AMERICAN RESEARCH JOURNALS
An Academic Publishing House

Cultural and Linguistic Conflicts in Cameroon, 1961 - 2020: Looming Threats to Peace and National Unity

Emmanuel Yenkong Sobseh, PhD

The University of Bamenda, Cameroon .

ABSTRACT

This paper examines threats to peace and national unity posed by the challenges of cultural diversity and linguistic conflicts in Cameroon. Given the linguistic and cultural diversity of the country with its more than 250 ethnic groups and a colonial legacy of English and French cultures and languages, plus remnants of a German sub-stratum, the paper reaffirms that there are many potentials ingredients for conflicts in Cameroon. In view of persistence of internal conflicts, the absence of peace and security and the potential for the eruption of large-scale violent internal conflicts, there is urgent need for appropriate policies for managing cultural and linguistic conflicts in Cameroon. Our findings reveal that, to promote fruitful diversity of cultures and avoid linguistic conflicts, the Government of Cameroon must promote indigenous peoples' cultures, formulate coherent language policies, safeguard endangered languages, preserve cultural heritage, encourage cultural production and linguistic research, and mobilize political will in applying the benefits of peace, science and technology to sustainable educational development. Using essentially the qualitativeapproach and consulting both primary and secondary sources, the study concludes that, the government of Cameroon must put in place structures and measures to mitigate the challenges posed by cultural diversity and linguistic conflicts in a bid to enhance social cohesion, peace and national unity in Cameroon.

KEYWORDS: *Cultural Diversity, Linguistic Conflicts, Peace, National Unity, Cameroon*

INTRODUCTION

In Africa, culture and language combined are major components of national unity, peaceful cohesion and conflict. This has been orchestrated by the fact that, most African countries are composed of several ethno-cultural groups.[1]Located at the cross roads of West and Central Africa, Cameroon is one of the most diverse and resource rich countries in Africa. It is home to more than 250 ethnic groups, harbouring ethnic cleavages with diversified origins, cultures and traditions.[2] Besides its rich indigenous cultures, ethnic diversity and geography, Cameroon has also had a checkered colonial history. Prominent among the ethnic groups in Cameroon are the Bamileke, the Bassa-Bakoko, the Beta, the Shoa Arabs, the Douala, the Fang-Pahouin, Beti-

Fang, Beti-Pahouin, the Fulani, the Kirdi, the Pygmies, and the Tikar.[3] However, in spite of this diversity, none of the ethnic groups has so far constituted a dominant group capable of diffusing its language and culture throughout the territory of the state.[4]Modern Cameroon is a bundle of diverse and juxtaposed autonomous cleavages brought together by the German colonisers.

Cameroon was born out of the erstwhile German colony of Kamerun. Colonisation added to diversity because the German Kamerun was split into two protectorates under the League of Nations - British Cameroon in the west, and French Cameroon in the east. The North West and South West Regions of the country, known today as Anglophone Cameroon, were administered by the British, while the rest of the territory known as Francophone Cameroon was administered by the French. The country's colonial and post-independence arrangements, therefore, helped in understanding the depth of cultural and linguistic grievances. This is essentially because, the two separately administered regions reunified in 1961 after a plebiscite to

---

1 Will Kymlicka, "Nation-Building and Minority Rights : Comparing Africa and the West," in Berman Bruce, BicksonEyoh and Will Kymlicka (eds.), *Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa* (Oxford/James Currey and Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004), 64.
2 WillibroadDze-Ngwa, "National Unity and National Integration in Cameroon (1961-2000) : Dreams and Realities," PhD Thesis in History, University of Yaounde 1, 2006, 40.

3 Ibid., 41-63.
4 Kymlicka, "Nation-Building and Minority Rights," 66.

form a two-state federation.[5] After independence, followed by reunification, French and English were adopted as official languages of the country. Besides these two officially widely used languages (French being significantly more widely used than English), there exists Pidgin English (considered by experts to have developed in the plantations) which is widely spoken along the coastline, even among French-speaking Douala and in almost all the major towns in the country. In 1972, the population voted in a referendum to adopt a new constitution setting up a unitary state to replace the federation whose name *ipso facto* changed from Federal Republic of Cameroon to United Republic of Cameroon. Despites these developments, English and French were maintained as official languages of Cameroon. Cameroon's great ethnic diversity is therefore accompanied by a unique linguistic and cultural pattern which is particularly complex and politically sensitive in all the regions of Cameroon.

In view of the persistence of cultural and linguistic conflicts caused most often by tribalism, corruption and discrimination, the absence of peace and security and the potential for the eruption of more threat to peace and national unity, there is urgent need for appropriate policies for managing cultural diversity, linguistic threats and diverse socio-political identities in Cameroon.[6] This paper examines Cameroon's cultural and linguistic landscape, explores the causes of cultural and linguistic conflicts in Cameroon, focuses on government's policies and reforms for managing cultural and linguistic conflicts, highlights the major threats to peace and national unity that could be overcome to enhance living together and harmony in the entire territory.

METHODOLOGY

This study made use of primary and secondary data obtained from different sources. The primary data was obtained through interviews with conflict analysts, elites, politicians, linguists, traditional rulers, private and government authorities. Files were gleaned in the National Archives Buea (NAB), the National Archives Yaounde (NAY) and regional and divisional archives in the different Regions of Cameroon. The secondary data was obtained through the review of books, journals, articles, reports, newspapers, and the internet. For the purpose of clarity in this study, major issues related to cultural and linguistic conflicts, peacebuilding, national unity and the opinions of policymakers in Cameroon are critically highlighted and analyzed from a wide variety of sources. This will enable us to tackle the challenges posed by cultural and linguistic conflicts in Cameroon.

5 Victor Julius Ngoh, "The Origins of the Marginalisation of Former Southern Cameroonians 1961-1966: A Historical Analysis." Journal of Third World Studies XVI (1) 1999.

6 P.N. Nkwi, and A. Socpa, "Ethnicity and Party Politics in Cameroon: The Politics of Divide and Rule", in P.N. Nkwi, and F.B. Nyamnjoh (eds.), Regional Balance and National Integration in Cameroon (The Netherlands: African studies Centre, 1997).

CAUSES OF CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC CONFLICTS IN CAMEROON

Cultural and linguistic conflicts caused by ethnic diversity, conflicting language policies and clashes between national and foreign languages are an existential threat to many states. Therefore, it is critically important to understand their underlying as well as proximate causes. Conflicts on account of ethnic identity and racial origins and differences therefore have been a key feature of national and international life for centuries, especially in the African continent. These conflicts have been a cause of massive death, destruction and crises. The causes of these conflicts are many, and include the following.

Colonialism is one of the main causes of cultural and linguistic conflicts in Cameroon. German colonial rule started in German Kamerun on 12 July 1884, and due to the outbreak of the First World War, the Germans were defeated and ousted from Cameroon by the joint Anglo-French forces in 1916.[7] The failed attempt to jointly and effectively administer "Kamerun", a former German protectorate, resulted in the partitioning of the territory between Britain and France in 1919. The French Cameroun comprised most of the former German territory (over 167,000 square miles) while the British Cameroons was an elongated strip of land along the border of colonial Nigeria. It consisted of British Northern Cameroons (about 17,500 square miles) and British Southern Cameroons (about 16,580 square miles), including the historical Ambas Bay Protectorate.[8] This large difference in territories awarded to France and Britain resulted in the present-day Cameroon's majority of Francophone and a minority Anglophone population, respectively. French Cameroun achieved independence in 1960, while British Southern Cameroons gained independence by joining the already independent "La Republique du Cameroun" at reunification on 1 October 1961. Post-independence Cameroon government inherited remnants of German culture, and integrated both French and British cultures and linguistic policies into post-independence Cameroon. The immediate effect, has been conflicts and clashes among these inherited colonial cultures of the Germans, British and French, as well as linguistic affiliations and national cultures of Cameroonians.

The second reason concerns the equal and questionable status accorded to English and French Languages. Linguistic conflict in Cameroon was nursed when bilingualism was officially institutionalized in Cameroon following the reunification of the independent La Republique du Cameroun

7 Lovett Z. Elango, "The Anglo-French 'Condominium' in Cameroon, 1914-1916: The Myth and the Reality." International Journal of African Historical Studies 18: 4, 1985, 657-673.

8 James Olson, Historical Dictionary of the British Empire (Greenwood: Greenwood Press, 1996), 169.

and British Southern Cameroons on 1 October 1961. English and French became the two official languages of Cameroon, with the English language considered inferior.[9]Articles 3 and 58 of this constitution made it clear that:

The official languages of the Federal Republic of Cameroon shall be French and English. This Constitution shall replace the Constitution of the Republic approved on 21 February 1960 by the people of Cameroon; shall come into force on 1 October 1961; and shall be public in its new form in French and in English, the French text being authentic.[10]

The reunification of Southern Cameroons and La Republique du Cameroun came prior to their two-state federation agreement during the FoumbanConstitutional Conferenceof 17 – 21 July 1961. They drew up a federal constitution that guaranteed independent administration and respect of each state's cultural identity. Southern Cameroons became West Cameroon, a constituent state of the Federal Republic of Cameroon.[11] Both the English and French languages, a heritage from the colonial rule, as seen above, eventually became the country's official languages. Following a unilateral referendum on 20 May 1972, a new constitution was adopted which replaced the federal state with a unitary state. The country was renamed the United Republic of Cameroon and afterwards the Republic of Cameroon through another revised constitution in 1984.[12]Apart from the 1961 constitution, subsequent constitutions in addition to the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon granted the English and French languages the same status. However, it is painful to acknowledge the fact that, most administrative and official texts and documents are not published in both languages; with priority given to the French language. This is a major source of linguistic conflict in Cameroon.

More so, the existence of several cultural and ethnic groups in Cameroon, has served as a major source of cultural conflict. The country is home to about 250 ethnic groups from the ancient tribal kingdoms in the West and the Pygmies in the South to the pastoral Muslims in the North. Besides its rich indigenous cultures, ethnic diversity and geography, Cameroon has also had a checkered colonial history. In addition, the multiplicity of ethnic conflicts (both armed and unarmed), the crisis of the tribalistic orientation of the state, tensions between communities and the emergence of ethno-regional social movements are all indicative of this crisis.[13]

Furthermore, the 250-plus Cameroonian national languages were sidelined in the planning of the country's language policy. English and French were the official languages of Cameroon since 1961 and recognised as such in the country's constitution of 1 September 1961 and amended constitutions of 1972 and 1996. An official bilingualism policy has been implemented since the early 1960s and the education system is made up of two subsystems: Anglophone and Francophone. These languages were sidelined, despite the fact that some linguists working to codify Cameroonian languages for the purpose of schooling suggested different models. Tadadjeu for instance proposed a trilingual model; a national language, chosen from the 250-plus languages, in addition to English and French.[14]Development in legislation promoting the use of local languages in education seemingly indicates that the current language in education policy departs from a long tradition where schools were perceived as ideological institutions for the reproduction of the languages and cultures of the former colonial masters, while local languages and cultures were not recognized.[15] However, the fact that a law passed several years ago and promulgated by the head of state is still to be fully implemented may give credit to Kazadi quoted by Robinson who argues that "aside from their virtues, constantly acclaimed in speeches, national languages have never been considered locally… as sufficiently serious to be given a budget, any planning or adequate institutions."[16] This situation has given rise to indigenous language awareness and conflicts across communities in Cameroon and researchers like Chiatoh[17] propound a community response framework in the absence of an adequate language policy addressing indigenous language promotion needs.

9 Sammy Beban Chumbow, "Language and Language Policy in Cameroon," in NdivaKofele Kale (ed.), An African Experiment in Nation Building: The Bilingualism Republic of Cameroon since Reunification (Colorado: Westview Press, 1980), 281-311.

10 See the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Cameroon; Ndi, South West Cameroon, 355-371.

11 V. G. Fanso, Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges: The Colonial and Post-Colonial Periods, Vol.2 (London and Oxford: Macmillan Education Ltd, 1989), 56.

12 Bonfen Chem-Langhee, "The Road to the Unitary State of Cameroon 1959 – 1972." Annals of the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences, Vol. VI Numbers 1 and 2, January-July 1990, 6.

13 Emmanuel Vubo, "Management of Ethnic Diversity in Cameroon against the Backdrop of Social Crises," Cahiers d'étudesafricaines, 2006/ 1, 181, 135-156.

14 M. Tadadjeu, "Language planning in Cameroon: Towards a trilingual education system," In Patterns in Language, Culture and Society: Sub-Saharan Africa (Colombus: Ohio State University, 1975), 53–75.

15 P. Bourdieu, & J. C. Passeron, La Reproduction: Eléments pour une théorie du système d'enseignement (Paris: Minuit, 1977).

16 C. D. W. Robinson, Language Use in Rural Development: An African Perspective (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1996), 18.

17 B. A. Chiatoh, "The Cameroonian experience in mother tongue education planning: the community response framework," Current Issues in Language Planning, 15(4), (2014), 376-392.

GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS IN MITIGATING CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC CONFLICTS IN CAMEROON

The preservation of cultural and linguistic diversity in today's world is a major concern to many scientists, artists, writers, politicians, and leaders of linguistic communities. The formulation of national cultural and linguistic policies and reforms is one of the major ways through which most countries proffer solutions to conflicts. Surprisingly, when these policies are made in Cameroon, they are not explicit enough and then become very difficult to implement because of ethnic loyalty and political interpretation.

Institutionalization of the policy of official bilingualism in Cameroon's Constitution

This has been government's policy since reunification of Cameroon. At reunification in 1961, and subsequently, in the 1972 Constitution of the United Republic of Cameroon, English and French were adopted as the official languages of Cameroon with each language having the same status.[18] The essence of this policy was to fight cultural and linguistic conflicts that could have emanated as a results of the English and French system inherited from colonial administrators.[19] In summary, the policy of official language bilingualism constitutes the main core of Cameroon's language policy. Article 1, paragraph 3 of the constitution of 18 January 1996 is abundantly clear in this regard. It states 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. It shall endeavour to protect and promote national languages."[20] Although successive constitutions of the country since independence have always reiterated the policy of official bilingualism, there exist no well-defined language policy till date as to its implementation.

Creation of a National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism

In January 2017, the Government of Cameroon created the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism to promote national languages, mitigate cultural and linguistic conflicts, and above all solve the Anglophone Crisis. While commissioning members to their function on 27 April 2017, Prime Minister Philemon Yang pointed out that the role of the Commission constituted inter alia:

submitting reports and recommendations on issues relating to the protection and promotion of bilingualism and multiculturalism to the President of the Republic and the Government; - monitoring the implementation of constitutional provisions establishing English and French as two official languages of equal status, and especially ensuring their use in all government services, semi-public bodies as well as any State-subsidized body; - conducting any study or survey and proposing measures likely to strengthen Cameroon's bilingual and multicultural character; - preparing and submitting to the President of the Republic draft instruments on bilingualism, multiculturalism and togetherness (Yang, 2017).[21]

Furthermore, the creation and functioning of the Commission helped to allay worries about the lack of supervision of the implementation of bilingualism. National social integration, the cultural blending of Cameroonians and the emergence of cosmopolitan communities in most of Cameroon's major cities, also enhanced bilingualism, living together, national unity and peacebuilding.

Government efforts to promote national cultures and languages

Since reunification in 1961, subsequent Cameroonian governments have made enormous efforts to promote national cultures and languages as a means to fight cultural and linguistic conflicts in the entire territory. An example, was the International Linguistic Institution (SIL) charged with the responsibility to carry out research in local languages aimed at establishing the writing conventions of most Cameroonian languages. This led to the creation of the Cameroon NationalLanguage Association (PROPELCA) in 1978. The objective of the programme was to promote selected national languages through their introduction at primary school level whereby children would learn to read and write in their Mother Tongue (MT) from grade one to three, with a progressive transition from oral practice and writing to mathematics and other subjects. A teaching programme including objectives for primary and secondary school levels were worked out; didactic materials were also elaborated. The experimentation phase were very successes in some selected schools. Yaro[22] contends that

18 Sammy Beban Chumbow, "Language and Language Policy in Cameroon," in NdivaKofele Kale (ed.), An African Experiment in Nation Building: The Bilingualism Republic of Cameroon since Reunification (Colorado: Westview Press, 1980), 281-311.

19 Paul Mbangwana, "Cameroon Nationhood and Official Bilingualism: A Linguistic Juxtaposition?" Revue Internationale des Arts, Lettres et Sciences Sociales (RIALSS, Yaoundé: Presse Universitaire, 2004).

20 See Article 1, paragraph 3 of the Constitution of 18 January 1996 of the Republic of Cameroon.

21 Philemon Yang, "The speech of His Excellency Philemon Yang Prime Minister, Head of Government during the official commissioning ceremony of the members of the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism in Yaounde on 27 April 2017", available online at http://allafrica.com/stories/201705040896.html, retrieved 2 June 2021.

22 Loveline Yaro, "Multilingualism as Curriculum Policy in Cameroon Education System," Journal of Education, Society and Behavioural Science, 33(6), 2020, 26-35.

the administration faced the challenge of selecting which languages to be taught in schools. The first phase in the implementation of the introduction of national languages in school started with experimentation in seven pilot schools. These include: Lycee Classique et Moderne de Ngaoundere in the Adamawa Region, Lycee General Leclerc de Yaounde in the Centre Region, Lycee d, Akwa de Douala in the Littoral Region, Lcycee Classique et Moderne de Garoua in the Northern Region, Government high school Njinikom in the North West Region, Lycee Classique d'Ebolowa in the South Region, and Lycee Classique de Bafang in the West Region. This project was very successful, especially as it helped to introduce national languages in Cameroon.

Cameroon's international affiliation and implementation of cultural and Linguistic texts

An important number of legal texts have been issued to protect and promote our languages and cultures at the international level. Some important recommendations have been made at world level to promote cultural and linguistic ties, some of which are: The 9 June 1996 Universal Declaration on Linguistics Rights in Barcelona, Spain; recommendations of the International Organization of Francophonie (OIF) on teaching French and partner languages (African languages) and those of the consultative committee on national languages held in Paris from 17 to 19 December 2005; the Convention on the protection and promotion of cultural diversity expressions held in Paris (France) on 20 October 2005. At the African level, we have the recommendations on teaching mother languages taken in 1961 during the first African conference on education held in Addis Abebas (Ethiopia). In addition to the fact that the Cameroonian Government is implementing these texts, it has also exploited the tests to prepare and enact its own laws and texts on cultural and linguistic procedures in Cameroon. The government of Cameroon has also fought against cultural and linguistic conflicts through the creation of the Ministry of Arts and Culture, the establishment oflinguistic pilot centers in Cameroon, the creation of special language departments in professional colleges, the protection and preservation of cultural heritage, the encouragement ofartistic and cultural production in Cameroon.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS TO PEACE AND NATIONAL UNITY IN CAMEROON

Before the 1990s, Cameroon represented an interesting example of a country that has managed to maintain relative peace and security in a neighbourhood that was marred by conflicts.As such, the country was regarded as an island of peace in central Africa, with minimal threats to peace and national unity. Since 1916, the situation has change drastically, with Cameroon's rapidly escalating levels of violent crises, cultural and linguistic conflicts, and appalling human security situation posing a credible security threat to the country. This portion examines the phenomenon and argues that the weakness and failure of the state in ensuring the citizens' security and tackling these issues is largely to be blamed. Some of the major issues posing threats to peace and national unity in Cameroon include the following.

Threats posed by Contested State Structures

The contestants are opposition parties advocating for a change of government; federalist movements demanding a return to federalism; separatist movements fighting for secession and unionist movements standing against any change to the form of the state. In trying to consolidate post-colonial national unity, Cameroon evolved through a series of revolutionary political stages such as the 1984 coup d'état, the reintroduction of multi-party politics and upheavals, the 2008 taxi driver strike and the resurgence of the Anglophone Crisis in 2016. This has created a climate for cultural, linguistic and political differences. As far back as 1972, a constitutional referendum replaced the federal system with the unitary system. West Cameroon, which had federated in 1961 as an equal state, eventually ceased to exist.[23] This gradually created an Anglophone political consciousness - the feeling of being exploited culturally, linguistically and politically by the Francophone dominated state.

Cameroon also went through several changes under the incumbent president, who came to power in 1982. These included a change of name from the United Republic of Cameroon to the Republic of Cameroon (exact appellation of former French Cameroon when it got its independence), a change of national flag from two-star design (symbol of the coming together of Francophone and Anglophone parts) to a single star, and the adoption of a new constitution in 1996 that transformed Cameroon into a decentralized unitary state. These changes are the reasons why many protesting Anglophones and other ethnic groups feel that their cultural and historical uniqueness was trounced in the union.[24] This continued contestation of state structures threatens peace and stability in Cameroon.

The Anglophone Crisis in the North West and South West Regions

The context and root of this problem that has resulted in human insecurity, cultural and linguistic differences, may be traced back to 1961 when the political elites of British Southern Cameroons and independent Republic of Cameroon with different colonial legacies agreed to reunify and form the Federal Republic of Cameroon.[25]Contrary to expectations, this

23 Piet Konings& Francis B. Nyamnjoh, "The Anglophone Problem in Cameroon," The Journal of Modern African Studies, 35, 2, (1997), 207-229, Available Online at: https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/15592501.pdf, 23 August 2021.

24 Institute for Peace and Security Studies, "Cameroon Conflict Insight," Peace and Security Report, Vol. 1 March 2020, 4.

25 A. Ndi, Southern West Cameroon Revisited: North-South West Nexus 1858-1972. Vol. 2 (Oxford: African Books Collective, 2014), 14.

did not provide for the equal partnership for both parties, and as such, most Anglophones felt marginalized, exploited and above all, assimilated by the majority Francophones.[26]The sustained repressive state policies and actions against the pro-separatist groups in the South West and North West Regions of Cameroon have within the past few years led to widespread humanitarian crises such as hunger, starvation and poverty and this has heightened the displacement of the vulnerable groups such as women and children both as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees.[27]

The Anglophone Crisis has evolved in different stages. The last and deadliest stage that escalated since 2016, was provoked by teachers and lawyers strikes linked to cultural and linguistic ties inherited from former colonial administration. Both government and armed separatist fighters have been blamed for human insecurity in Anglophone Cameroon.[28]In late 2016, instability gave way to violence when protests against the government's imposition of Francophone teachers and lawyers in Anglophone schools and courts were met with military action. The government's reaction to the protests resulted in the formation of several non-state armed groups and fueled existing separatist sentiment. Armed groups enforced school boycotts, and the subsequent violent confrontations have forced more than half a million people to flee their homes.[29] This has served as an impediment to peace and national unity in Cameroon.

Boko Haram Insurgencies in Northern Cameroon

Since 2000, the phenomenon of Boko Haramhas dominated policy debates in Cameroon's politics. Cameroon has been hit by several hundred violent terrorist attacks, obliging the country to mobilize and fight against the insurgents. Most of these attacks have been conducted by the militant Islamist group "Ahl al Sunna li al Da'wa wa al Jihad", popularly known as *Boko Haram*. Its insurgency is fueled by Nigeria's history, geopolitical structure, ethno-religious composition and

socio-economic disparities. Its main declared goals are to overthrow the Nigerian government and institute Islamic or Sharia law.[30] Since late 2010, the organization has been responsible for a brutal campaign of attacks targeting public officials, institutions, ordinary men, women, and children, wreaking havoc in Cameroon and its neighbouring nations. Meanwhile, *Boko Haram's* rhetoric and tactics indicate that the organization has expanded and evolved into a transnational threat with links to other terrorist groups and violent extremists in North, West, and East Africa.[31]The group employs various methods such as assassination of key individuals; bank robberies; kidnappings; attacks on military convoys; roadside bombings; use of Improvised IxplosiveDevices (IEDs); and the use of suicide bombers to carry out attacks. The group thus constitutes a wider threat to peace, national unity and security in Cameroon.

Minority Problems

Minority issues in Cameroon constitute wider threats to peace, national unity and cultural diversity. The migration and settlement of the peoples of Cameroon brought together different conflicting cultures in search for peace, security and welfare.[32] While most ethnic entities settled in specific locations, others found no separate geographical space, but settled amicably among the autochthons. A good example was the case with the Mbororo of the North-West Region of Cameroon. Such amicability soon dwindled, resulting in conflicts caused largely by socio-cultural, linguistic, economic and political rather than geographical boundaries. These boundaries brought misunderstanding, distrust and misrepresentation between the Mbororos and the indigenous peoples. The "early settlers" claimed ownership over land and space and considered the "late settlers" (Mbororo) as strangers who had to pay royalties for land use. The Mbororos on their part decried the attitude of the indigenous peoples as exploitative. With the liberty laws in the early 1990s, the Mbororos wanted to make their voices heard by claiming indigenous citizenship.[33] This has served as a major threat to peace, living together, unity and integration in Cameroon. Unity in diversity should reduce the boundaries which exist between the Mbororo and the indigenous peoples.

26 Emmanuel Yenkong Sobseh, "The Anglophone Crisis, Human Insecurity and the Role of Anglophone Cameroonians in the Diaspora, 1961 – 2019," Journal of Arts and Humanities Vol. III, No. 1, September 2020, 130-147.

27 J. Ebune, "The Dilemma of The Federal System in West Cameroon 1961–1972," Journal of Scientific Research and Studies, 133(2) (2016), Retrieved from http://www.modernrespub.org/jsrs/pdf/2016/July/Ebune.pdf, 22 August 2021.

28 Human Rights Watch, "Cameroon: Promised Investigation Should Be Independent: Government Forces on Rampage in North-West Region City" (May 16, 2019), Retrieved from https://www.hrw.org/news, 22 July 2021.

29 International Crisis Group. Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: How to Get to Talks? Report No. 272 (2019),Retrieved from https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon /272-crise-anglophone-au-cameroun-comment-arriver-auxpourparlers, 21 August 2021.

30 Andrew Walker, What is Boko Haram? (Washington: UNO Publication, 2012),

31 J. P Eter Pham, "Boko Haram's Evolving Threat," Africa Security Brief, No. 20, April 2012).

32 INADES-Formation Cameroon, "Mbororo: How Protected is the Minority Group?", INADES-Formation Quarterly No. 37 April-June, 2001, 3.

33 WillibroadDze-Ngwa, "Boundary Dynamics and the Search for Geopolitical Space: The Case of the Mbororo in the North West Region of Cameroon," in Daniel Abwa, Albert Pascal Temgoua, E.S.D. Fomin&WillibroadDze-Ngwa, Boundaries and History in Africa: Issues in Conventional Boundaries and Ideological Frontiers (Festschrift in Honour Of Verkijika G. Fanso) (Bamenda: Maryland Publisher, 2011), 22-46.

This means that the various cleavages in the region should be recognised, accepted and protected within the diverse society by ensuring mutual respect, peaceful co-existence, andpromoting the traditions and customs of the diverse cleavages.

Political and Socio-Economic Inequality

In Cameroon, political, and socioeconomic inequality among ethnic group has compromised peace and national unity. It has also promoted cultural and linguistic conflicts. A glaring example is the inequality in appointments and distribution of wealth between Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians.Overtime, Anglophones in the South West and North West Regions, who make up only about 20% of Cameroon's 25.88 million population, have felt cheated in the distribution of wealth and power in the country. They accused the government of marginalizing the two English-speaking regions over Cameroon's other eight administrative regions. Politically, some argue that there is an under-representation of the Anglophone minority in key government positions as well as other government services.[34] For instance, out of the 67 members of government, only 3 Anglophones occupy high-level cabinet positions. Social disparities equally exist due to the centralization of power, with decision making centers in Yaoundé, far from Anglophone regions. Policies in the education and judicial systems also created a fertile ground for the emergence and violent radicalization of those with grievances. The current Anglophone crisis is, therefore, a manifestation of frustration arising from both real and perceived discrimination, cultural and linguistic conflicts and marginalization of the English-speaking minority.[35]

Threats posed by Cameroon's Religious Landscape

In Cameroon, the rise of Christian revivalist (born again) and Muslim fundamentalist movements is rapidly changing the religious landscape and paving the way for religious intolerance. This is a major impediment to the peace, unity and integration of the country. Fundamentalist groups' emergence, combined with communal tensions, creates a specific risk in the North and increases competition for leadership of the Muslim community: such competition has already led to local and cultural conflicts.[36] Moreover, the various religious groups have negative perceptions of each other. The state and the mainstream religious organisations' response to the emerging radicalism is limited to the Boko Haram threat and therefore inadequate, and in some cases carries risk. However, the emergence of radical religious groups risks destabilising its climate of religious tolerance. A coherent and comprehensive response has to be implemented by the government and religious organisations to preserve religious tolerance and to avoid the kind of religious violence seen in neighbouring Nigeria and the Central African Republic. The struggle against the threat of religious radicalism in Cameroon requires a coherent and comprehensive strategy including a better understanding of the current religious changes, support for a charter on religious tolerance, the creation of representative bodies for the Muslim communities and Revivalist Churches, and the economic and social development of fragile regions. More immediately, the government must improve its monitoring of fundamental proselytisation, support interreligious dialogue and improve communities' awareness of the dangers of radicalism.[37]

CONCLUSION

This paper has examined thethreats to peace and national unity posed by the challenges of cultural diversity and linguistic conflicts in post-independence Cameroon. These conflicts have been particularly important since the dawn of the modern nation-state and have not only been a cause of massive death and destruction but have also resulted in many crises. The paper has argued that, to promote fruitful diversity of cultures and avoid linguistic conflicts, the Government of Cameroon must promote indigenous peoples' cultures, formulate coherent language policies, safeguard endangered languages, preserve cultural heritage, encourage cultural production and linguistic research, and mobilize political will in applying the benefits of peace, science and technology to sustainable educational development. The study has highlighted the fact that, Cameroon which represented an interesting example of a country that has managed to maintain relative peace and security in a neighbourhood that was marred by conflict, and regarded as an island of peace in central Africa, with minimal threats to peace and national unity within the last decades, is today suffering from rapidly escalating levels of violent crises, cultural and linguistic conflicts, and appalling human security situation posing a credible security threat to the country. However, the weakness and failure of the state in ensuring the citizens' security and tackling these issues is largely to be blamed for posing threats to peace and national unity in Cameroon.

34 J. Lunn & L. Brook-Holland, The Anglophone Cameroon Crisis. Foreign Affairs, 8 April 2019.

35 ACCORD, "The Anglophone Dilemma in Cameroon: The need for comprehensive dialogue and reform," Conflict Trends/Issue 2, 2017, Available Online at: https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/anglophone-dilemma-cameroon/, 12 July 2021.

36 Emmanuel Wayi, The Interreligious situation of Cameroon (Munich: GRIN Verlag, 2016), Available Online at: https://www.grin.com/document/336988, 12 July 2021.

37 International Crisis Group, Cameroon: The Threat of Religious Radicalism, Available Online at: https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/cameroon-elections-raise-prospect-further-ruling-party-dominance, 22 August 2021.

REFERENCES

1. ACCORD (2021). "The Anglophone Dilemma in Cameroon: The need for comprehensive dialogue and reform," *Conflict Trends/Issue* 2, 2017.Available Online at: https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/anglophone-dilemma-cameroon/, 12 July.

2. Bourdieu, P. & Passeron, J. C. (1977). *La Reproduction: Eléments pour une théorie du système d'enseignement.* Paris: Minuit.

3. Chem-Langhee,Bonfen (1990). "The Road to the Unitary State of Cameroon 1959 – 1972." *Annals of the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences*, Vol. VI Numbers 1 and 2, January-July, 6 - 18.

4. Chiatoh, B. A. (2014). "The Cameroonian experience in mother tongue education planning: the community response framework." *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 15(4), 376-392.

5. Chumbow,Sammy Beban (1980). "Language and Language Policy in Cameroon." In Kale,Ndiva Kofele (ed.) *An African Experiment in Nation Building: The Bilingualism Republic of Cameroon since Reunification.* Colorado: Westview Press, 281-311.

6. Dze-Ngwa, Willibroad (2006). "National Unity and National Integration in Cameroon (1961-   2000): Dreams and Realities." PhD Thesis in History, University of Yaounde 1.

7. _____(2011). "Boundary Dynamics and the Search for Geopolitical Space: The Case of the   Mbororo in the North West Region of Cameroon." In Abwa, Daniel,Albert PascalTemgoua, E.S.D. Fomin&WillibroadDze-Ngwa (eds.)*Boundaries and History in Africa: Issues in Conventional Boundaries and Ideological Frontiers (Festschrift in Honourof Verkijika G. Fanso).* Bamenda:Maryland Publisher, 22-46.

8. Ebune, J. (2016). "The Dilemma of The Federal System in West Cameroon 1961–1972."*Journal of ScientificResearch and Studies,* 133(2). Retrieved Online at:http://www.modernrespub.org/jsrs/pdf/2016/July/Ebune.pdf, 22 August 2021.

9. Elango, Lovett Z. (1985). "The Anglo-French 'Condominium' in Cameroon, 1914-1916: The Myth and the Reality." *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 18:4, 657-673.

10. Fanso, V. G. (1989). *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges: The Colonial and Post-Colonial Periods*, Vol.2. London and Oxford: Macmillan Education Ltd,.

11. Human Rights Watch (2019)."Cameroon: Promised Investigation Should be Independent: Government Forces on Rampage in North-West Region City, May 16,. Retrieved Online at:https://www.hrw.org/news, 22 July 2021.

12. INADES-Formation Cameroon (2001). "Mbororo: How Protected is the Minority Group?" *INADES-Formation Quarterly* No. 37 April-June.

13. International Crisis Group (2019). "Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: How to Get to Talks? *Report* No.272, 2019.Retrieved from https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/272-crise-anglophone-au-cameroun-comment-arriver-auxpourparlers, 21 August 2021.

14. _____(2021).*Cameroon: The Threat of Religious Radicalism*. Available Online at: https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/cameroon-elections-raise-   ospect-further-ruling-party-dominance, 22 August 2021.

15. Institute for Peace and Security Studies (2020). "Cameroon Conflict Insight." *Peace and Security Report*, Vol. 1 March, 4.

16. Konings, Piet &Nyamnjoh, Francis B. (1997). "The Anglophone Problem in Cameroon."   *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 35, 2, 207-229. Available Online at: https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/15592501.pdf, 23 August 2021.

17. Kymlicka, Will (2004). "Nation-Building and Minority Rights: Comparing Africa and the West." In Berman Bruce, BicksonEyoh and Will Kymlicka (eds.), *Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa*. Oxford/James Currey and Athens: Ohio University Press.

18. Lunn, J. & Brook-HollandL. (2019). *The Anglophone Cameroon Crisis. Foreign Affairs,* 8 April.

19. Mbangwana, Paul (2004). "Cameroon Nationhood and Official Bilingualism:A Linguistic Juxtaposition?". *Revue Internationale des Arts, Lettres et Sciences Sociales.* RIALSS, Yaoundé: Presse Universitaire.

20. Ndi, A. (2014).*Southern West Cameroon Revisited: North-South West Nexus 1858-1972.* Vol. 2. Oxford: African Books Collective.

21. Ngoh, Victor Julius (1999). "The origins of the Marginalisation of former Southern Cameroonians 1961-1966: A historical analysis." *Journal of Third World Studies* XVI (1).

22. Nkwi, P.N. and Socpa, A. (1997). "Ethnicity and Party Politics in Cameroon: The Politics of Divide and Rule." In P.N. Nkwi, and F.B. Nyamnjoh (eds.) *Regional Balance and National Integration in Cameroon*. The Netherlands: African studies Centre.

23. Olson, James (1996).*Historical Dictionary of the British Empire*. Greenwood: Greenwood Press.

24. Pham, J. P.Eter (2012). "Boko Haram's Evolving Threat." *Africa Security Brief,* No. 20, April.

25. Robinson, C. D. W. (1996).*Language Use in Rural Development: An African Perspective*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

26. Sobseh, Emmanuel Yenkong (2020)."The Anglophone Crisis, Human Insecurity and the Role o f Anglophone Cameroonians in the Diaspora, 1961 – 2019." *Journal of Arts and Humanities*Vol. III, No. 1, September, 130-147.

27. Tadadjeu, M. (1975). "Language planning in Cameroon: Towards a trilingual education system." In *Patterns in Language, Culture and Society: Sub-Saharan Africa.* Colombus: Ohio State University, 1975, 53–75.

28. Vubo, Emmanuel (2006). "Management of Ethnic Diversity in Cameroon against the Backdrop of Social Crises." *Cahiers d'étudesafricaines,*/ 1, 181, 135-156.

29. Walker,Andrew(2012).*WhatisBokoHaram?*Washington: UNO Publication.

30. Wayi, Emmanuel (2016).*The Interreligious situation of Cameroon*. Munich: GRIN Verlag.Available Online at: https://www.grin.com/document/336988, 12 July.

31. Yang, Philemon (2017). "The speech of His Excellency Philemon Yang Prime Minister, Headof Government during the official commissioning ceremony of the members of the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism in Yaounde on 27 April." Available online at:http://allafrica.com/stories /201705040896.html, retrieved 2 June 2021.

32. Yaro, Loveline (2020). "Multilingualism as Curriculum Policy in Cameroon Education System." *Journal of Education, Society and Behavioural Science,* 33(6), 26-35.