



INTELLECTUALIZING THE ANGLOPHONE PROBLEM: AN ENDOSCOPY OF CAMEROONIAN SCHOLARS' WRITINGS ABOUT ANGLOPHONE IDENTITY, REUNIFICATION AND ANGLOPHONE NATIONALISM

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Abstract: This paper examines the production of knowledge about the Anglophone problem which refers to Anglophone grievances against the Francophone dominated-State in Cameroon. This problem came as a result of the choice made by a majority of former British Southern Cameroonians to become independent by reunifying with *La République du Cameroun* (former French Cameroon) through the 1961 referendum that led to the creation of the Federal Republic of Cameroon. Later on, Anglophones started complaining of being marginalized and treated as second class citizens by the Francophone majority following the dismantling of the Federal State and the institution of a Unitary State by President Ahmadou Ahidjo in 1972. They considered this evolution as a threat to their identity and vainly undertook actions to voice their discomfort until the situation escalated into a “secession war” in 2016. Thus, by relying on Identity theory, this work analyses the reactions of Anglophone and Francophone intellectuals towards the Anglophone problem by confronting their views. This comparative approach reveals how contending these views are as far as the relevance of the problem and its resolution are concerned. Although the majority of Anglophone scholars promote an “Anglophone nationalism” implying the preservation of Anglophone identity, few of them refute this nationalist agenda. They adopt a “Republican approach” advocated by most Francophone authors. This approach suggests the creation of a sociopolitical environment conducive for national integration and equality of chances. The paper thus puts in debate the Anglophone nationalist struggle by relying on a critical content analysis of books and other scientific articles.

Keywords: Anglophone problem, Cameroonian Scholars, Reunification, Anglophone Identity, Anglophone nationalism

Intellectualiser le « Problème anglophone »: une endoscopie des travaux d'universitaires camerounais sur l'identité anglophone, la réunification et le nationalisme anglophone

Résumé : Il est question dans cet article de questionner la production du savoir sur le « problème anglophone » au Cameroun. Ce problème fait référence aux revendications des Anglophones qui se plaignent d'être marginalisés et traités comme des citoyens de seconde zone par la majorité francophone. Il découle du choix opéré par la plupart des populations de la partie l'ex-Cameroun britannique méridional de devenir indépendant en se réunifiant à la République du Cameroun (ex-Cameroun français) lors du référendum de 1961. Ce choix a conduit à la création de la République fédérale du Cameroun. Cependant, en 1972, le Président Ahmadou Ahidjo a décidé de remplacer l'Etat fédéral par un Etat unitaire. La mise sur pied et le fonctionnement de cet Etat ont suscité le mécontentement des Anglophones qui y voyaient une menace pour leur identité. Ils ont vainement entrepris des actions pour exprimer leur malaise jusqu'à ce que la situation dégénère en « guerre de sécession » en 2016. Ainsi, s'appuyant sur la théorie de l'identité, ce travail analyse les réactions des intellectuels anglophones et francophones sur le problème anglophone en confrontant leurs points de vue. Cette approche comparative rend compte de la divergence d'opinions sur la pertinence et la résolution de ce problème. Si la majorité des intellectuels originaires de la partie anglophone prônent un "nationalisme anglophone" fondé sur la préservation de leur identité, d'autres semblent réfuter ce discours nationaliste. Ils lui préfèrent une "approche républicaine" d'ailleurs préconisée par la plupart des auteurs francophones et qui propose la création d'un environnement sociopolitique propice à l'intégration nationale et à l'égalité des chances. L'article met ainsi en débat le problème anglophone à travers une analyse critique du contenu des livres et autres articles scientifiques publiés sur la question.

Mots clés : Problème anglophone, Intellectuels Camerounais, Réunification, Identité anglophone, nationalisme anglophone

Introduction

This piece stems from many discussions I had with some colleagues and students after the outbreak of the Anglophone crisis in November 2016. These discussions made me to take note of the reserve of Anglophone historians at the beginning of the crisis. As a matter of fact, it was at a very small scale that Anglophone historians contributed to the debates going on about the crisis. No major scientific publication (books or articles) in relation to the Anglophone crisis was released by Anglophone historians during the first years of the crisis (between 2016 and 2018). The debates were more animated on media by journalists, politicians, lawyers and some intellectuals who were discoursing about the Anglophone problem with a rough knowledge of history. Even the contributions of some French speaking historians living in Douala and Yaoundé were not enough to edify the listeners and viewers because of some bias related to their francophone background and their connection with the establishment. Besides, none of those “intellectuals of media” has published or was specialized on the Anglophone problem apart from Daniel Abwa who mentioned the case in one edition of the programme *Geopolis* broadcasted on Equinoxe TV on June 2018. History is foremost a matter of specialization and important historical issues like the Anglophone problem, which deals with the problematic of colonial heritage, representation and nation-building, should not be abandoned in the hands of neophytes and inexperienced adventurers with the risk of seeing people misled by their weak analyses.

That said, instead of speculating on the reasons why Anglophone historians did not (initially) participate in media debates related to the Anglophone crisis, I have chosen to look at what Anglophone and Francophone scholars have written and said about the Anglophone problem before the outbreak of violence. Although Anglophone grievances came to the knowledge of many Cameroonians after the escalation of violence from November 2016, the Anglophone problem is an old issue that has to do with the discomfort and the ill-being of Anglophones who consider themselves marginalized and assimilated in an asymmetric relationship with the Francophone majority that has failed to keep the flame and excitement of Reunification alive. This problem is so complex that even Anglophone scholars do not agree on who is an Anglophone and what is the Anglophone problem. In his critique of Victor Julius Ngoh (2004) who defines the Anglophone problem from a broader perspective as “the non-participation of Anglophones, on an equal basis with Francophones in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the nation” (p.214), Joseph Nfi (2014a) contends that the Anglophone problem is a struggle by the ethnic Anglophones (...) to rescue their cultural identity threatened by the assimilationist policies of the majority Francophones” (p.122). In a subsequent book published in 2019 and entitled *Cameroon 1884-present (2018)*, Victor Julius Ngoh indicates that “most writers and discourses on the Anglophone problem wrongly defined it as one of political, social, economic and linguistic marginalization and a second class status of the Anglophone” (p.382). He also revises his own definitional approach by considering the Anglophone problem as “The non-respect and non-application of the values and culture that Southern Cameroonians took with them into

the union in 1961” (Ngoh, 2019:21). Although contending ideologically, these two conceptual approaches of the Anglophone problem portray and summarize the mosaic of definitions that have been given to it.

Still in an effort of conceptualization, the notion of Anglophone scholars here refers to researchers and university lecturers who have their origins and roots in the two English speaking regions of Cameroon.¹ These scholars are natives of what has been defined as the “Southern Cameroons”². In opposition to the Anglophone scholars who originate from Southern Cameroons, the Francophone scholars are the natives of former French Cameroon; that is the part of the Cameroon located eastwards of the territory which achieved its independence in 1960. On October 1, 1961, these two territories came together in the framework of the Reunification making the two categories of scholars to become Cameroonians by belonging to the same country. It is for that reason that the title of this work uses the term “Cameroonian Scholars” to refer to these two categories of scholars. However, the coming together of Anglophone and Francophone scholars did not give way to the standardization of their opinions and views as far as the evolution of Cameroon is concerned. It is then interesting to navigate in their respective works in order to compare their views in relation with the Anglophone problem which constitutes one of crucial issues in post independent Cameroon. This navigation, that is coined here as endoscopy, exceptionally take into consideration the works of Piet Konings, a Dutch scholar, who appears to be a specialist of the Anglophone nationalism thanks to his multiple co-publications with some Anglophone scholars with whom he shares the same ideology.

In the domain of medicine, endoscopy refers to a non-chirurgical procedure in which “[the] doctor uses specialized instruments to view and operate on the internal organs and vessels of [the] body. It allows surgeons to see problems within your body without making large incisions”³. Relying on Kay Ball’s works, Sarah Ellison (2015) defines endoscopy as “the inspection of body organs or cavities by means of an endoscope, which is a device consisting of a tube and optical system” (p.1). This technique implies that when a disease is declared, the surgeon gets inside the sick body in order to analyze and understand the illness that the body is suffering from and eventually treat it. Analogically, the sickness here is the Anglophone problem which has its manifestations in the corpus of writings produced by Cameroonian scholars. The aim of this work is then to explore and inspect this corpus, in order to diagnose the problem by analyzing the opinion of Anglophone and Francophone scholars. Notwithstanding this general approach, the study adopts nonetheless a critical posture on aspects related to scientific issues but not ideological standpoints of authors. This is because the Anglophone problem -which has a political significance- is analyzed with passion by Francophone scholars as much as their Anglophone counterparts. But the *raison d’être* of this paper is not to give my own

¹ This definition follows the conceptualization scheme proposed by Anglophone scholars as presented in the continuation of this paper.

² That is the North-West and the South-West regions that have experienced the British colonial administration.

³ <https://www.healthline.com/health/endoscopy> (accessed on 4/10/2017).

stand about the Anglophone problem, but to unveil and question the existing literature on the issue.

Given that this problem has to do with sociopolitical developments in Cameroon since 1961, the work privileges publications of historians, sociologists and political scientists. Yet, it should be acknowledged that Prescillia M. Manjoh (2016) did a remarkable work on the contribution of novelists and other writers in the literary domain. Raymond Nkweny Fru and Johan Wassermann (2017) have also reviewed some history textbooks written by Anglophones. But their analytical toolkit was limited to three textbooks related only to the issue of Reunification.

Thus this research is purely a scientific work deprived of any ideological consideration and conducted from an analytical perspective that consisted in assembling the different publications related to the Anglophone problem before reviewing their content thematically. This process allowed a specification of Anglophone and Francophone opinion through three main problematics: (1) The Anglophone identity (2) Reunification and its controversies and (3) The emergence of the Anglophone nationalism after the political liberalization.

Re-questioning the Anglophone identity

It emerges from the publications related to the Anglophone problem that it is above all a matter of identity and representation. Eric A. Achimbe (2005) gives a good picture of this when he writes:

The lack of equal opportunities in political appointments and marginalization in other aspects of national life are projected by the Anglophones as a major source of their dissatisfaction. This state-of-affairs has made them to fight for the preservation of launched them into the defence of a culture presumed to be their own, that is, the Anglo-Saxon tradition, and into the call for the creation of an independent state along the boundaries set up by British trusteeship up to 1961 (p.41).

Although the Anglophone problem is differently defined because “Scholars disagree about the concept of Anglophone in Cameroon” (Nfi, 2014a:122), it remains that all the proposed definitions stress on the less representation of the Anglophone in the decision making process and the marginalization of their cultural identity. So to speak, the Anglophone problem is fundamentally and intrinsically related to the problematic of “crisis of identity” that is “part of a wider process of change which is dislocating the central structures and processes of modern societies and undermining the frameworks which gave individuals stable anchorage in the social world” (Hall, 1996:596). Thus, the Anglophone problem is foremost a problem of identity which has to be understood and analyzed from the perspective of social identity theory that focuses on “the extent to which individuals identify themselves in terms of group memberships” (Howard, 2000:368).

Theoretically, the concept of identity that derives from Erik Erikson’s works in psychology is a “complicated and unclear” notion which remains “something of an enigma” that nonetheless determines the evolution of modern societies (Fearon,

1999). For this author, identity has a double sense and refers to either social categories based on membership rules and specific characteristics attributes or behavior, or socially distinguishing features that constitute a source of an individual's self-respect of dignity (Ibid). Brubaker and Cooper (2000) indicate that "identity" is at the crossroad of a trilogy insofar it tends to mean too much, too little or nothing at all. The concept is then characterized by an ambiguity which is really criticized in social sciences.⁴ Roughly speaking, identity can be looked upon as an individual feeling about his self, his character, his origins and his goals. However, this feeling is not static and permanent. Rather, identity is "flexible and continually changing due to unstable political, social, and ideological environments and the inner development of the local communities" (Leete, 2012).

This conceptual approach of identity which derives from classical sociology implies that "[identity] is formed in the 'interaction' between self and society" (Hall, 1996:597). In the framework of the Anglophone problem, this notion of identity is more culturally than socially centered and has to do with the characteristics and distinguishing features of the Anglophone who represent a sociopolitical category based on their affiliation to southern Cameroons as their original homeland. Here identity is politicized and has "an intrinsic, essential content, defined by a common origin or a common structure of experience, and often, both" (Howard, 2000:385).

As a matter of fact, the Anglophone problem is a perfect illustration of the implementation of identity in politics. In this context, identity is constructed and exists with regard to a renegotiation of national identity. From the way it is structured and exposed in the existing literature, this problem can be theoretically envisaged from the perspective of essentialism and Marxism. In the context of Cameroon where the modern postcolonial state was built on the British and French colonial heritages, Anglophones consider themselves as a specific entity with typical values and behavior that single them out from the Francophones that they look upon as oppressors. In this regard, they implement their struggle for recognition (politics of recognition) and de-marginalization by using and promoting their identity. Elaborating on the politics of recognition which is the bone of contention in the Anglophone problem, Sonia Kruks (2001) reveals that the "demands for recognition [are expressed] on the basis of the very grounds on which recognition has previously been denied [and] what is demanded is respect of oneself as different" (p.85). Consistently to this approach, Art Leete (2012) contends that identity politics refers to the mechanisms through which a "social group constructs, arguments and defends its own self-conception" (p.9). This process of politicizing identity which has also been observed in many other contexts is referred to as identity politics. Identity politics theory implies that politics is informed by identity and "suggests a political orientation built around a (pre-existing) social identity" (Ford, 2005:53). In other words, the identity politics approach presupposes the transformation of differences

⁴ In their critiques of the conceptualization of "identity" in social and political analyses, Brubaker and Cooper point out the fact that " 'identity' is too ambiguous, too torn between 'hard' and 'soft' meanings, essentialist connotations and constructivist qualifiers, to serve well the demands of social analysis". They then proposed that social and political analyses should go beyond 'identity' in order to be able to portray to social reality (see R. Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, 2000, "Beyond 'identity'", *Theory and Society*, n°29, p.2).

between groups into cleavages leading to political conflictualization (Duchesne & Sherrer, 2003). From the perspective of nation building theory, Identity politics raises the issue of citizenship through the problematic of Identity and belonging. The existence of cleavages within a nation puts into question the ethic of uniformity that characterized citizenship and that stipulates that “individual happiness or collective existence is only possible with some level of uniformity” (Hakan & Yngve, 2005:199). Because of their “under-representation and inferior role in national decision-making councils; the neglect of their region’s infrastructures [...]” (Nyamnjoh & Konings 1997:211), and the pre-eminence of French as the “special language” and the adoption of “inherited French institutions and bureaucratic practices in all aspects of state administration and public life, not least in the Anglophone territory itself” (Nyamnjoh & Konings, 2004:193), the Anglophone quest for identity expresses their “resistance to their perceived marginalization and treatment as second class citizens...” (Nkwenti Fru & Wassermann, 2017:59).

However, the term Anglophone is ambiguous and misleading when applied to the Anglophone problem because its definition does not follow the linguistic pattern which constitutes its essence. Etymologically, the word Anglophone is composed with the Latin *anglus* (anglo) that pertains to English (language) or the English (people) and the Greek *phone* which means voice sound but also “speaker of”. From this perspective, an Anglophone is semantically someone who speaks English independently of his origin or geographical location. This classical semantic definition which is broadly admitted differs from the conceptualization of the Anglophone by Anglophone Cameroonians. The latter define an Anglophone, not only from the perspective of the language inherited from the British, but more importantly, from the perspective of a specific culture that they consider to be their idiosyncrasy and that differentiates them from their Francophone counterparts and constitute the lever of their marginalization (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997; Fanzo, 2010).

Contrary to Emmanuel Yenshu (2012), Eric Anchimbe (2005) and Walter Nkwi (2004) who integrate language issues in their conceptualization of the Anglophone problem, Joseph Nfi thinks that the linguistic parameter is misleading. He writes:

The linguistic Anglophones will include Anglophones of French Cameroon ancestry who migrated and settled permanently in British administered southern Cameroons before independence [as well as] the ‘new Anglophones’ who are Anglophones with their ethnic basis and ancestral homes in Francophone Cameroon but have recently migrated and acquired Anglo-Saxon education and culture...” (Nfi, 2014a:122).

From Nfi’s viewpoint, the linguistics definition of an Anglophone in the context of Southern Cameroons relies on three components: one, the natives of southern Cameroons; second, Cameroonians who migrated from French Cameroon and lastly, the “new Anglophones” whose settlement is more recent and related to education and professional reasons. Hence, the linguistic definition of Anglophone Cameroonians takes into consideration three historical periods viz: the period before

British colonization, the British colonial period and post-independence period. To Nfi, the problem with this conceptual approach of an Anglophone is that it takes into consideration Cameroonians who migrated from French Cameroon since the British colonial period to nowadays. This category of Cameroonians is not considered as Anglophone because their origins are in the Francophone part of the Cameroonian territory. Nfi (2014a) then stresses that “in Cameroon the concept of Anglophone is more ethnic, cultural and regional than linguistic” (p.122). In other words, within the context of the Anglophone problem, an Anglophone is someone whose ancestry is Southern Cameroons (Ndobegang, 2009).

Nevertheless, this ethnic and regional connotation of the Anglophone is somehow challenging. The first challenge is about the use of the term Anglophone to designate people who were leaving in current southern Cameroons before the British colonial period. The word Anglophone is related to the presence of the British and the British colonial heritage. It is then confusing to use it while referring to people whose existence was *a priori* to the British colonial experience. Maybe there is a need to formulate a new concept or adopt another concept that will capture all the historical and cultural specificities of the Anglophone as defined by the previous authors. Secondly, if it is admitted that people who settled in British Southern Cameroons during the British colonial period are not considered as Anglophone though they experienced the Anglo-Saxon culture, what about the children that they had with women who were considered as Anglophone? Can a child be considered as an Anglophone when his father is not? What about the Francophone women who got married to Anglophones and settled in the family compound of their husbands in Southern Cameroons? The case and the situation of the Mbororo community bring in more trouble in the conceptualization of the Anglophone identity from an ethnical perspective.⁵ This conceptualization proposed by Nfi alleges that some Mbororo are Anglophone while others are not. As a matter of fact, the Mbororo community in the North West region is mostly constituted of two main groups namely: the Jaafun⁶ and the Aku⁷ who arrived in Southern Cameroons respectively in the early twentieth century (the 1910) and during the 1940s respectively (Pelican, 2008). If it is agreed that the British colonial administration started in 1922 through the League of Nations Mandate (Ardener 1968, Nfi 2014a:121), the Aku who arrived in the region in the 1940s do not have the Anglophone identity whereas the Jaafin who got in the region during the 1910s are considered as Anglophone. The problem arising is that the Grassfields Mbororo considered that they belong to the same community on the basis

⁵ None of the entire literature on the Anglophone problem gives a real consideration to the Mbororo community. The latter whose settlement in the area was encouraged by the British administration and even some local chiefs, complain about their marginalization (Jabiru Muhammadou Amadou , 2017, “The Mbororo Problem in North West Cameroon a Historical Investigation”, *American Scientific Journal for Engineering, Technology and Sciences*, vol.33; n°1)

⁶ The Jaafun were the first Mbororo to enter the Western Grassfields. They were coming from the Adamawa plateau in northern Cameroon and established themselves on the Bamenda Highlands (M. Pelican, 2008, “Mbororo claims to regional citizenship and minority status in North-West Cameroon”, *Africa*, 78 (4):540-560.)

⁷ The Aku who originated from Jos Plateau in Nigeria settled on the lowland pastures on the northern fringes of the Bamenda Highland (Ibid).

of their lifestyle and religion (Islam). They also have the same problems and share the same experiences in their interaction with other Grassfields communities which are numerically superior to them. They “experienced themselves as a politically marginalized and economically exploited minority” (Pelican, 2008:546) and have decided to come together through an association⁸ in order to “claim for regional citizenship and minority status” in the North-west region. Thus, the Mbororo have developed a sense of community belonging to such a point that it is difficult to consider categorizing them differently through the concept of Anglophone although some arrived before British colonization and others after.

Besides, the definition of an Anglophone from an ethnic perspective is faced with another challenge when the pre-colonial period and geographical parameters are taken into consideration. Nfi’s article which is more expressive and detailed as far as the conceptualization of Anglophone and Anglophone identity are concerned, indicates that:

[Anglophone] identity was cultivated during pre-colonial times and later shaped by colonial forces. The ethnic Anglophones developed an identity and culture of their own thanks to their geography. Their land was circled by important geographical barriers: The Mungo River to the East, the Matarzim to the Northeast, the Atlantic Ocean to the South, the Adamawa Plateau to the North and Northwest, the Manyu River to the West and Mount Fako to the Southwest. These natural barriers protected the people against invasions from Fulani jihads and other conquerors from Kanem Bornu. The movement of people in and out of the zone was also difficult. With these barriers, the various chiefdoms and communities intensified inter- chiefdom trade and the exchange of goods and services (Nfi, 2014a:122).

This excerpt clearly situates the beginning of the Anglophone identity in the pre-colonial period; that is before 1884 and indicates that this identity was later on shaped by colonial forces. But, during the pre-colonial period, the territory that later became British southern Cameroons and Southern Cameroons did not exist as a homogenous political entity wherein it was possible to lay the foundations of a common and shared identity. More to that, there are some ethnic groups that existed as unique traditional political and cultural entities during the pre-colonial period and were split during the colonial period. In the current state of affairs, the ethnical definition of an Anglophone does not take into consideration the fact that colonial boundaries were not always defined on the basis of natural geographical features and that many ethnic groups were divided by colonial boundaries.⁹ This conceptual

⁸ That association founded in 1992 is known as the Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association (MBOSCUDA)

⁹ Verkijika G. Fanso reveals that “Colonial boundaries frequently left portions of distinct cultural areas or peoples in different colonies and, by virtue of the new international boundary already demarcated, parts of ethnic lands divided by it were declared by Powers concerned to be foreign to indigenous population” (G. Verkijika Fanso, 1986, “Traditional and colonial African Boundaries: Concepts and Functions in Inter-group Relations”, *Présence africaine*, n°137/138, p.69).

approach tends to ignore that some families were arbitrarily separated in 1916, when the British and French partitioned the German Kamerun. The example of the Bakossi people in the South West is eloquent here. Traditionally and culturally, the Bakossi is an ethnic group having Ngoe as unique and common ancestor (Edjedepang-Koge, 1986). During the partition of Cameroon, their ethnic land was divided into two: the “dividing line passed through Bakossi land and continual changes brought confusions, divisions, interclan and intertribal difficulties” (Hatfield et al., 2002:9). One part became francophone (the current Mungo division in the Littoral region) and the other part fell under the British Cameroon (the Kupe Muanenguba division in the South West region). Some then became Francophone while others were given the Anglophone identity. Piet Konings (2009) makes us to know that during the UPC¹⁰ rebellion in French Cameroon, “many Bakossi in Francophone Cameroon fled to be with their kinsmen in Anglophone Cameroon” (p.42). The pith and kernel of the problem now is to know if those Bakossi who left a part of their ethnic land located in French Cameroon and sought refuge in their families living in the other portion of their homeland found in British southern Cameroon are considered as Anglophones or not.

In the same vein, the conceptualization of an Anglophone from an ethnic perspective supposes that the Anglophones –considered here as those who have their origins in Southern Cameroons- constitute a unique sociocultural entity. It implies that the “ethnic Anglophones” (Nfi, 2014a) have common cultural schemes and are united around some values that created a feeling of solidarity and common belonging. Identity formation/construction includes a sense of uniqueness (Delage 2014). People sharing the same identity are unique as compared to other groups. This uniqueness supposes a uniformity of the group through its values, behaviors and culture. Identity is formed through uniqueness and its legitimacy is constructed through uniformity (Pedersen & Dobbin, 2006). However, some authors have pointed out the absence of uniqueness and sameness within the “ethnic Anglophones”. Henry Kah (2012), who has written about the existing dichotomy between the Anglophones of the North West and those from the South West, contends that “the two Anglophone provinces are ill at ease with each other” (pp.72-73). The author implies that Anglophones from the South West and those from the North West are divided and that division dates back to the colonial period:

Early missionary reports also discussed the differences between the people of the two English-speaking provinces. The South Westerners always claimed that they were superior to North Westerners. This explains why they often described their “brethren” from the North West as ‘simple and uncivilized bush people’ [...] It was partly these differences that made the Basel Mission, for example, to establish separate general meetings for the Christians of the grassfield and forest regions: *Mungaka* and *Duala* became official languages in church matters in the grassfields and the forest regions respectively.

¹⁰ *Union des Populations du Cameroun*. The first nationalist and anti-colonialist movement founded in Cameroon in 1948.

These differences have continued to manifest themselves within the church (Kah, 2012:76).

Through this statement, Henry Kah reveals the cultural and even identity differences that characterized these two communities. He makes the reader to understand that these two populations were different to the extent that it was not possible for the missionaries to consider them as a unique entity because of cultural and even linguistic barriers. That is why they decided to regroup them in two different religious groups using two different languages. The *Mungaka* is the language spoken in the North West region by the Bali-Nyonga while *Duala* is the language spoken by the populations of Douala and its surrounding localities which constitute the great Sawa group. It is then important to notice that after the partition of Cameroon in 1916, Douala became part of the French Cameroon. And the facts presented here occurred during the British colonial period; that is after 1916. Henry Kah is then insinuating that during the colonial period, missionaries located in British Southern Cameroons, adopted a linguistic policy that consisted, for the South Westerners, in using a language belonging to an ethnic group found in French Cameroon. This historical reality implies that the missionaries and the British were conscious of the fact that the colonial boundaries divided communities that were sharing the same pre-colonial cultural identity and brought together, in the same colonial territory, people who were different in essence.

Moreover Kah's paper goes further and analyses the manifestation of this dichotomy in postcolonial Cameroon. It reveals that the rift between Anglophone North Westerners and South Westerners reached its climax in the earlier 1990's with the beginning of the democratization process. Relying on Tande Dibussi's work¹¹ the author writes:

[...] when the University of Buea was created, the existing feud between the South West and North West provinces was compounded. Some North West elite sought audience with the Prime Minister and made him to understand that they did not feel happy that the university was created elsewhere. They requested that the university should be taken to its rightful place –Bambili (Bamenda), the seat of the Advanced Teachers Training College. In a move to preserve what was so dear to her, the newly established South West Elite Association (SWELA) dispatched a four-man delegation to the Prime Minister, Sadou Hayatou, to talk about the university. In their discussion, they made it clear to the Premier that the term 'Anglophone' was deceitful. Rather, 'Anglophoneness' had simply made the South West annex of the North West. They also pointed out that the use of the term "Anglophone" had made their province to forfeit its share of the national cake to North West. (Kah, 2012:88).

¹¹ Tande Dibussi, 1991, "Fire in the House: The NW/SW feud takes a turn for the worse", *Cameroon Life*, vol.1, n°12.

This passage goes beyond the depiction of the North West/South West dichotomy and gives indications about the rejection or disapprobation of the term 'Anglophone' by the South Westerners. Analytically, the words of the author stipulate that this category of people refused to continue to be identified neither *as* Anglophone nor *with* Anglophone.¹²

Without exonerating the Francophones from their responsibility in the Anglophone Problem, Henry Kah then deplores this dichotomy and its instrumentalization by post-colonial establishments, and concludes that "Anglophones are also architects of their marginalization" (Ibid:103).

The second author who has portrayed the absence of solidarity and uniqueness among the Anglophones is Walter G. Nkwi (2017). Contrary to Kah (2012) who analyses the North West/South West dichotomy from a political perspective, Walter Nkwi privileges a cultural approach. Focusing on the migration of Kom people (from Bamenda) to the South West region since the colonial period, he elaborates on the exo-perception of the North Westerners by the South Westerners and the strategies implemented by the previous to "hold tight to their identity while out of their area of origin in a melting pot of many cultures" (p.133). It emerges from Nkwi's analysis that the native communities of the South West region have become a numerical minority in their region with the coming of the North Westerners that they called *Graffie*. The author explains that the word "Graffie is a creolized word which means people from Bamenda Grassfields" (Nkwi, 2017:132). To him, this definition is sniping "in the sense that it refers to people from Bamenda Grassfields who are more backward as compared to more civilized [South Westerners who are] coastal people. It is also borne out of spite as the people who are more enterprising and entrepreneurial than the coastal people" (Ibid). Deductively, the South Westerners do not identify themselves with the "Bamenda Grassfielders" and the latter "resisted, by staying and hanging onto its identity" (Ibid: 141).

This situation described by Henry Kah and Walter Nkwi is detrimental to the construction and the existence of an Anglophone identity and/or ethnicity. The attitude of the minority South Westerners (compare to the *Graffie*) who almost delegitimized the Anglophone Identity (Kah, 2012), is an illustration of the fact that "minority groups may feel unaddressed by dominant heritage formation, and challenge the canons of cultural truth put forward by the heritage agencies..." (Van de Port & Meyer, 2018: 8). Obviously, with the disqualification or minimization of language as an element of that identity, it seems to be difficult for the Anglophone to succeed in the making of collectiveness. English language is the most determinant

¹² In the identification process there is a distinction between identifying *as* something and identifying *with* something. These two identification models were differentiated by Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper and referred to as the cognitive (classificatory) and the psychodynamic meanings. The previous meaning refers to "identifying oneself (...) *as* someone who fits a certain description or belongs to a certain category..." while the latter which derives from Freudian psychology "involves identifying oneself emotionally with another person, category, or collectivity" (See Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p.17). In the case of the South Westerners, Kah indicates that they considered "the term Anglophone as deceitful". In this case the term "Anglophone" involves a category to which the South Westerners do not want to belong anymore. He later on said that "Anglophoneness" had simply made the South West annex of the North West". Here Anglophoneness refers to an emotional belonging to a collectivity.

and observable colonial heritage that the South Westerners and the *Graffie* share in common (Kah, 2012:73). It is the element that better highlights “the presence of [their common] past in the present”¹³; and the construction of identity requires a process of heritage formation¹⁴. It should rely on something to which all the members of the collectivity must be able to identify themselves with; something that can be considered as a common heritage. Mattijis van de Port and Birgit Meyer (2018) state that there is “a link between heritage production and the making of collectiveness” (p.1).

Scholars interested in the conceptualization of the Anglophone identity from an ethnic perspective should then take these realities and limitations into consideration. Given the existing dichotomy between the South Westerners and the North Westerners, they should proceed to a production of the real that relies on the collective past of these communities. If it is true that identity is a construction, it also remains that the foundation of this construction rests on meaningful and authentic elements handed down from the past. In the case they exist, the authentication of these elements will facilitate the differentiation between the “original” Anglophone and the “new” Anglophone whose participation in Reunification is differently analyzed.

The origin of the Anglophone Problem: A “sham reunification” sustained by the “Eleventh Province”

On October 1 1961, the territory of the British Southern Cameroons became independent by Reunifying with French Cameroon that had achieved her independence from France in 1960. This Reunification came as a result of a long process that started in February 1961 with the plebiscite in which the people of the British Cameroons were invited to choose whether to become independent by joining Nigeria, or to become independent by joining Cameroon.

Given the fact that the British decided to divide their own share of Cameroon into two parts –the British Northern Cameroons and the British Southern Cameroons that were completely disconnected from a socio-cultural perspective- the plebiscite was organized separately in the two territories. The outcome of this exercise supervised by the United Nations was that the Northerners decided to join Nigeria while the Southerners decided to reunify with *La République du Cameroun*. After that, the officials of *La République du Cameroun*, and those of Southern Cameroons met at several occasions in order to discuss the terms of the Reunification and prepare its implementation. One of the prominent meetings that were organized to that prospect is the Foumban Conference that held from the 17th to 22nd July 1961 in the

¹³ I borrow this terminology from David C. Harvey (2006) quoted by Mattjis van de Port & Birgit Meyer (See M. van de Port & B. Meyer, 2018, “Introduction: Heritage and dynamics Politics of Authentication, Aesthetics of Persuasion and the cultural production of the Real” in B Meyer & M. van de Port (eds), *Sense and Essence. Heritage and the Cultural Production of the Real*, New-York/Oxford, Berghahn, p.6).

¹⁴ Heritage formation is a process which “denotes the process whereby, out of the sheer infinite number of things, places and practices that have been handed down from the past, a selection is made that is qualified as a precious and irreplaceable resource, essential to personal and collective identity and necessary for self-respect” (Ibid.p.1).

touristic town of Foumban located in the western part of *La République du Cameroun*. The importance of the Foumban Conference lies in the fact that it was there that arrangements were made about the form of the new State that was to be a Federal one. This Foumban Conference was preceded by the two Buea tripartite conferences (May and June 1961) and the Bamenda All Party Conference which met in June 1961 and where the Anglophones had to prepare for the Foumban Conference. From the 2nd to the 7th of August 1961, a Tripartite Conference was later organized in Yaounde in order to put the Foumban agreement in legal form. It is through that process that Southern Cameroons achieved her independence by Reunifying with *La République du Cameroun*. That is the reason why the date of independence of Southern Cameroons from Great Britain coincided with the date of Reunification with former French Cameroon. The word Reunification was used here accordingly because Southern Cameroons and *La République du Cameroun* previously belonged to a same territory; that is the German Kamerun. They were divided in March 1916 in the framework of World War I and evolved separately for 45 years. During this period of separation, they experienced different realities and were molded with specific political, judiciary, administrative and even educational ingredients. At the moment of their re-encounter (reunification) in 1961, the two territories were therefore different in many ways. Through reunification, the particularities of the two territories were to be preserved. But, to the Anglophones, the evolution of the country which became a unitary state in 1972 and the Republic of Cameroon in 1984 gave way to a subjection of their specificities. Reunification is then the Gordian knot of the Anglophone problem.

Ideologically, the Anglophone literature conceived the reunification obtained in 1961 as a marriage between British Southern Cameroons which is referred to as the “bride” and French Cameroon that is looked upon as the “bridegroom”. According to this allegory to a marital context, Southern Cameroons, the weak “bride”, was under the domination of her stronger husband in terms of territory, population and resources. This implies that the balance of power between the two territories was lopsided. Contrary to this conception which was developed by V.T Le Vine (1961), some Francophone scholars remain in the lexical field of the family but envisage Reunification as a reunion of brothers who have been separated for long. To them, there is no difference between French Cameroonians and Southern Cameroonians. They are all brothers having German Kamerun as a “common mother”. They are then alleged to have a same identity coined as *camerounité*. Daniel Abwa (2015; 2011 and 2003) can be considered as the flag bearer of this ideological stand point. Arguing on the fact that “there is no Anglophone and no Francophone” in Cameroon, but just Cameroonians, he opines that, during the Foumban conference: “*ce sont donc ces Camerounais, ces frères, en âmes et consciences qui adoptent la fédération comme système de gouvernement à mettre en place*”¹⁵ (Abwa, 2015:65). In the same vein, in his effort to explain that the partition of Cameroon that occurred in 1916 was not the will of Cameroonians, he points out the fact: “*aucun Camerounais ne peut être tenu*

¹⁵ Translation: “Cameroonians, who adopt the federation as a system of government were brothers, in souls and consciences”

pour responsable de ce découpage déséquilibré car nul d'entre-eux n'a été consulté ni de près, ni de loin"¹⁶ However, while making this statement, Daniel Abwa does not consider the fact that none of those who became Cameroonians after 1884 were also consulted by the Germans before they built-up their Kamerun. Even the Duala Chiefs with whom the Germans signed treaties were not willing to be under the German protectorate. History tells us that these chiefs wrote several times to the Queen of England requesting for the British protectorate. This can explain why Cameroonians have never considered themselves as Germanophones. The same way Abwa complains about the fact that Anglophones invoke their British Colonial heritage in the definition of their identity; the same way he is convoking the German colonial period to refute the Anglophone attitude. Then some questions arise as follows: why should the German colonial period that lasted for only 32 years be more important or valued than the British colonial period that lasted for 54 years? Are the French speaking Cameroonians not valuing their French colonial heritage? Why is the Cameroonian judiciary, military, monetary systems connected to France and not to Germany? These are some questions and problematics that historians arguing against the Anglophones' attachment to their British Colonial heritage should also consider and address.

By saying that there is "no Anglophones and no Francophones in Cameroon", this author contradicts the constitution of Cameroon that stipulates that "The official languages of the Republic of Cameroon shall be English and French, both languages having the same status. The State shall guarantee the promotion of bilingualism throughout the country (...)" (Article 1(2)). Through this article, the constitution acknowledges the bilingual and the bi-cultural nature of the State of Cameroon. This article is not *ex-nihilo*. It relies on the fact that Cameroon had experienced French and British domination simultaneously in her eastern and western part respectively. By this article the constitution magnifies the bi-cultural character of Cameroon where Anglophones and Francophones coexist since reunification. Besides, this negationist ideology that denies the existence of Anglophones and Francophones disqualifies reunification as one of the hinge period of the history of Cameroon in as much as it was the reunion of English-speaking and French Cameroonians.

In the same vein, the simple fact that "Cameroon has two completely different national anthems which were composed in two different territories by two different groups of people under two different historical contexts and influenced by two diametrically opposed colonial legacies" (Dze-Ngwa, 2014:91), is the perfect illustration of the fact that there are Anglophones and Francophones in Cameroon. Although the title of each of the Anthems is the translation of the other version, the two anthems are different in context and content despite the same melody and rhythm. There is then one anthem in English for the Anglophones and another one in French for the Francophones. To Dze-Ngwa (2014), the existence of two anthems in one country, [...] puts to question the desire to effectively unite a people who had been torn apart by colonial masters and reunited with different inherited colonial

¹⁶ Translation: "no Cameroonian can be held responsible for this unbalanced cut-off that none of them has been consulted directly or indirectly"

legacies...” (p.99). The fact that the Federal state had two different anthems can be considered as a sign of unpreparedness. It gives the impression that people and political leaders were not ready and prepared for it.

As a matter of fact, there are some scholars who consider that Reunification was a dupery since its inception. Anthony Ndi (2016:213) contends that “There has been a consistent tendency to down grade whatever originates from former Southern Cameroons for integration into national system as inferior or is generally treated with scorn and ridicule”. In the same vein, Emmanuel Yenshu Vubo (2012) is of the opinion that Reunification was not well thought and prepared. He writes:

The making of such an unexpected marriage between cultures in a context where technical developments to handle the impending complications of the association were not seriously analysed is both a puzzle and the result of a combination of seemingly contradictory drives. On the one hand, there was the utopianism of the pan-Kamerun experience projected by idealistic nationalists and later on the remote Pan-Africanist leitmotiv that came to be gratified unto it by politicians. On the other hand, it was expediency and political calculation (p.vii).

For this author, in 1961, conditions were not created to facilitate the coming together of the *La République du Cameroun* and the Southern Cameroons. This is because the rationales that motivated the implementation of Reunification were not genuine and objective. Those who campaigned for reunification were animated by the attainment of personal political goals. However, reunification was enunciated and masterminded for the first time by UPC nationalists who nurtured the idea of rebuilding German Kamerun. Since its creation on April 10th 1948, this movement had advocated for reunification and independence of French and British Cameroons (Joseph, 1977). From the UPC perspective the British and French Cameroons were to be reunited before achieving their independence as a unique territory. Unfortunately for UPC nationalists, this political option remained a wishful thinking because their efforts to conquer power failed and French Cameroon achieved its independence separately. After independence, Ahmadou Ahidjo, the first President of French Cameroon adopted the reunificationist discourse as a strategy aiming at “depriving the UPC of their ideological ammunition, rendering them empty, and making irrelevant their political tactics” (Awason, 2000:107). Nevertheless, it is not only the Francophone leaders, here represented by Ahidjo, who took advantage of the reunificationist ideology. In his work, Nicodemus Awason (2000) also indicates that prominent Anglophones politicians like Emmanuel Endeley and John Ngu Foncha used the reunification ideology in order to become Premiers in Southern Cameroons in 1954 and 1959 respectively. This somehow contradicts with the idea that reunification was imposed by Francophones on the “reluctant Anglophones” (Nfi, 2014b:348. See also Amazee, 1994 and Ndi 2013). According to Nfi (2014b), French Cameroonian immigrants in Southern Cameroon that he coined as the “Eleventh

province”¹⁷ “imposed [reunification] on the reluctant Anglophones by convincing the UN to propose it as one of the plebiscite alternatives. When this happened, Ahidjo used Foncha to force it through the throat of the Anglophones” (Ibid). In the same vein, Ndi (2013) holds that Foncha was not a reunificationist and that he “only accepted it with reluctance when he was maneuvered and subjected to heavy pressure...” (p.208). This view is striking when it is admitted with Jua and Konings (2004) that “Even on the eve of the UN-organised plebiscite in Anglophone Cameroon in February 1961, reunification remained low on Ahidjo's list of political preferences” (p.618).

However, although Awasom (2000) reveals that “The reunification ideology began in the French Cameroon before spreading to the British Cameroon” by some Francophone settlers and UPC that operated in Southern Cameroons from 1955 to 1957, it should be acknowledged with Joseph Takougang (1996) that the reunificationist ideology was “embraced” by Southern Cameroonians:

In fact, the UPC's persistent pursuit of reunification was partly responsible for inspiring almost all of the important political leaders in the Southern Cameroon (with the exception of P. M. Kale) to embrace the concept of reunification between 1948 and 1955. But as it turned out, most Southern Cameroonian politicians espoused the idea in order to win the support of French Cameroonian immigrants in case they were allowed to vote in future elections, and not from a genuine desire to recreate a Cameroon with its pre-1914 borders. These leaders also saw reunification as leverage that could be used in negotiating greater political concessions from Nigeria with whom the Southern Cameroons was administered after World War I (Takougang, 1996:11).

Takougang's view collides with Ndi and Nfi's opinions by holding that the political leaders of Southern Cameroons were inspired by UPC ideology of reunification that they “embraced” and later on “espoused” to gain the support of the “Eleventh Province” for elections. Southern Cameroonian political leaders adopted the reunificationist ideology, not because they were forced or constrained to, but because of political strategy in the negotiation of their separation with Nigeria (Awasom 2000). It can be surprising to notice that Anglophones, on whom reunification was assumedly imposed by the “Eleventh Province”, were the first to claim for it at an international level even before the UPC did. Actually, Emmanuel Endeley was the first to claim for reunification out of Cameroon during the Constitutional Conference held in Ibadan in 1950 (Ibid: 97). Besides, the fact that reunification movement survived and resurfaced in Southern Cameroons through the

¹⁷ Translation: “The Eleventh Province consist [sic] of immigrants from French Cameroons and the inhabitants and peoples who were living in the Southern Cameroons and later West Cameroon (present Northwest and Southwest Regions) but whose birth places, homes of origin or ethnic base were in French Cameroons. These were people born in the latter area before 1916 and later migrated for one reason or the other and settled permanently in the West or the British territory of Southern Cameroons during the Mandate and Trusteeship periods or before the reunification of the two Cameroons in 1961” (See J. Nfi, 2013, *Celebrating Reunification and the Eleventh Province*, Bamenda, Baron Printing House).

creation of the One Kamerun (OK) party -by an Anglophone in the name of Nde Ntumazah- after UPC was banned in May 1957 and its leaders arrested and deported (Ibid: 105) can be seen as an indication that the reunification ideology was adopted and well rooted in Southern Cameroons.

Furthermore, there is another contradiction in Nfi's and Awasom's views as far as the adoption of reunification as one of the plebiscite alternatives is concerned. The former insinuates, without clear demonstration based on historical facts, that the French Cameroonians immigrants are those who convinced the UN to propose it as one of the plebiscite alternatives. The latter on his part stipulates that "Although majority opinion in the British Southern Cameroons favored independence, this [option] did not have the blessing of Britain [that] feared that the Southern Cameroon might not be economically viable, incapable of standing on its feet if allowed to attain sovereignty, and the territory would always fall back on 'her' as a liability". Awasom stresses that, given the position of the British Government, the United Nations decided to impose the choice of joining with Nigeria or Cameroon. Apart from the position of Great Britain, the said choice was also influenced by "the pressures from the fiercely anticolonial African bloc championed by Nkrumah's Ghana, that was infatuated with Pan-Africanism and was against the emergence of microstates in the form of the Southern Cameroons" (Awasom, 2000:109).

However, reunification created more challenges than it solved maybe because the choice of Anglophone population during the plebiscite was a "*choix negatif*"¹⁸ as coined by Alain Didier Olinga, a Francophone scholar who contends that the frustration the Anglophones have experienced since reunification made them to feel there are still in the situation of "colonized people" (Olinga, 1994). Almost all the authors postulate that the Anglophone problem came up as a consequence of reunification which came as a result of the partition of German Kamerun. Awasom (2000) acknowledges that "The reunification movement germinated from the ashes of German colonization and was the manifestation of the desire of Cameroonians to return to German territorial frontiers before the First World War" (p.94). Deductively, the roots of the Anglophone problem "may be traced back to the partitioning of the erstwhile German Kamerun Protectorate after World War I into British and French mandate/trust territories" (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2004:192). Notwithstanding the fact that the partitioning of the German Kamerun constitutes the historical breeding ground of the Anglophone problem, it should be noted that the claims of the Anglophones are posterior to reunification and the establishment of the Federal State. These claims are subsequent to what they experienced *a posteriori*. The main grievances of the Anglophones are related to the implementation of reunification. This implementation did not follow the aspirations of Anglophones as indicated by Konings and Nyamnjoh (2004):

The political elite of the Anglophone territory, the Southern Cameroons, led by Prime Minister John Ngu Foncha, had proposed a

¹⁸ By the concept of "*choix negatif*" (negative choice), Didier Olinga indicates that during the 1961 plebiscite, the Anglophones opted to join with French Cameroon mostly because they wanted to escape from Nigeria domination and influence.

‘loose’ form of federation, which they considered to be a safe guarantee for the equal partnership of both parties and for the preservation of the cultural heritage and identity of each. Contrary to Anglophone expectations, the political elite of the francophone territory [...] opted for a highly centralized form of federation... (p.192).

The Anglophones came into the Federal state having in mind that their specificities would not be undermined by their Francophone new counterparts. They envisaged reunification from an egalitarian perspective assuming that the two federal states had to function on equal footing. Rather, the “bicultural project” they expected turned to be a utopia (Yenshu2012). Taking into consideration the fundamental cultural, social and political differences, between Anglophones and Francophones, it became obvious that the two cultures were difficult to bridge (Fanso, 2010). In the opinion of Wilbrod Dze-Ngwa (2015), the “reunification of people with different inherited Anglo-Axon and French colonial legacies brought about Anglophone-Francophone dichotomies, which have sometimes resulted in tensions...” (p.88). Reunification was therefore metamorphosed into assimilation giving rise to a number of unexpected situations and changes. The centralized form of federation adopted by Ahmadou Ahidjo played against the interests of the Anglophones whose administrative, monetary and even political specificities were subdued by the Francophone system. Thus, “the federation was not one of equality between the Anglophones and Francophones. It neither provided for equal partnership nor for the equitable preservation of the cultural heritage of each territory” (Fonchingong, 2013:225). This “created an Anglophone consciousness” (Konings and Nyamnjoh 1997:207), and made the Anglophone to feel that they “have been reduced from partners of equal status in the Union to the status of a subjugated people” (Fonchingong, 2013:226). In the domain of education, the Anglo-Saxon system became at risk because of its “francophonisation” (Nfi, 2014a). If they have not been able to protect the other aspects of their British heritage, the Anglophones had struggled to safeguard the General Certificate (GCE) which symbolizes their “cherished colonial heritage” (Nyamnjoh & Akum, 2008).

One of the fundamental and crucial complaints that Anglophones have formulated and expressed against the Francophones is about the different changes of the nature of the Federal state. The first change occurred with the 1972 constitution that converted the Federal State into a Unitary State. The Anglophones complain that this change was done unilaterally and at the expenses of the Federal constitution that provided in its article 47(1) that “No bill to amend the Constitution may be introduced if it tends to impair the unity and integrity of the Federation”. Although the unitary state reinforces the unity of the state, its implementation spelled the end of the federation; but more importantly, the disappearance of their specificities as part of the national identity. Nicodemus Awasom (2004) laments that: “the unitary constitution provided a greater opportunity for Anglophone-Francophone interaction” but unfortunately, the institutional set up was French-oriented and “Francophones naturally had the upper hand” (p.101). Then the 1972 constitution which dissolved

the federal structures meant a complete loss of West Cameroons (Southern Cameroons) autonomy leading to the sink of Anglophones into unitary state (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997). To Joseph Nfi (2017), the 1972 constitutional reform was justified by Ahidjo's plans to exploit the resources of Southern Cameroon which was yet a part of the Federal State. He writes: "the main factor that precipitated the 'death' of the federation was the discovery of petroleum in West Cameroon and Ahidjo's determination to take total control of this new source of wealth and prevent West Cameroon from waging a war of secession as was the case with the Katanga Province in the Congo and Biafra in Nigeria" (p.39). He concludes his paper by mentioning Ahidjo's effort to maintain the unity of the territory by avoiding that "West Cameroon could secede from the federation because of its new oil wealth" (Ibid: 45).

For some Francophone intellectuals who are in support of the unitary state system and who tend "to deny the existence of an Anglophone problem..." because they "have no idea what Anglophones are complaining about" (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003:153), the transition from a federal state to a unitary state was the expression of the people's will to reject the colonial interlude that divided Cameroonians with imported cultural elements. This vision is echoed by Hubert Mono Ndjana who says:

Dans la marche vers l'unité, le Cameroun a plutôt choisi la voie de la centralisation en vue d'une grande union nationale ; non par annexion d'une partie par une autre, mais par consensus comme expression d'un vouloir-vivre-ensemble. [...]Le référendum du 20 mai 1972, par lequel les deux états [...] décidaient de quitter le statut d'états fédérés, pour effacer la dualité qu'implique la fédération et devenir la République Unie du Cameroun était donc une sorte de retour institutionnel aux sources[...]¹⁹ (Mono Ndjana, 1996 :56).

Through this statement, Mono Ndjana implies that the 1972 institutional evolution was the expression of the desire of both Anglophones and Francophones to belong to a common unique state. But this author seemingly ignores the fact that during the negotiations for the setting up of the federal state in 1961, Anglophone political leaders were against a centralized form of the state. They opted for a "loose" federation as indicated by Konings and Nyamnjoh (2004). The question that arose therefore is: what had changed between 1961 and 1972?

Beyond the apologetic character of Mono Ndjana's statement in favor of the unitary ideology, this author points out the fact that unification was implemented as a result of a referendum that was sanctioned by a consensus of 99,97% for unification. But Nantang Jua and Piet Konings (2004) hold that the 1972 referendum was a "myth" and that:

¹⁹ Translation: "In its march towards unity, Cameroon has instead chosen the path of centralization with a view to achieving a great national unity; not by annexation of one part by another, but by consensus as an expression of a desire to live together [...]. The referendum of May 20, 1972, whereby the two states [...] decided to leave the status of federated states, to erase the duality implied by the federation and become the United Republic of Cameroon was therefore a sort of institutional return to the sources"

the referendum results were more likely a manifestation of the regime's autocratic nature than of the Anglophone population's support. In other words, fear prevented Anglophones from expressing their objective interests. The ballot box was far from secret,...] and it was neither politically wise nor politically safe to hold and express views different from those of the president...(p.8).

What transpired from this quotation is that Anglophones voted for unification, but their vote was not the expression of their will but rather, it followed Ahidjo's regime expectations. Simply put, Anglophones voted for something that they did not want because they were afraid of Ahidjo's repression. Without disqualifying the authoritative and dictatorial nature of Ahidjo's regime, it is worthwhile to notice that there was not a single Anglophone who voted for unification out of any pressure. Besides, the result of this referendum with is almost 100% arouses some questions about the role and the choices of the Anglophone political and administrative elite that also voted. Even if it can be admitted that the common Southern Cameroonians voted for unification because they were afraid, this justification can hardly be pertinent when it comes to Anglophone elite and leaders who were supposed to preserves the interest of the territory and the people. Piet Konings and Francis Nyamnjoh help to understand the rationales of this state-of-affairs by quoting Kofele-Kale (1987). They contend that:

While there is a widespread tendency among Anglophones to make the francophone elite, and even the francophone population as a whole, fully responsible for the Anglophone problem, it cannot be denied that the Anglophone political leaders bear an important share of responsibility for the Anglophone predicament. Generally speaking, in 1972, the latter did not resist the abolition of the federation, which they initially embraced as the embodiment of the highest ideals of reunification. Apparently, as soon as they came to realize that their influence within federal state of West Cameroon (...) began to be whittled down, the federal arrangements no longer suited their designs. They started competing for Ahidjo's favors, aspiring for power positions first within the single party and the federal government and eventually within the unitary state, and thus blatantly neglecting the defense of West Cameroon's autonomy and interest (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2004:193).

Through their writings, Konings and Nyamnjoh reveal the responsibility of Anglophone leaders in the dismantling of the federal structures. Joseph Ebune is of the same opinion when he writes:

If federalism failed in West Cameroon, West Cameroonians also gave their blessing for its fall in 1972 when a unitary system replaced it. Even before the 1961 plebiscite, there was much division of opinion and mistrust among them. This may have started right from the 1959 Mamfe Plebiscite Conference when they failed to

agree on what form the British Southern Cameroons' independence had to take, either joining Nigeria or Cameroon Republic (Ebune, 2016: 137-138).

Ebune, Konings and Nyamnjoh then reveal that Anglophone political leaders contributed in the implementation of Ahidjo's policies towards unification, in order to achieve their personal political interests. It is for this reason that they "did not resist the abolition of federation" (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2004) and approved the unitary system because what "seemed to prevail among them was their desire to satisfy their personal interests than those of the state" (Ebune, 2016:138).

The second change occurred in 1984 when President Paul Biya, who succeeded Ahidjo in 1982, decided to transform the "United Republic of Cameroon" into "The Republic of Cameroon" through decree N° 84-001 of 4/2/84. This new evolution sounds to the Anglophones as the completion or the "final stage" of their assimilation process since the new official name given to the country "was what independent francophone Cameroon had been called by Ahidjo before reunification" (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997:213). The Republic of Cameroon is translated in French as *La République du Cameroun* which was pre- reunification appellation of East Cameroon (Fonchingong, 2013:226). This new appellation "inevitably led to the dis-appearance of the autonomy of the Anglophone region" and removed "the last visible symbol of the 1961 union" (Ibid). There is then a general agreement among Anglophone scholars who think that: "federation that followed reunification was a sham federation which [...] was actually a preparatory stage for the annexation of Southern Cameroons..." (Nkwenti & Wassermann, 2017:59). All the frustrations obtained through Reunification (1961), the dismantling of the federal structures (1972) and the change of the name of the state (1984) led to the development of Anglophone nationalism in the 1990's thanks to the political liberalization.

Political Liberalization and the Anglophone Nationalism

The Anglophone nationalism is related to the ethnical approach of the conceptualization of an Anglophone in the Cameroonian context (see Ndobegan, 2009 and Nfi 2014a). This definition considers the ethnic Anglophone as a nation which is a "gravity center where a sort of national identity is founded" (Mabwe et al., 201:132). To Ernest Renan (1992), a nation is the "outcome of a long past of efforts, sacrifices, and devotions". It is "a moral conscience" created, "in sane mind and warm heart, by a great aggregation of people animated by the "feeling of sacrifices made and those that one is still dispose to make" (Ibid). Deriving from the notion of nation, nationalism can be understood as "a devotion to one's nation or a policy of national independence" (Simpson & Weiner, 1991: 234). In this sense, "nationalism is not only preceded by the very existence of a nation but also by sentiment or belief that produces devotion to the nation" (Mabwe et al., 2017:132). Despite the existing dichotomy amongst the *Graffie* Anglophones and the South Westerners (see Kah,

2012 and Nkwi, 2017), that makes it difficult to look at this group as a “nation”²⁰, it is worth to note that the marginalization and the frustrations that they have experienced have made the Anglophones to feel that they share same regrets and have a common program to realize. In this case, their common program is to free themselves from the Francophone domination, notably by returning to the federal option. Piet Konings, a Dutch scholar who has immensely co-published on the Anglophone problem with Francis Nyamnjoh and Jua explains that the Anglophone nationalism is “the result of a long process of Anglophone identity formation and is currently feeding on the multiple grievances of Anglophones in post-reunification era” (Konings, 2009:91). There are two prerequisites that are necessary for a better understanding of the Anglophone nationalism in Cameroon. Firstly, Cameroon is “*un pays, deux territoires, deux héritages*” (one country, two territories, and two legacies) (Bouopda, 2018). Secondly, “Anglophone nationalism was built on the premise that Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians differ linguistically, culturally, politically and socially” (Anyefru 2011).

That said, most of the authors who have questioned and discussed the Anglophone nationalism agree on the fact that it has benefited from the political liberalization implemented by Paul Biya in the 1980s and which was reinforced with the democratization process that began in 1990. Luc Sindjoun postulates that:

La libéralisation politique est un moment de constitution de la communauté anglophone en groupe ethnique dont l'ancêtre fondateur est l'administration britannique ; le territoire identitaire ; l'ex-Southern Cameroons et la langue de référence l'anglais (Sindjoun, 1996 :94).²¹

For this author, the constitution of the Anglophone community as an ethnic group having Southern Cameroons as territory and English as language came as a result of political liberalization that favored the development of opposition and contesting movements. Surfing on the same wave, Louis Marie Nkoum-Me-Tseny (1996), another Francophone scholar, postulates that with the democratization process, the grievances of the Anglophone went beyond issues related to federalism and embraced new problematics dealing with the democratization process of the country and the alternation at the head of the state. The Anglophone started complaining against the authoritarian and dictatorial characters of the state, deprivation of liberty, electoral fraud, and embezzlement of public funds. All this

²⁰ Ernest Renan stresses the fact that a nation is both a soul and a spiritual principle: “one is the past, the other is the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories, the other is the present consent, the desire to live together, the desire to continue to invest in the heritage that we have jointly received [...]”. Although the Anglophones share *Graffie* and the South Westerners share a common (colonial) past and a rich (colonial) legacy of memories, their “nation” is challenged by the dichotomy that exists between them and that subsequently divides them into two different groups.

²¹ Translation: “Political liberalization gives way to the constitution of the English-speaking ethnic group whose founding ancestor is the British administration; the identity territory; the former Southern Cameroons and English as the reference language”

new set of grievances were aiming at ensuring their political positioning vis-à-vis the Francophones (Ibid).

More importantly, the political liberalization facilitated “the entry of Anglophone nationalism into public space (Konings 2009:73), through the creation of the Social Democratic Front (SDF), a political party, but also the multiplication of associations of civil society such as: the Cameroon Public Servants Union, the Teachers Association of Cameroon, the All Anglophone Conference and the Southern Cameroons Peoples Conference. As far as the SDF is concerned, Konings (2005) says that this party “helped to transform the Anglophone region into a veritable hotbed of rebellion leading to fierce confrontations with the regime in power...” (p.169). But the party rapidly stopped to be a regional party and took a national character with the growing membership of Francophones who were also claiming for political alternation and who massively voted for the candidate of SDF during the 1992 presidential elections. Subsequently, the defense of Anglophone interests was ensured principally by pressure groups and other associations of civil society (Jua & Konings, 2004). These associations contributed in the preservation and promotion of the Anglophone identity (Menthong 1996:75). For instance, it is the Teachers Association of Cameroon (TAC) that fought for the preservation of the Anglophone educational system and the creation of the GCE²² board that is in charge of its functioning (Ibid, see also Nyamnjoh & Fonteh, 2008). Students themselves have played a vanguard role in the Anglophone nationalist struggles notably through the Southern Cameroons Youth League (SCYL) created in 1995 (Konings 2002 & 2005). In this light, it should be noted with Piet Konings (2005) that:

The political liberalization process that started in december 1990 not only created space for students to organize in defence of their interest but also tended to encourage a further polarization among student factions along party and ethno-regional lines (p.175).

Thus, through the creation of the SCYL, the youths did not only intend to defend their interest as Anglophone students in a context where Francophones were accused for attempting to subdue the Anglo-Saxon subsystem of education. Their association was also having a political agenda that transpired from its denomination. The expression “Southern Cameroons” in the name of their association was an indication that these youths “perceived the creation of an independent Southern Cameroons state as the only avenue to a better future for themselves and the Anglophone population as a whole” (Konings, 2005:176-177).

In addition to these associations, there was also the development of what Francis Nyamnjoh (2011) has called “Anglophone liberation journalism”. This liberation journalism, which refers to some journalists and private media created thanks to the liberalization of the media landscape through the 1990 law on social communication, also animated the Anglophone fight. In fact, the Anglophone press has “played a pivotal role” in the Anglophone problem by advocating Anglophone nationalism (Tapuka, 2017). Then, the political liberalization has given the

²² General Certificate of Education

Anglophones an opportunity to intensify their struggles for a return to federal state through the growth of associations of civil society, the claims for constitutional reforms and the possibility to voice the Anglophone cause at the international level through a “diplomatic offensive” (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003). For all these reasons, Hélène-Laure Menthon (1996), opines that “[l’identité anglophone] est réactivée par le contexte de relative anomie sociale qui caractérise le processus de démocratisation au Cameroun débuté en 1990”²³ (p.72).

However, some authors perceived Anglophone nationalism as a factor of “national deconstruction” (Nyamnjoh, 2001), in the sense that it calls into question the principle of national unity which is determinant in the transformation process of Cameroon into a nation state. Nantang Jua and Piet Konings point out the fact that:

Although Anglophone resistance has been a permanent feature of Cameroon's post-colonial biography (...), it was not until political liberalisation that the Anglophone elite started mobilising and organising the regional population. Capitalising on traumatic Anglophone experiences of "otherness" and second-class citizenship in the Francophone-dominated post-colonial state, they began to lay claims to autonomy and self-determination, in the form first of a return to a federal state and later in the creation of an independent state. Confronted with persistent government attempts to deconstruct Anglophone identity and to suppress Anglophone organisation, Anglophone nationalists have increasingly resorted to less obtrusive forms of resistance, creating public space for Anglophone identity and nationhood in the historical, artistic, virtual, legal and everyday domains (Jua & Konings, 2004:628).

It emerges from this excerpt that there is an evolution in the “common project” of the “Anglophone nation” in its conquest for self-determination. Due to their domination and marginalization, the Anglophone initially opted for a return to a federal state. But later on, a secessionist and autonomist discourse emerged following the second meeting of the All Anglophone Conference (AACII). It is in the aftermath of this meeting that held in 1993 that the Anglophones decided to bring back the name “Southern Cameroons”:

Following the AACII, the Anglophone movements provocatively re-introduced the name of Southern Cameroons to refer to the Anglophone territory so as to "make it clear that our struggles are neither of an essentially linguistic character nor in defence of an alien colonial culture... but are aimed at the restoration of the autonomy of the former Southern Cameroons which has been annexed by the Republic of Cameroon" (Jua & Konings, 2004:615).

²³ Translation: “[the Anglophone identity] is reactivated by the context of relative social anomie which characterizes the o democratization process that started in Cameroon in 1990”.

The autonomy of the Southern Cameroons has then become the dominant claim of Anglophone nationalists. The flag bearer of this claim is the Southern Cameroon National Council (SCNC) that has been striving “for an independent Southern Cameroons state through peaceful negotiation with the regime, the “sensitisation” of the regional population and a diplomatic offensive” (Ibid). As regard to the diplomatic offensive, Anglophones have taken their case to the international community through constant visits and petitions to the United Nations. These petitions which are against the state of Cameroon aim at drawing the attention of the international community on the problems of the Anglophones with the hope that the UN might restore the statehood of Southern Cameroon (Anyefru, 2010). Still in their efforts to make their case known internationally, the Anglophone nationalists have also made use of the Internet. The latter has become an instrumental tool to articulate their struggle through cyber-nationalism (Anyefru, 2008).

To some authors, this evolution of Anglophone claims from the restoration of the federal state to the secession was justified by the attitude of President Paul Biya and his regime. The two were accused of always minimizing and even denying the existence of an Anglophone problem in Cameroon. Since the intensification of the Anglophone claims, the government has always tried to circumvent the actions of Anglophone nationalists. Many strategies were used to that effect going from the trivialization and demonization of the Anglophone problem, the direct and indirect control of the media, divide-and-rule, to a repressive drift (Bouopda, 2018; Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2013; Jua & Konings, 2004). Concerning the divide-and-rule strategy, Kah (2012) states that “the former head of state, Ahmadou Ahidjo and the current president, Paul Biya, have their own share of the blames for, intentionally or not, perpetuating the disunity within the Anglophone community” (p.72). This author then implies that the establishment is not innocent in the existing dichotomy between the Anglophones of the North West and those from the South West. Consistent with this opinion, Nkwi (2006) postulates that in the framework of the democratization process and the return of multiparty system in the 1990s, the government of Cameroon was playing politics of identity and belonging to divide the Anglophones. To him, with the implementation of the notions of autochthony, allochthony and minorities, the 1996 constitution “had boosted the protection of the South Westerner and poured petrol to the already existing tension flames between the Southwest minority and Bamenda immigrants” (Nkwi, 2017:140). Despite the government attempts to control their actions, “Anglophone nationalists have increasingly adopted less visible and less controllable strategies to place the Anglophone problem in the public space” and to fight for their self-determination (Jua & Konings, 2004:616). And the “Biya’s persistent refusal to enter into any negotiation caused a growing radicalization among Anglophone movements” (Konings, 2004:170).

However, it is important to notice that there are some Anglophone scholars who have a different opinion about Anglophone nationalism. Contrary to the previous authors and Anglophone nationalists who are claiming for the preservation of the Anglophone identity inherited from the British, some scholars like Roland Ndille (2016) advocate for a reinforcement of nation-building through the implementation of a “Cameroon centric identity” decolonized from the English and French influences.

To him, “it is important for the government to reconsider the question of one or several national languages as official from the many linguistic identities that can be traced in Cameroon” (Ndille, 2016:30). It is then necessary to “indigenize” the curriculum and promote national languages as medium of instruction (Ndille, 2018).

Moreover, in the political domain, Dickson Eyoh (1998) stresses on the conflicting narratives of Anglophone protests among the Anglophone elites. He writes:

The Anglophones [...] have been at the forefront of region-centered political protests and demands for the rearrangement of State power. The feeling of communal disadvantage is widespread within this community. However, Anglophone elites offer contending explanations for the roots of, and vision for, the best political solution to the so-called Anglophone problem” (Eyoh, 1998:249).

Although it is a truism that Anglophones are facing difficulties, their elites do not agree on its causes and the strategies to adopt in order to improve their condition. In other words, the nationalist discourse seems not to be approved by all Anglophones. This view is clearly portrayed by Emmanuel Anyefru who discusses the limits of the discourse on Anglophone nationalism in Cameroon. He contends that this discourse does not realize that “since reunification of the two Cameroons, so much more has taken place between the communities in terms of intermarriage, investment, migration and lifestyle issues that the dichotomy between the two has become blurred” (Anyefru, 2011). Although this assessment sounds logical, it remains that the Anglophone problem is first of all a political problem that can be solved by the introduction of a larger degree of decentralization as preconized by Didier Olinga (1994) and Donfack (1998). Beside this political solution, there is a need to “realistically redefine the contours of a new bilingual situation in clear-cut terms and the complications arising from the development of nearly half a century of coexistence” (Yenshu, 2012:75).

Conclusion

Coming to the end of this analysis, one can notice that much has been written on the Anglophone problem in history, political science, sociology of the politics and even philosophy. This study then acknowledges the profusion of publications on this issue, and does not pretend to have presented all. At least, it has portrayed the main trends of the existing literature related to it in those areas of studies. All the same, this endoscopy has led to two main results. First, it provides a contradictory view to the idea that “scholarship on the ‘Anglophone problem’ is rare within the French-speaking intellectual community [and that] the little that exists tends to down-play the crisis of the presence of the English-speaking community in Cameroon” (Yenshu, 2012: ix). This work illustrates the interest of Francophone Cameroonian scholars for the Anglophone problem as a research subject. Although some of them tend to minimize the problem by taking a “republican stand”, others have acknowledged its importance and have even proposed some solutions to it. Secondly, the great majority

of Anglophone scholars who have published on the Anglophone problem promote Anglophone nationalism. Their publications push forward a discourse that is more pro-Anglophone than pro-national as regards to nation State Building in Cameroon. This desire to promote Anglophone identity and nationalism “could be explained in terms of the perceived marginalisation of the Anglophone Cameroonians by the Francophone Cameroonians in a majority dominated Francophone Cameroon” (Nkwenti Fru & Wassermann, 2017:59). However, this nationalist discourse does not reach agreement among the Anglophone scholars who also seem to be victims of the North West/South West dichotomy. Few of them have a minimalist and even nihilistic posture about it. They advocate for a “cameroonization” approach that should minimize the French and British colonial heritage and privilege a national consciousness by giving the same opportunities and chances to all the components of the national mosaic. All being equal, the profusion of publications on the Anglophone problem expresses its importance in the political history of Cameroon. Though having contending approaches about its definition and relevance, most of the authors used in this work agree on the fact that this problem, which originates from the choice made by the British Southern Cameroonians to become independent by reunifying with la *République du Cameroun* during the 1961 plebiscite, questions the management/governance of the country since then.

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