between Bamenda and Buea (the Anglophone Provincial Headquarters).

In diagram form, the reformulated model looks like our presentation in diagram 1. We have summarized this information as follows:

1. Harmony of interest between Yaounde and the provinces:
   
   a. There is relative harmony of interest between Yaounde, the capital, and the provincial headquarters, Bamenda and Buea, buttressed by both economic and political imperatives.
   
   b. The struggle for limited resources from the central government, and perceive “adverse” threats for non-compliance may explain this harmony of interest between the entities.
c. There is however, residual disharmony of interest between these provincial headquarters and the national capital, driven largely by the concerns local constituencies.

2. a. Disharmony of interest or conflict of interest prevails between the two Anglophone provinces of Bamenda and Buea.

b. Successive Francophone regimes have designed and executed policies to keep the two provinces at odds with each other.

c. Historical, cultural, political, and economic circumstances account for this anomaly.

d. Residual harmony of interest nevertheless, prevails between Bamenda and Buea. Both regions were under British Trusteeship as Southern Cameroons, and later West Cameroon. Both regions are bound together by a common language—English.
Diagram 1


This study also hopes to stimulate and provoke interest among West Cameroonians to engage forcefully in research and publication on the region. Most of the works written thus far, with a focus on West Cameroon, has been done by foreign scholars, whose grasp and understanding of the cultural realities of the people appears to be narrow, and to a limited extent, by Anglophone Cameroonians. We hope the new perspectives brought forth by this study will
create a desire for more research in such topics as “Political Balkanization and its impact on West Cameroon solidarity,” “Political Parties in West Cameroon,” Multiparty Politics and Unity in Cameroon,” “Politics of the Coastal/Forest and Grassfield People of West Cameroon,” etc. This study, by critically examining center-periphery relations, reveals other salient factors responsible for discord and lack of progress and development in the periphery other than ethnicity, as has been espoused by some western scholars.

In summary, therefore, whatever directions this study of center-periphery relations in Africa may take in the foreseeable future, it seems likely that it will build on, or perhaps take into consideration the contributions of this study on Cameroon.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to empirically explore the relationship between former East and West Cameroon, and how contemporary political, economic, and social circumstances have enhanced/undermined this relationship. The view espoused in this study is that re-unification in 1961, and most importantly integration of these separate political entities in 1972, marked the beginning of unequal (dominant-subordinate) relations. The conventional viewpoint held by some scholars and observers is that the merging of the Francophone and Anglophone cultures in Cameroon has been successful, compared to other integration attempts in Africa and other developing countries.
This viewpoint needless to say, has led most scholars to focus on the factors that have combined to make the Cameroon union a reality. Credible, however, as some of these observations may be, it fails to underscore the inherent disparities between the Francophones and Anglophones. Secondly, it fails to examine the chasm among the Anglophones themselves, especially between Northwest and Southwest provinces.

**Study Design**

This study will utilize a combination of primary and secondary sources of data to examine and analyze the political, economic, and social developments in the two Cameroons before and after independence, using surveys, interviews and other sources of data. The secondary source of information will comprise of the historical and descriptive approaches. The descriptive approach will attempt to familiarize us with the scope and major framework of the study, providing useful insights of the circumstances leading to the abolition of the federal system, and the creation of a unitary form of government by Ahmadou Ahidjo. This, will include the president’s penchant for personal power, his dream of forging a national consensus in a multi-ethnic country, and disarray among West Cameroon political leaders. It will also describe succinctly the strategies the government had used in the past and even today, to maintain and reinforce the dominant role of Francophones over Anglophones in the country. The historical aspect of the study will provide a brief account of Cameroon’s history and will complement the
descriptive approach. It will lay out chronological events beginning with early European trade activities, German control of Cameroon in 1884, its defeat by France and Great Britain, division of Cameroon by the League of Nations and later the United Nations. This approach will also focus briefly on the system of governance introduced by France and Britain, and assess the overall ramifications it has had on the relations of East and West Cameroon. These approaches will, no doubt, serve as the catalyst in my exploration, analysis, and conclusions on center-periphery relations in Cameroon.

Data Collection Method

The primary source of data for this study were gathered through a survey of individuals who were apt to have broad, or some knowledge on the prevailing subject matter. The investigation was also not limited to individuals with “better education” or persons considered “more articulate.” The fear was that such individuals often share common ideas or ideological orientations, which may taint, or present a distorted picture of the study. The goal of utilizing this method (survey) was to examine the views, attitudes, and opinions of respondents, regarding the unequal relationship of the two regions.

The subjects of the survey were Cameroonians, residing in Cameroon and the United States of America. The survey was conducted between February and June of 1999, and 200 questionnaires were distributed to respondents. Subjects were drawn from the Francophone and Anglophone sectors of the
country. Of the 200 questionnaires sent out, 174 were completed and returned, constituting a response rate of (87 percent). Twenty six (26) of the retrieved questionnaires were discarded because respondents were 17 years of age, and perceived to be unaware of political dynamics of the country. Furthermore, documents from the Census Bureau in Cameroon, the Cameroon Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, as well as Newspaper reports in Cameroon and around the world will be utilized in this endeavor. Similarly, information from publications of bilateral organizations such as the World Bank, the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, and country profile reports from the United States Department of State, and the Department of Commerce were utilized. The secondary sources of data and information were drawn from several diverse sources including academic or scholarly writings such as books, journals, magazines, periodicals and other unpublished materials.

Review of Related Literature

Studies on dominant/subordinate relations have been explored extensively in numerous literatures dealing with dependency, development and underdevelopment theories. Some of these works, however, have focused on the "general nature" of this uneven relationship rather than addressing circumstances and/or situations dealing with specific countries or regions. Thomas R. Shannon's An Introduction to the World-System Perspective, Ronald H. Chilcote's Theories of Comparative Politics: The Search for a Paradigm, Steven L. Spiegel's
Dominance and Diversity, Samir Amin’s Unequal Development: An Essay on the Social Formations of Peripheral Capitalism, Johan Galtung’s “A Structural Theory of Imperialism,” and Andre Gunder Frank’s “The Development of Underdevelopment.”

Some of the works just cited above are not specifically restricted to dominant-subordinate framework, but rather espouse the same general theme of domination, subjugation and exploitation exhibited by the developed countries over their less developed counterparts. These works also share the view that countries and/or regions which are economically, militarily and technologically more advanced use these capabilities to impose their will on their weaker partners.

Other works which have specifically focused on this subject with reference to individual countries include Hans Antlov’s Exemplary Center, Administrative Periphery: Rural Leadership and the New Order in Java, Robert A.

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Young’s *The Secession of Quebec and the Future of Canada*, and Charles F. Doran and Ellen Reisman Babby’s *Being and Becoming in Canada*. The purpose of this review is to examine various studies, which have explored and analyzed either directly or indirectly East and West Cameroon relations. It seeks to focus on past research which have dealt with political, economic and social discontinuities in Cameroon, and how these realities manifest themselves in East and West Cameroon relations. Milton Krieger, in “Cameroon’s Democratic Crossroads, 1990-94.” *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, examines a range of political, cultural, economic and ethnic issues relating to Cameroon’s transition to democracy. Krieger highlights the “Anglophone factor” as the incendiary spark to opposition movement in Cameroon. He argues that despite this major breakthrough by Anglophones to shape or redirect political discourse in Cameroon, Anglophones have continued to serve a subordinate role in the Republic. Krieger argues that disunity among the Anglophone (Northwest and Southwest) provinces remains a major huddle for this region’s to overcome in order to successfully influence the Francophone government in Yaounde. He

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further discusses factors responsible for political transition in the country, using economic deterioration as the motivating factor. He attributes Cameroon’s economic decline to two major factors: (1) ethnicity and (2) clientelism. Although these factors have contributed to the country’s economic woes, they are not the only factors. Evidence from other works reveal that exogenous factors such as decline in commodity prices in The World Market, the recession of the 1980s, increase in prices for manufactured products, and debt burden combined to accelerate Cameroon’s economic decline.

The author also fails to mention or discuss the role of the coup d’etat of April 1984, and its political and economic ramifications for the country. Furthermore, Krieger and other scholars have pointed to the events in Eastern Europe as the catalyst for democratic movement in Africa and especially in Cameroon. This view or perspective fails to mention that Paul Biya, the country’s leader, embarked on democratic principles and reform shortly after he took office in 1982; and seven years before the “wave of democracy” started blowing throughout Eastern Europe and Africa.

Similarly, Jean-Germain Gros, in “The Hard Lessons of Cameroon,” Journal of Democracy explores factors that have combined to undermine Cameroon’s democratic transition and future prospects for democracy. He contends that in order to understand Cameroon’s political transformations, one has
to examine its postcolonial history, social structure and political dynamics.\textsuperscript{26} Gros charts Cameroon’s political history stretching back to the conference of Berlin in 1884, which ceded “Kamerun” to Germany as its protectorate. He discusses the defeat of Germany in World War I and the break-up of Cameroon by the League of Nations into two entities, French and English, with the former controlling 80% of the territory and the latter 20%. He contends that this bifurcated colonial legacy and efforts to cushion the problematic legacy through a federal structure was a failure. The author highlights the difficulties of Cameroon’s dual colonial legacy in the following statement:

One cannot understand the militancy of the SDF, the party that has been most closely identified with Anglophone Cameroon, without grasping that what it wants is not merely a change in the government but a far-reaching federalist reform of the regime. Yet progress toward this goal is impeded by the reluctance of President Biya’s Franco phone opponents seriously to consider federalism, which they fear might lead to the eventual breakup of the country.\textsuperscript{27}

Gros succinctly contrasts the political and administrative systems of British and French in Cameroon in the following:

In addition to their language, the British left behind their traditions of Westminster-style bicameral parliamentarism, administrative


\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., 115.
decentralization, vibrant local government, and a relatively open society. By contrasts, the more prosperous and populous East Cameroon had a classically 'Gallic' orientation, with a strong executive, a centralized bureaucracy, and less tolerance for open debate and dissent.\textsuperscript{28}

The author further argues that Cameroon’s abandonment of the unitary system in favor of a multiparty system gained grounds in 1989 and was not a direct initiative by the government. He contends the birth of this movement was the result of Duala chief, Yondo Black, who championed this campaign by filing legal papers with the goal of creating a new political party besides the CPDM. The government counteracted this move by arresting Black and his collaborators who were charged with “attempting to destabilize the government by fomenting ethnic tension.”\textsuperscript{29} Black’s initiative propelled the formation of the Social Democratic Front, SDF Party. Again, this move was challenged by government security forces to break up this rally.

Gros maintains that Cameroon’s uneasy transition to multiparty democracy can best be understood by examining the circumstances and events that emerged in postcolonial Cameroon. He offers the following factors as impediments to transition to multiparty democracy: (1) the long and violent internal war especially against the UPC, which made secrecy official and brutality towards dissent seem like virtues. (2) Another hindrance to smooth transition to

\textsuperscript{28}Ibid., 114.

\textsuperscript{29}Ibid., 117.
multiparty democracy was over reliance of civilian leaders on the military, especially on French military experts, for protection. (3) The uneven terms of integration between the former federated states of East and West Cameroon. According to Gros, these inequitable terms of unification made allegiance of the Anglophones questionable. He further maintains that over centralization of the political and administrative system, an unchecked presidency, a fractured opposition hobbed by parochial goals of the opposition leaders and a distracted international community not able to press the cause for democratic reform in countries like Cameroon, all contributed to sluggish transition to multiparty democracy. The author sees Cameroon as likely to descend into the vortex of Somalia, Sudan, and Yugoslavia-style warfare. This conclusion presumes that the Anglophones will unite and fight for their separate entity. It fails, however, to recognize the chasm between the two Anglophone provinces, Northwest and Southwest, which would make such a purpose unattainable.

Frank Stark, in “Federalism in Cameroon: The Shadow and Reality,” carefully examines federalism in Cameroon from inception in 1962 to its demise in May 1972. He forcefully and convincingly argues that in order to understand the intricacies of the federal structure as it existed in Cameroon, one has to understand the forces and circumstances behind the drive for reunification from both East and West Cameroon, and also from the international community. He
begins by pointing out that the federal system was an illusion, given the inherent economic imbalance that prevailed between East and West Cameroon. East Cameroon, the author contends, was economically advanced, compared to West Cameroon, due to French aid to the region. West Cameroon, on the other hand, relied on the but more importantly their determination to Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) for its revenue.31

He further argues that West Cameroon’s economy was wedged between two aggressive business oriented groups, the Ibos from Nigeria who dominated trade in Southern Cameroon (West Cameroon), as well as the Bamelikes in the French zone. He maintains that the Bamelikes’ desire was not only to expand their trade interest in Southern Cameroons escape French colonial rule in East Cameroon.

Stark correctly points out that the Bamelikes’ business desire in Southern Cameroon was also the engine behind the reunification movement with East Cameroon in 1948, especially in cities like Kumba and Tiko. The reunification theme, Stark adds, was adopted by the anti-French revolutionary party, the UPC, and also resonated with Dr. E.M.L. Endeley’s party, the Kamerun National Congress (KNC) which used the issue to drive the anti-Nigerian sentiments in Southern Cameroon. According to the Catholic newspaper, L’Effort Camerounaise, the idea of federalism or federal structure in East Cameroon emerged in 1958, following the resignation of Prime Minister of East

30Ibid., 117.

Cameroon, Andre Mbida. Mbida, the paper contends, appealed to the French government to "divide the French Cameroons into a federation like British Nigeria or Switzerland."

The paper criticized and opposed the idea of fragmenting French Cameroons, stating that it would be "costly and totally against French political tradition." It also argued that this system would lead to ethnic divisions in the territory.

Southern Cameroon’s leadership embraced the idea to a federal system as illustrated by J. N. Foncha’s remarks: "Reunification would take place on a federal place, on a federal basis, after Southern Cameroon’s secession from Nigeria." The author further argues that pressure from the United Nations Trusteeship Council and other African leaders, forcing Foncha to hold a plebiscite no later than March 1, 1961 either to join Nigeria or Cameroon Republic as a condition for reunification, gave a disproportionate edge to East Cameroon since it was an independent state. Furthermore, pressure from other African leaders on Foncha and Endeley left the leaders with very little or no time to carefully work out the terms of reunification with East Cameroon. Frank Stark’s work clearly lays out the foundation for examining and analyzing intra-Cameroon relations based on the three perspectives just discussed (East Cameroon, West Cameroon, and the International Community).

Kofele-Kale Ndiva, in "Ethnicity, Regionalism and Political Power: A Post-Mortem of Ahidjo’s Cameroon," examines the major contradictions which have combined to influence the distribution of resources in the country, wealth, status and

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33 Ibid., 19 and 26 April 1959.
This inquiry focuses on almost two decades of leadership under Cameroon’s premier leader Ahmadou Ahidjo. The Cameroonian society can best understood if one examines three key images. One of the images, he points out, reveals a society cleared along ethnic/regional axis, particularly between the North and South. The second image identified by Azarya, Nelson, and Prouzet is one of a society divided along religious domains between the Muslim North and Christian South. This thesis maintains that although the Muslim North is fearful of the Christian South, they have used their position and power to monopolize power. The last image, according to observers, portrays Cameroon’s reality manifested by her varied colonial experiences—German-Francophone and Anglophone contradictions. According to observers, this image has been the most lethal to Cameroon’s internal cohesion and national unity for 20 years. As some scholars have forcefully stated, the union between these two colonial realities--

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Francophone and Anglophone—was a mismatch, "a union of unequals with seeds of its own eventual destruction embedded into it from the moment of birth." This tension and suspicion of domination and marginalization by Francophones is borne of the perception by Anglophones that East Cameroon purposefully wants to assimilate Anglophones into Francophone culture by obliterating all remaining vestiges of the English-speaking personality." According to Kofele-Kale, the origins of this perception stretches back to the "very nature of reunification itself, that is, the negotiations leading to it and the eventual outcome." Kale further argues that the subordinate and marginal role of Anglophones was not only a perception, but a constitutional reality, as he elaborates:

During the first decade of reunification, the Constitution contained a glaring contradiction: on one hand, it prescribed French and English as the country’s official languages (Article 1:4) only to allow, on the other hand, until the provision was eventually dropped, that the French text was the authentic one (Article 44 of the 1972 Constitution).

Although much attention has focused on the disparity between Anglophones and Francophones, Cameroonian economist, Ndongko Wilfred, reminds us that this problem is not peculiar to only West Cameroon. Wilfred argues that economic depravation is a shared problem by several regions in the republic, especially in the North and Eastern provinces. He, nevertheless, points out that this should not suggest that

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Anglophone complaints about the relative backwardness of their region brushed aside.
He adds that West Cameroon, in the final analysis, is Cameroon’s breadbasket and the source of considerable oil wealth.40

Mack W. Delancey in *Cameroon: Dependence and Independence*, offers a succinct construction of the Cameroonian society from the colonial epoch to independence in 1960. Delancey examines the nature of Cameroon’s triple colonial experience under the Germans, French and British, as a backdrop to analyzing the country’s political, economic, social and cultural realities. He maintains that Cameroon, like most other African countries at independence, faced similar problems, including: inherited colonial, political and administrative institutions, which were incompatible with the indigenous realities of the Cameroon people. The country also faced other problems, including the lack of industry, underdeveloped infrastructures, low per capita income, ethnic divisions throughout the territory, and her economy was dependent on a few agricultural exports such as palm oil, cocoa and timber.41 Unlike in other African countries, in Cameroon, it was a two-front struggle. First, there was internal struggle by the government against the UPC, an anti-French movement which was against French interference in Cameroon’s affairs, and advocated independence and reunification where nationalist struggles were against foreign domination for independence, in of the two Cameroons. Second, was the struggle for independence from colonial rule.

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41Ibid., 99.
Delancey also examines Cameroon’s delicate political dynamics and the implications for national unity. He discusses the schism between East and West Cameroon as central to avoiding political destabilization. He also offers plausible explanations for Cameroon’s economic successes in the 1960s and 1970s and its decline in the late 1980s. He argues that leadership change and the subsequent coup to topple Paul Biya, the President, combined with mismanagement and external factors, account for the country’s economic decline.

Despite Delancey’s excellent analysis, he falls short on his discussion on the West Cameroon issue, aware that it is one of the most important issues in Cameroon politics. He devotes just half a page on the Anglophone discussion, but nevertheless, provides useful insights.42

Victor T. LeVine, like other prominent scholars of Cameroon has carried out extensive research and published numerous books, articles, and monographs on the political, economic, social and cultural issues in Cameroon. In his text, The Cameroon Federal Republic, LeVine examines the evolution, challenges, and success of Cameroon’s Federal System, which emerged after reunification of the former French and British-controlled territories (La Republique du Cameroon and Southern Cameroons) in 1961. He argues that Cameroon’s federal structure succeeded as a stable system compared to other African federations like Ethiopian-Eritrean, Mali, and Nigeria, which experienced serious civil unrest.

42Ibid., 99.
The author also maintains however, that, despite Cameroon’s success, the system was riddled with some major problems and difficulties, especially in the disparity in size, population, and economic growth between the relatively small former British Southern Cameroons and the ten-times-larger former French Cameroons. Gwendolen M. Carter, in her foreword of the text, illustrates this fact in the following observations:

No one would suggest that the Cameroon Federal Republic is without serious strains and problems. No African-controlled country is without such difficulties. But Cameroon has successfully survived as a functioning federal entity, in a period when many apparently more fortunately endowed states have not.

LeVine also examines Cameroon’s complex political, economical and social realities, which as he observes, reflects the country’s exceptional social and ethnic diversity.

In another text titled, The Cameroons: From Mandate to Independence, LeVine focuses on the processes, forces and factors that combined in defining the political, social and cultural community of the Republic of Cameroon. In the first section of the text, LeVine focuses on geography and socio-political influences in the country during the pre-mandate period. In the second phase of the book, he devotes attention to Cameroon’s political metamorphosis under the League of Nations and later the United Nations Trusteeship. The author admits that the locus of the text is on the French Cameroon, however, he examines the rise of nationalism in the British Cameroons which

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is an integral component in understanding Cameroon’s political reality. The author also explores a range of other issues including “political” tribal or economically functional groups to political parties. The author criticizes this study in the following statement:

It may be argued with considerable justice, that greater attention should have been given to such matters as economic development. The impact of the French cultural presence in the Cameroon, the personalities of the more important Cameroonian leaders, and the growth and influence of trade unionism.

LeVine’s texts without a doubt, offers succinct account of Cameroon’s political history, and the text serves as a foundation to our understanding of the country’s contemporary political realities.

Another individual whose scholarly contribution has significantly shed light on Cameroon’s politics is Rubin Neville. In his text, Cameroon: An African Federation, he examines the development of the modern states in Africa with particular focus on Cameroon. The author specifically explores the processes and circumstances which combined in giving birth to the Federal Republic of Cameroon. Neville examines the policies and institutions which emerged during the federal system and how these were effectively utilized to bond East and West Cameroonians together.

The author offers a concise account of the early history of Cameroon, reflecting on the interactions with the Bornu and Fulani empires and later, the Europeans

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"Ibid., viii."
through trade. Neville further examines the influence and impact of foreign presence in Cameroon, focusing especially on the League of Nations, the United Nations, the Germans, French and British. He argues that policies of these organizations and countries had significant impact on the development of national consciousness in Cameroon. Neville draws our attention to the problems and challenges in French Cameroon perpetuated by the UPC before and after independence, as well as the movement for unifying the former territories. Finally, the author surveys and scrutinizes Cameroon’s Federal Constitution, adopted after the Foumban and Yaounde conferences. He argues that this constitution which was a reflection of constitution of La Republique du Cameroon, was anything but federal. Neville’s piece provides a sound background through which contemporary political issues can be discussed and analyzed, especially on the Southern Cameroon’s issue.

Of all the works that have dealt with politics, particularly the fusion of the former French and British Trust territories, Willard R. Johnson’s work stands out distinctly. In his text, The Cameroon Federation: Political Integration in a Fragmentary Society, Johnson provides a succinct account and analysis of the integration of the two Cameroons (East and West), formerly under French and British Trusteeship. The author begins by examining and discussing the concept of integration, focusing especially on the processes that combined to yield success in Cameroon, as well as the effects of integration on West Cameroon. Johnson forcefully and convincingly argues that Cameroon, unlike other African or developing countries with heterogenous ethnic affinities, was able to reunite because of the determination of its leadership and also desire of the citizens. He, nevertheless, points out some of the major challenges faced by
the country, including the stark uneven rates and levels of development in the two regions, as well as ethnic rivalries and religious competition.47 Added to this myriad of internal discontinuities, Johnson further notes that Cameroon had to deal with alien colonial legacies of France and Great Britain.

Besides the inherent problem of inequality identified by the author as a major challenge faced by West Cameroon as a result of integration, he nevertheless, expresses concern about lack of solidarity and unanimity among West Cameroonians. This anomaly, he points out, is rooted in economic and modern social development disparities between the coastal/forest people (Southwest) and the grassfield people (Northwest), with the former endowed with abundant natural resources. Johnson acknowledges that despite the difficulties, the case of Cameroon remains unique in Africa where the leadership successfully combined nation-building and state-building to operate successfully.48

Despite Johnson painstaking efforts in researching, analyzing and discussing political integration in Cameroon, it should be pointed out that the work, nevertheless, has some flaws. He devotes considerable amount of time and space to discuss and elaborate on his theoretical literature on political integration and conflict theory. This, author himself acknowledges as a flaw in his foreword.49 He identifies the widening economic and social gap between Southern Cameroonians (Southwest and Northwest), but fails to offer or suggest any amicable solutions in dealing with this problem.

48Ibid., 365.
49Ibid., ix.
Furthermore, he offers no real alternatives in dealing with internal discontinuities in the country such as ethnic rivalry, religious competition and regionalism. As a final note, it should be pointed out that the title, notwithstanding, this text’s narrative and analysis, does not extend beyond 1970, when the “real” integration of East and West Cameroon occurred in 1972. This was two years after publication of Johnson’s excellent text.

Nicolas Van de Walle’s “Neopatrimonialism and Democracy in Africa, with an illustration from Cameroon,” focuses on politics and the economy as major levels to political reform in Africa, particularly in Cameroon. Van de Walle’s piece is also an important contribution to the growing body of literature on Cameroon’s economic malfunction which began in the mid-1980s, resulting in protests and demand for political reforms in the 1990s. This article further constitutes a wider theoretical and comparative examination of the political economy of development and decline in Africa.\textsuperscript{30} He maintains that Cameroon’s transition from one-party rule to multiparty democracy was triggered by continued economic difficulties, and attributes this dismal economic performance on two key factors including external exigencies and internal mismanagement. Implementation of austerity measures to revamp the economy through the infamous IMF and World Bank Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) exacerbated citizens frustrations.

Van de Walle’s fundamental premise, however is that, Cameroon’s economic decline and subsequent demands for political reform cannot be understood outside the

political process including public policy matters.\textsuperscript{31} He argues that sharp decline in commodity prices and rapid depreciation of the U.S. dollar vis-a-vis the French Franc, resulting in a 45 percent deterioration of the country's terms of trade in 1987-1988, remains one of the major causes of the crisis.\textsuperscript{32} Internal corruption, misappropriation of funds, the conflict between Ahidjo and Biya in 1983, and the resultant coup d'état of April 6, 1984, all combined as major factors in Cameroon's economic decline. The author points out that through Biya emerged victorious in the power/struggle, the price for victory was, however, enormous and far-reaching. He argues that Biya had to divert the country's merger resources to appease those who stood by and supported his regime, particularly the army.\textsuperscript{33}

Another important element responsible for Cameroon's economic decline and demands for political reforms is the prevalence of what the author terms "Neopatrimonialism." Van de Walle points out that in this regime, the leader makes no distinction between his own private property and that of the public or state.\textsuperscript{34} He points out that the leader develops a sophisticated network of patron-client relations in which the client provides loyalty and support for the regime, in return to access to state resources. This strategy, Van de Walle contends, has been used extensively by most African and Third World leaders to glue elites to the regime and in some instances as in

\textsuperscript{31}Ibid.,

\textsuperscript{32}Ibid., 143.

\textsuperscript{33}Ibid., 144.

\textsuperscript{34}Ibid., 131.
Cameroon, prevent factional and/or ethnic divides. It also helped in maintaining political stability and predictable economic growth. However, with dwindling state resources, these leaders, including Paul Biya of Cameroon, could not operate these patron-client networks effectively. This resulted in defections of top elites who joined with other citizens to demand for reforms.

The author argues that Cameroon’s transition from one-party rule to multiparty democracy was stifled by a host of factors including a weak or absence of civil society. He reveals this in the following: “In Cameroon, there are simply no civil associations with significant organizational power.” He blames this absence on the country’s premier leader, Ahmadou Ahidjo, for destroying these organizations during his reign in the past two decades.

Van de Walle is perhaps the only scholar who has attempted to factor the coup d'état of 1984 in Cameroon as a major contributor to the country’s economic crisis. Despite this effort, however, he failed to expand on, or elaborate on the extent the struggle had on the psyche of the country or the role it played in preventing foreign capital in Cameroon. Furthermore, his emphasis and description of neopatrimonial regime adds a new perspective to our analysis and understanding of the economic and political crisis in Cameroon, as well as Africa.

Michael Bratton and Nicolas Van de Walle in “Popular Protest and Political Reform in Africa,” also share the view that demands for democratic reforms in Africa and other developing regions was not engineered solely by economic circumstances, but

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39Ibid., 151.
also by other external exigencies. They maintain that the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union played a lead role in precipitating demands for political reforms in the Eastern European states. This “wave of change”, they argue, transcended the political and geographical borders of Eastern Europe to Africa, where citizens demanded transparency, accountability, and participation in the political process from their various governments.

Joseph Takougang, however, disagrees with Bratton and Van de Walle’s thesis with regards to Cameroon. In his article, “Cameroon: Biya and Incremental Reform, Takougang forcefully and convincingly argues that before the “wind of change” started blowing across Eastern Europe and Africa, President Biya of Cameroon had put in motion the democratic process when he assumed power in November 1982.” Takougang further argues that through Biya’s speeches, it was evident that the leader was prepared to depart from his predecessor’s autocratic grip on power. He points out, for example, the leader’s determination to create a more liberal and “democratic” society in which tolerance, individual freedom, and free exchange of ideas would flow.

The author discusses Biya’s early presidency, contrasting the leader’s style with his predecessor. Although Takougang acknowledges early on that Biya was the driving force behind the democratic process in Cameroon, he, nevertheless questions the

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leader’s motives. He argues that Biya’s interest in espousing democratic ideals were self-seeking, using this strategy to consolidate his hold on power than introducing genuine democratic reforms. He adds that Biya’s democratic initiatives were more symbolic than real particularly in the 1980s. The author notes that ideological differences among the various opposition groups in Cameroon hindered any efforts by these groups to force Biya’s regime to institute more meaningful changes in the country.

Although he mentions the “Anglophone factor” as a major challenge to Biya’s regime, he falls short of elaborating on this issue, neither does he tell us much about internal dynamics among the Anglophones, (Northwest and Southwest). Overall, his piece provides a concise overview of Cameroon’s political transformation from 1982 to 1996.

**Definition of key Concepts**

Our goal in this section is to define some of the key terms, which we have used in the study. This is not an exhaustive examination of all the concepts, but rather, an attempt to shed light on some of terms we employed in the study, to enhance our understanding of the subject matter.

**Colonialism**

Kwame Nkrumah defines colonialism as the policy by which a foreign power binds territories to herself through political ties with the goal of advancing its economic interest. Colonialism brought under its umbrella a large number of distinct cultures,

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tribal linkages, and in some cases nationalities under the control of a superior central authority. European colonialism, as Christopher Clapham has indicated, imposed European dominance on exotic societies. The overall basis of colonialism was technology, and the principal motive was economic. Colonialism established territories and territorial boundaries where none existed. This system also set up political and administrative units which were hierarchical in nature. The political and administrative structures were designed to compliment each other in the colonies. While the administrative system was highly centralized and authoritarian, force was the basis for political order. Colonialism also introduced in the colonies colonial economy as well as alien social attitudes, institutions, and forms of communication between the center and the periphery. This system achieved its dual goals of external penetration perpetuated by the developed world, and internal dependence of the Third World on the industrialized or Western world. Colonialism is blamed for some of the major problems in the developing countries including regional and ethnic conflicts, economic dependency, administrative systems, which are centralized, authoritarian, and repressive. All these characteristics are evident in Cameroon today and are the basis of some of the internal skirmishes, cleavages, and confrontations in the country.

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61Christopher Clapham, Third World Politics: An Introduction (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 12.

62Ibid., 18-19.
Imperialism

Imperialism is defined as “a relationship of effective dominance or control, political or economical, direct or indirect of one nation over another.” It is a system that splits up collectivities and relates some of the parts to each other in relations of harmony of interest, and other parts in relations of disharmony of interest or conflict of interest. This iniquitous system has generated intense hatred and conflicts, resulting in brutal assault of one nation against another. Imperialism, and now, Neo-Colonialism has employed several propaganda strategies designed to exploit differences in ethnic, cultural, religious and political ideology among dominated subjects.

Neocolonialism

In the 1980s, the last vestiges of colonialism ended in Africa, with Zimbabwe gaining its independence. In its place, however, a new form of domination emerged, known as neo-colonialism. As its name suggests, neo-colonialism is a new form of colonialism, in which the former colony in essence is independent, but in reality, its economical and political matters are shaped directly from outside. This system of domination and control is based on the principle of breaking former large colonial territories into small or petty non-viable states, which are not capable of independent development. As expressed by the dependency school, neo-colonialism has now replaced the direct exploitation and control of former colonies.

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(imperialism). It serves as an indirect source of control and exploitation for capitalism, using indigenous Third World middlemen, compradors, petit bourgeoisie, or elites, to achieve its goals of cheap labor, natural resources, and access to markets. This form of colonialism has established a hierarchical structure of few rich states and numerous impoverished states, generally referred to as Third World or LDC.

The goal of neo-colonialism is to encourage reliance of less developed states on the former imperial power for defense, economic prosperity, as well as national security. Typically, the economic and financial systems of these states, particularly former French colonies in Africa have been linked directly to France. This system, needless to say, has necessitated the establishment of welfare state in the Third World. The increasing independence of the imperialist system on neo-colonialist exploitation on an international scale through the division of labor, renders its existence so precarious, and makes its future very uncertain. As Nkrumah puts it, neo-colonialism has no permanent friends its only companions are its interests.

Neocolonialism’s impact on Third World countries is severe and far-reaching. A major consequence of this system is that foreign capital is used for the exploitation of the people and resources rather than for their development. Investment under this system increases, rather than bridge the gap between the poor and rich, hence, allowing the masses to be exploited beyond the “safe limits of exploitation.” According to George Ayitteh, African despots use neo-colonialism to enhance their own personal gains and goals.64 This is the worst form of imperialism, Nkrumah remarks, “To those

who practice it, it means power to exploit and oppress without the responsibility to those exploited, and to the victims it means exploitation without redress." In the case of Cameroon, West Cameroonians believe French capital has been used extensively to exploit the resources of the region, especially oil and timber, without developing these areas.

Internal Colonialism

Colonialism, as we alluded to earlier, was a direct external political system of domination by the Europeans and other Western countries over people of the Third world or developing countries. Mexican sociologist Pablo González Casanova has postulated that "internal colonialism" prevails in nations today, especially in countries of the Third World. He argues that the same conditions of traditional colonialism continues to exacerbate itself in these countries, including monopoly and dependence perpetuated by the metropolis over the outskirts, and creating in "his words, a deformation of the native economy and decapitalization." Furthermore, internal colonialism has a major impact on the relations of production and social control. It has increased internal exploitation of the subordinate groups by the dominant groups plundering resources. Internal colonialism has contributed to poverty, backwardness, and accentuated low productivity. It has further marginalized certain portions of societies, creating massive unemployment, poor communication networks, and stirred internal differences to achieve certain predictable political outcomes. Internal colonialism, in my view, is the major reason Anglophones in

Cameroon are demanding alternative solutions to their current predicament, vis-a-vis Francophones.

**Nation and State**

The term nation-state have often been used loosely as synonyms, in most instances, linked to the word “country.” In ordinary conversations, individuals use the words “country”, “state”, and “nation” to refer to the same thing. However, to political scientists, a “nation” and a “state” have more succinct meanings.

**Nation**

A nation, according to Shively, is “a large group of people who are bound together and recognize a similarity among themselves because of a common culture; in particular common language in creating nationhood.” Karl Deutsch and Walker Connor define a nation as:

A named human population sharing a historical territory, common memories and myths of origin, a mass, standardized public culture, a common economy and territorial mobility, and common legal rights and duties for all members of the collectivity.

The above definition summarizes long and complex discussions of the many definitions of a “nation.” Nations are often times, though not all the time, connected with political boundaries of the state.

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State

A state, on the other hand, is “a political unit that has ultimate sovereignty; that is, a political unit that has ultimate responsibility for the conduct of its own affairs.” A composite definition of this term will include the following elements: (1) A state is a set of institutions which possess the means of violence and coercion; (2) These institutions are in principle responsible for and control a geographically bounded territory, often called society; and (3) The rule-making decisions within the territory are monopolized by the state.

Although there appears to be an overlap between these two concepts in terms of common territorial boundaries and citizenship, some clear differences can be descended. While a nation defines and legitimizes politics in terms of common culture, memories, myths, language, and history, a state is viewed as containing the legal and institutional elements. The state has autonomous public institutions which are differentiated from other social institutions, through exercise of legitimate violence against its people.

Nationalism

This is a combination of social and psychological forces that sprang from unique cultural and historical factors to provide unity to a given people, through a sense of belonging. Nationalism brings together people who possess common cultural, linguistic, racial, historical and geographical characteristics or experiences. It is a

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88W. Phillips Shively, 30.

relatively modern concept, which emerged with the creation of the modern nation-state. According to W. Phillips Shively, the passionate identification with the state is called “nationalism.” Shively lucidly maintains that like any passion, nationalism can make people noble or base. Nationalism, he adds, is undeniably convenient for governments, regardless whether it makes people noble or ignoble. Many reasons have been advanced why governments appeal to nationalism, including obedience and allegiance to a single government of the state, and fighting for, or defending the state against its enemies. Governments also encourage nationalism in heterogeneous societies possessing different ethnic, religious, racial, and historical backgrounds. From a geopolitical perspective, nationalism may be seen as an ambiguous ideology, which can be aggressive and expansionist within and outside the borders of the state. This concept can serve as a peace-keeping mechanism as well as integrating culturally differentiated groups in a nation-state.

Thomas Hylland Eriksen succinctly notes that:

While nationalism emphasizes equality and human rights with its polity, it paradoxically appeals to particularism, refusing noncitizen or culturally deviant citizens full human rights and, in extreme cases, refusing them membership in the community of humans.

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Eriksen further states that in circumstances where the nation-state has succeeded ideologically, its populations had become nationalists and their way of life also grown with the demands of nation-state and supported this growth.

Conversely, where nationalism fails to convince the inhabitants, the state has resorted to violence or threat of violence to prevent fission (that is, the potential to disintegrate or secede from the state).\textsuperscript{73} Ethnic and region minorities have in the past been absorbed by the dominant society through assimilation or outright annihilation. In the case of Cameroon, the strategy of the dominant society was to assimilate the two Anglophone Provinces of Northwest to the Western Province and the Southwest to the Littoral Province.\textsuperscript{74}

Nationalism was instrumental in the struggle for freedom against imperialist and colonialist presence in most developing countries, especially in Africa. Today, it appears it is a divisive mechanism especially since the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

### Plebiscite

This is a voting process by qualified citizens of a state to decide on some important public question. This vote allows citizens in a political unit to determine their autonomy or affiliation with another country. In the case of Cameroon under United Nations Trusteeship, the question was whether the British Cameroons, that is, Northern and Southern Cameroons wanted to join independent Nigeria or Cameroun Republic. On


\textsuperscript{74}The Buea Declaration: All Anglophone Conference (Buea, April 2-3, 1993), 17.
February 11, 1960, Southern Cameroons voted overwhelmingly to rejoin Cameroun Republic while Northern Cameroons vote decisively to join Nigeria.

Federalism

A federal system of government is a system made up of a number of regional governments which have democratic and pluralist political systems that provide their citizens access to participation as well as opportunities at the national and state levels. It is, according to Pierre Elliot Trudeau, a compromise and a fact. A compromise in the sense that if national consensus on all matters are not attainable, the area of consensus is reduced in order that consensus on some other things or issues can be reached. Federalism is also viewed as a fact or quasi-treaty, principally because the terms of a compromise reached cannot be changed or altered unilaterally by one party. Self-determination, according to advocates, is the crux of the federal system. Proponents plausibly argue that in nations with heterogeneous makeup, a federal system will serve to protect citizens, minority groups as well as regions from central tyranny. They further argue that this system will increase participation of citizens in the political process, encourage innovation, and strengthen community identity and values. Opponents of the federal system argue that the system is plagued with many pitfalls, including slowness to

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respond to new opportunities and challenges and difficulties that arise due to decision-making and implementation by the government.

The objective of federalism is to reconcile unity and diversity especially in societies with multi-ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds. Cameroon’s adoption of a federal system from 1962-1972, was principally to balance the interest of Anglophones with their Francophone counterparts as well as serve the interest of various ethnic entities in the country.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity refers to a subjective perception of common origins, historical memories, ties and aspirations. Ethnic group pertains to organized activities by persons linked by a consciousness of a special identity, a sense of peoplehood, and has its foundations in the combined remembrance. This concept has played both positive and negative roles in different societies. It has served as a unifying or cohesive mechanism in some, and in others like Rwanda, Somalia, and former Yugoslavia, it has become an explosive and divisive issue. Cameroon, as I stated earlier in the study, is perhaps the most ethnically diverse country in Africa with about 250 different ethnic groups speaking different ethnic tongues. Although Cameroon has not witnessed wide scale ethnic skirmishes as other countries mentioned above, there is no denying that this potential exist, and may explode at any given period. In the early days after independence, ethnic struggles between the Bamelikes and the Bakossi, the Kirdi of the north and the Fulbe, and the Bamelikes and the people of Douala are just some examples. Ethnicity plays an important role in the political and economic decision making of leaders in Africa, particularly in Cameroon. One strategy used by leadership in Cameroon to wield the
diverse ethnic population together, especially during president Ahidjo’s reign, was through ethnic balancing. According to Milton J. Esman, this strategy required the appointment of members of an ethnic entity, considered ‘left out’, and also contained provision of jobs, contracts, appointment to high and visible political positions and infrastructural investment etc.78

When a regime is dominated by a single ethnic group such as the Betis in the current administration in Cameroon, advantage flows disproportionately to the other constituencies in the country, resulting in some instances to alienation and rebellion. Although Ahidjo filled most of the key strategic ministerial and security positions with people from his ethnic background, he nevertheless incorporated members of other affinities in the government. He craftily utilized a combination of consociational devices as proportionality in the allocation of benefits and resources to other ethnic groups and regions in the country. Through this strategy and the use of state apparatus of violence, Ahidjo was able to contain ethnic hostilities during his twenty two years in power. On the other hand, there is wide perception that Biya’s inability to reach out to other ethnic groups as his mentor did, has resulted in bitterness, frustration, and disgust among many ethnic groups not only in West Cameroon, but in the Francophones zones. This may be a possible reason why some Francophones joined the opposition Social Democratic Front (SDF), an Anglophone political party to oust Biya from power in 1992. It is not surprising, therefore, for most Cameroonians to blame president Biya and his Beti members for the economic catastrophe in the country.

Patron-Client Relations

This is a reciprocal exchange of two key factors with disproportionate or unequal exchange powers. This form of political exchange, according to April and Donald Gordon, became a useful tool for post-independent African leaders. With secured economic resources, African leaders including Ahmadou Ahidjo of Cameroon and later his successor Biya, used patronage as the means of distributing limited resources in a discretionary manner. These leaders, like their counterparts in other African countries, swapped political favors such as jobs, award of lucrative government contracts, issue of import-export licenses, tax exemptions, appointments to high political and governmental offices, etc., to clients to muster support for the regime. They also utilized other mechanisms such as building schools, hospitals, roads, providing free government houses, automobiles, and making access to monetary resources available to clients. This relationship assured the patron of loyal support and tied the clients firmly to the leader. As Catherine Boone has observed, this system of control served to consolidate the regime by offering access to government resources in exchange for political acquiescence. The success of these regimes depended on continued availability of economic resources. But

79April and Donald Gordon, Understanding Contemporary Africa, 68-69.

as Hyden and Bratton have noted, continued economic deterioration in Africa and Cameroon, slash back in foreign aid, imposition of economic austerity measures, and market reforms by the World Bank and IMF, all combined to undermine patronage politics in authoritarian regimes by starving its participants of resources.81

Structural Adjustment Program (SAP)

Structural Adjustment Programs or (SAP) as it is commonly referred to, is a conscious strategy by the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Bank and the International Monetary fund (IMF) to socially transform societies in the Third World, particularly Africa. This program, ties loans needed by developing countries to offset deficits to draconian conditions. From a macroeconomic perspective, adjustment implies the adoption of fiscal, monetary, and exchange rate policies to achieve external stability. According to John Gershman, SAP encompasses political and economic implications, and represents the substance of the now-infamous package of neo-liberal economic policies.82 The key objectives of this program include: reduction in budget deficit by laying off government employees, freezing of wages, lowering of taxes on higher income

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81 Goran Hyden and Michael Bratton, Governance and Politics in Africa, 1992, 47.

Decline in Cameroon’s economy resulted in the government accepting the stringent and draconian recourse by the Bank and Fund, with French encouragement. Cameroon, therefore, joined the other African countries in the ritual dance of Structural Adjustment Programs in 1987. This program has had perhaps more negative toll on Cameroonians economically, socially, culturally, and politically than its intent to ameliorate the economy. On a positive note however, this program has encouraged Cameroonians to work for themselves rather rely exclusively on the government, as was the case in the past. Structural Adjustment Programs plus the wave of democratization that swept through Eastern Europe, and later in Africa, are without a doubt, major factors in the transformation of politics in Cameroon Anglophone pressure on the government in Yaoundé.

Goveriance

Goran Hyden and Michael Bratton define governance as the management of regime relations, that is, the rules that set the framework for the conduct of politics. The World Bank defines governance as “the exercise of political power to manage a nation’s affairs.” The Bank specifically views extensive personalization of power, the denial of fundamental human rights, widespread corruption, and the prevalence of unelected and

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84 Goran Hyden and Michael Bratton, Governance and Politics in Africa, ed. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992), x.
unaccountable officials as important setbacks to progress in Africa. The Bank further contends that good governance results in less unpredictability and uncertainty in policy, administration as well as guarantees the rule of law, transparency and accountability to representative bodies. As shown above, the term generally refers to the running of a government or other organizations or entity. With increasing problems in the developing countries in recent years, especially in Africa, this concept has been elevated in academic circles, especially in literature relating to development. Statist theorists have argued persistently that political and economic problems in Africa are basically problems relating to poor governance.

The issue of governance attracted the Bank’s attention and other industrialized countries like the United States only after dramatic changes took place in the world, beginning in 1989, in Eastern Europe. Thomas Gallaghy and John Ravenhill argue that the Western industrial democracies used governance to foster political conditionalities, thus promoting democracy in countries with authoritarian regimes. Like other African countries, there is no denying that the problem of poor governance has contributed immensely to the difficulties in Cameroon. However, exclusive focus on governance as suggested by some African scholars and statist theorists, as the most significant factor responsible for Africa’s economic decline, including Cameroon, misses the point altogether. This exclusive focus on governance I might add fails to reveal the

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link between African economies vis-a-vis the industrialized countries and the impact
decisions taken by these countries have on Africa, especially Cameroon. Although we
acknowledge the problem of poor governance as a road-block to African progress, it is
not [the] only problem.

Organization of Study

This study consists of eight chapters, organized as follows: Chapter I introduces us to the study, with an overview of dominant-subordinate relations from a
global perspective, followed by emphasis on Cameroon. The chapter comprises the
statement of the problem, main proposition, the theoretical and conceptual framework,
significance of the study as well as methodology. Furthermore, study design, data
collection, review of related literature and definition of concepts are examined.

Chapter II presents a brief overview of Cameroon’s historic past, its
geographic characteristics, cultural and societal features, as well as religion. The chapter
also examines Southern Cameroons relations with the British, as well as her role and
influence as part of Nigeria. The chapter further reviews events leading to re-unification
of French and British Cameroons, and formation of a federation.

Chapter III examines political integration of the two Cameroons- East and
West Cameroon, and how this move re-reinforced domination of the former over the
latter. It explores various elements used by the “center” to dominate the “periphery”.

Chapter IV looks at leadership succession, Ahidjo-Biya, and steps taken by
Ahidjo to ensure a smooth transition. Attention is given to leadership styles of Ahmadou
Ahidjo and his successor, Biya, and also the rift between the two leader, and their
implications for the country.
Chapter V explores Biya’s attempts to reform Cameroon, the challenges and opportunities he encountered in this process. The internal and external factors are scrutinized, including the Anglophone Phenomenon.

Chapter VI examines the factors or circumstances responsible for Cameroon’s economic decline, and attempts by the government and donors, particularly the IMF and World Bank, to reform the country’s economy. Focus on Structural Adjustment Program is explored, as well as its political, economic, and social implications for the country, especially for Anglophones.

Chapter VII deals with discord in Anglophone Cameroon, particularly, between the grassfield people of Northwest and the coastal/forest people of Southwest provinces. The chapter looks at natural, political and economic factors, and how these have converged to hinder, rather than enhance solidarity among the Anglophone minority.

Chapter VIII presents a summary of the study, including the findings, conclusions drawn and some suggestions for further research.
CHAPTER II

OVERVIEW OF CAMEROON

This chapter provides an overview of Cameroon’s early history, beginning with Portuguese explorations in 1472, to German proclamation and annexation in 1884. The chapter also examines the physical characteristics of the country, its people, and their activities. A glimpse of the country’s intricate political evolution is discussed, with attention to its triple colonial heritage as well as the role and influence of the League of Nations and United Nations in its early development. Considerable attention is paid to British activities in British Cameroons, and argues in the end that, Southern Cameroons’ peripheral or substate status was the outcome of British disinterest in the region. Furthermore, the chapter illuminates political developments in Southern Cameroons, as part of the colony of Nigeria, as well, the as events leading to reunification of the two Cameroons. This chapter serves as the foundation to our analysis and understanding of center-periphery relations in contemporary Cameroon.

Cameroon has undergone major geopolitical transformations in the past one hundred and fifteen years, stretching back to the Conference of Berlin in 1884. Decisions reached at this conference to partition and annex Africa had major implications for each country, and the continent as a whole. As the case of Cameroon demonstrates, the presence of three European powers in the territory—the Germans, the French, and the British within a period of seventy-six years (1884-1960), transformed the physical
geography of the territory as well as the social, cultural, and ethnic interaction patterns of the people.

Geography

Cameroon is strategically and conveniently located at the junction or crossroad of two distinct zones in Africa. This triangle shaped nation stretches northwards from the Bight of Biafra to Lake Chad and the fringes of the Great Sahara Desert. It also occupies the area between the western coastline and the equatorial states of the south.¹

Cameroon is bordered on the north by Chad, east by Central African Republic, west by Nigeria, and south by Rio Muni, Gabon, Congo, and Equatorial Guinea. The country serves as the gate-way to some of its landlocked neighbors, Chad and Central African Republic. With the exception of Nigeria on the western side, and Equatorial Guinea on the south-western edge, Cameroon is virtually in the midst of French-speaking colonies. Melville Herkovits has succinctly stated that Cameroon is not only the melting place of northern, western, and central geographic regions, it is also the confluence of the great African culture areas: Guinea coast, Western Sudanic and the Congo.² The skewed shape of Cameroon, reflects the country’s intricate political history, which had been shaped and reshaped over the centuries, first, by the Europeans, including


the Germans, French, and British, as well as by internal struggles among competing ethnic and religious groups.

Cameroon has a land area of (475,442 sq. km) or (183,569 sq. miles), with an estimated population of 14,262,000 inhabitants. The country is geographically diversified, with sharp contrast in its topography, vegetation and climatic conditions. Victor T. LeVine has distinguished five geographic zones in the country, including the western mountain region, the coastal forest plain, the inland forest plateaux, the Adamawa plateaux region, and the Savannah of the north. The variation in rainfall, humidity, as well as the topography of the region determines to a large extent, the economic and agricultural activities of the inhabitants. Furthermore, Cameroon’s ecological and geographical conditions have all combined to produce what Mark Delancey has characterized as “a great variation of cultures within the country.” Delancey contends that Cameroon is “a microcosm” of Africa, an ‘Africa in miniature,’ in which one finds all the major cultural types in the continent. This configuration of diverse geographic, demographic, religious, ethnic and regional differences combine to account for the complex political development of the country. Any analysis of Cameroon in terms of its geopolitical, social, and cultural, and economic development without focus on ethnicity, religion, and issues of regionalism will make such an analysis, skewed and unsatisfactory.

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5Mark W. Delancey, Cameroon: Dependence and Independence, 95-96.
Cameroon is a heterogeneous country, with a mosaic of ethnic affinities. There are an estimated 250 different ethnic groups in the country, speaking about 80 different languages besides English and French as the official languages. Interestingly, no one of these ethnic groups claims absolute majority, or assumes a dominant role as minority. Some of these ethnic groups as Delancey has suggested, were invented by the colonial rulers through ignorance, to facilitate their colonial administrative process. He further argues that other ethnic groups emerged largely as a result of urban migration, economic competition, and social change within the society. Some of the dominant political ethnic groups include: the Fulbe of the north, comprising of the Moslems. However, a majority of the northern population is neither Fulbe nor are they Moslems. This largely non Fulbe ethnic population is called “Kirdi,” who have suffered Fulbe domination and exploitation. In the southern regions there are also competing ethnic entities such as the Bamilekes. Population density, entrepreneurial abilities, and economic motivations of this group has pushed them out of their region (western province), to seek economic and agricultural fortunes in other areas of the country. This has resulted at times in serious conflicts with opposing ethnic groups, especially the Bakossi ethnic population in the Southwest province of Cameroon. The Bamilekes have also had confrontations with the people of Douala, and had been linked according to sources, to the UPC movement, a pro-communist and anti-French organization, before, and shortly after independence. Other influential ethnic groups that have played key

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*Ibid., 96.*
roles in the politics of Cameroon include the Fang group, which includes the Ewondos, Betis, the Eton, and the Bulu. The Fang-Beti people according to Eyongetah Tambi and Robert Brian, occupy the Sanaga region, extending to Gabon. The Betis currently control the government of Cameroon, with Paul Biya, the president, as their leader. Other ethnic groups in the country play relatively minor roles in influencing political power in Cameroon.

Religion

Cameroon also has a heterogeneous religious population, which has not only played a key role in the politics of country, but has, on some occasions stirred conflict, and confrontation especially with the Ahidjo government. Three major religious categories exist in Cameroon, including Islam, Christianity, and the local, or indigenous belief systems. Uneasiness between the Moslem north, and Christian south has been contentious for a while. Ahmadou Ahidjo, the president, who was from the Moslem north, had major confrontations with some southern Christians, especially with Andre Mbida, the first Prime Minister of East Cameroon. Just as no particular ethnic group has total dominance in the country, so too no religion claims dominance. According to Ndiva Kofele-Kale, the membership of the major foreign religions cut across several ethnic lines. Crawford Young has eloquently stated that “religion in Cameroon is not the

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primary basis of politically relevant collective identity." Despite some residual flares with the government, religion in Cameroon has not generated the phenomenon of ‘Islamic brotherhood’ that one finds in other countries like Senegal and Nigeria, nor has it provoked, according to Cruise O’Brien and Donald B., the kind of intense political rivalry among groups that one witnesses in countries like India. Despite these observations, it should be pointed out that north-south hostilities continue to permeate Cameroon society on religious basis. Some evidence exists to support confrontations in the country, on north-south basis. The replacement of Andre Mbida, a staunch Christian, and Catholic, from the south, by Ahidjo, a Muslim leader, attest to this fact. Also, the suppression of a southern radical movement, the UPC, with French assistance, by Ahidjo, only reinforced and added substance to Prouzet’s position of the seriousness of north-south disaffection. The deportation of the editor of a Catholic newspaper, Le Semaine Camerounaise, in 1962, for criticizing the leadership and his regime exacerbated the already tense atmosphere between a northern Muslim president, against the southern Catholic church. The government of Ahidjo charged the editor, who was a Catholic

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priest of publishing stories and materials considered harmful to the state. Besides the
differences alluded to earlier between the north and south on religious grounds, there
were other areas of disparity between the north and south. Economically, educationally,
and in regards to infrastructural development, the north was less developed. Delancey
has noted that this region received less attention from the colonial rulers for many
reasons, which include: its distance from the sea, and because the region was hot for
European settlement. The area's backwardness at independence, resulted in a movement
by the northern leadership to remain under colonial rule, while the south moved forward
with independence. I should point out however that some areas in the south were
equally depressed and underdeveloped as the north. The Eastern region continues to lag
behind the rest of the nation today, in economic and infrastructural development.

Regional disparity in the context of this study, does not dwell so much on
north, south, east, or west basis, but between the former East Cameroon and former West
Cameroon. The concerns raised by the Anglophone minority of unequal treatment by the
Francophones has inflamed debates among some Anglophone militants and elites to
secede from the union. This circumstance is perhaps, one of the biggest challenges
facing the government in Yaounde, and continues to plague the relationship of the two
entities.

13Jean Francois Bayart, "The Political Systems." in Gaullist Africa: Cameroon
under Ahmadou Ahidjo, (ed.) by Richard Joseph (Enugu, Nigeria: Fourth Dimension

14Delancey, Cameroon: Dependence and Independence, 98.
History and Political Developments

Before the Germans ventured into Kamerun with formal political rule in 1884, many other European interests had penetrated the territory, and interacted with the indigents through trade. The Portuguese, the Spanish, and the Dutch had established and managed important trading operations for more than two and a half centuries before the Germans proclaimed the territory as their protectorate. In 1472, Portuguese explorers penetrated the interiors of Cameroon through the Wouri River in Douala. The explorers were surprised by the abundant variety of “prawns” in the river, and named it “Rio dos Camerões,” literally meaning “river of prawns.” It is believed the current name Cameroon (British), Cameroun (French) or Kamerun (German) originated with the discovery of prawns.

The Berlin Conference of 1884 which was the springboard for European imperialism in the Third World, especially Africa, resulted in the scramble and ultimate partition of Africa. Present day Cameroon was declared a permanent German protectorate and named Kamerun. German rule in Kamerun lasted about thirty years, from 1884 to the outbreak of World War 1 in 1914. Pierre Englebert has noted that although German presence in Kamerun lasted a generation, it was arguably within this period that significant framework for the country’s infrastructures for modern economy was laid out.15 The defeat of Germany by joint Anglo-French forces in World War 1, ended German control of Kamerun, as well as other German possessions in Africa.

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Kamerun was provisionally divided among the allied victors, Britain and France, by the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles of 1919. Both powers gained international recognition as supreme authorities over their respective spheres of influence. This arrangements was confirmed with little or no alterations by the League of Nations Mandate in 1922. Kamerun was considered by the League as a class “C” Mandate, which means the territory was subject to minimal supervision by the League. According to Edwin Ardener, the British sphere or Mandate was called “Cameroons” while the French Mandate was known or designated as “Cameroun”. At the close of World War II, notwithstanding the League of Nations inability to prevent war and promote world peace, the League collapsed and was replaced by the United Nations in 1946, and the League of Nations Mandate Territories were converted into United Nations Trust Territories. Emmanuel Konde has noted that despite the change of organization, the Trusteeship remained under the administration of the British and French, who “maintained the nomenclatures in their respective spheres of influence.” Under the United Nations Trust, four-fifths of the territory was allocated to French administration, as French Cameroun, and one-fifth of the territory, consisting of two long contiguous areas along the border east of Nigeria was allocated to Britain as Northern and Southern Cameroons. (See map showing political subdivision of Cameroon, Appendix D). Some names have been used interchangeably in the past to refer to these territories such as

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British Cameroons, Southern Cameroon, West Cameroon and Anglophone Cameroon, referring to the British sphere, while French Cameroun or La Republique du Cameroun, East Cameroon or Francophone Cameroon referring to the French sphere. In the post war period, growing anti-colonial sentiments throughout the Third World, particularly in Africa, made control of these territories relatively difficult to administer. Britain and France eventually adhered to the United Nations Charter, which promised self determination for all inhabitants of the Trust Territories. Jean-Germain Gros has argued that “Cameroon, technically, was never a French or British colony, however, he adds, for all practical purposes, Cameroon was a colony with two masters, with the superior resource endowment going to French Cameroon.”

French Cameroon became an autonomous state in 1957, and on January 1, 1960, gained its independence from France. France, however, continued to develop East Cameroon more so than any of its other colonies in Africa. Political developments in British Southern Cameroons were strikingly different than those in East Cameroon. On February 11, 1961, the people of Southern Cameroons voted in a referendum, for union with independent Republic of Cameroon, while Northern Cameroons decided to join Nigeria. Great Britain took very little interest in Southern Cameroons affairs and treated the territory as a “step child.” The territory was linked to and ruled from Nigeria for nearly forty years, prior to the referendum. British policy of incorporating Southern Cameroons to Nigeria was driven largely by financial and administrative imperatives. It is not surprising, therefore, that while East Cameroun developed politically and economically, Southern Cameroons regressed.

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further because decisions affecting her growth and development both politically and economically were made in Nigeria, mostly by Nigerian representatives.

**British Tutelage and her Benign Neglect of British Cameroons**

Affirmation of Great Britain’s preponderance over Northern and Southern Cameroons was followed by the hegemon’s request to the League of Nations that her sphere of the Cameroons be administered as part of her Nigerian colony. This request, according to Willard Johnson was granted, and the Cameroons became an integral part of Nigeria in 1922.¹⁹ As Emmanuel Chiabi rightly puts it, the sub-state status of the Cameroons became apparent, and its political development and other activities intertwined with those of Nigeria. He further argues that the enforcement of the Nigerian system of government in the Cameroons in 1923, by a British order, “marked the genesis of the Cameroonian-Nigerian relations.”²⁰

Several reasons have been advanced to explain British disinterest in the political and economic development of Northern and Southern Cameroons. Foremost of these include, Britain’s original loss of Cameroon to Germany on July 12, 1884, when German consuls outpaced British officials and signed treaties with the Kings of Douala, proclaiming Kamerun a German Protectorate. Professor Lovette Z. Elango argues

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convincingly that British ambivalence in the territory was because it was acquired as "compensatory diplomacy."\textsuperscript{21}

Great Britain’s logical argument to the United Nations visiting mission to the Cameroons for incorporating or integrating the Cameroons to Nigeria was that the territory was sparsely populated without any tribal or political homogeneity.\textsuperscript{22} The British also argued that Cameroon’s social and economic advancement could be assured, only if it was administered as part of Nigeria. As Eyongetah and Brain have noted, British’s lack of interest was because the territory was a narrow strip divided into two separate areas which were not economically viable to stand on their own.\textsuperscript{23}

Evidence from studies suggests that British policy of incorporating the Cameroons as part of her Nigerian colony was driven largely by financial and administrative imperatives. The colonial office in London argued that it would be costly to administer the Cameroons as a separate entity, especially as the territory had no revenue generating resources to support itself. As Chiabi and other scholars have suggested, Southern Cameroon’s decision to join Cameroon Republic instead of Nigeria had some serious implications for the region’s relations with the United Kingdom. Britain did not only withdraw its subsidies for the region, but failed to support Foncha and Southern Cameroonians during the crucial Foumban Constitutional Conference in 1960. British’s refusal to mediate on behalf of her former Trust Territory, despite earlier


\textsuperscript{22}T. Eyongetah and R. Brain, \textit{A History of the Cameroon}, 99-100.

\textsuperscript{23}Ibid., 100.
promises to do so, only reinforces the argument that she had no interest in Southern Cameroons.24

Marginalization of British Cameroons

Integration and administration of British Cameroons from Nigeria had profound and far-reaching consequences for the territory. Britain’s decision to rule the Cameroons from Nigeria defined, not only the sub-state status of the region, as Chiabi has characterized it, but also shaped the political, economic, and social dynamics of the region.25 As we noted earlier, financial and administrative difficulties by the colonial government resulted in “indirect rule” of Northern and Southern Cameroons from Nigeria. Although this system proved successful in Northern Cameroons, in Southern Cameroons it was hard to implement the system. As a consequence, “Local Authorities” were created using traditional chiefs, (Fons of the grassfield zones).

In 1942, Chief Manga Williams of Victoria was chosen by the colonial administration as official representative of Southern Cameroons to sit in the Nigerian Legislature. His role, we should add, was not to advocate Southern Cameroon’s separate assembly, but to support the colonial administration’s decisions on behalf of Southern Cameroons.

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25Ibid., 40.
In 1946, the Richards Constitution was passed. The "obnoxious bill" as many Africans referred to it, represented a major set-back to Southern Cameroons. According to Neville, the "Richards Constitution" represented a backward step for Southern Cameroons, as it deprived the region of its lone representative (Manga Williams), in the Federal Legislature in Nigeria. The constitution further called for the partition of Nigeria into three distinct regions, with Southern Cameroons placed under the Eastern Regional House. Although the provisions of this constitution provided no opportunity for Southern Cameroons' recognition for a separate house, it nevertheless served as a "push" and galvanized Cameroonians to "seek a way out of Nigerian politics."

Notwithstanding the inadequacies of the Richards Constitution, Sir John Macpherson introduced his constitution in 1951, which superseded the Richards Constitution. Under the new constitution, the number of representatives allocated to Southern Cameroons increased from one to thirteen. Leadership scuffle in the Eastern Regional House of Assembly, especially in the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons (NCNC), offered another chance for Southern Cameroons issue to be raised in the Assembly.

Although political infighting among the Nigerian leadership awakened Cameroon's nationalists to re-examine their status within a politically divided Nigerian institution, Chiabi notes, division among Southern Cameroon's leadership also

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While some members of Southern Cameroons wanted a "separate region" from Nigeria, others argued for "equal representation in the Central Nigerian Legislature and Council of Ministers." The division and lack of solidarity among Southern Cameroons leadership will have profound consequences, in 1961, on the issue of reunification with Cameroon Republic or continuing as part of Nigeria. Lack of unity among Anglophones political elites will manifest itself once again in 1972, on the issue of unification with East Cameroon. These issues will be dealt with later in the section and again in chapter three.

In 1953, Dr. E. M. L. Endeley was elected as Southern Cameroon’s representative to the Eastern House of Assembly in Nigeria. His election was seen as a milestone, and an important step in Southern Cameroon’s politics. In October 1954, the region was granted her own House of Assembly. Chiabi cautions, however, that although Southern Cameroons was "technically not part of Eastern Nigeria, the region continued to be part of Nigeria, but with a semi-federal or "quasi-federal" status." This quasi status meant the federal legislature of Nigeria still had control over Southern Cameroons affairs. Furthermore, despite domination of the Southern Cameroons Assembly by colonial administrators, some positive outcomes should be illuminated. Cameroonians were allowed to make laws that affected their region. The people were also empowered to raise taxes as well as legislate on matters deemed vital for the territory. The creation of a

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29 Ibid., 53.

30 Ibid., 55.
bicameral legislative system with a House of Chiefs and a Lower House with elected officials, marked perhaps the beginning of participatory democracy in Southern Cameroons. These developments, Rubin has observed, culminated in the granting of election powers to Cameroonians based on universal adult suffrage.\textsuperscript{31}

Party Formation and Ethno-Regional Confrontations in Southern Cameroons

Early political movements in Southern Cameroons is credited to Dr. E. M. L. Endeley. In 1949, Endeley launched his Cameroon National Federation (CNF) in Kumba. However, disagreement between Endeley and R. J. K. Dibonge of Douala on the issue of including Francophone Cameroon in the ballot arrangements under the Macpherson Constitution of 1951 was indicative of weakness in the party. Endeley’s refusal to endorse Dibonge’s proposal to include French Cameroon in the ballot led to the latter’s breakaway from the CNF. Dibonge formed the Kamerun United National Congress (KUNC). In 1953, the KUNC and CNF leadership resolved their differences and merged to form the Kamerun National Congress (KNC) in 1953.

In 1955, a new political party emerged, the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP), led by John Ngu Foncha, from the grasslands area of Northwestern Cameroons. According to Chiabi, formation of the KNDP changed the political dynamics in Southern Cameroons. He maintains that the formation of the KNDP not only added an “ethnic and regional orientation” to the territory’s politics, it hampered

\textsuperscript{31}Rubin Neville, \textit{Cameroon: An African Federation}, 78.
solidarity. In the general elections of 1959, grassfield dominated KNDP, which was the viable opposition party, defeated the ruling KNC, and formed a government. It has been suggested that the defeat of KNC by KNDP convinced Mbile to join forces with Endeley. In 1960, Mbile’s Kamerun People’s Party (KPP) merged with Endeley’s KNC to form a ‘coastal’ party, the Cameroon’s People National Convention (CPNC). This alliance, needless to say, marked the beginning of ethno-regional politics in Southern Cameroons and perhaps strained prospects for consensus between the coastal/forest and grassfield peoples of Southern Cameroons.

Intra-Southern Cameroons polarization and lack of solidarity would be evident in 1960 and 1961, on the issue of Southern Cameroon’s merger with either Cameroon Republic or Nigeria. Disagreement between Endeley (CPNC) and Foncha (KNDP) would lead to United Nations’ “Two Alternatives”: (1) whether the territory should merge with Nigeria or become autonomous but with ties to Nigeria; (2) whether the territory should remain autonomous or reunify with Cameroon Republic. It should also be noted that the United Nation’s resolve on the “two alternatives” was precipitated by other African leaders and anti-colonial groups, especially the radical “Casablanca group (Ghana, Mali, Libya, Sudan, Liberia, UAR, Tunisia and Guinea), who feared and suspected the motives of the British in trying to delay talks towards eventual independence of her colonial possessions.

On February 11, 1961 under the United Nations monitored plebescite, Southern Cameroons voted overwhelmingly to join “independent” Cameroon Republic,

32Chiabi, 70.
while Northern Cameroons voted to join Nigeria. Table 1. illuminates the results of the plebescite organized by the united Nations in 1961.

**TABLE 1**

**PLEBISCITE ELECTION RESULTS SPONSORED BY THE UNITED NATIONS IN 1961**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>For French Cameroons</th>
<th>For Nigeria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern Cameroons</td>
<td>233,571 votes</td>
<td>94,741 votes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Cameroons</td>
<td>97,659 votes</td>
<td>146,296 votes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Integration of Southern Cameroons and “independent” Cameroon Republic became a reality on October 1, 1961, after flawed negotiations between Ahmadou Ahidjo, president of Cameroon Republic and John Ngu Foncha, Prime Minister of Southern Cameroon in Foumban in July 1961.

**Foumban Accords and its implications**

The various constitutional proposals by Foncha and Ahidjo were discussed at the Foumban Conference of July 17-21, 1961. According to most observers, the Foumban conference, and the subsequent Yaounde Conference clearly defined and established the role and status of Southern Cameroons in the Federation. To begin with, Foncha, Prime Minister of the Southern Cameroons was to negotiate with Ahidjo, president of “independent” Republic of Cameroon. According to Emmanuel Chiabi, Foncha had hoped the United Nations and United Kingdom would mediate with French
Cameroon on a workable framework for the federation. To his disappointment, neither the United Nations nor United Kingdom was present at the talks, placing Foncha in an awkward position of bargaining. Foncha was not only misguided and mislead by the United Nations and United Kingdom, but also faced intense challenge from some of his constituencies in Southern Cameroons, who wanted to strike deals with Ahidjo.\(^3\)

Prior to the constitutional talks in Foumban, Foncha and his team of advisers had drafted an elaborate set of proposals during the Bamenda Conference, as a blueprint for the Federation. The initial impression created was that the Cameroon Federation will be a loose one. According to Willard Johnson, Southern Cameroon’s proposal for a federal system included:

A ceremonial, rather than an executive head of state, a bicameral federal legislature; a governor as of each state, with a Prime Minister as head of a responsible government in each of the component states, separate state and federal citizenship allocation of a wide range of legislative powers to the states, with hopes of transferring these to the central government. The proposal also called for protection of fundamental human rights, powers of the president to veto legislation considered detrimental to the rights of the state, election of the president by popular vote rather than by members of the legislature.\(^4\)

Clearly, this proposal was in accord with the British-style decentralized system of governance, and in great variance with the tightly centralized, highly bureaucratized structure in the French system.

\(^3\)Chiabi, 127.

Ahidjo’s proposal, on the other hand, sought to establish a clear, preponderance of the federal government over the state systems. As Rubin has suggested, this approach was generally in line with the leader’s preference for strong government.\(^{35}\) Ahidjo’s proposal, we should add, was a reflection of the Gaullist Constitution of Cameroon Republic, which was established at independence in January 1960. Furthermore, Ahidjo’s goal was not only aimed at consolidating power at the center, but also to dominate all other institutions of government, at the federal and state levels. His proposal among other things included giving powers to the president to act unilaterally or concurrently with the legislative body, giving the president powers to appoint and dismiss prime ministers and other officials of government. It is clear, however, that Ahidjo’s goal of forging a centralized regime was eminent, given the fact that the proposal for a bicameral legislature was rejected and in its place a unicameral system established. This, again, was in accord with the French system of governance.

Clearly, Foncha and Southern Cameroons political elites were handicapped by three circumstances prior to the Foumban talks: (1) Foncha and his team lacked adequate preparation prior to the talks, and relied entirely on the United Nations and United Kingdom as their prime negotiators. (2) Southern Cameroons entered the constitutional talks not as “equals”, but as a substate against an independent Cameroon Republic. (3) Lack of solidarity among Southern Cameroons politicians was seen by Ahidjo as a weakness to exploit to his political advantage.

\(^{35}\)Rubin, 112-113.
Cameroon's Federal Mirage

Cameroon became a Federal Republic in 1962, with Cameroon Republic and Southern Cameroons relinquishing their separate identities, to form a federated republic. Southern Cameroons known thereafter as West Cameroon, while Cameroon Republic became East Cameroon. Ahmadou Ahidjo, president of former Cameroon Republic, became Federal president, while John Ngu Foncha, former Southern Cameroons Prime Minister, became the Federal Vice President. Two significant outgrowths of this federal experiment resulted in the establishment of "federal" or "national" institutions, the Federal National Assembly (FNA), comprising of fifty (50) members, elected by direct universal suffrage in a secret ballot, and the Executive Branch, with the president as chief executive officer. Members of the Federal Assembly were chosen based on proportionality of the population of the two states. Hence, West Cameroon had ten (10) representatives and East Cameroon forty (40) representatives. The stipulation in the constitution that the federal vice president should reside in the capital Yaounde, created a power vacuum and struggles in West Cameroon. Ironically, this power struggle was between S.T. Muna and Augustine Jua of KNDP, and from the grassfield region. As Rubin has noted, both men vied for the post of Vice Prime Minister of KNDP, and make his observations apparent in the following statements: for personal, and to a limited

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*The suffrage and the ballot are among just a few rights conferred on the individual citizen of Cameroon, by the Constitution. See Articles 2(2) and 16. For details. Members of the National Assembly could also be elected by their respective state legislatures, based on an interim arrangement.*
extent, ethnic factors involved, but no ideological question, apparently at issue, Foncha supported Muna.37

Despite Foncha’s solid support for Muna, his opponent, Jua, won with a wide margin. Jua’s victory not only tarnished Foncha’s reputation and prestige but set in motion endless struggles among West Cameroon political leadership.

In summary, we presented an overview of Cameroon, from its colonial past to reunification. We also examined the internal characteristics and discontinuities in Southern Cameroons, arguing that the peripheral or substate status which the region carried from Nigeria, plus disunity among Anglophone political elites, reinforced Ahidjo’s bargaining powers at the Foumban talks. The chapter also revealed the schism and feud among Southern Cameroonians, particularly along ethno-regional basis, was the outcome of the regions association with East Cameroon. The differences among Anglophones was magnified by Ahidjo, who viewed division among Anglophone elites as his best strategy of accomplishing his political objectives. Finally, the chapter laid the foundation for our examination and analysis of center-periphery relations in chapter three.

37Rubin Neville, Cameroon: An African Federation, 123.
CHAPTER III

INTEGRATIVE AND DISINTEGRATIVE FORCES IN CAMEROON

Although East Cameroon’s preponderance over Southern Cameroons was evident in the political, economic and socio-cultural domains after re-unification of the two entities in 1961, formal political union of these separate political communities in May, 1972, reinforced and magnified this dominance. Our attention in this chapter will be on the concepts of political integration and disintegration. Particular emphasis will be directed at the factors or circumstances which necessitated political union of the two polities. We shall examine four integrative variables: national unity, elimination of economic imbalance between East and West Cameroon, political stability and full utilization of the country’s resources. Furthermore, we will discuss each element of domination perpetuated by Francophones, including, the obnoxious constitution, political and administrative strategies, economic, as well as socio-cultural components. Similarly, we will examine disintegrative factors in Cameroon, which have precipitated separatist and secessionist tendencies in the Anglophone region. We shall further point out that, policies initiated and pursued by Francophone dominated government, have exacerbated these disintegrative tendencies in West Cameroon.
Integration: Genesis of Anglophone Domination

Political integration is defined as any attempt to bring separate political units or entities into closer relationship, seeking to bring separate territories or states into one state. Myron Weiner defines national integration as "a need to create a territorial nationality which overshadows or eliminates subordinate parochial loyalties." Clifford Geertz has also noted succinctly that:

The prevalence of these parochial or local allegiance or similar primordial attachments hinder rather than advance development and growth, since the national leader’s goal of putting together the functions of the political system demands the undivided attention or loyalty of all citizens.²

In a similar vein, Gabriel Almond and G. Bingham Powell, Jr. have argued that a major challenge to the political system is to bring about "the process whereby citizens transfer their commitment and loyalty from smaller tribes, villages, or petty principalities to the larger central system."³ Integration of heterogeneous or multi-ethnic

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¹Myron Weiner has observed that the term ‘integration’ is used in the social sciences to cover an extraordinarily wide range of political phenomena including (1) national integration, (ii) territorial integration, (iii) value integration, (iv) elite-mass integration, and (v) integrative behavior. Weiner considers all these five aspects each implying a sense of oneness inspired by a central government within a given state, as desirable for developing countries. See author’s classic article, "Political Integration and Political Development", in The Annals of the American Academy of Political Science, 358, (March) 1965, 52-64.


³Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell, Jr., Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach (Boston, 1966), 36.
According to sources, of the 2,827,338 eligible voters who went to the polls to vote on this issue, an overwhelming number (99.9 percent) voted “yes.” This, almost perfect support for the president’s proposal, whether it was voluntary or forced, resulted in the demise of the federation.

The president’s unilateral actions and the expediency with which he forced the issues to the citizens has raised some intriguing questions such as: what precipitated or motivated Ahidjo to forge a unitary system of government, especially as there was no internal challenge to his regime, particularly from West Cameroon? What was his rationale for a unitary system, given the success of the federal structure in ten years? These questions will be relevant later on in our discussion, and will affirm or refute the claims made by Anglophones that the president’s overall goal of integration was to subjugate Anglophones under Francophone domination, and secondly to control all decision making processes from the capital, Yaounde.

Scholars and observers have argued forcefully and convincingly that the abolition of the federal structure and creation of a unitary system in its place marked the beginning of dominant/subordinate relations between East and West Cameroon. They maintain that the major mechanism used by the president to legitimize this unequal relationship was the constitution of July 1972. What geopolitical and economic implications therefore, did this political changeover have for the country at large? Integration and centralization resulted in enormous powers to the president, undermining and placing other institutions of government in subservient positions, especially the

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Judiciary and the National Assembly. Clearly, the president’s capacity to act alone, disregarding other important constitutional bodies of government signaled the beginning of authoritarian rule in Cameroon, especially in Anglophone Cameroon, where citizens were used to the parliamentary system, and less rigid control of citizens’ activities.

**National Unity: Ahidjo’s Rationale**

Cameroonian society presents a mosaic of ethnic and regional diversities, which also differs in social organization, size, religion as well as their customs. In the Moslem north as well as the central regions, formal, hierarchical and centralized social structures are evident. Usually, leadership revolves around a single powerful individual. In the southern coastal/forest regions, the social structures are much less rigid and less hierarchical. Although the leader, usually the chief, and his council form the basic nucleus of the ruling class, the chief remains an equal among his subjects; and his authority does not include the right to command as is prevalent in the northern and central tier of the country. Given this complexity and fragmentation, the possibility of collapse and disintegration can hardly be ruled out. In several occasions, the President reminded Cameroonians that while the fragmented society is a great asset to be cherished, it could also become the nation’s most lethal weapon, splitting or doing away with the nation. It is against this backdrop that one must understand Ahidjo’s commitment for a

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8See Ahidjo’s address in *As Told by Ahmadou Ahidjo* (Monaco: Paul Bory, 1968).
unified polity and his push for integration of East and West Cameroon as well as centralization of the administrative apparatus.

While Cameroon faced equally challenging economic, health, education, and communication problems, the President’s focus was on national integration. Throughout his years as federal president and later, president of the United Republic, Ahidjo never failed to underscore the importance of national unity. He envisioned that such unity can only be achieved with a strong central government and a strong leader. In various speeches to the nation, the president made his priority of unity apparent, as in the following:

“The independence of a people, of a country, he emphasized, is one thing. The existence of a government, an administration, local authorities and chiefdoms is another thing. But a nation, a real nation, is something else again. Since the 1st of January 1960, our country, Cameroon has been free and independent. That, however, does not mean that since January 1, 1960 a real Cameroonian nation has existed. It is incumbent upon us, the leaders and people in charge at all levels, to forge this nation, for forge this national unity.”

President Ahidjo’s rationale for dissolving the federal structure and integrating the polity could be analyzed from three perspectives: economic, sociocultural, and political. A compelling argument by the president for integration of East and West Cameroon was the natural and historical imbalance between regions, so that the country could achieve harmonious development as a whole. Regarding the budgetary situation of West Cameroon, the president remarked:

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9Ibid., 72.

It will be seen that although most services have been federalized, the budget of the state of West Cameroon is still experiencing difficulties; in spite of a balancing subsidy from the Federation totaling more than 2000 million (francs), that is to say an amount equivalent to approximately three quarters of the budget.\(^1\)

This economic imbalance, we should stress, was not limited to West Cameroon alone. As we indicated earlier, in the Eastern and Northern provinces, the economic picture was equally bleak. Socio-culturally, the president insisted that consolidation of national unity would iron out rivalries and tribal divisions. He further maintained that divisions and rivalries between Francophones and Anglophones, Northerners and Southerners still constituted the greatest problems in the country, particularly the government in Yaounde, regardless of the ethnic or ideological complexion\(^2\) of the leaders. Politically, Ahidjo argued forcefully that the cumbersome federal structures of the Republic greatly affected the development efforts of the Cameroonian people, and the functioning of the three governments and four assemblies. The president argued that this overlap involved considerable expenditures which could have been used in the economic, social and cultural fields.\(^3\)

Clearly, Ahidjo’s emphasis and conviction on national unity, whether real or otherwise, seems to have be the centerpiece of his domestic policy agenda and served as his greatest asset, convincing the people to vote for integration, thus consolidating power in 1972. The president’s idea of national unity, we should add, was inextricably linked to

\(^1\)Cameroon News, May 19, 1972, 2.

\(^2\)“Towards Integration,” Africa Confidential, January 9, 1976, vol. 17, No 1,6.

\(^3\)Cameroon News, May 19, 1972, 2.
political stability. One would, therefore, argue that his goal not withstanding his strategy has primarily aimed at strengthening his hold on the reigns of power by preventing competition or challenges to his regime. His critics have charged that his goal of national unity was based on egoistic indications to remain in power.

It is little surprise to students and scholars of Cameroon politics that Ahidjo’s overarching goal in Cameroon was national unity. Nicolas Ofiaga has approached and analyzed this issue from a comparative stance. In his text, Stability and Instability in Politics: The Case of Nigeria and Cameroon, Ofiaga stresses that political stability in Cameroon was the outgrowth of two principal factors: (a) the pre-eminence of the quest for national unity and national independence over all other priorities, and (b) the development and maintenance of a highly centralized and authoritarian system, which according to the President, was invaluable for the maintenance of unity and political stability. Although Ahidjo succeeded in sustaining unity, political stability, and projecting Cameroon’s image beyond its frontiers, the same level of commitment to economic growth and development was absent. Documents from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reveal that the country’s dismal economic performance after independence in 1960 through the early 1970s, was largely due to the government’s neglect of the economic sphere and its obsession with national unity. On several occasions, Ahidjo lent credence to this goal in the building of the Cameroon state. For example in his address to the National Council of the Cameroon National Unity Party

(CNU) in Yaounde on November 5, 1967, the president unequivocally summed up his position on the issue in the following words:

We shall never tire of repeating, as we have already done several times on other occasions, that economic development which will give a more substantial content to our independence cannot be achieved without national unity.

National unity, therefore, viewed as Ahidjo’s political “oxygen” was the bedrock without which economic development and growth in Cameroon could not have been attained. The president’s remarks and emphasis not only point to variations in the goals or objectives with which the government had to contend with, it clearly served as a reflection of the leader’s preference when confronted to choose between desirable objectives for the country.

In summary, therefore, ‘national unity’ was used by president Ahidjo not only for bringing together and maintaining the focus of Cameroonians for nation building, but it served as a ladder through which the leader used to accomplish his varied political objectives. Under the guise of national unity, Ahidjo succeeded in reunifying former French and British Trusteeships to form a federation, with Ahidjo as federal president. He used national unity as a rallying tool to combat and defeat his political enemies, especially the outlawed Communist or terrorist party, UPC in Cameroon. Scholars and analysts of Cameroon politics have argued strongly, that the formation of the CNU in 1966, was the outcome of Ahidjo’s ceaseless plea for unity. This objective was achieved by calling for the abolition of regional parties in both East and West Cameroon.
Furthermore, under the guise of national unity, Ahidjo was able to create
a unitary state, United Republic of Cameroon, with a highly centralized and
bureaucratized administrative system. To maintain unity, Ahidjo built an elaborate
security network considered by most observers as the most effective in Africa.

Elements of Domination

(a) The Constitution of 1972

The overwhelming and enthusiastic support of the Cameroonian electorate in the May
1972 referendum, in favor of integration of East and West Cameroon, meant their support
for a “new” constitution. By presidential decree 72-270 of June 2, 1972, the Federal
Republic of Cameroon ceased to exist, and Cameroon became a unitary state known
thereafter as the United Republic of Cameroon. The constitution declared Cameroon a
“secular state” in which the rule of law governed the people. In close examination of the
“new” constitution, however, one would find that the 1972 document was neither “new”
nor did it take into account the wellbeing of all Cameroonians, especially the Anglophone
minority. The constitution in large part was a reflection of the “Gaullist” style
Constitution of La Republique du Cameroon, which was adopted when East Cameroon
gained its independence from France in 1960. Against this backdrop, therefore, some
scholars have forcefully argued that adoption of the 1972 constitution meant
Anglophones were bound to “play by the rules” set forth by Ahidjo and his Francophone
colleagues. This section, therefore, is to argue that the Constitution of 1972 was nothing
more than an instrument through which Francophones exercised their preponderance over
their Anglophone counterparts.
Implications of the Constitution

The Constitution of 1972 had significant and far-reaching consequences for the country, particularly for Anglophones. A key provision of the 1972 Constitution which had severe consequences for Anglophones was the abolition of the office of the Federal Vice President. Recall that this office was created during the period of federation and was held by the Prime Minister of West Cameroon, John N. Foncha. Although in practice, this office did not play a major policy role; in essence, it assured the Anglophones that their views were represented in the capital. Indeed, some scholars, observers, and Anglophones have argued fervently that elimination of the office of the Vice President was just the first step by Ahidjo and East Cameroon to undermine the importance of English-speaking Cameroonians in national political life. Secondly, this move was a glaring indication that Ahidjo was not prepared to share the reigns of power with anyone.

The Constitution also established a form of government structure officially labeled “Presidentialism” or “Republicanism” with a strong executive as president, an Executive Council of Ministers appointed by, and subject to dismissal by the president. A unicameral National Assembly comprised of 120 members and a centralized administrative system were set up. On the issue of succession, the constitution clearly stipulated that in the event of the presidency being vacant, either by death or permanent physical incapacity ascertained by the Supreme Court, the powers of the president of the Republic shall devolve upon the president of the National Assembly until the election of a new President.19 In May 1973, Ahidjo appointed a pro-centralist, Solomon Tandeng

19T. Eyongetah and R. Brain, A History of Cameroon, 179.
Muna, President of the National Assembly. It should be pointed out that Ahidjo had previously selected Muna as Prime Minister of West Cameroon and later made him Vice president of the Republic, after the dismissal of Foncha, the pro-reunificationist.

Troubled that Muna (Anglophone) and President of the National Assembly might assume the presidency in the event of his death or inability to govern, Ahidjo initiated a Constitutional Amendment, which the National Assembly passed, creating the post of Prime Minister. Paul Biya, a former Secretary-General at the presidency, a southern Christian, and one of Ahidjo’s young “Lieutenants” was appointed Prime Minister. The amendment further stipulated that in the event of the president’s inability to govern, the Prime Minister, not the President of the National Assembly will assume the office until elections are held. Although Ahidjo repeatedly stated that whosoever holds the post of Prime Minister should not be regarded as heir apparent, Biya’s succession seven years later only revealed the truth of what Ahidjo had downplayed previously.

Clearly as the two examples have shown, Ahidjo used the constitution in a manner that buttressed his position as president and at the same time used the Constitution to block or prevent Anglophones from holding the top office of the land.

Administrative Changes: Their Implications

During the federation, the republic was divided into six administrative regions, with West Cameroon serving as ‘one’ region. But as Mack W. Delancy has noted, with the end of the Federal System, Ahidjo was able to extend the highly

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17Ibid.,
centralized structure established by the French throughout the country. Cameroon was partitioned into seven administrative units or subdivisions called provinces, with appointed governors as administrative heads. West Cameroon, which was a single entity with a Prime Minister, was subdivided into two separate administrative provinces. As Eyongetah and Brain have suggested, this partition was based more or less on both geographical and ethnic lines. The grassfield region consisting of Mezam, Momo, Bui, Menchum and Donga, and Mantung, made up the Northwest Province, with its provincial headquarters in Bamenda (see map showing the country as East and West Cameroon, Appendix E). Similarly, the coastal/forest region consisting of Manyu, Fako, Meme, and Indian constituted the Southwest Province, with Buea as the provincial headquarter. Recall that Buea had served as the political headquarters of what was known as Southern Cameroon and West Cameroon prior to integration in 1972. These administrative changes had profound and far-reaching consequences for West Cameroonians; it exposed and magnified for example, the historic differences that had existed between the coastal/forest and the grassfield people.

When asked about the motives for the partition of West Cameroon into Northwest and Southwest provinces, 47 percent of respondents say the move was a deliberate political calculation by the East Cameroon’s lead of government to create disagreement between the two regions based on their historic differences. They also confirmed that this goal was achieved through manipulation of the politicians of the

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18 Mack W. Delancy, Cameroon: Dependence and Independence, 55.

regions coupled with the selfishness of West Cameroon’s leadership. Only 28 percent of the respondents believed the partition of West Cameroon was aimed at bringing the government closer to the people as most centralist advocates including Muna have argued. As we shall see in the next sections, Ahidjo and later Biya have capitalized on this ethno-regional differences at various periods, co-opting one region against the other and also providing political and economic incentives to maintain this imbalance. When asked which of the two Anglophone provinces (Northwest and Southwest) has benefitted most from the government since unification, (30 percent) of our respondents said the Northwest province, while 10 percent say the Southwest province. However, 37 percent of the respondents said neither of the two provinces have benefitted and 23 percent say both provinces have benefitted about the same. This finding is of particular significance because it appears to be consistent with the view held by most Southwesterners that Northwest politicians have “sold out” West Cameroon to East Cameroon for their own selfish and parochial interests. Also important is the perception, whether real or imagined, that this division among Southwest and Northwest provinces has given the East Cameroon’s lead administration the leverage to continually manipulate and put the leadership of this region at odds with each other; thus, making the possibility of solidarity for secession from the union even more difficult.

Furthermore, Anglophones have sharply criticized successive Francophone regimes of Ahidjo and Biya, of appointing Anglophones to head only “non-essential” ministries. They argue, for example, that since re-unification and later integration of the two entities, Anglophones have not been appointed to “high profile” Ministries such as Defense, Territorial Administration, Finance, or Foreign Affairs. A majority of the
respondents (53 percent) agreed that Anglophones have not been appointed to these
top offices, while 19 percent said Anglophones have served as heads of these ministries,
and 28 percent were unsure. This noticeable gap reflects and supports the views of most
Anglophones including some Francophones that the government has not provided equal
access to Anglophones as guaranteed by the constitution. Political elites from Northwest
and Southwest provinces have echoed this imbalance in the following:
“In the foreign service, Anglophones rarely get appointed as Cameroon’s Ambassador to
London, Washington, Lagos or Paris. These key diplomatic posts are reserved
exclusively for Francophones.”20

Similarly, Anglophones have voiced their concerns and displeasure with
Francophone domination in internal administrative affairs, especially in their “own”
territory. They argue, for example, that the government has embarked on a policy to post
only Francophones to Anglophone zones in top administrative positions, including Senior
Divisional Officers, Legion Commanders, Institutional and Parastatal Directors. Again,
this policy of the successive regimes has been at variance with the Constitution.

Another significant component of integration with far-reaching ramifications
for West Cameroonians was the introduction of centralized rule throughout the country.
This rigid system, we should point out, was the hallmark of French-style administrative
system in East Cameroon and other French possessions in Africa. Integration and
introduction of centralized rule, therefore, was at variance with the British liberal
parliamentary system, which Anglophones had been used to, for nearly 40 years. The

20“The Buea Declaration,” 19.
Cameroon National Union Party (CNU), formed in 1966, became the single most important vehicle through which major political and administrative decisions in the country were made. The leadership utilized the party to award patronage to supporters. As Ruth Morgenthau has clearly observed, the party was the cohesion of a few important people, each of whom brought in his/her loyalists to the party. Likewise individuals who did not conform with the party dogma were arrested, tried, and sentenced to long periods in prison for alleged "plots" against the state. Also, strict laws were passed which barred or hindered non-CNU party members, especially non-CNU parliamentarians from exercising control in the Assembly. This initiative by Ahidjo was designed to instill fear and to intimidate potential anti-government elements both in East and West Cameroon, particularly in West Cameroon, where freedom of expression was pervasive. It was also intended to further enhance Ahidjo's image among all Cameroonians as a strong leader.

An important consideration which Delancey touched upon, regarding Ahidjo's strategy to usurp power, was through extensive use of patronage in West Cameroon. As we noted earlier, the president used the CNU party as major lever through which political, economic, administrative, and party positions were distributed to his loyal supporters, particularly in West Cameroon. The dismissal of Foncha as Vice President and his choice of Solomon T. Muna, first as Prime Minister and later Vice President of the central government only attest to the fact that Ahidjo wanted men who shared his views and supported a strong centralized regime. As Delancey and other

scholars have noted, Ahidjo’s appointment of pro-centralizers to the party hierarchy, combined with his ability to nominate candidates for legislative positions, placed individuals who advocated for strong West Cameroon like Augustine N. Jua in an awkward political position. The activities of the CNU party at the local levels under the watchful eyes of the Prefect also had some ramifications for West Cameroonians. In the past, most traditional rulers were chosen by the villagers, who, together built a strong traditional political institution. With integration, the West Cameroon’s House of Chiefs was dissolved. The local ‘prefects’ and the party gave the president direct link to grassroots, traditional activities of the party which the president controlled from the top. The president’s representatives, therefore, became significant players in the selection of officials of the local governments as well as traditional rulers such as chiefs, fons or kings.

Integration and centralization of the political and administrative system revealed discontinuities in the country, especially in West Cameroon. It resulted in the demise of West Cameroon’s bi-cameral system, and led to domination by Francophone prefects in decision-making areas where traditional rulers had prevailed. Centralization, we should add, caused political infighting among West Cameroon’s political elites, each seeking ways to get to the president’s “side” to take advantage of patronage. Concentration of the decision-making powers in the capital Yaounde, and under one person, the president, meant unacceptable delays in action by the governors and prefects


Ibid., 56.
even on matters of great importance. Concentration of the decision-making in the hands of the president also raised concerns of overloading the president with huge burdens of decisions, some often very minor. Furthermore, the tendency to constantly seek approval from the capital and the president before any key policy is executed had some revealing negative consequences on local initiatives as well as free thinking. As Delancey has correctly observed, even bureaucrats became timid, not only afraid to contradict or oppose their immediate seniors, but also fearful to suggest ideas that might conflict with that of another individual further up the hierarchy. Sammy Kum Buo, in “How United is Cameroon?” forcefully illustrates the negative realities of centralization in Cameroon, especially in the former Anglophone region in the following:

The high degree of centralization has ushered in abuses of power by security officials, whose vehicles seem to out-number pedestrians in a number of Cameroonian towns. Inefficiency, red-tape, and corruption have grown. Under the former federal structure, some national administrative functions were performed regionally in Buea, the former capital of Anglophone Cameroon. Now, with the unitary system, everything has to be done in Yaounde, the national capital. This has caused problems and difficulties for government workers. For example, even minor officials have to make the pilgrimage to Yaounde to trace their files, or have their papers of employment signed. The results have been disruptive and there are complaints at the inefficiency of the bureaucrats in Yaounde.

In sum, therefore, the unitary system which emerged in May 1972 and its attendant centralization which followed closely thereafter, have been viewed by a large

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Ibid.,

Ibid., 57.

Sammy Kum Buo, How United is Cameroon?, 17.
majority to Anglophone Cameroonians as a hoax, and a major disappointment. Most West Cameroonians maintain today that the region is worse off politically and economically than was the case before re-unification in 1961, or when the territory joined East Cameroon to form a federal republic in 1962. This pessimism and frustrations of Anglophones with the state of being in Cameroon, is, without a doubt, the outcome of the policies instituted by successive regimes from Francophone Cameroon.

Economic Dominance

Economic imbalance between Anglophone and Francophone Cameroon since unification in 1972, has been a cause of concern for most Anglophones. The country adopted a regional economic planning strategy after independence aimed at equalizing the uneven economic needs of destitute regions with those of more economically viable regions. The logic behind this approach was to satisfy the diverse culture, ethnic, and economic disparity of the various areas in the country. Ndongko Wilfred has succinctly stated that the differential impacts of British and French economic policies in Cameroon, laid the foundation for the economic disparities which have existed in the country after independence and unification. Although regional economic imbalance remains a major anomaly throughout the country, our concern, however, is on the factors which led to the creation and sustenance of this imbalance between Francophone and Anglophone Cameroon.

A thorough examination of Anglophone complaints will reveal that their problems range from poor and inadequate physical infrastructures, unequal distribution of

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industrial facilities, insufficient energy production and deficient, transport and communication systems. To grasp the essence of these economic disparities between the two regions and why it has emerged as a frustrating and relative important issue among Anglophones, we must first understand the source of these disparities. The Cameroon Investment Code (CIC) originally proposed and approved by the East Cameroon National Assembly on June 27, 1960, would serve as our point of departure. With reunification of the two territories and by law No. 64-LF-6 of April 1964, the CIC was adopted throughout the Federation. The fundamental goal of CIC was to hasten the removal of economic disparities, which had existed between the various regions of the country, especially between East and West Cameroon. This initiative was also designed to identify the potentials for economic and social development including problems impeding growth in the regions. Finally, it was aimed at ensuring maximum gains from public and private capital investments. We should also note that in June 1975, the provisions of the National Investment Code (NIC) replaced the Cameroon Investment Code.

The question we are left with is, whether the NIC mirrored the objectives of regional economic and social development, and whether application of these provisions encouraged concentration of industrial activities in the Francophone region to the

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30Ibid., 134.
disadvantage of Anglophone Cameroon. If, as most scholars and observers have argued that the investment strategy widened the economic and social gap between the two regions, then the question becomes why the notion of balanced development objective was not forcefully implemented by the government. If, on the other hand, the initiative of balanced regional development is well and alive, as some supporters assessed, then it begs the question why there remain disproportionate economic and social differences between East and West Cameroon and among regions within each entity? Answers to these questions will enhance our understanding of the prevailing anomaly between Francophone and Anglophone Cameroon.

An examination of two major investment ventures in the country after the enactment of the National Investment Code in 1975, will reveal that the government’s rhetoric of balanced regional development was more an illusion than real. Our focus will be on the manufacturing industries and Agro-industries.
### TABLE 2

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Number of Investments</th>
<th>Investments in Milliards CFA</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Turnovers in MM CFA</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Number of Persons Employed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Littoral</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>26,479 mm</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>36,297 mm</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>11,374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>266 mm</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 mm</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>16 mm</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center South</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1,587 mm</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3,823 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>575 mm</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>609 mm</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>28,910 mm</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>40,205 mm</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>12,970</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*West Cameroon regions

Source: Ndongko Wilfred, complied from files of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Planning, Yaounde

It can be observed from the above figures in Table 2 that, the National Investment Code of 1975, that the development priorities of the government in Yaounde focused so much on East Cameroon than West Cameroon. Of a total of 67 investment ventures in the country, only four were allocated to West Cameroon, particularly in the Southwest province. Although other East Cameroon provinces such as North and West had just one investment undertaking each, and no investment allotted to East Province and none for Northwest Province (West Cameroon). On the aggregate, therefore, East Cameroon...
dominated the economic scene with over 92% of investment in the manufacturing industries.

It will also be observed with respect to the Agro-industrial ventures, that East Cameroon continued to dominate this sector with over 84% of the undertakings. As Table 3 reveals, the Littoral Province (East Cameroon) continued to draw huge number of investments undertakings, 18, representing 56% of investment ventures in the country. The table shows that Littoral Province alone received 12, 238 million francs CFA in investments and made a substantial turnover of 15,787 million francs CFA. Meanwhile, West Cameroon (Northwest and Southwest) received a total of five investments undertakings, representing just over 15% of the total number of investments, with total investment of 1,479 million francs CFA with a negative turnover of 518 million francs CFA. We should note, however, that although Littoral Province had huge investment capital, it created employment for just 3,000 individuals. While in West Cameroon, with relatively less investment capital, a total of 4,219 jobs were created. In terms of salary, however, the jobs in Littoral paid comparatively better than the jobs in West Cameroon because in the former, focus was on processing, while in the latter, greater attention was given extraction of raw materials.
TABLE 3

AGRO-INDUSTRIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Number of Investments</th>
<th>Investments in Milliards CFA</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Turnovers in MM CFA</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Number of Persons Employed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Littoral</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12,238</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>15,787</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center South</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4,702</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3,416</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>719</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-west*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-west*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,081</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3,285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>19,132</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20,255</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>8,097</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*West Cameroon regions

Source: Ndongko Wilfred, compiled from files of Ministry of Economic Affairs and Planning, Yaounde. (Author's comments also included.)

In view of the above evidence, it is clear that the National Investment code in Cameroon was skewed and served the interest of East Cameroon more so than West Cameroon. East Cameroon, it will be observed, clearly benefitted from the investment incentives reflected in the number of companies approved under the investment code of 1975.31 Ndongko Wilfred had pointed out that West Cameroon has not benefited.

Furthermore, East Cameroon's preponderance over West Cameroon is made apparent when one examines evidence presented by Anglophones political leadership.

31Ibid., 245.
predicament since formal union with East Cameroon, and further question and challenge the constitutionality of the agreement reached in May 1972. They maintain that this arrangement was not only “illegal, but also a breach of faith.” The architects succinctly and methodically outline and discuss each area of East Cameroon dominance over West Cameroon, supporting these claims with examples. They argue for example, that since unification, core ministries in the country such as Territorial Administration, Finance, the Armed Forces, Foreign Affairs, etc., have never been headed by Anglophones. Although Anglophones have been appointed Prime Minister, successive Anglophone Prime Ministers have not been given real power and authority as their Francophone counterparts. This paradox is revealed in the following statement:

When the Prime Minister is Francophone, there is no Secretary General at the Presidency and no vice Prime Minister... ...The Prime Minister wields real power and authority. But when that office comes to an Anglophone, he is hedged in between a Francophone Secretary General at the presidency and another at the Prime Minister’s office. At the same time, (the Anglophone Prime Minister) is saddled with not one, but two deputy Prime Ministers, on whom real power devolves.33

Anglophones further argue that successive Francophone regimes have used the old colonial strategy of “divide and rule” to achieve their goal of domination and control. First, that the partition of Cameroon into seven provinces, especially the division of West Cameroon into two Provinces (Northwest and Southwest), was designed to put these regions at odds with each other, to the advantage of Francophone or East

33Ibid., 18.
Cameroon led government. This was achieved by rewarding one region with high political appointments over the other region. For example, some Southwesterners have argued that since integration with East Cameroon 1972, mostly Northwesterners have been appointed to high profile positions in the government. John N. Foncha Federal Vice-President, Solomon T. Muna later succeeded Foncha as Vice-President and later as Speaker of the National Assembly.

**Sociocultural Domination**

East Cameroon used various strategies aimed at assimilating Anglophones culturally into French culture by utilizing the radio, television and road infrastructures. Anglophones cites, for example, that “television films and programs originally made in English are always shown in Cameroon only after they have been edited and translated into French, and only in French version.” They also argues that since unification, cinema theaters in major Anglophone cities such as Kumba, Victoria, Buea, Mamfe and Bamenda were compelled to show only French Language films.

Although Cameroon is theoretically a bilingual country, its educational institutions, according to Anglophone elites, do not reflect this orientation, especially in the Yaounde University and other professional schools of higher learning. The leaders maintains that Anglophones have been systematically discriminated against especially in admissions, and that French language has been used extensively for instructions to the disadvantage of Anglophones. Similarly, critics argue that Anglophones with foreign academic and professional diplomas are subjected to rigorous and timeless evaluation of

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*Ibid., 23.*
their degrees before they are considered for employment and often some have to wait for as long as five years for the process to be finalized.  

Finally, Anglophone leaders argue that East Cameroon has utilized communication networks especially road infrastructures to further marginalize and subjugate West Cameroon. They maintain for example, that since unification, key roads connecting major cities in West Cameroon-Mamfe-Kumba, Mamfe-Bamenda, Bamenda-Wum and Nkambe were destroyed, preventing commerce and easy movement of people from one region to the other. Meanwhile, the roads leading from major East Cameroon cities such as the Douala-Bafoussam roads were well developed. This strategy, according to the architects of the document, was designed to compel Anglophones traveling from Bamenda to Buea or Victoria (Limbe), to pass through these major Francophone cities.

The problems of West Cameroon, as espoused by Anglophone leaders, supports Claude Anderson’s “Political Integration” thesis. According to Anderson:

> Political integration for the integrating group is an illusive dream than real. That the integrating group loses all self-determination, since all plans and goals must be processed through and approved by the dominant society into which the minority group is integrating.

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3Ibid., 21-22.

3Ibid., 17.

Political Disintegration: Secessionist and Separatist Nexus

Prior to the April 6, 1984 coup attempt in Cameroon, the country was hailed by both African and Western observers as one of the most peaceful and politically stable countries in Africa. The attempt to unconstitutionally size power by a group of disgruntled elites, reveal however, the deep and intense disaffection in the country, fanned by ethno-regional affinities. Similarly, demands and protests from some Anglophone leaders for devolution of state authority, most importantly, forceful calls for secession by militant elements, attests to the growing discontent from the Anglophone community who view themselves as victims of political, economic and linguistic discrimination by Francophones. Before examining the factors which have culminated in calls by members of the Anglophone sector for separation and/or secession, from East Cameroon, it would be important to put in perspective what political disintegration is.

Ernst Haas, defines political disintegration as “the process whereby political actors in several distinct political systems are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations, and political activities toward a new center, the institutions of which possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing sub-system.” This process produces results in communities, which vary markedly in dimension and intensity. In some instances, the decision may warrant political leaders in a sub-system to withdraw their allegiance and recognition of the existing political center and build their own center. This breakaway from the dominant or major political entity is called secession. When a state breaks away from an internationally established and recognized political entity and

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declares her independence as a new state, she has seceded. Conversely, separatism, is when political elites of a peripheral or distinct community seek greater autonomy or semi autonomous government from existing principal political authority. Viva Ona Barkus, draws clear contrasts between these concepts, noting that the “crucial distinction between secession and separatism lies in the willingness or unwillingness of the discontented community to recognize the sovereignty of existing political authority”.39 Secession and separatism as we have shown, are two components or elements of political disintegration. Anglophone elites, political leaders, and “radical” militants however, differ markedly on which of this elements to employ in their bid to force Francophone dominated government for significant changes. Despite these differences, Anglophones of all works, agree that their political, economic, social and cultural realities in Francophone dominated Cameroon are the motivating forces behind their appeal for secession or separation. Anglophones point to continued economic imbalances between East and West Cameroon, despite the latter’s significant contribution to the economic wellbeing of the country. Table 4 highlights the integrative and disintegrative factors in Cameroon. We should caution that Anglophones perceive these disintegrative factors as barriers to the realization of their political economic, social and cultural potentials within a Francophone dominated Cameroon.

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TABLE 4
INTEGRATIVE AND DISINTEGRATIVE ELEMENTS IN CAMEROON

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Integrative Factors</th>
<th>Disintegrative Factors (Anglophone)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common legacy: both territories were under German colonial rule</td>
<td>Continued economic imbalances between Francophone and Anglophone Cameroon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for national unity: bringing diverse ethno-regional, religious and cultural</td>
<td>Hostile attitudes and intolerance of Francophones towards Anglophones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>groups together</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elimination of economic disparities between Francophone and Anglophone Cameroon</td>
<td>Francophones displace Anglophone social mobility and view this as a threat to their “rights”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for political stability to enhance economic growth</td>
<td>Anglophones view themselves as victims of political, social, cultural and linguistic discrimination by the dominant society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to utilize the country’s human and natural to maximum</td>
<td>Exploitation of natural resources in the Anglophone region, by French interest, to develop the Francophone zones is a great concern to Anglophones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to promote Cameroon’s dual heritage</td>
<td>Absence of good road infrastructures linking major cities to one another in the English-Speaking territory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clearly, as this chapter has revealed, although domination of the Anglophone region began before formal political integration in 1972, there is no denying that the events of May 20, 1972, reinforced and exacerbated Francophone hegemony over their Anglophone counterparts. As we pointed out in the chapter, East Cameroon’s dominance over West Cameroon was possible through various strategies, which included constitutional, administrative, political, economic and socio-cultural means. For example, adoption of the 1960 constitution of East Cameroon as the supreme document for East
demanded of them. Furthermore, the partition of West Cameroon into two distinct political and administrative zones, Northwest and Southwest, was another major attempt by Francophone regime to balkanize English-speaking Cameroon, and prevent cohesion as best as possible. Similarly, enactment of the Cameroon Investment Code (CIC), as well as the National Investment Code (NIC), laid a solid foundation for economic inequality between Francophone and Anglophone Cameroon. Finally, through use of the radio, television, and cinemas, East Cameroon’s resolve to assimilate West Cameroon into French culture was eminent. Without a doubt, East Cameroon’s ability to dictate and “push” her will on Angophones is clearly the result of the unequal relationship between entities. Anglophones’ lack of political, economic, and social advancement in Francophone dominated Cameroon, as the study indicates, is the outcome of the vertical and unequal relationship between East and West Cameroon.
CHAPTER IV

LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

Our goal in this section is to examine the nature of leadership change in Cameroon and the implications of these changes on the political economy of East and West Cameroon relations. To accomplish this task, however, we must first examine the leadership style of Ahmadou Ahidjo and Paul Biya, putting into proper perspective their political vision as well as other exigencies that might have combined to influence their decision making processes, particularly as it relates to Anglophones. Naomi Chazan and others have identified two major components of political decision making at the center, which include: (a) consolidation and (b) entrenchment, as well as three principal elements in the decision making process which all leaders, including Ahidjo and Biya utilized in fulfilling their constitutional duties. These decision making elements include: (a) articulation of a political vision, which is usually linked to the leader’s goals and plans for governing the policy (principles of decision making); (b) refinement of leadership styles and modes of operations (locus of decision making); and the establishment of the rules of the game (manner of decision making).\textsuperscript{163} We should emphasize,

\textsuperscript{163} Naomi Chazan et al.,\textit{ Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa}, 149.
ever, that these elements do not operate in insolation, neither are they mutually exclusive of each other.

Peaceful transfer of political power in Africa has not made a lot of headlines or attracted attention as other major occurrences on the continent, like military takeovers, assassinations, ethnic and regional wars, and political corruption. This is because of the relatively few successful transitions that have taken place in the continent since decolonization and independence of most of the countries in the continent beginning in the 1960s. In fact, since achieving independence, fewer than half a dozen countries have experienced successful transfer of political power without major incidents. Some major successes include: the Osman-Sharmarker succession in Somalia in 1967, the Senghor-Diouf transition in Senegal in 1981, the Stevens-Saidu transfer in Sierra Leone in 1985, the Nyerere-Mwinyi succession in Tanzania in 1985, and the Ahidjo-Biya transition in 1982, which is the focus of this chapter. Despite these successes, most observers and critics point to numerous violent transitions which have characterized the political landscape in Africa as evidence that political succession in the continent remains an illusion than a reality. Peaceful transfer of power in the above countries was influenced by a number of factors including the initiative of the incumbents and in others, the result of collective efforts by individuals and

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groups outside the political arenas, who employed violence as a strategy to change the political leadership in the country.³

Michael Schatzberg has noted that since the end of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet Union, the world has witnessed a steady decline in various forms of authoritarian rule in Africa, Eastern Europe, Latin America and Asia. He maintains that the forces of change have caused most long-ruling autocrats of both left and right to pursue a range of strategies and tactics to remain in power. He aptly argues that though some of these leaders relinquished powers behind the scenes, some attempted to undermine the legitimacy of their successors through overt and covert activities. Schatzberg succinctly reveals this in the following statements:

Few (leaders) have successfully ceded their coveted positions as heads of a state-party without resistance; fewer still have openly and sincerely embraced the new cross-currents of political change. The vast majority of them have waged fierce and occasionally violent political struggle to retain both their positions and power.

Even when autocrats have either departed or have been removed from the scene, however, they often leave behind them political forces and erstwhile allies who continue to fight to pressure or restore the old order that nurtured them.⁴

³Ibid.

President Ahidjo's announced resignation on the evening of November 4, 1982, stunned not only Cameroonian, but observers of Cameroon and African politics alike. Analysts and scholars of Cameroon politics have raised intriguing questions, seeking to know the reason(s) for the leader's abrupt decision to step down from power. Although there were some speculations about the leader's ailing health, the precise cause or causes of Ahidjo's decision to relinquish power remains unclear. As Victor T. LeVine has noted, however, “the president must have been planning his departure some time.” This speculation was, however, confirmed by Ahidjo himself in a press conference in Douala, at the Congress of the Cameroon National Union (CNU) in February 1975. In his interview, the president stated: “I had already decided to leave power.” The president's decision to leave office after nearly twenty-three years was, therefore, not spontaneous as some observers have suggested, but rather a carefully planned and strategized decision that would ensure continuity. If one examines the events and actions of the president prior to his resignation, one would find patterns that suggest a planned, rather than a precipitous or spontaneous resignation. As LeVine has

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6 President Ahidjo made these remarks in an interview during the February 1975 Congress of the Cameroon National Union Party (CNU) in Douala, Littoral Province.
clearly pointed out, some key events by the President suggest the image of a man putting his house in order before leaving it.7

The Succession Amendment

The first indication of the president's future plans to depart office was effected in 1979 with a constitutional amendment. This amendment permitted the Prime Minister to succeed to the presidency with full powers, in the event of the president's death or inability to serve. The amendment also empowered the new leader to choose a new Prime Minister as well as his cabinet and to serve until his predecessor's full term runs out. It stipulated further that if the Prime Minister could not serve as president, then the president of the National Assembly will be next in succession, followed by a minister "in the order of precedence." 8 The provision also stated that if either of these elites becomes president, he will serve only on an interim basis, until the next presidential elections are held--"not to exceed 50 days after the [initial] vacancy." We should point out that under the previous dispensation, the president of the National Assembly was to be the next in succession to the president who could only serve for a short period until new elections are held, that is 50 days afterwards.

The amended succession law had two significant implications: (1) Paul Biya, the Prime Minister at the time, was a beneficiary, who was to assume full

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8 Ibid.
responsibilities of the office of president and to serve until his predecessor's own term of office was over. Ahidjo's early retirement, therefore, afforded Biya more than two years to assert himself in office and start establishing himself as a leader, away from the shadows of his boss and mentor. The second important aspect of the amended succession law was that it prevented any power struggle that might have ensured, if early elections were held.

The second major implication of the succession amendment was that it prevented an Anglophone, Solomon Tandeng Muna, former federal Vice-President and president of the National Assembly from becoming national president, even on an intermittent basis. Biya's assumption of the presidency did not alter the North-South balance established by his predecessor and mentor, Ahidjo. Biya's appointment of Bello Bouba Maigari, a northerner, as Prime Minister, not only assured continuity of Francophone-dominance but perhaps revealed to Anglophone Cameroonians their unequal role in the unitary state, and eclipsed their aspirations to hold the highest office for some foreseeable time.

The second major action by Ahidjo, which clearly demonstrated a man putting the "house" in order, was a cabinet reshuffle in January 1982. What appeared different from past reshuffles was that the major actors involved were not aware of the president's proposed changes. More so, it involved personnel changes particularly in the presidency. The most significant move was Sadou Daoudou's transfer from the ministry of public service to deputy secretary-general at the
presidency. Recall that Daoudou was Ahidjo's most loyal and oldest friend in government. Daoudou was not only a political ally, indeed, both men were from Garoua, the northern province. Ahidjo's goal in this personnel change was geared towards limiting the growing powers of Secretary-General, Samuel Eboua, who had presidential ambitions. This strategy, while it kept Eboua's maneuvers in tact, aided the smooth transition of power from Ahidjo to Biya later in the year. When Biya assumed office, he named Sadou Daoudou Secretary-General at the presidency, while the former secretary-general, Eboua was moved to a less powerful ministry of agriculture.

The third major event was Ahidjo's fifth-five year development plan, promulgated in November of 1981. Of special importance was the primacy given to agriculture over other development issues. As LeVine has aptly pointed out, the fifth-five year plan firmly placed Ahidjo's pragmatic stamp on the development priorities of Cameroon, making it difficult for his successors to deflect the economy from the course he had chosen.

The final event or pattern suggesting the president's preparation to depart office was planned official presidential visits to some European and North American countries, including France, Canada, Great Britain, and the United States. It appears, therefore, that president Ahidjo was on his last round of

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9 Ibid., 24.

10 Ibid., 23.
farewell tour in the world. Lastly, was the tenth anniversary celebrations marking a decade of political union between East and West Cameroon. In an elaborate yet succinct speech, the president detailed many of his accomplishments and hopes for a better Cameroon. All these events put together without knowledge of the president's closest aides, illustrates the secretive nature of Ahidjo.

**Leadership Styles**

Since decolonization and independence of most countries in Africa in the early 1960s, numerous books and commissioned studies have been carried out by scholars and analysts regarding approaches and models in studying leadership styles in Africa. These endeavors have resulted in characterization of leadership in the following categories: the charismatic type, patriarchal style, the populist-prophetic leadership and the tyrannical leadership sort. Of the four leadership categories just stated above, our focus will be on patriarchal and populist-prophetic types, since they reflect more closely to the styles embraced by Ahidjo and Paul Biya of Cameroon.

**Patriarchal Leadership Style: Ahmadou Ahidjo**

This leadership style is prevalent in regimes generally referred to as administrative-hegemonial regimes. These leaders, including Ahmadou Ahidjo, Jomo Kenyatta, Leopold S. Senghor, Felix Houphouet-Boigny, etc, who emerged

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11 Ibid., 158.
Ahmadou Ahidjo of Cameroon, like most of his post-independence counterparts in other countries in Africa, utilized manipulation coercion, award of patronage and other devices to achieve his political goals. Ahidjo remained above the political frail, always able to juggle, vying political factions in the country, and coopting his political adversaries to ensure their dependence on him. The president, LeVIne has noted, held himself purposely aloof and reserved. Sammy Kum Bufo has aptly depicted the leader in the following statements:

Mr. Ahidjo, a shrewd . . . politician, who uses a combination of moderate tactics and tough handed rule, depending on which measure best suited his needs . . . he, not only charted his rapid political ascendency, but also created a situation in which he is considered indispensable by many Cameroonians.12

Ahidjo portrayed himself as father of the nation and was glorified by his fellow countrymen as such.

Ahidjo's political success hinged not so much on coercion as some of his critics have clearly charged, but he also relied heavily on an effective network of clientelism between himself and powerful political elites, as well as traditional rulers. An effective strategy employed by Mr. Ahidjo to achieve his desired political outcomes was to pit his adversaries against each other, and gaining loyalty from both ends. For example, aware that the grassfield and forest/coastal

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people of West Cameroon had vast disagreements on political, social and economic matters, Ahidjo exacerbated these differences further by partitioning the region into two separate political and administrative entities, called Northwest and South Provinces. It is also evident in his appointment of two Northwest political elites, Foncha and Muna as Vice-Presidents of the country and later Muna as speaker of the National Assembly, as a strategy to put the Southwest and Northwest at odds with each other. Although the president’s rationale for the partition was administrative expediency, his refusal to partition his home base—the Northern Province, which was three times larger than West Cameroon, in land mass, and constituted about a third of the population, makes his motives even clearer.

Another important aspect of Ahidjo’s leadership style focuses on decision making process. Decisions were centrally made by Ahidjo with assistance from a few of his trusted fideles.\textsuperscript{13} Ahidjo’s leadership style, just like his counterparts in other countries, encouraged nepotism, favoritism, promoted corruption and fueled factionalism.\textsuperscript{14} Furthermore, his leadership style created inequality in the country particularly in the distribution of resources. Although this aroused social resentment, the president’s effective internal security apparatus made it difficult, if not impossible for disgruntled groups or individuals to voice

\textsuperscript{13} Michael Schatzberg, "The Metaphors of Father and Family," 30.

\textsuperscript{14} Naomi Chazan et al., 159.
their discontent, especially from Anglophones. Without a doubt, Ahidjo exemplified a leader who employed the “carrot and stick” philosophy in his administration to achieve his political goals. Besides his strategy of pitting his adversaries against one another as indicated earlier, the ex-president did not hesitate to purge recalcitrant cabinet members and others in the civil service who challenged or held opposing views from his. This was evident with his dismissal of Foncha, and his replacement with a pro-unificationist, S.T. Muna. Finally, Ahidjo’s political skills in juggling and manipulating party elites, legislators, and civil servants gave him an overarching political edge over all other political elites in the country. Similarly, Ahidjo’s persuasive skills and his ability to capitalize on his political opponent’s disharmony, especially (West Cameroon) politicians, will be viewed as perhaps one of the president’s major strengths.

Ahidjo and the Old Consensus

A major cornerstone of president Ahidjo’s political success revolved around his ability to build and maintain what professor Lovett Elango has aptly and succinctly characterized as the “old consensus.” This old consensus centered almost exclusively on national integration. Given the inherent difficulties manifested in Cameroon’s diverse ethnic and cultural makeup, Ahidjo utilized a range of strategies to hold the fragile nation together. Besides excessive use of

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patronage, discussed previously, Ahidjo also used repressive measures, to achieve this consensus. To buttress his argument for one Cameroon, and to prevent alleged divisiveness stemming from primodal ethnic loyalties, the president, on July 12, 1967, passed laws banning “any association exhibiting an exclusively tribal, clan or regional character.” The leader's commitment to building a strong nation under the leadership of a single party, the (CNU), is remarkably made clear from his statements during the tenth anniversary of celebrations in 1976. President Ahidjo firmly stated “a multi-party system would only lead to ‘anarchy and inefficiency and even ultimately to the suicide’ of our Cameroonian nation.”

Before moving further with our discussions on leadership succession and its implications, it would be important to make a brief digression and examine the nature and character of Ahidjo's relations with Anglophone Cameroonians, particularly the political elites. We should state that without such background information, our discussion and analysis will have little or no validity.

**Ahidjo and West Cameroon 1961-1972**

The political history of post-independent Cameroon, until 1970 and 1982 respectively, is without doubt associated with two key actors, Ahmadou

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18 *Africa Confidential* vol. 18 no. 9. April 29, 1977, 3.
Ahidjo and John N. Foncha. These leaders, Ahidjo-East Cameroon and Foncha-West Cameroon rose to political prominence in their respectively states in 1958 and 1959. In 1958, Ahmadou Ahidjo, leader of Union Camerounaise (UC) and pro-unificationist, became Premier of French Cameroon. Similarly, in January 1959, John N. Foncha, leader of Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) became Prime Minister of West Cameroon.\textsuperscript{19}

In the course of eleven years, 1961-1972, three major events of great significance were realized under the direction of these leaders, including: (1) reunification of the former French and British Cameroons (2) formation of a federal structure, and (3) political integration of East and West Cameroon to form the United Republic of Cameroon in 1972. These major events have been discussed with some detail in chapter three.

Throughout their political careers, one would argue that Ahidjo dominated the political scene, out-pacing his counterpart John N. Foncha. Ahidjo’s political skills and his manipulative abilities, pitting Foncha against his Anglophone friends and counterparts, gave him an edge over Foncha. After reunification and the formation of the federal system in July 1962, Ahidjo became federal President while Foncha was his Vice President.

We should point out that the office of federal Vice-President performed very little or no functions of significance. The federal constitution, no doubt,

\textsuperscript{19} Victor T. LeVine, \textit{The Cameroon Federation}, 25.
recognized this insignificance and granted that the Vice-President could retain influence at the state level. The constitution also spelled out clearly that Foncha was entitled to continue as Prime Minister of West Cameroon. Foncha himself declined the office at the time of the first Vice-Presidential election. This provision was allowed for the next five years, that is until 1967 and was to lapse in 1970. Ahidjo reappointed S. T. Muna as Prime Minister of West Cameroon after his election as federal Vice President in 1970. This had some significance worth mentioning. Technically, it brought Foncha’s ‘political career’ to an end, and at the same time elevated Muna to great political heights.

According to Article 47 (2), (4) of the federal constitution, the Vice-President was to reside in the federal capital-Yaounde. Foncha’s constitutional responsibility, therefore, to relocate to Yaounde not only to cut him off his political base in West Cameroon, it created a leadership void with many eager contestants for the post of Vice-President of the party. Foncha’s favorite candidate, we should point out, was S.T. Muna against his political rival, Augustine N. Jua, We should point further that these political elites hailed from the grassfield region of Northwest. In a similar vein, Foncha supported Emmanuel Egbe Tabi, for the vacant post of secretary general against N. Ekhah-Nghaky, both from the forest region of the Southwest. Unfortunately for Foncha, both Muna and

20 Rubin Neville, Cameroon: An African Federal, 123.

21 Federal Constitution, Arts. 9 (31) and 52.
Egbe Tabi lost the election to their opponents. This setback greatly undermined Foncha’s prestige and reputation in the region. As if these troubles were not enough, Muna, Foncha’s one time candidate, and supposed heir apparent, argued that it was the constitutional prerogatives of the federal president to appoint the premier in West Cameroon. However, as Neville has argued, Jua’s supporters asserted the right of the KNDP members in the State House of Assembly as bona-fide individuals to be heard on this matter,\textsuperscript{22}d to make the final call. A caucus vote in 1965 favored Jua as Prime Minister.

In accordance with the will of the KNDP militants, Foncha refused to submit his candidate, Muna’s name to the president for consideration, and further called on Muna to accept the will and decision of the party. In a dramatic turn of events, Muna refused to capitulate and was suspended along with seven of his supporters from the party.\textsuperscript{23}Cognizant of internal dispute among the West Cameroon party elites, Ahidjo wasted no time in asserting himself as a role player in the political affairs of the region. On his own initiative in June 1966, Ahidjo gathered key figures of West Cameroon’s political parties in Yaounde, joined by the Prime Minister of East Cameroon. As Neville has observed, Ahidjo secured the agreement of these political leaders within two days to dissolve all existing parties in both states, and the creation of a new party, to be later known as the

\textsuperscript{22}Ibid, 151.

\textsuperscript{23}Ibid, 152.
Union Nationale Camerounaise/Cameroon National Union (UNC/CNU).

Clearly, Ahidjo's overarching goal of putting together a single political party was achieved mainly on ideological imperatives. As he [Ahidjo] put it, the single party in Cameroon came about at least because of a 'bold and rigorous analysis' of the political realities of the federation.24

What we have noted thus far is that Ahidjo's interactions with West Cameroon's political elites revolved around half a dozen men. Interestingly, all the leaders with whom Ahidjo dealt with, either as Prime Minister, federal Vice-President, and later speaker of the National Assembly, were all from the grassfield region of West Cameroon. We should also point out that KNDP's final decision to dissolve to join the UNC/CNU was made in Bamenda, Northwest Province. As we shall later discuss, Bamenda, the Northwest provincial capital, will be used by Ahidjo's successor Biya, to bring to an end the CNU and launch his own political party, the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM). These facts, coupled with their daring and pushful nature, the grassfield people benefitted politically and economically from Ahidjo's patronage system.25 In 1972, for example, after successful political integration of East and West Cameroon, Ahidjo appointed S. T. Muna, a pro-unificationist and federal Vice-President as speaker of the National Assembly. This appointment, we should emphasize, placed Muna as

24 189 President Ahidjo's Speech to the National Council of the UNC/CNU, November 1967.

Ahidjo entered a room, the temperature seem to drop by 10 degrees." He was reserved and secretive. Under his leadership, Cameroonians enjoyed political stability as well as economic prosperity. However, these dual achievements were obtained at the expense of individual freedoms--such freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom to associate. These freedoms were minimally allowed by the president, whose internal security networks were reported as the most effective in Africa. Ahidjo's relentless efforts to effect a smooth transition to his successor, and later, his attempts to overthrow his successor's regime, attest to the complex nature of Cameroon's premier leader.

**Populist-Prophetic Leadership Style: Paul Biya**

The second category of leadership style we will examine and which reflects the pattern adopted by Biya, is the Populist-Prophetic leadership style. Scholars have characterized this style as a contemporary version of the charismatic leadership style, with many attributes of early autocrats. Biya took over the political mantle of Cameroon after nearly twenty-three years of Ahidjo's rule, in which he (Ahidjo) managed to impose his will on Cameroonian politics and the conduct of Cameroonian governmental affairs. Biya, we should point out, was part of

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Ahidjo's government and an able "lieutenant," who joined the civil service under Ahidjo in 1962. It was therefore assumed that Biya would continue with Ahidjo's policies. However, as future events will reveal, Biya did not only abandon some of his mentor's policies and agenda, he charted a new political course for Cameroon establishing his own personality and unique leadership style. Biya brought with him a set of new political objectives encapsulated in his "new Deal" program. The President promised to "gradually liberalize and democratize" the Cameroon society, ensuring open debate of ideas, the multiplicity of candidate for elections, as well as the free choice of leaders of all political levels.  

Biya's leadership style, according to Mario Azevedo, confirms that he is deliberate and methodical in his approach to statesmanship. His countrymen believe he is more sincere and considerate, and has the interest of Cameroonians at heart. Earlier in is presidency, most Cameroonians described Biya as "a man who mixes, a man of the people." Biya's cordial relationship with Cameroonians is revealed in the leader's ability to draw huge crowds wherever he visited. In Douala, the provincial headquarters of Littoral, Biya was honored and initiated into the society of the traditional rulers. Similarly in January 1985, the President

33 Ibid., 2213.
accepted to be crowned "Fon of Fons," the highest traditional title in the
grassfield regions of the Northwest. This title was conferred upon the President
under the auspices of the fons of Bali, Bafut, Kom, Mankon, and Nso. Biya
demonstrated his seriousness and respect for the rights and tradition by appearing
in public, shrouded in his traditional robes. During the Agro-Pastoral Show in
Bamenda-Northwest Province in 1984, Biya, again, walked through the crowds,
willingly savored dishes offered him, and chatted freely and warmly with
exhibitors. Biya's personality and charisma are revealed clearly in the following
statement:

"Usually when he is waving to crowds and is overwhelmed,
he clasps his hands and waves them over his head
relentlessly with his usual smile. Had it been Ahidjo, he
might not have waved back; even if he did, it would be with
a stern look."

Lastly, Cameroonians saw in Biya a certain gentle attitude and
unpretentious disposition. He was endowed with infinite patience and evoked
hope in the future. Anglophones saw in Biya a leader who had concerns for their
welbeing, especially his knowledge and willingness to address their issues in
English.

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34 Ibid.
Biya and the New Consensus

Like his predecessor, Ahmadou Ahidjo, Biya understood the diverse and complex nature of Cameroon society and promised to work within the existing framework to strengthen national integration. His attempts in fulfilling this realization are depicted in numerous excerpts from the president's speeches and interviews in Cameroon and abroad with Cameroonian citizens. At the close of his speech at the Fifth National Council of the CNU in Yaounde on November 21, 1982, for example, the president made his stance on national unity apparent with the following words: "The consolidation of national unity must remain our major concern; it must be preserved at all cost."35

In an interview with the national daily news, the Cameroon Tribune, Biya echoed the same message of unity in the following statements:

I, therefore, urge the people of Cameroon . . . to remain vigilant in order to preserve and constantly strengthen this unity and consensus which are never acquired once and for all, but must be conquered each day so that Cameroon, despite foiling and defying maneuvers of any kind, from whatever they may come, maneuvers of diversion or confusion, of speculation or dramatization, of demoralization or destabilization, can remain a strong, united, peaceful, prosperous and just state.36

Throughout his official visits to the provinces, the president kept his message of unity at the top of his agenda. In his end-of-year message to the

35 Biya's closing speech at the Fifth National Council of the CNU in Yaounde, November 21, 1982.

36 Cameroon Tribune, January 18, 1983.
nation, for example, Biya emphasized the need and importance of unity and solidarity to a young nation like Cameroon. He offered this in the following words:

Our people, stimulated by the successes so achieved, showed their awareness that progress can only be achieved through their own efforts, that is, through their ability to assume the task of national development in unity, solidarity, order and justice.\(^{37}\)

Further in his official tour of Maroua, the provincial headquarters of the Far North, Biya revisited the issue of unity as an invaluable mechanism in the developmental goals of Cameroon. The president elaborated on the subject in the following statements:

National unity does not amount to the often restricted and passive feeling of belonging or wishing to belong to one and the same community. It is above all, a common and unanimous determination to feel, undertake and build together—a unanimous determination to walk together and share in a brotherly manner the same common ideals and the same hopes.\(^{38}\)

While addressing the people of the Centre-South Province on June 11, 1983, the president equally admonished citizens of the region to work together to realize goals of Cameroon. He expressed these in the following words:

We should struggle to eliminate all obstacles to the consolidation of national unity, without which our drive for nation building will remain fragile. I am here referring to tribalism, sectarianism, favoritism, intrigue and maneuvers


\(^{38}\) Speech by President Biya on National Unity in Maroua, Far North Province, May 4, 1983.
our country with so much diversity, no party can claim to be a national party unless it has the ambition to be and become a meeting place for all the Cameroonian people: men, women, old and new faces, youths, adults and the less young, who are all sons and daughters of one fatherland.  

Rift Between Ahidjo and Biya and its Implications

We shall examine the nature of leadership change in Cameroon and the implications of these changes on the political economy of East and West Cameroon relations. On November 4, 1982, president Ahmadou Ahidjo announced to the nation his decision to resign as president of the Republic and his decision to transfer power to his Prime Minister Paul Biya. This move, according to Michael Schatzberg, was hailed as a statesmanlike gesture and met with near-universal approval. One would have expected, given the circumstances, that president Ahidjo would have done everything in his power to ensure a calm and smooth transition to the new regime. Unfortunately, the ex-president’s alleged conspiracy against his successor in 1983, and the failed military coup d’état of April 1984 to topple the government of president Biya, cast a dark cloud on the former president’s sincerity of relinquishing the reigns of power. For example, although Ahidjo stepped down as president of the Republic, he retained the all powerful position of Chairman of the Cameroon National Union (CNU). The ex-president attempted to amend the constitution in which the party, not the president

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would be responsible for national policy decisions of the country. In a press interview with the national news daily, The Cameroon Tribune, on January 31, 1983, Ahidjo declared that the party was responsible for defining policies, which the government would implement. This strategy by Ahidjo in essence, was designed to dictate policies behind the scene, while Biya, the new president, remained a powerless figure head. This bicephalism in leadership, Joseph Takougang has succinctly pointed out, resulted in a series of conflicts between Ahidjo and his successor Paul Biya.

We should stress that the unsuccessful conspiracy against the Biya government in 1983 and the failed military revolt of 1984 changed the political dynamics in Cameroon. As Victor LeVine has noted:

> These episodes not only hastened but effectively guaranteed the country’s first wholesale succession event, one in which not only virtually an entire leadership group (a government in the classic sense) was replaced, but also one that has already yielded significant changes in the country’s institutional framework and that presages policy directions resubstantially different from those of Biya’s predecessor. Some noteworthy lessons can be drawn from the Ahidjo-Biya struggles. On the positive side, Ahidjo’s alleged involvement in the conspiracy to overthrow Biya and enormous support from Cameroonian for the president (Biya), especially from the loyal military, strengthened Biya’s popular legitimacy. The plot also gave Biya the

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In summary, although some noticeable differences in leadership style and orientation between Ahidjo and Biya has been highlighted, especially in their dealing with Anglophone, it is important nevertheless, relevant to note that both men were determined to main and re-enforce the dominant-subordinate relationship between East and West Cameroon. While Ahidjo used the succession amendment in 1979 to prevent an Anglophone (Muna) from becoming president,

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45 Ibid., 49.
CHAPTER V

PAUL BIYA AND POLITICAL REFORMS: IMPLICATIONS FOR EAST-WEST CAMEROON RELATIONS 1982-1997

When Biya assumed the Presidency, he assured Cameroonians that he would continue with the programs and policies of Ahmadou Ahidjo, his predecessor. Biya's activities as Prime Minister, however, did not offer any clues as to his policies and principles. It was therefore conceived that the new leader would not deviate from the policy footsteps of his mentor. Ahidjo's image, his leadership style, his constitutional and "political shoe," we should add, were too large for Biya to fill. As events would later reveal, through Biya's speeches and his actions, it was apparent that the President was not willing to be perceived as Ahidjo's political "puppet." Instead, Biya embarked on creating his own image and political vision for Cameroon.

Through the years, Biya recognized the extent of repression that Ahidjo tolerated and how hypersensitive the regime was toward criticisms, more importantly, how detached the regime was to the public. The president was therefore determined first to "liberalize" and "democratize" the society, allowing greater individual freedom, free exchange of ideas as well as tolerance for
opposing political points of views.\(^1\) Early indications of the President's actions were the proliferation of independent newspapers, some of which were critical of the President's "snail-paced" reforms and policies. Paradoxically, Biya's actions failed to eliminate his predecessor's repressive laws of March 12, 1962 and June 19, 1967 respectively which restricted citizens' freedom of expression and association. Under the guise of the antisubversion decree of 1962, journalists and Cameroonians who were against or criticized the regime were dealt with severely. Individuals found liable for publishing or reproducing rumors, false statements, reports, or tendentious comments deemed "harmful" to the state were fined and/or imprisoned.\(^2\) Under Ahidjo's 1962 antisubversion laws, two international magazines, *West Africa* and *Jeune Afrique* were banned from circulation. Under Biya, these magazines and other newspapers were allowed to operate without the stringent censorship of the past. Cameroonians were also encouraged by Biya to make "constructive criticisms" of the government and its policies without fear of arrest, torture or detention.

The most significant reform instituted by the president was to demystify the Cameroon National Union party (CNU), permitting competitive elections at all levels of the party's hierarchy. Biya's goal was to utilize the party

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as a platform for national development and a forum through which free discussions of ideas could be achieved. Indeed, Biya wanted a "democratic" party with contested elections rather than political elites picking and choosing party candidates. The goal of Biya's new approach was to blend "new blood" in to the party structure by permitting voters to select candidates they believe would best serve their interests.

These bold and "revolutionary" proposals however, were too much for entrenched party elites to accept. As Takougang has observed, these proposals were rejected by party officials mainly because those who controlled the reigns of power,—members of the Political Bureau and the Central Committee of the CNU—were hangovers of the ancient regime, who owed their political fortunes to Ahidjo. Another reason advanced by Takougang for resistance by the party elites was that it threatened their stay in power and made their political futures doubtful.

Biya's victory against Ahidjo in the feud over party and policy control resulted in some dramatic changes in the country. A major move by Biya to shake off the shackles of Ahidjo was to propose amendments to the constitution of 1972. By Presidential Decree no. 84-001 of February 1984, for example, Biya abolished the name, United Republic of Cameroon, replacing it with the Republic of Cameroon or La Republique du Cameroon. Recall that the name, La Republique du Cameroon was the pre-unification name of East Cameroon, which gained its independence in 1960. Some Anglophone elites have argued fervently that Biya's
unilateral decision was tantamount to the secession of La Republique du Cameroon from the union; thus, Anglophones had the rights to declare a separate state of their own. Biya further abolished the post of Prime Minister, which was created in 1975 by his predecessor, Ahidjo, who made him (Biya) Prime Minister.

Politics of Partition

The events of April 6, 1984 also triggered administrative changes in the country, resulting in the partition of the Northern and Center-South Provinces (see map showing partition of Cameroon into ten political and administrative units after April 1984, Appendix G). Recall in our last section that after political integration in 1972, Ahidjo partitioned West Cameroon into Northwest and Southwest provinces. Although administrative expediency and "bringing government closer to the people" was Ahidjo's rationale for the partition, it is evident that this strategy was designed to exploit the differences (political, cultural, social and economic) of the grassfield and the forest/coastal people of West Cameroon. Paradoxically, the North province which constituted one-third of the country (in land and population) was not partitioned. We should state that Ahidjo was from the North and wanted to maintain his stronghold of the region under the leadership of his hometown, Garoua. We should further point out that the people of Adamawa and Far North resented Garoua's hegemony in the region as well as inadequate resource distribution to their zones.
TABLE 5

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY REGION BEFORE POLITICAL INTEGRATION IN 1972

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Area (km2)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Cameroon</td>
<td>42,210</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1,495,272</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>164,050</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2,089,791</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Central</td>
<td>115,940</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1,393,608</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>13,890</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>968,856</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>108,900</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>342,850</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Littoral</td>
<td>20,220</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>841,456</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>465,210</td>
<td></td>
<td>7,131,833</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Planning, 1976 Census

When Biya assumed the presidency, he was already aware of the plight of the people of Adamawa and Far North regions. The aftermath of the April coup provided him the opportunity to fulfill his promises to the people. Biya broke up the former North Province into three autonomous provinces—Adamawa, North and Far North Provinces. This move neutralized the stronghold of Ahidjo's hometown, Garoua and gained Biya Northern political support. In a similar vein, and to avoid any appearances of playing regional politics through partition, Biya partitioned the Center-South region into two separate administrative entities, later
referred to as Center Province and South Province respectively. Some observers have argued that Biya's goal was to prevent any ethnic group in the region from dominating the others, especially the more ambitious and politically aggressive Ewondos, Etons, Bafias and Bassas from overshadowing the Boulous. (See map of Cameroon showing partition of the former North and South-Center Provinces in 1984).

Clearly, as Table 5 reveals, Ahidjo's objective was to prevent solidarity among Anglophones, more so than any suggested imperative. Both in terms of land area and population, the table shows that the North Province was about four times larger than West Cameroon with one-third the population. Similarly, the South Center Province with the second largest land area with one-fifth of the population remained a single political/administrative unit. Broadly therefore, one would argue that president Ahidjo's goal was designed to employ the old colonial strategy of "divide and rule" to keep Francophones intact, while preventing cohesion among Anglophones. a's strategy of creating a new consensus was designed therefore to establish himself and consolidate his hold on power away from the stigma of Ahidjo. In September 1983, Biya convened an emergency party congress of the CNU in the capital, Yaounde, in which party elites elected him chairman. Shortly thereafter, the president called for a presidential election in January 1984. We should point out that elections were originally scheduled for
1985. Biya, emerged victorious in this uncontested election, and strengthened by the mandate from the citizens. Reinvigorated by this mandate, the president convened the Fifth Ordinary Congress of the CNU in March of 1985 in Bamenda, Northwest province. Although the Congress achieved nothing substantive, it nevertheless, scored some major political points. At the Congress, the name of the party was changed from the Cameroon National Union to the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM).

The significance of this move was that it marked the effective end of the Ahidjo-CNU era on the one hand and the beginning of the Biya CPDM era on the other. Also significant was that Biya's men replaced Ahidjo's loyalists in the party bureaucracy. Biya, President of the "New Deal" or the "Renoveau" was determined not only to liberalize and democratize the regime, but to infuse young men into politics, utilizing their skills and intellectual abilities to reconstruct the Cameroonian society.

Biya's decision to launch his CPDM party in Bamenda, Northwest Province had some profound implications. First, it was in Bamenda that the KNDP party of Foncha, Muna, and Jua decided in 1966 to dissolve and merge with Ahidjo's Union Camerounaise (UC) to form what was later known as the CNU. Secondly, Biya's strategy of launching the birth of his party in Bamenda,

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Northwest Province was to assure Anglophones, especially the politically aggressive Northwesterners of his concern for the plight of the English-speaking Cameroonians. Ironically, it will be from Bamenda six years afterwards that Biya will face the most unprecedented challenge to his regime and party.

Biya and the Progressives

A key strategy designed by Biya and his aides to dismantle the party machine of the CNU, was to call for party reforms. The President, early on, stated that the party must be able to “convince Cameroonians of good faith, whoever they are, wherever they are, whatever they think, that it was no longer necessary to go underground, or to go into exile in order to be able to discuss political issues at stake.” The President's insistence that multiple candidates be allowed to run for party posts and for legislative elections, saw new faces in the National Assembly. As Elango has clearly stated, this move gave young Cameroonians the hope that substantial changes were possible within the one party framework. This optimism gave hope and rise to the Progressives or liberal wing of the party, which included faculty members of the University, businessmen, lawyers and civil servants. As Elango has further noted, these Progressives pressed for more substantive changes along the lines postulated in Biya’s Communal Liberalism.

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6 Lovett Z. Elango, 6.

7 Ibid.,
Critics have charged that Biya's reforms were more symbolic than real, that they were designed for public consumption than to effect real political change. A key indication that Biya's political reforms were more "artificial" than substantive was apparent when the Progressives demanded that the president summon a meeting of the Central Committee of the CPDM party. Despite Biya's refusal to heed to the demands of the Progressives, he nevertheless called a meeting of the lesser body, the politburo. Furthermore, although Biya out-maneuvered the Progressives, he nevertheless paid a heavy price for his strategy. The president's resistance and rebuff of the demands of the Progressives demonstrated that the president's promises and commitment to genuine political reforms were more self-seeking than real. A second implication was that it revealed to the public the impotence of the Central Committee and its inability to resist political pressures from the president. This scuffle between Biya and the Progressives tarnished Biya's reputation with the public as a true reformer, while the Progressives gained an increasingly receptive and sympathetic audience including workers, petty traders, hawkers and even some white collar workers. These groups, we should point out, would be instrumental in the political transformations that will ensue in the 1990s.

8 Joseph Takougang, "Cameroon: Biya and Incremental Reform," 165.

Biya and Political Challenges

The assertion that economic decline played a key role in precipitating demands for democratic ideals and promoted political extremism in Cameroon in the 1990s remains an undisputed fact. Despite the consensus on the validity of this assertion one cannot, however, underestimate the influence and contributions of non-economic factors in shaping the political dynamics of the country. These non-economic factors provide meaningful insights of the genesis of Biya's political challenges in the 1990s and helps us put into proper perspectives the reasons for Anglophone agitation and dissatisfaction with the Francophone dominated regime. Biya's political difficulties can therefore be examined and analyzed by focusing on both internal and external circumstances.

Internal Dynamics

Students and scholars of Cameroon politics have offered varied, yet compelling explanations of the causes of president Biya's political problems in the late 1980s and 1990s. As we pointed out earlier, Biya's determination to assert himself as leader and away from the shadows of his predecessor, meant he had to introduce reforms which would not only elevate his political stature with the Cameroon people, but would counter the entrenched interests of the political barons. The president's commitment to bring about meaningful change in the country would therefore be seen as effective, if it started from top-down, rather than bottom-up. The first steps in this process was to democratize the choice of
party leaders through competitive elections at all levels of the party. Biya further called for reorganization of the basic organs of the party, advocating that able young men and women be permitted to seek high positions in the party hierarchy. This strategy of marginalizing the status quo alienated most of the barons, whose desires were to continue with the system as it existed. This struggle between the status quo- "Les hommes de L'ancien regime" and Biya's "Les hommes du "renouveau"" (the men of the New Deal), diminished the president's ability to lead, particularly after the failed attempted coup of 1984. Furthermore, the president's political challenges increased significantly as he systematically purged cabinet members whose ties and allegiance to the former leader remained strong, as well as those ministers whose loyalties were doubtful, or others whose job performances were unsatisfactory. All these changes, needless to say, served as major political challenges to the president as he sought to build and maintain a new consensus.

The president's next political challenge was with the Cameroon people, from whom he had enjoyed enormous support. When Biya took office, he promised through his "rigor" and "moralization" to curb government excesses including corruption, embezzlement, tribalism and lack of productivity by government workers or civil servants. The president further promised Cameroonians that individuals who engaged in such evil practices will be investigated and brought to justice. Biya's failure to deliver on his promises to
scale back corruption and tribalism, had a chilling effect among Cameroonians. As a former government employee put it "Biya, a man whom Cameroonians trusted would deliver justice based on moral principles, turned into a moral misfit."^{10}

In another interview with a physics professor of the Buea University, the same negative remarks were echoed when asked about the President’s handling of corruption, embezzlement and tribal matters. He simply put it thus:

This disappointment among Cameroonians, Francophones and Anglophones alike is clear. We believed the President to be the possessor or agent of moral values, one we believed would not be touched by the presence of external watchmen and the man we believed would make moral decisions based on the strength of his convictions rather than the strength of support.^{11}

These comments reflect the disappointment with the President by most Cameroonians who argue that the President’s lax enforcement of anti-corruption policies was because his tribesmen (the Betis) were the masterminds of these evil practices. When asked in our survey the most serious issue likely to threaten the unity of the country, more than (72 percent) of the respondents identified tribalism and corruption as key. It is therefore not surprising that most criticisms of

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^{10} Comments made by former District Officer (DO) during an interview in Kumba, Southwest Province, December 18, 1996.

^{11} Interview with Physics Professor of Buea University in Molyko, Buea January 2, 1997. Participant requested his identity remain anonymous.
president Biya's government has focused on these issues, and continue to manifest themselves in slogans both in Francophone and Anglophone communities.

President Biya's greatest political challenge emerged in 1990 with the arrest of the president of the Cameroon Bar Association, Yondo Black and ten others for alleged attempts to form an alternative party to the ruling CPDM. Central to their arrest, however, was that Black and his associates held secret and unauthorized gatherings in violation of the law of association adapted in 1962. This event triggered the launching of the Social Democratic Front (SDF) party in Bamenda, Northwest Province. Although the president had initially encouraged competition at various levels within the party machines, he steadfastly refused demands for the creation of competing political parties, characterizing this proposition as a "distasteful passing fetish." Like his predecessor, Ahmadou Ahidjo who strongly opposed multiparty system, Biya viewed multipartyism in the same light. He therefore argued that in a multiethnic country like Cameroon, multiple political parties will serve as a divisive instrument that would hinder, social and economic growth. Biya succinctly argues in favor of one-party system in the following statements:

At the national level, the one-party system appears today to be the only suitable institutional framework for bringing together Cameroonians of all origins. It should therefore give birth to a new brand of Cameroonians devised of any

tribal or regional allegiances. . . It is also necessary for the mobilization of human resources, especially intellectual resources which though so invaluable, are still scarce in our country. For, how could we ensure the efficient running of the state machinery if the political leanings of the few senior officials Cameroon now has were to be torn between several opposition parties, thus creating for any ruling regime an insurmountable crisis of power?\(^1\)

Although the president has eloquently argued against multipartyism, citing the possibilities of balkanization of the country along ethnic or regional lines, his appeal nevertheless, seems to be geared towards preserving his authority under the one-party system.

The president's most potent political challenge surfaced in March 1990 with the formation of the Social Democratic Front (SDF) party formed in Bamenda, Northwest Provincial headquarters. [The] Anglophone party, as most people refer to it, emerged as a result of the events in Douala and the increasing discontent among Cameroonians, particularly Anglophones of their declining socio-economic standards in the country. In May 1990, SDF applied for permit from the government for an inaugural launch by its party. Refusal by the government to grant this request resulted in defiance by party faithful of administrative orders. This event led to a bloody clash between government forces and civilians, resulting in the deaths of six individuals and hundreds others injured. This was the first time citizens outrightly defied government orders, and prepared the stage for other acts of defiance in the years ahead.

\(^{13}\) ESSTI, Paul Biya (Yaounde, Cameroon: Impressions Essti, 1987): 44.
Implications of Unrest

The political events of early 1990 as described above had some significant and far-reaching consequences for the leadership and country as a whole. In June 1990, for example, notwithstanding continued civil unrest, precipitated by worsening economic conditions, president Biya announced that adoption of a multiparty system was imminent, and later outlined a series of reforms to be undertaken by the government, including the law prohibiting unauthorized association (under which Yondo Black and his associates were convicted in April). The president also proposed reforms to relax press freedom, and summoned a committee whose task was to formulate legislation on human rights. Two months later, hundreds of political prisoners were released including Yondo Black. Finally, on December 5, 1990, the national assembly approved a constitutional amendment providing for the establishment of a multiparty system in the country.

Political pluralism in Cameroon, as in other countries in the world, triggered another major political development. As political parties emerged in Bamenda, Douala and other provinces of the republic, suspicion started mounting among the Betis. As Tamfu Hanson has argued, this suspicion gave rise to Beti solidarity which comprised the Ewondos, Etons, and Bulus, whose goal was to
maintain Biya in power. As the various political parties focused on "destroying" Beti oligarchy, Biya used his strategy to rally his kinsmen and vehemently argued that the goal of the other parties was not only directed at removing him from office, but against the Betis as an ethnic group. The Beti solidarity will also be evident, according to Tamfu in the 1992 presidential elections.

The National Conference and its Implications

Resurgence of democratic pressure and spiraling violence in most cities in the country forced Biya's beleaguered government to seek other political solutions. The opposition parities in Cameroon, were impressed with the success of the "national conference" strategy utilized by opposition parties in Benin, Gabon, Congo Mali, Togo and Niger, and they worked in unison calling for a national conference. The national conference, according to Walter S. Clarke, is a model for an instrumentality of mobilizing and channeling political consciousness of the population. The goal of the national conference therefore, is to open up previously closed political doors for debates, thus enabling political development in a country to fester, to further change the character of the political environment. Even though this strategy for managing political reconciliation was

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successful in former French territories mentioned above, in Cameroon, however, this strategy was less fruitful. Biya tactfully outpaced the opposition by refusing to adhere to the oppositions' demands for a sovereign national conference. As Lovett Elango has succinctly argued, the President avoided a potentially inquisitorial sovereign national conference and instead summoned a Tripartite Conference in Yaounde from October 30 to November 13, 1991.\textsuperscript{16}

Participants of this conference included representatives of the government, civic and religious leaders, representatives of the ruling CPDM party as well as representatives of the various opposition parties. Although "nothing" substantive was achieved in the conference, according to some opposition members, participants, nevertheless agreed on some key decisions which were later put together and called the Tripartite Accords of November 13, 1991. The most significant achievement of the conference was the decision to create a technical body to review and revise the constitution of the country. As some observers have pointed out, Biya used the Tripartite Conference to cool the political barometer in Cameroon, at the same time, seek ways to further prevent solidarity among the various opposition parties. Biya's second goal was achieved when opposition leaders started pointing fingers at each other for having "sold out" to Biya, particularly leaders who signed the Tripartite Accord. Furthermore, when Biya denied access to the national television (CRTV), to opposition leaders as

agreed previously, it became apparent to these leaders with the exception of John Fru Ndi of SDF, that Biya could not be trusted. Thus far, Biya's ability to manipulate his opponents and keeping them confused and in disarray had succeeded. But as Lovett Elango has observed, the President's maneuvers “far from easing tensions and restoring mutual trust and confidence between the government and the people, the Tripartite fiasco only intensified the mutual distrust.”17

Another significant achievement of Biya over his political opponents during the Tripartite Conference was his ability to limit the scope of the discussion to constitutional matters. As Jean-Germain Gross has noted:

Unlike national conferences in other African countries, where the terms of reference covered a whole range of issues—from the first days of independence to the present—the Cameroon tripartite meeting was restricted to the constitutional reform.18

Finally and perhaps most importantly, the President and his aides led the opposition leaders at the talks to believing that electoral and constitutional reforms would be tackled first before legislative and presidential elections scheduled in March and October 1992. As it turned out, those reforms did not materialize, thus, both elections were governed by the old or existing electoral

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17 Ibid., 15.

laws, which authorized the minister of territorial administration to run the

President Biya's tactical maneuvers continued unabated as he further promised early legislative elections for March of 1992 and presidential elections for October of 1992. Scholars have argued that the president's strategy was to "cut the opposition off guard" by announcing these elections earlier than originally scheduled, that is, April of 1993. The President further promised that he would appoint the next Prime Minister from the party that won majority in the Assembly. It is important to point out that the President's pledge to appoint the next Prime Minister meant he/she (the Prime Minister) would be answerable to him, the president and subject to dismissal at the president's pleasure. Secondly, it indicated that the leadership of the party was powerless to appoint a prime minister further making the president supreme.

Even though Biya's strategy for early elections was to inflict what would be described as a political "KO" punch to the opposition, results of both the legislative and presidential elections would prove otherwise. As Table 6 shows, Biya's CPDM failed to win an overwhelming majority in the Assembly. Below, is a breakdown of the parties and the number of delegates won in the March 1992 elections.

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19 Ibid,
The Social Democratic Front (SDF), the most threatening of the opposition parties boycotted the legislative elections. John Fru Ndi’s unwise decision to boycott the legislative elections has been viewed as the vocal leader’s “Political Waterloo.” Biya characterized Fru Ndi’s actions as “a power-monger
and an unreasonable candidate who opposed the wisdom of his own friends in a battle.  

This SDF’s boycott of the legislative elections, despite the participation of other opposition parties, has raised serious questions both in Cameroon and internationally. It is possible that had the SDF participated in the elections, Biya and the CPDM would not have attained 88 of the Assembly seats. As the table indicates, it is however doubtful to say the least, if all Northwesterners who voted CPDM, would have done so with SDF’s presence. It is equally uncertain whether the loyalty of many of the Northwest “fons”, who had supported top Northwest elites such as Achidi Achu, the PM Akum Fomum, Francis Nkwain, John Neba Ngu as well as Lawrence Fonka Shang, Speaker of the House of the Assembly would cross the political “carpet” and vote for Fru Ndi, one of their own.  

Despite the speculations and uncertainties as to the voting patterns, a few things remain clear. SDF’s withdrawal from the elections gave Biya the needed mandate, even though it was small to exert control over the affairs of the state. Furthermore, it tarnished Fru Ndi’s image and popularity, and caused fragmentation among and within the SDF elites. Another significant revelation from the legislative election was that it followed both regional and ethnic lines. Bouba Bello Maigari of UNDP won all seats in the North and Adamawa regions, but Biya and CPDM

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UNDP won all seats in the North and Adamawa regions, but Biya and CPDM were able to snatch the Far North region from UNDP. Meanwhile, in the Center East and South provinces, the ruling CPDM party had an overwhelming advantage. In the Southwest (Anglophone), West and Littoral, North and Adamawa provinces, the UNDP registered big victories. In closing, therefore, it would be prudent to argue that SDF's boycott of the legislative elections allowed Biya to gain a working majority in the legislature. Likewise, Biya's poor performance in the legislative elections may have encouraged and lured John Fru Ndi and the SDF party into the presidential elections of October 1992.

The 1992 Presidential Election and its Aftermaths

On August 24, 1992, President Biya, in a televised address, announced the holding of presidential elections on October 11, 1992. This election, we should point out, was originally scheduled to take place in April 1993. Before going into details of the elections and its impact within the Anglophone community, it would be important to examine some key issues, such as the rules governing the elections, timing, resource availability as well as equity. Cameroon's first "true" presidential election in October 1992 made headlines not because of a massive turnout, but because of widespread irregularities, from both the ruling party as well as the opposition parties. Some scholars have raised intriguing questions for these anomalies.
As Jean-Germain Gross has succinctly argued, the presidential election in Cameroon was marked by gross unfairness of the electoral process. Gross argues that the “playing field” in the elections was less than “level”, attributing this failure to factors such as timing, mechanics, resource availability and equity, and administration and conflict resolution procedures. He maintained that the timing of the election, for example, was unconstitutional, citing Article 51 of the Cameroon Constitution, which stipulates that there must be at least 30 days lapse between the electoral campaign and election day. Since the official date for launching the presidential election was September 17, 1992, the 30 days required by the law was therefore not observed. This protracted period between the campaign and the elections, he maintains, worked to the disadvantage of new parties. Secondly, the short duration did not provide adequate time for education of the masses and to register voters. As a result, many anxious voters could not cast their ballots on voting day because their names were not on the register or did not have adequate identification papers. The second issue raised regarding the election was the role of the minister of territorial administration in the electoral process. Civil servants in Cameroon as in other countries in Africa, particularly in Francophone countries, are political in their activities. Since the minister of territorial administration was in charge of civil servants, it raised questions of fairness and equity in the electoral process. This is perhaps one of the reasons the

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opposition challenged the government and called for an independent electoral commission to conduct the election. Although this request was rejected by the government, a National Commission of the Final Counting of Votes (NCFCV) was set up.  

The third question raised regarding fairness of Cameroon's presidential elections in 1992 concerns equal or equitable access to resources by all presidential contestants. Some observers have argued that contestants were not afforded equal air time in the public media, particularly the radio and television (CRTV), which is the most accessible source of information and news to millions of Cameroonians. In fairness, however, president Biya, by virtue of his position as incumbent, enjoyed all the privileges of his position as other leaders in the developed and less developed countries.  

These key issues raised will be the basis and grounds for problems after the final results of the election. On October 11, 1992, Cameroonians went to the polls to vote, either to re-elect the incumbent or a new leader. Below are results from the polls extracted from a report by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, entitled An Assessment of the October 11, 1992 Election in Cameroon 1993.

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23 Ibid., 159.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>CPDM Vote as % of Rep. Turnout</th>
<th>SDF Vote as % of Rep. Turnout</th>
<th>CPDM Vote as % of Prov. Prop.</th>
<th>SDF Vote as % of Prov. Prop.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adamawa</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far North</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Littoral</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All figures are in percentages.
Source: Extracted from report by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, entitled *An Assessment of the October 11, 1992 Election in Cameroon 1993*, Appendices XI and XII.

Biya’s narrow margin of victory in the presidential elections, 39.9% of the votes cast against John Fru Ndi and the SDF’s 35.9%, and Bello Maigari and UNDP’s 19.2% was not only challenged by the opposition, but by some independent observers like the NDI. When the Supreme Court finally declared Mr. Biya the
winner of the election, a number of violent demonstrations erupted in Bamenda, Northwest province as well as Douala in the Littoral province. Although the opposition charged the Biya government with electoral fraud, in fairness, we should state that there were widespread irregularities on both sides, with the SDF also engaging in electoral malfeasance. For example, in the aftermath of the presidential election, the SDF produced two conflicting sets of result figures without bothering to offer any explanations as to how the data was collected and reasons for the discrepancies.24

My interview with militants of both the ruling party and opposition parties in December 1993, revealed that both sides engaged in coercive activities including intimidation and bribes. As one sympathizer of the CPDM put it, “We were here first, we know the corners and the depths of the political whole, we know when to jump or walk over thorns.”25 Similarly supporters of the SDF boasted that they “rampaged people who supported corrupt Biya.” One of the “foot soldiers” of the SDF, during my interview, stated confidently the following words in Pidgin English: We dey for Ni John hi back, Man weh hi no support ‘suffer don finish’ (SDF) we go make yi suffer.”26 Literally, this gentleman stated that those who refused to support the chairman of the Social Democratic Front

24 Jean-Germain Gross,


26 Interview with a Group of Social Democratic Front Activists at the Tiko Motor Park, December 23, 1993.
(SDF) were to face severe consequences. This atmosphere of intimidation from both sides may have prevented many Cameroons from going to the polls.

The results of the elections on Table 6. above shows some elements of regional and ethnic voting behavior. We notice that SDF won solidly 83% and 89% respectively in the two Anglophone provinces of Southwest and Northwest, and made significant in roads in the West 71% and Littoral 68% respectively. Biya and the CPDM on the other hand, won resoundingly in the south 95%, Center 70%, and East 68%. Both the South and Center provinces constitute Biya’s ethnic and regional base. Interestingly, Biya performed relatively better in the North 43% and Far North 48% considered Maigari and UNDP’s stronghold.
TABLE 8

VOTING TURNOUT BY PROVINCES AS COMPARED TO NATIONAL TURNOUT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>CPDM Turnout</th>
<th>SDF Turnout</th>
<th>National Turnout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adamawa</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far North</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Littoral</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North*</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South*</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *Denotes cases of "significant" deviations from the national turnout average. The above figures are expressed in thousands.

Source: Extracted from report by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs entitled An Assessment of the October 11, 1992 Election in Cameroon 1993, Appendices XI and XII.

Clearly, as Table 8 turnout figures for CPDM and SDF show, some significant but unexplained deviation, particularly in the North with thirty-three thousand more persons, and in the South forty-three thousand more citizens turned out on election day, more than the estimated national average of twenty-five
thousand. These overinflated turnout figures only reinforce the argument that electoral malpractice occurred on both sides of the political parties.

Civil Disobedience and its Consequences

As we have noted before, the Supreme Court's announcement or declaration of Mr. Biya as the 1992 winner of the presidential election triggered violent protests and demonstrations in some strongholds of the SDF party. In Bamenda, the birthplace of the party, for example, there were reports of brutal assaults on individuals and their properties for their support of the CPDM.

The SDF employed several political tactics to protest the election results. But its most lethal arsenal was the "operation ghost town" or in French "operation villes mortes," in which widespread coercion and intimidation was used by party diehards to induce compliance. These acts of civil disobedience called on work stoppage by civil servants, merchants, schools and other essential services. Notwithstanding the magnitude and potential consequences of such actions on the stability of the country, Biya ordered the forces of law and order to place John Fru Ndi, SDF chairman and several of his radical supporters under house arrest and summarily declared Bamenda and the Northwest province under a three-month state of emergency. Although the "ghost town" strategy was successful initially in some of the non-Anglophone zones such as the Western province and Littoral, the momentum in these regions gradually started fading as economic hardship of the people continued. In the Anglophone regions of Northwest and Southwest, the
outcome or impact was differential. In the Southwest economic "capital" of Kumba, for example, properties of individuals known to be supporters or sympathizers of the ruling party were destroyed by SDF militants, including destroying and burning down one of the biggest employers of the region, Brasseries du Cameroon. In Bamenda, as well as other towns in the Northwest, and to a lesser extent the Southwest, administrative and commercial activities were almost brought to a halt. But, as Gros has convincingly argued, the opposition may have underestimated Biya and the regime's stay in power. He further reminds us that although the ghost town operation may have scared away investors, reduced tax receipts, and to some degree embarrassed the Biya government, it may have hurt the population even more.\textsuperscript{27} Anglophone school children were mostly disadvantaged by this civil disobedience strategy as their counterparts in other provinces continued school uninterrupted. Evidence also suggest that Biya's regime, despite all the pressures, remained in control and never in any serious danger, either threats of military insubordination or donor lack of confidence. On the contrary, at the apex of the civil disobedience, the government concluded two key accords with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the other with France which forgave some of Cameroon's debt.\textsuperscript{28} The political misjudgement of John Fru Ndi, the SDF, and the other opposition leaders on the impact of operation

\textsuperscript{27} Jean-Germain Gros, 155.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.,
ghost town would have in bringing Biya to his knees failed to materialize.

Indeed, Gros has summarized succinctly reasons for the lack of success with this strategy in the following statements:

... Store owners could not keep their stores closed forever, nor could middle class opposition leaders ask their less well-off followers to tighten their belts indefinitely. The general atmosphere of insecurity created by the government's sometimes violent reactions to popular protest, continued support for it abroad especially by France, random acts of banditry and rising perception that things were just going nowhere, virtually forced the opposition to accept or capitulate to Biya's terms.29

In the face of failure, one is tempted to ask why the opposition was unable to rally and sustain the momentum to achieve its desired results. Several factors or reasons may have been responsible for this failure. One of the reasons for failure of the ghost town operation was that the opposition was unable to convince its adherents to stay the course or had no other alternative strategy thereafter. Some scholars have argued convincingly that the strategy would have been successful, if they had used incremental amounts of pressure on Biya as time and circumstances called for. Secondly, the opposition believed Biya was already a weak president whose political survival lay on the "canvas." However, once it dawned on the opposition that Biya's political "life" was on the ropes and not the canvas, the opposition lacked the mechanism to deliver the final punch. Further-

29 Ibid.,
more, evidence of fragmentation within the opposition party on the ghost
town strategy and its impact on the population may have caused its lack of
success.

When asked in our survey how effective and successful the opposition’s
sabotage strategy of “operation ghost town/operation villes mortes” was, only 21
percent of our respondents thought the strategy was politically and economically
successful forcing the government in making significant changes in the country.
An overwhelming majority of our respondents, 74 (percent) believe the
opposition’s strategy was ineffective and unsuccessful. Respondents stated that
the strategy was flawed for many reasons, including poor coordination and internal
disagreements among the opposition leaders. Respondents further pointed out that
the strategy caused more economic hardships on citizens and that violent means to
achieve political goals was counter to what they believed. One could argue that
the civil disobedience strategy of the opposition also failed because of Biya’s
political skills in neutralizing his adversaries’ impact on some core elements in the
country. For example, Biya’s ability to buffer civil servants, the military and other
law enforcement components as well as the traditional rulers (chiefs) from the
impact of the boycott helped him prolong the crisis which therefore worked to his
advantage. Besides external assistance from France and other international
institutions, the advantage of incumbency provided Biya the opportunity to use
state resources to shield the most significant internal factors. As Gros has stated,
Biya's success was attributed to his selective rewards to key factors most directly responsible for regime survival. Biya's strategy was best articulated during his tour of the provinces in late 1991. Focusing on the capital Yaounde, Biya echoed confidently to supporters and sympathizers of his regime the following: "Tant que Yaounde respire, Le Cameroun, vit." meaning: as long as Yaounde is breathing, Cameroon will live.31

We should also point out that although Yaounde is the political capital and seat of government, it is also Biya's "cradle", his home base and "protective" zone. It is within this context therefore that Biya's statement above can best be comprehended. Biya, in January 1993, granted amnesty to all political prisoners arrested during the 1992 riots.

Having blundered in the ghost town strategy, the opposition in March, 1993, formed a coalition called the Union Pour le Changement or Union for Progress and Change (UPC). The goal of the coalition was to impose economic punishment on France for supporting the Biya regime. The objective of the opposition coalition was to boycott French consumer products thus, increase pressure and public sentiments in France to denounce the Biya regime. This united show of strength was also aimed at reinforcing demands by the opposition for a new presidential election. Biya's government countered this strategy by accusing

30 Ibid.
31 Ibid., 155-156.
the (UPC) of attempting to incite civil disorder and further destabilize the country. As international pressure for reforms increased, Biya announced that the national debate on constitutional reform was eminent by the end of May.

Meanwhile, after the ghost town fiasco, the opposition once again regrouped with hopes of overcoming Biya and the CPDM. In 1994, the opposition formed the Alliance For Change (AFC), a coalition comprised of sixteen parties, including the leading opposition, SDF. We should point out that a former high level government official, Samuel Eboua of the Movement for Democracy and Progress (MDP) was part of the alliance. However, as Takougang has argued, the alliance was rift with ideological differences and rivalry among the various parties, particularly between the leader of Union Democratique du Cameroon (UDC), Adamou Ndam Njoya, UNDP leader, Bouba Bello Maigari, all against the SDF chairman John Fru Ndi. Marc Yared has stated the obvious that the chairman of SDF, John Fru Ndi was resented by the other opposition parties for his apparent authoritarianism, his insistence that he be called "president elect" for his constant but unsuccessful call for a national conference and for his ambiguous attitude towards federalism.

As if the dilemmas for the SDF party were not enough, in April, there were reports of internal discord within the Social Democratic Front. A prominent


member of the SDF, Ben Muna called on the SDF to join the government in its efforts for a national debate on constitutional reforms. Muna's appeal did not resonate with most elites of the SDF and he was subsequently dismissed from the party. In keeping with his promise for constitutional reforms, in addition to mounting pressure from the international community, the government, in May of 1993, promulgated a draft constitutional amendments. The amendments called for the creation of an upper legislative house, council of the state, decentralized (but not a federalized) government system, provide a "high authority" to oversee the civil service as well as limit the president's tenure in office to two five-year terms. The constitutional provision also called for elections to comprise two rounds of voting (a system more favorable to the opposition). These constitutional proposals, according to Pierre Engelberg, were open to amendment by recommendations to the technical committee.  


The Anglophone Phenomenon

Despite his concern with the opposition and their challenges, President Biya's most troubling dilemma was with the English-speaking minority, comprised of the Northwest and Southwest provinces. Recall that the president's major political and party challenge started in Bamenda, the Northwest province, where, ironically, the president was crowned "Fon" of "Fons" in 1985. It was also in Bamenda that Biya "buried" the CNU and gave birth to the CPDM in March 1985.
Since taking office in 1982, President Biya has had to deal with one of the most polarizing issues in Cameroon politics, the Anglophone minority. In 1985, for example, three memoranda were sent to the president from elites of the Southwest and Northwest provinces and a third, jointly signed by both groups with their elites based in Douala, the Littoral province. In the same period, a letter was sent to the British Prime Minister before the head of states' working visit to London. The elites enumerated their grievances against the government, including political and economic neglect. The elites blamed the Francophone dominated government of Ahidjo and Biya for failure to distribute resources equitably in the region, particularly in industrial infrastructure, communication and road networks. On the political front, the memoranda complained about government discrimination in appointing Anglophones to high profile positions in the civil services, as well as state run corporations. These elites further decried unpunished corruption and embezzlement of public funds by Francophones in these institutions, particularly in the oil industry (located in the Anglophone region).

The ongoing political stalemate in the country triggered some elites in the Anglophone region in 1990 to demand not only equitable distribution of resources, but a return of Cameroon to the federal system, which guaranteed some autonomy to West Cameroon. This demand organized by the Cameroon Anglophone Movement (CAM) took place in the former West Cameroon capital,
Buea. As Pierre Engelberg has observed, this demand by Anglophones was far from unanimous. He argues strongly that even the SDF (Anglophone party) was not in support of the proposed establishment of a federal state.  

Similarly, far-right or radical Anglophone groups pursued a rather separatist approach, calling for the secession of the English-speaking Cameroon from La Republic du Cameroon. Since abolition of the country's name, United Republic of Cameroon by Presidential Decree No. 84-001 in February of 1985 which was replaced with the pre-unification name of East Cameroon (La Republic du Cameroon), Anglophone radicals have argued that French Cameroon, from a technical standpoint, seceded from the union. They further argue that by adopting the pre-unification name, Biya and the Francophones were, in essence, confirming completion of their assimilation of English-speaking Cameroon into dominant French culture. This unilateral withdrawal of East Cameroon from the Union the elites maintain, meant the state of West Cameroon became "stateless." As Takougang has observed, these radicals, called for the creation of a separate English-speaking Cameroon with its own name, "Ambazonia."  

Despite the frustrations of these radical Anglophones with continued Francophone dominance, we should caution that the views expressed by this group is not in anyway shared by a majority of Anglophones. When asked in our survey

35 Ibid.,  
what option respondents would most likely support in terms of secession and remaining in the union with East Cameroon, a majority of respondents, 53 percent of Anglophones said they preferred to remain in the current system as a republic, but would like to see major constitutional and policy initiatives taken by the government to bridge the gap between East and West Cameroon. Also, 29 percent of our respondents said they preferred a return to the federal system as it existed prior to unification in 1972 with some modifications in the constitution. Only 14 percent of our respondents (Anglophones) said they preferred an autonomous West Cameroon with no ties to East Cameroon. About 4 percent of our respondents said they were not sure. Although just a small percentage of Anglophones believe the region should separate from East Cameroon, the problem of Anglophone Cameroonians should not be taken for granted.

The frustrations of Anglophones was evident in 1993 with the formation of All Anglophone Conference (ACC) in the Southwest provincial capital Buea in April 1993. During the conference, members deplored exploitation of resources of the two Anglophone provinces for the economic development of the Francophone provinces, the oppressive form of government perpetrated by the predominantly Francophone ruling class, and the fact that Anglophone Cameroonians were treated as “second-class citizens” in their own country. In 1994, a second all Anglophone Conference (AACII) took place in

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37 For details on the Anglophone predicaments, see The Buea Declaration (Limbe, Cameroon: Nooremac Press, 1993).
Bamenda, the Northwest province to review the progress of the first conference in Buea. The "Bamenda Proclamation", as the conference was known, noted that "any union between Francophone and Anglophone Cameroon would not last, develop and prosper, unless it was built on a solid foundation and was sustained by a greater degree of openness, trust, mutual respect, and a sense of belonging by all." 38 Francophone "hostilities" against Anglophones is echoed especially by Beti strongman, Emah Basile, during the tripartite talks in Yaounde. Basile described the Anglophones as "Les ennemies dans la maison" or enemies of the house. 39 Although this attack was directed at SDF chairman John Fru Ndi, who became Biya's political nemesis, it is evident that this characterization was directed at Anglophones who had expressed their disgust with Francophone dominance since integration in 1972. In fairness, however, we must point out that Biya has listened to, and acted on some of the Anglophone demands since taking office, particularly since the advent of multiparty system in Cameroon. We should credit some of the reforms enacted by the president to the relentless efforts of the opposition parties.


Southern Cameroons National Council: Leadership Paradox

Anglophone frustrations with the Biya and Francophone dominated government re-emerged in October 1995, championed by the Southern Cameroon's National Council (SCNC). The council adopted a proposed resolution by the Cameroon Anglophone Movement (CAM) on October 1, 1995, calling for independence of West Cameroon from French Cameroon. Led by SCNC Chairman, Barrister Sam E. Elad, a delegation of prominent political elites of the region traveled Washington, D. C. to launch the Southern Cameroon's Advisory Council. The delegation included John N. Foncha, former Prime Minister of West Cameroon and federal vice president of Cameroon after re-unification. We should point out that Foncha was the major actor and advocate of re-unification of the two entities in 1961. Another significant elite who accompanied the delegation was S. T. Muna, also former prime minister of West Cameroon, federal vice president of the Republic, and speaker of the National Assembly from 1973-1988. He was the chief architect of integration of East and West Cameroon, and strongly supported Ahidjo's strategy to abolish the federal system, which gave Anglophones some leverage as an autonomous entity to decide on some key issues germane to the region.

At this point, one is bound to inquire about the motivations behind these leaders' mission to the United States. The purpose of this trip was for these political elites to deliver a draft petition to the United Nations Security Council
about the predicament of Southern Cameroons. Specifically, the draft petition called for nullification of what the architects alleged was "illegal annexation" of Southern Cameroons and excessive exploitation of the region's resources by La Republic du Cameroon. This delegation sent copies of the draft petition to the government of her majesty the Queen of England, the U.S. Department of State and some members of the diplomatic corps in Washington, D.C.

There is, however, a certain irony in the activities of these leaders which makes their intentions and motives not only suspect but their strategy and timing questionable. First, Foncha, as we mentioned earlier, federal vice president of Cameroon after re-unification in 1961, until his dismissal by the president, Ahmadou Ahidjo, in 1970. Foncha was the main force in the Anglophone region, advocating for re-unification of East and West Cameroon. Foncha was also named Grand Chancellor from 1979 to 1990. Interestingly, through these years, Foncha did not condemn or step down from his positions in government, neither did he criticize Francophone dominated government for "illegal annexation" and exploitation of resources in Southern Cameroons. Indeed, if Foncha is to be credited with making re-unification of East and West Cameroon a reality, then his statements about "illegal annexation" of Southern Cameroon ought to be re-examined with a critical eye. Furthermore, Foncha's ill-advised endorsement of a government plan to block holding of the second all Anglophone Conference or
AAC11 in Bamenda in 1994, raises even more questions about the former leader's political judgement. More importantly, Foncha's decision and role in inducing SDF chairman, John Fru Ndi into opposing this conference reflects once more, the vacillating positions of Foncha through the years, concerning matters of political significance for West Cameroon. As Chiabi Achuosih-Nyouk has indicated, Foncha's constantly changing positions on issues germane to West Cameroonians has raised suspicion among the SCNC leadership and West Cameroonians at large, as to the sincerity of his motives and commitment to the Southern Cameroons struggle.40

Solomon T. Muna, on the other hand, was a key actor during the reunification process of the two regions. Muna was appointed federal vice president from 1970-1972, after Foncha's dismissal, and was the staunchest pro-unification politician in West Cameroon. After political integration of East and West Cameroon in the "glorious revolution" of May 1972, Muna was appointed speaker of the National Assembly from 1973-1988. Like Foncha, Muna did not criticize or condemn Francophone hegemony and exploitation of the resources of West Cameroon until years after they were dumped by the system which they had benefitted from. From the above scenarios, therefore, one can only conclude that the goals of Foncha and Muna in the final analysis was to redeem themselves after

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many years of accusation as having "sold out" to the Francophones for their personal and selfish interests.

As our preceding discussion has illustrated, although Biya's political challenges continued to mount, fanned by a sluggish economy, the opposition was unable to unite to counter Mr. Biya. Internal discord among the opposition leadership prevented the opposition from forming a formidable, well-coordinated alliance against the Biya regime. Lack of solidarity on the part of the opposition is reflected within the UNDP, the dominant opposition party represented in the legislature. Expulsion of two executive committee members for accepting positions in Biya's government, despite criticism and objections from the party's boss, only reinforces the level of disharmony in the group. Within the ranks of the largest and most influential opposition party, the SDF, we also notice serious internal discord. For example, dismissal of the party's secretary-general, Siga Asanga, for allegedly extending an olive branch to Biya's CPDM with a view to including the SDF in the administration only confirms how polarized and disunited the opposition party is. This lack of solidarity would play an important role in the presidential election of 1997.  

Recall also that in March 1992, the SDF party unilaterally boycotted the legislative election. This political miscalculation has not only raised serious questions among party adherents, but also with foreign observers. Also in the

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presidential election of 1992, the opposition, particularly the SDF, blamed the minister of territorial administration for fraud and inaccessibility to voters of voting materials and information. For this reason, therefore, the opposition parties demanded the creation of an Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) to oversee the electoral process. During the last parliamentary session in 1997, a UNDP representative tabled a private bill calling for the creation of such an organization. The government, however, argued that a legal and institutional framework already exist which regulates the electoral process and offers the best guarantees for "free, fair, and transparent elections." The government further argued that it is within the existing framework that the local government elections of January 21, 1996 were organized in which some of the major opposition parties scored impressive victories. The government also maintained that under the same framework, some electoral litigations have been channeled to the Supreme Court and the rulings have been viewed as fair. For the above reasons, therefore, the government pointed out, there is no need for an electoral commission.

In an apparent show of solidarity and notwithstanding government's refusal to heed to their demands, leaders of the three major opposition parties, the SDF, UNDP and UDC held a news conference in the nation's capital, Yaounde, to announce their decision to boycott the presidential election of October 12, 1997. The leaders also declared that they would no longer call for disruption of the election as earlier planned. Furthermore, the leaders appealed to Cameroonians to
remain indoors and isolate the CPDM candidate and eight others in the race.\textsuperscript{42} Bouba Bello Maigari of UNDP offered the following reason for the boycott “the boycott is a means of expressing our political rights and nobody has the right to force us into a faulty process.”\textsuperscript{43} Despite all threats and plans of sabotage, the election went on as scheduled without incident. Absence of the major opposition parties left Biya without serious challenge at the election. According to the national daily news daily, \textit{The Cameroon Tribune}, Biya registered a resounding victory, receiving 92.50 percent of the votes cast, while the eight presidential contenders scored 7.43 percent.\textsuperscript{44}

In summary, therefore, as our discussion has clearly revealed, the absence of “real” democracy in Cameroon cannot be explained by simple factors such as poor constitution or the influence of “power-hungry” Biya and a small circle of his elites alone. As the case of Cameroon has shown, the most difficult and intractable barriers to Cameroon’s democratic transition has been structural in nature, rooted largely in the underlying socio-ethnic and regional components of the country. As the next chapter will reveal, the economic circumstances of the country will play a major role in undermining efforts for political reform. Further-

\textsuperscript{42} Peter Ngea Beng and Randy Joe Sa'ah, “Fru Ndi, Bello and Ndam Say No to Disruption of Poll: Say CPDM Will be held Responsible for Any Violence,” \textit{The Herald} (Yaounde), No. 521, October 10-12, 1997.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 3.

\textsuperscript{44} 1992 et 1997: Deux Presidentiel les Historiques,” \textit{Cameroon Tribune} (Yaounde), No. 2754, October 29, 1997.
more, the premise that Biya has been, and continues to be the major barrier to any efforts for genuine political reforms deserves further examination. It is uncertain, given the discord among the major opposition parties in Cameroon that if Biya were to leave office, reforms would be implemented swiftly and smoothly. Biya, no doubt, has demonstrated his ability and capacity to manipulate and co-opt the opposition on various occasions for his political advantage. However, he is not just an intransigent actor determined to prevent political reforms in Cameroon, other factors and circumstances combine to stifle the democratic process in the country.

Similarly, although the Francophones have to a large extent stood in the way of development in the Anglophone region, it is prudent nevertheless to argue that Anglophone elite themselves have contributed substantially to the regions relative underdevelopment. As the case of Foncha and Muna has shown, these political elites were not willing to risk their illustrious political careers for the good of West Cameroon. Their role in demanding secession of West Cameroons from the union with East Cameroon has not only raised questions and suspicions of their motives, but has intensified and rekindled the debates among the Northwesterners and South Westerners concerning the future of the region, vis-à-vis East Cameroon.
February 1990 when Tanzanian Leader, Julius Nyere declared that the single-party state was no longer sacrosanct, followed closely by his visit to communist East Germany to terminate former relations with the regime. In Algeria, violent protests and riots in October of 1988, resulting in the defeats of the ruling FLN party by the Islamic Fundamentalists in local elections and the legalization of opposition parties became apparent. In Francophone countries, the Sovereign National Conference (SNC), which resulted in the devastating defeat and indictment of President Kerekou's of Benin, sent chill waves to the rest of his other Francophone leaders. As Bratton and Van de Walle have eloquently argued, Kerekou's progressive loss of control to a civilian government of neutral technocrats provided courage and momentum to opposition groups in other countries including Cameroon, an appealing scenario to emulate.

France and Her Former Colonies—Cameroon

Besides the role and influence of political events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, France, the former colonial hegemony of Francophone Africa played a key role in the political dynamics of Cameroon. Under Francois Mitterrand, France reversed its traditional and longstanding attitude of intervening to support incumbent leaders against political threats. As Bratton and Van de

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46 Ibid., 42-43.

47 Ibid., 43.

External Circumstances

Thus far, our attention and focus has been on the internal political dynamics surrounding the Biya regime and his handling of the Anglophone affairs. Our objective now, is to examine the external or exogenous circumstances and how these factors have contributed in exacerbating the gap and distrust between Francophones and Anglophones in Cameroon.

The Cold War and its Implications
The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union had profound political impact on Africa, especially Cameroon. Also, the end of bipolarity resulted in dramatic changes in attitude of Western democracies toward autocracy, malfeasance among strategic allies, and welcomed expression of more idealistic foreign policy goals.\textsuperscript{45} Political events in Eastern Europe, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, may well have influenced the thinking and behavior of elites as well as the masses in Africa and Cameroon in particular. From an elite perspective, the overthrow and summary execution of Romanian dictator, Nicolae Ceausescu, in December 1989 had a chilling impact on other dictators and allies around the world. In the case of Zaire, Mobutu's announcement of political reforms as well as Kenneth Kaunda's declaration of multiparty elections seem to suggest that they too wanted to prevent their violent overthrows by their subjects. Perhaps the most dramatic turn of events occurred in

\textsuperscript{45} Michael Bratton and Nicolas Van de Walle, "Toward Governance in Africa: Popular Demands and State Responses", in Goran Hyden and Michael Bratton eds. Governance and Politics in Africa (Boulder: Colorado, Lynne Rienner Publisher, 1992.), 48.
Walle have argued, France’s open support for democratization at the Franco-African summit of La Baule in June 1990, only encouraged opposition groups and convinced governments of the virtues of accommodation and compromise. While France and Mitterrand encouraged opposition parties to compete against incumbents throughout the former French territories, ironically in Cameroon, with a strong opposition from the Anglophone region, whose candidate was against French influence and dominance in the economic, political and cultural life of Cameroon, Mitterrand instead supported the incumbent, Biya, against his opponent, John Fru Ndi of SDF.

In the aftermath of the 1992 presidential election, severe criticisms were leveled against the government of Biya for alleged fraud, intimidation and other aspects of electoral irregularities. The National Democratic Institute (NDI), the U. S. government and other donor nations also expressed their dissatisfaction with the electoral process in Cameroon. The U. S. government, for example, closed its AID mission in Cameroon and further suspended financial assistance to Cameroon for fiscal year 1993. Although Biya’s government was widely criticized for mishandling of the presidential election and subsequent gross violation of human rights. John Fru Ndi, Biya’s political nemesis, was equally criticized in several quarters for numerous reasons. According to sources from West Africa, several United States and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), privately criticized Fru Ndi for his apparent intolerance toward dissent within the
SDF and his tendency to hyperbole and death of concrete policy proposals other than calling for nullification of the 1992 election and strict international supervision of a new one.49

In closing, we examined and discussed several important factors, internal and external, which reflects Cameroon's dual political realities under Paul Biya since 1982. From these discussions, some important lessons emerged. Although Biya's assertion to power brought some hopes and assurance to Anglophones of his concerns with their plight, the president, nevertheless, continued the same strategies of Francophone domination of Anglophones by his predecessor, Ahidjo. Like Ahidjo, Biya utilized the political, economic, judicial and military frameworks of the country to retain patterns of domination and dependence of Anglophones on Francophones. Furthermore, despite the immense contributions of Anglophones in reshaping the political contours of the country after 1990, the Francophone dominated government has continued to manipulate, co-opt and intimidate vocal Anglophone elites and militants who demand equity from the government. Similarly, French president Francois Mitterrand's refusal to support John Fru Ndi, the strongest opposition leader in Cameroon, (Anglophone), only re-enforces the argument that France and East Cameroon want to keep Anglophones in Cameroon as subordinates and not equals. Finally, as the events of the late 1980s in Eastern Europe has demonstrated, Cameroonians, particularly

Anglophones have become politically conscious, and no longer accept autocratic rule and domination from their Francophone brothers as a given, neither do they accept exploitation as ordained by God. Anglophones, in the final analysis, do not see themselves as inferiors to Francophones. It seems they want to be recognized as integral citizens contributing in the political economy of Cameroon.
CHAPTER VI

CAMEROON'S ECONOMIC DECLINE:
THE CAUSES, SCOPE AND IMPLICATIONS

In chapter five, we examined the internal and external political dynamics in Cameroon and how these factors contributed in shaping the political contours of the country. We particularly noted that Francophone dominated regime used political, military and judicial means to subjugate Anglophones throughout the country. In this chapter, our focus will be on the economic exigencies and how Francophones have used the economic component to further marginalize Anglophones. We will show that the decline in the economy, combined with the political factors, triggered demands for political reforms in Cameroon, particularly in West Cameroon. The layout of this chapter will be as follows: background of Cameroon's economy after reunification, reasons for decline, attempts to revive the economy and the political as well as economic implications of decline.

Background

Since independence until the late 1980s, Cameroon was frequently referenced by donor nations as one of Africa's rare economic successes. The country's economic growth was in part based on her diversified agricultural exports including cocoa, coffee, banana, tea, rubber, cotton and timber. The country's growth accelerated from the late 1970s to 1985, thanks to the development of the petroleum sector. Relative to other
African and third world countries, Cameroon's economy soared markedly, pushing the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita income to record levels in 1984. An international comparison of Cameroon's economic performance between 1970-1985 with other developing countries clearly attest to the country's vibrant economy.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cameroon</th>
<th>All of Africa</th>
<th>All Developing Countries</th>
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<td>165</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>163</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>204</td>
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<td>243</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Imports Per Capita (US$)</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>129</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>211</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>193</td>
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<td>Export/GDP %</td>
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<td>44.2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>1970</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>25.4</td>
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<td>1984</td>
<td>25.0</td>
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* Manufacturing Value Added to GDP

What then must have accounted for this rapid economic growth? Economists and scholars have offered several reasons for Cameroon's economic success. One among many reasons advanced for the Country's success is the fiscal discipline of the leader, Ahmadou Ahidjo. Under his leadership, Cameroon pursued a centrist economic policy. This disciplined policy of economic liberalism coupled with its record of political stability attracted foreign investors including the French, the British, Americans, Germans and Dutch.1 Cameroon's economic activities were controlled by the state which used the selective tariffs and import-controlled measures to limit and reduce luxury imports as well as protect "national priorities"- infants or indigenous. As table 9. shows Cameroon's total imports per capita as well as her imports GDP % were slightly lower than those of other African and developing countries. Furthermore, like most African and developing countries, Cameroon's economic growth in the 1970s was propelled by an increase in bank lending from developed to less developed countries of "recycled" OPEC financial surpluses (petrodollars). Cameroon, however, did not spend most of her growth revenues in luxurious foreign goods, neither did she spend on "pork barrel" projects. The infamous presidential place, however, appears to be the only extravagant spending by the government.2

Although rent-seeking was the government's initial rationale for intervening in the economy, tribute taking by politicians, public officials, civil and military personnel

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1 Africa Research Bulletin-Economic 1982, 691a

as well as large scale farmers appears to be the most obvious. This strategy, of course, encouraged corruption in Cameroon. Williams maintains that although government-regulated economic activities did not originate corruption, regulations, nevertheless rewarded corruption.

Using the aforementioned perspectives as a backdrop to understanding and appreciating Cameroon's economic success, one is nevertheless tempted to ask probing questions such as: Why did this vibrant economy decline in the first place? What factors or circumstances might have necessitated this decline? What steps, if any, did the government and non-governmental organizations take to redress the situation? Were there any constraints to achieving these goals, and lastly, what were the implications for Cameroon's economic decline? To answer these questions, therefore, we have to examine the cause of causes of decline, focusing on both the internal and external realities. We should stress that just as Cameroon's economic decline is not the outcome of a single factor, answers or solutions to her problems will equally not be simple. We shall now turn to the internal and external circumstances, which, according to observers, have been responsible for Cameroon's downward economic spiral.

Internal Causes of Decline

Since the end of Cameroon's robust economic growth in 1985, several perspectives and sometimes contradictory explanations have been advanced by scholars and analysts as reasons for the country's economic decline. Below are some of the

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internal factors, which have been advanced as responsible for Cameroon's economic decline.

Failure of State-Planned Economy

As we stated previously, the economic activities in Cameroon were centrally managed and controlled by the state. The reason, according to the government, was to expand growth opportunities to all regions of the country. This strategy was achieved by creating public enterprises, which served as the economic machines for the country. These public enterprises or PE as we will henceforth refer to them in this dissertation, expanded tremendously both in number and influence, at the same time were costly and ineffectual. As Nicolas Van de Walle has succinctly argued, "most of the institutions created within this period had valuable initial development functions and would have fostered more rapid development had they functioned correctly." President Ahidjo unequivocally stated that Cameroon's economic development program would be based on what he coined "planned, liberalism," and his vehicle to achieving these goals was through the public enterprises. The government's rationale for these enterprises was that they were essential to promote rapid economic growth and that these parastals would pay for themselves by generating needed revenues through marketing of commodities overseas and through provision of essential services to Cameroonians. Although the government had experienced sub-optimal performances with these state-run enterprises in the past, officials nevertheless encouraged its proliferation, and this why there were relatively few private sector ventures in the country.
The government's priorities with respect to the PEs were centered in three key sectors: (1) agriculture/marketing, (2) large capital intensive projects, and (3) the banking industry. The National Produce Marketing Board (NPMB) served as the main institution for marketing the country's agricultural products. This public sector agency accounted for revenues over 100 billion FCFA, while the Societe National des Hydrocarbures (SNH) which dominated oil export, accounted for revenues constituting 15 percent of the government's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and accounted for 50 percent of the country's export.  

In the capital-intensive projects, the government's budget was allocated to agro-industrial facilities such as the paper mill, (CELLUCAM), the fertilizer factory (SOCAME), oil palm (CDC and SOCAPALM) as well as the sugar complex (CAMSUO and SOSUCAM). In the banking sector which was controlled largely by subsidiary or foreign-owned banks, the government enacted laws requiring state participation with at least 35 percent in all banking activities. Thus far, we have seen that the state controlled most of the economic activities of the country, sometimes at 

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enormous cost to the state. As Mark Delancey has observed, although there were more
than 20 parastatal institutions created during the 1970s at enormous costs to the state,
cotton, was the only crop that enjoyed significant productivity growth during this period.7
What then were the reasons for the state's involvement in economic activities?

The chief reason for the creation of PE or parastatals in Cameroon by the
political elites was to establish a foundation for their political power. As Claude Ake has
succinctly argued, aware that the political elites lacked the material base on which to
stand as a national bourgeois, they (the elites) used their control of the state to create a
vast public sector. This sector, he maintains, became the prime arena for generating and
maintaining a network of patron-client relationships as well as for acquiring private
wealth through corrupt practices.8 Rather than serving as real engines of growth, PE or
state-owned corporations operated as private assets of powerful officeholders, who used
these institutions for their personal gains as well as to build a political clientele of petty
bureaucrats and urban workers. It is, as John R. Nellis has aptly described, the battle for
the allocation of scarce economic resources that has generated the current crisis in the
public sector.9 Furthermore, as Jean F. Bayart has noted, public corporations afforded
prebendal and patronage possibilities that Ahidjo used to reward allies, co-opt early
opponents, and solve the complicated equations of the "ethnic calculus" in which elites
from the various regions of the country were given a fair slice of the national pie. State

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7 Mark Delancey, "Cameroon National Food Policies and Organizations: The Green Revolution
expansion through these corporations was also used to glue what Bayart refers to as "hegemonic alliance," incorporating the country's emerging elites into the state apparatus.\textsuperscript{10} Although Cameroon's economy and the public sector showed eminent signs of decline in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the grim realities is that corruption and malfeasance in these state corporations were increasingly taking their toll. FONADER, for example, which was created with the goal of providing short and middle term loans to farmers to boost agricultural productivity, became the most corrupt and inefficient agency throughout the country. Even the National Produce Marking Board (NPMB), which was setup as a purchasing and sales agent for farmers and the government, became a resource drain for the country. It is believed that the coup d'etat of April 1984 was partially financed with revenues from this agency, the director general, who was loyal to the former president Ahidjo.

One could argue that expansion of the bureaucracy in Cameroon coupled with the proliferation of state-owned corporations, which were semi-autonomous and without regulation, contributed to the country's economic decline. The relative freedom enjoyed by managers of these corporations, who were not supervised, and only answerable to the presidency, speaks clearly of lack of accountability in the system. Furthermore, the influence of political elites whose goals were to use PE to further their varied political agendas helped in crippling Cameroon's economy.

\textsuperscript{10} Jean Francois Bayart, \textit{L'Etat au Cameroun} 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationales de Sciences Politiques, 1): 985.
Fraud and Corruption

Another major contributor to Cameroon's economic decline in the mid 1980s include fraud and corruption. Government contracts, for example, served as lucrative avenues for fraud and corruption to both private and civilian personnel. According to Michael Courcelle, submission of false invoices, bribery as well as misappropriation of resources were the reasons foreign companies refused to do business with the Cameroon government, and suggest the magnitude of the problem. Courcelle also notes that the state tolerated corruption through credit allocation projects. He argues that in the mid 1980s, politically mediated loans to elites were widespread and that a quarter of the total portfolio of these loans (120 billion CFA francs) were never recovered by the state. One could also argue that the passive complicity of state agents and state policies made fraud and corruption easier, especially through selective application of laws and regulations, tax exemption, land title, and payment of arrears on public utility services. In sum therefore, the proliferation of public corporations, financial mismanagement, embezzlement of state funds, fraud and corruption exhibited by state agents serve as important reasons for Cameroon's economic decline.

Neglect of Agricultural Sector

The third reason advanced for Cameroon's economic decline was her neglect of the agricultural sector. Agriculture, before the discovery of oil, played a major role in Cameroon’s economic growth, accounting for 60 percent of the GDP, and an estimated

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60.2 percent of the labor force in 1991. However since the discovery of oil in the late 1970s, agriculture's significance withered away, causing alarming decline in productivity in forestry and fishing.

Between June 1979 and June 1984/85, agriculture's contribution as a percentage of GDP declined from 32 percent to 21 percent. As we stated earlier, the government had made agriculture its priority, and president Ahidjo echoed the importance of this sector when questioned about oil and its role in the economy. Ahidjo responded with the following: "before oil there was agriculture and with oil there will be agriculture." Critics have charged that the president's answers were designed to redirect questions posed about oil revenues which remained the state secret. The Marketing Board which was created to serve as a buffer between the farmers and the international market, failed to play its stabilizing role in the economy. With gross mismanagement and falling world prices in the 1980s, the board was unable to pay farmers for their products. The consequence was that some farmers diverted to non-export activities, particularly in subsistence agriculture. Furthermore, FONADER which was established to channel agricultural credits to farmers, instead became a "loan clearinghouse" for politicians and other personalities in power. The drought of the early 1980s also affected agricultural production in Cameroon, as well as other countries in the continent. The government responded to the crisis by using oil revenues to provide incentives to farmers in the form of subsidies on fertilizers and pesticides, and providing bonuses and other incentives for replanting cocoa and coffee. Gavin Williams has succinctly summarized Cameroon's

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agricultural dilemma in the following statements: Through regulation and stabilization measures, the NPMB-ONCPB generated surplus revenues. These surplus revenues were lavishly spent on projects and programs which were politically appealing and self-gratifying, and included among other things, infrastructural projects such as building of roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, etc. These revenues were also used to reward political clients, especially providing lucrative bonuses to non-farmers.\textsuperscript{14} The recession of the early 1980s had a devastating impact on agricultural economies, including Cameroon. Sharp declines demand for commodities in foreign markets, resulted in drops, in agricultural prices. This economic downturn revealed the inability of the Marketing Board to perform its stabilizing role as originally intended. The implications of this failure is that farmers experienced long delays in payments for their products, and were not able to secure loans to open new farms or expand existing acres. Furthermore, farmers were unable to meet their family obligations (providing health care and other basic needs to their families), parents could not send their children to school, while others were evicted from their farms. As a consequence of this failure, farmers resorted to other "survival" strategies, including diverting from cash crop to food crop production, engaging in non-agricultural related activities to sustain their families.\textsuperscript{15} This diversion, needless to say, contributed significantly in reducing Cameroon's agricultural input in the world market, and diminished the country's revenues from this sector.

Ahidjo - Biya confrontation


\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.,
Another important reason articulated by observers for Cameroon's economic decline centers on the feud between Ahmadou Ahidjo and his successor Paul Biya. The success or prosperity of the economy in the past, hinged on the country's stable political environment. With stability, foreign investors were assured of returns on their investments and less fears of government confiscating their assets. The coup d'état of April 6, 1984 masterminded by Ahidjo, according to sources, tarnished Cameroon's reputation politically and economically.\textsuperscript{16} As we stated earlier, Biya's attempts to consolidation power after the coup became a tremendous burden to the nation. Not only did he try to fulfill promises he had made to various groups to ensure their support, the failed coup gave Biya the needed opportunity to expand state resources for political purposes, especially to mollify Ahidjo's northern base, as well as meet the expectations of his fellow southerners. Furthermore support of the military for Mr. Biya, during the coup, meant he had to appease them by disproportionately depriving other vital sectors in the country of resources. The coup caused major personnel changes in military, as well as expanding military hardware and security to assure confidence in citizens and foreign businesses. This struggle also witnessed the emergence of new and influential elites, especially from Biya's "backyard," who vied for power and privileges in the state. Lastly, Biya's earlier promises to citizens of the various regions of improving their economic and social wellbeing meant spending state resources for mega public investment projects at a

time when revenues were declining due to global recession. These ambitious projects, needless to say, contributed markedly in the country's economic deterioration.

**Civil Disobedience-Operation Ghost town**

As we stated earlier, Biya's refusal to capitulate to the demands of the opposition had some peculiar political implications for Biya and the country. The most severe impact of the opposition's strategy on the government was the call to strikes and civil disobedience by the population. The goal, of course, was to bring Biya to his "knees" through economic pressures. The opposition designed "Operation Villes Mortes" or Operation Ghost Town, in which citizens were encouraged not to go to work, and students not to attend classes. This strategy also called on citizens not to pay taxes and to massively withdraw their monies from the banks and other financial institutions. Supporters and sympathizers of the opposition used intimidation to force compliance. This strategy may have scared some potential investors during this period in the country, causing reduced tax receipts. Although overall this strategy did not achieve its intended goal of forcing Biya to the terms of the opposition, it nevertheless undermined the government's extractive capabilities. According to sources, as a result of this campaign, the government collected as little as 15 percent of the previous year's revenues.\(^{17}\) During a question and answer session with members of the Manyu Elements Cultural Association in Atlanta Grorgia, in 1996, I asked Dr. Peter Agbor-Tabi, Minister of Higher Education, of the ramifications of the "ghost town" strategy, and he stated:

\(^{17}\) This claim was issued by Africa Confidential in "Cameroon: Crisis or Compromise?" The government officially maintained that the ghost town campaign had a negligible impact, although in private, many officials conceded that in exacerbated an already dismal revenue situation.
Cameroonians are peace-loving people who will seek peaceful solutions to complex problems. The ghost town tactics had disproportionate adverse impact on Anglophone students and pupils, who did not attend school for several months compared to their Francophone counterparts. Similarly, this strategy contributed significantly in polarizing, rather than uniting Cameroonians. It inflicted pains on innocent citizens, and in the end achieved nothing politically.  

In closing, Cameroon's economic decline as we have pointed out was not due to one internal factor or circumstance, but sometimes intertwined factors. It is however clear that the government's dominance in economic activities in the country, widespread fraud and corruption by government officials through contracts, bloated bureaucracy, the feud between Ahidjo and Biya, as well as the opposition's economic sabotage strategy all worked to underscore Cameroon's economic troubles. In the next section, we shall examine the external factors and how these factors also contributed in undermining Cameroon's economy.

**External Causes of Decline**

Cameroon's economic woes can best be understood within the context of more relevant external factors. A major reason advanced for economic deterioration in the third World, particularly in Cameroon, emerged from the developed countries. Economic reforms and political pressures within these industrialized countries to reduce their budgets had a chilling consequence for most dependent nations like Cameroon. The recession of the 1980s, for example, triggered economic stabilization policies in these industrialized states particularly from the conservatives. These policies called for reduction in foreign aid to developing countries including Cameroon. As Michael P.

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18 Dr. Peter Agbor-Tabi, Minister of Higher Education (question and answer session with members of the Manyu Elements Cultural Association MECA GA, in 1996).
Todaro has observed, the net private investments of these industrialized countries reduced by $480 million. Like most African and Third world countries, Cameroon’s economic decline was precipitated by the following external factors:

Decline in Commodity and Oil Prices

The most important cause of Cameroon’s economic malaise in the 1980s include: sharp falls in commodity and oil prices. The government, however, cushioned the impact of the crisis by pumping revenues from sales of oil in order to maintain the level of investment expenditure and imports. The startling drop in international prices for oil in 1986, not only concluded Cameroon’s robust economic growth, but the beginning of economic hardship. The simultaneous drop in commodity and oil prices significantly reduced the export revenue base of the country. As Igoh Karmiloff has argued, with the exception of tobacco, all other major export commodities of Cameroon experienced sharp declines. The price of cocoa, for example, dropped by 22 percent, Arabica coffee by 34 percent, rubber by 3 percent and cotton by 23 percent. The drop in oil prices by 32 percent exacerbated an already traumatized economy. Furthermore, the country’s GDP showed a negative growth rate of 8 percent for 1987, followed by a 20 percent drop in 1988. With sharp falls in commodity and oil prices, the country’s terms of trade also

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declined remarkably. We should point out that as Cameroon's terms of trade continued to decline, the country was bound to use more (in terms of quantity) of her primary commodities to pay for imports. Although Cameroon and other African and Third World nations noticed significant drops in the prices of their commodities, the prices of imports from the industrialized countries continued to rise. Prices for machinery spare parts, new technology as well as the dollar continued to gain strength. This economic anomaly caused Cameroon's terms of trade to decline by 45 percent, at the same time increasing the country's import bills. 21 Faced with bloating current account deficits, the government resorted to import controls, further creating scarcity in consumer products as well as intermediate and capital goods. These factors, needless to say, served as a catalyst in fueling inflation, at the same time slowing down economic activities. 22

Cameroon's Debt Dilemma

Another major factor which contributing to Cameroon's economic decline in the 1980s was the country's huge foreign debt situation. As we pointed out earlier, contractions in the industrialized markets caused sharp falls in commodity and oil prices, resulting in worsening terms of trade and balance of payment deficits for the government. Cameroon's foreign debt between 1980 and 1985 stood at $2.940m, equivalent to slightly over one third of the country's annual GNP in 1985. Servicing of the country's debt, therefore, represented close to 15 percent of her exports. In 1986, however, as the global economic situation worsened, its impact on Cameroon became severe and unmanageable,


Cameroon’s debt soared to $4,743m at the close of 1989. In 1991 with increase in payment of arrears for civil servants and other government agents, the country's external debt climbed to a record $6,278m.\(^{23}\) This circumstance, as A. Ighemat has observed, increased domestic borrowing, which in turn fueled domestic inflation, reducing the population's real income, raising costs of producing exports and contributing to an 'overvalued' currency. Similarly, borrowing from external sources, especially from commercial institutions in the industrialized countries, at exorbitant interest rates further intensified Cameroon's economic decline, resulting to a crisis.\(^{24}\) The country's external debt therefore affected the economy in the following ways: (1) repayment of these loans was with high interest rates, (2) it required abiding by Western-oriented monetarist policies of IMF and the World Bank, (3) reducing spending on programs that in the past enhanced the physical and emotional quality of life in Cameroon.

Capital Inflow

Lastly, foreign capital from Multinational Corporations (MNCs) produced both internal and external imbalances in Cameroon's economy. Although this capital may have relaxed efforts geared towards domestic resource mobilization, their availability in the country had some profound implications. External capital impacted not only savings and investment patterns of the citizens, but it hindered the country's economic growth and her balance of payments situation. Finally, these capital inflows


did not only cause further financial burden to Cameroon, it forced the country to accept (SAP).

Although we have argued that Cameroon’s debt burden constitutes one of the major external constraints and contributors to the country’s economic malaise, it is equally necessary to point out that the size of the debt alone is not to blame for its decline. Rather, the government’s inability to use the loans productively and service it appropriately played a key role in the decline. The World Bank has espoused this concern about misuse of loans by Third World African governments, including Cameroon, in the following statements:

A major cause of Africa’s precarious situation has been the failure of many countries (including Cameroon), to invest borrowed resources productively... [and] hand-in-hand with economic policy reform, these economies need to strengthen their debt management capabilities, requiring in some cases, changes [in] the institutional and administrative procedures used to monitor and process information on external debt.25

Attempts to Reinvigorate the Economy

As Cameroon’s economy continued its down spiral, the Bretton Woods institutions -IMF and World Bank, urged the government for reforms through negotiations. These negotiations began in 1986, but showed no signs of progress. President Biya, in an attempt to appeal to economic nationalism, steadfastly refused the draconian measures of these financial bodies. The president insisted that Cameroon would undertake an adjustment on its own and seek only non-conditional capital from

bilateral donors and the private banks. The magnitude of the country’s economic woes became increasingly apparent as private investors lost confidence in the government, precipitating massive capital flight as well as renewed growth of what the World Bank describes as “ton-tines”, informal financial circuits which ignored the financial markets.

Furthermore, fears and uncertainty among Cameroonian businessmen including civil servants about the bleak economic situation, encouraged massive withdraws of money from banks, causing liquidity scarcity and shortages. The suspension of public and private sector arrears in the tune of FCFA 200 billion in 1987, repatriation of the country’s external assets in 1986, plus pressures to domestic banks to increase their external indebtedness to meet current claims, all signified an economy in depression.

As Karmiloff has argued, the down slide of the country’s economy was mirrored in some 18 percent decrease in demand for imports in 1987, a 30 percent fall in domestic demand and an 8 percent reduction in the volume of money. Likewise, the Treasury's withdrawal of some FCFA 100 billion from commercial institutions in 1987, in the face a 13 percent expansion of domestic credit, exacerbated the banks' liquidity

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difficulties. These situations, needless to say, encouraged external borrowing by the country, which of course doubled in value.29 In Cameroon, as in most other states in Africa and the developing countries, the government served as the single largest employer. In the past, the government provided 1500 jobs each year to university graduates, mostly "non-productive" jobs, which did not contribute directly to economic growth. With the bleak economic situation, however, the government announced suspension of these offers, further magnifying the magnitude and dimension of the country's economic problems.

With rapid economic deterioration and no positive signs from the main economic indicators, the government acted once again to re-establish the major macroeconomic balances, and to adjust production costs as well as structure, and realign the performance and competitiveness of the economy with new circumstances, realities and challenges. The government adopted a series of measures aimed at ameliorating the dismal economic circumstances, which included: (a) passage of the Finance Law 1986/87, geared towards reducing the budget, (b) instituting ceiling regarding expenditures on personnel, (c) systematically retiring personnel in certain age limits and (d) increase taxes on some items such as petroleum products, liquor and beer, cigarettes, beverages as well as some imported luxury products. A State Revenue Collection Commission (SRCC) was established to oversee revenue collection. Despite these elaborate efforts to revive the economy, through internal measures, no success was accomplished in this direction. The president notwithstanding these problems appointed

a Commission of five Cameroonian technocrats, assisted by foreign experts financed by the World Bank and United Nations to recommend reform measures for the ailing public sector. The Commission's report was issued to the president in 1988, suggesting institutions to be liquidated, rehabilitated, or sold to private interests. The Commission further recommended that the roles and functions of some irreplaceable parastatals be redefined.\textsuperscript{30} Aware of the internal political ramifications of eliminating some of these PEs, the president continued to placate donors with rhetoric, without actually following through with the Commission's recommendations. As Tedga has eloquently argued, the president instead requested that the Commission examine with thoroughness the financial sector. Of the seventy-five (75) public enterprises examined by the Commission, only 30 were recommended to remain in the state's portfolio. The commission also called for significant reductions in state subsidies to the public sectors from CFA 150 billion to 30 billion in 1993.\textsuperscript{31} According to Nicolas Van de Walle, the deplorable economic situation in 1989/90 financial year, forced the Biya government to act on the Commission's recommendations. Fifteen of the most inefficient and wasteful parastatals, including the machinized rice project SODERIM were to be liquidated immediately. Another fifteen public or state ventures including CAMSURO, CHOCOCAM, and OCB were recommended for sales to private interests. Lastly, government ventures like NPMB-ONCPB, SONEL, SOCAPALM and SEMRY were retained under the government but


\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
restructured. The NPMB operations, for example, was to privatize its quality control functions, slash back its marking operations as well as layoff a third of its workforce.32

**Cameroon and Structural Adjustment Program**

Faced with severe debt burden, foreign exchange scarcity, balance of payment difficulties, declining levels of foreign aid, limited access to private capital markets, and the dire need to relieve the Cameroonian economy from further stress and hardship on the citizens, the government reluctantly caved in, becoming another "victim" of IMF and World Bank conditionality and monitoring.

Before examining the various elements of SAP in Cameroon and its attendant difficulties, let us first explore the definition and some key components of this term. In macroeconomic terms, "adjustment" refers to the adoption of fiscal, monetary as well as exchange rate policies to attain internal and/or external stability.33

Ann Siedman and Frederick Anang provide a mainstream definition of SAP. According to these authors, "structural adjustment programs" link needed loans by African countries to offset persistent deficits and for limited development expenditures to the re-introduction of competitive market forces.34 The standard IMF conditionality package has focused on demand management and includes the following components:

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budget and money contraction especially to control inflation; reduction or elimination of subsidies especially regarding consumer goods and services; changes in exchange rate policies, particularly requiring large devaluations of currency; raising of nominal interest rates; liberalization of import controls particularly regarding licensing systems; expansion commodity exports; reduction and rationalization of the role of the state in the economy especially in the public enterprises or parastatal sector; and encouraging the growth of the private sector through increased reliance on market and price incentives especially in the agricultural sector.35

In 1988, Cameroon negotiated a short-term stabilization program with the IMF, aimed at assisting the government with her balance of payments crisis. It was also designed to assist the government to reduce her balance of payment deficit, and enable the government to acquire foreign exchange needed to repay earlier loans. In 1989, Cameroon was granted stand-by and compensatory credits which enabled her to obtain a rescheduling of some $440m, up to the end of March 1990.36 A similar program was negotiated with the World Bank, which stretched even longer than with IMF. The World Program required both quantitative and qualitative resources (World Bank, African Development Bank [ADB], and the Cameroon government). The goal of this program was to gradually reduce constrains impeding economic activities and the re-orientation of

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the role of the state and public services towards programs that improve the welfare and productivity of all citizens.\textsuperscript{37}

**IMF’s Rationale for Adjustment in Cameroon**

Like most other African countries, the rationale by IMF officials for Cameroon to adopt a SAP was based on the following argument: officials argued that government spending was far in excess of revenues and that this circumstance resulted to budget deficits and inflation. The second reason advanced by the IMF is that the government failed to maintain a balance between imports and exports in the face of rising prices for imported goods. Another argument advanced by this institution Cameroon to adopt SAP was that the government failed to adjust exchange rates to reflect internal inflation, leading to over-valued currency.\textsuperscript{38} The IMF has also argued that unless these deficiencies are ameliorated, Cameroon’s balance of payment difficulties will not be ratified.

**Key Components of Cameroon’s SAP Package**

**Currency Devaluation**

As a condition for receiving further IMF/World Bank assistance, the government was required to devalue her currency, which, as we pointed out earlier, was considered over-valued by IMF. The goal, from IMF’s perspective was to provide a


relatively neutral and comprehensive solution to stabilize Cameroon's economy, since it experienced short-term balance of payment problems.39

Devaluation, according to Gavin Williams, results in the "elimination of opportunities which rationing overvalued currencies and imported goods creates for the corrupt enrichment of those who control the allocation of foreign exchange."40 As K. P. Mosley has aptly argued, devaluation caused massive under-valuation of currency, enabling creditor countries to obtain resources (raw materials) for extremely low real prices and raising the costs of imported necessities (including machinery, equipment), required for development. He also maintains that devaluation also added inflationary pressures on the economy.41 Currency devaluation also required the government to replace licenses with tariffs, thus giving the government control over unofficial currency and commodity markets.

Economic hardships increased in Cameroon in 1994, when the CFA franc was devalued by 50 percent, in relation to the French franc. This action by the IMF led to a sharp increase in inflation (35.1 percent). However, as a result of this move, prices for Cameroon's export commodities increased, improving the economic situation in 1995 and 1996 respectively. This strategy also resulted in a drop in inflation to 4.7 percent, and real gross domestic product (GDP) edged by 2.8 percent in 1996.42 Cameroon was able


40 Gavin Williams, "Why Structural Adjustment is Necessary and Why It Doesn't Work," 221.


to implement several structural adjustment reforms in accordance with the IMF agreements. The country obtained a debt restructuring agreement concluded with the "Paris Club" of official creditors. Similarly, the government signed a three-year $219 million Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) loan with the IMF in 1997.

Although the devaluation strategy proved beneficial to the economy, Cameroonian businessmen and women remained fearful of holding or investing in production of goods sold with the CFA franc. Some believed further devaluation was eminent, thus, withdrew their monies from local banks and made transfers to foreign banks. This move, as we pointed out earlier, encouraged capital flight and tax evasion. Similarly, higher prices for imports and rise in food and other essential goods triggered demand for higher wages from civil servants, at a time the government was pressured by IMF conditions to slash salaries in the public and industrial sectors.

Privatization of State-Owned Enterprises

The next important component of Cameroon's adjustment package included privatization of some of the most inefficient PEs. The basic assumption and argument advanced is that the private sector will be able to increase efficiency and productivity in these entities than under government operation. Privatization involves in an attempt to change behavior and institution, which also encompasses divestment or selling off part(s) of the public sector. R. Bailey adds that privatization involves either sub-contracting of existing public sector activities to private sector entities, or liquidation or abandonment of
those activities entirely (in what has been referred to as “load shedding”). As we pointed out previously, through the recommendation of the president’s Commission of five plus other experts sponsored by the World Bank and the United Nations, Cameroon was able to privatize her least efficient and most corrupt parastatals like FONADER, CHOCOCAM and OCB. The NPMB for example, laid off 1400 her employees as result of restructuring, and subcontracted some of her quality operations to private entities.

Anti-Inflationary and Demand Measures

Cameroon also adopted a package of anti-inflationary and demand management measures designed to stabilize her economy.

Specifically, the policy called for a combination of slowing the rate of growth of money supply as well as fiscal adjustments by the government to restrain wages. Two schools of thought have emerged, each claiming to offer solutions to deal with Cameroon’s financial difficulties. On the supply side, monetarist argue that reducing the rate of growth of money supply will be the most feasible way of managing demand. Proponents, including I. Friedman argue that tighter money supply will force the government to confront the sources of its payment difficulties, rather than inflate its way

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Opponents, including Biersteker, argue that fiscal adjustment by the government will be the path to follow, on the assumption that Cameroon's public sector difficult is central to many of the country's balance of payment problems. Biersteker and others further maintain that through this strategy, barriers to long-term adjustment would be realized. On the supply side, the government adopted wage reduction measures aimed at drastically reducing the fiscal deficit, which would eventually lead to a smaller increase in the amount of money in circulation.

Restoration of Market Mechanisms

This measure, proponents argue, will increase efficiency of domestic production. It called for reduction in price controls (ending subsidies particularly on food and energy items). It also advocated for an increase in interest rates by eliminating subsidized credits. Externally, the measure called for trade liberalization through tariff simplifications, elimination of trade licensing and phasing out export incentives. It is also believed that this measure will encourage competition, resulting in farmers enjoying higher prices for their products, and less delays in payments for their products.

Democratization

Democratization and liberalization of the political system in Africa and the Third World were not regarded by IMF and the World Bank as important elements in the

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adjustment process. However, with the end of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet Union, the permissive attitude of the IMF and the World Bank towards autocratic rule suddenly reversed. The thrust towards democratization was strengthened, according to Donald L. Gordon, by the loss of credibility of ideologies that legitimated autocracy. With emphasis on democratization, the IMF and World Bank were in essence, indicating the end of the political, social and economic trajectory that had sustained autocratic regimes in the past thirty years in Africa. The IMF and World Bank as well as other donors hoped that democratic regimes would pay back debt, and also to gain some modicum of legitimacy with the citizenry. Like most other African countries, the democratization package for Cameroon included legalization of parties to foster popular participation in the electoral and decision making process, allowing freedom of speech and the press, conducting free, fair and transparent elections as well as outlining laws to protect and guarantee political and civil rights of all citizens. We should restate here that before the IMF and World Bank embarked on the decision to require debtor nations to democratize their societies, Paul Biya of Cameroon had already started the process in 1982, when he succeeded Ahmadou Ahidjo.

Implications of Economic Decline and SAP

Cameroon's economic decline and subsequent attempts by the government and the Bretton-Woods institutions to remedy the situation through SAP has had some significant ramifications for the country and citizens alike. Politically, pressures from the international community especially the IMF and the World Bank. Although there is no

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evidence to support the claim that economic deterioration in Cameroon precipitated political unrest and civil disobedience such as "operation ghost town," it is nonetheless important to point out that the country's downward economic spiral served as a vehicle for opposition leaders to rally workers and disgruntled citizens to disregard the rule of law, thus undermining the legitimacy of the Biya government. During a question and answer session in a "town meeting" with SDF chairman John Fru Ndi in Atlanta in 1995, for example, the author posed the following questions to the SDF party leader (1) What the chairman would do to reverse the bleak economic situation in Cameroon if he was elected president?; (2) if he would refuse IMF and World Bank SAP conditionalities? 50 (3) if he regretted boycotting the legislative elections of March, 1992 and advocating violence through operation ghost town. Interestingly, instead of providing answers germaine to ameliorate the dismal economic situation in the country, the SDF leader was eager to focus on the impact of the problem on the citizens. He stated for example that, during one of his trips to the Far North province, a woman brought her dying child to him, pleading that he should do something. 51 The SDF leader refused to answer these question and instead asked his Communications Manager, a Francophone, who apparently was not well vest with the intricacies surrounding the country's economic decline and the role of the IMF an World Bank in addressing these problems. It our contention therefore, that Cameroon's economic decline provided an opportunity for

50 Question and answer session in a "town meeting" between SDF Chairman John Fru Ndi and Cameroonians in Atlanta, Georgia, October 1995.

51 John Fru Ndi, SDF Chairman, during his visit to Atlanta, GA in 1995.
political opportunism for some individuals to become visible and prominent, with to the populace, and purporting to have solutions to the problems of the country.

There is no denying that the country's economic decline and attempts to "fix" the broken economy through austerity measures (SAP) caused scarcity of resources in the country, particularly consumer goods. Another major attempt to revive the sluggish economy which had serious consequences on the population was devaluation of the country's currency. After the January 1994 devaluation, imported goods became more expensive and scarce, forcing the government to use foreign exchange to import scarce consumer goods instead of paying for industrial imports (parts, semi-processed materials). Perhaps the most serious implication of Cameroon's economic decline and its attendant political instability caused prospective foreign investors to look to other directions to establish their businesses. Domestically, many entrepreneurs were forced to fold their business, while others withdrew and transferred their capital to foreign banking and financial institutions.

Furthermore, calls by IMF and World Bank through SAP further caused hardships on citizens, particularly children and the elderly. Cuts in the health budget had devastating consequences for hospitals and patients, as doctors and health professionals were unable to provide basic health care services to the sick and dying. Cuts in doctors' salaries forced some doctors to relocate to neighboring countries or travel oversees to provide services for lucrative compensation. It also opened up opportunities for some doctors to set up clinics, but charging high fees for their services, which most of the citizens could not afford.
Similarly, cuts in education resulted in increased cost of education (tuition, books, uniforms and other school supplies). As a consequence, some parents were forced, given the hardship, to withdraw their children from school because they could not afford the charges. Also, cuts in teachers' salaries by about 35 percent, and sometimes without pay for several months, caused some of these professionals to devote their time and energy on other sectors in an attempt to make ends meet. Citizens reacted to these hardships by demonstrating and protesting against the government. Students at the University of Yaounde protested termination of allowances; teachers, cuts in their salaries; and parents decried high cost of educating their children.

In sum, Cameroon's political economy can be characterized by at best, state inefficiency, and at worst, state corruption, which have combined to serve as a hindrance to private investment particularly in the Anglophone sector. Although West Cameroon served as the “breadbasket” of the country, citizens of this region were disproportionately impacted by decline in the economy. First, as a result of gross mismanagement of the National Produce Marketing Board, controlled by Francophones, Anglophone farmers experienced long delays in payment for their produce, resulting in massive smuggling of cocoa and coffee to neighboring Nigerian. Similarly, Anglophone farmers did not benefit from agricultural credits issued to their Francophone counterparts through FONADER.

On the positive note, however, the decline and measures to reform and revive the political and economic system have started yielding some fruits. Cameroon has embraced a multiparty system of governance largely as a result of international pressure as well as IMF and World Bank conditionalities. The crisis has also caused most Cameroonians to rely less on the government and seek opportunities in the private sector.
Lastly, the impact of Cameroon's decline affected citizens throughout the country, not only in West Cameroon. This, perhaps, explains why the SDF party led by John Fru Ndi, an Anglophone, drew support from some Francophone regions such as Littoral and West provinces. Perhaps the most positive revelation of Cameroon's economic difficulties is that it uncovered the unequal treatment successive Francophone regimes have had on Anglophones, in the economic domain since reunification in 1961. The poor economy also served as a springboard for Anglophone elites to demand greater political leverage from the government, including, calls for devolution of state authority. From the above text, it is clear therefore that the dismal economic situation in West Cameroon was the result of policies designed by the dominant society, to keep Anglophones in subordinate roles in the economic life of Cameroon.
CHAPTER VII

DISCORD IN THE PERIPHERY: REASONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR WEST CAMEROON SOLIDARITY

The divisions that threaten a polity's internal cohesion and solidarity are rooted in its society, geography as well as its demographic makeup. In West Cameroon, the most important of this cleavage is the division between Northwest and Southwest Provinces, or better, the grassfield and coastal/forest people. Although significant schisms have erupted between ethnic groups within each polity, on the whole, however, these seem to be less threatening to the solidarity of West Cameroon. Much of the political, socio-cultural ills engulfing West Cameroon today, emanate from the region's peculiar history, including politics and geography. These factors have combined with other circumstances to impede unity among the political elites of the two regions, thus making it difficult for them to work in unison to exert collective political pressures on the Francophone government in Yaounde.

The focus of this section therefore, is to examine the forces which have worked to prevent unity among West Cameroonians and how these forces continue to fester and promote disunity and "lack of progress" in the region. Before we stretch any further with this discussion, some key questions need to be advanced. (1) Did partition of West Cameroon into two provinces cause or exacerbate disunity among members of these entities? How has the government succeeded in preventing cohesion among these two entities? What have the elites in these regions done to enhance their solidarity? How far
has it achieved its desired goals? These questions will help us analyze and understand why Anglophones have become “enemies to themselves.”

**Background**

Although geography and history have knotted Northwest and Southwest provinces and singularly referred to as West Cameroon, the two regions however, exhibit some distinct dissimilarities in terms of culture, their political orientations, economic and social matters. The body politics of West Cameroon from its days as a British Trust Territory was filled with many political ills which was injected from outside. These exogenous factors, we should point out, constrained the development of sentiments of “regional identity” between the people of Northwest and Southwest provinces. In this discourse, the terms “grassfield people” and “coastal/forest people” will be used interchangeably to refer to Northwest (NW) and Southwest (SW) provinces respectively. To understand the Anglophone phenomenon better, we will focus on the environmental set up of the region.

**Geographic Dissimilarities**

Situated on the western side of French Cameroon, West Cameroon (Northwest and Southwest provinces) exhibit striking dissimilarities in terms of land area and agricultural activities. Area-wise, West Cameroon has a landmass of 42,210 square kilometers. Of this, Northwest province shares 17,300 square kilometers representing 41 percent of the land, while Southwest Province comprises 24,910 square kilometers representing 59 percent of the land area.¹ These regions also differ in more than one

¹ Source: Bureau Central du Recensement (1978).
category and these differences have produced friction and dissension on matters Germaine to the region.

Demographic Disparities

Besides size disparity, the two regions also display marked differences in their demographic makeup. The population of West Cameroon in 1978 was 1,495,272. Of this total, 914,912 or 61 percent of the population was from Northwest, while 580,360 or 39 percent were in the Southwest. From Table 9 below, we notice striking differences in the population density of the two regions. Northwest, with a relatively small land area compared to Southwest had 52.9 inhabitants per square kilometer, while Southwest only had 23.3 inhabitants per square kilometer. This imbalance reveals therefore that there was noticeable pressures on land activities in the Northwest, and confirms why some of the inhabitants migrated to the Southwest in search of jobs and other opportunities.
### TABLE 10

AREA AND POPULATION OF WEST CAMEROON INCLUDING URBAN AND RURAL MAKE UP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Total Pop.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Urban Pop.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Rural Pop.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Size (in km2)</th>
<th>Density Inhabit. (km2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Cameroon</td>
<td>1,495,272</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>323,581</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1,171,691</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>42,210</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>914,914</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>136,589</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>778,323</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>17,300</td>
<td>52.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>580,360</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>186,992</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>393,368</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>24,910</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: Percentages were calculated by author.
TABLE 11

PROJECTED CHANGE IN URBANIZATION RATE BY PROVINCE (1976-1991)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adamawa</td>
<td>25.08</td>
<td>22.43</td>
<td>22.54</td>
<td>22.64</td>
<td>22.75</td>
<td>22.86</td>
<td>22.96</td>
<td>23.07</td>
<td>23.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center</td>
<td>27.62</td>
<td>47.82</td>
<td>48.92</td>
<td>50.02</td>
<td>21.12</td>
<td>52.22</td>
<td>63.32</td>
<td>54.40</td>
<td>55.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>20.66</td>
<td>23.31</td>
<td>23.65</td>
<td>23.99</td>
<td>24.33</td>
<td>24.67</td>
<td>25.02</td>
<td>25.36</td>
<td>25.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far North</td>
<td>8.91</td>
<td>10.07</td>
<td>10.18</td>
<td>10.29</td>
<td>10.40</td>
<td>10.51</td>
<td>10.63</td>
<td>10.74</td>
<td>10.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Littoral</td>
<td>75.13</td>
<td>79.70</td>
<td>80.26</td>
<td>80.81</td>
<td>81.34</td>
<td>81.87</td>
<td>82.38</td>
<td>82.88</td>
<td>83.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>20.99</td>
<td>17.58</td>
<td>17.63</td>
<td>17.69</td>
<td>17.74</td>
<td>17.80</td>
<td>17.85</td>
<td>17.91</td>
<td>17.97</td>
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<td>North west</td>
<td>14.97</td>
<td>16.81</td>
<td>17.08</td>
<td>17.35</td>
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<td>17.90</td>
<td>18.18</td>
<td>18.46</td>
<td>18.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>12.43</td>
<td>26.43</td>
<td>28.84</td>
<td>17.26</td>
<td>27.69</td>
<td>28.11</td>
<td>28.54</td>
<td>28.97</td>
<td>29.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>17.62</td>
<td>24.52</td>
<td>25.14</td>
<td>25.77</td>
<td>26.41</td>
<td>27.06</td>
<td>27.72</td>
<td>28.39</td>
<td>29.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South west</td>
<td>32.28</td>
<td>43.25</td>
<td>43.97</td>
<td>44.68</td>
<td>45.39</td>
<td>40.11</td>
<td>46.82</td>
<td>47.53</td>
<td>48.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>28.52</td>
<td>34.33</td>
<td>35.73</td>
<td>36.14</td>
<td>39.96</td>
<td>37.28</td>
<td>38.59</td>
<td>39.42</td>
<td>40.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Situation et Tendances de la population Camerounaise Yaounde, November 1985, 17.
The rate of urbanization is highest in the Littoral, followed by the Center and the Southwest Provinces. The least rates are found in the Far North, Northwest and the Adamawa Provinces. Apart from economic and political reasons, it would be realized that most of the least urbanized provinces are those in grassland areas where the tendency is for the people to adopt a dispersed form of settlement on the hills rather than the grouped form of settlement to be found in the forest region.

Again, the dissimilarities of the two entities were noticeable in the ratio of urban and rural populations. Although Northwest had a higher population density, its urban population constituted less than half the urban population of Southwest. Land pressures and scarcity of jobs plus the desire by some elements in Northwest to seek fortunes in the coastal/forest region caused migration of Northwesterners to the Southwest. We should also point out that Buea, (Southwest) was the political capital of southern Cameroons and West Cameroon until 1972. This factor attracted political figures from the Northwest to the Southwest to perform their duties. Without a doubt, the differences just outlined above, had far reaching political, social and economic effects on both regions and may serve as a chief reason for lack of solidarity among West Cameroonians.

Topographic Differences

The topography of Northwest and Southwest Provinces further reinforces the remarkable differences of the two regions. In the Northwest, with perhaps the exception of Ndop plains, the region is comprised of highlands, covered with stretches of grass-
Savannah and almost overlaid by volcanic stones.\(^2\) The soil in this region is fertile for domestic staples as well as coffee and tea for export. In the Southwest, there are a number of volcanic structures, including the Rumpi, the Kupe, Manenguba and the Mount Cameroon, the highest peak in West Africa. The region also has high rainfall and fertile soils, but less hilly compared to the Northwest. In this region, large banana, rubber, tea, and cocoa, and coffee plantations are evident, as well as timber from the hot swampy areas of Mamfe. The Cameroon Development of Corporation (CDC) took over large plantation industry from the Germans in 1947, after the second World War. Also, the Southwest region has coastal stretch which links Douala and Victoria (Limbe) and has two major seaports, Tiko and Limbe. To the Southeastern side, there is the Cross River in Mamfe, which connects West Cameroon with Nigeria.

From the above discussion, therefore, one can argue that population pressures in the Northwest, abundance of highlands, and volcanic rocks, plus the absence of waterways prevented the growth of large scale agricultural industry in the region. We can also argue that the above factors, coupled with social circumstances, influenced migration of large numbers of Northwesterners to Southwest for job opportunities and other social amenities.

Cultural Differences

Described as a mosaic of small tribes with different dialects, communication between Northwest and Southwest was through English language, but most often “pidgin English.” The two regions also displayed different life-style patterns as well as cultural

orientations. By virtue of her geographic location to the sea, Southwesterners were the first to embrace "modernization" through interaction with European traders and explorers. As a consequence, therefore, Northwesterners generally perceive that Southwesterners look low on them as "inferiors" and uncivilized. Furthermore, the Southwest being the gateway to the sea had great intermingling with different racial and linguistic groups from other countries such as Togo, Ghana, Senegal, Nigeria, etc. Indeed, one could aptly describe the region as "a melting pot of races and cultures."

The diverse social patterns of the two regions also reflects a contrast in the political views of the people. While "tribalism", homogeneity and "authoritarianism" dominates the social framework of the Northwest region, egalitarianism, heterogeneity and liberal attitudes appear to characterize the orientation of the Southwesterners. "Tribalism" in this context should be understood to mean strong and unbroken allegiance to the "Fon" or chief and the desire to "stick together" to work for the good of the region, even if it goes against ones' individual interest and belief. Although tribal affinities are evident in the Southwest, they are not as strong as among the Northwesterners. Tribal loyalties among Northwesterners residing in the Southwest and other provinces of the country have resulted in the formation of social compartments who act generally as a collective, particularly on electoral and voting matters. Indeed, the culture of the Northwesterners, plus the influence of the traditional rulers (Fons) have contributed immensely to social cohesion of the people. Keyaka R. N. Nyamboli aptly captures and describes this unique characteristics of the "graffiman" in the following statements:

...What sets the graffiman apart from others is his humility and deference to acknowledge authority as much as his arrogance and aggressiveness in the
expression and pursuit of his perceived rights, his sense of purpose and tenacity of will, but above all, his resourcefulness in the face of environmental odd... others begrudge him and at times even resent him. His propensity to ruffle feathers and not care to trample on others’ toes if that’s what it takes to get to the top.³

Political Struggle and Their Implications

Besides economic imbalance and social animosity between the two regions, political divergence of the two entities may serve as perhaps the most divisive factor which continues to prevent Northwesterners and Southwesterners to work in harmony for their own good. To understand this complex phenomenon, we must take a retrogressive step and examine political developments in the two regions before and after reunification.

In chapter two, we mentioned that early political developments in Southern Cameroons were linked to Dr. E.M.L. Endeley and his Cameroon National Federation (CNF). From the 1940s until the late 1950s, the coastal/forest people dominated the political scenes of Southern Cameroons, especially in the Eastern House of Nigeria. However, the defeat of Endeley and his CNF party by grassfield leader John N Foncha in 1959, changed the political arithmetic of the grassfield and coastal/forest people. Why did the Northwesterners or grassfield people yawn to control the political scene of the region? Willard Johnson, a distinguished scholar of Cameroon politics has advanced the following reasons to explain this desire. He states in the following:

In certain circles, particularly among the grassfielders, there was a passionate desire to overcome the economic and modern social development disparities between the grassfields and southern

forest areas; the instrument for this achievement was thought to be the assertion and consolidation of the political preeminence of the grasslands through the strengthening of the KNDP and the weakening, if not destruction of the opposition CPNC.⁴

Political dissension between Northwest and Southwest leadership can be traced to R. J. K. Dibongue’s founding of the French Cameroon’s Welfare Union (FCWU) in Victoria in 1949. Formation of FCWU challenged Endeley’s CNF party, but most importantly, some of Endeley’s supporters like N. N. Mbile and John N. Foncha, “crossed the carpet” and supported Endeley’s rival, Dibongue. This, according to Eyongetah and R. Brian, was the beginning of split between Endeley and Foncha.⁵ Furthermore, in the mid 50s, Endeley broke his neutrality in Nigerian politics, especially dissociating himself from the NCNC, and forming an alliance with the opposition group led by Chief Awolowu.

The chief reasons for Foncha and his grassland supporters to part from the KNC, hence build their own political machine, the KNDP were as follows: Foncha’s desire to break or secede from Nigeria with the goal of re-uniting with French Cameroon. Second, Foncha and Jua, both from the grasslands were supported by the traditional rulers of Nkambe, Bamenda and Wum, who disliked the fact that the grassfield region was economically backward, relative to the coastal/forest regions. The traditional rulers of the grassfield region also resented the polished European sophistication of E. M. L. Endeley, as well as the coastal intellectuals. Finally, the traditional rulers were also afraid of Endeley’s plans to reduce their roles and influence in regional political


⁵ T. Eyongetah and R. Brian, A History of the Cameroon. 131.
Based on the above factors, therefore, it was clear that in any political contest between a Grasslander and a coastal/forest elite, the former will prevail because of strong adherence of the subjects to the traditional ruler's calling. We should also point out that the grasslanders had a disproportionate advantage in population compared to the coastal/forest people, and this will play a major role in electoral outcomes in 1959.

In the 1940s, Endeley was in strong support for secession of Southern Cameroons from Nigeria, and for unification with French Cameroon. However, in the 1950s, Endeley changed his position and instead hoped for Southern Cameroons to attain full regional status within the Nigerian Federation. The role and influence of the Ibos in Southern Cameroons compounded Endeley's problems in the region and offered Foncha the opportunity to rise as a leader. Foncha exploited "Ibophobia" and used this successfully and with great vigor to swing public opinion for separation from Nigeria and unification with French Cameroon. Endeley's support continued to wane especially in Bamenda where Kom women revolted against the ruling party, KNC. Eyongetah and Brian have argued that several women's groups or organizations were set up to unseat Endeley's KNC, using rumors that the KNC were selling land to the Ibos and encouraging Fulani herdsman to graze their cattle on women's lands.

Although Endeley and the KNC had record accomplishments, including separation of Southern Cameroons from Eastern Nigeria, creation of the House Chiefs, establishment of road infrastructures and water supplies, Foncha and his KNDP were able

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6 Ibid., 138.
7 Ibid., 141.
8 Ibid., 144.
to downplay these achievements by elevating the unification issue. It is evident that Foncha’s victory in the elections of 1959 over Endeley was the result of strong support from the grassland people, buttressed by their traditional rulers.

Also, Endeley’s loss is attributed to his arrogance to the Mamfe and Manyu people of the forest region in the Southwest, who supported Foncha instead of a fellow coastal/forest son. After his defeat in the election, Endeley reflected with gratitude of his accomplishments in a speech to the United Nations in 1959. The leader offered the following statements in terms of association with French Cameroon: “What would be the advantages if Southern Cameroonians could gain by association with a long-estranged French administered territory?” He, therefore, concluded:

It will be unwise to abandon a secure and floating vessel which offers us sure landing and allow ourselves to drift in an open-life boat because we hope to be picked up by a new and better vessel which we have not even seen on the horizon.  

Thus far, we have examined and contrasted the Northwest and Southwest provinces in terms of size, topography, culture, population, and early political activities and their implications. We also pointed out that land pressures and economic imperatives were driving forces behind migration of the grassfield people to the coastal/forest region of Southwest for jobs and other opportunities. We further stated that this influx of migrant population created competition for jobs which increasingly became scarce as a result huge numbers of laborers from the grassfield region. We also showed that the social framework of each region played a key role in the activities of the people,

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9 Dr. E. M. L. Endeley, Address to the United Nations on February 23, 1959, after his loss to Foncha.
particularly with respect to authorities. These factors serve as foundations for understanding contemporary issues between the two regions and how they have reinforced each other to prevent solidarity of the region to exert political pressures on the Francophone dominated regime in Yaounde. The differences which exist between the grassfield and coastal/forest people has been heightened by contemporary factors and circumstances. Thus, the goal or feeling of West Cameroon “nationalism” or solidarity is increasingly becoming an illusion than a reality.

In this section of the paper, we will explore contemporary reasons for animosity between these two peoples, taking into consideration the role and influence of the government in perpetuating these differences. The partition of the region into two separate political and administrative units will be examined.

**The 1959 Elections and its Aftermath**

Early indications of dissatisfaction against the grassfield dominated government in West Cameroon became clear in hiring and promotion of civil service personnel. As Johnson has eloquently argued, perceptions of discrimination in the appointment and promotion of civil servants based on tribal or former affiliation was widely evident in the grassfield led administration.

Evidence show that people from the coastal/forest regions were passed over for jobs and promotion by the Foncha and KNDP administration especially if these individual(s) had prior history of association with the opposition party members or even their political linkages, friendships or related by marriage. Two civil servants from the
coastal region, for example, were dismissed arbitrarily based on unsubstantiated rumors that these individuals supported the opposition party or its affiliates.\textsuperscript{10}

**Cracks in West Cameroon Solidarity**

Although cry of Francophone dominance over Anglophones has taken center-stage, exclusive focus on this dichotomy without critically examining the fundamental reasons which have reinforced this dominance will obscure some basic realities which underpin West Cameroon's solidarity. Anglophones, as we discussed earlier, have a litany of interrelated problems which have contributed to discord among the political elites of two regions and manifested in the masses. The first of these is dominance of Northwesterners in the political scene of Anglophone politics, both at the national and regional (West Cameroon) levels. From 1959-1996, Northwesterners "monopolized" top government positions in West Cameroon as well as at the federal and later in the unitary state. This skewed or disproportionate representation has caused uneasiness among Southwesterners who claim that Northwesterners will do everything to get to the top, even at the expense of West Cameroon unity. An examination of Table 11 will clearly demonstrate this disparity.

\textsuperscript{10} One notorious case concerned two Bakweri civil servants, Eric D. Quan and Peter M. Efang, both holding University of London degrees, advanced studies as well as many years of satisfactory service. These individuals were summarily dismissed by the Foncha administration without hearing or appeal. Apparently, one had accused them of having given aid and support to Endeley's CPNC, the opposition to KNDP. The government attempted to deny them passports to permit them to seek employment elsewhere and prohibited the claim from considering a suit brought against itself in the matter. One of the victims was hired by Dr. Bernard N., a grassfielder and strong critic of Foncha.
### TABLE 12

**BREAKDOWN OF HIGH PROFILE POSITIONS HELD BY NORTHWESTERNERS AND SOUTHWESTERNERS SINCE 1959**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Position Held</th>
<th>Occupant</th>
<th>Province</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1959-1965</td>
<td>Prime Minister of West Cameroon</td>
<td>John N. Foncha</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965-1967</td>
<td>Prime Minister of West Cameroon</td>
<td>Augustine N. Jua</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967-1972</td>
<td>Prime Minister of West Cameroon</td>
<td>Solomon T. Muna</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967-1970</td>
<td>Federal Vice Pres. of Cameroon</td>
<td>John N. Foncha</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1972</td>
<td>Federal Vice Pres. of Cameroon</td>
<td>Solomon T. Muna</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973-1988</td>
<td>Speaker of National Assembly</td>
<td>Solomon T. Muna</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-1989</td>
<td>Speaker of National Assembly</td>
<td>Lawrence F. Shang</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-1990</td>
<td>Vice President of CPDM</td>
<td>John N. Foncha</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-</td>
<td>Vice President of CPDM</td>
<td>Fon Angwafor 111</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979-1990</td>
<td>Grand Chancellor of Nat’l Orders</td>
<td>John N. Foncha</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-</td>
<td>Grand Chancellor of Nat’l Orders</td>
<td>William N. Effiom</td>
<td>Southwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-</td>
<td>Prime Min. of Rep. Of Cameroon</td>
<td>Peter M. Musonge</td>
<td>Southwest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by author from various sources including Cameroon Tribune, The Pilot, Cameroon Times, The Herald and books.

As Table 12 reveals, Northwesterners have dominated the political scenes in West Cameroon, as well as eclipsed Southwesterners at the federal level from 1965-1972. Also, Northwesterners occupied prominent positions during the unitary system as well as the republic, from 1972, to 1990 and 1996 respectively. This political preponderance however, was interrupted in 1990, when Effiom was chosen Grand Chancellor and Peter
M. Mafany as Prime Minister in 1996. This disproportionate representation by Northwesterners has been a major concern of Southwesterners for along time, and continues to raise suspicion in the minds of most Southwesterners when cries of domination by Francophones are echoed by Northwesterners.

When asked in our survey which of the two Anglophone provinces has benefitted the most from the government since unification, 49 percent of our respondents said Northwest province has benefitted most, while 24 percent thought Southwest has benefitted from the government, 23 percent believe both Northwest and Southwest have benefitted equally and just 6 percent believe none of the two provinces have benefitted from Francophone dominated regime. This finding clearly parallels the evidence presented in Table 11. above. Furthermore, when asked why West Cameroonians have not been able to exert collective political pressure on the government in Yaounde for reasonable changes (53 percent) of our respondent said selfishness of West Cameroon politicians and their inclinations to parochial allegiance, than for the good of West Cameroon is responsible for this anomaly. Forty-three (43 percent) of our respondents said West Cameroonians could not exert political pressure on the government because of government's strategy to keep the two regions at odds with each other, using political office and pet projects as a tool. It is evident based on the activities and pressures from political organizations that if Anglophones work in solidarity, they can achieve more from the government. One can argue based on facts that through unity and solidarity among Anglophones, French Cameroon under Ahidjo accepted the creation of the state of West Cameroon, rather than attempt to infuse the region into French Cameroon through assimilation. Likewise, it was unity and solidarity among the Southern Cameroonians
that led to eventual secession of the region from Nigeria. It is also evident that disarray among the Anglophones in the early 1970s resulted in Ahidjo's swift decision to abolish the federal system, creating a unitary and highly centralized system, which further deprived Anglophones from some benefits of the states.

Another reason advanced for widening differences between Southwesterners and Northwesterners, resulting in lack of solidarity among Anglophones is in the allocation of major development projects. In my interview with a former government official and Mayor of Kumba, the "economic capital" of Southwest about the discord among Anglophones and its consequences on development or lack thereof, he offered the following explanations:

Dr. E. M. L. Endeley for many years struggled for the realization of higher institution of learning in West Cameroon—a University. However, this project was held hostage because Northwesterners were not pleased with the project being in the Southwest. They made every effort to foil the project in hope of getting a university center first established in Bambili-Northwest. It is crystal clear that two prominent Northwest politicians residing in Buea sent false reports to Yaounde during Ahidjo's reign and even when Biya became president, that the proposed Buea University Project be halted or completely wiped off.11

The actions of John N. Foncha, an elderly statesman of West Cameroon in 1995, appears to validate Mr. Eyumbi's comments during my interview in 1994. Recall, that in 1995, a delegation of Anglophone elites led by Foncha and Muna traveled to New York to demand Southern Cameroons independence from the United Nations. Ironically, after the trip, Foncha sought authorization from president Biya to open a university in Bamenda. Foncha's actions have infuriated Southwest elites who believe Foncha, and

11 Interview with former M. P. and Mayor of Kumba, John Sona Eyumbi, December 19, 1994.
other Northwest elites indirectly inferred that the Buea University was ineffective, thus proposing an alternative—Bamenda University—to replace it. Clearly, the unwillingness of Northwesterners to support unequivocally the establishment of a 'complete' university in Buea demonstrates the discord among these two regions. In a similar vein, the lukewarm attitude and unwillingness of Southwest politicians to speak out in favor of, and support of Licensed Produce Buying Agents, a business venture dominated by Northwest entrepreneurs reinforces, the prevailing dysfunction of the two Anglophone entities.

Furthermore, Southwesterners have continued to be suspicious of actions of their brothers in the Northwest, particularly on party politics. This suspicion was echoed during my interview with a prominent lawyer in Buea who requested that his identify remain anonymous. He stated "that Northwest elites have kept the Southwesterners guessing, especially on the issue of independence for Southern Cameroons". On the issue of launching of the Social Democratic Front (SDF), Southwesterners complained that they were not informed of such a grand plan. However, it was revealed that three prominent Southwesterners, Dr. Enonchong, Dr. Nkongho and Chief Ngolle were approached with a suggestion of creating a political party. Most Southwesterners have questioned the reasons or motives underlying the selection of these three Southwesterners, aware that they will not accept the proposal. We should point that Dr. Enonchong helped frame the constitution of Cameroon and Dr. Nkongho is also a prominent and respected lawyer in Douala. Based on this suspicion of motive, some Southwesterners use this as a ploy to discredit the SDF.
The schism between Southwest and Northwest elites has given rise to the formation of "regional" organizations in the Southwest to cater for the interest and well-being of the citizens of the region. Such organizations as Southwest Elites Association--SOWELA I &II is evident. Furthermore, bitterness among Southwesterners against what is believed is Northwest preponderance, led the mobilization of citizens of the province through reactivation of anti-Northwest organization like VIKUMA (Victoria, Kumba Mamfe), the three major divisional capitals of Southwest province. This anti-Northwest movement was strong particularly among Southwest professors and instructors at various institutions of higher learning, particularly in Yaounde. Northwesterners have nonetheless responded with their own organizations to rally and mobilize their folks for their agenda.

Northwesterners have countered the charges of domination by the coastal/forest people, arguing that their success has been largely the result of undaunting courage and pushfulness, which is lacking among the Southwesterners. According to Sylvester Gwellem, this quality of fearlessness which some people interpret as domination has earned the Bamenda man more successes than failures. Northwesterners also argue that their region lacks natural resources and without an industry in the whole republic, yet they have not complained as their coastal brothers have. Yindo Ngong Mai has argued that progress and success among the "graffimen" have emerged due to their dedication, hard work, risk-taking endurance and sacrifice. He maintains that each time a Southwesterner loses an opportunity, they whip up provincial

sentiments by putting the blame on the "graffiman", without a critical analysis of themselves. Mai also points out that failure or lack of progress in the Southwest is the result of inept leaders from the region. He argues that political and managerial leaders of Southwest including figures like Egbe Tabi, Honorable P. M. Kemcha, Honorable Nerius Namasso Mbile, the late Dr. A. D. Mengot, John Ebong Ngole, Nfon V. E. Mukete, Honorable W. N. O. Effiom, Honorable Lifio Carr, all had the opportunity to improve Southwest, but failed to do so. 13

Clearly, although the Southwesterners ventured into the political arena before their Northwest counterparts, the latter's political maturity and active involvement in the process has no doubt earned them a lot of political benefits. Northwesterners have been articulate and sophisticated in their strategies, particularly in organizing mass political meetings which have been well attended. Unlike their Southwest counterparts, Northwest voting behavior has been predictable, particularly if "one of their own" is running for office. This characteristic reflects and reinforces the homogeneous political culture of the grassfield people.

**Fractured Consensus**

As we alluded to in the previous section, discord among Anglophones (Northwest and Southwest) served as the major stumbling block for the region's progress, particularly its ability to exert influence on the Francophone dominated government. Acknowledging this salient characteristic as a hindrance to Southern Cameroon's development, Anglophone elites, in a show of courage and solidarity, gathered in Douala

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in 1985 to seek a "new" strategy for the plight of all Anglophones in Cameroon and the diaspora. The resolve of these elites to put aside their parochial differences and work for the good of West Cameroon became a reality with the creation of the Cameroon Anglophone Movement (CAM) in December 1991. Recall that some of these elites had sent a memorandum to the president, Paul Biya in 1985, outlining grievances of the Anglophone minority, and seeking answers to these problems. Principally, CAM's immediate task was to redress past grievances between Northwest and Southwest, especially complaints by the Southwesterners against John N. Foncha and S. T. Muna's administrations, and how this contributed to Anglophone predicament. One of the goals of CAM was to ensure balance of leadership, by choosing Southwesterners to carry the leadership mantle. Despite some occasional disagreements, the leadership of CAM and Southern Cameroons National Conference (SCNC) have been tactfully selected to reflect both entities, rather than dominance by one.

Anglophone solidarity was evident in 1993 and 1994 respectively, following two major conferences held in Buea and Bamenda. In the first All Anglophone Conference (AACI), elites and citizens of West Cameroon drafted and presented their grievances to Biya's government. The conference was also aimed at preparing Anglophone participation in the National Debate on Constitutional Reforms, and examining a variety of other salient issues relating to the well-being of the Anglophone minority, and Cameroon in general. In 1994, the second All Anglophone Conference (AACII), held in Bamenda, Northwest province, reviewed progress of the first conference. The "Bamenda Declaration," as it was later called, issued "a reasonable time" for the government to respond to the demands of Anglophones presented during the
AACI or the Buea Declaration. Elites and participants resolved that if the government failed to respond by their “reasonable time,” the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) would eventually transform into Southern Cameroons Constituent Assembly and do all in its power to protect the territory and citizens. At the conclusion of the conference, the general assembly of the Anglophones of Cameroon was renamed Southern Cameroons Peoples Conference (SCPC), while the standing committee became the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC). This body adopted the theme “The Force of Argument, not the Argument of Force” as its guiding principle. According to its architects, Anglophones will utilize dialogue and legal means necessary to resolve inequities between Francophone and Anglophone Cameroon.

Again, Anglophones' resolve for their cause was evident in 1995 when the SCNC adopted proposed resolution by CAM for declaration of Southern Cameroons independence on October 1, 1995. Ironically, on January 1, 1960, French Cameroon gained her independence from France, while Nigeria, gained her independence from Great Britain on October 1, 1960. The first All Anglophone Conference held outside Cameroon took place in Washington, D.C. in an attempt to internationalize the Anglophone struggle. At this conference, an advisory council was created called the Southern Cameroons Advisory Council (SCAC). The conference was led by a delegation from Cameroon under the leadership of Barrister Sam E. Elad, John N. Foncha, and S. T. Muna. Their goal was to carry a petition to the U. N. Security Council, the government of Great Britain and the United States, what they claimed was the “illegal annexation and exploitation of the natural and human resources of Anglophone Cameroon by La Republique du Cameroun.
The decision of the delegation to petition U.N. Security Council, especially the presence of Foncha and Muna has raised not only suspicion of the motives, but angered most Anglophones, particularly Southwesterners, who argue that the faith and predicament of West Cameroon was the outcome of Foncha and Muna's greed in the first place, and question repeated why these figures continue to be involved in the affairs of region. Furthermore, the SCPC delegation submitted an application to the Commonwealth of Nations, meeting in Auckland, New Zealand in November 1995, seeking membership and recognition by the body. Recall that president Biya had submitted a similar request for membership into the organization in 1993, which was approved during the Auckland gathering. Cameroon's admission into the Commonwealth of Nations was protested by the SCPC. The SCPC delegation, on their return to Cameroon, hoisted a United Nations flag on the other side of the Mungo River, signifying that West Cameroon was a U. N. mandate territory and technically not part of the La Republic du Cameroun.

From the above, it appears therefore that, the activities of the Anglophone elites are at variance with the wishes of the people, thus causing more problems of legitimacy than anticipated. Using the SDF as an example, the party chairman, John Fru Ndi, during the SDF's National Convention in Bamenda, called for "devolution of powers," while in Bafousam, Western Province, Fru Ndi echoed "decentralization," but

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completely avoided mentioning federalism. Some observers maintain that Fru Ndi and SDF feared that propagating federalism as its key goal would scare Francophone militants, whose support for the party gave it national, rather than regional trappings. After much discussions and manueuvring, the SDF focused on creation of four autonomous states for the Republic of Cameroon. This position was, however, counter to one backed by CAM, whose moderates, according to Milton Krieger, sought a return to 1962-1972 federal system. The militants, on the other hand, wanted to dissolve the union of 1961, and to form a new nation. Clearly, this disarray has created tension and panic among loyal Francophones sympathetic to, and attracted by a message for national issues such as the economy and declining living standards enunciated by the SDF.

When asked in our survey which option citizens would most likely support, 53.6 percent of our respondents said they would prefer to continue with the current system as a Republic, but with major constitutional and policy initiatives to bridge the gap between East and West Cameroon. Nearly one-third of our respondents (29.25 percent) said they wanted a return to the federal system as it existed prior to unification in 1972, with some modifications in the constitution. A small number of respondents (13.61 percent), said they wanted West Cameroon to be an autonomous state with no ties to East Cameroon. From the above it is evident that Southern Cameroon's political elites, especially leaders of SDF and SCNC are at variance with each other on the best strategy.
for West Cameroon. Furthermore, based on the opinion of majority of West Cameroonians surveyed, it is apparent that SDF and SCNC are at odds with the population over the issue of separation from La Republic du Cameroon and continuing with the current system. Similarly, in my interview with Mr. D. A. Wan-obí, a seasoned politician and administrator in 1997, on the Anglophone-Francophone issue, he offered the following:

Although perceptually it might appear the government has not done much for West Cameroon, and Anglophones would like to have more say in the decision-making circles, in the government, I believe, the government is doing its utmost to satisfy the demands of West Cameroonians. Similarly, although Anglophones have not held sensitive positions in the government such as Finance, Foreign Affairs, Territorial Administration, the Armed forces etc.; they have, nevertheless, been appointed to other ministerial positions.17

From the above, one can argue therefore, that the disregard of the views of the majority that has caused intense struggle among the leadership ranks in the SCNC. Clearly, as our discussion has revealed although Francophone dominance over Anglophone remains a salient political reality in Cameroon, there is no denying that disagreement among Anglophones, Northwesterners and Southwesterners has contributed to, and made working in solidarity difficult among these two peoples. Regional and parochial proclivity has overridden concern for West Cameroon's well-being. This factor, therefore, is perhaps the most important reason why Anglophones have not been able to exert political pressure on the Francophone dominated government in Yaounde.

17 Donaltus A. Wan-Obi, Former Section Vice President of CNU for Manyu, Section Secretary for CPDM, Manyu, and First Assistant Sub Prefect for Manyu. Interview on August 30, 1997, during his visit to the United States.
CHAPTER VIII

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The goal of undertaking this study as we stated in chapter one, was to examine the unequal relationship between East and West Cameroon, with the former serving the "center" and the latter as the "periphery". Our motive was to explore the factors and circumstances which contributed to, and have reinforced this unequal relationship and the implications of this imbalance for continued harmony between the two polities. As this study has demonstrated, not only the political leaders and elites of West Cameroon have championed the cause for equity between Francophone and Anglophone Cameroon, the poorest and most under-privileged citizens of the region have also expressed their discontent with the government for economic mishaps. We hoped however, that, through this endeavor, we would be able to understand the nature and complexities underlying the relationship between Francophone and Anglophone Cameroon, and seek, in the final analysis, ways to enhance unity, cooperation and nation-building, rather than confrontation and conflict.

Findings

With regards to the prevailing relationship between these entities, our study uncovered no major break-through or surprises concerning Francophone preponderance over Anglophones. As our discussion in chapter two revealed, inequality between these two regions was enhanced by many factors, including internal circumstances and external
exigencies. French Cameroon to begin with, was also more advanced economically than British Cameroon, and she gained her independence from France in 1960, while British Cameroon never attained her independence from Britain. Furthermore, Francophone Cameroon was better organized and prepared for unification according to Mark W. Delancey, than the Anglophones. ¹ These inequities needless to say, would serve as the basis for occasional tensions and cleavage between the two regions.

Similarly, we discovered that despite continued complaints and agitations by Anglophones regarding disparity in resource distribution, perceived treatment of Anglophones as “second class” citizens, and the glass ceiling preventing Anglophones from holding some strategic positions in the country, most citizens in this sector still believed in union with East Cameroon. Although divergent views and opinions among Anglophone militants, elites, as well as ordinary citizens concerning secession or separation of West Cameroon from East Cameroon prevail, it is important nevertheless, to point out that the view or approach is not shared by a majority of Anglophones. Indeed in our survey, a majority of subjects, (53.6 percent) of Anglophones were in favor of continuing with the existing system, but with major constitutional and policy initiatives aimed at bridging the gap between East and West Cameroon. This, is indeed, a significant deviation from what we had originally anticipated, given the role and

¹Mark W. Delancey, Cameroon: Dependence and Independence, 99.
influence of Anglophone elites and militants, in mitigating secession and/or separation from East Cameroon.

We also found that successive Francophone regimes of Ahidjo and Biya used the divisive strategy of "divide and rule" in West Cameroon to achieve their political objectives. First, through partition, and subsequently through award of lucrative political positions to one Anglophone region to the disadvantage of the other region. As table 12 shows, the government appointed Northwesterners to key, or high profile positions in various institutions of government, to the disadvantage of Southwesterners. Again, this strategy was designed to appease the more vocal and politically aggressive Anglophones from Northwest province. Another significant finding espoused by this study is that the deteriorating economy served as a catalyst, bringing together disgruntled Francophones and Anglophones together, amidst their differences, to work towards removing Paul Biya, president, (Francophone) from power. Decline in Cameroon's economy and the attendant hardships resulting from IMF and World Bank's Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), measures contributed significantly in undermining Biya's legitimacy as leader, and was partially responsible for violence and disorderliness that swept across some provinces in the country. Equally important, we found that economic decline precipitated Allophone leaders to push aggressively for the government to implement reforms that would alleviate the misery of Anglophones. Likewise, introduction of democracy and multiparty politics in the country in early 1990s, increased political awareness of Cameroonians on key issues, and also gave citizens the opportunity to participate in the political process. As our respondents revealed in the
survey (66.38 percent) said the process was a major contributor to their understanding of the political system. This process was a great impetus for Cameroonians, particularly Anglophones, to be actively involved the political matters of the state. Anglophones were not only able to form their own political parties, they challenged the government's of dominating Anglophones. Despite this positive step forward brought about by democracy and multiparty system in transforming Cameroon's political landscape, we found that this process and system also handicapped relations between and within groups in the society. We found that although one of the goals of democracy is to educate and inform citizens to transcend their partisan and particularistic concerns, and to give priority to the wellbeing of the state, the system intensified internal divisions and triggered fierce competitions among various parties, each vying for articulation, ascendence and control of power. We also found that the system aroused ethnic and regional sentiments particularly during the presidential elections of October 1992, where candidates performed better in their region(s) of origin, with the exception of president Paul Biya, the incumbent, who won in some regions not affiliated with his ethnic upbringing. Our respondent (29.85), stated that democracy and multiparty politics increased distrust and skepticism among Cameroonians about their government. We found that with the formation of SDF party, the most viable of the opposition parties, the Francophone led government again coopted prominent Anglophones, especially influential Northwesterners like Ahidi Achu, Fon Angwafor, Foncha, and Lawrence Shang, as well as some Southwesterners like Agbor Tabi, Peter Musonge and W.N O. Effiom for their
support. This strategy has no doubt weakened the SDF, at the same time strengthened Francophone dominance over Anglophones.

Finally, we found that the crux of Allophone bitterness with Francophone dominance is based on the logic of self-deprivation and progress. Anglophones, maintain that they have been refused the right to share equitably in the country's wealth, by successive Francophones regimes, even though Anglophones are the (bread winners) of the country. Absence of industrial and commercial infrastructures in the Anglophone has also added to cries of domination and unequal treatment by Francophones. Similarly, we found that complains of their disadvantaged position in the Cameroonian society, especially in socio-cultural, and linguistic domains served as reasons for continued Anglophone dissatisfaction with Francophone dominance. Genuine, as these complaints are, they should not be examined in compartments or isolation. These complaints we believe, should be analyzed and explained within the context of inequality between Francophones and Anglophones regions, despite the prevalence of inequity in other Francophone provinces of the republic. Clearly, a close examination of other provinces in East Cameroon, particularly Adamawa, Far North, East and South provinces, will show that the Anglophone provinces are not worse off. This, however, is not to suggest that Anglophones should be complacent or content with their realities in the larger Francophone dominated Cameroon.

Conclusions

In every society, large, or small, with diverse population, and with competing interests, the task for the central authority of striking an equitable balance between the
majority society and the peripheral community becomes of significant importance.

Forging an acceptable and equitable balance in a bifurcated state such as Cameroon, which is ethnically heterogeneous, religiously differentiated, economically and materially skewed, poses a number of problems to unity and stability of the polity. It seems therefore that, the elemental problem Anglophones seek redress by the dominant society is not much about exploitation of resources, but rather, their active role in the decision making process on matters that affect their economic and social wellbeing.

As this study further demonstrates, the roots of this conflicting tendencies between Francophones and Anglophones as we as we stated previously, trace their origins from the country's colonial past. Political integration in 1972, and fusion of these unique colonial experiences into a monolithic, highly centralized system, had severe and far-reaching implications for the Anglophones. Abolition of the federal system which had guaranteed Anglophones some degree of autonomy and self-rule in determining their own "internal" affairs, meant they had to rely on directives and consultation from the Francophone capital, Yaounde, before any actions or projects would be implemented.

Clearly as our discussion has shown, West Cameroon's disadvantage of being numerically weak has often been reinforced by the deprecatory treatment Anglophones receive from their Francophone counterparts. To a large extent, Francophones have exhibited arrogance and intolerance towards Anglophones as depicted in Emah Basile's characterization of Anglophones, particularly directed at John Fru Ndi, SDF chairman as "les enemies dans la maison" (enemies of the house). Basile, we should point out was the
theory of imperialism," in which harmony of interest exist between the "center" and "periphery" but there is disharmony of interest within the "periphery."

Finally, from our discussions it is evident that the thrust of Anglophone complaints and anger at the dominant Francophone regime is that Anglophones no longer want to viewed as appendages to East Cameroon, they do not want to be regarded as something grudgingly given. They want in the final analysis, to be recognized as an integral and vital component of the political economy of the Republic of Cameroon.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study on "center-periphery" relations in Cameroon has highlighted several issues, raised important questions worth further examination, analysis and investigation. Key areas which will inspire further research will include, role of the economy in intra-Anglophone relations, role and influence of Cameroonian students abroad in Cameroon politics, secession and the future of the republic of Cameroon, "center -periphery relations in comparative perspective: Cameroon and other dominant-subordinate relations in Africa or the Third World. In sum, whenever such academic endeavor is undertaken, we hope this study center on "center-periphery" relations in Cameroon will serve as a foundation as well as and a point of reference.
CPDM president of the Yaounde region, and long serving Government Delegate to the Yaounde City Council.

Although in the real world dominated and oppressed people would prefer doing away with inequality and dominance, the fact remains that as long as dominated subjects are disunited and dysfunctional internally, their oppressors will always have an edge over them, pitting one segment of the population against the other to achieve maximum compliance and consensus. As the West Cameroon experience has demonstrated, concern for self aggrandizement and regional growth perpetuated by Anglophone political elites has been a key reason for continued dominance by Francophones. While there exist an objective situation impelling Anglophones to forge a political union, strong and viable enough to promote and protect their interests, failure or absence of such unified organization capable of rallying and bringing together the two provinces on the same platform highlights the problems of Anglophones.

Furthermore, although there has been political tensions between Northwest and Yaounde as well as Southwest and Yaounde on some pertinent issues, in general, however, the relations between these provinces and the capital, Yaounde can be described as strong. The struggle for access to scarce resources for development in each region, may account for this solidarity between the provinces and the capital. On the other hand, we noticed that solidarity between the two Anglophone provinces was missing, or at least not as strong as one would expect. This missing link as we indicated in chapter seven, is partly the outcome of historical circumstances, and conforms to Galtung’s “structural
theory of imperialism," in which harmony of interest exist between the "center" and "periphery" but there is disharmony of interest within the "periphery."

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My name is Ayuk E. Augustine, I am a graduate student at Clark Atlanta University. I am a Ph.D. candidate in the above institution, and my dissertation is on Cameroon. I am requesting a few minutes of your time to review and complete the enclosed questionnaire.

This survey is designed to elicit responses from Cameroonians at home and abroad, with the goal of understanding intra Cameroon relations. I would like to assure you that this information would be used solely for research purposes. Respondents are therefore urged not to identify themselves by writing their names on the questionnaire.

I appreciate your time and assistance in this endeavor.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Ayuk, E. Augustine
APPENDIX B

SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Please complete the following:
   (a) Your Division of origin _______________________
   (b) Your Province of origin _______________________
   (c) If you live in Cameroon, in which Province do you reside?
   (d) Your age?
   (e) Sex? (Male)____ (Female)_____

2. Which of these categories best describes your education background? (please select one option only)
   (a) Primary School
   (b) Secondary School
   (c) High School
   (d) University
   (e) Other (please specify) _______________________

3. Which of the following would you consider the most serious issue threatening Cameroon’s unity?
   (a) Economic Deterioration
   (b) Tribalism
   (c) Widespread corruption in the government
   (d) Concern about Anglophone Separation from the Republic
   (e) Too much foreign influence in the affairs of the country

4. Which of the following would you most likely support?
   (a) Return to the Federal system as it existed, prior to unification in 1972, with some modifications in the constitution
   (b) An autonomous West Cameroon with no ties to East Cameroon
   (c) Continue with current system as a Republic, but with major Constitutional and policy initiatives to bridge the gap between East and West Cameroon
   (d) Remain exactly as we are
   (e) Other

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5. Politically and economically, West Cameroon has benefited as a result of unification with East Cameroon. (*please circle one*)

(a) Strongly agree
(b) Agree
(c) Neither agree nor disagree
(d) Strongly disagree
(e) Disagree

6. Which of the following reasons explain West Cameroon’s economic and infrastructural backwardness?

(a) Government’s development priorities are in East Cameroon not West Cameroon
(b) West Cameroon contributes relatively less to the overall economy of the Republic Cameroon.
(c) The region’s economic contribution to GNP is relatively less.
(d) Perception that West Cameroon might some day break from East, hence invest as little capital in the area as possible
(e) Other

7. The partition of Cameroon into seven Provinces after 1972, especially the division of West Cameroon into North West, and South West provinces was a political calculation by the government

(a) To create disagreement between the two regions, by manipulating the politicians
(b) To bring government closer to the people
(c) To prevent the UPC Movement from further terrorizing citizen
(d) To consolidate power in Yaounde
(e) Other

8. Despite claims of unfair treatment and discrimination, West Cameroonians have been appointed to, and occupied high profile positions in the government, such as Defense, Territorial Administration, Foreign Affairs, and Finance.

(a) Agree
(b) Disagree
(c) Don’t know
(d) Other
14. The oppositions’ sabotage strategy “operation ghost town”/ “ville mort,” against the government was?

(a) politically and economically effective because it forced the government to make significant changes in the country.
(b) ineffective because it negatively impacted the ailing economy, and political achieved nothing.
(c) ineffective because most Cameroonians do not believe in violent strategies as means to achieving political reforms.
(d) ineffective because of internal disagreement and poor coordination among the opposition leaders.
(e) Other

15. Democracy and multiparty politics has:

(a) increased political awareness of most Cameroonians today on key issues, than was the case ten years ago.
(b) revealed internal divisions among Cameroonians, along ethnic and/or regional lines.
(c) caused more distrust and skepticism about the government
(d) given Cameroonians the opportunity to participate in the political process.
(e) Other

16. Which of the following reasons explain why West Cameroonians could not complain of domination, and unequal treatment by East Cameroon during the reign of president Ahidjo?

(a) President Ahidjo did not tolerate criticism of his regime
(b) He used state institutions to subdue his political enemies, sentencing them to long prison terms.
(c) West Cameroon politicians were concerned more with satisfying Ahidjo’s demands, and maintaining their positions in gov’t than appealing for equal treatment from the president.
(d) Freedom of speech and press censorship was strictly limited
(e) There were no viable opposition parties or groups to challenge his government

17. Cameroonians are relatively free today, to express their political views and opinions about the government than was the case under president Ahidjo.

(a) Strongly Agree
(b) Agree
(c) Strongly Disagree
(d) Disagree
(e) Don’t know
9. Which of the two Anglophone Cameroon provinces in your view, has benefited most from the government since unification in 1972?

(a) Northwest Province
(b) Southwest Province
(c) None of the Provinces
(d) Both have benefited about the same

10. West Cameroonians have not exerted collective political pressure on the government in Yaounde for reasonable changes because:

(a) The government built the CPDM Congress house in Bamenda, Northwest Province, instead of Buea, South West Province
(b) The government built the University in Buea, South West Province, instead of Bamenda, North West Province.
(c) West Cameroon politicians are selfish, they think of themselves and their local areas than the general good of West Cameroon.
(d) Government strategy of keeping the two regions at odds with each other has been effective.
(e) Other

11. If West Cameroon were to separate from East Cameroon, where would you prefer the political capital to be? *please select only one city*

(a) Bamenda
(b) Buea
(c) Do not know
(d) Other

12. In your view, the Social Democratic Front (SDF) party is?

(a) A North West party
(b) A West Cameroon party with strong support from North West and South West Provinces.
(c) A North West party, with lukewarm support from South West
(d) A party with broad support throughout the country
(e) Other

13. In your view, the Cameroon People’s Democratic Movement (CPDM) party is?

(a) A party with equal representation from East and West Cameroon
(b) A party with a greater percentage representation in East Cameroon
(c) A party with a greater percentage representation in West Cameroon
(d) A party with increasing support in South West Province
(e) A party with increasing support in North West Province
18. What, in your view should the government do to improve the perceived economic imbalance in West Cameroon?
(a) Institute policies which will allow foreign businesses to establish their plants and Headquarters West Cameroon
(b) Provide incentives to businesses to relocate to West Cameroon
(c) Provide good roads and communication networks to facilitate commerce in West Cameroon.
(d) Remove inter-city road blocks by Gendarmes and Police to ease
(e) Other

Thank you for your time and participation.
APPENDIX C

LIST OF INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED FOR THE STUDY

**Academics**

Dr. Peter Agbor-Tabi
Dr. Lovett Elango
Associate Professor at Buea University, who asked that his name not be revealed.

**Political Figures**

John Fru Ndi
Peter Agbor-Tabi
Eyumbi John Sona
Donaltus A. Wan-Obi
CPDM Militants in Kumba
SDF Militants in Tiko
APPENDIX D

CAMEROON UNDER BRITISH AND FRENCH TRUSTEESHIP
NOTE: BRITISH NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN CAMEROONS


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APPENDIX E

CAMEROON AFTER RE-UNIFICATION IN 1961

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ABSTRACT

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Advisor: Professor Hashim Gibrill

In recent years, West Cameroonians (Anglophones) have expressed deep concern regarding their relative deprivation in the political, social and economic realities in Francophone dominated Republic of Cameroon, particularly the widening gap which continues to manifest itself between the two entities since integration in 1972. This study examines the factors and circumstances (internal and external) responsible for fusion of the two polities, and the implications of such a union for the life experiences of Anglophone Cameroonians, particularly in the political, economic, social, and infrastructural domains. A case study analysis approach was utilized to analyze data gathered from Cameroonians at home and in the United States, as well as personal interviews. The researcher found that successive Francophone regimes used varied policies and strategies to reinforce the hegemonic nexus of East Cameroon (center) over West Cameroon (periphery). The conclusions drawn from the findings suggests that although Francophone policies and strategies are paramount in hindering Anglophone progress in Francophone dominated Cameroon, there are, never the less, other salient factors which have combined to make this reality apparent.
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